

First Visit of the Yankees to Somerset
Place, Lake Scuppernong. N. Carolina
July 21st 1862

On Monday July 21st 1862, about 10:00 P.M, Capt Woodward a Federal officer with Twelve of his men came to Somerset Place. As soon as I could dress myself, I went out and met the Captain, who introduced himself, & assured me that I should not be annoyed in any way, & that none of the servants or the property on the Plantation should be troubled.

"He then said he wished to examine the house to see if there were any arms, or ammunition; I showed him into the office where we found one Gun which he did not take; after this, I carried him into the Parlour, Library, & Dining Room, and offered to take him up stairs which he said was unnecessary, as my word that there were neither arms nor ammunition was sufficient. I remarked that I had two bags of shot in my room which I was using as weights to press my sermons, & asked him if he wished to see them, he said that he did not.

"After this conversation & search, I sent Alick Millin [?] over to Mr. Chas. L. Pettigrew's to let him know that the Federals were here; the boy, however, was stopped by one of the Federal Soldiers, who was acting as a guard on the Bridge near the house, & brought back to the Capt, but at my request was allowed by him to carry my message over to Mr. P. I then went down to the overseer's house in company with Capt Woodward, and a soldier, to let Mrs. Spruill know, (the overseer being absent in Plymouth on business concerning the Mill, which had been made a public Mill by the order of Capt Flusser, a Federal officer,) that she should not be troubled in any way. When I arrived there, I found that the house was guarded by soldiers, but as we returned the Capt kindly took away the guard from the overseer's house, & brought them up to the Collins' residence, where they remained all night, sleeping, when not on guard, by my permission, on the lower Kitchen **Piazza**. Mr. John Giles, who came in with the Yankees, also staid with the soldiers on the **Piazza**, as I had previously told Capt Woodward that I could not allow either his men, or Mr. Giles, to enter our house for any purpose whatsoever; So they did not go into the House or the Colony. Having reached the house, the Capt & I sat down in the Dining-room, when he informed me that he had orders from his Government to take away a lot of Corn & Wheat; I asked him if the U.S. Government intended to pay for the grain, he said no, but that it was to be taken to Plymouth, to be distributed among the poor. We then conversed about the War, I asked him when he tho't it would end? He said before a great while, & then enquired of me when I tho't there would be peace? - I told him I was in his power, &, therefore, perhaps it would be better for me to be silent, he replied, "Oh! No, when do you think it will end?-" I answered there would be peace, either when the Federal Government gave up, or in the next case, when every man, woman, & child in the Confederacy had been killed. We sat and talked until about 12 M. when we parted for the night. I had the room usually known as "Miss Alethea's" prepared for the Capt, to which he retired.

"On the morning of Tuesday, July 22nd, about ½ past 4, I went down to the Mill, where I found the Captain; & two of his men acting as guard.

While there the Capt was either talking to me, or attending to the business then on hand. The Overseer returned from Plymouth this morning, and was able to in person to attend to the business; As the Yankee Capt had told me the night previous that our hands were to prepare the grain & get it ready, & to put it on board the Yankee Schooner, they remained in by my orders, & were all busily engaged when I reached the Mill. There being Corn and Wheat enough in the Mill to satisfy the orders of the robbers, it was as speedily put on board the Flat as possible, and carried down to the Schooner by our force. Altho' Capt Woodward had assured me that the Federal Government did not wish our Negroes, that they were not allowed to go within their lines, & that our servants should not be carried off in his vessel, still, I tho't it best, & was strengthened in my belief by the advice of my friend, Mr Pettigrew, to go down to the Scuppernong river with the Capt, his men, and our people, & see for myself that our Negroes neither ran away, nor were carried away. I remained either on board the Schooner, or in the neighborhood until the vessel was loaded, & all our servants were on their way back to the Lake.

"The whole am't of grain taken by the Yankees is as follows - which is the statement given to me by the overseer - to wit. -

Corn-----1.080 bushels
Wheat ----- .238 " "

"Whilst we were at the Mill, a man by the name of Durham Lassiter, came into the Lake, & took away with Capt Woodward's permission, & from the lot of corn which the Capt had already forcibly taken from us Two (2.) barrels of corn. Also another man by the name of John Ainsley carried off Two hundred (200.) pounds of Flour which he paid for.

"Mr. Chas. L. Pettigrew came over to Somerset Place, & went down to the Mill, where he met with Capt Woodward, & had some conversation with him on the subjects of the day.

"I am happy to say that all our servants behaved with great propriety. None were carried away by the Yankees, & not one of them so far as I could learn was at all desirous to run away. The Capt treated me kindly, & regretted to me that he had been sent on such an unpleasant mission. I replied that it was most unpleasant to me, & that I hoped the like would not occur again.

"While the Yankees were here, I gave orders that breakfast should be prepared in the Wash-house for the men, The Capt, however, I of course invited to eat with me in the house. I endeavored to treat him politely, tho' not cordially while he was at the Lake; & when I went on board of his vessel, he showed me marked kindness.

"On our way down to the River, Geo. B. Davenport desired to ride with us as far as Danl S. Phelp's house, in order that he might have a private conversation with the Capt; What Mr. Davenport said to the Capt, I, of course, do not know. So we were delayed at the Mill until 11 O'clock A.M., & as it would be quite late before it could be put on board the Schooner, & as we had no provisions with us, the Capt & I accepted an invitation to eat dinner with Mr Davenport. Mr D, was evidently very much alarmed, but did nothing so far as I know against our Government.

"When I parted from the Capt, he thanked me for the kindness he had recd, & said that he would mention it to his superior officers. I replied that I trusted he would only speak of it, as an assurance that Mr. Pettigrew and myself were as likely to speak the truth as the "Buffalo Yankees," for we were gentlemen, &, that if any reports were circulated against us, I hoped we might be allowed an opportunity of speaking for ourselves.

"I am sorry to say, that tho' Capt W., did his best, I am sure, to prevent any disorder among his men, yet one of them went into the Cook House, & shamefully ravished our Sv't Lovey, threatening her that she should be shot, if she resisted or made any noise; he also drove away some servants who went to her assistance, by threats. The Capt promised me that the man should be severely punished for his disgraceful misconduct.

"Whilst I was on board the Federal Schooner, Mr John Giles apologized to me for the taking away of our Corn & Wheat, and said that he did all he could to prevent it. He also regretted the War and its consequences upon us & the people of our neighborhood. I asked him if Mr Lassiter had paid for the Corn which he had taken; he said no! that Mr L., was a poor man & unable to work. I remember nothing else in regard to this visit of the Yankees to our Plantation, that is worthy of record.

"Turn over. –

**"Second Visit of the Yankees to Somerset
Place, Lake Scuppernong. –
July 27th 1862.**

"On Sunday July 27th, Capt Woodward with about Thirty of his men, Mr Giles, & a young man by the name of William Alexander, a resident of Tyrrell County, who had been bro't here under guard, & against his will, for what cause I know not, paid a 2nd to this plantation, for the purpose of pressing Twelve (12.) horses into the Federal service, to be used in this County in case the Yankees were attacked by the Confederate Cavalry.

"That morning Mr C. L. Pettigrew, and Geo. C. Newbury who had come here on an errand from his father, were sitting with me in my room, when we were all surprised by the painful news, that "the Yankees is here." I went out immediately, & found two soldiers stationed as a guard on the Bridge near the house; I asked them where their officer was? - learning that he was down at the Mill, I went there at once, & found him in company with Geo. W. Spruill, our overseer, & John Giles, examining our horses. Capt W., after saluting me told me his business, & showed me his order to take Twelve horses, which order is now in the possession of the overseer. The Capt regretted the cause of his visiting us a 2nd time, & said that it was not his fault; I begged him to leave us some horses, particularly our Carriage horses, & Conrad, as the last named was a favorite horse which belonged to a deceased member of our family; but it was all in vain, the Capt feared that he would be compelled to take such horses as would be of use to his Government. I think, however, that he would have left us these horses just named, & I am almost sure that he would not have taken Conrad, had it not been for Giles, who seemed most anxious to take those that were most valued by the family.

"When Capt Woodward had examined & selected our horses, & found only Seven (7.) that suited his purposes, he went over to Bonarva [the Pettigrew Plantation] , & took Five (5.) horses belonging to Mr Pettigrew, which were carried down to our Mill by Mr P.'s servants, & after dinner the whole Twelve (12.) were taken away by the Federals. I asked Capt W., & the Master's Mate, a man by the name of Williams, to dine with me, at the same time I had dinner provided in the Wash house for the soldiers; Mr Giles ate at the overseer's house. Just before dinner Mr Pettigrew came over to see the Capt at his request; it could have been Easily perceived by any person with two grains of sense, that the visit of the Yankees was not at all relished by Mr P., & in a proper manner, he showed them very plainly that it was not, at the same time remarking, that no Government could prosper which took away the property of the people against all law & order, &, that whilst he did not blame Capt W., for obeying the orders of his Superior Officers, yet he did very much blame any Government that resorted to any such means to establish itself. After some conversation neither very agreeable, nor of much importance, the Yankees left us, & we returned to the Colony in no very pleasant frame of mind.

"The soldiers, so far as I know, during this visit behaved very well; tho' from what I can learn they talked to some of our servants about freedom, & asked some of them if they would not like to go away with them, where they could work, & receive wages for their work.

"I am sorry to say that Fred Elsy [Fred Littlejohn] did not behave properly; I ordered him to remain in the garden, in order that he might take care of the fruit, & report to me if the soldiers stole any; instead of remaining where I had placed him, & where he belonged, he went down to the Mill, &, as William Penny said was the 1st to bridle the horses for the Yankees. It is my opinion that he should be severely punished, not only for his disobedience, but also because he was very impudent to me when I remonstrated with him about his conduct. He has since apologized to me for his misconduct, & as I then hoped, sincerely, but his conduct afterwards has been extremely wicked, & tho' I forgave him freely for his 1st offense, yet now I fear he is worthy of punishment.

"It is due Mr Collins overseer, Geo. W. Spruill to say, that before, during, & since the two visits of the Yankees to this plantation, he has behaved with great propriety, & is I believe & hope true to the Southern Confederacy.

"This is a copy of my 1st rough ~~draft~~ description of the Yankee's two visits here.-

Geo. Patterson

"Love for all = How I wish I
could see you & talk with you.}"