

This article was in the May 25, 19 10 Issue of the Fairfield News and Herald

EXTRACTS FROM THE DIARY Of Mrs. W. W. Boyce, Throwing Many Side-Lights upon the Movements Leading up to The War.

November 8, 1860 - Heard the sad news that Mr. Lincoln is elected president of these United States. Now or never the South will withdraw from the Union. No longer will the "Star Spangled Banner" wave over our heads. As Mr. Boyce said in his Columbia speech Tuesday night, "We will dare to secede." I feel truly sad at the condition of our beloved country thus rent in twain. Great excitement prevails in Columbia.

November 12 - Political excitement still prevails. Senator Chestnut has resigned his seat in the United States Senate and others have resigned office under the Federate Government; it really seems that a revolution has begun in earnest. I pray our heavenly Father to look with pity upon us and guide our rulers.

Tuesday, November 13 - Mr. Boyce and Minnie have gone to the fair in Columbia. The secession excitement still rages there. Mr. Keitt, M. C., spoke to the crowd last night, and both he and Col. Orr are for Southern action. The latter was speaking to a large concourse in front of one of the hotels when a man interrupted by asking questions, the speaker in his powerful and far-reaching voice replied, "I am making arguments, not brains to comprehend them." Suffice it to say - no more questions were asked.

November 16 - Mr. Boyce returned from Columbia yesterday; he says everybody is for secession. He is receiving letters from all quarters upon the politics of the day, even one from Lowell, Mass., from a man who offers his nephews to South Carolina. Senators Tombs of Georgia and Hammond of our State have resigned. The story is told of the latter, that on the streets of Columbia a few days ago, he was speaking of the state of the county, and said, "When Indians go on the warpath, one sober Indian remains at home. I am that sober Indians.

November 19 - Mr. Boyce and Uncle William Alston attended a mass meeting in Winnsboro. The Fairfield members of the legislature spoke and Mr. Boyce and others followed; all were for State action. I made a one star flag today, and unfurled it from the upper front porch. I have one star and one stripe on my secession flag, the star for Mr. Boyce and the stripe for Col. Keitt. (The latter died upon the field of glory, the former lived through all of the troublous times and died of a broken heart over the sad fate of his beloved South).

November 23 - Rainy and cold. Pendleton, where he is to speak Tuesday. To our surprise tonight we heard a rapping at the door, and who should it be but Waters who has returned from "bleeding Kansas" to join the Southern cause.

November 22 - My brother and brother-in-law (the latter just from Kansas) attended a secession picnic at Salem today. Ex-Gov. Means, Mr. Wm. S. Lyles and the Rev. Drs. Smith and Boyce spoke. Resistance to Republican rule is the watchword of the day, the beacon to light the way to Southern independence.

November 23 - Rainy and cold. Brother and Waters attended a meeting at Monticello, the latter and several others made speeches.

November 27 - I have been busy today getting Mr. Boyce ready for Washington.

November 28 - I finished fixing Mr. Boyce for his journey to Washington; his last term in congress as our delegation intend to withdraw from that august assembly.

November 29 - Mr. Boyce left for Washington. We feel sad and lonely although he thinks he will be back at Christmas.

December 6 - Received two letters from Mr. Boyce, he had arrived in Washington, not much yet done in congress, but the government surely going to pieces. I pray our heavenly Father to guide our people.

December 14 - A letter from Mr. Boyce, the political troubles are on the increase; and our government is at an end.

December 17 - This day will be memorable, our convention meets at Columbia to vote South Carolina free and alone. I trust the delegates will act with wisdom. I received a letter from Mr. Boyce; he writes that a pall seems to hang over Washington. He will come home as soon as our State secedes.

December 18 - The convention has moved to Charleston on account of smallpox having appeared in Columbia. So slight a thing and times so momentous. I am sorry for the delay. I wish South Carolina to act at once.

December 20 - Sam Alston went to Winnsboro this evening and returned with the pleasing yet melancholy news that South Carolina has seceded. The news was received by telegraph and to show our approval, Sam and George our visitor, fired three big guns, rather mock ones, by boring holes in a log and charging them with powder. I say, "Three cheers for South Carolina, ever glorious, now doubly so!" We are from today no longer citizens of the U. S. Minnie and George Taylor received invitations to a grand young people's party at Mr. Osmund Woodward's this evening. Minnie went accompanied by Mauma E.- in the carriage, returning by half past 11, fortunately the moon shone brightly. In Winnsboro there was a torch light procession accompanied by other fireworks and I suppose we might call the juvenile party a secession party or the lone star party.

December 22 - George Taylor went to Winnsboro to attend a meeting of the Minute Men. The papers are filled with the secession movement. Like a volcano it threatens to engulf everything.

December 24 - Instead of Mr. Boyce, a letter was received from him, he said his time in Washington was short, the delegation were only waiting to receive the news of secession; his letter was dated on the 20th.

Christmas, December 25 - I wish a merry Christmas to everybody, though it is not a merry one to me - the prospect of war, and our dear little State's danger makes it a gloomy one.

December 27 - Mrs. Wm. Lyles today gave me a piece of the palmetto that waved over the Ordinance of Secession, as it was signed by the members of the convention in Charleston.

December 28 - The prospects for war increases.

December 29 - Instead of Mr. Boyce coming today as I expected, the papers state that he will remain in Washington until the South Carolina commission finish with their mission. Fort Moultrie has been vacated by Sumter garrisoned, which causes the most intense excitement. This took place on the night of the 26! The president is blamed, but the poor old gentleman is trying to do his best and his dilemma is great. Gov. Pickens has ordered troops to Charleston.

December 31 - The last day of 1860, how many thoughts crowd upon my memory! Mr. Boyce to our joy, came today, how thankful I am that we are all blest to meet again!

January 1, 1861 - The first day of the first year of our separate independence.

January 3 - Volunteers have gone to Charleston from Columbia. The two young sons of my cousin, John Pearson, are of the gallant number.

January 5 - In Winnsboro today a new company was formed, called the Boyce Guards. Mr. Boyce volunteered as one of its members. January 6 - Our young kinsman, John H. Kelly, a cadet from West Point, came today en route to his home in Alabama. He would soon have graduated, but the call of the South came, and he answered. What will his fate be?

January 7 - Mr. Boyce drilled today. I have sewed and sewed and now have George ready when his country calls.

January 10 - The papers report a sad casualty at Fort Moultrie, it now being garrisoned by South Carolina soldiers, a young Mr. Holmes has been accidentally and fatally shot by a sentinel, the first life sacrificed on the altar of our beloved South. The United States vessel Star of the West, in attempting to provision the United States troops in Fort Sumter, was fired upon by our soldiers in Fort Moultrie and forced to retire. Thus the ball has opened. When and how will it end? My brother-in-law left this morning for Alabama and my cousin Sam Alston for Charleston. The combat deepens, on ye brave. Florida and Mississippi have withdrawn from the Union.

January 12 - News today is that our soldiers are about to make an effort to take Fort Sumter.

January 14 - Every tree, limb and blade of grass was beautifully bedecked in a crystal robe this morning. Everything so lovely to look upon, and war, horrid war staring us in the face.

February 1 - After an early breakfast this morning my sister and Mr. Boyce left for Montgomery, Ala. Mr. Boyce has gone to attend the Southern congress that will convene there on Monday.

February 4 - The Southern convention or congress met today at Montgomery.

February 11 - Gov. Pickens has declared martial law at or in Fort Moultrie. I fear we will have war after all of our hopes to the contrary.

February 23 - We have been busy today making cakes, etc., with which to fill a box to send to my cousins, Sam and Joel, who are members of the garrison of Fort Moultrie. The box contains a pig, a turkey, a ham, one loaf of homemade bread, six loaves of baker's bread, crackers, rolls, five dozen and seven small cakes, one large cake and three dozen tarts with a bouquet for each.

March 4 - Today Lincoln was inaugurated and now we will certainly know whether we are to have peace or war. I pray to God to aid us and give us peace.

March 5 - Capt. Shedd of the Boyce Guards called to consult about the presentation of the flag to his company.

March 6 - Heard the startling news that our forces are to attack Fort Sumter tomorrow. Received a letter from Mr. Boyce in which he gave me a description of our new flag (Confederate flag). The flag to the Boyce Guards is to be presented on Friday by Minnie.

March 13 - Heard through a neighbor that Fort Sumter is to be given up tomorrow.

March 14 - Minnie went to Winnsboro today to meet Agnes and about 4 o'clock Ms. Eugenia and Hattie Means, Sallie W., Sallie P. and Sue Lyles arrived, so we have a merry houseful of sweet girls.

March 15 - All of us went to Winnsboro to witness the flag presentations. Minnie presented one to the Boyce Guards and acquitted herself admirably. Her address was simple but to the point, was responded to by Capt. Shedd, who then handed it over to the color bearer, Mr. Jenkins, an old Mexican war veteran. Our flag function took place at 12 o'clock in front of Mrs. Ladd's and at 3 o'clock just opposite, Mr. Osmund Woodward presented one to another company, I think, named for him. Our young people dined with Mrs. Bolyston.

April 9 - News came today that our Fairfield soldiers must be ready by 8 o'clock Thursday morning to go to Charleston.

April 10 - This has been an exciting day, I sent Frank by times this morning to Fonti Flora to let my brother know that war has been declared.

April 11 - The road was alive this morning with carriages, buggies and people on horseback going to Winnsboro to see our volunteers depart for the seat of war, the lovely old "City by the Sea." We wished to go, but not having an escort, doubted the propriety and contented ourselves at home with heavy hearts.

April 13 - Our servant Ham came from Winnsboro with the news that the bombardment of Fort Sumter commenced yesterday morning at 5 o'clock and still continues. Edmund Ruffin, an old Virginia gentleman, was given the honor of firing the first gun from our side. As yet no lives lost on either side, but Fort Sumter is much damaged by our shell and shot. We will take the fort and must give to God all of the praise.