

THE GRAVE OF JOSEPH HAMILTON DAVEISS

BY OTTO A. ROTHERT

Were the remains of Colonel Joseph Hamilton Daveiss ever exhumed at Tippecanoe and reinterred in Kentucky? A number of members of The Filson Club have recently browsed around hoping to ascertain definitely the place of Colonel Daveiss' grave. Judge Samuel M. Wilson and Mr. Charles R. Staples, of Lexington; the Rev. Lucien V. Rule, of Goshen, and Colonel Lucien Beckner and Otto A. Rothert, of Louisville, are investigating the subject. Mr. Rule and I made a pilgrimage to Lexington on August 27, hoping to find documentary or other positive evidence one way or the other, but found no definite data.

The purpose of this article is to make an appeal for information pertaining to the grave of Colonel Daveiss and to call attention to a pamphlet and a book that apparently have been overlooked by most of the Daveiss investigators until recently, when our attention was called to them by Mr. Rule: *Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Kentucky held December 24, 1811*, a seven-page pamphlet published in Lexington in 1812 and reprinted in 1880, and *The History of Freemasonry in Kentucky*, by Rob Morris, Grand Master, a volume of 592 pages printed in Louisville in 1859.

Historians who have written on the life of Colonel Daveiss are, evidently, under the impression that his remains were not removed from Tippecanoe Battlefield where he was killed November 7, 1811, at the early age of thirty-seven. Among these are Captain Alfred Pirtle who in 1900 published *The Battle of Tippecanoe*, The Filson Club Publications No. 15, and Judge Lucius P. Little who, on December 16, 1915, read a paper before The Filson Club entitled "Ann Marshall and Her Various Matrimonial Experiences." Ann Marshall was a sister of Chief Justice John Marshall; her first husband was Colonel Daveiss, the second Colonel Joseph Pollard, and the third John Cox.

Alva O. Reser, who in 1909 compiled *The Tippecanoe Battlefield Monument*, a book of 154 pages, is also under the impression that the remains of Colonel Daveiss are on the battlefield where

he died. The name of Daveiss appears among the nine officers and thirty-seven privates killed in action and engraved on the Tippecanoe Battlefield Monument erected in 1908. It is there given as "Major Joseph H. Daviess." Daveiss himself spelled his name Daveiss; by all others it is invariably but erroneously spelled Daviess.

The presumption that the remains are still buried at Tippecanoe is based on the fact that there is no definite record now known of their removal to Lexington or elsewhere. Robert Morris in his book, however, leads one to infer that the remains might have been reinterred at Lexington on August 27, 1812.

Mr. Staples calls our attention to the following notice in the *Kentucky Gazette*, December 17, 1811: "Hiram Lodge No. 4, Jesse Bledsoe will deliver Oration on St. John's day (27th) in State house Frankfort, in memory of Joseph H. Daveiss, late W. G. Master of Masons for Kentucky." Mr. Staples found that this oration is published in the *Gazette*, January 14, 1812. It is two columns long, but does not refer to burial or disposition of the body of Daveiss. He also found a notice of the death of Daveiss with a list of other Tippecanoe officers in the *Gazette* for November 19, 1811, and in *Kentucky Reporter* for November 23, 1811.

In the pamphlet entitled *Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Kentucky held December 24, 1811*, appears the following resolution not quoted by Morris in his history of Freemasonry:

"Resolved, That on the Tuesday preceding the last Wednesday in August next, there be a Grand Funeral Procession in memory of our late M. W. Grand Master, with the usual honors on such occasions. That the subordinate Lodges working under the jurisdiction of this Grand Lodge be requested, and that the officers of the different Grand Lodges in the United States be invited to attend."

The *Kentucky Gazette*, June 9, 1812, published the following under the head of Masonic:

"The Grand Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge of Kentucky will be held at Mason's Hall, in the town of Lexington, on the last Wednesday in August next, at 10 o'clock A. M. On the day preceding, being the 25th day of the month, a grand funeral procession will be formed at the Hall, and an oration delivered by the Grand Orator at the Presbyterian Church in mem-

ory of our departed M. W. Grand Master Joseph H. Daveiss, to which all the brethren are invited.

“By order of the M. W. D. G. M., Daniel Bradford, G. Sec’y.”

The contemplated funeral procession, it will be noted, was to be “in memory of” Colonel Daveiss. The fact that it was “in memory of” is not definitely stated in Morris’ book. Morris does not quote from the proceedings of the Grand Lodge held in Lexington, December 24, 1811. In his book, page 143, under date of November 7, he, however, states that the Battle of Tippecanoe took place on that day and that Colonels Daveiss and Abraham Owen, with other Kentucky Masons, were slain. He continues with the following:

“This sad event was appropriately noticed by the Grand Lodges of Ohio, Maryland, and others. The Legislature of Kentucky, by solemn Act, went into mourning in December following, as a testimonial of patriotic respect. Counties in Kentucky, Indiana, and Illinois received the names of ‘Davie’s’ and ‘Owen’ respectively. The Grand Lodge of Kentucky performed funeral honors the subsequent year, (Aug’t,) in respect to its Grand Master, upon a scale of great magnificence.”

On pages 153 and 154, under the head of “The Twentieth Grand Communication, August 25 to 29, 1812,” Morris, after stating that the ceremony had been postponed two days and that a change in speakers had been made, says:

“Eleven lodges were represented [at Grand Lodge]. The principal labor of the Session was the performance of an appropriate and imposing ceremonial in honor of the deceased Grand Master Joseph Hamilton Davie’s, killed November 7, 1811, at Tippecanoe . . . The record of the funeral obsequies is very interesting and worthy of an extended place.”

He then quotes from the original Masonic proceedings and gives in detail the Order of Procession. He says “The grand funeral procession was formed.” Among the parts designated in the Procession it is shown that a group of eight Master Masons, members of Lodge No. 1, served as pallbearers and carried a coffin. Continuing, Morris quotes from the original:

“The procession was formed at the Hall [Masonic Hall, Lexington], proceeded down Walnut street to Main; down Main to Mill; up Mill to Second street, and with Second street to the Presbyterian Church. There it halted and attended a funeral

sermon by Dr. Caleb W. Cloud. The procession then proceeded, in the same order, down Cross street to Main street, and down Main street to the place of interment, where the funeral service was performed according to Masonic usage. The Grand Lodge then returned to the Hall and were called to labor."

The Presbyterian Church here referred to was at the corner of Second and Main Cross streets, what is now Second and Broadway. The procession, after reaching Main Street, went "down Main street to the place of interment." Going down Main it, in all probability, did not stop at "First Hill"—a pioneer cemetery then and long thereafter used by the Baptists, a site now occupied by the First Baptist Church. The procession probably passed this place, continued down Main Street and probably turned south into McConnell's Graveyard—a pioneer graveyard of which no traces now remain.

Was this a ceremonial procedure, an honorary funeral, a memorial funeral, with a corpseless coffin? It probably was. Or was it a funeral in which the remains of Colonel Daveiss were carried to another "place of interment"? The fact that Robert Morris does not, in 1859, comment on it being a corpseless funeral leads one to infer that he must have known, or presumed, it was a funeral in which the remains of Colonel Daveiss were being carried in a coffin.

If the remains were brought from Tippecanoe to Lexington, Mr. Rule and I failed to find any record to that effect in the *Kentucky Gazette*. It must be borne in mind, however, that the *Gazette* of that time carried very little local news; its pages were devoted chiefly to foreign and political news and local advertisements. It must also be borne in mind that in the olden days memorial funerals were not unusual events and that most of them were held long after the burial of the body had taken place.

There is a vague but somewhat persistent tradition that the body of Colonel Daveiss was brought to Lexington, his home town. The tradition may be based on the fact that a funeral had taken place about a year after his death, and it may also be based on what might now be a forgotten fact that his remains were actually brought to Kentucky after 1812.

It appears that immediately after the Battle of Tippecanoe his grave was distinctly marked. Morris, page 147, quotes from

an address made in 1854 by Judge Naylor, of Indiana, one of the survivors of Tippecanoe, referring to Colonel Daveiss:

“His grave was dug at a distance from the graves of the residue of the soldiers who fell in the battle—between two oak trees, one of which is dead and broken off near the ground, and the other is standing, exhibiting the letter D, cut on the side next the grave. I was told the day after he was buried, that his friends took the precaution of making a level surface over the grave, and of burning a brush heap over it, and then covering it over with oak leaves so as to conceal it from the Indians. The probability is, therefore, that, while the other persons, who were buried together, were all disinterred and scalped by the Indians, the body of Major Daviess was not found.”

There are two well-known memorials of Colonel Daveiss: the painting of him by Matthew Jouett and the sword presented to him by the Grand Lodge of Kentucky. Both are mentioned by Morris. The original portrait is now owned by Mrs. James T. Menefee, of Louisville, who is his great-great-niece. The copy of the Jouett portrait in the Grand Lodge, Louisville, was painted some time before 1854 by John Neagle.

His sword is also in the Grand Lodge. Mr. Rule, Colonel Beckner, and I examined it one day in August, 1931. The blade is thirty-three inches long and one and one-fourth inches wide, curved saber style. On one side is engraved “Liberty and Independence” and on the other “E pluribus unum. 1783.” The hilt is ivory, mounted with a silver guard and knight’s helmet. The scabbard is leather, with silver mountings. The sword, with its leather belt, is in a velvet-lined box on which is a silver plate, about six by three inches, with marginal engravings of Masonic symbols and scroll work. The inscription reads:

“In this box is the sword worn by Col. Joseph H. Daviess when he fell in the Battle of Tippecanoe, on the 7th day of November, 1811. Col. Daviess, at the time he fell, was Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the State of Kentucky. This box, the timber of which grew on the Tippecanoe Battle Ground, and the sword, were presented in open lodge to the Grand Lodge of Kentucky, on the 14th day of October, 1858, by Levi L. Todd of the State of Indiana, who was a student in the law office and a member of the private family of Col. Daviess at the time he fell. Col. Daviess was a resident of Lexington, Fay-

ette County, Kentucky, where the donor was born, reared and educated."

As stated in the beginning, the purpose of this article is to make an appeal for definite information as to whether or not the remains of Colonel Daveiss were ever removed from Tippecanoe to Kentucky. Even the vague tradition that his body was brought to Lexington is not substantiated on a historical basis.