Jefferson Davis Essay, Research Paper

Jefferson Davis

Jefferson Davis was born on June, 3rd, 1808, in Christian

County, Kentucky. He was educated at Transylvania University and at

the U.S. Military Academy. After his graduation in 1828, he served in

the army until bad health forced him to reside in 1835. He was a

farmer in Mississippi from 1835 to 1845. Then he was elected to the

U.S. congress. In 1846, he resigned his seat in order to serve in the

Mexican War and fought at Monterrey and Buena Vista, where he

was wounded. He was a U.S. Senator from Mississippi from 1847 to

1857, and a U.S. Senator again from 1857 to 1861. As a Senator, he

was in support of slavery and states’ rights. “He also influenced Pice

to sign in the Kansas-Nebraska Act, which favored the South and

increased the bitterness of the struggle over slavery. ” In his second

term as a Senator he became the spokesman for the Southern point

of view. He opposed the idea of secession from the Union as a way

of maintaining the principles in the South. Even after the first steps

toward secession had been taken, he tried to keep the Southern

states in the Union. When the state of Mississippi seceeded, he

withdrew from the Senate. On February 18, 1861, the congress of

the Confederate States made him president. He was elected to the

office by popular vote for a 6-year term and was inaugurated un

Richmond, Virginia, the new capital of the Confederacy. He failed to

raise enough money to fight the Civil War and could not obtain help

for the Confederacy from foreign governments. One of the

accomplishments of Jefferson Davis, was the raising of the

Confederate army. Davis had a difficult task to preform. He was the

head of the new nation in the beginnings of a major war. The South

had inferior railroads compared to the Union, no navy, no gunpowder

mills, and a reat lack of arms and ammunition. “The South’s only

resource seemed to have been of cotton and courage.” (Davis, W. P

128). Despite this, the Confederates demolished the North at the

battle of Bull Run. Somehow, with limited resources, Dacis made

facotries for arms, cannons, powders and ammunition. Old naval

yards were restored and gunboats were built. Davis sent agents to

Europe to buy arms and ammunition and representatives were sent

to try and secure help from England and France. These

representatives were unsuccesful. In 1862, Davis appointed Robert

E. Lee as the leader of the Army of North Virginia. Lee remained

Davis’ most favored commander and one of the strongerst and most

loyal of Davis’ supporters. In May of 1865, Lee, without the

authorization of Davis, surrendered to the North. Upon hearing this,

Davis and his cabinet fled farther to continue the struggle. He finally

realized defeat and was captured by Northern troops. He was

imprisoned for two years, and then released without trial. Jefferson

made some minor accomplishments once he was released.

Although these are not as great as being the president of the

Confederacy, they are quite important to Davis’ life. After he was

released and had regained his health he wrote “The Rise and Fall of

Government”. He became the main spokesperson for the defeated

south and was asked to rejoin the Senate, but he declined. He

neither apologized nor asked for amnesty for his actions during the

Civil War. He believed that he had done nothing wrong. He believed

that he needed to stand up for the states’ rights no matter how bad

the conditions got. In other words, he stood up for what he believed

in. He never regained citizenship with the United States. He died in

1889 of a complicated bronchial ailment, and was given a huge

funeral by southern supporters. He was buried in Hollywood

Cemetery, in Richmond, Virginia. I learned about the only president

the Confederacy had.