

GREEN: YANKEES CAN'T BE ALL BAD

General William T. Sherman marched from Atlanta to the sea, burning and pilaging as he went. Savannah awaited Tecumseh with some hope but little confidence that he could be kept away. Staring at defeat, defending General William J. Hardee evacuated his men to safety to South Carolina before any serious fighting took place. On December 21, 1864 Mayor Richard Arnold and his aldermen rode out the Augusta Road to surrender the city. With this party went Mr. Charles Green, Englishman and wealthy merchant. Sherman was absent at the time so the Georgians were met by General Oliver O. Howard or General John W. Geary. The proud city was handed over at 4:30 in the morning.

When official courtesies had been exchanged, Green went forward and said to Howard, "General, we surrender the city only upon one condition."

With some scorn Howard replied, "Sir, a conquered city has not the privilege of making terms of surrender."

"Nonetheless," responded Mr. Green, "I insist upon the acceptance of one condition before capitulation, namely that General Sherman and his staff make use of my house for headquarters during their stay in Savannah."

Later Green approached General Sherman as he rode to the Pulaski Hotel where he expected to stay. He offered Sherman his home for headquarters. "If you don't take it," he said, "some other general will. I much prefer you." Some have wondered why Green made the offer.

Charles Green came to America from Liverpool England in 1833 to seek his fortune. He found it in exporting cotton. He proved a good businessman and soon amassed considerable wealth. His first wife, Catherine Jane Burrough, whom he had married in 1837, died in 1842.

In 1850 Green married Lucinda Ireland Hunton of Prince William County, Virginia. The same year he began construction in Savannah of a house at a cost of \$93,000. He put the property in Lucy's name along with an additional \$30,000 which was invested in stocks for her.

The house is a striking blend of Georgian and Victorian Gothic with battlements, stained-glass windows and rooms filled with Italian sculpture and European paintings. The graceful curved stairway with skylight above is a feature common in other houses designed by the architect, John S. Norris of New York. The dome has vents and gas fixtures which when lighted created an updraft, thus a unique form of ventilation for the house on hot summer days. It also contained a cistern on the roof for a bath, or at least tanks for baths which may have been supplied with water by servants. The house has covered porches on three sides.

His home, now known as the Green-Meldrim House, is a National Historical Landmark and also the Parish House of St. John's Episcopal Church.

Into this residence Green brought General Sherman. He escorted him to the second floor and turned over his own suite to him. He, his wife Lucy and children Gilbert, Edward, Douglas, Anne, Lucy and Mary had to find accommodations elsewhere, perhaps some of them in the servants quarters which was located behind the house. This building is now the rectory for St. John's. (The last child by Lucy, Francis, was born the next year. Children by Jane Burrough, Benjamin, Charles, and Andrew were adults and probably living elsewhere. An infant daughter by Jane, Catherine, lived only two years.)

It's possible that Green had sent his family to his summer home in Greenwich, Va. In 1855 he bought "The Lawn," 22½ acres for \$3,000 from Mrs. A. E. Moxley. The family spent the summers here and perhaps while he was on his many business trips. He later added more acres to this place.

At any rate they were used to their father's penchant for entertaining generals and other dignitaries whenever he could. Not only did he host General Sherman in Savannah but also General George C. Meade at his home in Greenwich, Virginia. Meade made his headquarters there during various troop movement in Northern Virginia. Green had Sherman post a sign on the gate, "British Property under Safeguard, by order of General Meade." He also entertained the Rebels among them being Col. John Mosby and possibly General P. G. T. Beauregard.

Charles Green was a man who enjoyed social occasions so was pleased when Sherman invited him to a dinner party of twenty in Green's home on Christmas Day. Green offered his silver and china for the occasion, as well as his house. The guests may have laughed over a story that an Episcopal bishop had asked Sherman's consent to pray for the Rebel cause. "Hell, yes," the general had said, "Jeff Davis and the Confederate government need all the prayer they can get."

All news for Sherman was not good. He didn't laugh when he read in a newspaper brought into Savannah of the death of his six-month-old son, Charles. He had never seen the child. He wanted to go home, but because of "General Grant's confidence in me...I must go on," he wrote his brother, John.

For the most part Sherman was a busy Federal officer and his guests or visitors had to do with military affairs. U. S. Treasury agent, A. G. Browne tried to claim all the captured cotton for his department. Sherman refused. Browne later suggested that Sherman send a wire to President Lincoln, which he did from Green's house.

I beg to present you as a Christmas gift, the City of Savannah, with one hundred and fifty heavy guns, and plenty of ammunition, also twenty-five thousand bales of cotton.

Lincoln read the telegraph on Christmas Eve. Newspapers picked it up and the official announcement created a sensation in the North. Looking for a hero, the Northern public found one in Sherman. Browne became his friend for life.

Secretary of War, Edwin M. Stanton, arrived in Savannah and pressed Sherman concerning his troops' practice towards Negroes. When the Secretary persisted in exploring racial problems Sherman invited twenty blacks - most of them preachers - to Green's house. Possibly for the first time blacks took part in a political caucus. Attempts were made to better understand the position of the freed slaves and to begin plans to improve their plight.

The blacks viewed "Tecumseh" as a savior. Most of the persons in Savannah saw otherwise. An Episcopal minister who had been staying with Green, greatly offended that his host had offered hospitality to the Yankee General, left in a huff. A Federal chaplain offered to help Reverend I. S. K. Axson at the Independent Presbyterian Church where Green was a member. He was told, "Sir, my people need comfort, and that you cannot give." (Axson was the grandfather of Ellen Louise Axson who became the wife of President Woodrow Wilson.)

When a Miss Moodie visited Green, Green asked her if she wished to be introduced to Sherman. "Not for the world." Green took her upstairs to look at a painting and pointed out that General Sherman's apartments were next door. She wrinkled her nose with disdain.

"Don't you want him to rest comfortably?"

"Indeed not! I wish a thousand papers of pins were stuck in that bed and that he was strapped down to them," with an expression indicating wonder as to how a good Southerner could have him in his home.

It is not clear whether or not Green considered himself a Confederate or a U. S. citizen. It has been assumed that Green retained his English citizenship. Yet records indicate that he declared his intent for U. S. citizenship on January 24, 1837.

His son, Benjamin, served as a Confederate officer. In a different way Green got involved himself. The first part of the war he and his sister Elizabeth, Mrs. John Low, made a trip to England. There they were shadowed by U. S. detectives who followed them to Canada and to Detroit where he was arrested for carrying secret dispatches for President Davis. He was imprisoned for a time at Fort Warren in

Boston Harbor. He claimed to be innocent, but later, dispatches were delivered to Davis intact. Some said they were hidden in his boots and others that they were kept underneath Elizabeth's hair. She was not imprisoned.

Two reasons have been offered as to his hospitality. One, that by offering his home he spared some citizen of the Confederate States the "ignominy of having his house requisitioned by Sherman." Green said jestingly that it was as much from a desire to preserve his property against the "vandal hands of a victorious soldiery."

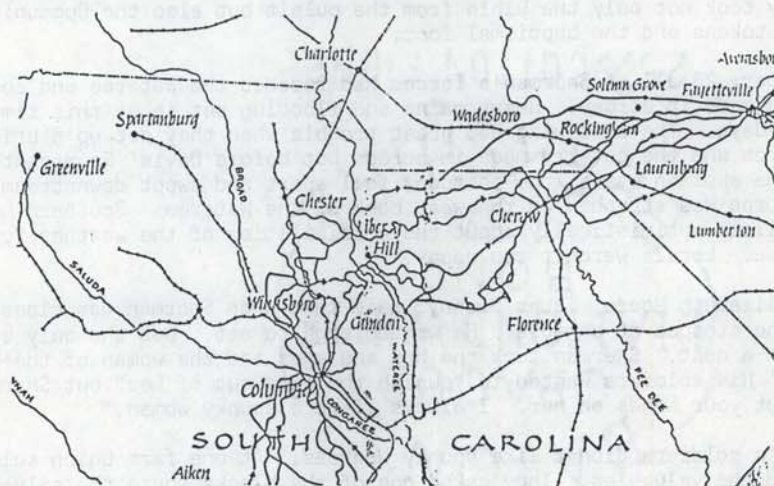
While Green may have been hurt some socially for his relationship with Sherman he did not suffer financially. By 1868 business was again booming in Savannah. Green prospered and his company stayed very busy.

Years later Sherman revisited Green at his Savannah home. They remembered the "good old days." Perhaps Green's reason for opening his doors to Sherman was quite simple: He liked prominent and interesting company. Anyway, while they were not always good, Yankees can't be all bad.

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Earle P. Barron



GRANNY: ALL YANKEES AREN'T BAD

Sherman moved his army of some 60,000 towards Columbia on January 13, 1865. The general predicted the swash he would cut through the state would be "one of the most horrible things in the history of the world." South Carolina could expect total war because she had fired the first shot at Charleston.

Bummers, deserters, camp followers, and soldiers not under very much supervision - did the most damage. They not only looted but destroyed property for the fun of it. The city of Columbia began to burn at dusk on February 17, Reporter David Conygham wrote,

I trust I shall never witness such a scene--drunken soldiers rushing from house to house, emptying them of their valuables and firing them; Negroes carrying off piles of booty...officers and men revelling on the wines and liquors until the burning houses buried them in their drunken orgies.

Sherman wanted the Confederates to think he was headed for Charlotte, N. C. From Columbia he moved on Winnsboro. As the bummers approached, its few remaining male citizens "took to the woods." General John W. Geary leading the advance of the left wing saw smoke rising from this and other fires and tried to get there to arrest the flames. When the army arrived only the Reverend W. W. Lord, rector

of Christ Episcopal Church, which was burned, and his four-hundred-pound vestryman, the village doctor, remained.

After Winnsboro, Sherman moved northeast in the direction of Cheraw. He still made feints towards Charlotte with his cavalry in order to prevent a Confederate troop build up in up-county South Carolina. The right wing was to cross the Wateree at Peay's Ferry and the left up the river at Rocky Mount, a ford 4 or 5 miles south of Great Falls. Sherman directed the cavalry to demonstrate strongly on Chester and then to turn east.

The Federals encountered little resistance. General Joseph E. Johnston couldn't get his army together until Sherman entered North Carolina. He seemed to have more officers than men. He had lots of generals. The veterans from the West dribbled in but General P. G. T. Beauregard had said, "If not, in the strict sense of the word a mob, it was no longer in the army." Desertions were high.

Fighting Joe Wheeler, with such outfits as his Third Arkansas Cavalry, "The War Childs' Children," had hounded Sherman all along. Mostly it was hit and run. If he caught bummers in acts of violence he had them shot.

General Hugh J. Kilpatrick U. S. A., halted at Monticello on his feint towards Chester. Two young Federal officers out-witted him in his plans for calling on the young ladies at the local "female institution." He was greatly disappointed for he was more interested in women than war. The next morning duty got the best of him and he moved along the railroad close to Chester. He tore up track and pulled down telegraph lines as he went. Later, in North Carolina, Wheeler's men surprised him in his night shirt with Marie Boozer and almost captured him.

The Yankees went through Woodward. They ransacked the Concord Presbyterian Church. They took not only the Bible from the pulpit but also the Communion Service, the tokens and the baptismal font.

By February 23 all of Sherman's forces had reached the Wateree and some divisions had made it across. Heavy rains and flooding set in at this time and lasted three days. The left wing had great trouble when they put up a bridge. The Twentieth Corps and the cavalry made it across but before Davis' Fourteenth Corps could span the swollen stream the pontoons fell apart and swept downstream. The Fourteenth Corps was stranded on the west bank of the Wateree. Southern newspaper men editorialized optimistically about the possibilities of the weather for the Southern cause. Locals weren't too happy.

Sarah Elizabeth Moore, later Granny, said that when Sherman was close to the Wateree he stopped at a house. He wanted eggs to eat. But the only eggs left were those on a nest. Sherman took the hen and eggs and the woman of the house slapped him. His soldiers wanted to "punish the fire out of her" but Sherman said, "No, don't put your hands on her. I always liked a spunky woman."

Sherman's soldiers didn't like spunky Negroes. At one farm Union soldiers couldn't find the valuables. They asked one of the blacks where the silver was hidden. He refused to reveal its location. When he persisted in not telling they killed him. Presbyterians erected a monument to the faithful servant at the Hopewell Church (ARP).

Granny had some experience with Sherman's soldiers herself. A party came by the Moore place on the road to Rocky Mount. Other than a few servants no men were present. Granny's father, Major John Moore, had died before the war. Her brother Captain John Moore of Picken's Guards, S. C. Volunteers, had been killed on June 28, 1862 in the Seven Days Battle in Virginia. Granny, her sister Mary Moore (married to a Ragsdale and then a Sigmon), and her mother, Jane Stewart Moore, were alone. The Yankees took everything they had except one ham and four or five chickens. While the servants were churning milk the Yankees broke the crock vessels on the rocks. They burned the gin house and other out-buildings. According to "Granny" the small detachment was afraid to go close to the barn for fear Wheeler's men were there.

One of the soldiers, an officer, had to wait for the Wateree River to go down to make his crossing. To pass the time he sat with the family around the fire for 2 or 3 days. While he was there some of the soldiers went up to the clothes room on the third floor of the brick home and set fire to cotton kept there in baskets. The sociable officer jumped up, rushed upstairs and brought the burning baskets of cotton down and out of doors. He suffered severe burns. The grateful family corresponded with him after the war. Granny liked to tell the story and always ended it, "All Yankees were not bad."

The next year Granny married William Banks Thompson of the Rocky Mount area. Thompson was a bright young man who graduated from Davidson College in 1859. He had worked his way through college as a proctor, majoring in the classics. After he finished he went to Arkansas to tutor the son of a wealthy planter. In 1861 when the war broke out he enlisted in Co. "A" Third Arkansas Cavalry. His outfit saw much action throughout the South. It harassed Sherman from Atlanta to Savannah and through the Carolinas.

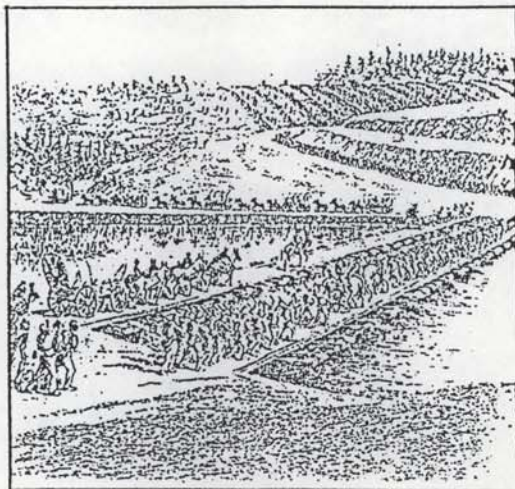
Undoubtably Thompson was in the area at this time. He was the quarter master-forager for his unit. Apparently he took as many country hams and chickens as Sherman. He had to wear his pistols for some time after the war because his neighbors didn't fully appreciate his duties.

Thompson stayed with Wheeler to the end and was paroled in May 5, 1865 in Chester, S. C. He received \$2.18 in Mexican money for pay. With this he bought a pair of shoes and some tobacco and kept a silver Mexican dollar. He went back to Davidson and got a Master's degree in Greek. He then operated an academy and taught school. He's buried at Catholic Presbyterian Church (USA) where he was Clerk of Session. Granny is buried at White Oak Presbyterian Church (ARP).

All that's left of the house is some large granite foundations stones and rubble in the heart of a vast pulpwood forest. What Sherman didn't do, time and the elements finished.

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