

Romance and Flags

Six Girls Waited...

As Hood's Battered Confederates Marched Toward Nashville

By HUGH WALKER

THE DATE was Friday, December 2, 1864, and the Confederate Army of Tennessee was marching from Franklin toward Nashville.

No bells were ringing, as for the Romans on the Apennine Way. No bands played. It was a somber, silent, battered army — hoping for the best and expecting the worst.

But one thing this army had as it marched up the Franklin Pike to its old stamping grounds. The girls had heard the boys were coming home again — after three long years — and they were waiting.

These were, six of them, in buttons and bows, hoop skirts and crinoline, caps and bonnets — "much excited," as Colonel W. Dudley Gale put it, chattering, laughing, waving and, perhaps, crying for joy.

In his letter to his wife Colonel Gale listed the girls' names: Mary Bradford, Miss Maxwell, Miss May, Misses Becky Allison, Mary Hadley and Buck Correy. For the rest of the century their names would be prominent in and around Nashville.

Coming Home

It was no wonder the girls were excited as they stood by the road near Traveler's Rest. Their sweethearts and brothers were coming home again from Stone's River, the Chattanooga and Georgia campaigns — and from the bloody battle of Franklin. They had just two days before, 1750 boys in gray had died before the Federal battle line.

Death and his pal, danger, were everywhere that day, hiding like rabbits in the broadsword fields. But these girls, and the soldiers passing by, had lived with war for nearly four years now. They were thinking of life and love — brown hair and blue eyes — and long-remembered kisses. If danger was in the air, so was romance!

Mary Hadley

Take Mary Hadley, for instance.

Mary was 24 years old, the daughter of William and Mary Hadley. Her father had been a law partner of Felix Grundy, and had served as mayor of Gallatin.

Mary was in love, and her sweetheart rode by that day in Hood's army. She must have waved, and perhaps found time for a little sweet talk, because ten exciting days later they were married in the Brentwood Methodist Church.

Mrs. William G. Ewald of Baltimore was, as a girl, Frances Moore of Nashville. And her great-grandmother was Mary Hadley's cousin, Mrs. Ewald brought to Nashville a copy of the only known portrait of Mary Hadley, which hangs in her Baltimore home.

Mary Bradford

AND THEN there was a beautiful, brave and destined for a place in the history of Nashville and the Civil War. Mary lived on the Granny White Pike, and she had come across, perhaps on horseback, by one of the country lanes that in those days connected the pike to the Franklin Pike.

Mary Bradford's daughter, Miss Virginia Campbell Johns, lives in Nashville today, at 1610 East Linden Avenue, and through her we know more about Mary than any of the other girls who smiled at the Confederate soldiers that December day.

Mary Bradford was born on Feb. 11, 1836, and on June 19, 1873 she would become the bride of a sweetheart and neighbor, John Johns. Of Virginia ancestry, she was a descendant of Pocahontas and John Rolfe. She died on July



Even wounded Confederates could smile when they saw six pretty girls waiting on Franklin Road. The date: Dec. 2, 1864. —Painting by TENNESSEAN Staff Artist Jim Young

The scene was a cameo of Civil War history. The girls stood by the side of the road where the lane comes down from Traveler's Rest — eyes bright, hearts beating fast. The soldiers came down the dusty road, and there were shoeless boys with beards among them — boys shoved into early manhood by the hard hand of war.

TENNESSEAN staff artist Jim Young has captured that moment of long ago in his painting. At the bottom of the page, reproduced from paintings and photos, are the six girls as they looked when they lived in Nashville.

It was a moment when tears and laughter were mingled by the jostling of war. And these girls and boys of long ago come alive again on this page.

25, 1913, while on a visit to Rockville Center, Long Island, New York.

Mary Bradford was a beautiful girl — her pictures show it — and she had her mind on serving the South. On Dec. 15, during the afternoon of the first day of the Battle of Nashville, she made a place for herself in history. It happened like this:

Deas' brigade of Confederate troops, from the division of Gen. Edward Johnson, had been driven by Federal infantry from their positions along the Hillsboro Pike. These men had taken a beating, and they were retreating under orders, to a new position.

Helping the Wounded

The Confederates had set up a field hospital near the Bradford house in a small school building, and here Mary Bradford was helping the surgeons with the wounded.

"A lieutenant Fitzpatrick of Alabama had his arm splintered," Miss Johns said. "He had no drugs, but Mary Bradford held the shattered arm while the surgeon cut it off. The lieutenant just looked into her eyes and made not a sound. Her eyes were his anesthetic. Whether he lived or died, I don't know."

The surgeons ran out of bandages, and Mary ran up to the house to get linen sheets to make more. As she ran to the battlefield, she met Deas' beaten brigade streaming to the rear, officers trying in vain to rally them.

In the name of God and country, Mary begged the soldiers to go back into the front line and fight. Miss Johns says they did rally momentarily. But it couldn't have been for long, because all accounts agree that the men

continued to the rear. But Mary Bradford had done her best.

"The men seemed utterly lethargic," wrote Colonel Gale, "and without interest in the battle. I never witnessed such want of enthusiasm, and began to fear for tomorrow."

General Hood did not fail to mention Mary Bradford's attempt to turn the tide of battle, and described her conduct in his official report. And Mary Bradford, as long as she lived, and now in memory, is the official heroine of the Battle of Nashville.

White May

MARY WHITE MAY — who was Mary Bradford's friend — was usually called White

the army — perhaps a soldier who never came home.

White was an "ardent patriot," according to Mrs. Mary T. Orr, who knew her well, and was known to smuggle boots, pistols and medicines to the Confederate army under her voluminous petticoats.

One one such occasion she was searched by a Federal officer, who found the items he was looking for. "Well," said White, "I've often heard of a fellow feeling, but I've never experienced it until now."

White May was a mother to the children of her sister who died young. She lived until 1898, and today she is remembered by a faded photograph, owned by Miss Virginia Johns. On the back is written: "Miss White May, school-mate and close friend of Mary Bradford."

Mary Maxwell

MARY ELIZABETH MAXWELL was the second daughter of Jessie Maxwell. It was her uncle's land which was sold to Judge Overton for his plantation on Franklin Pike. Her sister married the judge's son, and it was the Maxwell name that was given to Nashville's largest and most famous hotel, built just before the Civil War. It burned to the ground after more than a hundred years had passed.

Mrs. Orr remembers Mary Maxwell as a beautiful girl —

but the executive type. She wanted a husband she could boss, said Mrs. Orr, but the right man never came along.

One time, however, Mary got a proposal while riding on the train. She was taking half a dozen children to Bon Air when a man boarded the car who supposed she was a widow, and the children were her own.

"See here," he said, "I'm a widower and I've got six children, too. I need a wife like you who knows how to handle them. Will you marry me?" Needless to say the answer was no, but Mary had a proposal to talk about.

In later years Miss Mary learned to use the telephone. One time a well known bachelor got her number by mistake. Thinking he had the laundry, he demanded: "When are you going to send my shirts?"

"I am an old maid," she shouted Miss Mary into the telephone, "and no man's shirttails hang on my line!"

Miss Mary lived to a ripe old age, dying in 1916 while living in the home of Dr. W. G. Ewing.

Becky Allison

AND THERE by the road that day, as Colonel Gale noted, was **Becky Allison** — little, lovely, and out to capture a Confederate officer for herself. She did, too, because she married tall Captain A. J. Porter. And his portrait makes it plain that if he wasn't the handsomest man in the Confederate Army, he was close to it. As for his young wife, Bishop Thomas Gailor called her the prettiest girl in Nashville.

Rebecca Allison was a charmer — her great-granddaughter, Mrs. David E. Graves tells how she persuaded the Federals to let her brother out of prison for Christmas. This young soldier, Dixon Allen Allison, came home for a hot bath and a Christmas dinner — then had to go back to the Federal calaboose.

Becky's husband had been educated at the Sorbonne, and the young couple went to Paris

Colonel Gale's Letter to His Wife

January 19, 1865
Headquarters Stewart's Corps, Tupelo, Miss.

I... will give you some account of our doings in front of Nashville. We left Franklin on the second day after the fight and moved on towards Nashville, our army in mourning. When we got to John Overton's place I saw some ladies by the roadside in high excitement, and on riding up found them to be Mary Bradford, Miss Maxwell, Miss Jay, Misses Becky Allison, Mary Hadley, and Buck Correy.

Mary Hadley was married to Maj. Clare, of the staff of Gen. Hood, and was left behind after her three days' honeymoon. Our corps moved across to the Granny White Pike, through Mr. Lea's place, and went to Mrs. Johns' house and established headquarters there.

Our first line was from the Franklin Pike, near Mr. Vaux's place along the ridge in front of Father's, by Montgomery's house (burned some time ago), across to the Hillsboro Pike, near Mr. Rains. This Corps on the left, Lee in center, and Cheatham on the right, extending over towards and near to the Murfreesboro Pike. We remained thus for two days, entrenching and building redoubts on our left. The Yanks were in line, plain in view along the high ridge just back of Mr. Lawrence's and in front of Mrs. Acklen's.

There was a force under Rousseau holding Murfreesboro which Gen. Hood was

anxious to capture. He detached the most of Forrest's cavalry and Bate's division to that work, but they failed. Bate was then ordered back, leaving Forrest. Here we remained watching each other and entrenching as hard as we could until the morning of the 15th of December.

On that morning about 9 o'clock it was reported to me that the enemy was advancing in heavy force on the Hills-

(Turn to Page 20-G)

Drawings by Jim Young reproduce portraits and photos of the six girls, some made after the war. Prettiest girl? Pick her yourself.

