

Childhood memories of NANNIE WOODSON CARNEFIX

The 6th Day of April 1865 at 1 pm a horseman was seen galloping toward a farm-house in Cumberland Co. Va. When he came nearer we saw it was my Uncle who had been absent for some time. We all hurried out to meet him and saw that his horse was flecked with white foam, and he was very much excited. He said Gen. Lee was retreating from Richmond and he had come for his family and was going with the army, that he would never surrender as long as there was any army to fight in the South.

Uncle Alex has married his first cousin, and we were at his father-in-law's home. Aunt Willie's parents begged him not to take us but if he would go himself to leave Willie and the baby, and his little orphan niece eleven years old who he was raising. He said no he was going to take his family too. So amid weeping and great sorrow, hurried preparations were made for our departure. The carriage driver was to take Uncle John team and drive us 20 miles that evening to where Uncle A. had a team waiting. We were off in an hour or two. The day was pleasant and I a child of eleven thought it fine fun to be on the road. As soon as we reached the main road we were with the retreating army. We traveled along passing the cannon whenever we could, but not making much speed, for the poor old army horses were worked down poor and feed was scarce, and the roads very muddy.

We staid five miles from Farmville that night and heard that the "yankees" has come up the South side railroad and cut the Southern Army off. Next morning we started very early, traveled all day with the Artillery and I would wonder if that cannon was loaded with grape-shot or with a ball as I LOOKED INTO THE MUZZLE OF EACH ONE FOR WE PASSED THAN AS FAST AS WE COULD, And I WOULD WONDER IF THEY MIGHT NOT GO OFF AND KILL US ALL. Once we met some soldiers leading horses with the harness on. Uncle A. Said "Why boys your are going the wrong way. What's the matter?" They said "We heard the "yankees were coning and cut loose from the cannon, and now we have order to go back for them." Uncle said "Ar'n't you afraid the yankees will get you? They said "We don't care if they do".

When the army went into camp, Uncle decided to travel a part of the night to get ahead of them. The horses were very spirited. After dark we were going down a long hill over a piece of new road through the woods, when the horses ran off and ran on wheel against a tree with such force as to break the other horse loose from the wagon. My Uncle fell out and was hurt so badly that he was unable to drive. Luckily we were close to Dr. Mathews house so we went back and staid there. He had our carriage repaired that night. Two men from Georgia were there, they very kindly offered to let their driver drive for us (as we were all going the same way) We started early to get across the R.R. before the federals cut us off. We traveled that day with the army untill the afternoon, when we passed Appomatox Depot. We stopped right at the depot door, bought feed for our horses and talked of feeding there, but decided to wait until we stopped for the night.

We drove across the track and turned over the hill into the woods. In about Fifteen minutes we heard firing at the depot. We knew it was the federals and were very much frightened. Aunt cried bitterly. We hurried on as fast as possible, going South. We staid at one town where president Davis has staid the night before. The floor of a bridge had been taken up to prevent a

suprise of his capture. The right had horse began to lag in his gait and seemed very stupid. Saturday at noon we came to the Roanoak river and stopped for dinner.

We were informed that the ferry-boat was gone and there was no way to get over the river. After a dinner of as fine fish as I ever saw, my Uncle became very sick. The horse has become so stupid that we could not get him on, So we decided to rest over Sunday. They would not keep us there, so we drove back a mile from there to Mr. Lemons where we staid a few days. The horse died and when examined it was found that he had bruised his side when he ran against the tree. We then moved to Mr. Sawyers, ten miles from Danville, Va. Here we staid until the first of June. Bought a poor army horse and fed him until he was strong enough to take us back to Cumberland. The Yankee Army came by where we were and took a great deal of meat from Mr. Sawyer. He had a barrel of whiskey in his smoke-house, they got a taste of it, but he knew it would make trouble so he rolled it out, took an axe and knocked the head out. Then they came and searched the house for whiskey, and tormented us so much we had to ask for a home-guard, who proved himself to be a perfect gentleman, and kept order there.

*Nannie Woodson Carnefix married Thomas Henry Smithson.
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