

Civil War

When the Civil War broke out in 1861, Allen Kennedy, the Mayor, and most of the city officials were union sympathizers. They issued the following proclamation

“We, the undersigned citizens of Brunswick pledge our sacred honor to maintain and defend the stars and stripes, which now float on what is now known as the Douglas pole, and to maintain the same in its position, and that we will not suffer any traitorous hand to lower or disturb the same.”

July 7, 1861

A. Kennedy, Mayor

Frederick Sasse

John D. Plunkett

R. P. Dolman, Clerk

Since many of the people of Brunswick had come from Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee, they sympathized with the Confederacy. Sometimes brother fought against brother and neighbor against neighbor, causing much ill-feeling that lasted many years after the Civil War ended.

Men of Chariton County fought in three different companies for the union. Louis Benecke, a resident of Brunswick, enlisted in the 18th Missouri Volunteer Infantry. However, in 1862, at the battle of Shiloh, he was captured and held prisoner for seven months. In the spring of 1864, he enlisted a company of volunteers of which he was made captain. During the remainder of the year, he commanded the company and was mustered out in August, 1865.

In 1861, James Morgan, a grocer of Brunswick, undertook to raise a company of Union men to be known as Morgan's Rangers. A newspaper commented, "true Yankee zeal!"

Records show that Jasper Peery became Captain in the Confederate Army under General Price, and George W. Hibler enlisted in the Confederate army under Major Searcy, and was a member of the latter's battalion of sharpshooters. Both men served until the close of the war.

DeWitt Clinton Basey, in an unpublished manuscript "Recollections of Old Brunswick" commented on the Civil War:

“Upon the breaking out of the Civil War, I joined a company of Missouri State Guards raised by General Edwin (or 'Stump') Price, as he was known, and we went to St. Louis to drill. Under a call from the Governor, we went out to Camp

Jackson, which was at the end of Olive Street, and while engaged in drill we were surrounded, and most of the company taken prisoners to Jefferson Barracks. Our company returned home and was called to Jefferson City to drill; then to Lexington, then to the Arkansas line, where the Missouri Guards and Confederates joined forces and marched for Springfield. We met the Lyons forces at Wilson Creek, where we had a hard fought battle, but came out victorious. The army lingered there for sometime. General Sterling Price sent me home with dispatches to his family who were Confederate or gray uniform, and I have often thought of my fortunate escape from being waylaid. On my arrival home, I was taken before Colonel Morgan and sworn not to take up arms again.

Property of value was destroyed by fire in Brunswick. Allen Kennedy's warehouse with a large quantity of furniture, tobacco, and several pianos was among property burned. The loss was great as the building contained the property of citizens who were leaving for St. Louis to escape the horrors of the Civil War. It is said that about fifty-five people (mostly noncombatants) were ruthlessly killed in Chariton County during this period of the war. John Leonard, a youth of seventeen, was accused of leading some bushwhackers. After he was arrested, he was

taken before the soldiers stationed at Brunswick. When they decided that he should pay with his life, he was taken to the frozen Grand River, thrust under the ice, and held until he died.”

Miss Mary Lou Stewart interviewed Mrs. Lola Hopner (who was ninety-one years old at the time) in 1967, and Mrs. Hopner recalled her mother telling her:

“Coffee was scarce. Some soldiers crossed the bridge and slit a coffee bag. Women ran out with spoons and cups, getting a few grains of coffee out of the road.”

In an interview with Miss Abbie Magruder (sister of Mrs. Ruby Benecke) before her death in February, 1973, Miss Magruder gave the following account:

“When the northern soldiers came here, we hid the hams. My mother's father (William David Herring) lived here, and Mother had a baby here. (The 13 children of Waverly Theophilus Magruder and Joanna Elizabeth (Herring) Magruder were born in "Locust Hill", part of which was built in 1837, but Lloyd Herring, whose father lived there until he married in 1887, says that the house as it is today was probably not finished until the 1850's.) During the war, the family took their shotguns, and hid in the cellar of the slave quarters when the Union soldiers used the house for two days. The soldiers

took my grandfather away and brought him back unhurt the next day. He never mentioned a word to anyone what happened. The smokehouse and slave quarters are still standing.”

The following story was told by the late L. W. Heisel and printed in the April 4, 1957 issue of *The Brunswicker*. During the Civil War, J. J. Heisel, Louis Heisel's grandfather, was a Captain in the Union Army and trained men for service. Although feeling was sometimes bitter between Northern and Southern sympathizers, J. J. Heisel [numbered among his best friends the Plunkett family, Southern sympathizers, who ran an early-day store in Brunswick at the approximate location of the Uptown Store. One day a raiding party of Bushwhackers visited Brunswick in search of Yankee sympathizers. The Plunketts hid their friend Heisel in a vault at the drug store until the bushwhackers left town, probably saving his life.

William Andrew Stroemer, a union soldier stationed at Montgomery, Alabama wrote May 27, 1865, to his wife. in the letter he said, "With this letter the last postage stamp is leaving. Money is not at hand, also no stamps! . . . Sometimes I can get some paper from our regimental Chaplain. If possible, send me 4 or 5 stamps . . . Toward evening we have our dinner bean soup with a piece of cooked shoulder." On June 21, he wrote, "We are still 4 miles east of Montgomery, the same place we were six months ago. We will not be in Missouri by July 4th. Yesterday we received rations for

10 days. That signifies, without a doubt, that we will soon be leaving here." This letter was addressed to Dear Wife (Frau) and Children (Kinderchen). The whole letter shows how homesick he was and he writes, "Tell the children I will be home soon, and all should have a remembrance of my service in the South . . . Have you sowed the grass seed? You must let the boys hoe! . . ." The letter ends with "Be heartily greeted and kissed by your husband and father, who is still longing to see you."

The grandfather of W. D. Hibler, Jr., John James Hibler, wrote the following letter:

Dear Cousin Elvira,

. . . in regard to your dad, he was all right. Cousin Bill & my brother Isaac left there in 1863 to go south. There was about 150 to work their way through the main army but before they got there they were taken prisners (sic) and they were all sent to Alton prison. Brother Isaac died there some time after that, the rest were set free, 7 sent home on the steam boat and your dad was with them also. Well after they got home the home guards hunted for them day and knight (sic) & killed some of them so there had to be something dun (sic) so they got hold of what arms they could to protect themselves and scattered out in small bunches-stayed in the

woods, hence the name bush whacker & it was either that or get killed or hung & there was plenty of them hung & shot. Well then in the fall of 1863, then in the fall of 1863, the boys got through to the south & Uncle Stringfellow was killed that fall in 1863. Your dad got back in the spring of 1865 & went to KC . . . If your brothers have any more mischief in them than some of their folkes back here, they must be good ones.

Love to you & all the rest,

Cousin John James Hibler