

A 'Secesh Scratch-Cat' Finally Married a Yank

HOW DID Nashville's girls take to the boys in blue, who ruled the city with military clickety-clack for three long years?

It's safe to say that the girls who stayed home shared the antagonism for the Federals held by citizens in general. For the most part, there was no love lost between Yankee soldiers and Nashvillians. The mutual hostility was so thick you could cut it with a knife.

Any Christmas that passed in the city during those years could have been called a "blue Christmas." In 1862 Nashville's Daily Union, in its editions for Dec. 24-25, made just one reference to Christmas. And that said:

"The public are hereby notified that there will be no passes issued from this office on Christmas Day.

"Permits to carry merchandise beyond the lines of this army will not be granted."

That order was signed by Federal General W. S. Rosecrans, in command at Nashville. What it meant was that no Nashville girl, wife or mother could carry a scarf, a pair of shoes or a pound cake to a sweetheart, a husband or a son in Bragg's Confederate army at Murfreesboro. The same thing applied, of course, when Hood's troops were camped just outside the city during the Battle of Nashville.

A Military City

A Federal writer described how Nashville looked during the occupation:

"Nashville was now a military city. It was girdled with a waist of formidable fortifications and encircled by a zone of warlike camps.

It's proud capital, graceful and beautiful, upon the crown of a rocky hill, was a castle frowning with great guns on its battlements and bristling with glittering bayonets.

"The streets were barricaded with cotton and earthen parapets. St. Cloud Hill, once the cynosure of the Rock City, was a menacing fortress grinning at traitors in the rear and scowling at armed Rebels in front.

"The tramp of hated soldiery and the ominous rattle of cannon wheels echoed in the story streets. A sad mixture of luxury and desolation excited generous commiseration. The dwellings were full of rich furniture, but the markets were bare and money scant. Most of the able-bodied male population had gone to war. Scarcely a score of hale young men remained in the city.

"There had been mourning in almost every leading family, and there was woe in store which they had not drawn."



—Painted for THE NASHVILLE TENNESSEAN by Jane Balfour Payne Dicks
Boys in blue get not so much as a smile from a passing belle of old Nashville.

Newspaper advertisements during the occupation indicate, in spite of this report, that not all the markets were bare. A housewife could buy groceries — if she had Federal money.

Fresh Oysters

Bacon, hams, sugar, soap, fish, starch, brooms and other supplies were available. Prices were not printed — perhaps because they were so high as to be unmentionable.

The Capital Restaurant and

Oyster Saloon on Cedar Street advertised that it was "always supplied with all delicacies of the season — fresh oysters, game and fish, and also fancy groceries and confections."

The fact was that the people of the city, as the war went on year after year, had little with which to celebrate Christmas, or any other holiday. William Lamers writes:

"In wealthy homes pantries were bare, silver coffee pots empty, and fine china plates held scanty rations . . . Money was scarce."

If any Southern sympathizers did have money, military Gov. Andrew Johnson planned to relieve them of it. He would use it, he said, for a charitable purpose. A number of wives and children of Confederate soldiers were without support, and Johnson proposed to help them by collecting money from people who had it—at the point of the bayonet.

Johnson then levied assessments against all "rebels" who refused to take the loyalty oath. And these reluc-

tant philanthropists had to dig deep, whether they wanted to or not.

Among the leading Nashvillians who were forced to contribute were John Overton, Washington Barrow, Neill S. Brown, Mrs. Lazinka Brown, Dr. W. K. Bowling and Dr. W. A. Cheatham. Overton, under a heavy assessment, finally took the oath to escape financial ruin.

But despite all the antagonism and misery in the air, boys and girls did sometimes have an eye for each other—

such cases are mentioned by Mrs. James E. Caldwell in her memories of wartime Nashville.

One of the best known weddings of a Nashville girl with a Federal officer was that of Miss Ida Hamilton, a cousin of John Thompson, to Gen. Gates Thruston.

It was said that the couple met during the war at Glen Leven. Thruston, then a Federal colonel, was stationed nearby. When the colonel came in the parlor, Ida Hamilton flounced out of the room, holding her voluminous skirts tightly so they wouldn't brush the hated blue uniform. She must have made some cutting remark, since Thruston called her a "Secesh scratch-cat."

Romance Wins

In the end, however, romance triumphed. The year after the war was over the

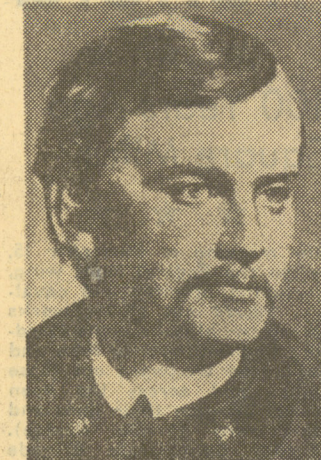
colonel, now a general, was stationed in Nashville with the army of occupation, and

Ida Hamilton consented to be his wife.

Ida's mother, called "Aunt Louie," by Mrs. Mary T. Orr, who lives in Nashville today, disapproved of the marriage, as did the rest of the family. The general could marry her daughter, she said, but he must not wear that blue uniform at the wedding.

Thruston was willing to go along with this—until he visited the minister's study at First Presbyterian Church, where the wedding was to take place. There, behind the altar, hung pictures of Jefferson Davis and Robert E. Lee. The sight so incensed Thruston that he showed up for the wedding wearing his blue regimentals after all.

But that turned out all right, because "Aunt Louie" didn't see him. She couldn't bring herself to come down and see her daughter married to a Yankee general.



General Thruston

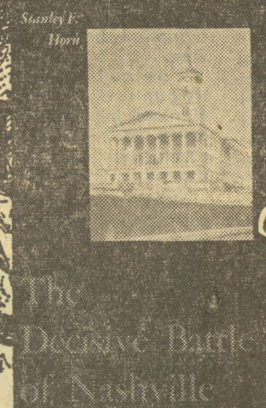
" . . . a battle of which a contrary event would have essentially varied the drama of the world in all its subsequent scenes"
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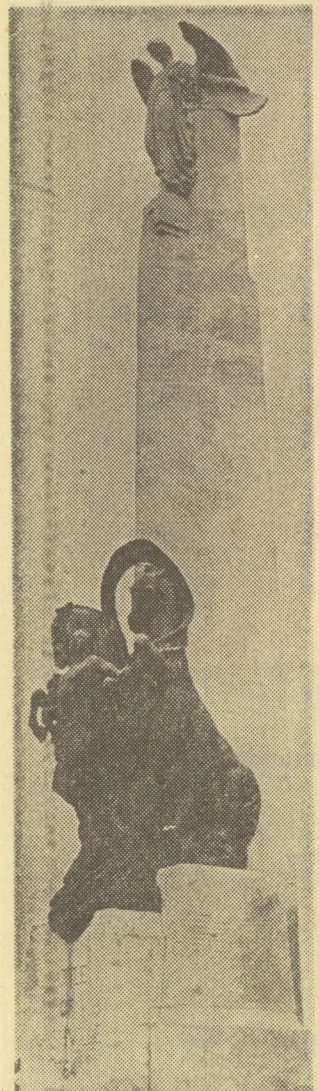
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An Angel Stands Over All

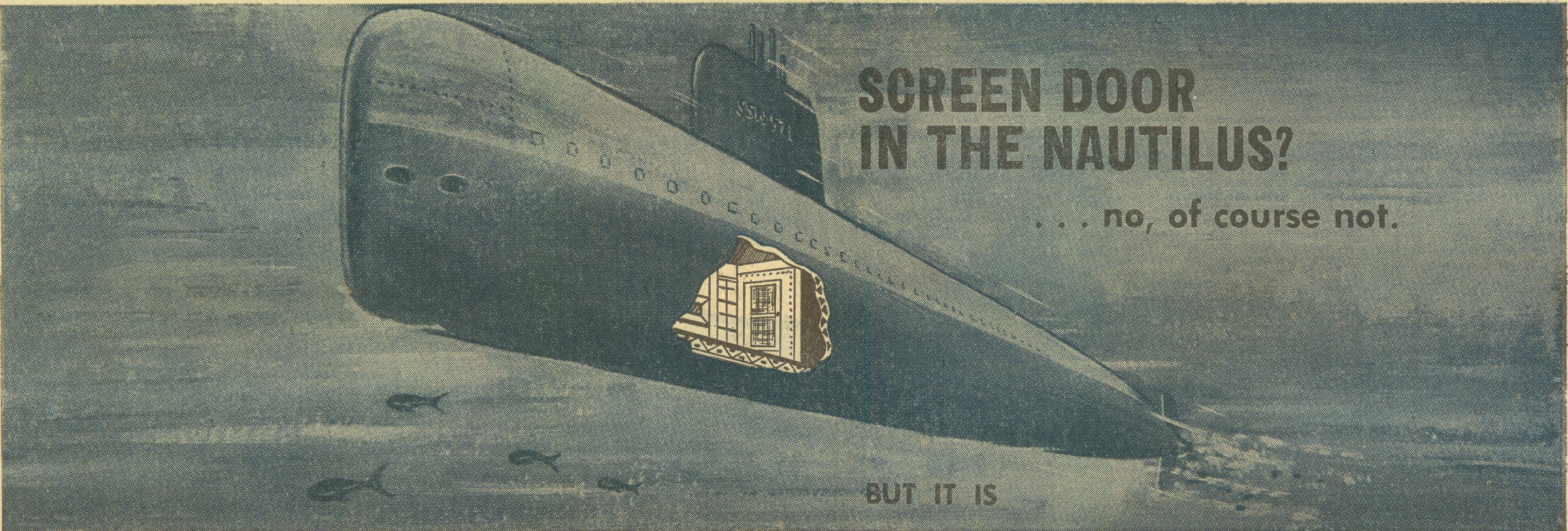
The Battle of Nashville monument, originally dedicated as the Peace monument, stands on Franklin Road at Thompson Lane. The monument was erected and dedicated in 1927 by Ladies' Battlefield Association through the efforts of its president, Mrs. James E. Caldwell.

The two charging steeds at the base of the monument, representing the North and South, are held in check by a youth symbolical of later generations in America's two world wars. Atop the monument the angel of peace looks down on the bronze figures and protects them with her wings.

Sculptor of the monument was G. Morett, and funds were contributed by patriotic citizens of Tennessee and other states.



Peace Monument On Franklin Road



SCREEN DOOR IN THE NAUTILUS?

. . . no, of course not.

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