

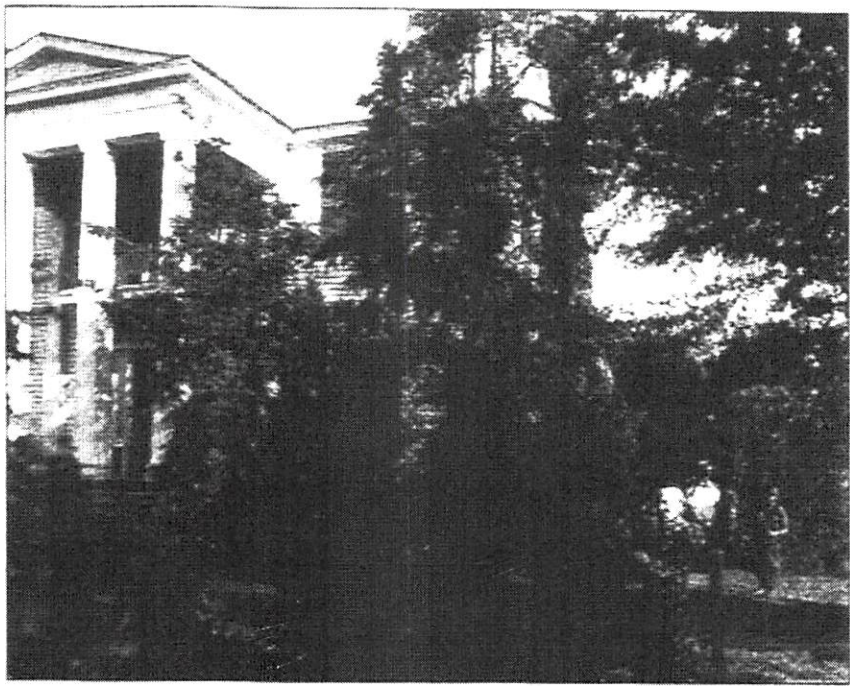
wrote on November 30, 1853, shortly after he had returned to San Francisco he had apparently secured a likeness, but had not yet sent it to Mary. "I did not send the likeness by Col. Fitzpatrick, and it is perhaps best for he has been in Texas ever since he reached the Atlantic." Colonel Richard Fitzpatrick was the maternal uncle of William F. English, and had been with him in Nevada County.

Fortunately, we have other sources that tell us a bit about Nathan's appearance. In his Civil War enlistment documents, for example, he is described as being 6' 1" tall, of fair complexion, with dark hair, dark eyes.<sup>31</sup> If the diarist Mary Chesnut's judgment can be relied upon, Nathan was good looking: "Nathan, all the world knows," she quipped, "is by profession, a handsome man." On another occasion she refers to him as "Nathan, the elegant."<sup>32</sup> Indeed, by other reports all six of the Davis brothers were, as the saying goes, tall, dark, and handsome. Nathan's youngest brother, Bun, was, at just over six feet tall, referred to as "The Little Davis."<sup>33</sup>

After the war, Nathan was engaged to marry Catherine (Kate) Hampton, sister of his Civil War commander, and a woman to whom he had "been attentive" for twenty years, but they never married.<sup>34</sup> In the 1870 census Nathan lived alone on a farm in Monticello.<sup>35</sup> He eventually settled in Greenville, where he became a judge and editor of the *Greenville News*. By the time of the 1880 census Nathan was living with Mary, her husband, and their children.<sup>36</sup> In his later years Nathan wrote on agricultural matters and often visited family members who had settled in Texas.<sup>37</sup> He died peacefully at the home of one of his nieces on October 27, 1901, at the age of 81. Mary died in 1911.

Some forty years after Nathan's adventures in California the writer of his obituary acknowledged Nathan's time in the west: "During the California gold fever he went to the Pacific coast and amassed considerable property. While living in California he was appointed to a judgeship and took a leading part in suppressing the brutal lawlessness in the early days of that State." Ending the obituary in the courtly language which Nathan had occasionally employed in his own letters, the anonymous writer concluded:

... Col. Davis was one of the most perfect types of



Nathan's sister, Mary Davis Furman (right) in front of her home at Greenville, South Carolina, known locally as "Cherrydale."  
(Special Collections and Archives, Furman University)

the olden time gentleman, a man of culture, loved and honored by all who knew him. . . . He was . . . a man of gentle disposition, true, pure, chivalrous, loving everything noble and honorable, hating sham and duplicity, and his death was peaceful, a fitting close to a pure and noble life.<sup>38</sup>

#### Endnotes:

30. See for example, *Nevada Journal*, 3:6, June 3, 1853, p. 2. St. John the Baptist was closely associated with the Masons: the first grand lodge in London was founded on June 24, 1711. Mark Stavish, *Fremasonry: Rituals, Symbols, & History of the Secret Society*. Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn Publishers, 2007, p. 11.
31. *Nevada Journal*, 3:9 June 24, 1853, p. 3.
32. *Sacramento Daily Union*, 542, December 18, 1852, p. 2.
33. *Nevada Journal*, 3:8, June 17, 1853, p. 2.
34. Nevada County Historical Society *Bulletin*, 7:1, April, 1853, p. 2.
35. *Nevada Journal*, 3:9, June 24, 1853, p. 3.
36. *Nevada Journal*, 3:10, July 1, 1853, p. 3.
37. *Nevada Journal*, 3:11, July 8, 1853, p. 2.
38. *Nevada Journal*, 3:12, July 16, 1853, p. 2. John I. Sykes had consented to appear as a candidate.
39. *Sacramento Daily Union*, 5:699, June 20, 1853, p. 2. They were: Z.A. Beatty, W.C. Crossett, E. Wilson, and Joseph S. Conn of Grass Valley and John R. Coryell and Wm. Bothwell of Nevada City.
40. *Nevada Journal*, 3:13 (169), July 22, 1853, p. 3.
41. *Grass Valley Telegraph*, 1:14, December 22, 1853, p. 3, for example.

42. *After the Gold Rush*, Table 6, p. 227.
43. Bancroft Library, Papers relating to La Laguna Seca land grant in Santa Clara Co., Calif., 1853-1854. BANC MSS C-190 port.1
44. J. P. Munroe Fraser, *The History of Solano County*, San Francisco: Wood, Alley & Co., 1879, p. 271.
45. Margaret Purser and Noelle Shaver. "Plats and Place: The Transformation of 19th Century Speculation Townsites on the Sacramento River," *Historical Archaeology*, 42:1, 2008, p. 33.
46. *History of Solano County*, 272-3.
47. Solano County Archives, Deed Book P, March 1, 1861, p. 449. My thanks for Solano County Archivist, Leslie Batson for her assistance in using the Solano County deeds.
48. *Charleston Courier*, 41:18,493, February 27, 1860, p. 4.
49. The South Carolina in the Civil War Message Board [http://www.history-sites.com/cgi-bin/bbs62x/scwmb/webbbs\\_config.pl?md=read;id=3054](http://www.history-sites.com/cgi-bin/bbs62x/scwmb/webbbs_config.pl?md=read;id=3054)
50. *Nevada Journal*, 2:10, June 26, 1852, p. 3
51. *Lives of Pioneers*, p. 120.
52. Thanks to BreAnna Johnson for her assistance with the Furman University images.
53. South Carolina Civil War Message Board
54. *Mary Chesnut's Civil War*, C. Vann Woodward, ed. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981, p. 315-316.
55. *History of the State Agricultural Society of South Carolina from 1839-1845, Inclusive*, Columbia, S.C.: R.L. Bran Company, 1916, p. 226.

56. *A World Turned Upside Down: The Palmers of South Santee 1818-1881*. Louise P. Towle, ed., Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, p. 553.

57. Year: 1870; Census Place: Township 13, Fairfield, South Carolina; Roll: M593\_1496; Page: 248B; Image: 502; Family History Library Film: 552995

58. Year: 1880; Census Place: Greenville, Greenville, South Carolina; Roll: 1230; Family History Film: 1255230; Page: 53C; Enumeration District: 081

59. The Davis family history credits Nathan with taking the first Cashmere Goats to Texas in the 1840s, which started a thriving industry there, in which the Davis family is still engaged to this day. A special thanks to Lora B. Davis Garrison and Jad Davis for sharing their family history.

60. *The Watchman and Southern* (Sumpter, S.C.), 21:14, November 6, 1901, p. 1.

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