

Reminiscences of the Women of Missouri During the Sixties

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Transcribed by Jerry Patricia Austin, Ph.D.

The following is from pages 183 to 185.

(The Mrs. Cole mentioned in this story is Catherine Peters (daughter of early Cooper Co. settler, Samuel Peters) Patrick (married first to Thomas K. Patrick) Cole (married after Thomas died to Samuel Cole, son of Hattie Cole and early settler to Cooper Co.)

(The "Patrick" who is one of the two young recruits is my greatgrandfather, James Maston Patrick, son of Catherine and Thomas K. Patrick.)

Execution of Lieutenant Brownlee By Mrs. Susan Bunce of Nevada, Mo. May 15, 1907

In the spring of 1863 Lieutenant Brownlee of the Confederate service came into Cooper county, Missouri, as a recruiting officer, by permission of General Shelby, and while not a commissioned officer, he had his orders from his commander, like many others.

He enlisted two, and maybe more, young men, but these two with Brownlee are the prime actors in this drama. Their names were Patrick and Carrol. They told Brownlee where arms and ammunition could be obtained, and knowing so well how both were needed by the South, he consented to go with them. They took him one night to a house near Pilot Grove, owned by a northern man named Brownfield, expecting to capture arms, but he fired at them and wounded Patrick. This enraged the two recruits and they set fire to the house, but it was extinguished. They now proceeded to the home of young Carrol's mother, so that the wounded man could be attended, and then spent the night in the woods near by, little dreaming that the early morning would bring a company of Federal soldiers on the scene. The three southern boys were on the alert, however, and would have escaped, but one of their number tripped on a grapevine in running and fell, his comrades went back to his aid, and thus all were captured and taken to Boonville, a distance of ten miles. Patrick with his wound, as well as the other two, were made to walk that distance, guarded by a company of cavalry. They were tried by a military court and condemned to be shot as Bushwhackers or spies.

Young Patrick's mother had married the second time and was by this marriage my step-grandmother, Mrs. Cole. As soon as she heard of her son's misfortune she went to Boonville to be near her doomed boy. Carrol's sister, Mary, also went to Boonville, and they immediately commenced to make plans for the escape of the prisoners. This was a difficult matter as both were searched, as well as every basket of food that was carried to the condemned men. The two women succeeded in carrying a crowbar into the jail under their clothes, but the men could not use it, and it was dropped in the sewer. Brownlee, having a very artistic eye, looked at the key as it hung at the jail's side, and cut a pattern of it out of paper. These two women took this pattern and made a wooden key, which grandmother took to the prisoners one night, going through back yards and gardens in her stocking feet so they might try it in the lock. It seemed to fit and then they took it to a blacksmith several miles in the country, and after Mrs. Cole promised never to tell who made it while he lived, he copied it in iron. Never while the smith lived would she tell who her faithful workman was.

The women again visited the jail, guarded and searched as usual, but with the key hid in their clothes. They sat down on a cot and slipped the key in the bedclothes and in some way let

them know where to find it. When alone the men tried the key and found it too large. A file was procured and Brownlee filed it, making it now too small. He then took a piece of leather and wrapped around it, and thus succeeded in opening the door. With all the impatience that doomed men could have they waited for the two noble women to have everything ready for their escape. Every night they would take the ball and chain from each ones ankle and take exercise, so that they would be more able to walk or run, for they had been in prison about two months.

Mrs. Cole, by permission, went to her home to wait, knowing all plans that had been made. Sunday morning orders came for the prisoners to be shot at sunrise Monday morning. Sunday night when the church bells were ringing and citizens and soldiers were going to church the poor men offered up a fervent prayer for aid and opened the door, this time to freedom. They separated at the jail door, agreeing to meet at an old cemetery a mile from town. Their escape was discovered sooner than expected, and scarcely had they reached their rendezvous when they heard the soldiers in close pursuit. They took refuge behind a log lying close to the ground and the Federals actually made the horses jump that same log.

The news of the order to shoot the men had flown like fire over the whole country, and on Monday morning grandmother took my mother and went to Boonville to find out how her plans had worked. I, a child of twelve, was left at home to care for the younger children. At eleven o'clock I went to the garden for vegetables, taking a younger child with me. I had scarcely commenced to gather the vegetables when I heard a knocking on the fence and looking up, saw a man who beckoned me. I was greatly frightened, and taking the child by the hand I tried to walk slowly to the house. I then investigated and learned who my visitors were. I soon notified my grandfather, who lived near, and he and I fed them that noon. That evening my grandmother had returned and I took her to their hiding place, again taking something to eat. I shall never forget the looks of those men sitting on the grass with their wounded ankles, made by the balls and chains, exposed to view. As the sun went down we bade them Godspeed on their journey south. Carrol was killed by Federals in Southwest Missouri. The other two joined Shelby's forces and fought through the war. After the war was over Brownlee was going into Springfield, Mo. To surrender and was arrested and shot under the old sentence.

[The following is from pages 273 to 275.](#)

In 1862 Miss Sue M. Bryant was a pupil of Professor Hunt's seminary in Boonville, Cooper county, Missouri. At the close of the school they had an entertainment - calisthenic exercises - Harriet Beecher Stowe, the originator. The costume was red and white. Professor Hunt had half of the girls to dress in white and blue, the other half in red and white, making red, white and blue on the stage. All went off well, both southern and northern girls participating. Several weeks after the entertainment Miss Bryant paid a visit to an old friend, Mrs. Sheridan of Marshall, Miss Bryant's old home. The evening of her arrival she dressed in her calisthenic costume and went through the exercise for the amusement of her friend. This was witnessed by a small negro girl, who reported that Miss Bryant was at Mrs. Sheridan's home and that she danced with the secesh flag wrapped around her. A few days later Colonel Lezeare came to Marshall from (I think from Lexington). This dance was reported to him.

In the meantime Miss Bryant was spending a day with Mr. Wm. Burks' family, a Presbyterian minister. Lezeare sent his menials out, had her arrested and taken back to town to Dance's Hotel under heavy guard. Was there several days with about fourteen other girls. This arrest was on the 10th of August. Lieutenant Blair, a Federal, called for me to start on that never-to-be-forgotten ride across the county on a load of corn. We all left Marshall about 10 o'clock and arrived in Brownsville in time for supper -no dinner--a good supper of stale bread and tea.. We were honored by a guard at our backs while eating. We left for Warrensburg early the next day without breakfast, traveled all day through the hot August sun and arrived at Warrensburg about 1 p.m. The girls peeped through the little round hole in the back of the wagon, ever on the sly. We saw so many going to church or from church we were ashamed and felt humiliated that we should be seen in such awful company. We reached headquarters about 2 p.m., were taken to a small room and told we would soon be nicely located. After waiting ten or fifteen minutes in walked T. C. Crittenden, a Colonel, I think. He greeted us as if we were there seeking the position of barmaids. The first thing was from "Big I". "Colonel Crittenden we have had nothing to eat this

whole day; we are nearly starved to death." He graciously took our names and said, "You will be served bountifully very soon." He called a sergeant and said, "Take these girls to another room." Miss Bryant said, "Is our dinner ready?" He bowed to the sergeant smiled, and we were marched out and on, on and on, finally landing at a two room grocery store, where we were locked in, a soldier parading before our door. Just before sundown a corporal came in with our bountiful dinner, a quart bowl of pickled beets, one-half slice of stale bread, all until next day. I was so disgusted I failed to remember our next meal. We remained there ten days, taken at night to a larger prison, then sent to St. Louis the next morning at 5 o'clock - no breakfast, no dinner. We arrived in St. Louis, marched for two solid hours to our St Charles prison and received with abuses and small fare. Do not remember how long we were in that place. From there we were taken to Gratiot street prison. From there I was, after taking that "iron-clad oath", sent to Kirkwood and remained there under guard and spy for two weeks; then I was allowed to return to my home.

Another instance: One hot summer day about 18 men called at Mr. Bryant's home and demanded a quick dinner, as they were in a big hurry to catch a lot of d-n rebels. They had the housemaid getting pans, bowls, towels, soap. Finally the cook was called. I stepped to the back porch and said, "If you all call the cook you can't have a quick dinner." On youthful ignorant looking fellow replied, "You go out and help them." I said, "I have never cooked and won't commence now." He retorted, "You have got to cook we have set the 'niggers' free." I replied, "The freeing of the slaves did not worry me in the least." He said, "Who will do the work." I said, "O, I will send north and hire your wives, sweethearts and sisters, makes slaves of them." They soon pointed some shooters at me saying, "I have a mind to kill you, a d-n rebel." I said, "You dare not, too many Bushwhackers around." They laughed and said, "Let her alone, she is not fit to kill."

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

Sue M. Bryant of Cooper county, State of Missouri, do hereby solemnly swear that I will bear true allegiance to the United States and support and sustain the Constitution and laws thereof; that I will maintain the national sovereignty paramount to that of all state, county, or Confederate powers; that I will discourage, discountenance and forever oppose secession, rebellion and the disintegration of the Federal union; that I disclaim and denounce all faith and fellowship with the so-called Confederate armies, and pledge my honor, my property and my life to the sacred performance of this my solemn oath of allegiance to the Government of the United States of America.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 10th day of October, 1864, at St. Louis, Mo.

Wm.. A. Keyser,
Asst. Prov. Mar.

Several witnesses.

I. A Galbraith of St. Louis, Mo., Clerk P. M., General Office.

Description- age, 16; height, 5 feet 3 inches; color of eyes, dark; color of hair, dark; characteristics, handsome.