

*Typed as the Original*

MEMORIES OF THE CIVIL WAR

By Mrs. Martha Ann Stone

Memory has painted pictures destined never to fade from the minds of the Southern women who lived in war times. Their colors are still vivid, although many of their pictures are shrouded in gloom and surrounded by deepest shadows. Yet all of them are tinged by the glory and nobility of Southern womanhood.

Why could not Millet Reynolds or some of the greatest landscape or character painters who lived in those times, so that posterity might now enjoy a vision of war times on canvas, and as it were to catch a vision of glory?

Truly no theme ever offered greater opportunity of sublimity to either artist or author.

Can you picture a clearing in a wilderness of large trees and in the midst of these an humble home made beautiful by background of forest shaded sky? And at the door shading her eyes, a woman with lines of anxiety in her face, patience in every line of her form, wakening, but not knowing whether to expect friend or foe.

At home with several small children this woman was not surrounded by friends, but she was alone, with the spirit to do and dare, to fight and work bravely. Such was the condition largely throughout the South when the war of the Confederacy was raging through the Southern States.

The glorious anti-bellum days of plenty were changed to the years of famine, when the most rigid was turned away hungry, He was welcomed and fed.

Very often voices echoing across the silent hills were a herald of the approach of "our men" or of the Yankees.

When my husband, John Henry Stone was called into the army he was thirty years old. We had a little girl who was two years old, so I went to live with my parents. Out in the country, not too far from several farm homes was a one room school house and our country friends begged me to teach their children

in this place. We owned a small house in the country, not too far from the school house, so I decided to move our there to live and teach. My father gave me Aunt Phyllis to take with me to look after little Ellen, my little girl. Aunt Phyllis was a sweet, dependable colored slave and I knew while I was in school she would take good care of my baby.

One day some farmers came by and told me a Union detachment had camped just across the road from where I lived. They told me they forged, stole your horses, food or anything, and to watch out for them. Or better still, close the school and move back to my father's home.

When I reached home after school, I told Aunt Phyllis to keep Ellen with her, and I went down the hill crossed the road to the Yankees camp. A soldier stepped forward and asked what I wanted. I told him I would like to speak to the officer in charge. He led me to a tent, called in, and told the captain someone wanted to speak to him, and then ushered me inside.

"What can I do for you Madam?" asked the Captain. "I live on the hill up there in the house you can see," I explained to him. "My husband is away in the Confederate Army, and I live up there all alone with my little girl and my maid. I would like your promise not to allow any of your men on my property, while you are camped here."

The Captain rose to his feet, bowed to me and said, "Lady, you have my word, none of my men will be allowed on your place." Then he stepped to the door of the tent, called the Sargeant and said, "Sarfeant, I want you to tell all our men that I am ordering every one of them not to go on this lady's property and if a one of them disobeys that order he will be shot!"

The Sargeant saluted him, and left to give out his orders. I thanked him, and he bowed courteously and said good by.

And it may be said to the honor of those men, that they never molested or harmed these lonesome women who were left to watch and pray.

For days afterwards no news came to the solitude of the hills until detailed scouts were sent by General Lee to seek deserters. The Scout brought news of the battles of Gettysburg, Guilford Courthouse and others. They told wonderful tales of adventures and of comrades in the workd of action. Among them were Captains Grimes and Todd.

One morning a detachment led by General Joseph Wheeler passed along the mountain side headed for Martinsville. A light skirmish occurred there, but on the route no harm was forthcoming from the dread Sherman's army. One incident typical of wartime methods, remains especially vivid in my mind. The father of our Confederate States sought to protect the States in every way possible. And in caring for Confederate money it was necessary for it to be concealed in some safe place. Near my home was an old flour mill and just below the dam, Fisher's Creek made a careful turn. There a large tree had sent out gnarled limbs in protection over the surface of the water. Here the Ambassador from Jefferson Davis brought bags of gold and silver, and placed them in the bank beneath the care of the tree. These bags were left here all during the war, and when peace came, these men returned and secured the money. It was found untouched and many persons later visited the spot to see the hole which concealed an amount so valuable to our government.

By far, the most sorrowful feature of the war was the death list in almost every home. My own list consists of two brothers and my husband.

One morning I heard someone drive up in the yard. I opened the front door and upon seeing me the driver of the vehicle called out.

"Where do you want the body?"

"What body?" I asked. "John Henry Stone's," he answered. My husband's body, and I didn't know he was dead! An epidemic of typhoid fever had hit the camp near Goldsboro, and he died in a few days.

The agony of such a loss is a thought too deep for words, altho it is noble to feel that one has endured that for one's country.

Those days were times of strife, confusion, distress, and sorrow, of bloodshed and bereavement.

And we should be thankful today that we can follow the sun from the Atlantic to the Pacific across a continent of happy homes.

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