

# Jefferson Davis'

## 1,200-Mile Funeral Procession

While the South mourned, the body of the beloved "Father of the Confederacy" moved aboard a special train from New Orleans, La., to its final resting place at Richmond, Va. Much of that trip in May, 1893, was made over a railroad which a year later became the original Southern Railway Company.

*Dark among the bullet-riddled trees of Cold Harbor and the Wilderness, bright in the sunlight on a stubbled slope 'at Gettysburg, the grey lines went down to glory. And the heart of a tired, young-old man at Richmond died a little with every Confederate soldier who fell.*

*Death laid its final full claim to Jefferson Davis a quarter of a century later. As his funeral train passed by on the last, long journey from New Orleans to Richmond, the mourning crowds paid silent tribute not only to the "great chieftain" of the Confederacy but to all the brave men who bought with their lives its brief embattled years on history's stage.*

As the city of New Orleans awakened on Sunday, May 28, 1893, the bright rays of a late spring sun did little to ease a feeling of approaching sadness in the hearts of the city's people. This was the day the body of Jefferson Davis, the beloved "great chieftain" of the Confederacy would be borne away from the Crescent City to a final resting place in Richmond, Va.

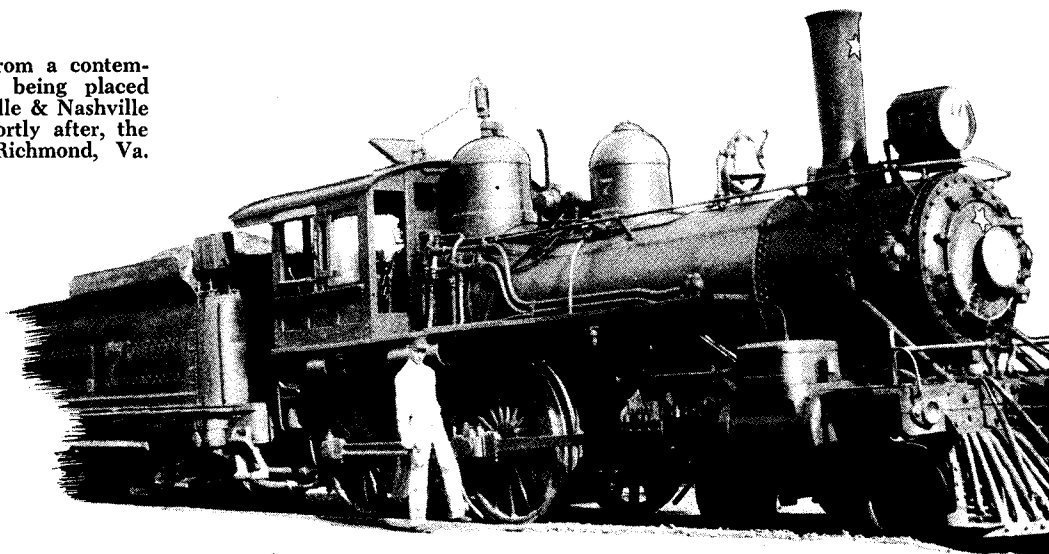
Detailed preparations had been made days before by the four railway companies soon to be involved in handling the movement of the body by special train to the Virginia capital. Eventually, the trip would cover 1,200 miles over a route through seven states.

The longest part of the trip—the last 700 miles—would be over the Richmond & Danville Railroad. (A year later in 1894, the R&D became the Southern Railway Company—nucleus of the present Southern Railway System. As a matter of further interest, the son of Jefferson Davis' private secretary during the War Between the States was destined to become a president of the Southern—Fairfax Harrison.)

In New Orleans, the news that Jefferson Davis' body would be transferred to a final burial plot in Richmond had come as no surprise. The ex-president had died at a friend's home in New Orleans on December 6, 1889, from a severe attack of bronchitis. During the ensuing three and a half years there had been much discussion over a permanent resting place.

(Opposite page) Eye-witness sketch from a contemporary newspaper shows the casket being placed aboard the funeral train at the Louisville & Nashville Railroad station in New Orleans. Shortly after, the train began a 55-hour journey to Richmond, Va.

(At right) The funeral train started on its way from New Orleans behind this locomotive, originally No. 69, of the Louisville & Nashville Railroad.



In the meantime, the body had lain in a tomb at New Orleans' Metairie Cemetery.

Finally, in deference to the wishes of his widow, then living in New York, it was decided that he should be buried in Hollywood Cemetery at Richmond.

The R&D furnished the funeral car in which the body of Jefferson Davis would make its entire trip. A rebuilt observation car with a catafalque erected in the center, the funeral car was described as follows by an eye-witness reporter:

"Its superstructure is almost entirely of glass so that the casket will be visible as the train moves across the Southland . . . The interior of the polished car is effectively draped in black, heavy streamers being beneath the rafters supporting the roof."

The initial responsibility for assembling the train fell to the Louisville & Nashville Railroad. Its preparations in this quarter were described in a recent article in the *L&N Magazine* as:

"Headed by locomotive No. 69, which gleamed spic and span . . . the consist included a baggage car; a Pullman car; a dark red, glassed-in observation car draped in funereal black, marked Danville & Richmond; five more Pullman cars, and a coach."

It was late afternoon on that historic Sunday when the body of Jefferson Davis in a rich oaken casket heavily trimmed in brass was laid tenderly on the catafalque in the car among thick banks of flowers. At 7:50 p.m., the signal was given and the train began its journey to Richmond.

Beside its honored charge the funeral train carried members of the dead president's family as well as a large group of other passengers. Mrs. Davis was

unable to make the trip but her two daughters, Miss Winnie Davis and Mrs. J. Addison (Margaret) Hayes, and Mr. Hayes were aboard. Other passengers included representatives of the Louisiana governor, the mayor of Richmond, Va., railway officers, and a party of newspaper reporters.

Between New Orleans and Mobile the special train made only brief stops, the most memorable one at Beauvoir, the Davis family home near Biloxi, Miss.

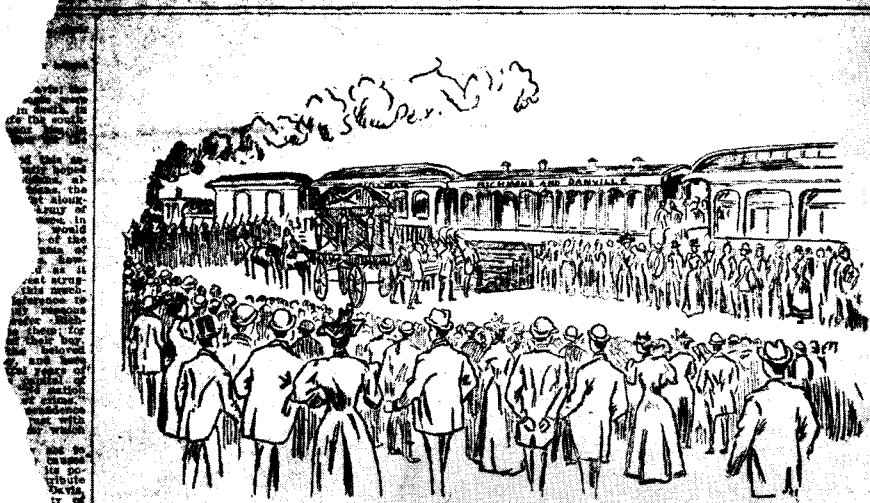
At about midnight on the 28th the train arrived in Mobile, saluted by a 21-gun burst of artillery and greeted at the station by a crowd of perhaps a thousand people. After a change of engines and crews the funeral train proceeded to Montgomery.

A violent rainstorm burst over the city as the train entered the Alabama capital shortly after 6 a.m. on May 29. But the weather relented by 8:30 when, as planned, the casket was removed from the funeral car and carried on a horse-drawn caisson to the capitol building. There, pallbearers bore the casket through the white-columned portico where Jefferson Davis had taken his oath of office on February 18, 1861, as the first and only president of the Confederate States of America. Inside, while church bells tolled, thousands of mourners filed by in final tribute.

After about two hours the casket was returned to the flower-decked funeral car and at 12:30 p.m., the train departed over the Western Railway of Alabama and the Atlanta & West Point for Atlanta, Ga.

At 4:30 on the afternoon of the 29th, the train rolled slowly to a halt in the Atlanta station beside a flower-filled caisson drawn by six white horses. Shortly afterward, the caisson left with the casket in

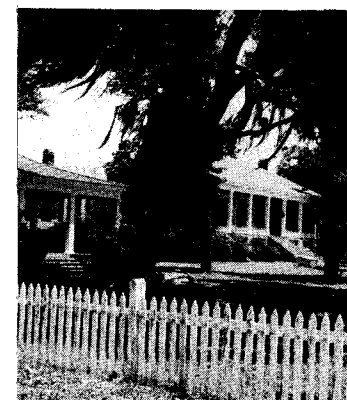
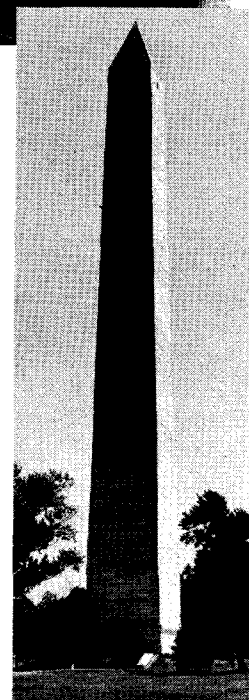
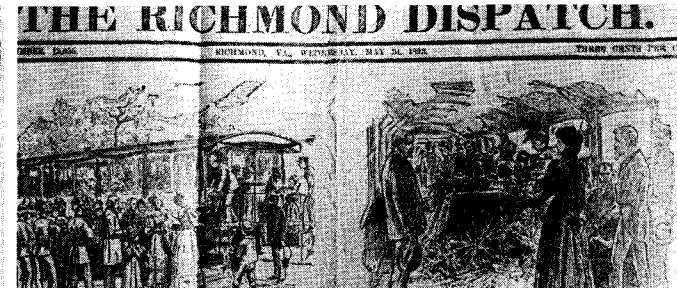
# THE DAILY PICAYUNE-NEW ORLEANS, MONDAY, MAY 29, 1893.



THE FUNERAL TRAIN.

fine horses, almost black, and the drivers were William Casey and John P. Benton, in gray uniforms. The men were members of the Third Company, Washington Artillery, and they rode in the casket containing the remains of the distinguished dead was reverently borne in the funeral car in waiting on the street, and by the anxious notes of an organ and dirge the men began to lead the way; the casket was tenderly lifted from the vehicle which had borne it through the streets, and the veterans placed it safely and gently upon the bed in the caisson. Around it were placed the flowers which had been sent, and at the head of the coffin was the laurel wreath. All were for the ride to Richmond. The escort at Mobile, Ala., May 23, first move made here to-day participating in the removal of the late Confederate chief from New Orleans, Va., was the depot escort party at 2:15 p. m. bound train. The private car, "General Sherman," was the funeral car, and the train, and in it was Rich and the following staff: General J. and the following staff: Major John H. S. Jones, Major F. J. H. Graham, General Harvey, and Major F. J. H. Graham. The program of the funeral train will be as follows: The funeral train will be started at 4:30 p. m. and will be accompanied by the following staff: Major F. J. H. Graham, General Harvey, and Major F. J. H. Graham. The funeral train will be started at 4:30 p. m. and will be accompanied by the following staff: Major F. J. H. Graham, General Harvey, and Major F. J. H. Graham.

Grand funeral of a word "General Sherman" Mobile, Ala., May 23, first move made here to-day participating in the removal of the late Confederate chief from New Orleans, Va., was the depot escort party at 2:15 p. m. bound train. The private car, "General Sherman," was the funeral car, and the train, and in it was Rich and the following staff: General J. and the following staff: Major John H. S. Jones, Major F. J. H. Graham, General Harvey, and Major F. J. H. Graham. The program of the funeral train will be as follows: The funeral train will be started at 4:30 p. m. and will be accompanied by the following staff: Major F. J. H. Graham, General Harvey, and Major F. J. H. Graham. The funeral train will be started at 4:30 p. m. and will be accompanied by the following staff: Major F. J. H. Graham, General Harvey, and Major F. J. H. Graham.



(From left to right, then down)

Sketches of the Davis funeral car appeared in this Richmond newspaper on the day the Confederate leader was buried. The funeral train arrived in Richmond at 3 a.m., on May 31.

First White House of the Confederacy at Montgomery, Ala., contains a number of items intimate to the Davis family.

Interior of library cottage, Beauvoir, where Jefferson Davis wrote "The Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government."

Concrete obelisk, 350 feet high, marks the birthplace of the ex-Confederate president at Fairview, Ky. The site is also a Kentucky state park.

Beauvoir, near Biloxi, Miss., where Jefferson Davis spent his last 12 years, contains many original furnishings.

A painting, based on a photograph made at the time, shows inauguration of Jefferson Davis as president of the Confederacy. He is standing, left, between the two center columns on the portico of the Alabama state capitol at Montgomery.



a procession to the capitol building. A crowd of 20,000 people lined the streets, silently watching the slow-moving cortege. Many of them viewed the body of their gallant wartime leader as for two hours he lay in state in the rotunda of the capitol building.

From Atlanta the train rode over the tracks of the Richmond & Danville. After a brief stop at Gainesville, Ga., it arrived at Greenville, S. C., at 2 a.m. on the 30th. There, South Carolina Governor Benjamin R. Tillman, one of six governors who would act as pallbearers, boarded the train to accompany the family to Richmond.

Charlotte, N. C., reached in the early morning, staged a military salute to the dead leader and the train continued to Salisbury and Greensboro.

At Greensboro the heralded funeral train veered eastward toward the North Carolina capital at Raleigh. Originally, the train was due to proceed northward from Raleigh directly to Richmond. But R&D officials permitted a change in the train's route to include Danville, Va., "last capital of the Confederacy," so people there would have the privilege of paying their respects to their former president.

As in the previous two state capitals, two hours were allowed the citizens of Raleigh to view the body as it lay in state in the capitol building.

Leaving Raleigh at 3:45 p.m., the train returned to Greensboro then continued north. The train arrived in Danville at 9 p.m. At the station a choir sang "Nearer My God to Thee" while the city's church bells rang and crowds surged around the funeral car.

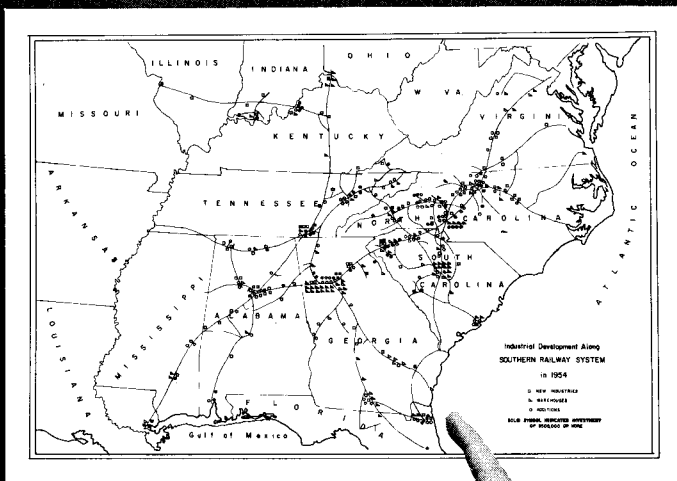
From Danville the Jefferson Davis funeral train traveled on the last leg of its mournful journey, through South Boston and Keysville to Richmond where it arrived at 3:05 a.m. on Wednesday, May 31. The body lay in state at the Virginia capitol building all morning and at three in the afternoon the funeral procession started for Hollywood Cemetery.

The caisson bearing the casket was drawn by six white horses. Mrs. Davis, who had met the train in Richmond, and daughters Winnie and Margaret were among those who followed in carriages. Newspaper accounts of the event reported "... at least 75,000 people were along the streets and at the cemetery, and not since the war (Between the States) had so many Confederate soldiers been seen in Richmond."

Attended by governors and military leaders, honored with the 21-gun salute a president commands, and with the high clear bugle notes of "Taps" sounding a requiem, the great chieftain of the "Lost Cause" was laid to final rest.

(Ties thanks the editors of the *Louisville & Nashville Magazine* for permission to borrow extensively from their article, "The Great Chieftain's Last Ride," in the magazine's February issue. All pictures here are used through the courtesy of the L&N.) \* \* \*

# TIES



**THE SOUTHERN RAILWAY SYSTEM MAGAZINE**

**March 1955**

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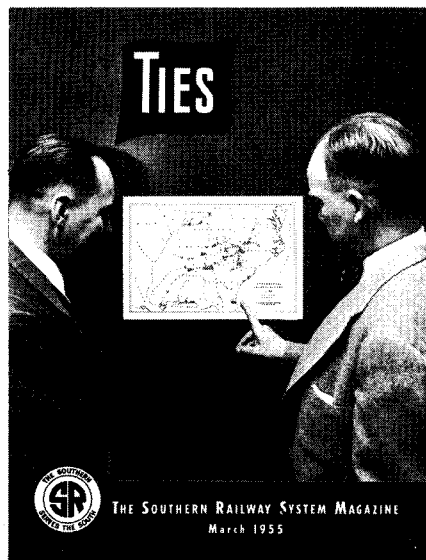
TIES—The Southern Railway System Magazine—is published monthly and is distributed free of charge to both active and retired employees. It will be mailed to others for the annual subscription price of \$2.50.

### ON THE COVER

F. C. Toal, assistant vice-president (Industrial and Agricultural Development) and G. W. Edler, Jr., general industrial agent, are studying with understandable interest an unusual Southern Railway System map.

It shows graphically the new industrial developments in Southern's territory during 1954—new factories, new warehouses and distributors, and additions to existing plants.

The clusters of plants and warehouses shown on the map represent traffic for Southern Railway and good news for railroaders. For more information about the industrial department's part in helping them locate there, see the story beginning on page 4.



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MARCH 1955

VOLUME 9

NUMBER 3

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