

“UNCLE” CHARLEY SHEPPARD

An Old Confederate Darkey's Remains Buried With Honor

(MEMPHIS COMMERCIAL APPEAL August 8, 1900)

UNION CITY, Aug. 7—(Special)—

“Uncle” Charley Sheppard, known to every Confederate soldier in the county and to nearly every other person, passed peacefully away yesterday about 11 o’clock, of senile debility, and his remains were laid to rest this morning between 10 and 11 o’clock in the Confederate cemetery, an honor which has never been, nor will likely in the future, be accorded a colored man. Before his death he expressed the wish to be buried by his white friends, and that some preacher who was a Confederate soldier should conduct the funeral service. Rev. F.J. Tyler of the C.P. church was a Confederate soldier, but he is out at Beech conducting a meeting and could not be reached in time. Elder J.H. Roulahc, also a Confederate soldier, was selected to conduct the services, but was taken sick this morning and could not attend. As not one of the other pastors in the city was in the Confederate army, the exercises were conducted by the old Confederates, Col. J.M. Coulter and Andy J. Lawson, both of whom made appropriate and touching talks concerning the life and character of “Uncle” Charley, whose funeral was conducted entirely by his white friends, who appreciated him as an old Confederate, a life-long Democrat and a man of irreproachable character and the highest morals. His pall-bearers were: Dr. F. M. McRae, A. J. Lawson, Esquire H.S. Sacra, Capt. Wm. Askins, G. A. Gibbs and Dr. F.M. Trevathan, all of whom were valiant Confederate soldiers.

The deceased had quite a history, He was born in the Andrew Jackson family of negros; passed into the Donaldson family, living near the Hermitage, and subsequently became the property of Mr. Sheppard, who was comptroller of the State of Tennessee. When James K. Polk made his campaign for governor against James C. Jones his carriage was driven by old Charley, who faithfully drove the president-to-be, over most of the State. Charley went through the civil war as his master’s valet, and his proudest boast to the day of his death was that he was an old Confederate soldier. He never voted any other but the Democratic ticket, and being unable to read or write, never cast his ballot until being fully assured by some one in whom he had perfect confidence that there was no name but that of a Democrat on it. For years, being too feeble to work, the old man has almost daily hobbled around town with his stick, and subsisted on the willing contributions of old Confederates and others. When Warren McDonald Camp, Confederate Veterans, attended the reunions at Nashville during the centennial, “Uncle” Charley went along as an honored guest, and was accorded many favors and courtesies at Nashville, where he met many old time friends. When the old Confederates attended the reunion at Louisville last spring “Uncle” Charley was at the depot to see them off, and as he watched them in their happiness and listened to words that brought back the long ago, his patriotic old heart beat in sympathy and tears streamed down his wrinkled black cheeks. A lady noticing his apparent distress, said to him tenderly:

““Uncle” Charley, do you wish to go?” “Yes, Mistiss, indeed I do,” was his sobbing reply.

“Well, if it's the lack of money that prevents your going, you shall go,” was her feeling comment.

“It isn't that Mistiss,” he corrected, “they'd take me, but I am not able to make the trip.”

“Uncle” Charley was one of the best posted men in this county in regard to the politics and history of the prominent men of fifty years ago. He had a very retentive memory. He had a high conception of right and honor, and was never known to be guilty of a mean or dishonest act. The darkeys would have nothing to do with him on account of his politics, and in his last illness he was attended by a nurse hired by his white friends, a large concourse of whom attended him to last resting place. Our military company would have escorted his remains to the grave and fired a salute over it, but they could not obtain cartridges for their guns.

“Uncle” Charley has heard the last earthly reveille, and has gone to the great general of us all.

STILL TRYING