President of the Confederate States of America

Born: June 3, 1808, Fairview, KY

Died: December 6, 1889, New Orleans, LA

"Never be haughty to the humble or humble to the haughty."
Samuel and Jane Davis
  • Ten children; Jefferson is youngest
Abraham Lincoln born about two years later, less than 100 miles away.

"I worked night and day for twelve years to prevent the war, but I could not. The North was mad and blind, would not let us govern ourselves, and so the war came."
1813
- Davis attends Wilkinson Academy Woodville

1815
- Enters Catholic school of Saint Thomas at St. Rose Priory; only protestant student.

1818
- Davis returns to Mississippi, studying at Jefferson College, Washington.

1821
- Returned to Kentucky, studied at Transylvania University, Lexington.

1824
- Eldest Brother Joseph gets Davis appointment to attend West Point.

1826
- Arrested for eggnog raid.

1828
- Graduates 23rd in class of 33.

"If the Confederacy falls, there should be written on its tombstone: DIED OF A THEORY."
• 1929
  • Lt Davis assigned 1st Infantry Reg.
  • Stationed at Fort Crawford, Prairie du Chien, Michigan Territory.
  • Predecessor is Zachary Taylor, future POTUS.
• March 1832
  • Davis furlohs in Mississippi
  • Still in Mississippi during Black Hawk War but returned to the fort in August.
• Black Hawk War
  • At conclusion, Col. Taylor assigns him to escort Black Hawk to prison.
  • Shields Black Hawk from curiosity seekers.
  • Chief notes his treatment "with much kindness" by Davis in autobiography.
• 1835
  • June 30<sup>th</sup>
    • Resigns from military.
  • June 17<sup>th</sup>
    • Marries Sarah Knox Taylor.

"Tradition usually rests upon something which men did know; history is often the manufacture of the mere liar."
1835
- September 15th
  - Sarah dies at 21
  - Davis also severely ill. Months later he slowly improved, although he remained weak.

1845
- February 26th
  - Davis, nearly 36, marries Varina Howell, 18.
  - Only 2 of 6 kids survive; only 1 marries and has children.

"Obstacles may retard, but they cannot long prevent the progress of a movement sanctified by its justice, and sustained by a virtuous people."
"I love the Union and the Constitution, but I would rather leave the Union with the Constitution than remain in the Union without it."

- **1840**
  - Davis joins politics.
  - Attends Dem.
  - Party meeting in Vicksburg.
  - Chosen as Jackson state convention delegate.

- **1842**
  - Attends Dem. Convention

- **1843**
  - Dem. Candidate for Warren County HoR.
  - Lost election

- **1844**
  - Davis sent convention 3rd time.
  - Was 1 of 6 presidential electors.

- **1845**
  - Campaigned for Dem. James K. Polk in Miss.
  - Runs for US HoR again
    - Arrives in Woodville for speech a day early to see mother.
    - She died day before.
    - Rode 40 mi. after funeral for speech
    - Won election.
"The troops of other states have their reputation to gain, the sons of the Alamo have theirs to maintain."

1846
- Mex. – American War.
  - Davis resigns in June.
  - Assembles volunteer reg., the 155th Infantry.
  - Commanded by Gen. Taylor again.
- July 21
  - Sailed from New Orleans to TX.
  - Equipped with M1841 Mississippi smoothbore rifle. Given by Pres. Polk to vote for Walker Tariff.
  - Became known as Mississippi Rifles.
- Gen Winfield Scott claimed insufficient testing on rifles.
- Found to be particularly effective.
- Began lifelong feud between Davis and Scott.
Lay aside all rancor, all bitter sectional feeling, and to make your places in the ranks of those who will bring about a consummation devoutly to be wished—a reunited country.

- February 22
  - Davis fights Battle of Buena Vista.
  - Shot in foot.
  - Saved by Robert H Chilton.
  - Polk offers Fed. commission as Brig. Gen.
  - Davis declines because Constitution gives powers of appointing militia officers to states not Fed. gov.

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"I love the Union and the Constitution, but I would rather leave the Union with the Constitution than remain in the Union without it."
"African slavery, as it exists in the United States, is a moral, a social, and a political blessing."
• 1849
  • Lopez asks Davis fill position.
    • Offers $100,000 (over $2,000,000 today) to go and $100,000 after Cuba was liberated.
  • Davis rejects offer this was not the duty of a senator.
  • Davis recommends Baltimore Army Maj. Robert E. Lee.
  • Robert declines because of duties as well.

"How idle is this prating about natural rights as though still containing all that had been forfeited."
“To one who loves his country in all its parts, it is natural to rejoice in whatever contributes to the prosperity and honor and marks the stability and progress of any portion of its people.”
“I worked night and day for twelve years to prevent the war, but I could not. The North was mad and blind, would not let us govern ourselves, and so the war came.”
“It was one of the compromises of the Constitution that the slave property in the Southern States should be recognized as property throughout the United States.”
• 1840
  • North/South tensions grow over slavery and other issues.
• 1846
  • Wilmot Proviso
    • Would ban slavery in Mex. acquired land.
• 1857
  • Pierce administration ends.
  • Davis returns to senate March 4th.
  • Compromise of 1850
    • Brings brief calm.
• 1857
  • Dred Scott case of US Supreme Court causes conflict.
    • Justice Taney rules Missouri Comp unconstitutional and Africans are not citizens.
• 1858
  • Renewed Senate service.
  • Interrupted by nearly losing left eye to sickness

“A people morally and intellectually equal to self-government must also be equal in self-defense.”
• Davis believes all states are sovereign and capable of seceding.
• Did not encourage it due to North's disapproval, which would result in conflict.
• Also knew South could not support a defense war by naval or military means.
• 4th of July
  • Davis gives speech against secession on ship near Boston
• Gave similar speech Oct. 11th in Boston before returning to Senate

‘Neither current events nor history show that the majority rule, or ever did rule.”
Neither current events nor history show that the majority rule, or ever did rule.

- **1860**
  - Abraham Lincoln election pushes South Carolina ordinance of secession on Dec. 20th.
  
- **1861**
  - Miss. follows actions on Jan 9th.
  - Jan. 21st, Davis claims “the saddest day of my life”.
    - Delivers exiting address to Senate, resigns, and returns to Miss.

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• 1861
  • Davis messages Gov. John J Pettus to, “Judge what Miss. requires of me and place me accordingly.”
  • Jan. 23rd Davis assigned as Maj. Gen of Army of Miss.
  • Feb 9th Davis and Robert Toombs possible presidential candidates.
  • Davis wins.
  • Inaugurated Feb 18th.
  • Alexander Stephens for Vice-President.
  • Alex and Davis feud constantly

“It is not differences of opinion; it is geographical lines, rivers, and mountains which divide State from State, and make different nations of mankind.”
• Davis must choose to prevent Ft. Sumter reinforcements or not.
• Decided to demand Ft’s surrender.
• Ft Commander Maj. Anderson refuses.
  Beauregard, Confed. Gen., bombards Ft on April 12th.
• Ft. surrenders.
• No deaths.
• Kicked off fights of the war.

“God forbid that the day should ever come when to be true to my constituents is to be hostile to the Union.”
• 1861
  • Virginia joins Confederacy.
  • Davis moves capital to Richmond in May.
  • Later viewed as a negative choice on Davis’ part.

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"I love the Union and the Constitution, but I would rather leave the Union with the Constitution than remain in the Union without it."

- **1861**
  - **November**
    - Davis elected full 6 year term as POTCSOA on 6th.

- **1862**
  - **February**
    - Inaugurated on 22nd.
  - **June**
"The troops of other states have their reputation to gain, the sons of the Alamo have theirs to maintain."

- Limited resources to Union forced confederacy into defensive position.
- Davis made these strategic decisions himself.
- Offensive attempts in Antietam (Maryland 1862), Gettysburg (Pennsylvania 1863), and Confed Heartland Offensive (Kentucky 1862) all failed.
"I worked night and day for twelve years to prevent the war, but I could not. The North was mad and blind, would not let us govern ourselves, and so the war came."

- Davis must select cabinet members for state representation.
- Based decisions on recommendations from congressmen and prominent figures.
- Led to good exec and leg branch relations.
- Also resulted in state complaints because of too few cabinet positions to be represented.
- Cabinet changes occur as complaints increase throughout war.
• Europeans critical factor to success in war.
• Union naval blockade causes European neutrality.
• South assumes lack of cotton supply will motivate Europe to support them.
• Several European countries object to slavery by this point. Britain abolished it by 1830’s. Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation (1863) reduces European desires to assist.

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“How idle is this prating about natural rights as though still containing all that had been forfeited.”

- Davis blamed for strategy, selection of friends for subordinates, and homefront crises neglect.
- Desire to equally defend all territory led to lack of ability everywhere against attacks.
- Allowed Lee’s invasion in 1862/1863 during Western pressure. Lee loses Gettysburg and Vicksburg at once and Miss River loss splits Confederacy.
• Poor management of Gen.’s.
• Dispute between Leonidas Polk, a personal friend, and Braxton Bragg, defeated and distrusted Gen by his subordinates, as resolved with reluctance.
• Joseph E. Johnston’s excessively cautious behaviors are handled the same way.

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- Spoke to soldiers/politicians, failed to do so with common people, failing to build nationalism.
- War is financed by bonds, but investments never make sufficient money.
- Taxes were lower than unions and collected poorly.
- Relied on paper money. Inflation from 60% (1861), to 300% (1863), to 600% (1864).
• 1863
  • Food shortages cause Richmond riots in April.

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“God forbid that the day should ever come when to be true to my constituents is to be hostile to the Union.”

- 1865
  - March
    - Gen. Order 14
      - Slaves can enlist in army for freedom.
    - Failed to take this action earlier in the war.
April 3rd.
- Ulysses S. Grant to capture Richmond.
- Davis escaped to Danville, Virginia, with cabinet.
- Lincoln sits in Davis’s office 40 hours later.

‘Neither current events nor history show that the majority rule, or ever did rule.’
April 12<sup>th</sup>

- Davis receives letter of surrender from Robert E. Lee.
- Davis issues last official proclamation as pres. of confederacy.
- Went south to Greensboro, NC.

"Lay aside all rancor, all bitter sectional feeling, and to make your places in the ranks of those who will bring about a consummation devoutly to be wished—a reunited country."
- **April 14th**
  - Lincoln assassinated.
  - Davis situation complicates as Andrew Johnson, Lincoln’s successor, issues $100,000 reward for his capture.
  - Claimed Davis helped plan assassination.

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"The troops of other states have their reputation to gain, the sons of the Alamo have theirs to maintain."

- 1865
  - Davis meets cabinet lastly on May 5th in Washington, Georgia.
  - Officially dissolves Confed. gov.
  - Occurred at Heard house.
- Davis, wife, and escort captured May 10th in Irwinville.
  - Davis put wife's overcoat over shoulders while fleeing, creating stories that he was trying to escape in women's clothes.
1865

- May 19th, Davis imprisoned in Fortress Monroe in Virginia.
  - Allowed no visitors or books except Bible.
  - Became sicker.
  - Indicted for treason.
  - Trials not pursued in expectations of failure and fear of reconciliation.
- Free after 2 years.
  - Released on $100,000 bail by citizens.

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Davis went to Montreal, Canada to join his family which had fled there earlier, and lived in Lennoxville, Quebec until 1868[146] also visiting Cuba, and Europe in search of work indictment until he was released from all liability by the presidential amnesty issued by Johnson on December 25, 1868

“A people morally and intellectually equal to self-government must also be equal in self-defence.”
1869, Davis became president of the Carolina Life Insurance Company in Memphis, Tennessee, where he resided at the Peabody Hotel.

Ownership of the Brierfield plantation (Wifes Families) after the Democrats took control of the state supreme court in 1881

“I worked night and day for twelve years to prevent the war, but I could not. The North was mad and blind, would not let us govern ourselves, and so the war came.”
1876, Davis promoted a society for the stimulation of US trade with South America. He visited England the next year. In 1877, Sarah Anne Ellis Dorsey, a wealthy widow who had heard of his difficulties, invited him to stay at her estate and plantation house of "Beauvoir" on the Gulf Coast (facing the Gulf of Mexico) in Biloxi, Mississippi. She provided him with a cabin

helped him with his writing through organization, dictation, editing, and encouragement. Knowing she was severely ill, in 1878 Dorsey made over her will, leaving Beauvoir and her financial assets of $50,000 (equivalent to $1,222,000 in 2014) to Jefferson Davis and, in the case of his death, to his only surviving child, Winnie Davis.[153][154] Dorsey died in 1879, by which time both the Davises and Winnie were living at Beauvoir. Over the next two years, Davis completed The Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government (1881).[181]"Tradition usually rests upon something which men did know; history is often the manufacture of the mere liar."
reputation among ex-Confederates was restored by the book and by his warm reception on his tour of the region in 1886 and 1887. attended Lost Cause ceremonies, where large crowds showered him with affection and local leaders presented emotional speeches honoring his sacrifices to the would-be nation. Davis completed *A Short History of the Confederate States of America* in October 1889. On November 6, he left Beauvoir to visit his plantation at Brierfield.

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While in New Orleans, he was caught in a sleety rain, and on the steamboat trip upriver, he had a severe cold; on November 13 he left Brierfield to return to New Orleans. acute bronchitis complicated by malaria.

in bed but was stable for the next two weeks; however, he took a turn for the worse in early December. Just when he appeared to be improving, he lost consciousness on the evening of December 5 and died at 12:45 a.m. on Friday, December 6, 1889, in the presence of several friends and with his hand in Varina's

"If the Confederacy falls, there should be written on its tombstone: DIED OF A THEORY."
His funeral was one of the largest in the South. Davis was first entombed at the Army of Northern Virginia tomb at Metairie Cemetery in New Orleans. In 1893, Mrs. Davis decided to have his remains reinterred at Hollywood Cemetery in Richmond.

"Truth crushed to earth is truth still and like a seed will rise again."
Analysis

Comparing both sides, Davis’s lack of political or military structure to work with was a challenge, but not nearly as challenging as attempting to defend against a country with a constitution in place, well structured and tested military, experienced political structure with courts, congress, and executive branch, and a leader who’s desire to win outweighed that of his desire to argue verbally this conflict at hand.
OPCVL: Letter from Jefferson Davis to Abraham Lincoln

MONTGOMERY, February 27, 1861.

The President of the United States: Being animated by an earnest desire to unite and bind together our respective countries by friendly ties, I have appointed M. J. Crawford, one of our most settled and trustworthy citizens, as special commissioner of the Confederate States of America to the Government of the United States; and I have now the honor to introduce him to you, and to ask for him a reception and treatment corresponding to his station and to the purpose for which he is sent. Those purposes he will more particularly explain to you. Hoping that through his agency, &c. [sic.]

JEFF'N DAVIS.

For the purpose of establishing friendly relations between the Confederate States and the United States, and reposing special trust, &c., Martin J. Crawford, John Forsyth, and A. B. Roman are appointed special commissioners of the Confederate States to the United States. I have invested them with full and all manner of power and authority for and in the name of the Confederate States to meet and confer with any person or persons duly authorized by the Government of the United States being furnished with like powers and authority, and with them to agree, treat, consult, and negotiate of and concerning all matters and subjects interesting to both nations, and to conclude and sign a treaty or treaties, convention or conventions, touching the premises, transmitting the same to the President of the Confederate States for his final ratification by and with the consent of the Congress of the Confederate States.

Given under my hand at the city of Montgomery this 27th day of February, A.D. 1861, and of the Independence of the Confederate States the eighty-fifth.

JEFF N DAVIS.

ROBERT TOOMBS, Secretary of State.
Origin

- This letter was written directly by Jefferson Davis.
- It is an authentic letter addressed from Davis.
- It explains to Abraham Lincoln the reason for the anticipated arrival of the Confederate Secretary of State.
- It’s production occurred in Montgomery, Alabama on February 27th 1861.
Purpose

• The purpose of this letter is explicitly stated as being “For the purpose of establishing friendly relations between the Confederate States and the United States, and reposing special trust,”.

• It talks about Davis’s SoS going to negotiate and sign a treaty(s) with the Union in hopes of meeting the interests of both nations.
Value

- This letter’s statement of Davis’s desire “to agree, treat, consult, and negotiate of and concerning all matters and subjects interesting to both nations, and to conclude and sign a treaty or treaties, convention or conventions” enforces the idea of Lincoln’s desire to win the war over Davis’s desire to be right in winning the argument, as stated in the “Lincoln and Davis: A Comparative” paper.
Limits

- Davis was hoping to reach an agreement with the union and therefore is trying to be as respectful and convincing of his nation’s positive intentions as possible: “Being animated by an earnest desire to unite and bind together our respective countries by friendly ties, I have appointed M. J. Crawford, one of our most settled and trustworthy citizens, as special commissioner of the Confederate States of America to the Government of the United States”. The information is reliable, as there is no biased information shared but only the fact being stated as to the Secretary’s arrival and purpose there.
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Lincoln and Davis: A Comparative; Tim Beck
Questions?