

YANKEE TORTURE AND MURDER OF SOUTHERN CIVILIANS

The truth is it was not war. It was hell unleashed on Southern civilians, non combatants. Citizens who were defenseless women, innocent children and unarmed old men. This is pitiful and sickening in the extreme and y'all need to read it:

"It is with the greatest reluctance that I write this sketch of my mother's experience... If those who have urged me so much and so often to write, knew what I have suffered in putting those sad particulars on paper, they would have said, "let them alone." Those who have undertaken to gather reminiscences of this kind have a hard task on their hands as one thousandth part of what the women of the South suffered during the war can never be told. It is a duty, however, that the authors of these reminiscences should be aided in every possible way, so that valuable materials of history may not be lost. This is why I send my crude statements, though it is breaking my heart to do so.

Our home was in a little town on the Arkansas river, called Pittsburg, about nine miles from Clarksville. The Federal officer in command of Clarksville at the time was Col. Waugh. One Federal officer called and said to me : "If my wife or mother had been treated as yours, I would live only to kill Federals and when I came to die, I would regret that I could not live longer to kill more."

The following are the main particulars : On the night of the 20th of February, 1864, five or six Federal soldiers came and demanded money of mother, saying, "I know you have it, everyone knows that your husband has plenty of money." When she refused to give them money, they stripped the right foot and leg and thrust it into a bed of red hot coals lying in a large open fireplace. When they took it out they asked

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her if she would tell them where the money was, and when she said no, they put it back and told her they would burn her to death if she did not tell. The flesh was cooked until it fell off from the knee to the toe. They then brought in my widowed aunt, Mrs. John W. Willis, who was living with my mother. They had been keeping her outside on the lawn, and had previously told her that my mother had sent her word to tell them where the money was, as they were burning her to death. She said she did not believe them and refused. They then took my mother from the fire and put my aunt in, and burned her in the same way, but not quite so severely. At last when they found they were of the material from which heroines are made and Spartan mothers reared, they released them and going to the servants quarters, they locked them in and told them if they came out before sun up, their heads would be shot off. My poor mother in some way found the linseed oil and together she and my aunt dressed their burns.

When mother and aunt learned that the house was on fire, they in some mysterious way with those terribly burned limbs, crawled to the wood pile, where they lay and watched the destruction of a fine old Southern home (the home where brother John and I were reared). When the building was falling into ashes some Federal officers came with ambulances to fill them with furnishings from this house. When they saw the sad plight of my loved ones, they were compelled to take them to Clarksville, where they could receive medical attention.

A week after this terrible affair Capt. Abbot, commanding a U. S. transport, (but a Southern sympathizer), came down from Clarksville and sent me word, saying, that he had not the courage to bring the message in person. Capt. Abbot held the transport until I could get

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ready to return with him. I left my four fatherless children, (baby being quite ill), with my dear friend, Mrs. Adams, widow of ex-Governor Adams was afterwards with me in Little Rock, having been turned out of her home by Federal officers. It took the transport three days to reach Spadra Bluff, the nearest point by river to Clarksville. I was told here that mother was dying and that her limb had been amputated, all of which was almost unbearable for me, and the suffering so changed me that some of my loved ones did not recognize me. I must pass over the meeting with my mother ; I can not even at this late day write of it. I staid until my mother could be moved to Spadra Bluff by ambulance, and by transport to my home in Little Rock. The news soon spread that we had arrived. The first to reach the boat was our old friend, Dr. E. L. Dodge. He dropped on his knees beside mother's bed and wept aloud. Mother did not die just at this time, but lingered two years. Poor, dear mother, how she suffered!

"I forgive them for the pain and poverty they have caused me," were her words. They destroyed what they could not carry away, shooting large numbers of cattle, hogs, etc.

Maj. Newsome (a Federal), told me at Spadra, that when mother's house was on fire, he counted fourteen others burning at the same time, and he knew that orders for the fires had been sent out from headquarters.