

MARLBORO IN REVOLUTION

STORY OF THE KILLING OF COL. KOLB BY TORIES.

Interesting Revolutionary History of the Ayers, who Later Moved to Barnwell County.

The following interesting story of old Marlboro is told by Mrs Lulah Ayer Vandiver, of Anderson, in the Sunday News, the main features of which are recorded in Gregg's and McCrady's histories of the Pee Dee people.

"It is not a question of property, but of liberty." This was the reply made to Tory neighbors who urged him to save his property by taking the oath of allegiance to Great Britain, by Thomas Ayer, one of the sturdy Scotch-Irish stock, which in the early and middle years of the eighteenth century poured into the new world.

Ayer located first in Virginia and later in Marlboro district, S. C., on the banks of the Great Pee-Dee River, a few miles below Hunt's Bluff, where he established a trading post and a mill, and amassed considerable property. This Irishman with his innate love for liberty and his inherited hatred to England, embraced heartily the sentiments of the Revolution, and joined Marion's partisan forces, faithfully serving his adopted country on many trying occasions.

On one occasion he was sent with an armed force to take a band of Tories which had become very obnoxious to the community by their lawlessness and depredations. Ayer captured the party and effectually secured the country against further trouble from them by hanging them to the nearest trees. For this act he became an object of especial detestation to the British officer, McArthur, who offered a large reward for his detention. Being thus under British ban, it became necessary that Ayer remain away from his home as much as possible. But the men who rescued Carolina from Cornwallis and Rawdon were not enlisted soldiers, they were citizens who shouldered muskets and sallied forth under their peerless leaders, fighting fiercely until their immediate object was attained. Then laying down arms, returned to their homes and pursued their daily avocations until necessity called them forth again. It was imperative that the men return frequently to look after their affairs and see to the well-being of their families. The faithful black slave, who protected his mistress and her children and worked the plantation during his master's absence was a later development, reaching perfection during the war between the States. When the men who won the Revolution went forth they left not a faithful, humble friend, but a treacherous and cruel black savage in their homes.

On one of the stolen visits Thomas Ayer was discovered by his implacable foes and late in the afternoon sixteen of them rode up to his house and took him captive in sight of his wife and two sons. Binding him hand and foot with buckskin thongs furnished by his neighbor and quondam friend, Magnus Corgill, they had intended taking their prisoner at once to McArthur, but a terrific storm arising, they determined upon reaching Blunt's Bluff, not to attempt to cross the swollen and raging stream, but to take shelter for the night in an abandoned hut near its banks. There feeling secure, they stacked arms and leaving their prisoner bound, lying upon the earth floor, they proceeded to amuse themselves by playing cards.

Very soon after the capture of Thos. Ayer his eldest son, Hartwell, himself a soldier, with 5 companions, reached the desolate home. Learning the state of affairs, the young men immediately remounted and started in pursuit of the marauders. Under cover of the storm they cautiously approached the rude shelter taken by their adversaries. Then making a sudden assault, they seized the arms, then bayoneted the whole party, with the exception of Asal John, son of a neighbor and former friend of Thos. Ayer. The old man with his own body protected the youth, pleading for his life until it was granted.

One other of the Tories escaped death, he was pinned to the floor by a sword and left for dead, but after the victorious assailants, with their rescued prisoner were gone this Tory revived from the swoon caused by the loss of blood, and pulling out his sword, he crawled to the edge of the river and plunged in; the cold water stopped the deadly flow and he lived for years after the war was over.

Upon learning of Ayer's capture and escape, McArthur was more enraged than ever, and determined to have the stubborn Irishman at any cost, so he went to take him himself.

However, he found only the patriot's wife and two young sons at home. After committing every depredation in his power, McArthur set

fire to the house, and carried off the negroes. In the conflagration he spared a big barn well stocked with corn, which he wanted for his horses. For some years after the war was over, this barn was the family shelter. Mrs. Ayer and her two boys escaped to the nearby swamp, and there for several days were fed at nightfall by kind neighbors.

One of these sons, Lewis Malone, was only eleven years old at the outbreak of the war, but he soon began to take part in the great struggle. Born in Marlboro, he was truly a son of Carolina! The boy owned a sorrel pony, the swiftest steed in the community, and upon its back he traversed many miles of unknown country, carrying messages of importance from camp to camp, and from commander to commander.

Of course the British soon learned how information became disseminated thereabouts, and the lad and his pony were objects of vengeance and desire to the invader. He always attributed his escape from harm to the inordinate greed of the enemy for the horse. They wished to capture it unhurt, and their care for the animal probably saved his life.

The young courier witnessed the treacherous death of Col. Kolb. Kolb with two friends, had gone home for a brief visit, and the Tories learning of it, Major Gainey set out to capture them. Col. Kolb's regiment, hearing of Gainey's move, made ready to follow and by holding his ferries and various roads, hoped to rescue their beloved commander, if he should be taken prisoner. An effort, however, should be made to warn him, in order that he might escape. The only hope was in young Lewis Ayer and his fleet-footed horse, Selim. The boy was sent upon the errand, but the Tories were too far in advance; he never succeeded in overtaking them. When he came in sight of Col. Kolb's home it was surrounded by the blood-thirty band. The residence was a two-story brick building and was seemingly fastened against the invaders while Col. Kolb and his two soldier friends stationed themselves beside windows in the second story, commanding obliquely the front and rear of the house. The volley poured into the building by the Tories was not returned, the inmates having very little ammunition, and being so few in number, felt it incumbent upon them to husband their resources.

When the Tories dismounted, and with logs of wood approached, intending to beat in the doors, the well directed shots from above laid them low. This recurring several times, the invaders withdrew a little distance for consultation. Major Gainey then sent a messenger bearing a white flag and requested a parley with Col. Kolb. The Colonel replied that Major Gainey and two of his men, unarmed, might come as close as they pleased. Gainey then went forward and most solemnly assured Kolb that if he and his two companions would surrender themselves prisoners of war they should be honorably treated and exchanged at the earliest opportunity. He even named a British colonel, then a prisoner in the hands of the Americans, for whom they would exchange Kolb. The specific statements and earnest protestations deceived the brave officer, and he with his two friends came down unarmed and passing through the door of the house, surrendered. The whole band of Tories advanced to meet their prisoners, and when they came within fifteen or twenty feet of them, Gainey gave the word "shoot the damned traitors." The treacherous volley poured upon them and the three defenceless patriots fell dead.

Lewis Malone Ayer, hidden in a dense willow thicket not far from the scene of the tragedy, witnessed the harrowing spectacle. Sad and mortified by the failure of his mission, the lad stealthily made his retreat.

But ere long approaching the house of Mr. Caleb Nunnary, about six miles away, hunger, and a stronger passion, boyish love, made him halt there for a time. Mr. Nunnary's young daughter, Sarah, was the lode star of his existence just at that time, and in fact, became his wife before he attained his twenty-first birthday.

Halting at the house, Lewis tied Selim, and entering was soon busily employed eating supper and telling his dreadful story. But in the midst of his recital Gainey's men rode up to the house and with exultation, beheld at their mercy, the coveted pony, Selim, which they immediately seized, and upon which the exultant Major Gainey fastened his handsome saddle and a fine pair of army pistols, the valued gift of Lord Rawdon.

Meantime, through a near door, the lad made good his escape, his route being completely concealed by an immense field of tall corn, through which he fled. After a vain search for the boy, the Tories comforted themselves by the possession of the horse, and entering the house, rudely demanded supper.

Mrs. Nunnary and Sarah busied themselves in preparations for their

unwelcomed guests, but well Sarah knew that Lewis would never abandon his beloved pony without making an effort to save it, so when the party sat down to the table Sarah took a chair and, seating herself in it, tilted it back against the open door, through which the Tories could keep watch upon their prize tied just without.

A very restless girl did Sarah prove to be; she twisted in her chair, she dropped it upon its legs, then she again tilted it against the door on two legs until, suddenly chair and girl both fell heavily to the floor, and the door slammed shut. Sarah set up a mighty groaning; she had hurt her arm dreadfully, she thought it must be sprained and she had bruised her ankle. In the midst of her complaints and her mother's attempts at consolation, there was heard rapid galloping of a horse. With an oath Gainey sprang to the door and throwing it open beheld Selim, adorned with his own saddle and holsters, bearing the grinning boy, who as he disappeared down the road amid Tory shot and curses, turned and waved his hand to Major Gainey with an impudent shout: "Good-bye, Major, till we meet again."

Wild with anger, the disappointed officer cursed the girl and accused her of shutting the door purposely to which the saucy maiden replied: "You must be an old fool if you think I would hurt myself so for anybody."

Nevertheless, Sarah's injuries disappeared with the disappearance of her Tory guests. Selim was never captured again and with his proud master made many more trips bearing messages of importance over long and dangerous distances.

Thomas Ayer died at his home in Marlborough district soon after the war was over. Lewis Malone remained there with his mother until his marriage at twenty to Sarah Nunnary. When they went to Barnwell district, he establishing himself at Buford's Bridge in what is now Bamberg county, living to become a wealthy and influential citizen. He was a member of the famous Nullification Legislature. He died in 1855 at the advanced age of 95 years.

PROSECUTION ENDS.

Sentence of Two Years on Gang is Stayed by Marriage.

Florence, June 8.—There was a romantic and dramatic ending to a case tried in court to-day. Commodore Poston, a prominent young farmer from the lower part of the county, was tried and convicted of seduction of Miss Ella Poston, who though she has the same name, was no relation of Poston's. The prosecuting witness was her brother.

Judge Gage sentenced the young man to two years on the gang, and fixed the bond in case of appeal at \$3,000. After a conference between the principals, they determined to get married, and the services of Magistrate McClenaghan were called for and he tied the knot in the court room with the judge and jury as interested witnesses.

This acted as a stay in the sentence.

Confirms Crum's Nomination.

Washington, June 8.—With practically no discussion, the senate committee on foreign relations to-day decided to report favorably the nomination of W. D. Crum, of Charleston, S. C., to be minister to Liberia. Crum's appointment was announced at the White House yesterday.

E. A. Brown, Esq., of Aiken, stenographer of the second circuit, was admitted to the Bar last week after passing a highly satisfactory examination before the newly created board of law examiners. There were fifteen candidates in the class and seven were unsuccessful.

Serious Case in Darlington.

Darlington, June 8.—There will be two men tried on the charge of criminal assault at the approaching term of criminal court, which convenes here on Monday, June 20. One of these will be the negro Johnson, who was convicted of the crime committed in Hartsville over a year ago. His attorneys argued an appeal before the supreme court last fall, and a new trial was granted by that tribunal shortly after the February term of court last. Johnson has been kept in the penitentiary ever since his first trial in February, 1909, when he was convicted.

The other case is against a negro, Harris, who has been practicing among negroes of this county for some time, claiming to cure certain diseases by means of electricity. A very respectable colored woman went to him recently for the treatment, and she was assaulted while in his office. The defendant in this case was lodged in jail three days ago, and will face the charge during the approaching term.

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