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A SOUTHERN WOMAN, IN 1897, REMEMBERS THE
CIVIL WAR

Edited by Anna Mary Moon

The original of this paper, written by Mrs. Anna Mary Deaderick Van Dyke, and read before the Daughters of the Confederacy, General A. P. Stewart Chapter, Number 81, on May 11, 1897, is now in the possession of Mrs. Milton B. Ochs of Chattanooga, Tennessee, a daughter of Mrs. Van Dyke.

Mrs. Van Dyke, born Anna Mary Deaderick, was a daughter of James William Deaderick and his wife, Adeline Clifton McDowell of Danville, Kentucky, and a great-granddaughter of Governor Isaac Shelby of Kentucky. She was born September 22, 1836, and on June 16, 1859, married her half second cousin, William Deaderick Van Dyke of Athens, Tennessee. Mrs. Van Dyke was active in the original organization of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, and was its third national president, and one of the charter members of the General A. P. Stewart Chapter, Number 81, of Chattanooga. She died October 11, 1911, at the age of seventy-five and is buried at the side of her husband at Chattanooga.

W. D. Van Dyke, the husband of the author, was born at Athens October 20, 1836, the son of Chancellor Thomas Nixon Van Dyke, a prominent lawyer at Athens, and Eliza Ann Deaderick. In the fall of 1861, he entered the military service of the Confederate States as a commissary of the Fifty-ninth Regiment of Tennessee Infantry. He remained an officer of the commissary department in Vaughn's brigade during the entire war, whence his title of major. After the war he came to Chattanooga where he practiced law, and was recognized as a leader in all matter concerning the public interest in his municipality. Major Van Dyke died August 1, 1883.

The memoir is printed as written, without correcting errors in spelling and punctuation, except where necessary in the interest of clarity.

A Few Scattered Thoughts in
Regard to the War of 61-65

In looking down the long vista of years, which has intervened between the late civil war, and the present, Memory almost fails to call up *some* of the obliterated & half forgotten pictures, while others spring into life with a vividness, that would mark them as recent occurrences. Lincoln's call in '61 for 75,000 men to quell the Rebellion, was promptly responded to by brave men, ready to do and dare *anything* for the constitution—& they were met by

foeman [foemen] worthy of their steel, By the best blood & chivalry of our beloved, & beautiful Southland—who stood ready for the defense of their homes—their country—and her institutions. A few of us here, remember the preparations for war—The organization and equipment of companies—the public speeches and dinners—the making and presentation of flags—the bugle's call—the God Bless you's, and the partings fraught with so much uncertainty, sacrifice and peril. During the four years of privation, suffering, and continuous danger, our women played well their part, and were wonderfully sustained. Their zealous and unbounded faith in the ultimate success of our cause, never wavered—They were called to pass through scenes freighted with hope—love—despair and *misery*. But in their unselfish devotion, they were always ready to cheer—Their comforting ministrations, to the sick—wounded or unfortunate soldiers, were never wanting, And the last hours of many a brave boy, far from the objects of his tenderest love, have been brightened by her gentle, soothing touch, and words of sweetest sympathy. Well do I remember the first time I ever *saw* the Yankees. True they were Tennesseans—but they wore "the blue". 'Twas on a Sept afternoon of '62, that the alarm was given—that the Yankees had driven their wagons into the cornfield, & were sweeping everything—That corn meant food for man and beast—& although there were only females about the house (with the exception of one old darkie)—We determined to have a small share of that corn. Uncle Charles quickly hitched up the wagon, & we all repaired to the part of the field, most remote from the invaders—and went to work in earnest—We succeeded in saving several loads of corn—and being very weary from the new experience—I had seated myself on the front porch steps—and had scarcely gotten a good breath, when two most inoffensive looking "blue coats", walked up and asked for something to eat. I tried to *rise*, but sank back—seeing my agitation one sneeringly remarked "Madam, we not horned animals!" hastily and almost unconsciously I replied Sir, to *me* you are more horrible than any horned animal. In after days I got over this terror. But, "they hungered, and I gave them meat." My contribution to the war was *large*, and *precious*—My husband and his three brothers—Six brothers of my own—besides numerous other relatives. My husband was the only member of his family who returned. One sleeps at Darksville¹ Va. Another wounded in the Shannandoah valley, rode 36 hours in such pain, that most of the time he was held in his saddle by his Adjutant—finally reaching Lynchburg, but to die². The third died from exposure³—My brothers were more fortunate. Five of them are still living—Two of them carry horrible scars, and others can tell tales of filthy prison life—while one—my brother Shelby,⁴ fell at the foot of Snodgrass Hill on the gory field of Chickamauga. Even with the dark pall of desolating war overshadowing us, we had some happy days in Dixie—Times of amusing

¹Richard Smith Van Dyke, a lieutenant in the Confederate army, was killed at White Post during the Battle of New Market.

²John Montgomery Van Dyke was killed near Darksville in 1864, while serving as captain in the Confederate army at the Battle of New Market.

³Thomas Nixon Van Dyke, Jr., who was in the Confederate service, died at Cumberland Gap.

⁴Shelby McDowell Deaderick, second lieutenant of his company, and his captain, James T. Gillespie, of the 63d Tennessee Infantry, were charging up Snodgrass Hill at the Battle of Chickamauga, September 20, 1863, when the same piece of shell killed them both instantly.

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make-shifts—Days brightened by the coming of our loved ones—occasional letters—deeds of sacrifice & usefulness, for the absent—Victories which filled ours hearts with a *hope*, big enough to sustain us to the end. Athens was often raiding ground—today the Confederates, tomorrow the Yankees—One afternoon my husband dashed in to spend a short time with his family—These home comings were always attended with so much danger—that the *pleasure* they brought, was of a very doubtful character. After an almost sleepless night I looked out early the next morning, to see everything ablaze with camp fires—They looked like the stares [stars] of heaven for multitude—I aroused Mr. Van Dyke—explained the situation—told him to dress & prepare for flight while I reconnoited. Taking with me a sister-in law—we ran about a quarter of a mile—(for I was young then), nor tarried for anything until we reached the encampment. The men were already preparing to move. In the gray dawn of the early morning—we could scarcely descerne the color of the uniform—And hesitatingly I enquired—“Whose command is this gentlemen?” Not receiving a satisfactory answer—I approached a commanding figure, who seemed to be marshaling his forces—and more peremptorily and pleadingly enquired—“Wont you *please* tell me whose command this is?”—The answer came with such infinite relief, that I almost fell to the ground—Madam, it is mine— N. B. Forest’s brigade—With almost the fleetness of the wind—we returned to Prospect Hill⁵—My husband was standing by his horse, ready to leap into the saddle—But before we could tell him whether it was friend or foe—he saw from the reflected light in our faces, that no fear dwelt within. Suffice it to say he retired “decently and in order” with Gen Forest. But a very little while before this, the battle of Chickamauga was fought. We knew the conflict in all its horrors was raging. In imagination we could almost hear the thunder of the cannonading—the roll of the artillery and see the gleam of the sabres, and the flash of the musketry. How torturing the suspense!—how maddening the anxiety, & how we impertuned the God of battles, for the safety of our dear ones engaged in that unequal strife. Inability to follow up our advantages & the depletion of our army—left us badly crippled—though we never say *whipped*. Even the federal soldiers claim no victory. It was a most disastrous engagement to them. Soon after this—Gen Sherman, pressed his way into our little village—I have not time, nor disposition to enumerate all the in-conveniences, annoyances and outrages, that this acquaintanceship of six weeks with Sherman’s army brought us. Will only say the house was ordered burned—the order revoked—and it was taken for headquarters for the officers—and the family crowded into two rooms—Judge Van Dyke⁶ was arrested and taken to Camp Chase—where he spent 14 months. a few weeks later my mother-in

⁵Prospect Hill, the home of Dr. William Haney Deaderick at Athens, was later known as the Van Dyke Place. Dr. Deaderick, a distinguished physician and surgeon, was the only son of David Deaderick II and his first wife, Ann Knight Deaderick. He was the first surgeon to remove the lower jaw bone.

⁶Chancellor Thomas Nixon Van Dyke, son of Thomas James Van Dyke and Penelope Smith Campbell Van Dyke, married his cousin, Eliza Ann Deaderick, daughter of Dr. William Haney Deaderick and Penelope Smith Hamilton Deaderick. Jukge Van Dyke, a very strong Confederate, served with the rank of major. When the Union forces gained control of East Tennessee Judge Van Dyke had to take refuge in another state, having been ordered away by the Federal forces.

law and four children were arrested by Sherman's order, and sent North of the Ohio River two weeks later—& myself & two children were arrested, & under flag of truce were sent into Confederate lines—Six ladies were sent out at the same time. Among them Mrs J. G. M. Ramsey & daughter, wife & daughter of the Tennessee Historian. At Strawberry plains we were searched by order of the Maj who commanded our flag, for contraband articles—Even our shoes & stockings taken off, & our hair pulled down—My offense had been communication with the rebels—I told them very plainly I had never had such communication simply because I had never had the opportunity. The progress of our ambulance from this place to my objective point, Jonesboro, was very slow. On the second day of our journey—we met a flag of truce going to Knoxville, on official business, commanded by my husband—For nine months I had not seen him nor heard one word from him. *Perhaps* you can imagine the meeting—After a happy half hour the flags were ordered to move on—(for war is a tyrant). The next afternoon we reached Greenville—were taken to Mrs. Dr. Williams,⁷ where a few days before Gen John H. Morgan had been betrayed, by Mrs. Williams daughter-in law⁸—He took refuge in in her garden where he was found—brutally murdered—thrown across a horse in front of a federal soldier—& with head hanging downward and his brave heart still warm, was with savage glee paraded up and down the main street. Here we were turned over to the Confederate authorities, and it was two days before I reached my fathers,⁹ a distance of 25 miles, owing to the poverty of the "rig". But all things have an end— & I finally reached home—Was there only a few weeks however, when the Yankees came—& fearing I might give father trouble, I refuged to Charlotte N. C.—where I staid until the ubiquitous Sherman bore on this position—and in Jan. before the Surrender I came back to Jonesboro—convinced that I had not long to wait for the end. This trip cost me over \$2,500. I paid \$60 for the transportation of a trunk from one side of a burnt bridge to the other side—"I was just after Stoneman's memorable raid through Va."¹⁰ I was two weeks in making this trip—travelling by rail—ambulance & finally landed at home on a dump car. Long e'er this the resources of the South were almost exhausted. and necessary supplies were growing beautifully scant. I never felt the actual pangs of hunger—but I have lived on *little*, and then on *less*—have lived three months *solely* on Irish potatoes & corn bread—have been nausiated on the fancy coffees of dried apples—sweet

⁷Mrs. Catherine Williams, although in a town intensely Union, was southern in sentiment. The Williams' home, the largest in Greenville, was usually occupied by the commanding generals of both armies.

⁸Mrs. Lucy B. Williams, wife of Joe Williams of the Federal army. It has been said by some that she betrayed General Morgan and by others denied.

⁹James William Deaderick, son of David Deaderick II and Margaretta Anderson Deaderick, was born at Jonesboro on November 25, 1812. In 1870 the bar of East Tennessee, by an almost unanimous petition, requested Deaderick to become a candidate for the supreme court of the state. He was elected under the present constitution of the state, which was adopted in that year by a very large majority. On the death of Chief Justice A.O.P. Nicholson in 1875, he was chosen chief justice by his associates on the bench. In 1878 he was unanimously re-elected chief justice, which position he held until 1886, when he declined re-election on account of his age and voluntarily retired at the end of his second term. Judge Deaderick died October 7, 1890.

¹⁰General George Stoneman, who led a raid to southwestern Virginia in December, 1864.

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potatoes, and rye—I have paid \$75.00 & \$100.00 for shoes for myself—&
 \$60 & \$75 for my little children—Have spent all night in cooking for our
 retreating soldiers—During the seige of Vicksburg—with mind torn & dis-
 tracted, for my precious ones were there, a little stranger¹¹ came to my
 home unattended by nurse or physician—I have seen my children sicken and
 the angel of death apparently hovering o'er them, and no resources at hand
 save a merciful heavenly fathers care and protection, & home remedies.
 I have carded & spun wool & cotton to make cloth, & with my own hands
 have helped to fashion it into garments for the soldier boys— I have spun
 flax on the little wheel for towels & table cloths. Have knit socks by the
 dozens—Have sent to the front boxes of bandages & lint. Have colored with
 cedar tops & barks the cotton for dresses & thought myself highly favored in
 having some turkey red & indigo blue to check them with—Have dyed,
 & braided straw & palmetto for hats, & time and memory would fail me
 to tell you, of all the troubles and disturbances and vexations we endured.
 Yet all so cheerfully borne. But when the surrender came—and the
 ashes of our dead hopes were scattered, When we realized that for some
 mysterious reason God saw it was best that the Southern Confederacy
 should not be established. It took a great deal of Grace to *feel* that all was
 for the best. Even the fact that "the cruel war was over"—and that some
 of our loved ones had been given back to us failed to soothe the bitter
 disappointment that filled our hearts. But God who sees the end from
 the beginning, decreed that there should be no division of North &
 South—and we should try to "dwell together in unity"—I have no apology
 to make—for actions & feelings of the past. *Might* does not make *right*—
 and I shall always believe we *had* a right—a constitutional right to
seceed & the North had *no* right, to coerce, or force us back into the Union—
 but God makes no mistakes & we *know* "it is all for the best." Although in
 our blindness, we hoped for a different termination.

¹¹Thomas Nixon Van Dyke of Chattanooga, who died November 10, 1945.