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The Anthony Burns Affair

**Alexandria, Virginia Locals at the Center of National Debate
over the Fugitive Slave Act during Violent Incident in
Boston, Massachusetts**

by Cliff Johns

The Alexandria Gazette of May 30, 1854, published an article which describes a riot in Boston, Massachusetts sparked by Col. Charles F. Suttle's attempt to reclaim his runaway slave named Anthony Burns. By the terms of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act¹ Suttle, an Alexandria merchant, had every legal right to expect that the fugitive would be returned.

During the course of the brawl one defender of the jail in which Burns was incarcerated was killed by members of an Abolitionist mob numbering 2,000. The event provoked intervention by such national Abolitionists as William Lloyd Garrison and Wendell Phillips.

The old Gazette article documents how the Metropolitan Washington area figured into national militancy

against slavery.

There are few details in the *Gazette* story which document how Anthony Burns fled to Boston, the hotbed of abolition in antebellum America. Initially, the slave hid amidst cargo he was loading in a barge departing from the James River at Richmond. (Burns seems to have stowed away for three frigid weeks in February.)

Upon Burns' arrival in Boston, the *Gazette* reports "he wrote a letter to Richmond, stating that he was at work with Coffin Pitts, in Brattle street, cleaning old clothes." Testimony to determine the runaway's arrival time in Boston established that Burns was also employed at the Mattapan Iron Works in South Boston. Thus, Burns was able to find employment before his former owner showed up to reclaim him. Burns' letter was meant to alert friends to his whereabouts, but despite the precaution of sending the missive via Canada, the Southern practice of opening and reading slave mail led to detection of these facts and

put Burns' owner Col. Suttle on his trail. Suttle traveled north to reclaim his "property," who was now under the jurisdiction of a "U.S. Commissioner Loring" in Boston.

The *Gazette* prints an ostensible colloquy between slave and master, an example of pro-slavery fabrication. In it, Burns expresses regret at escaping slavery and states he is eager to go "home." The *Gazette* editorializes: "His only object in leaving at all appears to have been a species of curiosity, which being thoroughly gratified, he desires to return." The *Gazette* further reports that Burns was motivated solely by a childish wanderlust, **not** the desire to escape the conditions and stigma of slavery in Virginia.

What, if any, were the connections between Col. Suttle, his slave Anthony Burns and Alexandria? An examination of Alexandria Business Directories in the Lloyd House track Suttle's commercial activities. The first mention of Suttle's name occurs in 1860: "Suttle G. [Sic] F. & Co., 10 South

Wharves ¼ Merchants, Commission." Ten years later in 1870, Suttle resides at "112 Cameron," while his business was then allied with one "Henry L. Stuart" at "13 King." [old numbering system] Finally the Directory for 1876-1877 places Suttle & Co., "general commission merchants," at the foot of King Street. There is however, no evidence that Anthony Burns ever worked for Suttle in Alexandria. By the 1880s Suttle's name has disappeared entirely from Alexandria.

Recently Albert J. Von Franks' in his new book The Trails of Anthony Burns: Freedom and Slavery in Emerson's Boston puts forth additional new evidence about the Burns' affair.

It is interesting to note that in the Massachusetts court proceedings to determine Burns' status, officials objected to the word "master" being used by Burns himself and others as "odious." Further evidence of stark regional disparities appeared in the case when William Brent, who accompanied Suttle to Massachusetts as a witness,

was sued for \$10,000 for "damages, well knowing the said Burns to be a free citizen of Massachusetts, who had been arrested and imprisoned as a slave."

Von Frank's book details some horrendous accounts of the run-away Burns.

Anthony Burns, the youngest of his slave mother's 13 children, was about 20 at the time of his arrest in Boston. He had been raised and had worked in Stafford County until his owner's son Charles (eventually a member of the Virginia legislature) hired him out² to "three maiden ladies" to run errands. "The fifteen dollars he earned was the first money Suttle obtained from owning Anthony." After that initial transaction Burns was continuously hired out. Five of Anthony's siblings had already been sold during his youth; his mother was hired out from the family for two or three year. Suttle's rock quarry business had failed (it had supplied inferior stone to the U.S. Capitol and White House) Subsequently Suttle moved to Alexandria (1852), while Anthony remained hired

out to Stafford County whites. The record shows Burns to be very religious while his master was not.

At the time of his capture Burns showed signs of abuse and fear for his future. Richard Henry Dana,³ an attorney and a member of the Abolitionist Vigilance Committee who came to Burns' legal aid, left the following description of the defendant: "He is a piteous object, rather weak in mind and body, with a large scar on his cheek, which looks much like a brand, a broken hand, from which a large piece of bone projects, and another scar on his other hand. He seemed completely cowed and dispirited," and indicated that any attempt at defiance of his owner would make it "go hard for him back in Alexandria." (The hand had been mangled by a careless "master" in a saw-mill accident.) Later Burns would rally mentally and physically, but at first he seemed to his potential defenders fairly hopeless as a defendant.

It is clear from the *Gazette* story that the Burns affair inadvertently caused a

riot in Boston in May of 1854. Just four years after passage of the Fugitive Slave Law, detested by most Northerners, and an eventual factor of the Civil War, the Burns' case tested the act's validity, and thus created a riot involving 2,000 protesters, black and white. As previously mentioned, one deputy jailer was killed when the mob crashed the facility. First, a door was smashed in with a 12-foot make-shift battering ram; there were other minor injuries during the ensuing mêlée; at least nine protesting Bostonians were arrested. During the riot allusions were made in speeches to both the Boston Tea Party and Massacre of revolutionary days as justification for this populist revolt for freedom. Burns, the Alexandria run-away, was not successfully freed by the abolitionist mob during this assault on the jail. He was forced, however, to return with Suttle to Virginia.

The Burns' case caused anti-Fugitive Slave Act demonstrators from other Massachusetts towns including Salem, Worcester, and New Bedford. Demonstrators not

only surrounded the jail but rallied at Faneuil Hall for a meeting to discuss strategy. These protestors threatened to tar and feather Suttle's slave catcher and also raised money to buy Burns from his owner. Suttle, under pressure, said at one point he would accept \$1,200 for Burns; but when the asking price was met, Suttle changed his mind, and requested more, making the purchase price unobtainable. Other complications of this ugly affair included the law suit for \$10,000 against Suttle and Brent "for having conspired together to have the said Burns a "free citizen of Massachusetts" arrested and imprisoned as a slave of the said Suttle and carried to Alexandria, Va., &c., &c." Even President Pierce was forced to intervene in the Boston case, by telegraphing authorities and insisting upon enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Act.

The Alexandria Gazette published the following facts about the riots one fatality. When the door to the Boston facility was forced in a bold effort to free Burns, Bostonian

James Batchelder, "a truckman, in the employ of Col. Peter Dunbar, 'received a pistol shot' in the abdomen." The *Gazette* account continues: "Mr. Batchelder uttered the exclamation, 'I'm stabbed,' and falling back into the arms of watchman Isaac Jones, expired, almost immediately. The unfortunate man resided in Charlestown, [MA], where he leaves a wife and one or two children to mourn his untimely death." Later editions of the *Gazette* aver that Batchelder was shot as well as stabbed during the rush; his assailant was later arrested. Among the weapons used in the attack on the Court House were meat axes with "blades enveloped in the original brown papers." The wielding of these items revealed the depths of hatred and the potential for even more serious bloodshed. Only the presence of U.S. troops seems to have been the main factor which prevented those meat axes from being swung.

Edited by Edgar Snowden, the Alexandria Gazette compiled stories about the Burns' affair mostly from telegraph transmissions.

These articles made clear that Col. Suttle, the aggrieved Alexandria slave owner, was interested in testing the enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law as well as reclaiming his "property." Ultimately he refused the \$1,200 offered by Boston Abolitionists for Burns' freedom. According to Edgar Warfield in his volume Memoirs of a Confederate Soldier, Suttle was later involved in organizing local militia in Alexandria which led to the formation of the 17th Virginia Volunteer Infantry Regiment in Lee's Army of Northern Virginia.⁴

Only 51 of these local Confederates were left to surrender at Appomattox. Suttle's military role in these operations appears unclear since he may have been too old for field service.

Suttle was not an inconsequential Alexandrian of the nineteenth century. Von Frank writes that he operated a general store, Green, Suttle, & Company, for two decades. In 1866, "he ended his long bachelorhood by marrying Emily Taliaferro Claiborne, a

war widow from Baltimore." As a result of his social status, Suttle served on the Alexandria city council, and was a director in the Farmers' Bank and the Orange, Alexandria & Manassas Railroad. He retired to the Blue Ridge and died in February 1881.

Meanwhile, Burns was returned with his "master," to Virginia. Perhaps, the runaway's only consolation may have been a reunion with his mother, also owned by Suttle. (It is more probable, however, that Burns' mother was hired out elsewhere other than Alexandria, or that she was deceased.)

After being remanded, Burns then served several months amidst wretched conditions in a Richmond prison. He was later sold by Suttle to a Rocky Mount North Carolina slaver, who agreed to Boston, Massachusetts Abolitionists' terms and financial overtures. Burns' cause was kept alive by his desperate correspondence to the North for freedom.

Burns' return to Boston was exploited by a lecture series.

Still later, Burns attended Oberlin College in Ohio. Finally, he took a pastorate in St. Catherine's, Canada, where he died in the summer of 1862. His tombstone is still visible, and bears an inscription about his role as the object of the Boston slave riot.

There is no question from the *Alexandria Gazette* accounts and Von Frank's book that in 1854, five years before John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry, and seven years before Fort Sumter, Bostonians and Washington-City people were acting out the contentious preamble to the Civil War.

Alexandrians, on the other hand, would suffer greatly with the outbreak of Civil War in 1861. For four and one-half long years they endured the longest military occupation of any American city during that conflict.

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Endnotes:

1. Fugitive Slave Laws -- two statutes enacted in the U.S., 1793 and 1850, for the return to their masters of escaped African-American slaves. The first act gave the slave-owner the right to seize an alleged fugitive...Laxity in enforcing this law led to efforts in the North to nullify it; continued demands of the South resulted in an even more stringent act, part of the Compromise of 1850. The hostility stirred by disputes over fugitive slave cases was one of them.

2. The practice of hiring out slaves was common in Northern Virginia between 1800 and 1861. The 1999 summer issue of the *Alexandria Chronicle* contains a fascinating article by Dr. A. Glenn Crothers about the conflict between the ideals of the American Revolution and the institution of slavery. It contains these lines: "if all else failed, planters and farmers could always hire out their excess slave labor. In fact significant slave

hiring took place.' The labor needs of the region – from agricultural workers to artisans, from wood cutters to wet nurses – could be supplied from this source. Perhaps [the] largest employers of hired slaves in the region, however, were the transportation improvement companies formed after the Revolution to link the wheat-producing lower valley to the port of Alexandria."

3. Richard Henry Dana -- (b. 1815; d. 1882); attorney and author -- His most famous classic was Two Years Before the Mast.

4. The 17th, amassed from Alexandria city and Northern Virginia counties in the days following Union occupation of the Potomac town, missed the battles of Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, and Wilderness because of being posted in Tidewater Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee. The regiment was fully engaged at Blackburn's Ford two days before First Bull Run; attacked in the early days of McClellan's Peninsula Campaign (Yorktown, Williamsburg); lost the most men in the whole brigade at Frayser's Farm; stood the test at Seven Pines; charged from the Chinn House during Second Manassas, while routing mostly Ohio troops and killing Daniel Webster's son Fletcher; fought with its weakest numerical strength at Antietam; performed stoically on the Howlett Line near Bermuda Hundred and at Drewry's Bluff; and was finally overwhelmed in an emaciated

state at Five Forks and Saylor's Creek against Sheridan's stout and well-equipped troopers, who smelled final victory.

The U.S. Presidential Election of 1860: Reflections of Judge Andrew Wylie

Contributed by T. Michael Miller

In the 1850s Alexandria was a community which exhibited strong pro-Unionist sentiments as the North and South debated tariffs, slavery and States Rights. Alexandrians' forefathers had fought with George Washington during the Revolution to secure the independence of Virginia and the colonies from Great Britain. After the war, Alexandrians were almost "Federalist" to a man and believed in the concept of a strong central government, especially that government's right to regulate trade and commerce.

During the second quarter of the 19th Century, the Whig party controlled Alexandria's political landscape. Nationally, the party had been formed to oppose President Andrew Jackson and the Democrats. The Whigs advocated a nationalistic economic policy (the American System), which emphasized internal improvements, a conservative public land sales policy and the continuation of the

National Bank. These designs appealed to local merchants and manufacturers whose business operations extended beyond state lines. Alexandria, populated by a conservative mercantile class, relied heavily on its coastwise and Northern trade.

Alexandria's Whigs endeavored to downplay the issue of slavery and shunned the propaganda of Northern Abolitionists and extreme Southern radicals. The U.S. presidential election of 1860 only served to fan the political discord between North and South. By 1860, the Whig Party in a vain attempt to prevent the dissolution of the country, organized the Constitutional Union party. Their candidate for president was John Bell(1) who did not believe that secession was constitutional or lawful. On September 27, 1860, the Whigs organized a grand demonstration of Union men in Alexandria.

The Union men of Alexandria made the most imposing demonstration, last night, which has ever taken place in this city. If there has ever been a doubt of the intense enthusiasm which the Union cause and its candidates have created in this good old town, that doubt must have been dissipated by the outpouring of popular sentiment witnessed upon our streets, last night. ...(2)

At the head of the delegation rolled on wheels, a mammoth transparent tower, each face of which displayed the likenesses of the Union candidates. On the two sides of the base were the inscriptions:

BELL & EVERETT

Reverse:

THE CONSTITUTION, THE UNION, AND THE MAINTENANCE OF THE LAWS.

...At the intersection of every street, rockets were sent whizzing to the upper air, and at the head of the First Ward delegation rolled a car with a "fountain of fire," from which Roman Candles and other fireworks were constantly discharged. (2)

Other candidates who ran for President of the United States in the fall of 1860 included Northern Democrat Stephen A. Douglas, Southern Democrat John C. Breckinridge and the Republican from Illinois Abraham Lincoln. On August 28, 1860, the "Breckinridge wing of the Democratic party assembled at Sarepta Hall" on the 400 block of King Street. After considerable discussion, a constitution for a Democratic Association was adopted and David Funsten was chosen president. For most Alexandrians, Breckinridge was too radical since he

championed "States Rights" and an aggressive policy for the expansion of slavery in the territories.

The Douglas arm of the Democratic party gathered at Sarepta Hall on September 10, 1860. This faction favored popular sovereignty in the territories and received moderate support in Alexandria. George W. Brent who would later play a major role in Virginia's secession convention of 1861 actively promoted the candidacy of Stephen Douglas.

Because of Alexandria's strong Unionist sentiment and financial self interests, it came as no surprise that when townsmen went to the polls in November 1860 they elected Constitutional Unionist candidate John Bell. After the votes had been tallied, Bell received 911 endorsements; Breckinridge, 619; Douglas, 183 and Lincoln only 2 votes. Not even Alexandria's Quaker community supported Abraham Lincoln.

One citizen who did, however, was Judge Andrew Wylie. He was one of only two men who cast their ballots for Lincoln in the November election.

Judge Andrew Wylie was born on February 25, 1814 at Connorsburg, Pennsylvania. His father served as both president of Washington University in Pennsylvania and Indiana State University in Bloomington. As a

young man Andrew was a student at Bloomington; but later removed to Lexington, Kentucky where he studied law and attended Transylvania University. Subsequently attorney Wylie relocated to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania where he became a leading member of the bar, served as a city councilman and was appointed city attorney.

On March 6, 1845, Judge Wylie married Miss Mary Caroline Bryan, of Alexandria, Virginia. Upon his return to Pittsburgh, Wylie found business much disturbed and moved to Washington, D.C. in 1849. He then settled in Alexandria, Virginia where he resided until the spring of 1861.

Through the influence of old friends, Secretary of War Edwin Stanton and Henry S. Lane, Senator from Indiana, Wylie was first nominated to be Judge to the criminal court and later, Judge of the Supreme Court of the District of Columbia. "He remained on the bench from March 1863 until May 1, 1885, when he retired at the age of seventy-two years. During his term on the court, Judge Wylie sat in the second trial of John H. Surratt, for the murder of President Lincoln, when the defendant was acquitted." [Job Bernard, "Early Days of the Supreme Court" in Records of the Columbia Historical Society (Washington, D.C., 1919), Vol. 22, pp. 17-19.] On August 1, 1905, Judge Wylie died in his ninety-second year at his lovely

house located at 1205 Vermont Avenue.

Although Judge Wylie claimed he was the only elector in the City of Alexandria to cast a ballot for Lincoln in the 1860 U.S. Presidential contest, a review of the election data reveals that two individuals from Alexandria and 14 from the county actually voted for the sixteenth President. [See: Alexandria Gazette: November 15, 1860, p. 2.]

In 1893, Judge Wylie published an interesting account describing the machinations surrounding the 1860 presidential election and the subsequent intrigue, the consequences of which led to the destruction of the U.S. arsenal at Harper's Ferry by Federal forces. The following reflections first appeared in the Alexandria Gazette of March 14, 1893.

"Judge Wylie, of Washington, formerly of this city, has given through "Gath" in a Washington paper some interesting reminiscences of the days just previous to the breaking out of the late war. He says:

'During the winter of 1859-60, I had both legal and legislative business at Richmond and went down there and stopped at the Exchange Hotel. There was a nearly universal sentiment in favor of destroying the government as far as I could see it. I do not believe that most of the men of influence there

desired to see a democratic president elected that year. Such an election would put off this pretext to destroy the Union. There were one or two persons like Alexander H.H. Stuart, who had been in [President] Fillmore's cabinet, and a gentleman from Wheeling, who thought with me that the government must be preserved. While I was there some kind of convention was being held behind closed doors. Delegates came from various directions, and pains were taken that nobody should get into that room or hear what was going on there. It was announced that a scheme of disunion was being there contrived. And, I made up my mind that whatever personal influence I had should be expressed in the ensuing campaign.'

'To vote for Bell and Everett, I felt would be to throw away my vote. I therefore resolved to vote for Lincoln and Hamlin. But they would not allow tickets to be disseminated at Alexandria, and in order to get a ticket I had to write to a friend who was on the electoral ticket and lived at Wheeling, near my birthplace. This gentleman was a brother-in-law of mine. He sent me a ticket. (The elections in those days, if I correctly remember, were in the nature of viva voce voting.--voice voting) I took my ticket to the polls and handed it to the inspector. The other tickets had designations upon them, and he saw that this was not either the Breckinridge, the Douglas or the Bell

ticket, so he held it in his hand. Said I: 'Why do you not deposit my ticket in the box?' (He had in the meantime been conferring with the judges of the election in whispers.) Said he: 'We were deliberating whether we would allow this ticket to be voted here.' 'You know,' said I, 'that I am a voter and a freeman, and have my rights here. I demand that ticket be put in the box while I stand here.' With reluctance, or hesitation, it was put in the box. When the votes were counted it turned out to be the only vote for Lincoln in the City of Alexandria. Then began agitation, such as you might expect in an old slave community like that. However, I did not pay much attention to the matter. I had some friends there, and some connections, too. A lady of my connection used to come with her husband to visit us in the night. They told us they were afraid to come in the daytime, lest they also be black-listed. I continued, however, to go over to Washington on the ferryboat and return again, and one day as I was coming over with a copy of the New York Tribune in my hand, a member of the bar said to me, 'I see you have got the New York Tribune there.' 'Yes.' 'Now,' he said, 'if you are going to read a paper like that, I advise you not to display it. If you must take it home, put it in your pocket, etc.' Said I, 'We are not yet savages, I hope, in Alexandria.' 'Well,' said he, 'there is a great smothered excitement here, and war is approaching, and you must be careful.'

After that I did put my paper in my pocket. It was generally known and remembered, however, that I was in favor of the government and of seeing Mr. Lincoln inaugurated. On Saturday night I was going home, and I had hardly stepped off the boat when I found myself surrounded by quite a band of men. One of these cried out 'Hang the black republican.' I had a stick in my hand, and I notified them that if they interfered with my personal action they might expect the consequences at once. They followed me some distance to my house. That evening two gentlemen came there and told me they feared the house would be burned that night. It was not my house, but belonged to another person. I said to them, 'I have no desire to live longer in such a community. Tomorrow is Sunday and you may say to the ill-disposed persons, who want to burn this house, that if they will let me stay here over Sunday and put my papers in order, that I will go away on Monday morning and cease to trouble them.'

There was a man in Alexandria by the name of Massey,⁽³⁾ who was not a Republican, but a Union man. He called on me one morning while the convention was meeting at Richmond to consider secession, and we did not know anything about its conclusions. Said he: 'Something has been done at Richmond. Last night I could see from my shop that the [railroad] rolling stock here was all hooked up and pulled off southward. Then I

also saw Mr. Barbour, the superintendent at Harper's Ferry, get off the cars and go rapidly past, and I hailed him and asked him what had been done at Richmond. He said that I must not stop him, that he could not tell me. 'Now,' said this man, 'I am satisfied that they have voted the State out of the Union and that Barbour is rushing off to Harper's Ferry, for he took the ferry boat to Washington, to seize the armory and arsenal there and turn it over to the enemies of the Government. (4)

'I told him I thought he had reasoned right.' Said I, 'Let us go to Washington and give the Government information.' He said he would go. We hired a horse and carriage, and as we went out of town in the night, we found patrols on the streets. Evidently those to whom the information had been given had already formed themselves into secession military. Our carriage was stopped and we were told that we could not leave town. I had a pistol in my pocket and felt determined, and I told them that we were going about our business, and if they delayed us they must take the consequences then and there. They were not quite prepared for this mood and let us go on. We crossed the Long Bridge(5) and when we came to the Washington end of it we found a piece of artillery planted on the bridge. An officer stopped us and said that we were friends of the government, coming to give it information.

We went up to Willard's Hotel [in Washington] and found everybody doing something else. There was a ball somewhere, and the principal officers had gone to that. Gen. Scott(6) had gone to bed. We hung around until late at night and then I got hold of Capt. Wright and I told him our conclusions. Said he: 'There is a train going out to the Ferry at 4 o'clock in the morning, and we will send a messenger to Lieut. Jones, in command at Harper's Ferry, and give him information.' The messenger went off, and before the rebels could get around to Manassas Gap and come to capture Harper's Ferry and its arms, Jones had got ready for them, had mined the works, and he blew them up and retreated across the river."

Thus, it appears that Judge Wylie and his companion were instrumental in keeping the Harper's Ferry Arsenal and its munitions from falling into the hands of the Virginia Government.

ENDNOTES:

(1) U.S. Senator Louis Bell (b. 1797; d. 1869) -- Bell "supported the plan of admitting the territories to statehood even though the exclusion of slavery should be the result of this. After the demise of the Whig Party, he tried to unite the moderate Republicans and former Southern Whigs. For these efforts he was called a harloting with the hated Black Republicans. Moderate men nominated Bell for the

Presidency in 1860, and he secured 39 electoral votes including Virginia. Bell disapproved of secession 'both as a constitutional right and as a remedy for existing evils.'"

[Allen Johnson, editor, Dictionary of American Biography. (New York: Charles Scribener's Sons), Vol. I, p. 158.]

(2) Alexandria Gazette:
September 28, 1860

(3) William Massey --Born in New York State in 1816, Massey was a successful tailor who served as mayor of Alexandria from 1857 to 1860.

(4) The U.S. Government maintained a large military arsenal at Harper's Ferry, Virginia, where thousands of guns and rifles were manufactured.

(5) The Long Bridge was situated just south of the present day 14th Street Bridge.

(6) General Winfield Scott (b. 1786; d. 1866) was general-in-chief of United States forces in the spring of 1861.

Christ Church and its War

Work during the First

World Conflict: 1917-1919

Alexandria was a town of 16,000 in 1917 when the United

States entered the combat against Kaiser Wilhelm the Second of Germany. Little has been written about the sacrifices and services of the young Alexandria men who enlisted to go "over there"(Europe) and fight during this conflict.

As local troops were drafted and mustered into service, the venerable Christ Church sponsored a series of sociables at their parish hall from 1917 to 1919 to entertain U.S. service men and wounded soldiers. A description of these "Sociables" as the boys called them forms a part of Christ Church Archives, now housed at the Lloyd House Library at 220 North Washington Street. Although not meant for publication, this charming account is presented in an unedited format. As a means to understanding Alexandria's role in World War I, it is fitting these minutes be published. The author of this work is not known.

"The first war work undertaken by Christ Church was an evening of music, with light refreshments provided by the Sunday School and served by the Parish Aid Society to the Alexandria Light Infantry before it entrained for Camp McClennan, Anniston, Alabama. Many of the privates just enlisted were our own church boys and we rejoiced in this opportunity to give them a cheering ovation. The Company and officers attended in a body.

Since then, August 25th, 1917, from time to time a number of parties, --"Sociables," the boys

called them, music and games, were given to the soldiers at the Parish Hall, and this amusement which they all enjoyed was provided for many who did not care for dances held elsewhere, and the refreshments often came from the ladies of the Parish Aid (Society).

The historic church was opened free to the uniform every day throughout the entire war period and on Sunday afternoon from two to six o'clock was opened solely for their benefit; no civilians being admitted. They grew to love the church; back they would come Sunday after Sunday bringing new groups of soldier friends with them, and they would sit by the hour and listen to the history, in the home church, of the lives of her two great sons, Washington and Lee. Then, too, the church yard was a delight to them; there they would sit and read or talk; they loved to tell of their own life at home, and every Sunday they arrived from the surrounding camps and forts, -- Camp Meigs, Humphreys [later renamed Ft. Belvoir], Meade, Washington Barracks, Forts Washington, Myer, Hunt, Foot and Sheridan, in a steady stream they came and always left refreshed and charged. The Parish Hall was also open to them, magazines and writing materials furnished them and souvenir postcards; sometimes fruit punch and cakes and always ice water on hand--a real luxury to a soldier. On Sunday mornings great numbers of officers and soldiers attended service and were

frequently taken home by the parishioners to meals. Some of the most prominent men on both sides of the water came to Christ Church to worship, besides our own Generals and Admirals. Shortly after we declared war, England sent a special commission to Washington and the Rt. Hon. Arthur J. Balfour accompanied by the British Ambassador, Cecil Spring Rice, attended service. Also, Sir Eric Geddes, Lord High Commissioner of England, Commodore Foote and Secretary Daniels.

The ladies of the church took their turn with ladies from other churches in cooking and serving breakfast on Sunday mornings at the War Camp Community Hall, thus meeting and feeding thousands of soldiers. Then, too, we would discover that some of the soldiers stationed near us had fine voices and had sung in their choir at home. They were made very welcome to our choir practice on Saturday nights, and sang with our choir on Sundays. It relieved them from the monotony of camp, and it filled our depleted choir, for our boys had gone to war.

The establishment of Community Night was perhaps one of the biggest pieces of war work undertaken by the church. Mr. Kenneth Clark first gave us the vision. He was one of the most famous song leaders of the war and came to the Parish Hall under the auspices of the Cameron Club to give us a practical demonstration of

what community singing could be. The work was established by Mr. Gordon Reese who had served one year abroad with the British Army before we entered the war. He brought us members of the Quantico Marine Band and the church bore the expense of lighting the yard with electricity, of erecting a platform for the band, and when benches were installed to accommodate between 800 and 900 people for open-air night services to be held during the month of August our equipment was complete. Having no printed words at first, we used our stereopticon most successfully. Later we used words printed in leaflet form and supplied by the War Camp Community Service. The success was instantaneous: from 2,000 to 3,000 people was an average attendance. Very few soldiers ever were present, because the band could never come on Saturday nights, the soldiers holiday, but the community was always there and the singing was for the community, and by the community. At the sings collections were taken to defray the expense of transporting the band by rail to and from Quantico as well as to pay for their meals; their beds were furnished them free by St. Paul's Church. In their frequent visits they were taken to Mt. Vernon, shown the historic points of the town, given automobile trips and were often entertained by the young ladies who had offered to help Mr. Reese. At other times the collections at the sings were given to war work such as the Red Cross,

or again to community work such as the playgrounds of Alexandria. When Mr. Reese left, and the band went overseas, Mr. Van Wie, the leader of the War Camp Community Services supplied us with leaders and bands from Washington and from Camp Humphreys. In the Home Coming week, June 8, 1919, one of the highlights of the week of celebration was a sing in the church yard.

On the night of June 8th, a Sunday celebration of a Victory Service in which all churches were invited to take part was planned for the church yard but the rain obliged them to hold the service in church, thus only hundreds could take part in the service while had the night been clear, thousands could have been accommodated in the yard.

So for two successive summers the sings in the church yard have been a source of pleasure and of profit to throngs of people, helping the church to become a center for social service, for she opened her gates to the community.

The last community sing held in the church yard was on October 19th, 1919, on the occasion of the Sunday School Parade. It was a beautiful sight, every Protestant Sunday School grouped under its own banner with its own distinctive colors, filed into the church yard and seated on the benches concluded the parade with singing a selection of hymns, led by the band.

In the golden days of the autumn of 1918, the influenza swept the Country, and Camp Humphreys shipped its toll of death to Alexandria, -- 80 soldiers in one day being no unusual number. Almost every family in the city had some member ill, and private houses were taxed to the limit. The vestry of Christ Church offered the Parish Hall to the medical authorities as a hospital. It was dismantled of all furniture, filled with cots, equipped with hospital supplies and the doctors and nurses took full control. Many a silent form was carried out of the Hall, while, when the weather was favorable those that recovered lay on mattresses on the benches under the trees in the beautiful church yard and slowly strength and health came back to them once more.

On June 15th, 1919, the last of the Home Coming Week,--a class in Sunday School composed largely of our returned overseas boys invited 90 of the wounded soldiers of the Walter Reed Hospital to be their guests for that afternoon. Automobiles were secured from our parishioners as well as from some of the leading citizens of the town. They drove out to the Hospital, brought the boys to Alexandria, showed them various places of interest, took them to the Masonic Hall where they were shown many relics, especially those belonging to General Washington, and members of the craft welcomed them and did the honors of the occasion. Then the soldiers were brought to Christ

Church where a few hymns were sung by the choir, a few prayers offered by the Rector, Dr. Morton, followed by a short sketch from him on the history of the church and a helpful inspiring talk on the work that lay before each one as a soldier of the cross, urging each to carry on in civil life after the war as valiantly as he had done on the battlefield, and supper was then given them in the church yard, members of the choir and the Girls Friendly serving the soldiers with substantial refreshments, while some of the little children of the Parish had made some fudge and were proud to distribute it themselves to the soldiers. It was a sight never to be forgotten, these 90 soldiers seated on the benches in the shady church yard, cherry and smiling still, who with their mutilated young bodies had paid our price for peace. On the return to the Walter Reed, one of the wounded soldiers said that since he entered the army it was the only time he had ever been asked to go to church.

Our Service flag proudly lays claim to 61 silver stars, and we thanked God that only two of those silver stars were changed to gold. On November 23rd, 1919, that same class of Christ Church boys invited another group of wounded soldiers from the Walter Reed Hospital to another Sunday service. The occasion being the planting of two memorial trees, one tree being in memory of Sergt. Major John H. Leadbeater, aged ____ years, a member of the class, and the other

trees was in memory of Lieut. George H. Anderton. Those who were represented by the silver stars on the Service Flag were given a prominent part in the ceremony. Preceding the choir into the church was the Sunday School class to which Sergt.-Major Leadbeater belonged, who carried the American and Virginia State Flags of the Alexandria High School when he had been a pupil under Lieut. Anderton, and on each side of the chancel these overseas boys of the class stood with those flags throughout the services which consisted of prayers, singing of hymns, reading of the names of those on the service flag and a short address by the rector.

In the body of the church were 70 wounded soldiers from the Walter Reed Hospital and a number of our local American Legion. The rest of the church was filled by relatives and friends. At the conclusion of the service a procession led by the class and the choir and the Walter Reed soldiers marched to the spot in the church yard where the two Nordman Firs were to be dedicated; one in the memory of 1st Lieutenant George Moncief Anderton and the other in memory of Sergeant John Morrill Leadbeater. In the gray November twilight "My Country tis of Thee" was sung by the choir, the benediction was given by the Rector, taps was sounded and the soldiers' last farewell brought the exercises to a close.

A supper was served in the Parish Hall to the Walter Reed men before they were taken back to the Hospital.

In July 1919 some of our Christ Church overseas boys whose silver stars shown on our Service Flag organized a club for boys and called it the Silver Star Club, taking as a nucleus the young boys in the Sunday School.

There are about 100 on the roll and every Friday night they meet in the Parish Hall for some athletics.

These records fade from memory but the outstanding results of the war work of the Parish is the Silver Star Club, that is the direct result and outgrowth of the vision of helpfulness and service caught by our soldiers in the war. --[Signed] HNC/fal"

Vignettes from the Pages of the Alexandria Gazette

A Lone Indian -- Probably the most venerable sign in Alexandria is the well known red man who has stood in front of the Scotch-roof frame house on the northeast corner of King and Fairfax Streets for the past half a century. [Ramsay House] This good natured-looking aborigine has kept his silent watch so long that everybody in Alexandria is acquainted with him. For half a century he has faced blizzards and

torrid waves with the same placid smile and clutching the identical bunch of cigars that were in his hand in the early days of the late Charles P. Shaw. [Shaw manufactured cigars at the Ramsay House] This faithful brave witnessed the departure of Alexandrians for the Mexican war, saw the sons and many of the survivors of that conflict pass and repass him while preparing for the fratricidal conflict of 1861-65, while the entire army of the Potomac passed him and repassed him during those four years. Time has long ago cut down his original owner and during the years he has so faithfully stood at his post thirteen hundred millions of people have died and equally as large a number been born. Yet Time has had no effect upon him; the same good-natured smile he has cast upon past generations he is casting upon this, while at long intervals a coat of paint causes him to renew his youth and render him invulnerable to the onslaughts of Father Time. When he first took his post the sickly glare of oil lamps cast their beams upon him. He smiled still when gas jets gleamed, and now under the radiant beam of electricity the same smile bedecks his countenance. [AG: August 26, 1893]

Alexandrians Used as Human Hostages on U.S. Military Railroad Trains -- Following Confederate Col. John Singleton Mosby's attacks on federal supply trains in October 1864, Union General John Slough, military governor at Alexandria,

requested and received permission from Washington to arrest local citizens and force them to ride the trains. Among the ten prominent Alexandria citizens arrested and held as human hostages was Edgar Snowden, Jr., editor of the Alexandria Gazette. Snowden explained his absence from the newspaper in a notice published October 17, 1864:

Office of Military Governor,
No. 7 North Fairfax Street
Alexandria, VA., Oct. 16, 1864

My arrest, by the military authorities in this place, to be one of a "safe guard" composed of some of my fellow citizens who are to be "detailed" to go upon the trains, on the Orange and Alexandria and Manassas Railroads, to prevent an attack by the Confederates, will account for my absence from my post of editor of the Gazette, and until my release, the conduct of the paper will be entrusted to those for whom I ask the indulgence of its patrons. -- Edgar Snowden.

Other citizens who were arrested and confined at the office of the U.S. Military Provost Judge included J.B. Daingerfield, Arthur Taylor, Rev. C.C. Bitting, pastor at the Baptist Church, T.B. Robertson, Dr. D.M. French, J.W. Stewart, Dr. J.B. Johnson [subsequently mayor of Alexandria in 1876/1877]; James E. McGraw and J.A. English. A portion of these [gentlemen] were sent up in the 5 o'clock train this morning; and the remainder in the

11 o'clock train." [AG: October 17, 1864]

After vociferous protests by local citizens, the hostage orders were rescinded and Snowden and the others were released.

Negro Regiment being raised in Alexandria --Efforts to recruit a Negro regiment are being made in this place. A meeting for that purpose was held at the African Baptist Church, yesterday afternoon which was addressed by several and about 50 names were enrolled as volunteers. [AG: May 12/14, 1863]

John C. Underwood, Judge of the U.S. District Court by authority of the Federal War Department has raised a company of Negro troops to do special duty in Fairfax and the

adjoining counties. These men though enlisted here are to be credited to New York. One-hundred fifty enlisted. Another company, it is stated, will probably be formed. The bounty of each Negro will be about \$600. [AG: Sept. 27, 1864]

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Cliff Johns is a local free lance writer and reporter who has published historical articles in the Washington Times, The Alexandria Gazette Packet and other journals.



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