

## The Book Shelf

(continued from page 11)

noise and battle cries we sense a little of what the animals endured. We are presented with strong new pictures. We meet new horses. Jeb Stuart's Skylark, Jefferson Davis' Thunder and Stonewall Jackson's Little Sorrel, who is clairvoyant.

The South won the war, was the conviction in Traveller's mind. The image of Marse Robert was goodness in his world. In October 1870 General Lee died. Until June 1871 Traveller waited and hoped to see him. And the last words he quoted from General Lee were, "Strike the tent."

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## A noted Southern belle...a raider from the North, they were Sherman and "Miss Cecilia"

by Leta Hatcher Plaskon  
Kennesaw Chapter #241

Marietta, Georgia

On Shelman Heights on the Etowah River near Cartersville, Georgia there stood an old antebellum mansion, among the few which escaped Sherman's torch in his resistless "march to the sea." The lady who became mistress of this mansion and queened it there in the old days was Miss Cecilia Stovall, a noted Southern belle. At West Point, where she spent many of her summers, she was surrounded by a train of admirers, among whom were William T. Sherman and Joseph Hooker.

Cecilia Stovall was the daughter of Pleasant A. Stovall, wealthy cotton merchant of Augusta, Georgia. In 1845 young Lieutenant Sherman, who had given Cecilia such a rush at West Point, was assigned to detached duty in her hometown of Augusta. However, by that time Cecilia was so interested in another West Point graduate Richard B. Garnett, then stationed at the U.S. Arsenal in Augusta, that her father packed her off to visit relatives in South Carolina. There was nothing wrong with Dick Garnett except his salary, which Mr. Stovall considered inadequate.

In South Carolina Cecilia met Charles T. Shelman, of old Cass, now Bartow County, Georgia. They fell in love. Her father approved and they were married in 1848. Charles Shelman later built a beautiful white house with six tall columns on a hill above the Etowah River in Bartow County. It was called Shelman Heights and many of its handsome furnishings were selected in Europe by Cecilia and her father. Here the Shelmans were living when North and South went to war in 1861. And here Cecilia's old beau, William T. Sherman, came to call in 1864 at the head of an invading army. Only she was now Mrs. Shelman.

In the spring of 1864, Sherman and Joseph Hooker both paused on the heights of Etowah. As his soldiers were ransacking the mansion, Sherman's attention was attracted by the wails of an old Negroess: "O Lawd, what's Miss Cecilia gwine ter do now?" Sherman made inquiries and learned that the "Miss Cecilia" was his old sweetheart. Captain Shelman was in the Confederate Army and Miss Cecilia had refugee. The house was in the care

of this aged family servant.

Thereupon, orders were issued to the soldiers to replace what they had taken. A guard was thrown around the house, and the man who had said "War is hell" left the following note for its mistress:

Dear Madam:

*You once said that you would pity the man who would ever become my enemy. My answer was I would ever protect and shield you. That I have done. Forgive me all else. I am but a soldier.*

Respectfully,  
W. T. Sherman

To Joe, the faithful family retainer, General Sherman said, "Say to your mistress for me that she might have remained in her home in safety; that she and her property would have been protected."

Shelman Heights burned to the ground on New Year's Day in 1911. An old photograph reproduced in the History of Bartow County shows it white and beautiful and well-preserved to the last. Captain Shelman died there in 1886, but Cecilia lived on until 1904, witty and charming and the center of attention to the end of her days.

**Author's Note:** There are two different spellings of Cecilia (Cecelia). They were used interchangeably.

### Bibliography

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