

Saga of 'flag petticoat' made by BR

In the last century and before, women were petticoat-minded. A friend, the late Cecil Bird, a distinguished attorney and gentleman of the old school, overstated it when he said his idea of a real lady was one who wore "three starched petticoats." And so, when the Union forces were advancing on Natchez, it was quite natural for a young belle of the city to conceive the idea of fashioning her Confederate flag into a petticoat to protect it from seizure by the invading Northern forces.

She did just that and thus saved the precious Confederate banner which was dear to the heart of Joanna Painter Fox, who attended the sick and dying in a Mississippi Confederate hospital from 1862 to 1865.

It was at this hospital that she met a member of a well-known Baton Rouge family, George Daniel Waddill, a Confederate soldier assigned to this hospital as a steward. Love blossomed amid the chaos of war and after the great conflict the two were married and made their home in Baton Rouge where the family operated drugstores for many years.

When Confederate memorial associations were being organized over the South, it was the patriotic Joanna Waddill who took the lead in 1891 in forming the Confederate Memorial Association of Baton Rouge, forerunner of a United Daughters of the Confederacy chapter which was formed in 1898. This was the first UDC chapter here and the second in the state. As a testimonial to this heroine of the War Between the States, it was named the Joanna Waddill chapter. At this time Joanna was 60. She died during the next year.

Her husband, who had served with Company K Pelican Rifles, lived five years longer, passing away in 1904. Both are buried in Magnolia Cemetery where numerous members of the family were laid to rest. Each year on Confederate Memorial Day, flowers are placed over the grave of Joanna Waddill by the Joanna Waddill chapter of UDC.

George Daniel and Joanna had seven children: Hugh, Benjamin Fox, Joanna Loretta, Sylvania Helen, Laura Lenore, George Daniel Jr. and William Robert.



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By ERNEST GUEYMARD
(Former Managing Editor, State Times)

The saga of the petticoat flag is fraught with mishaps. One of Joanna's daughters, Laura Lenora (shortened to Launo), came into possession of the flag. After some years she decided that it should be placed in a museum and so she gave it to the LSU history museum (now the Anglo-American Museum) in the War Memorial Tower.

A few years later, she went to the Campanile tower to view her cherished possession and to her horror it was not on display. It was found bundled up in a corner of the museum gathering dust. She was so incensed that she promptly took possession and left in a huff with the flag.

Still later Laura Lenora (Mrs. Arthur P. Miller) decided that an appropriate resting place for the flag would be the Mississippi State museum in the state Capitol at Jackson because it was in that state the flag had first been unfurled. Later, on checking the status of the flag, she learned with sorrow that it was not on display and was nowhere to be found. A sad ending to this heirloom of the Waddill family.

This story was related to us by Mrs. Solon W. Murphy of Baton Rouge, a great-granddaughter of George Daniel and Joanna Waddill.

The original Waddill home was in the seventh block of Main Street just east of the old Farrnbacher house. The family drugstore was at the southwest corner of Main and St. Anthony (N. Seventh). Another drugstore operated until 1926 by Hugh Waddill, grandfather of Mrs. Murphy, was the Green Cross pharmacy at North Boulevard and S. 13th St.

Hugh Waddill served as volunteer firemen and in gold medals, each the size to her grandfather at the recognition of his service.

The first Waddill of Waddill (1774-1827) from (1798-1872) who settled in eleven children, one of which husband. The other children: Helen Amanda, Mary, Martha, Eleanor, Zachary, Andrew and Laura Jane.

Among the activities of UDC was sponsorship of the Baton Rouge Public Library, the Baton Rouge Public Library. She was librarian of this pioneer library on the second floor of the old fire station between Main and Laura and in the 1850's the upstairs where the mayor kept his headquarters of Washington.

Friends who knew Joanna for her courage and energy. The flag was turned until her object was achieved.

Commentary

at' made by BR Civil War war heroine

Gueymard notebook

By ERNEST GUEYMARD
(Former Managing Editor, State-Times)

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Hugh Waddill served as a fire chief in the days of volunteer firemen and in Mrs. Murphy's possession are five gold medals, each the size of a dollar. These were awarded to her grandfather at the annual firemen's banquets for recognition of his services to the city.

The first Waddill of which there is a record was Noel Waddill (1774-1827) from South Carolina. His son Abel (1798-1872) who settled in Baton Rouge, was the father of eleven children, one of whom was George Daniel, Joanna's husband. The other children were Hugh T. Horace Abel, Helen Amanda, Mary, Elizabeth, Benjamin Franklin, Martha, Eleanor, Zachariah, Cornelia Wood, Robert Andrew and Laura Jane.

Among the activities of the Joanna Waddill chapter of UDC was sponsorship of a local library called the Baton Rouge Public Library, the forerunner of the East Baton Rouge Public Library. Miss Lucie Stirling served as librarian of this pioneer library which was located on the second floor of the old fire station on North Fourth (Church) between Main and Laurel. This building is still standing and in the 1850's the upstairs floor was used as a town hall where the mayor kept office. Downstairs was the headquarters of Washington Fire Co. No. 1.

Friends who knew Joanna Waddill spoke of her great courage and energy. They said she never left a stone unturned until her objective was reached.

This ends our story of Joanna and her library.

save the Confederate flag. Before her death in 1899 she was made an honorary member of Camp 17, United Confederate Veterans in recognition of her service to the men of the Gray in that Mississippi hospital. Even though she had been born in the North (Bristol, Penn. in 1838), her sentiments were with the South, the family having moved to Natchez long before the outbreak of war.

This vignette of southern bravery and patriotism is only one of many that should be told and this column welcomes word of all such tales.

