

CATHERINE I.(TURNER)MOSELEY'S DIARY

While Catherine wrote her Diary as a young woman, it is only two years later she married William Henry Moseley. They were married at "Fairfield", Ruther Glen, Caroline Co. Virginia December 4, 1867. Catherine's new mother-in-law was Mary Daniel (Whitlock) Moseley the daughter of Izard Bacon Whitlock and his wife Martha B. Turner. Mary Daniel Whitlock and her brother Nathaniel Izard Bacon Whitlock were both cousins and neighbours of the Moseley's in Bedford Co., Virginia and despite the fact Catherine normally uses only initials when she talks about persons other than immediate family, it is not too hard to pick out N.I.B.W. in her Diary and know who she is referring to.

The Diary starts in 1864 and in early 1865 Catherine leaves home to take a position at a school for girls some miles away from her home. The extracts from the Diary I have included start as it becomes evident the war has overtaken their town and school is in danger and must close:

Friday, April 14, 1865

...

I am anxious and fearful. We are threatened by a removal of the guards, and that girl who insults them, if she can be designated, is to be handed over to them, if not everyone, Mrs. Preas included, is to be carried under guard to their camp. Is it not awful? We cannot realize too fully, our situation.

Saturday Night. April 15

Thank God, another day has, passed without interruption. My life is passing away, and yet the solemn truth seems to make but little impression on my mind, and to influence my conduct less. I drew the figure of a ship or a little boat today, and it recalled a pleasant duty I once had to perform at school. Our teacher gave us half a dozen words, we were to compose a piece and take them in. I wrote, "A voyage" and she said I was to draw a ship, and write the description under it, but I could never do it.

Sunday Afternoon. Apl 16. 1865

Last night a most daring robbery was committed here. The house was entered by someone who was evidently acquainted with the situation of things. They ripped the floor and took a quantity of jewelry and nine watches, valuable papers belonging to the family and the school and escaped without even the guards finding it out. How thankful I am that I did not put any of mine there. A favorite servant went off yesterday, and I suppose returned with a party last night and stole the things.

I read the 1st eight chapters of Genesis with Carrie, Eugenia, Mattie, Anna, Fitz and Irene. I really enjoyed it.

Dinner over, I lay down the book in hand and soon fell asleep, from which I was aroused by the ringing of church bells and the playing of a band of musicians close by. You, who may chance to find and read this in coming years, when time, if it can, has mellowed and softened the outrages committed in War, imagine if you can, the situation in which we are in, and pray God never to allow such a curse to come upon you.

While I am writing, Mattie Owen comes in and tells me that they have been stripped of everything. She has a letter from home.

For the last hour the band stationed on the next lot has been playing vigorously. Rumor says Lincoln and his son are both dangerously stabbed. It was done in Richmond.

My home! Oh my Heavenly Father, please protect my home. Do not let them destroy it!

A week has passed, no tidings of my soldier cousins. Many confederates came, but my cousins are not among them. The guards have orders not to allow anybody to come in, but as they are good natured and obliging, they allow it sometimes.

Monday. 17th

In bed all the morning, aching limbs, read a book entitled, "The Hall and Hood" or the "Unequal Yoke," with which I was much impressed.

Company this afternoon, Mr. Farrier and daughter, little Nannie Hoge. A very pleasant gentleman, promised to take charge of me as far as Richmond if I would go with him, said he would send or come for me!

My mind has been more calm today, than since the presence of our enemies.

Tuesday. April 18th

Occupied a portion of the morning writing to Aunt E. reading and helping Mattie to fix her book of hair mementos.

Went down to Mr. Prea's Chambers and was introduced to Captain Pritchard, the first Confederate soldier with whom I've been in company since the Surrender of Lee's Army. I've been truly tired of my prison life today, longed to go forth in the bright sunlight, the earth is clad in such a sweet, green verdure. Still, I should be thankful that such a shelter is afforded me from the enemy!

All day the Federal soldiers have been passing, reg't. after reg't. I do not act rightly, my mind, I fear, is too much occupied. The scenes being enacted engross my attention so fully. I fear my soul is suffering. The clock is striking but I cannot tell the hour. I know it is late.

Wednesday. April 19th

I rose early this morning and the singing of the sweet birds and the rising sun made me sigh for one hour of liberty to enjoy them.

At breakfast I was told that Abraham Lincoln's burial would come off and the day was to be observed as Sunday. Cannon were fired and the churches were open, services held.

In the midst of it, a Federal officer, Col. Barker offered us the poor accommodations afforded by Army Wagons.-- We accepted them and all was hurry and confusion, "Going Home": such leave taking, promises to write etc. About 5 o'clock, we started, walked two or three hundred yards, we separated, two or three getting in one wagon and four or five in another.

The brave, the noble Lee's cannon served us for seats. We traveled on, four or five miles of beautiful country. Beautiful in its ruins. The little Village of Farmville looked more lovely than the description I had had of it, and it was with sad and melancholy feeling that I looked back upon it as we slowly wound our way over hills, the memory of which will come back often, bringing with the, many a deep sigh.

At nightfall we halted for the night and most providentially, found shelter in the house of a once wealthy

gentleman, Major Watson. He gave us the best accommodations he had, his parlor. Said his house had been filled since the battle, with the wounded of both Armies, Confederates and Federals.

It is now 10 o'clock and I am sitting in a rocking chair, while the floor and sofas are filled with sleepy girls. Our protector, Lieut. Brown is seemingly very polite.

Thursday, April 20, 1865

I'm passing over the worst road in the "S., or the C. S. What I am now suffering has been endured by many. The country is very picturesque, and under any other circumstances, I should enjoy the scenery.

Rice's Station, our driver informed us, was the last place General Lee made a stand, or at least a decided resistance to the enemy.

I was seated on one of the Cannons which belonged to him, and was perhaps used that day and handled more than probably by my brave cousins. Imagine my feelings of imagination if, indeed it may be said that I felt anything but the intolerable jolts and aching body.

One o'clock, we arrived at the Junction, nothing but Yankees every way I looked, and there we had to sit for the longest time. But our Wagoner was polite and kind, and at length our fears were relieved, as well as our eyes by the sight of a little Cadet, Confederate named Taylor of Richmond, who came and helped us out and carried us to the rest of our party--and then Lieut. Brown, looking like he never was so scared before, marched us off, we knew not whither, but asked no questions. The question presented to our minds was soon answered by our guide, halting us in front of a neat little building, deserted by its former inhabitants, and breaking the lock, he swept the floor, had the bedsteads brought for seats. Soon after, several officers entered and brought us refreshments, cream and peaches and hardtack.

We were much more pleasantly and kindly cared for than we had expected, and this, I considered providential.

For supper, Lieut. Brown gave us the nicest crackers and cheese, then finding that we could not be accommodated except with one box car,

and as the weather seemed unsettled, a party of officers advised us to wait until this morning, the 27th, Friday.

I spent a somewhat comfortable night, they kindly provided us with plenty of nice, White blankets and candles and gave us one of the sweetest serenades. They sang "Rock me to sleep, Mother", and "Mother Will Comfort Us When She Is Near", "Goodbye at the Door", and other songs.

Now, someone has kindly offered us breakfast. I read some sweet, comforting Psalms both yesterday and this morning.

On the way to Petersburg. Arrived in Petersburg at one o'clock and heard to our great delight that the boat, at three, leaving City Point could be reached in time to take us on to Richmond. We went on a little better than one mile, the engine broke and here we are waiting for another, the noisy roar of the steam sounds like the vent of passion in the ragings of an ungoverned temper.

The scene is rendered more pleasant and my situation much more agreeable by change in my neighbors. Just now every man I saw was a Yankee, now there are three gentle looking Confederates seated around me.

We had a nice breakfast given us by our Conquerors, conserved peaches, loaf bread, and tea.

Went down to the cars, a special coach had been provided, and we were ushered into a car which was filled with Yankee Officers, with the exception of those seats reserved for us, 23 in number. Two of the girls got off at Nottaway C., two further on, Eugenia Foulks, Alice Crenshaw, and Blacks and Whites.

I reached City Point about an hour before sunset, and after standing half an hour in a small, crowded room, we were politely informed by a Yankee Captain that in case we did not get on board the steamboat, he had engaged rooms for us at the hotel. But a Col. Bates, a cousin of one of the young ladies, and in the Federal Army, and under whose care we were placed

by Lieut. Brown, engaged a boat and carried us to it.

When I first saw City Point, my attention was called to the mast and sails on the river (twas the first time I had ever seen such a sight) I sat by a nice Confederate Cadet, who lived in Norfolk, had not been home from his mother, she told him to fight them to the last. I heard his name was Wesley.

I enjoyed the scenery amazingly, wished for my ma and sister to enjoy it with me. The parlor in the boat is very nice and appears elegant in contrast with the accommodations we have received in the last few days.

Would you know where I'm sitting while writing, I'm in the parlor above mentioned, surrounded by my noisy party. And in addition a Yankee Major, a lday Yank and several Confederates, all talking. Then make allowances for this.

"Delays make trouble and procrastination is the thief of time." I did not write any here Saturday, although the scenes through which I passed might furnish material for a waverly novel. And tonight, Sun. 24th, I'm tired and sleepy, and that. more than usual because I've lost more sleep in the last 6 nights than I can give up.

Monday. April 25. 1865

Have just returned from a long and tiresome walk, went down to Greaner's and then to Tolbert's in search of the Miss Thomas, that we might go together and get our passes home but could not find them, and hoping to meet with them at some of the offices, I hastened on.

Went first to Gen. Patrick and thence to Captain Schofield, who directed me to go to Lieut. Townsend. I went to his office situated in the Capitol, found him very gentlemanly and polite. Memory reverts to the pleasant time I spent within those same old chambers but a few months ago. How have a few weeks changed the scene.

I must not neglect to give a sketch of Sat. I rose much refreshed

Sat. morning and went out in the deck of the Vessel which was the Thomas Colyier. The breeze was very refreshing after our crowded state room. Binnie Harrison, Ella Tolbert, Ipora Lee, and Florence Temple were my companions. The scenery was more beautiful than any I had ever seen.

Breakfast was soon ready and very bountiful. One dish, I had never seen, irish potatoes, sliced and fried.

A little after seven, we got on another steamer and went up to the wharf and landing, were

requested to see after our baggage, mine was not to be found, all the rest was safe. I thought and said when I saw the blue jacket carrying it off, that I never expected to see it again! Here, the major took leave of us and the three Baltimore girls, Bettie Yerby, Anna Ball, and Georgia McCarty.

Soon we were going up the James River at the rate of 5 miles an hour. I had never imagined traveling by water as pleasant. I watched the crested waves and my mind compared my journey to the voyage of life. I was the Howlet House, the splendor of which I had known as also something of the short life and many trials of some of its inmates. Its crumbling walls called to mind the words of Solomon, "Vanity of Vanities, all is Vanity."

The batteries of Chafins Bluff, Beast Butler's observatories, Drwry's Bluff, all spoke to me many said lessons. The awful looking gunboats and monitors that frowned upon me, and the charred and broken ruins of lovely houses, and as I neared Richmond, the wretch of our own little Navy reminded me of the uncertainty of all things earthly.

Arrived at Rockets about 12, the Richmond girls left me-Ella T., Minnie H., Isora and Marliga Lee and Judith Haskins, all bidding me an affectionable goodbye, the others passing on unmindful of me.

Here, I took a seat in the omnibus, thinking that I could pay some of Willie's silver, but they charged me 50 cents, and when I said I couldn't pay, a Confederate Col. told me he would.

There was a Miss Chesney and Miss Lee, whom I met at City Point, and their grief on reaching home and finding it so changed, affected me greatly.

At the Spotswood we parted from my unknown friend, who gave the Negro in charge of our baggage, a dollar, bidding him carry me where I wanted to go, and into his wagon, I climbed, together with the two ladies.

Soon I was his only passenger and after driving up some of the principal streets, he put my Hover sack and me down at Aunt E's door, tired, happy and travel stained.

I opened the door and there sat Sallie Turner, Aunt E, and Dick and one of Uncle's servants. They looked at me like they thought I was a ghost. Sallie had been here since before the evacuation of the city.

Tuesday

Went again to the passport office in the Capitol. Lieut. Townsend, the officer in charge, recognized me as having been there the day previous, and offered me a pass whenever I wanted it.

My breast pin mended at Phillips, B-Street, 25¢. Sallie and I then paid Mr. Holdimer a short visit.

Wednesday 26

Aunt E. was sick this morning and for the first time for months, I went into the kitchen to help. This evening Sal and I went to Mrs. Sneads and again to Mrs. Pishur's, where I met last evening, several poor ladies, one a widow and a Christian, who had lost their all by the blowing up of the magazine. Thousands are in the same airful situation. My Calico, Daphney washed it and I hope I have it in my power to appear decent.

Thursday. April 27

Sallie and I spent the day at Uncle Dick's, a pleasant time, all well.

Friday. April 28

Sallie and I went early to the packet office, and thence to Lieut. Townsend, got a pass and mailed my first letter for four years, with a U.S. postage stamp. I wrote to Pa.