

# Captain Andrew T. Harlee's



## Dispatch



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### “My Will is Absolute Law”

[Continued from last month]

Job Parsons was one of those who Milroy had placed a tax upon; he could not pay so he rode away to join Confederate forces commanded by Col. John D. Imboden, operating nearby. The Colonel immediately sent out a letter to President Jefferson Davis, enclosing the summons that Milroy had served on Job Parsons. Imboden wrote, “This is only one of a thousand barbarities practiced here in these distant mountains. Oh for the day of retribution!” Davis sent word to Gen. Lee to contact Milroy’s superiors asking them to respond to “the indulgence of such brutal passions.” On December 20 General Milroy ordered that all citizens under his command to take an oath of allegiance to West Virginia (a state that did not yet exist) and to the United States. Those failing to do so would forfeit all right to protection of his army. The same day, he added that in addition to forfeiting ‘protection,’ the defiant or unyielding must provide supplies for his troops. Since he was defending “the only truly republican Government in the world, rebel sympathizers, aiders, and abettors, seeking its destruction, must be made to feel the strong arm of Government, whether found in arms against it or at home with their families.” The people of Hardy County (where his last edict was issued) along with Tucker County, had voted in May of 1861 to withdraw from that “strong arm of Government.” Milroy was never reprimanded and nothing was ever done by the Federal authorities. In Frederick County, the town of Winchester had a prewar population of 4,403. It had almost as many free blacks as it did slave; yet in the May 1861 referendum on Virginia’s secession, the county had voted 81% in favor of secession. Winchester was repeatedly invaded and then liberated during the first year and half of war, but on Christmas Eve, 1862 a Federal occupation began that would last for six months. Their conqueror was none other than Brig. Gen. Robert H. Milroy, Republican, abolitionist, and staunch foe of all enemies of the Union. He was enthusiastic of Lincoln’s recent Emancipation Proclamation when he said; “Our boast that this is a land of liberty has been a flaunting lie. Henceforth it will be a veritable reality.” Some of his own troops though, were less enthusiastic, as one of his Pennsylvania soldiers wrote: “I never intend to stay here and risk my life for these damned niggers.” Many civilians under Milroy’s sway came to question his concept of ‘liberty.’ In a letter written in January of 1863, Milroy wrote to his wife and said, “my will is absolute law—none dare contradict or dispute my slightest word or wish...both male and female tremble when they come into my presence...I feel a strong disposition to play the

tyrant among these traitors.” Milroy ordered clerks to read all civilian mail, and if a word was detected that questioned the Union—or Milroy—the offending citizen could expect to be exiled. Exile or jail awaited anyone who might “insult” a blue-clad officer. When boys throwing snowballs accidentally hit one such officer, the child was arrested. It became an “illegal assembly” for as many as two people to meet publicly in Winchester. A local lady named Laura Lee wrote in her diary, “Gen Milroy told a girl the other day, when she went to him to ask for a pass, that Hell was not full enough of rebels yet, and would not be until more of these Winchester women went there.” Milroy used “Jessie Scouts” who were Union soldiers dressed as Confederates. They would go out at night to homes around Winchester begging for something to eat or a place to stay. Those who would try to help who they thought to be a Confederate were either exiled or jailed. Lloyd Logan’s family discovered the true identity of a “Jessie Scout,” and ejected him unceremoniously from their home. The family was immediately exiled, not allowed to pack clothing or possessions. A Logan daughter, though ill, was even forced to leave her medicine behind. Milroy’s troops went to several towns around Winchester and robbed the “disloyal” and destroyed their property. He explained it to his wife this way; “The way of the transgressor is hard. If they could not afford to renounce treason they must suffer on as they need expect no favor.” Despite the fact that a declaration of loyalty to the Union would bring relief,



**Monument**  
**Gen Robert H. Milroy**

not a single person took the oath under Milroy. In mid June of 1863, at the Second Battle of Winchester, Confederates under Lt. Gen. Richard S. Ewell routed Milroy and his men—the citizens seemed to go wild with joy. To the left is a monument dedicated to Gen. Milroy. A fine example of a good Yankee soldier who was promoted to the rank of major general in recognition of those assessments that first brought him to prominence. Should you ever decide to visit this monument, don’t look for it in West Virginia, it can only be found in the town of Rensselaer, Indiana where he is remembered by those people by a large bronze statue.

### Cooks for the Camp

There are several members who have volunteered their service as cooks for one month of the year so that the Camp could enjoy a meal prior to the monthly meetings. This has been a successful

addition to our meetings. The following have volunteered their time and labor.

January----- Tommy Thompson  
February----- Charlie Floria  
March----- Larry Jones  
April----- "Heavy" Price  
May----- Leroy Jackson  
June----- Asa McDuffie  
July----- Jason Tice  
August----- John Bumgardner  
September----- Daryl Hardwick  
October----- Charles Arnette  
November----- Howard Arnette  
December----- The Camp

Should there be some reason those listed can not provide a meal for the month indicated, they are asked to please contact Commander Artie Quick in plenty of time for someone else to have ample opportunity to prepare a meal. If your name is not listed and you would like to prepare a meal, you are asked to contact Commander Quick so that you may have that opportunity.

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## Brothers Divided by Politics and War

Thomas Drayton and Percival Drayton were brothers originally from South Carolina who were divided by their beliefs in politics and personal convictions. Their father was a prominent congressman named William Drayton, upon retiring from public office, relocated his family to Pennsylvania. As events led up to the firing on Ft. Sumter, these brothers had to make a decision as to where their loyalties would lie. Again, their beliefs would separate them. Thomas decided that he could not separate himself from his home state of South Carolina and Percival would not separate himself from his adopted state. Thomas wrote to his brother, knowing after Ft. Sumter that much ruin and misery was yet to come. He reminded his brother that the South was merely protecting itself against an encroaching federal government. He wrote: "Before this dispute is over however, I look for abundance of death and blood—as I cannot for a moment suppose that the North will stop without sending other expeditions against us. I could hope that wiser and more pacific counsels would prevail and that we might be allowed to pursue our ways in peace... It is unfair to charge us with being the aggressors in this strife. Mr. Lincoln who collected fleets and threatens assaults, is far guiltier than those who were provoked as an act of self defense into striking the first blow... We are fighting for home and liberty. Can the North say as much? If the Northern and Middle States allow



**Captain Percival Drayton**  
**USS Pocahontas**

as a captain on the USS Pocahontas. This seemed to not set well

the call of Lincoln and his shortsighted advisers, for men and arms to force us back into a hateful Union, then civil war is inevitable. So let all men set their houses in order 'to die and not to live,' and confess that self government is a cheat and that the American people have for 80 years been mistaking the phantom of liberty for the substance. Well may we tremble—who have children." Percival accepted a commission in the Union

with his brother Thomas as he wrote: "I had understood at our last interview—that although you would not take sides with the South—you would not do what you have now done,—take position against her, but that, you would resign and return to private life! William Drayton—had he not died—would never have acted with you and retained a commission under an administration whose acts show it lost to all sense of justice, magnanimity and honesty, and in this hour of heartfelt sorrow, I pray Almighty God, that your convictions of duty—will never prompt you to set foot on your native land as one of Lincoln's brutal cohorts, breathing fire and destruction upon a people who to repeated overtures of peace and earnest demands to pursue their own destiny in their own way, have been replied to with taunts and the sword brandished over their heads with the scornful division of presumptuous superiority, as from a superior race. But henceforth, Percival Drayton, believe the South like yourselves a unit—and thus we



**Brigadier General Thomas Drayton**  
**CSA**

shall enter upon this conflict forced upon us—in our faith—and relying upon God to maintain the justness of our causes, fighting manfully for our houses and rights; and understand my brother that when the olive branch of peace is next offered, it will be extended by other hands than ours. Farewell Percy and however much we may differ on the present issue let no unkind word escape to lacerate the heart of the other. Defend the soil of Pennsylvania if you will. Then,

you and I will never meet as armed foes; cross her Southern boundary with hostile purpose and we shall face each other as brother never should."

[Editor: Thomas became a brigadier general and they did meet as brothers commanding opposing forces at Port Royal in November of 1861. This information came from "Behind The Lines" by Andrew Carroll.]

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## A Grandson's Letter to a Confederate Veteran

**Dear Grandpa,**

Some time back, I joined the Sons of Confederate Veterans. I was suddenly overcome with Southern pride having the newfound knowledge that you, my Grandpa, had served in the Confederacy. I did a little research of your military unit and discovered that you and your fellow Confederates were engaged in many fierce battles. It was obvious that you had suffered beyond normal battlefield fatigue, as you had to endure extreme hunger and you suffered through fierce heat in summer months and extreme cold during the winter. I often wondered if you were one of those soldiers mentioned in Richmond's newspapers as marching barefoot down their streets in the melting snow. I wondered how much you must have worried about your comrades, who were also your neighbors before the war—those who were captured and now in the hands of the enemy. It must have been pretty gruesome, as you saw your friends lose arms and legs, parts of their faces and other war type wounds as they suffered with agonizing pain. I wondered how you must have felt as you saw some of your best friends and comrades lying,

mangled on the battlefields with no signs of life in them any longer. I have wondered how you were able to continue when you were asked to move to another location, after being totally exhausted from marching all day with hardly any rest, while at the same time having a painful knot in your belly coming from near starvation. I learned that many of the soldiers actually had to eat the tender buds from trees at times to have something to eat. I wondered if you were one of those soldiers. I heard stories of soldiers scurrying around the battlefields after the shooting had stopped in order to finally put some shoes on their feet, or replace some clothing that had been completely worn out. I wondered if you were one of these poor fellows. I had learned that most Southern soldiers had placed themselves on battlefields to protect his family and his home from an invading and overzealous government. I was proud that my Grandpa would love his family and his homeland enough to sacrifice those four years of hardships to protect them. Knowing that my Grandpa loved the original Constitution and its promises to the people, that he would be willing to take a solid stand for those rights was very pleasing. You have no idea how proud I was of you. I was proud to use your name as the veteran that would allow me to become a member of this organization; an organization that you and your fellow veterans organized. But I must confess that as time has gone on, I have become bored with all of this stuff. I don't get much recognition by being a member of the SCV; those fellows actually work. They clean old cemeteries where some of your old Confederate veterans and their families are buried. They sometimes have to take a public stand to defend the Confederate veterans. But Grandpa, that doesn't set too well with a lot of people these days and I don't want to become embarrassed in public. I would really like to help with some of this stuff, but I can't find the time to work in some old cemetery in the middle of the woods, besides it's a little too much hard work for me. The work they do to raise money is hard work too; besides, they have enough help without me. The raffle tickets they sell aren't too hard, but they have the name of the Camp on them and I'm afraid I'll offend someone who has sensitivities against the Confederacy. This is a new time Grandpa; there are other organizations around now that don't require much from their members, and the general public thinks that they are special. Besides, they aren't as controversial as the SCV. I don't have to worry about anyone looking down on me because I'm a member of these clubs. Then, there is my job. I have to make a living, you know? If my boss finds out that I'm a member of the SCV, it could cause me a problem, and I'm not sure that being a member of the SCV is worth having problems. So, if I decide to just remain a member in name only, or if I decide to just get out, I'm sure you will understand.

#### Your Grandson

#### Dear Grandson,

Oh, yes I understand son. I'm sorry that I have become an embarrassment to you and I couldn't live up to your expectations. I sincerely hope that the legacy you leave behind may be something that will allow your grand kids to be grateful. Maybe you would have been more pleased if I had been a Yank!

*Grandpa*

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### Defending His Grandfathers Flag

Nelson Winbush grew up in the house his grandfather built in 1908, a two-story yellow structure in Ripley Tenn. He tells stories about his grandfather being a Confederate soldier. He tells how his grandfather began by cooking and caring for others, but later saw action, fighting with a rifle under the command of General Nathan Bedford Forest. He told that at Shiloh, a two-day battle in 1862, more than 23,000 American men were killed or wounded. The Confederate Army needed a Chaplain, and although Louis Nelson couldn't read or write, he became their Chaplain. He had memorized the King James Bible. He stayed on as Chaplain for the next four campaigns, leading services for both Confederate and Union soldiers, before they headed back to the battlefield. He also forged for food. One time he killed a mule, cut out a quarter and hauled it back to his comrades. He told his grandson, "When you don't have anything else, mule meat tastes pretty good."



Over the years, his grandfather went to 39 Confederate reunions, wearing a woolly gray uniform that Nelson Winbush still has. Each time he came back, "It was story telling time," says Nelson. The picture on the left is Louis Napoleon Nelson, posing with grandson, Nelson W. Winbush at the Memphis train station in 1932 before leaving to attend a Confederate reunion. The old Confederate Veteran passed away in 1934, his casket being draped by a Confederate flag. One of the things that make this an interesting story today is the fact that Louis Napoleon and Nelson Winbush are black. Nelson's convictions about the war lay dormant until 1991, when the NAACP began an all-out campaign against the Confederate flag, calling it a symbol of hate. He saw things differently, and he was retiring and didn't have to worry any longer about what some "Yankee boss" would think. He said, "I got fed up with all this politically correct mess." Rev. Nelson B. Rivers III, the field operations chief for the NAACP, calls Winbush's arguments illogical. Intrigued by Winbush's position, Rivers telephoned him a few years ago. He says that he remembers Winbush being loud, sincere and holding fast to his convictions.

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### October Meeting

This month's meeting will be October 18 at the American Legion Building as usual. The meeting will begin around 7:00 PM and the evening meal will be around 6:30. Charles Arnette is in charge of the meal. (Has always been very good) The speaker this month will be Ken Howle of the Pee Dee Rifles Camp # 1419. He will talk about the Division Flag Restoration Project. This will be a good meeting for everyone to bring a friend and a potential member.

**REMINDER: IF YOU HAVE NOT PAID YOUR DUES, IT IS NOW TIME!! THE CAMP NEEDS YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT!!! THE SCV NEEDS YOU!!! IF YOU PAY NOW, YOU MAY AVOID LATE FEES. THANKS—IN ADVANCE.**

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### DEO VINDICE