

The Tiffany Windows at the Blandford Church

This was one of my favorite places on the trip. Below are two books that provide information about the women artists that worked in the Tiffany studios, and how they made the windows and lamps: 1) *Clara and Mr. Tiffany* by Susan Vreeland. A work of fiction but based on factual information. This book provides very detailed information on how the lamps and windows were made and it is woven into a story about relationships and society in that era. 2) A book that grew from an art exhibit on Tiffany, *A New Light on Tiffany: Clara Driscoll and the Tiffany Girls* by Martin Eidelberg, and two others. Clara was from Tallmadge, Ohio. Searching on her name brings up a lot of photos and information about her life.

The Women of Petersburg

Sara Agnes Rice Pryor

Sara was born in 1830, so she would have been in her early 30's during the war years. She had married Roger Atkinson Pryor and by 1861 they had six children. Roger was the son of Reverend Theodorick Bland Pryor and his first wife. Roger was a member of Congress from Virginia and a Colonel in the Confederate Army. When Roger went off to fight, Sara traveled with his company and worked as a nurse, leaving the children in Petersburg to be cared for by family. In 1863 Colonel Pryor resigned his commission to go with General Fitzhugh Lee's cavalry. Sara then returned to Petersburg to care for the children. After the war they moved to New York City and Roger studied law and opened a law office. Within the "Confederate carpetbagger" community they were socially prominent. Sara, together with other women in her social circle, founded a home for poor women and children. She was also active in the *Preservation of the Virginia Antiquities*, the *Daughters of the American Revolution*, and the *United Daughters of the Confederacy*. Sara and Roger had their seventh child while in New York. Sara wrote *Reminiscences of Peace and War* (Macmillan Co. 1924), and also published two histories and several novels. A social history of their era and also a biography of the Pryor's was written by John C. Waugh, *Surviving the Confederacy: Rebellion, Ruin, and Recovery: Roger and Sara Pryor during the Civil War* (2002). The next book on my list to request from the library.

Anna Augusta Banister (Pryor)

Anna was just 10 years old in 1861. She later wrote *Incidents in the Life of a Civil War Child* (1904). Anna married Archibald Campbell Pryor, whose father was also, Reverend Theodorick Bland Pryor, and his mother the second wife. When I looked up Anna's name on-line, I found her listed in the Year Book for the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities 1901-1904. At that time she was living in Washington, D.C. I also found her listed in a Lineage Book, DAR, Vol. 61-62, along with her DAR number, but I found no other information. I do wonder if she and Sara talked about their experiences and perhaps Sara encouraged Anna to write.

Margaret Stanly Beckwith

Based on the 1860 census, Margaret was 18 when the war started. She was living at home in Petersburg with her parents and 7 siblings. In the 1880 census Margaret was 37 years old, she was living with her father, a widower, and two of her sisters, both in their twenties. Margaret wrote *Reminiscences, 1844-1865* (Virginia Historical Society). Her father, and grandfather, were physicians in Petersburg. They had invested in the the production and sale of "Beckwith's Antidyspeptic Pills"

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along with maintaining a medical practice. Margaret's maternal grandfather, Edmund Ruffin, was a passionate advocate of southern secession. Dr. and Mrs. Beckwith had borrowed a considerable amount of money over the years from Edmund Ruffin and had not paid it back. Mr. Ruffin was known to call his son-in-law a "spendthrift and worthless". In 1846 the Petersburg Medical Faculty, a group of regular physicians, had organized to define and combat quackery. This group considered the Beckwith's promotion of their Antidyspeptic Pills an unethical practice, and their pills "secret nostrums". The Doctor's Beckwith continued to promote their pills and considered the work of the Medical Faculty to be focused on driving out their competitors. But the community listened to the Medical Faculty and soon the Beckwith's were without patients for their medical practice and buyers for their pills. The creditors closed in and the Beckwith's sold their furniture in order to pay their bills. This furniture was the very furniture Edmund Ruffin had given to his daughter and her husband at the time of their marriage. This was the last straw for Edmund and he refused to acknowledge his daughter Margaret from that time on. Edmund Ruffin, the staunch secessionist, committed suicide just after the war ended.

Bessie Meade Callender

Bessie was born in 1832 in City Point, Virginia. Her father was a tobacco and wheat planter. Bessie and her sister were educated at Mrs. Eliason's in Alexandria, VA, and Mrs. Minor's in Richmond VA. It was typical of the time for planters to send their daughters off to finishing schools to learn the arts of a lady. In 1855 Bessie married David Callender, who later supplied cloth to the Confederate army. They were living in Petersburg, VA., along with their three children, the oldest about 5 years, at the beginning of the war. Bessie wrote *Personal Recollections of the Civil War*.

Elizabeth Hobbs Keckley

Mrs. Keckley was mentioned briefly in our travels, but she has such an interesting life I wanted to share a few things. Elizabeth was born in 1818 in an area just south of Petersburg. She was enslaved in Virginia and North Carolina. She was able to teach herself to read and write. Her mother taught her to sew. Elizabeth gained the reputation of being an excellent seamstress and she made dresses for her owner and other white ladies. In 1855 she borrowed money from some white friends and purchased her freedom and that of her son George for \$1200 (\$30,000 today). She relocated to Baltimore in 1860. There she opened a dressmaking business and became known for designing and making dresses for the rich and powerful. She made her way to Washington and continued her dressmaking business. Elizabeth was best known as the personal seamstress and confidante of Mary Todd Lincoln. Elizabeth was with Lincoln and Mary when they visited Petersburg at the end of the siege. In 1868 Elizabeth published her memoir "Thirty Years a Slave and Four Years in the White House". Sadly, Elizabeth ended her days in the National Home for Destitute Colored Women and Children. One article I found on-line was titled *Mrs. Lincoln's Confidante* by Peter Cozzens. In 2014 an Historical Marker in her honor was placed in Dinwiddie Court House, Dinwiddie County, Virginia. A film is in the works, by filmmaker Tim Reid. His Petersburg studio, New Millennium, is completing a documentary on Ms. Keckley.

Schools in Petersburg

In the report I wrote about Petersburg, I did mention the schools on page 2. Now with the newly purchased books from Petersburg, I can add that by 1850 there were three free schools, the City Free School, and one each in the East Ward and the West Ward. These schools were specifically for the

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poor white children. They were started with a private endowment and then continued to be run with a small supplement of tax money. Each of these schools had one female teacher. In 1850 Petersburg also had three private schools for white girls: The Petersburg Female College, the Leavenworth Female Seminary, and the Davidson Female College shared some features. Men and women taught in the schools. The administrators of the schools were all male. The teaching focus was on “mental discipline” and academic subjects. Instruction in the “traditional female accomplishments” was included.

Sources:

Lebsock, Suzanne. *The Free Women of Petersburg: Status and Culture in a Southern Town, 1784-1860*, New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1985. Includes an epilogue entitled, *Feminism, Slavery and the Experience of Defeat*, and chapters on Petersburg, the Political Economy of Marriage, Free Women of Color, Women Working, and Women's Organizations.

Massey, Mary Elizabeth. *Women in the Civil War*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966. From the back cover of this book, “A serious book, at once charming, scholarly and highly readable”. Mary includes both famous women of the era and the common women. A great chapter, “Taken to Her Pen” covers both Northern and Southern women writers and their publications during the war. Miss Massey also wrote, “*Ersatz in the Confederacy: Shortages and Substitutes on the Southern Homefront*”. Now on my reading list for the future.

Janney, Caroline. *Burying the Dead but not the Past: Ladies Memorial Associations and the Lost Cause*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012. I have not read this one but plan to in the future.

Confederate Hospitals in Petersburg

I attempted to find information about each of the doctors mentioned in the report, but only found a few. I did see Dr. Claiborne’s name in some of the exhibits in the museums.

Dr. John Herbert Claiborne

John was born in 1828 to John Gregory Claiborne, a lawyer and clergyman, and his wife Mary. John's education included: Randolph Macon College (B.A. in 1848 and M.A. in 1850), the University of Virginia (Doctor of Medicine), Jefferson Medical College of Philadelphia and the Pennsylvania Hospital (Doctor of Medicine). He then went into private practice in Petersburg prior to the war. In his associations with the various American or international medical associations he was a member, Sometimes president, or an honorary fellow. I asked our tour guide at Blandford Cemetery, and Dr. Claiborne was buried there.

Dr. John Blackwood Strachan

Born in 1830, his parents were John Blackwood Strachan and Rebecca Bolling. His spouse was Mary Virginia Meade and they had 9 children. Dr. Strachan was the surgeon-in-chief at the Fair Grounds Hospital, or the Confederate General Hospital as it was also known, during the war. Dr. Strachan died in Petersburg in 1907, age 77, and is buried in Blandford Cemetery.

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Dr. John Grammer Brodnax

John was born in 1829 and died in 1907. He was a graduate of the University of Virginia (Doctor of Medicine), a graduate of the Jefferson Medical College, Philadelphia, PA, and then studied medicine in Paris for 3 years. In 1853 he started his medical practice in Petersburg, VA. During the war he was the Surgeon-in-Chief at the North Carolina Hospital. In 1864 he was appointed to supervise the exchange of prisoners. At the time of the surrender he was in charge of two military hospitals in Greensboro, NC. Between 1887- 1907 he had a medical practice in Greensboro. John worked as a physician up to the day he died at age 78. Source: Alumni Bulletin-University of Virginia, Vol. 1, Issue 1-4, page 181

The General Military Hospital for the North Carolina Troops

While searching for information about the hospitals in Petersburg I stumbled upon a jewel, *The General Military Hospital for the North Carolina Troops in Petersburg Virginia*. This reads like a brochure you might pick up while waiting in the emergency room at Marietta Memorial Hospital. The General Military Hospital was described as “one of the most convenient and comfortable Military Hospitals in the country”. This booklet continues to describe the number of officers and employees and their responsibilities. The Steward, among other tasks, must “attend to the marketing”, and “issue stores to cooks and nurses”, and is responsible for “keeping the store room neat and clean”. The Matrons, the position head by Nora Davidson at the Poplar Lawn Confederate Hospital in Petersburg, was to “assist the Steward in the general domestic management of the Hospital, especially in looking after the washing and cooking and nice condition of the wards, and in seeing that the female nurses do their duty”. Source: <http://docsouth.unc.edu/imls/generalhospital/hospital.html>

Nora Fontaine Davidson

Nora was born in Petersburg in 1836. She taught school in Petersburg for 59 years. Nora and her two sisters taught at the Davidson Female Seminary. Nora was one of the charter members of the Petersburg Ladies Memorial Association, the group responsible for the beautiful Tiffany windows in the Blandford Church.

On June 9, 1866, Miss Nora had taken a group of students from her school to the Blandford Cemetery to decorate with flowers the graves of both Union and Confederate soldiers. Mrs. John Logan, the wife of the Commander in Chief of the Grand Army of the Republic, the Union Army Veterans organization, visited the cemetery and saw the flowers on the graves. Mrs. Logan then wrote an article about the flower decorations in memorial, and that was the inspiration of our National Memorial Day. Sources were listed in the report “Confederate Hospitals of Petersburg and the Saga of Dr. John Claiborne”.

Snakeroot and milk sickness

While researching snakeroot I found that Milk Sickness, a serious human illness, is caused by drinking the poisoned milk or meat from cows that have eaten snakeroot plant. Cows are attracted to the plant by the fluffy, snow-white flowers of late summer. The symptoms of Milk Sickness include loss of appetite, weakness, muscle stiffness, vomiting, severe constipation, and finally coma. The disease is often fatal. In the fall of 1818, Nancy Hanks Lincoln, Abraham’s mother, became sick and died of Milk Sickness after caring for some sick neighbors. Perhaps while at their home she drank milk from an infected cow. Source: <http://www.nps.gov/abli/planyourvisit/milksickness.htm>

Appomattox

Wilmer McLean

Born in 1814 in Virginia, Wilmer was one of 14 children. His parents passed away when he was young and he was raised by various family members. Wilmer was a wholesale grocer and a retired major in the Virginia militia. At age 39 he married a wealthy widow with a plantation of 1200 acres in Bull Run, Virginia. When the war started he offered the plantation to be used by the Confederate army. The house became the headquarters for General P.G.T. Beauregard. The house was later used as a hospital and a place to hold captured Union soldiers. Wilmer McLean was paid rent for the Confederate's use of the plantation. He made a small fortune running sugar and supplies through the Union blockade to the Confederacy. In 1862 he feared for the safety of his family and the plantation was in disarray, so he moved to Appomattox, Virginia. There he found a nice two story cottage to live in. Then, in April 1865, McLean received a message that informed him of the Confederates intention to surrender and he was to find a house where this could take place. He chose his own. On the afternoon of April 9th, the official surrender took place in McLean's parlor. Union soldiers started taking tables, chairs, and any other items they could for souvenirs. A few soldiers gave McLean money as he protested the theft of his possessions. Local visitors started taking parts of house. McLean did make money off this for a time, selling many items supposedly in the house during the signing. He reportedly sold enough items in this way to furnish an entire apartment complex. Although McLean profited during the war by renting the plantation and running sugar, he was paid in Confederate notes. After the Surrender, these securities had little or no value. In 1865 his house was foreclosed on for \$3,060 (about \$46,000 today). Mr. McLean moved his family to Alexandria, Virginia. There he lived out his life working as an Internal Revenue Service auditor, retiring at the age of 66. He passed away 2 years later. The house in Appomattox was in ruin until 1930 when it was bought by Congress and rebuilt. The house became a tourist site in 1949. Source: *Meet Wilmer McLean-One of the Civil War's First and Last Victims*, <http://militaryistorynow.com/2014/01/29/meet-wilmer-mclean-one-of-the-civil-wars-first-...> (4/20/2015)

Hannah Reynolds

Hannah was the only civilian casualty of the fighting at Battle of Appomattox Court House. I looked for information on Hannah in our museum visits. I did find a panel in the Slave Quarters behind the McLean house at Appomattox Court House. In 1865 Hannah was 40 years old and her owner was Dr. Samuel Coleman. He was married to Amanda and they had a young daughter, Mary Ann. Their home was one mile west of the village of Appomattox Court House. Hannah's husband was Abram Reynolds. Although it was illegal for slaves to wed at that time in Virginia, Abram was listed as her husband in multiple accounts.

On April 8th, 1865 Federal troops were camped near Dr. Coleman's home. The family fled the house for safety and stayed at a relative's home a few miles away. Hannah stayed at the home, perhaps to protect it. Amanda may have been worried that her wool would be stolen. This was reported by her daughter, Mary Ann, in 1940. At that time Mary Ann was 77 years old and a widow.

On April 9th, 1865 there was fighting around house. Hannah was standing by the door when a shot passed through house and the shot struck her in the arm. She was treated by the 8th Maine Infantry in the field hospital set up behind the house. The following is from an eyewitness account of the chaplain with the 8th Maine Infantry, published in a newspaper article in the *Maine Bugle*, 1894. Hannah became "sick with fever and unable to be moved, her husband at her side". "Her arm was very large and fleshy and a concave wound was the in the shape of the ball". "I hardly knew which the more to pity, the wife in her intense physical pain or the husband in his helpless sympathy, both dead with

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fear". She had received medical care in the field hospital and spiritual care from the chaplain.

The date of death on the death registry was April 12, 1865. Dr. Samuel Coleman is listed as "former master" and Abram Reynolds is listed as her husband. The research that was done by Alfred Jones III, local pastor and part of the group organizing Footsteps to Freedom used census records, death registry, and old newspaper articles in his work. Pastor Jones found Hannah had no children, but Abram had descendants nearby. Pastor Jones is writing a children's book about Hannah's life.

Footsteps to Freedom was the event that highlighted this history and was part of the 150th commemoration of Lee's surrender. The event was held on April 11th, 2015 and was sponsored by the Carver-Price Legacy Museum and the National Park Service, Appomattox Court House National Historical Park. The sponsors, along with citizens from local churches, joined together to spotlight all of the slaves in Appomattox County. There were 4,600 slaves listed in the 1860 census. The event was held to recognize emancipation, an outcome from surrender. The event included a living history portrayal of her funeral, with eulogy by Pastor Jones, portraying Flemming Johnson. Pastor Johnson was thought to be the only African-American pastor in the area at the time. A speech was then given by someone portraying Abram Reynolds, Hannah's husband. Music was provided by a gospel choir of 100 members. The event concluded with a procession, marking the enslaved to liberated, held at dusk through 4600 lit luminaries lining the Old Stage Road through the park. Source: *Wounded as a slave, died as a free women: Appomattox anniversary program to honor Hannah Reynolds*.

[http://www.newsadvance.com/news/wounded-as-a-slave-died-as-a-free-woman-appomatto...\(4/11/2015\)](http://www.newsadvance.com/news/wounded-as-a-slave-died-as-a-free-woman-appomatto...(4/11/2015))

Future Trips

For the next trip, to Cincinnati I believe, I hope to find more information about the citizen's experience, and the military hospitals in the area. The Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati worked in the military hospitals. The book, *In the Civil War: The Love of Christ Urges Us*, is about the experiences of the sisters in their work.

I would like future trips to include: Clara Barton Missing Soldiers Office in Washington, D.C.; National Museum of Civil War Medicine, Frederick, Maryland; and, Pry House Field Hospital Museum, Antietam National Battlefield.

Where would you like to go? Let us know, and we will consider the possibilities!

Great trip. Thanks to all of you for making it so. Shirley-was the best bus driver!