

My half-brother William lived over there. He and his son were in the Southern Army. Men locked his family in the house and set fire to it. This made my brother so furious that he got permission from the regular army and raised a squad of men and went for the Torries and when the Guerillas came they drove the Torries down the river. That gave us a rest and we could sleep in peace for awhile. One night not long after that a party of men came looking for brother William. They said that they were going to hang him. They did not find him for he never came near our house. They told mother if she did not tell where he was they would burn the house. Then they changed their mind and said that they would take me. I was sitting on the stairs steps. I told him there was no one up there but there was another company on the way and I hope they would kill them. Then the Captain guess there was no one upstairs so they left. The Guerillas kept those Torries busy. It was safe for our rebel boys to come home now although they had to stay close in the house. One of our neighbors had heard that her husband had been killed. Brother Jim came home and Mother kept him hidden. We had been through much and we still had to be very careful. Mother sent me over to this neighbors house to tell her that her husband had not been killed, but he was wounded and was recovering. Mother told me to be very careful not to let anyone hear me tell her. There was a lady there so I just sat and said nothing. Then she said,

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"Oh Birdie, come and see my little chickens." As soon as we got out of doors she caught me by the shoulders and said, "what is it." I told her what brother Jim had told us about her husband. She ran back into the house and said that mother had a bad spell of headache and had nothing to take. Then she went to a shelf and took an empty vial and asked the other lady if she would take care of her children until she came back. We ran all the way back to our house. She saw Jim and he told her that her husband was not dead and was doing fine and getting well. Jim went back to camp. Not long after that Father came

William Carroll Duncan, b. 1822, and his son, William Daniel Lafayette Duncan, b. 1847, both served in Forrest's cavalry. William D.L.'s records are difficult to trace. His widow was denied a pension. However, a photo of him in uniform is available in the maps & photographs section of this blog.

The family must have escaped the fire because William Carroll and his wife, Amanda, show up in census records both before and after the war. In the 1870 census, they are in Weakley County. Apparently William Carroll died between 1870 and 1880 because Amanda is listed as a widow in the 1880 census. Do you have any information about this event?

In his book, *Hurst's Worst*, Kevin McCann reports that, in early 1864, Colonel Fielding Hurst "was given greater leeway in his movements than at any point during the war." He writes that Brigadier General William Sooy Smith told Major General Ulysses S. Grant on January 17: "We have given Colonel Hurst a roving commission with his regiment...and directed him to 'grub up' West Tennessee." McCann writes that Smith's attitude "coincided with the sentiments of Major General [William T.] Sherman, who after three years of war had come to the realization that if Confederate sympathizers 'cannot be made to love us, [they] can be made to fear us...' McCann also reports on instances of Hurst's cavalry "burning homes and harassing wives and children of Confederate soldiers."

home. He was not well and Mother was worried about him. He had to go to bed. We were afraid for him,--he had to stay close and we were always on the lookout for fear some one would find out that he was

at home and slip in and get him. It seemed that we always had to be listening for some kind of noise. We had to be quiet so as to hear the least noise. Some of us had were afraid to be outside for fear some one would slip up and surprise us and we would be caught unaware. Then Father got better and went down into Mississippi and stayed with his brother who was an invalid and did not go into the army. Spring was coming with the warm sunshiny days. Mother started a little school in the big living room. The children were glad. She had about 20 of the children in the neighborhood. She taught four days in the week and Sunday school on Sunday. Everyone was pleased. It was free as no one had any money. The school lasted all summer. The children were nice and clean with their hair combed but clothes I would not attempt to describe. Then Mother organized the community prayer meeting. That was a great success. It went for about two years and we were greatly comforted and blessed. The Torries and the lawless raiders had been run out of the community, and we were having some rest and safety. Father came home and brought some much needed things among them he brough some cotton and wool and Mother and Sis got busy and made some white goods and made some sheets which we needed very much. They worked at night as the school kept them busy in the day-time. The things in the garden were getting large enough to eat and the wild onions were growing fine. We were getting along pretty well. The war was

still going on in other parts of the south. Father came home again not so well. Mother had dreamed that brother Jim was sick or wounded. She made Father get up at two o'clock in the morning and then Father started to Corinth and sure enough he met Jim coming home with his arm in a sling. He had been shot in the wrist and it came out just above the elbow. And his back was all cut up from a shell explosion.

Then Mother had a terrible time with him,--he suffered so dreadfully. Only two old Doctors were available and they were so old they could not work and did not know much about what to do anyway. So Mother had to do the best she could. Father could not help her for it was not safe for him to stay at home. So we had to keep Jim in a back room in the dark and keep the door shut.

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The windows were still boarded up. There was, as yet, Guerrilas to keep the Tories from slipping in and when we heard horses galloping we never knew whether they were friend or foe, and that kept us in a state of terror for we well knew if they were enemies they would take that poor wounded boy out and hang him. They did not come often to our relief. That did not relieve the tension that we were in for being uncertain. Mother was almost in despair. We were overjoyed when we heard that the Confederates were coming,--even if they were Guerrilas' as they would be a protection to us. We had been through so much that caution and fear became a second nature to us. We soon had plenty of gray coats scouting around. Things began to look brighter for us. We were

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not so afraid now. Father came home. Now he could stay awhile. The gray coats were with us. Pappy made a little arbor in the bushes with ??? little trees for posts and he worked limbs around them so no one could see through them. He put a camp cot in it so Jim could stay there in the daytime and he began to get better right away. We would take his meals to him. We still had to be careful. He did not come back into the house until dark. Father was at home most of the time now. More scouts were around and gave us more protection. We could get the things we needed and we did not have to stay so close to the house as before. It was getting along into mid-summer. Mother made the boys some shirts and they went out to play in their shirt tails. She made me some slips and I wore them out to play with the boys and one of the old Doctors came along

and said, "well I didn't know that you had five little boys." So I went into the house and put on an old ragged dress and Mother said that I looked worse than I did at first, and I said that I did not care I was not going to let anyone think I was a boy. Brother Jim was getting well now. He did not have to keep the water on his arm now. Mother and Sis were very busy now. Mother turned the school out as they had a teacher now but she kept the prayer meetings going and they kept it at other houses also. Mother and Sis made the little boys some clothes out of the cloth they had so they would be ready for school this fall. We had a very quiet summer. It will soon be fall again, then we will be gathering nuts and other things that are good to eat. We are like the little squirrels putting things away for winter. We set

traps to catch birds and the quails and they are very plentiful this winter. We had news from some source that General Forest was sending scouts out to stop the lawlessness that had been going on ever since the Shilok battle. They helped a lot. There was another General named Raddy, I did not know much about him. I heard a Guerilla say that when they caught a Torry they sent him the nearest way to Raddy. I knew what that meant,--that they would hang him. My brother Jim was with the scouts the last part of the war after his arm got well enough so he could use it a little. We had a cousin whose husband was a Tory Captain. His men got Jim and had the rope around his neck and the Captain turned him loose and took him home with him and kept him until he could send him home.

When he was coming home some one in ambush shot him in the breast and that bullet stayed in him until the day of his death. After that we did not have anymore trouble with the Tories. We still had the Guerillas. They were just as bad only they were on the Confederate side. Pappy came home to stay. He still is not well. The hardships of the army life was too much for him. He brought us some shoes and the best of all he brought Margie home. She had been

staying at Ripley, Miss. with her brothers folks. We were so glad to see her. It was nearly Christmas and we called her our Christmas gift and we were happy. We had asked her to bring her cat in and put it beside of the ? just like she did before she went away for we were her little white chilins now that she is back.

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We children will have more liberty. We can stay out of doers more as she watched over us and took care of us, and then she will help Mother and Sis do the work. Mother and Sis were making a web of cloth. She had some ? so she made the cloth white and yellow stripes. Then we had a dress apiece. I wore mine short so the stripes run up and down but she wore hers long so her stripes had to run around. She said that was a new fashion,--that they did not look funny. I was very proud of my new dress. Margie would have to wash it at night and hang it up to dry. I put it on in the morning without ironing. The irons were gone like everything else. Margie fixed an ash hopper and ashes in it and poured water in it and made lie to wash the clothes with. She could not make soap. We had no grease. We went down into the botton field and found some pumpkins and turnips and turnips greens that had come up in the turnip patch. Everything helped out. Things were scarce and hard to get. Pappy was feeling better so he went away for a while and when he came back he brought a lot of things to eat and seed to plant and shoes, wool, and cotton. Then mother, Sis, and Margie got busy to make clothes and knitting socks and stockings. We were beginning to have things now. I was worrying about Mother. She looked pale and worn. She told me not to worry about her, that she was thankful that things were not as bad as they had been but that was the very things that was telling on her,--

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things that she had gone through. There were some confederate soldiers camped not far from us and somethimes they would come to our house and talk with pappy.

One kept coming often, so one day I told Margie that I thought he was coming to see Sis for he was always at her. Margie said don't you worry your pretty little head about that. Miss Sara would not look at him. That made me feel better but that did not satisfy. Sis was a beautiful girl and only twenty-three years old. We were fixing up for Christmas with what we had. We had many things to be thankful for, our lives and good health,--that our soldier boys had been spared. So far the things that we had lost were small compared to the many blessings that we had to thank our kind and loving Father who brought us

through the trying times of the last three years and we trust that he will still care for us and keep us from all harm in time of trouble which befalls us in time to come. We still put our trust in Him for we know He will stand by us in time of trouble. Sis and Margie are fixing to go over the river. Sis to visit her sister, and Margie to see her Mother whom she had not seen for three years. Sis was hiding her things out for safe keeping for she did not know what might happen before she came back home. She came and told Mother that a friend of hers wanted her to come and stay all night with her so she wanted Margie to have everything ready to go the next day. Sis did not come back and Mother sent Margie to see about her. She came back and told Mother that Miss Sara had married that soldier boy

and had gone away with him. That upset Mother,--she had brought Sis up since she was three years old. Mother told Margie to go on and visit her Mother. She was gone two weeks. Christmas was gone and we started in another year. There was plenty of hard work for all of us to do. Mother and Margie had all they could do. The baby was (1865) getting to be a big boy now and could look after himself. Only when Margie was with us on our trips in the woods, then he would take a bone in his leg and could not walk at all. Then she had to take him up. Then Johnny said that boy did not have any more bone in his leg than he did himself. About this time Jim came home and brought some calico of different

Do you know the identity of Sarah's second husband or anything about him?

kinds. He was not well. His arm and breast were giving him some trouble. Pappy told him that it would be safe for him to stay if things kept on like

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they were then, but he should stay close around the house. Pappy was going away to try to get some things that we needed. The war was still going on and we still had to be careful for we did not know how soon things would take a turn for the worse. He told Jim not to expose himself,--that it would be best if it was not known that he was at home. We had not seen any kind of a soldier, neither blue or gray for sometime. He said that we must be careful and on the lookout. He was worried on account of Jim being at home. Then we all gathered around Pappy and he prayed and left us in the care of our kind heavenly Father, who I knew was with us in the room and would be until the end of time if we put our trust in him. Pappy left next

INSET

THE OLD CHIMNEY AT ROCK HILL

Eight feet deep and six feet front it was a double chimney built between the kitchen and main room between a large closet under a stairway on one side and a door leading through a back porch into the kitchen on the other side. With a hearth about two feet wide on each side of the chimney. Above the fire place were places built to put things to keep them warm.

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morning and we did not see him for two months. Mother was worried as night came on. Margie suggested that we keep a lookout in the early part of the night and she was the self appointed sentinel that watched over us while we slept but nothing happened. We went back to our old quiet ways. Jim was still in the little back room. He was very precious to us. Not one of us would not do all in our power to protect him from all harm. Days went by and we were not bothered except a few scouts in gray uniform came by. We did not trust them. We were afraid that they were wolves in sheeps' clothing. We had been deceived

before and we did not know whether they wer friend or foe,--th t we never knew. We still had no light at night. We got through with all the work before dark. Margie would keep

a little fire burning that gave a little light. Then she would cover it up as we had no matches at that time. Then she would go out to look around to see if everything was alright. I was afraid that something might happen to her out there in the dark so I would slip out and stay with her. She said that no one could see her in the dark,--she was to black. There was a man came in one day and told Mother that he had the palsey, and wanted to rest ahile. He sat down in a chair and he kept shaking all the time. We did not leave him alone because we were suspicious of him. Margie fixed us some dinner. She brought him something on a plate and,asked her if some one stayed in there all the time. She told him yes and when she went out I came in. He did not shake so much when I was in there. He asked a lot of questions about our men,--where they were and

which Army they were in and if they came home often. I told Mother and she said that we had to get rid of him. He sat there until after night and then he got up and went away. When he got out into the night he walked as straight as any one. Margie watched him go. We were uneasy that night but nothing happened. What he was after we never knew. Mother did not know what to do. She was afraid that some one had found out that Jim was at home. Margie said that she knew that man was a spy sent there to find out if Jim was there. He did not find out. That was the reason no one came that night. We had heard that the Torries were just across the river. We knew that something had to be done about Jim so she and Margie began to make plans to send him awgy to the railroad and get him away. So they sent him to an Aunt at Ripley, Miss. where he would be safe.

When she knew he was safe the relief was so great because she had gone through so much nervous strain it was almost more than she could bear. Mother then went to bed and sent for a neighbor lady to come and spend the night with us. She brought some flour. Mother asked her where she got it and she said that she guessed Bob stole it. Bob was her husband. He did not go into the army,--he had something the matter with his neck. She said that it was not wrong to steal or to tell lies during war time when there was nothing to eat. Mother said there was nothing to tell her now and she said that she could tell as big a lies as anyone. I knew right then who helped Mother get Jim away. Spring was coming,--~~soon~~ everything was getting scarce again, our clothes were wearing out,

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our dishes were about all gone,--we had ceased to think about new clothes. Mother had lost her needle but there was nothing to make anyway. We did not have a comb anymore so Mother had to cut off my long curly hair. We had some cards,--the kind they used to card roles to make thread with. Margie used them to get the tangles out of our hair. Mother made the boys some suspenders out of the cloth she had left from the pants she make last fall. The buttons were all lost off of them so they got some thorns which were plentiful and pinned them up. The quails were beginning to make their nest in the fence corners and hedges'. They were plentiful as no one had killed them. We had lots of fun hunting their eggs. There were lots of them. They were good too. We did not bother the little birds or the doves,--we were taught that they were sacred. Everything

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was beautiful now. Flowers blooming all over the woods, The days were warm and sunshiny. Everything was so peaceful. It is so hard to believe that we have been through so many hardships and privations. We little rebels have come through with flying colors but we are not out yet. Mother does not look well. I guess she took things to heart more than we did

but we are ready to face whatever trouble that was in store for us. We were thankful for the peace and the quiet of the last year. We hope the war will soon be over and peace will soon be all over the land. Pappy came home last night after six weeks absence. He had a nice trip. We were all so glad to have him back safely. He came by Riply and saw Jim and our other brother who had been there ever since the Shiloh battle. He was such a big boy that they were afraid to leave him at home. He was only 15 years old. Pappy brought a lot of things home with him and left more at the railroad station to get later. After he saw how things were at home some one gave him a little gray mare. She was a beauty but she had been shot in the mouth and her front teeth were shot out so she could not eat corn or bite the grass. We took great pleasure in gathering grass to feed her. We did not have her long. One morning we went out and she was gone. Some thief had stolen her. Everything happened at night. We were so afraid that she would not be fed right. We were afraid for night to come. Pappy could carve and make things out of wood. He made combs

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and spoons out of maple blocks and lots of other useful things that we needed in the kitchen. He would help Mother with her work at night. He would knit gloves and socks, make button holes and sew on buttons. Mother had some cloth. She had for sometime but had not made up. Pappy had gotten his things from the depot. We were having some sunshiny weather and apart from our worry about what might happen in the future we were doing fairly well. Mother made me two dresses out of calico that Jim brought sometime ago. She had not made them before because she had no needles. She was looking better and we had high hopes that all our troubles would soon be over and this cruel war fare would soon be over and peace and prosperity would come again over our beautiful southland.