

## Lee Surrenders

In April, 1865, Lee surrendered. Uncle Willis asked me what I aimed to do after peace was declared. I toald him that I thought I would go to Texas and get into the Ranger service fur a few years and then shape my coarse from thar.

Uncle Willis commenst in his usual way of giving advice and sed, "John, I think the best thing you can do would be to hunt up some good woman and get married again, settle down in life. You are on the verge of becoming reckless and I want you to settle down." He then sed that he knew a girl that would suit me and went on to say that she was good-looking and a nice housekeeper, was of a good family and one of the kindest girls to her Father and Mother he had ever sean.

I ask her name and thought no more about it at the time.

A few days later Uncle Willis taken a congested chill while in town and they sent fur his wife. I went with her but he was too fur gone. We dun all that we could far him. He never got over the first chill. Uncle Willis was a member of the State Senate at the time of his death. He was baired at St. John Cemetary at Little Rock.

My aunt wanted to move back to her oald settlement and commenst to make her arrangements that way.

Lee and Johnston had surrendered, the men was coming home. One day when I was in town, I sean a big fellow dressed in the gray uniform walking toward me and calling my name. I had to get prity close to him before I knew hoo he was.

It was Jim Davis, one of Joe Johnston's men that had bin surrendered. He commenst to persuade me

to go home with him. I toald him that I had outlived the war so fur and I did not want to throw my life away, I thought I had better wait till men's minds had time to cool down. We then met up with three other boys from our settlement. They all wanted me to go and sed we would stick together even though we fought on different sides, would put it all behind us.

I toald them if they would wait on me one day I would go with them as I wanted to let my aunt know what I planned to do. So the next day I fixt up and started fur home with them. They all had thar paroles and passports to get thru and I was to pass fur a confederate. They would put up at the secession houses they could find. I had to set still and hear the Union men called all sorts of hard names meant fur cowards, scoundrels and others. They would all laugh at me a little about the no-good company I was keeping. I would say, "Couldn't say, I didn't fit on boath sides."

I started with two horses and I bought another the first day. One of the boys had bin wounded so this left only one to walk at a time. The night before we got home, I ask them to let me select the place fur us to stay all night at and they could pass as Union men. They agreed to do this.

I called on a Mr. Skelion hoo had suffered at the hands of the Confederats. I was well known to this man and toald him that we were slipping through in disguise in order to get even with the tramps. His wife was a good talker. I led her out on the acts of the Confeds. She toald about two of the boys turning to the Feds after they had left home. They had bin caught and brought close to thar house and tide to a tree and shot with thar family and children watching and pleading far thar lives to be spaired.

This brought tears to all of our eyes. I tried to change the subject, telling her that peace was made and we must hope for far better times, but she had got started and could not find a quitting place, telling the boys if they didn't think I was even with them. They sided not only even but a hundred percent a-hed.

As we struck the settlement a meleon-colly feeling stole over me each time I would come to the houses that was deserted. Fences all torn down and farms all grown up in briars. As I come to where my friends had lived, I would get down from my horse and go in to see what kind of shape the family was left in. After they would recognize me, the next thing would be, "Oh, if my son (or husband) could have lived to come home like you." It would bring tears to my eyes and I would have to swallow as hard as I could.

I could not see how the Country was ever to build up again, the stock all gone, neather cattle, hogs or horses, not even a chicken could be sean anywhere. The young men were all mostly lyeing at Vicksburg, Prairie Grove, Shilow and other battle field lots.

That evening I got home and found my Mother, sisters and my sweet baby girl all well. After the first burst of joy was over, my Mother commenst to weep for brother Joe. I toald her the sight of me brought grief to every family that I sean.

I found Mother living on the milk of one cow and a few vegetables, so the next evening I taken my gun and stole into the woods. I had walked till I was tired, so set down to rest. I sean a deer shake his head. It was fifty yds. from me. I taken rest off of the log that I setting on and never in life did I take more pains to make a good shot. At the crack of my gun I sean I was rewarded for my panes for he failed to get up. On going up to him, I found I had killed a

large and fat deer. I skinned out a ham and hung the other up and lit out fur home well pleased with my luck. So we had venison far supper that night.

That sad and lonely feeling had got persuasion of me and I could not shake it off. I wanted to see everybody in the country but when I would meet them, they were no company to me ner me to them.

Mother was uneasy about me evry time I was out of her sight. I was the only one in the Country that had bin in the Federal Army and it remained that way fur near a month. I was right among the men that had often hunted me to kill me, but somehow I could not be uneasy. I thought that they had a-nuff of fighting to do them.

It was not many days after I got home, Burk disbanded his Company and a good many of the men left the Country never to return. I heard thar was to be a gathering of the citizens at Biggs School house. I toald Mother I was going. She tried to persuade me out of the notion, telling me thar would be men thar that had often tried all sorts of sceams to ketch me and if they had a-got holt of me they would have put me to death. I toald her they had repented of thar foolish ways.

The morning of the gathering, I buckled on my pistols and mounted my horse. It was about eight milds to the school house. As I rode along, I could not help thinking of the change that had come over the country. Here I was riding in broad day light through the same country I had so often slipped through at night. My ears had almost got like a mules, they would pitch forward at a noise. When I got near the school, the road made a sudden turn and brought me in full view of the crowd.

My oald friend John Wright was thar. He sean me and come to meet me. Others followed him. I

rode up and spoke in as churchful manner as possible and shuck hands with all I was aquanted with, and that was a good many. They profest to be proud to see me. Some I beleaved was honest in what they sed, others I thought was great hipocrits.

Oald man Billy Sanders had spread the word that I was a Jay-hawker, so I had wrote a note to give him, stating that we could boath live in the same Country, me with as much as him. It was fur him to get up publicly and acknowledge what he had sed was more than he could prove.

When brother Joe was killed, his gun, pocketbook and knife had bin taken to Sanders. It was to be returned to our family, but we never got nothing.

It seamed thar was a impression had went out that the South had certain rights granted her. Thar was a dozen different opinions about it. I toald them it was unconstitutional. They contended thar was certain rights granted. I toald them I thought I understood all that passed between Grant and Lee, also Johnston and Sherman. Each one of us would take turns getting on a bench and telling what we thought took place, and how the war come about. When it was my turn, I stept up on the bench and toald it like this:

Thar was a Union man forced into the service. He got a position in a ship as a workman and finally got to go out to a stone quarry to dig out grind stones. After he had dug out quite a lot, a scout come a-long and ask him what he was doing.

He sed, "Digging out grind-stones."

"Who fur?"

He sed, "The Confedracy."

They wanted to know what the Confederacy wanted with so many.

He ses, "Jest to grind the damd thing down to a

point, so it can slip back into the Union.”

Now, boys, this is all true. Grant give them rations and transpersion home.

I then read the note I had wrote to Sanders, saying that I had come home to live and I had nothing against any man that had went out and fought fur what he thought was right, but Sanders was a thief and it made no difference hoo's flag he fought under. At this I ended my speech and stept off of the bench.

Oald Bill Thomson hollowed, “Hoo-rah.”

This was a great surprise to me, coming from the man it come from.

Sanders complied with my request, making a public acknowledgmet in church one day right after the sermon had bin preached. From that day on I went where I pleased without remarks being thrown at me.

## Making The Peace

A few days after this, Doctor A. B. Clingmons called me as I was passing, saying that he wanted me to go to church with him. I pointed to my belt which contained two forty-four six-shooters and sed, "Doctor, I don't want to go to church in this stile and hardly feel safe without them."

He ses, "Nobody will expect to see you without them and, John, if you ever expect to see Uncle Billy Pettijohn in church this is about your last chance."

Here he touched a tender place, fur thar was no one I thought more of than Uncle Pettijohn.

We got in about forty yards of the church. The Doctor propose to hitch our horses. Thar was quite a crowd at the church-house. I stept some three or four steps and called to the Dr. to hold up. I then turned back to my horse, unbelted my six-shooters, buckled them to my saddle and started fur the church-house.

We was a little early. I sean Capt. Burk coming to meet me. I went strate a-head till we met. The tears was running down his face. He could not speak fur some time but held onto my hand. He ses, "J. N., if I was ever proud to meet a man, it is you. You may think different about me, but I have come to know you."

He sed that he had bin detailed to protect that part of the country but I had dun more fur it than he had, I had saved a many house from being burnt, speaking of the time we got our buglar shot. We set and talked till church broke, I toald him, that I had no hard feelings toward anyone. I then went up and mingled with the crowd a little, then went strate to Uncle Billy Pettijohn.

I was so glad to see him. He was a fine person.

He had fought in the war of 1812. I had stayed with him when I was fifteen and waited on him. He only lived a few days after that Sunday.

When I got home after this trip, I toald Mother I was in no danger. I toald her of meeting Capt. Burk and talking over our scrapes and having a good laugh over me shooting his horse from under him. I guess thar was never two men trying to capture each other more than we were. I could not help telling her about Burk saying that if I had ever dun anybody dirty, I had covered it up well far he had never found it. I remarked to Mother that I felt flattered but was proud of it.

Mother toald me, "That is the highest compliment I ever heard a man get from his enemy, and you don't feel half as proud as I do. How you have lived under all you have had to go through, and get such praise, I can't see fur my life."

A few days after this, Alford wanted me to go with him up in Montgomery County. Some of his neighbors that had refuge to that County wanted to move back and they would have to talk to the County officers before they moved back. I was well aquanted with the officers, so Alford wanted me to be thar. Thar was Jeff Colier, Mr. Stone and Bill Harper, one or two more. Gibson Robertson was County clerk. Thom Martin was sheriff. They all lived at the Cedar Glades. It was about thirty five or fourty milds. All of these boys had bin Confederat soldiers. We joked each other as we went along. I had to contend with it all, but I toald them when we got to Robertson I would have help.

We all put up at Robertson's far the night. He was one of those big harted men that tried to make everybody feel at home. We all put our horses in the pasture some half mild from where Robertson lived.



We spent a pleasant time joking each other, most of us had bin well acquainted before the war.

The next morning we struck out to get our horses. I was a-hed. Soon as I got to where I could see over the pasture, I sean that our horses was gone. When I got thar, I struck around the fence to see if I could see where they got out. I soon found where the fence had bin lade down and the horses led out. I hollowed to the others and pointed to the place, saying, "Boys, our horses is stolen."

We taken thar trail. It led in the direction of home. I give Robertson the wink and we fell back and had a talk. I ask him if any of the Union boys had come in. He sed two had and toald me hoo they were. I then toald Robertson I beleave they were the boys that had the horses. He sed if it was them he could have them brought back and put into the pasture that night. He toald me to go a-hed fur a while tracking the horses and he would make some excuse to go back home, and fur me to come in fur dinner, fur me to let on like it was Union men that had the horses.

I began to try to lose the trail but I had as well tried to lose a bunch of fox hounds. The men would circle around and strike the trail. I would go a-hed again tell I struck a rough rocky place and try to lose it again. We kept on tell we got some five milds and it was leading up a breshey hollow to a mountain. I sean through a opening my horse, so I toald the boys I would go a-hed, but they wouldn't hear of this. So we all drew our pistols and went a-hed. When we got to the horses, they were tied hard and fast. We could see no one so we soon had them loose, got on them and struck fur Robertson's.

We went by Doctor Whits. As we got in sight of his house, thar was two men standing on his gallery

and when they seen us coming they took off. When we rode up, the oald Doctor come out and shuck hands all around and wanted to know what we were all riding bairback fur? One of the boys sed, "Fur exercise." I thought it a poor way fur pleasure. I made a excuse to get down to get water and comenst to brag on the place and the nice view of his farm. I went to the back yard to get a better view but was looking fur the man that had got away as we come up.

I happen to see him leaning against the wall of the house. He seamed like he was trying to bary himself into the wall. I knew him. It was one of the oald Dr's. sons. I went up to him and asked him why he stole our horses fur. He ask me hoo was along with me. When he heard, he sed he would not have taken them fur a thousand dollars. He thought it was some oald Missouri refugee and he was paying even, fur Shelbey's men had taken thars as they went back to Missouri. I knew thar was no truth in this statement but he begged me not to let the others know he had anything in it.

When we got back to Robertson's fur dinner, the subject was, hoo stole the horses, me and Robertson trying to leave it in doubt, them trying to find out hoo it was and what to do next, and trying to make the impression that it was Union men.

Uncle Jeff Collier sed if they had not taken my horse, it would not look so bad, but they had no regard fur thar friends. I toald Uncle Jeff that I could furgive them if it was Union men. He ask how I could do so. I ask him if he didn't recall the fable in the spelling book, how they was all beaten bey being caught in bad company. This got quite a laugh. Someone ask him how many horses he had stolen during the war. He sed six. I then ask if he knew

which side got them. The Confederats got four and the Union got two he ses. I then remarked, "That ought to convince you hoo is the greatest theaves, to admit this horse was taken bey the Union side. You have beaten us two to one."

I wanted to stay all night but the other men wanted to go home. Robertson and Martin was ancious fur them all to come back and try to build up the Country again. Late in the evening we set out fur home and it was day-light when we got back. I can't call to mind that I ever spend a day or two more pleasant than I did on this trip.

I will give the reader another blunder of mine. About this time thar was one of them oald time revival meetings going on at Biggs school house, so I went. I was a widower at the time. I dressed as good as I could, got thar early and was noticing how they all come in. I sean a boy come in with a widow that was young and good-looking. The boy was not noted fur being smart. I had served with him in the Confederat Army and the boys had a good deal of fun at his expense. Me and Jim Buchanan had taken his part and toald the other boys they must let up on teasing him so much, so he thought me and Jim was the greatest men out.

At Church the congregation was dismissed. The church was having some business to attend to, so me and Jim Buchanan went out and was talking in front of the church-house. I sean Lee coming to us so I thought I would have a little fun out of him.

I ses, "Jim, you know how me and you always taken Lee's part."

He ses, "Yes."

I then commenst to tell him how mean Lee had treated me. I had dressed up and come purpose to go with that widow, now Lee had knocked it all in the

head, she would not so much as look at me. Lee fell right in the trap.

He ses, "John, you may go home with her."

I ses, "No, she won't let me."

He ses, "You ask her."

I ses, "You are jest wanting her to slight me right here before all these people to get to laugh at me about it."

She come walking out of the house and ask Lee to bring her horse up.

He ses, "I an't going back with you. J. N. Jones is going."

I spoke and ask Lee what he ment.

He sed, "You sed you wanted to go."

If I had bin struck with liteing I would not have bin worst shocked.

Buchanan laughed but come to my relief bey saying, "Miss Corda, you have not made a bad traid in swapping company."

My face burned like my hair mite be in danger of taken fire and the widow did not need paint to give color to her prity face. I finally got my voice and toald her if she would point out her horse I would wate on her. I brought up her horse to the stile blocks. I had charged rifle pits, masked Battries, but I was afraid to ask that lady fur her company. I got on my horse and sneaked a-long after her and I finally had the nerve to ride up, but could not think of a thing to say fur about a mild or more. When I did, I would say it backwards every time. I tride to apologize and I made things worse.

So much fur teasing a simpleton, but she was a nice lady and after I got over my first shock, I enjoyed her company. Had it not bin thar was another woman that had bin spoken of in such glowing termes, I expect I would have drove a trade

with her.

Well, I went back to the Rock and, on the way, I met the four Arkansas boys coming home. I had a long talk with them and they was surprised to learn I had bin at home a month mixing with the Rebs. I toald them to go home and try to make good citizens, let beygones be beygones and all hands try to forget the past and look to the future.

In a few days after I got to the Rock, I got a note from Governor Murphy to come to his office. I could not think what I had dun to be punished fur, so I went to see. I went in and introduced my-self, not having the least ida what the Governor could want with me.

He ses, "You are Lieutenant Jones?"

"I served a while as Lieutenant."

"Well, you have bin highly recommend to be the proper man far Sheriff of Clark County and I want to commishen you."

I thn toald the Governor that I did not think I was the proper man from the fact I had but little education and another thing I was not willing to serve bey apointment. He insisted on me excepting it but I declined, telling him I would not serve if commeshion. In two months after this I would have excepted the oald Sheriff was a great friend of my father's and I could have deputized him and got behind and let him dun all the work.