

15th Annual Nathan Bedford Forrest Birthday Celebration a GREAT SUCCESS!

Well, the 15th Annual birthday celebration for Lt. Gen Nathan B. Forrest at Fort Dixie was another HUGE SUCCESS thanks to ALL Y'ALL who physically came to the party and those who were unable to attend but sent donations, bought ancestor pavers and participated in the drawing for the NBF hot-cast bronze mini bust. Mr. Jack Skoch of LaFayette, AL won the bust this year...Jack is a champion for our cause and reveres General Forrest, so the General is in good hands this year!

We dedicated the party this year in the HONOR of our precious friends, Bobby & Belinda Holloway. Both are cancer survivors and we are soooo thankful to God for His Grace and answer to soooo many of our prayers. Both, Bobby & Belinda are literally walking miracles from God! As you know, Belinda is my "partner in crime" and Bobby has been for so many years our Master Chef but this year the weather was just soooo hot they could not attend. Hopefully, they will be back with us next year!

As usual, I DO GUARANTEE HOT weather! Well, it was hot as blue blazes on July 12 at Fort Dixie but that did not stop folks from coming to enjoy an "ole South Day" at Fort Dixie to fellowship with folks of like minds & hearts! We had approximately 250 folks here...a GREAT turnout! We had folks from AL, of course, & TX, LA, FL, GA, MS, TN, and Tom & Jill *Forrest* from **Belleflower, Illinois!** Yep, Tom FORREST keeps the skeer on'em in the Land of Lincoln! In the words of faithful compatriot, Tyrone Crowley, "In spite of killer heat, I believe it was the best party yet to my memory"!

We kicked the party off with our friends, Mr. Johnny Westerfield of Monteagle, TN giving a very inspirational invocation and then Kirby Crabtree also of Monteagle sang his resounding rendition of the Bonnie Blue Flag in A capella while waving the Bonnie Blue! Kirby is outstanding and sings from his heart! Todd Kiscaden, of Monteagle, TN, fired the opening Happy Birthday Cannon Salute to General Forrest after we all sang a resounding rendition of DIXIE and fired a few more times during the day! We let folks in this community know Fort Dixie is prepared to DEFEND the fort! (Looks like we had Monteagle, TN well represented!)

Past Ala Div SCV Commander, Ronnie Simmons, of Columbiana, AL was our Master of Ceremonies and always does an outstanding job! Ronnie is a natural born speaker & has a GREAT sense of humor and keeps ME on track with the program...which is the hardest part of his job! For those of you who have never had the experience of hearing Past SCV Chaplain-in-Chief, Pastor John Weaver speak, you have really missed a treat! It goes without saying that he is inspirational - a tremendous orator... who NEVER lulls you to sleep and he is VERY astute when it comes to the history of General Forrest! His address on General Forrest is OUTSTANDING & on DVD & CD; I highly recommend you buying it if you don't already have it! Christmas will be here before we know it & would be a GREAT Christmas gift! If you need contact information, contact me & I will give you his information.

Our family friend, George Denmark & my brother, Ron Smitherman, stayed busy cutting & slicing ice cold watermelon all day long at the “Pickinny Freeze Watermelon Stand”!!! Everyone enjoys ice cold watermelon on a hot July day in the South! While just a few feet away from the watermelon stand, at The General’s Mess Tent is Nelson Andrews, our Master Chef and Medford Pharr & Butch & our son, Austin...frying up our famous Southern Fried Catfish. Some folks who come here who don’t “normally” like Catfish, give it a try and LOVE it! Our pond raised, grain-fed catfish is picked up FRESH (NEVER frozen) at Harvest Select Catfish in Uniontown, AL on Friday afternoon & packed in ice...we don’t serve frozen “slanted eyed” catfish from Viet Nam!

Everyone enjoyed the music entertainment provided by Celtic singer/songwriters Jed Marum and Rickey Pittman...PROFESSIONALS to the bone! Their music is lovely, entertaining and inspirational and in touch with our love of our history, heritage & Celtic culture. They were back by popular demand and hopefully they will come back to Fort Dixie again real soon! If you need music entertainment at your upcoming events, I highly recommend them!

The auction was a GREAT success! We had several beautiful Confederate prints & wonderful Southern items and some rare collectibles in the auction this year! The proceeds from the auction garnered more than \$2300! Thanks to all who participated in the auction & made a purchase! Bill Anthony of the Tallassee Armory Guards, Camp 1921 did his usual outstanding job at being our auctioneer! I’d like to thank all who contributed items to the auction and the collection of items for the door prize drawing. Artist Ron Lesser contributed the beautiful print, “The War Horse” and if anyone would like to know how to contact Ron & his Publicist, Jerry Ross I will be glad to give you the information. Ron & Jerry are very generous every year to donate a Ron Lesser print.

After supper we had a “special visitor” to come & speak...Emma Sansom Johnson, portrayed in first person by Mrs. Virginia Davis of Rainbow City, Alabama. Ginny portrays Emma Sansom Johnson in her reflections of being a young girl who was named Alabama Heroine by the Alabama State Legislature in 1901 by awarding her 600 acres of land for her valiant assistance to General Forrest in crossing Black Creek during the Abel Streight raid near Gadsden Alabama! Ginny does a wonderful job in this first person portrayal and I highly recommend her to anyone’s camp or chapter program! After Emma Sansom’s address, we cut the General’s Birthday cake & sang Happy Birthday General Forrest!

This year we enjoyed a 2-fold celebration...the birthday of Gen. Forrest and our victory against the City of Selma! We have been back at work at Confederate Circle in Historic Live Oak Cemetery since April 16, 2014. The project is coming together absolutely beautifully. We have had NO problems with Rose Sanders and her foot soldiers! I invite you All to come to Confederate Circle whenever you are in the area & see our work in progress! The crew arrives from TN each Monday, works all week & goes back to TN on Friday afternoon! We are shooting for May 2015, the Sesquicentennial year of the Battle of Selma for our dedication. Plans will be forthcoming as they develop and are finalized. So, keep May

clear next year...don't worry, we definitely will NOT have the dedication on Mother's Day!

I want to thank Darcie Simmons for "soldiering" the General's Water'n Hole serving sweet tea & lemonade and also a Big Thank You to Mrs. Lee King, the Commander of the Kitchen! Lee does a magnificent job at guarding the kitchen making sure "no catfish is eaten before it's time" and literally works herself to the bone in maintaining the kitchen duties! Also, I don't know what I would do without Tonnia Maddox and Carol Crowley at the Registration table...handling registration & selling drawing tickets & selling items out of The Gen'rls Sto"... Also, thank you soooo much to all the ladies who brought so many wonderful & delicious desserts and side dishes! It's a "Suth'rn thang"!

It was dreadfully HOT but God continues to smile upon the General's birthday party each year with no rain. So far, we have never been rained out, even the year Hurricane Dennis was on his way...it misted & drizzled a little bit & then cleared off & cooled the evening that year! God is truly sovereign and GOOD!

It is additionally important for me to say "THANK YOU" to ALL of you who continue your faithful support of our efforts here in Selma to honor Gen. Forrest who so rightfully deserves his place of honor for his defense of Selma and the Confederate Naval Ordnance Works & Foundry from the invading forces of Gen. James H. Wilson. Without YOU this project would not be enjoying the VICTORY that we have fought so hard for soooo long!

The day ended with more cannon salutes and beautiful fireworks...folks went home a little bit more educated, a little bit entertained, a little bit less hungry and HAPPY, HAPPY, HAPPY after a day at FORT DIXIE celebrating the 193rd Birthday of Lt. General Nathan Bedford Forrest! The tents have been taken down, the flags that adorned Fort Dixie's front porch properly folded & put away til we see y'all again next year!

Keepin' the Skeer on'em,

Confederately

yours, Pat

Godwin