

CONFEDERATE SENATOR LANDON C. HAYNES

LANDON C. HAYNES was a natural word painter. A lawyer by profession, as a stump speaker he was unsurpassed, having engaged creditably in debate on the hustings the foremost men of his time, including such notable speakers as Andrew Johnson and Thomas A.R. Nelson. Together with Gustavus A. Henry, he was Senator from Tennessee to the Confederate Congress.

So far as is known only two of his speeches have been preserved – one an address of some length before the Literary Society of Emory and Henry College and the other a reply to a toast proposed by General Nathan Bedford Forrest at Jackson, Tennessee upon the occasion of a banquet in honor of the bench and bar during a session of the Supreme Court held soon after the Civil War. Both Forrest and Haynes were ardent Confederates, but the former though born in Middle Tennessee had been reared on a Mississippi plantation and he then lived in Memphis, from whence he looked after his chief interests still centered in Mississippi. It had been his good fortune to live only among those in sympathy with his wartime activities. But in East Tennessee Union sentiment greatly predominated, and Haynes who also then lived in Memphis had recently gone there, leaving his East Tennessee home (in present day Johnson City) because of great bitterness in that section against all those identified with the Lost Cause. Manifestly Forrest had no particular regard to East Tennessee and probably assuming that Haynes had become estranged twitted him in a toast apparently not on the program after the principal speeches had been made. Arising slowly and facing Haynes he said: “Mr. Chairman, I propose the health of the eloquent gentleman from East Tennessee sometimes called the God-forsaken country,” whereupon after insistent calls Haynes responded:

“ODE TO EAST TENNESSEE”

“MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN: I plead guilty to the soft impeachment. I am from East Tennessee. Evidently the distinguished soldier proposing the toast was not himself born breathing the pure air of the mountains. At least I understand he was reared in the sluggish atmosphere of a lagoon far back in the swamps of Mississippi.

Yes, I was born in East Tennessee – on the banks of the Watauga which in the Indian vernacular means beautiful river. And beautiful river it is! Standing upon its banks in my childhood, I have looked down through its glassy waters and beheld a heaven below and then looking up beheld a heaven above, reflecting two great mirrors each into the other its moon and planets and trembling stars! Away from its banks of rock and cliff, cedar, hemlock and laurel, stretches a vale back to the distant mountains, more beautiful than any in Italy or Switzerland. There stands the great Unaka, the great Roan, the great Black and the Great Smoky Mountains, among the loftiest in America, on whose summits the clouds gather of their own accord even on the brightest day. There I have seen the Great Spirit of the Storm after noon-tide go take his evening nap in his pavilion of darkness and of clouds.

Then I have seen him aroused at midnight like a giant refreshed by slumber, covering the heavens with gloom and greater darkness, as he awoke the tempest and let loose the red lightning that ran along the mountain tops for a thousand miles swifter than the eagle's flight in heaven! And how the lightning would stand up and dance like angels of light in the clouds to the music of that grand organ of nature whose keys seemed touched by the fingers of Divinity in the hall of eternity, sounding and resounding in notes of thunder through the universe!

Then I have seen the darkness drift away, and the morn getting up from her saffron bed, like a queen put on her robes of light, come forth from her palace in the sun and tiptoe on the misty mountain top, whilst night fled before her glorious face to his bed chamber at the pole, as she lighted the beautiful river and the green vale where I was born and played in childhood with a smile of sunshine.

O beautiful land of the mountains with thy sun-painted cliffs **how can I ever forget thee!**"

THE LAW OFFICE AND HOME of Senator Landon Haynes have been preserved as a historic site by the State of Tennessee as part of the **Tipton-Haynes Site** located at 2620 South Roan Street in Johnson City, Tennessee. During the Civil War, Johnson City was known as "Haynesville" while under Confederate occupation in honor of Landon Carter Haynes.



Tipton-Haynes Historic Site – Johnson City, Tennessee