

Mrs. Charles C. Rainwater Papers
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Reminiscences, typed 6 pp.
Dates 1861-1865

eminiscences of Mrs. C. C. Rainwater from 1861 to 1865.

My father, Samuel Fowler of Maryland, was one of the first settlers of Benton County, Mo. Our home was a mile from the little town of Cole Camp, which is about twenty miles north-east of Warsaw, the county seat, and about the same distance from Sedalia on the north. In September 1858, I was married to Charles C. Rainwater of Ray County, Mo.

My husband entered the mercantile business at Cole Camp in the fall of 1859. Mr. Rainwater's parents being of Carolina and Tennessee stock, and mine of Maryland, there was no question about where our sympathies lay when the "War Cloud" appeared in 1861. The first outward sign of sympathy in our little town was in May when the "red, white and red" flag was hoisted and unfurled to the breeze on the Town Square.

The women made the flag and aided in sending it aloft, and greeted it when its folds were unfurled. This, I believe, was the first Confederate flag raised in the County. Soon after this it was rumored that a man named Cook, who lived some four miles north of Cole Camp, and who had some years before moved from the north, was getting up a Company of Home Guards composed of union men, mostly Germans. It was said that he had succeeded in getting some three or four hundred men together and gone into camp in and around a vacant house in the timber, some two miles east out of town. In the meanwhile the Southern men were not idle. Recruiting was going on at Warsaw. My husband with other southern men went there to enlist under the Southern banner. Walter B. O'Kane was elected Captain of the Warsaw Grays. The Confederates at Warsaw and Leesville determined, if possible, to disperse the home guards masked at Cole Camp. The Warsaw Grays (infantry) started from Warsaw, Sunday afternoon, June 16, 1861. Early Monday morning, Capt. Cook and his men were taken by surprise-- a battle ensued-- the home guards routed and dispersed. The number of killed and wounded has never been accurately told. The Confederates had two killed and four wounded. I had gone up to Warsaw a few days before, not knowing that any movement was contemplated. Well do I remember the agony of suspense while awaiting news of the expedition.

The women were making uniforms for the soldiers, and I do not remember ever working harder in my life than on that Monday, while awaiting news of the battle, for we knew there had been or would be one. Wednesday, the eighteenth, the Warsaw Grays returned and buried their dead.

On the morning of the 19th, Gov. Jackson crossed the Osage at Warsaw on his retreat from Booneville. The people of Warsaw were panic stricken, thinking that Gen. Lyons was following Jackson closely. Many left their homes. It was here I took leave of my young husband, not knowing when or how, or if ever we would meet again. The Southern Army moved south and our locality was ever after left to the mercies of Home-Guard rule. It was some months before Capt. Cook succeeded in getting a small company together again.

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Every man suspected of being in sympathy with the South was under constant surveillance. Unfortunately for our section, there congregated in and near Cole Camp, lawless men from many places, and under the guise of Home Guards, committed thefts and murders.

Before committing depredations, drinking was always resorted to. They were the terror of surrounding counties. Men would be called to the door at night and shot down without warning or provocation. In the fall of 1863, one Sunday afternoon, these fiends started out and by Monday morning had murdered three innocent men in their homes surrounded by their families. Notwithstanding the horrors and anxieties of the times, we were often amused with the results of expeditions sent in to the Osage Hills, some ten miles away, to capture or kill two men named Smith. These men had been with the Confederate army but did not remain, and came back to their cabins in the hills, and from being hunted, became what was termed "bush-whackers." The "Home Guards" determined to rid the County of these men--either kill, capture or drive them away.

We would frequently see a squad or company start out after the Smiths and possibly the next day would hear that the Federals had dined at a farmhouse, and, in less than an hour the Smiths dined at the same house. The houses of these men were burned and their wives taken prisoners, but by threats of retaliation by burning the homes of union men, forced the release of the women.

This game of hide and seek was kept up for years and so far as I know the Smiths were never captured.

In 1863, times became so very troubled, and our family so anxious for the safety of my father, that it was decided that he and myself should go to Maryland and visit relatives until peace be restored. I was to go because of threats to burn the house over my mother's head if I remained, inasmuch as my husband was in the Southern army. In 1864, while in Maryland, I received word that Maj. Rainwater had been dangerously wounded at Ditch Bayou, in Texas and as soon as I could arrange, I came on to St. Louis, intending to ask that the Federal Authorities permit me to go through the lines, but on arriving in St. Louis, I found that the message was sent me by Miss Hattie Snodgrass who had been banished from St. Louis and had ventured back to look after her aged mother, but intended to return South and I was expected to go with her. Miss Snodgrass would not be ready to return before October. This meant a wait of some weeks, running the blockade, and slipping through the lines. The plan was to go by boat, be transferred to the gunboat patrolling between Helena and Vicksburg, and get the Captain to put us ashore at Columbus, Arkansas, thus avoiding Army Posts where soldiers were stationed. In our party was to be Miss Snodgrass, known for the time as Miss Miller, *Miss* Rainwater and Mrs. Van Court. Miss Snodgrass being so well known in St. Louis it was deemed best that she and myself should go to Cairo by rail and take the boat there. No bridge being over the river at that time, we had to ferry over and take cars in East St. Louis. A mistake was made in calling for us; we missed the train and had to return to St. Louis for the night. Of course, we were fearful that we would miss the boat but fortunately for us, the boat got on a sand bar and did not get in until we arrived. We were to go on Capt. Burdeau's boat, he knowing who we were, and what we wished to do. There was a detective on the boat whose duty it was to search all baggage for contraband goods, such as confederate gray cloth, letters, gold, etc.

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Miss Snodgrass had so much that was contraband, including gold and a large package of letters, that she was advised by a friend in Cairo not to attempt all, so she repacked her trunks and left one behind. We all had gray cloth made into make believe undershirts.

I had no fear of being recognized myself, but was uneasy about Miss Snodgrass as she was so well known in St. Louis. As we went aboard the boat, one of the clerks standing by the Captain remarked, "Why, if there isn't Miss Hattie Snodgrass!" The Captain quietly answered, "You are mistaken, that is Miss Miller." The hint was observed, and the young clerk who had been a Sabbath School pupil of Miss S.'s knew her thereafter as Miss Miller. She found an acquaintance in one of the pilots also, but he too was a Southern man. The detective was a nephew of a Mr. Dutrow, who was banished from St. Louis at the same time Miss S. was, and thus she knew of him and his family without his knowing who she was. We were exceedingly anxious to have our baggage searched and have the anxiety over. We asked several times that it be done and I am inclined to think that our expressed willingness somewhat disarmed the so-called "trunk digger." When the search took place we assisted at the performance, opening the apartments and lifting trays, the officer not lifting a single article, simply pressed his hands around the sides of the trunks a little and that was all. The trunks were prepared for the occasion. All went well until we reached Memphis, where we had to go to a Federal office and take oath of allegiance to the U. S. A.; swore not to aid or abet, etc., etc., all with a decided mental reservation. At Memphis we were joined by a Mrs. Nichols whose home was in Chicot County, Ark., and who wished to land at Columbus also. Of all the lame stories ever mapped out to be told in case we got into close quarters, the one we adopted was the lamest. I really do not know why we were not suspected, arrested and sent back. Here is the story. We were from Pittsburg, Pa. Miss Miller had left there some years before the war, and had gone to Arkansas to teach school, had been north to attend to business and was on her way home. I was a friend going to spend the winter with her. Mrs. Van Court was a friend of Miss Miller's mother who was going down for her health. Miss Snodgrass as a child had lived in Pittsburg but neither Mrs. Van Court nor myself knew a street or any person in that city.

Shortly after leaving Memphis, we were all seated in the cabin; not far from me was seated our quondam Miss Miller in conversation with our detective. I was attracted to them by hearing her say, "Yes, I am southern from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet." Others had heard the remark also; poor Mrs. Van Court's tell-tale face began to burn, and red spots appear on each cheek, and a lady from Helena was trying her best to warn Miss Miller to whom she was talking, while I wondered, what next. Mr. Dutrow, the detective, answered, "I am surprised, Miss Miller, to hear you say this, and you from Pittsburg!" "Yes," she said, "I am for the South. I have lived with the southern people long enough to know them, and they have my sympathy." She discovered that others were listening and she turned and said, "Mr. Dutrow, I did not seek this conversation. You have forced it upon me. I may have offended some one; there are wives of Federal officers aboard. They may have heard and this may get me into trouble, and if it does, you must see me through it."

He protested that no harm was meant, and none should come of it, and nothing more was said. An amusing incident took place one day when the detective was sitting by the table in the cabin and picked up a pair of new gauntlets belonging to Miss Snodgrass.

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There was pen and ink near and he said, "With your permission, Miss Miller, I will mark your gloves for you." With her consent he wrote, "Miss Hattie Miller." And turning to her said, "Your address, how do you spell it?" She was nonplussed and continued very busy with her sewing for she could not spell the name of her adopted county and village, but Mrs. Nichols who was to the "Manor-born", promptly came to her aid and spelled Chicot.

To our dismay we passed the patrol gunboat in a fog at night and what to do was the question. After consulting with the Captain, it was deemed best to remain on the boat, make the trip to New Orleans and try to catch the gunboat on the up trip rather than transfer to another boat and run the risk of encountering another detective. While awaiting the transfer of cargoes at New Orleans, we, one morning, visited the famous French market, dressed, of course, in northern clothes and naturally were judged accordingly. After we had our French coffee and had seen the sights, we started for the boat and as we were passing down an aisle of the market, met two negro women. One of them attracted my attention immediately by her large and venomous eyes. I never saw such complete hatred expressed in eyes before. She was looking me squarely in the face and just as she passed my shoulder she turned her head and hissed-"Yanks"-and went on. We started north the third day, and all went well until we passed the gunboat again at night, while it was anchored at Vicksburg. Now something must be done, to go back to St. Louis meant certain detection. The only alternative was to land at Skipwith's Landing in Mississippi, where there was a gunboat stationed provided the captain would allow us, and care for us until the patrol gunboat came up. We arrived at Skipwith on Friday about noon, the gunboat Captain received our party of four courteously, but said the only accommodation that he could offer us was the occupancy of a small vacant store-room a short distance from the shore, and have a negro woman prepare our meals. We were furnished bedding and a pistol. Mrs. Nichols could use a gun effectively if necessary. Our situation was not an enviable one, when it is remembered that the gunboat houses its officers and crew and what on shore and nearer us were armed negroes. We were not molested in any way and in fact we discovered, after retiring, that a guard had been set for our protection as we could hear the patrol pass. The officers treated us with the greatest courtesy, however. I have always thought that a little gunboat practice was gotten up the last evening of our stay, for our special benefit. We had heard from our first arrival that Confederate scouts had been not far away and it was feared a dash might be made for Skipwith and the gunboat, and this particular day, more rumors than usual had been brought in. We were not alarmed for we were not afraid of the Confederates. About dusk the Captain and his Lieutenant came up to see how we were getting along. They had been there but a short time when an officer called for the Captain who went out and almost immediately we heard the report of a gun and then another, and the Lieutenant got out of the room "double quick". In a moment the firing seemed general and we thought that the Confederates had made a dash sure enough. Our Captain, Miss Miller, was equal to the emergency. Her order was, come help bar the door, and now girls drop on the floor and be out of the range of bullets. While the firing was at its height one of the combatants gave a dismal groan as though desperately hurt, and Mrs. Van Court remarked, "There is one poor soul gone to glory." The fray lasted only a few moments.

and we soon found out it was simply a ruse, whether for our benefit or to give the gunboat crew practice, we never knew. Then we saw the Lieutenant again we laughed at him for making such good time towards the river. He said that he did not feel a bit comfortable when he reached the bank, to hear orders being given and the gunners at the guns.

On Sunday about noon the much desired gunboat came in sight, was signaled, and landed and we four women were rejoiced when Captain Burnes, who was in command, graciously consented to take us to our destination. Miss Miller was our spokesman and made all arrangements with the Captain. Only two of us could take meals at the Captain's table, the other two must mess with the other officers. I was to take Mrs. Van Court to the Captain's table, as this would be less trying for Mrs. Van Court than with so many officers.

At the first meal it became my part to make good our lame story. After preliminary table courtesies the Captain remarked, "You are from Pittsburg, I believe." "Yes, Sir," I replied. And I thought, now for some big story telling. His next was, "The most of my crew are from Pittsburg. My first officer, Lieutenant-- is from there. Do you know him?" I called the name over several times as though trying to remember and said, "The name is not familiar to me, and I am sure I never met him." The Captain let the subject drop for which I was exceedingly thankful. Poor Mrs. Van Court's cheeks had assumed the hectic's flush and I thought any one might know that something was not right.

We were treated with the greatest courtesy by the Captain and officers.

As the sun was nearing the western horizon on Monday, we reached Columbus; a landing was made north of the town in a clump of willows. We were ready to go ashore and were standing talking to the Captain, the quondam Miss Miller was opposite the Captain and doing most of the talking when he cut the subject short and asked, "Have you any letters?" "No, sir," was her prompt reply. I have a verbal message for a lady who went to Texas before the war for the health of her husband. He has since died. Her mother wishes her to go home. A verbal message for her, sir, and that is all."

The little hand-bag carried by Miss Miller and almost touching the Captain would have told a different story had it been examined. We bid a glad good bye to the gunboat and its officers and were soon with friends who had been on the outlook for us for weeks.

A courier was sent to Hamburg to secure transportation which finally reached us in the shape of a plantation cotton wagon drawn by four mules. I had not been quite well for several days and at the end of the first day's journey, had to be left behind to await the coming of my husband. He was at Camden and as soon as he heard that we had landed, started for the river in an ambulance and met the wagon a day's journey from where I was. His feelings may be imagined when he found that I was not one of the party. The first intimation of his nearness was when it was reported to me that an ambulance was at the gate. I looked out and saw my husband on his way to the house leaning on a crutch and cane. My bright, bouyant, active husband permanently disabled for active

service in his country's cause! We went to Camden, remained until the third week in December when we went to Clarksville, Texas, where we were when the surrender came in 1865. 6

Maj. Rainwater gradually grew stronger, first discarding the crutch and then the cane. And when he found that he would be able to do without either, remarked, "I am so thankful that although I carry a reminder of the war in my body, in the shape of a leaden bullet, no one can tell it." In August 1865 we started for St. Louis to make it our future home, arriving in September.