



War is Marching Our Way-Fayetteville Captured- March 11, 1865

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“We tried to treat them politely but were we to live a million years the 11th of March will be one of the darkest spots in our memories.”

Sarah Tillinghast, a resident of Fayetteville in 1865, wrote those words in a letter to her brother. Over the next 4.5 days, her hometown would be occupied by Sherman’s force of nearly 60,000 men. Ms. Tillinghast and others would write many other words about what they witnessed during that occupation.

This day of occupation began with a bit of a role reversal to Confederate cavalry leader, General Wade Hampton. Remember the day before he had nearly captured Union cavalry commander Judson Kilpatrick at Monroe’s Crossroads. Now, on Saturday, March 11, 1865, Hampton was almost captured himself when a group of Union scouts came into town early in the morning. Hampton and a few of his staff officers confronted those scouts. A fight happened--Swords were drawn--Shots were fired---Men died. (Anytime you’re standing near the Market House in downtown Fayetteville, you’re standing in the place where part of this fight happened.) Hampton and his fellow Rebs got away after capturing and killing a few of those scouts.

The Old Clarendon Bridge over the Cape Fear River(Today’s Person Street Bridge)was torched by those retreating Confederates, an action that upset Sherman and may have led him to make Fayetteville’s occupation harsher than originally intended.

The first portion of the Federal infantry marched in later that day. A diary account by Josephine B. Worth said a Federal band started playing ‘Dixie’ as they marched by. That caused caused Josephine and her brother to burst into tears.

Fayetteville's mayor, Archibald McLean, would surrender the city twice. Once to a Lt. Colonel on General O.O. Howard's staff and later to left wing commander, Maj. General Henry Slocum. For the first time in four years, the U.S. flag was raised over the Market House and the old Fayetteville Hotel on Hay Street (that's where today's PWC building is located).

Sherman himself arrived around noon. He made his headquarters at the Fayetteville Arsenal. He left on horseback to make a quick tour of Fayetteville. While Sherman was gone, a man walked up to the troops at Arsenal Hill. Edward Monagan was an employee of the Arsenal. He had a house close by. He'd come to raise the issue of looters near his property and ask that his house be spared. Turns out Monagan and Sherman had been comrades at West Point. They had been friends. Monagan told staff officers a few R-rated stories that lent credence to his claim of being an old friend of Sherman. **"He'll be pleased to meet me. You just watch Sherman's face when we meet."**

Sherman returned to the arsenal sometime that afternoon. His quick horse ride had gone by the places where the early morning fight had happened. It's likely he had seen the bodies of some of his men and the carcasses of their dead horses still in the streets. As he stepped down from his horse, those images filled his mind as he glanced up to see Edward Monagan approach. His old comrade went to greet his former friend with open arms. The Union staff officers watched Sherman's face...and yes...initially...there was **"a ray of pleasure illuminating Sherman's face"** at this recognition of a 'former' friend. But the ray of pleasure dissolved immediately. Sherman's eyes took on a cold, hard stare.

"We were friends, weren't we?" said Sherman.

"Oh, yes. You shared my friendship and my bread too, didn't you?" a still smiling Monagan said.

"That I did." Along with the change of expression, witnesses noticed a cold intensity crept into Sherman's voice. **"You have betrayed it all. Betrayed me...betrayed the country that educated you for its defense."** Now through clenched teeth...**"And here you are---a traitor--asking me to be your friend once more, to protect your property...to risk the lives of brave men who**

were fired on from houses here today...Turn your back on me forever. I won't punish you, only go your way. There is room in this world even for traitors."

An account says that as Sherman watched Monagan leave, Sherman's hand was trembling and later, his eyes filled with tears. You can witness today how Sherman kept his promise to his old comrade. Monagan's house still stands today...the only building left standing on the grounds where the Arsenal was located.

I'll have more accounts to tell you about as we recall the days of Fayetteville's occupation. Stories of destruction and flame. And we'll find out if the couriers Sherman sent off 3 days earlier made it safe to Wilmington.

If you haven't been yet, you should visit the special exhibit at the Fayetteville Transportation Museum downtown. It's called, 'The Fall of Fayetteville' and recounts in great detail what happened when Sherman captured the city in 1865. There's a authentic silver tray there, that Union troops used for target practice. You can see the bullet holes! The exhibit will be there for several months but it's especially relevant and moving to visit it during the 150th anniversary of these events. I encourage you to go.

Next time we return to 1865, it will be Sunday, March 12. This particular Sabbath will be remembered for many years. Of course, by the citizens of Fayetteville. But more so by the men in Sherman's army and about 25,000 'refugees'...most of them former slaves who have followed that army here to Fayetteville as it has driven through both South Carolina and now North Carolina. And the remembrances of that particular Sunday could be initiated by ...the sound of a steam whistle.