



Julia Ann Morgan

FOUR YEARS AMONG THE REBELS

A Nashville Woman's Life in
Georgia During the War

by
Julia Ann Morgan
(Mrs. Irby Morgan)

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Dedicated to the Confederate Soldiers

INTRODUCTION



This book gives an inside view of things during the war by a truthful, patriotic, great-hearted woman, whose keen observation and kindly soul are reflected in its pages. It is refreshing, after the deluge of dry official reports of campaigns and battles and the unhappy contentions of so many surviving heroes as to where to locate the glory of victory and the shame of defeat, to hear a woman's voice telling the story of that awful time in her own way, which is very straightforward, circumstantial, and realistic. I mean realistic, not in the nude and vulgar realism of a class of modern novels equally inane and indecent, but realistic in the sense that events are narrated with simple truthfulness. There is no partisan coloring or melodramatic flourish. Mrs. Morgan tells what she saw and heard during those "Four Years with the Rebels" in a colloquial style that suits the theme and charms the reader.

Mrs. Morgan is a Southern woman, and the throb of her womanly heart is in every line. The splendid courage of the soldiers of the Confederacy finds part of its explanation in the intense devotion, unflinching fortitude, and sublime self-sacrifice of the women of the South. The

sons and husbands of such women could not be cowards. Even in a case in which cowardice might be in the blood or the nerves, the inspiration of woman's sympathy and the traditions of a people where courage is hereditary, and among whom true chivalry yet lingers in this materialistic and sordid age, the constitutionally timid were swept into the current and carried forward on the crest of the fiery waves of war.

It is worthy of notice that Mrs. Morgan, writing more than a quarter of a century after the war, expresses no doubt of the righteousness of the Southern cause. Whatever may be said of the people of the South, and whatever may be the ultimate verdict of the world, it is uttering nonsense to say that their hearts were not in the struggle. Men do not die and women do not suffer, as the men and women of the South died and suffered, for a cause that is not dear to them. Had not the hearts of the men and women of the South been in the cause, the Confederacy would have collapsed with its first serious reverse. The leaders of the South did not drag the Southern people into the war any more than did the leaders of the North drag the Northern people into it. They had been drifting into its vortex for two generations, and what had been long dreaded and foretold came in 1861.

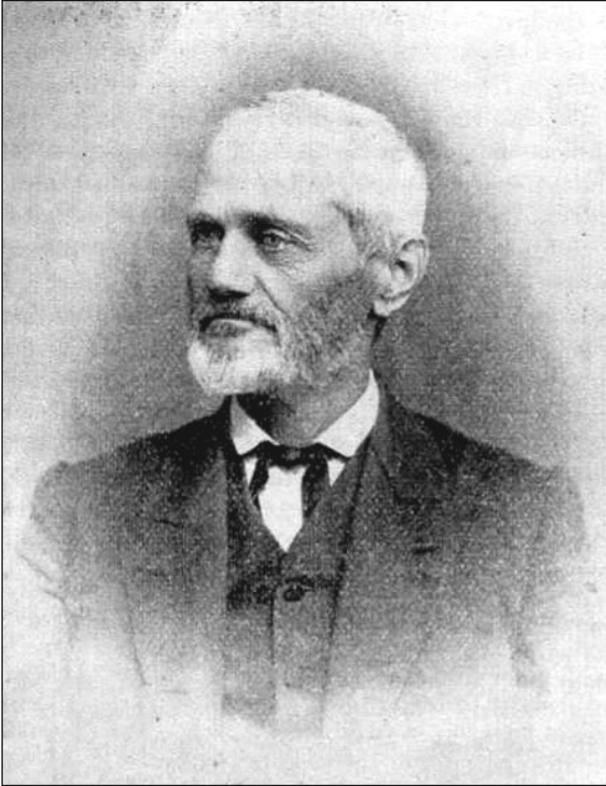
Reconstruction has been effected, and reconciliation has been so greatly advanced that hopeful patriots of all sections indulge the expectation that the time is not far off when the last note of sectional discord will be hushed, and the last sectional politician will be buried deep with his face downward. But it may be said here, as it has been said before, that if it is insisted that, as a condition of perfect reconciliation, the Southern people shall acknowledge that the boys in gray fought and died for a cause they

believed to be wrong, the trumpet of the last judgment will sound before they will make the shameful concession. They were defeated, but they made a good fight for what they believed to be a just cause. They died for their convictions, and no Southern man or woman will seek to fix upon their memories the blot of insincerity. Neither will any true man or woman of the North seek thus to smirch the memory of our dead heroes. The women of the two sections who still mourn for their dead who sleep where they fell may clasp hands in a sacrament of sorrow and forgive on both sides, but they cannot forget.

Within the bounds of Mrs. Morgan's personal acquaintance in Nashville and elsewhere she is well esteemed as a lady of the highest social respectability and Christian virtues. Beyond that circle is the general public, to whom I commend these pages with these "Introductory Words," with the belief that they will greatly enjoy their perusal, and with the hope that, having yielded to the urgent request of her family and friends in giving this book to the press, the author may be rewarded by a large measure of success.

O.P. Fitzgerald.

March 4, 1892.



Irby Morgan

CHAPTER ONE



The people of Nashville for weeks before the fall of Fort Sumter were greatly excited, as the whole country was watching and waiting coming events. Fort Sumter fell; and no one can describe the excitement but one who witnessed it, and every one commenced planning and trying to do something to aid the South.

Drums were beating, fifes playing, the boys coming in troops to enlist for the war, and anxious fathers and mothers could be met at every point. All were earnest and anxious, as few had anticipated the result of the wrangling the country had had for years; and now war was upon us, and we totally unprepared for it.

All the old guns and muskets to be found were brought into requisition, and many consulted as to how to use them, how they could be remodeled, etc., and we of the South were in a dilemma what to do; but we went on the presumption, "where there's a will there's a way," to get us out of difficulty, and the result proved it.

Mr. V. K. Stevenson and others formed a company to gather war materials, and my husband, Mr. Irby Morgan, was selected by him to go to New Orleans, Louisville, and other points to get sulphur and other material

for making caps.

Col. Samuel D. Morgan took great interest in the cap factory, and it was a success, for in a short time they were making thousands. Mr. Morgan brought home two of the first perfect caps, and requested me to keep them as souvenirs of the war. The caps that were used at Manassas and Bull Run were made in our cap factory of the material bought by my husband. After this factory had proved a success, Mr. Morgan and others were sent to hunt wool to make clothes for our soldiers, and he went to Texas and other points and bought four hundred and fifty thousand pounds and had it shipped to Nashville, and from here he took it to factories in Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and East Tennessee to be made into Confederate gray. He went to the factories and got the cloth, and the last he procured Gen. Rody had to send an escort to guard the wagons, and he delivered to the department in Atlanta five hundred thousand yards of Confederate gray which he had had made at a cost of seventy-five cents a yard, when it was selling in the market at five dollars a yard. After he returned from Texas, then our work began.

Col. Terry's gallant command from Texas came through the marshes of Louisiana, in water and mud almost waist deep, and most of them took severe colds, and by the time they got to Nashville a number were sick. To add to their troubles, the measles broke out among them. Hospitals were hurriedly fitted up, and they were soon crowded. The citizens were greatly distressed, and the ladies went in troops to see them, to take delicacies, and to do all to alleviate their sufferings. Miss Jane Thomas, Mrs. Felicia Porter, and many others were untiring in their attentions; but the hospitals were so crowded and uncomfortable that a number decided to take them to

their homes and nurse them. A great many were young, petted darlings at home, and of course they were wretched. I took Capt. Rice, a grand old man who lived on Trinity River on a large farm; also Frank Roan, Capt. Hunter, and Frank Kibbe, all four from Texas, and Levi Jones, of East Tennessee. All were very ill with measles and terrible coughs, and we sent for our family physician and did all we could for them, sitting up and nursing for two months. I hired a nurse and got the boys from the store to help sit up with them. Capt. Hunter was delirious for two weeks, and Capt. Rice as ill as could be to live, and we watched and waited as tenderly as possible.

After two months Capt. Hunter got strong enough to join his command, so did Frank Roan and Kibber; that left me with Levi Jones and Capt. Rice. Dr. Atchison told me he thought Capt. Rice would die. I was much distressed, for I had become greatly attached to the old man. I went to him and said: "Captain, you are very sick; I fear you will not get well."

He said, with a great deal of earnestness and quiet dignity: "Madam, I am an old man. I have plenty at home, a large farm, negroes, no wife nor children, and the boys were all leaving, and I loved them and could not stand to see them go without me, and I thought a country that had done so much for me I ought to fight for it."

I said: "My dear old friend, you must try to think of a better land, to which you are fast hastening. Look to God for help. We have done all we can for you; now beg God to help you to be ready to meet him."

He said: "I have always been charitable, have ever been kind to my negroes, and old Master will deal kindly with me. I have no fears." And just as the glorious sun rose the old man's spirit took its flight, I hope to a better

world. We buried him at Mt. Olivet.

All were gone now but Levi. He seemed delighted with his surroundings; would come into my room and would sit for hours with the children and myself and tell me about his mother, sisters, and brothers, and wish he was at home with them. He said he wished he was at home so he could go to the singing school. He was tired of the war. He reverted to the singing school again and again, and said they made the prettiest music he ever heard; indeed they were powerful singers.

One day I said I thought the fresh air would do him good: "I will have the carriage ready, and I want you to take a ride." He was delighted, and observed that he thought it would do him "a power of good." As he crossed the bridge he saw his first steamboat; and he was charmed, and told me when he got home that he thought "it was such a good idea, houses floatin' on water, and a feller could fish all the way down."

He got to looking well and ate heartily, and I said: "Levi, I expect soon they will call on you to join your command."

He said: "Yes; I am looking any day to be sent for, but I am powerful weak." He screwed up his courage enough to appoint a time to join his regiment, but when the fatal day arrived he came to my room with a handkerchief bound around his jaws. I asked him what was the matter. He said his tooth was killing him it was aching so bad. I got him camphor, laudanum, and warm cloths to apply, and he sat with his head bent down in his hands and rocked and moaned and, as I thought, oblivious to all surroundings; but all of a sudden he looked up with his keen, black eyes, and said: "When I go home, I am going to send you a barrel of apples and sweet taters." I thanked

him, and said he was very kind; and then he would rock and moan again, seeming in great agony. After being silent for some time, he raised his head again and said: "Miss Morgan, California must be a great country. Sweet taters grows thar an trees, and weighs sixty pounds." I told him I thought it wonderful. He was just nineteen, and could I have done so, I would have sent him home to his mother to be happy. After his toothache was cured he could find no other excuse, so finally, with great reluctance, he joined his command.



Col. Erasmus Burt

CHAPTER TWO



The next startling event was the battle of Ball's Bluff, in which Col. Erasmus Burt, brother-in-law of Mr. Morgan, lost his life. He was Auditor of the State of Mississippi, and raised a splendid regiment around Jackson, sons of the best and most influential families, and went to Virginia to the seat of action. They had a terrific fight there, and Col. Burt killed Col. Baker, of Oregon, and a whole regiment of Federals fired on him, and as Col. Burt fell, mortally wounded, his regiment yelled and charged like demons, killed and drove into the Potomac two thousand seven hundred men, and it was called at the time by the Federal papers: "The Ball's Bluff Disaster." Col. Burt was promoted for his bravery, but it came too late, as he died the next day. This was early in the war, and a company was detailed to escort his remains to Jackson. He was beloved by all, for he was a brave soldier and a Christian gentleman. He left a widow and eight children with no protector, so Mr. Morgan moved them to Alabama near relatives.

One day it was announced that Gen. Beauregard and Father Ryan would give a talk on the war, at Masonic Hall, so we went to hear them. This was soon

after the battles of Bull Run and Manassas, and they had a great deal that was encouraging to say. After the lecture was over we went up to the platform and were introduced to them, and expressed pleasure at hearing them give so encouraging accounts of our prospects. Gen. Beauregard spoke of the battles of Manassas and Bull Run, and said the Federals were so demoralized that if we had been prepared to pursue them we could have gone to Washington and dictated terms of peace. He asked my husband if he was related to Gen. John T. Morgan, and he told him he was his brother. He said we ought to be proud of him, for at a critical time in the battle he, by his strategy, helped to turn the tide in our favor. We told him that Nashville had made the caps that fought those battles. I never will forget Father Ryan's noble countenance, so full of love and gentleness. He had long hair, a handsome face, and every inch a man and poet, and his love for our Southland beamed forth in every look and trembled in every word he uttered.

They had been fighting at Fort Donelson for days, and we would hear very distressing accounts from them: our boys in water knee-deep, and such terrific fighting it was fearful to contemplate, and such overwhelming numbers to contend with. But almost every day we would hear of deeds of valor and bravery, and we felt that our noble boys could not be whipped. They were outnumbered and had to succumb, and only those know, who went through these exciting times, what the news of the fall of Fort Donelson meant.

The next report was that the army was falling back and would make a stand at Nashville. Some said they would fight in Edgefield; others, that they would fall back and fight on the other side of the river. By the next

morning the streets were filled with soldiers, wagons, army stores, and artillery wagons being prepared to send South, and the excitement was at fever heat, and pandemonium seemed to reign.

The next news was from an old friend, Mrs. Stubbs, who said Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston was at her home; had come there to rest, and everything was being done for his comfort. I prepared a waiter of delicacies, and was soon on my way to her house. When I arrived, she insisted on my seeing him, but I said I wouldn't think of intruding. She took the waiter to him, and in a little while came back with a message from the general that he would like to see me. She took my arm, and almost before I knew it I was in Gen. Johnston's presence. He expressed great regret at having to fall back. I told him I hoped he would not think it presumption, but I was anxious to know if he intended making a stand at Nashville.

"My husband intends to take us South if the army does fall back; but if it is not proper to answer, don't hesitate to decline. I am anxious to know, for we will have to make some few prepared before leaving home."

He said: "You had better get ready and start in the morning."

I looked at that noble face and massive head, and saw sorrow and care depicted there, and I have never forgotten him. That careworn face is fresh in my memory. I have met Mrs. Stubbs many times since the war, and she loved to dwell on the time Gen. Johnston was at her house, and she, as many others would have done, considered it a great honor to entertain so brave a man.

I went home, and soon after saw Drs. McTyeire and Summers, knowing they were as anxious as we to get away with their families. But by night the rumor was all

over town that the army would make a stand, and every one who could shoulder a musket must help to defend Nashville to the last ditch. My husband thought it best for us to go, and he would stay and fight if necessary. So we started to Fayetteville. Before leaving, I called up my two faithful servants, husband and wife, Henry and Martha Brown by name, told them to take the keys, use wood, coal, and contents of the larder, and take good care of the house and everything in it; and faithfully they performed their part. They buried my China, packed at night my carpets to my mother in Nashville, carried my furniture, piece at a time, to the houses of different friends, and stayed as long as they were allowed. The Federals wanted to make a hospital of the house, when our friends, Mr. Dick White and family, moved in and kept it for us till the close of the war. Martha and Henry went to Washington with President Johnson's family, Martha as maid in the "White House," and Henry as a trusted servant; but he died a few months after going there. I mention all this to show the fidelity of the old servants. They had been with us many years, and "Mammy Martha" was dearly beloved by us all. I packed my trunk, took my nurse Ella, and children, and my little son, ten years old, to drive the barouche, and we started to old friends in Fayetteville, leaving Mr. Morgan there to await coming developments. We traveled with sad hearts, thinking of the dear ones left behind who could not follow us.

Events soon showed that instead of making a stand the army was retreating, and the roads were filled with every kind of vehicle of which the imagination could conceive. Artillery wagons, ambulances, furniture wagons, carts, and every kind of conveyance to which a horse could be hitched. They were driving, lashing, yell-

ing, and galloping, and my little children and myself in the midst of them. We got to Murfreesboro after dark, but found that the army had beaten us there and all the hotels were filled. There we were in the crowded street, not knowing where to go or what to do, when I heard my old hackman's voice, Frank Eakin, for he had waited on me in that capacity for many years whenever a hack was needed. Never did a voice sound so sweet! for I was much fatigued, and more worried in mind than body.

He ran up and said: "Is that you, Miss Julia?"

And I said: "Yes; what is left of me."

He said: "I will take you out to Miss Julia Eakin's [Miss Julia Spence, now], and Miss Myra Eakin is there – just come all the way from New York – got there this evening."

So I gladly followed Uncle Frank until we got to Mrs. David Spence's house, and there received a hearty welcome, and we all sat up till late that night, bemoaning the fortunes of war. Early in the morning old Frank had everything in readiness, trunks securely strapped, harness adjusted, etc., and many directions to my son how to drive to prevent an accident. Then, after Mrs. Spence had prepared us a sumptuous lunch, we bade them good-bye, thanking God for having such kind friends raised up to us in our hour of need.



Gen. John C. Breckinridge