

"The Arrest of Joseph Shaw, Part II"

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By Jay A. Graybeal

Last week's column contained the first part of Joseph Shaw's description of his arrest in August 1862. Shaw and other residents had been taken to Baltimore and detained by military authorities. Their story continues with a visit from friendly Baltimoreans and a Westminster man:

"But the darkest hour is just before the break of day. Truman Cross, a highminded gentleman, had seen us up at the Eutaw House and knew some of us, he got an order from General Wool to call and see us, and he in company with Mr. Thomas E. Hamilton, another elegant gentleman, Col. Dymock and James Blizzard of Westminster, visited our lonely and loathsome apartment and they soon got us out and into a large and well ventilated room, supplied with comfortable cots, we were here introduced to a Mr. Wood and a number of other highminded gentlemen whose names we do not now remember. We were at once introduced into the society of gentlemen and treated as gentlemen.

Mr. Cross went to an eating house and ordered our supper and our board during our stay and we had good and comfortable quarters and the society of gentlemen. We then began to find out who had us arrested, no more nor less than Col. Wm. Lewis Schley, of Baltimore, and we were promised a hearing as soon as Col. Schley could get his witnesses, which was on Monday about 11 o'clock. When we were conducted up to the office of Gen. Wool, seven of us were tried first; A. J. Yingling, Sidney Dymock, Winfield Fringer, F. W. Neal, H. S. Neal, E. Benton Evans, and C. Burke, at whose trial we were not present but they were discharged. The balance of us were then taken before the General; Wm. Mitten, Joel Blizzard, Henry Boyle, Wm. J. Crouse, C. B. Boyle, C. C. Raymond, C. A. Horner, John C. Frizell, and Joseph Shaw. We were here permitted to see Col. Schley's witnesses, and our accusers, and they were Chas. W. Webster, a lady named Mr. Wilson, Harry J. Shellman, and two of the soldiers who had made the arrests. The General treated us exceedingly kind, for he is an affable gentleman.

Mr. Blizzard's case came up first and it appeared that there was no charge against him and he was discharged. Webster and Shellman swore that C. C. Raymond was a secessionist, and was regarded as leader of them. Our case came up next; we were introduced to the General as the editor of the Western Maryland Democrat, he said we ought to be a Union man, he was a democrat; we told him we were Union, had always been for the Constitution and the Union and always said so. Here Capt. Barret presented three copies of the Carroll County Democrat dated Jan. 16th, Feb. 20th and June 5, 1862 with certain passages of the editorials marked with a lead pencil.

The Gen. thought the papers were old and remarked that hundreds had changed to be Union men, and secessionists since those papers were issued, we regretted that there had not been a later number furnished, we however examined the papers, owned them and endorsed the articles as our own, and was not aware that there was treason in them and did not know that we had abused our privilege as a citizen of the United States. The Gen. here remarked he would examine the papers after a little while. Chas. A. Horner's case came up, Shellman and one of the soldiers that arrested him swore that he had hollowed for Jeff Davis. Two of the soldiers swore that William Mitten had cursed Lincoln. Mrs. Wilson swore that she had heard somebody say that Wm. J. Crouse had said 'Jeff Davis was as pure as Jesus Christ.' Chas. W. Webster swore that John C. Frizell had kissed a secession flag, and had talked secession talk. The charge against Chas. B. Boyle was that he was a member of some guerrilla band, he knew nothing of it and no one else seemed to know. The charge against Henry Boyle was that somebody had

heard him say or do something, we forget what it was. Gen. Wool read an order that hereafter no arrests be made unless the charge be made in writing and the time and place of the offense be specified, and charged us all to remember that. Just here Capt. Barret seemed a little chafed, and we thought the witnesses felt a little uncomfortable.

Gen. Wool then ordered all the witnesses to leave his office, and then told us that he had not ordered our arrests and gave us an honorable discharge."

Shaw's arrest and brief imprisonment hardly diminished his political opinions and he remained an ardent critic of the Lincoln administration until the end of the war. His views, particularly an editorial he wrote shortly before Lincoln's assassination, led to his violent death at the hands of Unionists in 1865. Not surprisingly, bitter feelings remained long after peace returned.

Photo caption: Harry J. Shellman of Westminster was a witness against a southern sympathizer in August 1862. Historical Society of Carroll County collection, gift of Rev. Paul Reese, 1941.