

"Johnson's Raid"

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By Jay A. Graybeal

In October 1903 former Confederate Gen. Bradley T. Johnson died. The editor of the Union Bridge Pilot took the opportunity to publish a description of the raid through Maryland made by the late general's forces in July 1864. The story appeared in the October 9, 1903 issue of the paper:

"Death of General Johnson

Gen. Bradley T. Johnson died Monday at the home of his son Col. Bradley S. Johnson, Rock Castle, Va., of Bright's disease, aged 74 years and 5 days.

His remains were conveyed to Baltimore on Wednesday and buried at Loudon Park Cemetery, after services conducted in Christ Protestant Episcopal Church.

Not during the Civil War was this part of Maryland caused more scare and consternation by the invasion of troops than when on that hot 10th day of July 1864, Bradley T. Johnson, at the head of his forces, made a raid through Frederick, Liberty, New Windsor, encamping at the latter place the night of that day; and on to Westminster and near Baltimore &c. the next.

He having been a resident of Frederick City all his life to the time he took up arms for the South, and having many Marylanders from these sections of the state then under his command, they were very much at home in that fleeting journey among the native haunts & homes of many of them but a few months before. To say the people along that military march this side the Potomac, at that time were made afraid and many almost frantic, is putting it mild.

All the good serviceable horses in this part of the state were hurried away to places of safety by men and boys who were still remaining at their homes, out of the armies of the North and the South, to escape capture, while the women and children were left at their firesides to hope and weep in those long dreary days and sleepless nights, filled with dark forebodings as to the outcome to themselves, their friends and their property. Of their best horses, some farmers secreted them in the cellars of dwellings, some were hidden in the thickets and ravines on or near their farms, while most all the others, hundreds of them in cavalcades, were speeded away to eastern Maryland or Pennsylvania as fast as their legs could carry them; while the old, blind and lame ones, were left in the pasture fields to graze uncared for and unharmed.

The country was scoured by scouts for horses, harness and other things needed for the army of the invaders and none more so than around New Windsor, where they had camped on the night named.

There, shots were fired at fleeing teams from the town when the soldiers entered, the drivers of which wouldn't halt at command-some shots passing through the buggy tops. At McKinstry, Jesse Anders' store was relieved of shoes and other goods by a few soldiers, one being Theo. Clary who was a miller near there a few years before, and after had joined the army. A 3-year-old colt was taken from the late Stephen Haines, but was too young to stand the travel and was left on the way and he recovered it. He was from home at the time and it was said he declared he would have used his old musket in protection of his property had he been there and no doubt his gun would have been as dangerous to the shooter as

the thing shot at. At John Clemson's near there, several horses were taken and shots fired at farm hands who were trying to get away with the horses when the soldiers appeared, but no one was harmed by bullets there or elsewhere where the firing took place.

The old men, women and children, left at their homes in those turbulent days would all gather at some neighbor's home in every community and cry, talk and pray for a more favorable state of affairs, not knowing that they would ever see again the return of their fine stock and those who fled with them to save them from the soldier bands; but in a week or two nearly every man, boy and horse reached their homes from the timbers and bushes of Pennsylvania again, with the invading hordes beyond the Potomac, and a degree of relief and tranquillity prevailed once more for a time at least.

My! My! what days of terror were those to the people of this part of the land! No one knew what a day would bring forth at our firesides or upon the battlefields near around them. Most of these warriors, many of them from this state, were not uniformed but clad in knit undershirts and seedy pants, and they and their horse and the line of march behind them, showed the wear and tear and ravages of war on every hand.

Robt. W. Macubbin, of west Saratoga St., Baltimore, a young man who had been in the confederate army from the beginning of the war, was one of the scouts near New Windsor, and said that he had tried to run the blockade three times to reach his home and friends in that city, but failed in every case and had not heard from his homefolks in that time, but hoped and expected to enter Baltimore in a day or two. But in that they failed, as a retreat to their southland was made hurriedly in the next day or two. Still fearing he would not reach his home on that occasion, he requested of one he met near New Windsor, that his friends be informed that he was with Johnson's force in that raid and was in good health and free from army wounds; which was done. He returned to his home after the war and if still living will remember much here stated, and the incident that occurred on the farm now owned by Mr. Hoff, near New Windsor, when he and a comrade secured the keys and searched the place for horses and harness in the presence of several scores of crying women and children who had gathered there from the surrounding neighborhood.

Some people stayed out of their homes at night, some put their clothing in sacks and had them out of doors, some put money in bottles and buried it for safety, and as before stated, at no time during the Rebellion, was this part of Maryland more agitated, more frightened and more nearly crazed by war, than about the time this most gallant but now dead confederate hero, General Johnson, lead his men on a quick movement through this section, in July 1864."

New Windsor artist Frederick Dielman produced a sketch of the scene in his home town which was later copied and published in the September 3, 1864 edition of Leslie's Illustrated Magazine. Although Carroll County was occupied by Union and Confederate troops during three campaigns, Dielman's illustration is the only local example of a published wartime scene.

Photo caption: Frederick Dielman of New Windsor sketched Confederate cavalymen as they stopped in New Windsor in July 1864. Historical Society of Carroll County copy photograph collection.