

A Delta Diary

Amanda Worthington's Civil War Diary

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Contents

Introduction..... *Page* 2

Volume One..... *Page* 16

Volume Two..... *Page* 72

Volume Three..... *Page* 74

Volume Four..... *Page* 75

Volume Five..... *Page* 112

Diary Notes..... *Page* 123



Amanda Worthington

(Courtesy of Mississippi Dept. of Archives and History)

This journal was kept by me, Amanda Worthington, in the year of our Lord 1862. I was sixteen years old then, and was living at "Willoughby", Washington County Mississippi, Southern Confederacy, and was going to school at Butterbean Academy...

Volume One

January 1st, 1862

I have been intending for lo these many years to keep a journal but never did commence one till this January. No doubt this one will be as dry as a chip but I don't care, so here goes. I have been going to school at "Butterbean Academy" all day and knew all my lessons but I like to have wept over my drawing, for, for the life of me I couldn't get the old tree right. After school was out Sister, Sallie and I went down to the lake and wrote names in the sand and wandered around a little and then started back; as we were coming back to the house we saw four or five gentlemen riding along and I with my usual curiosity was nearly dead to find out who they were, but I didn't like to turn round and stare at them so I am still in suspense. Bert says that one of them was "Big mouth" otherwise Mr. Wilson. Bert and Sam and I played some together tonight, and one tune (Norma) reminded me so much of Willie. My dear brother how much I do want to see him!

I have been searching around for a piece of poetry to learn for Miss Georgie, I explored Moore and Campbell and at last found one that suited me, in the British Poets called the "Hare and many friends". I made some honey candy this evening but it wasn't half as good as that made of molasses, still it was better than none. Sam says he would as leive chew leather; I advised him to quit eating it then. Dollie just now told me that the honey I made the candy out of had got both salty and greasy in the meat house! Oh! My conscience! No wonder it wasn't good. I'll go to bed after that.

January 3rd, 1862

I didn't write any yesterday because forsooth, I had nothing to write about. The day passed exactly like the one before. Today has been lovely, as pleasant as springtime; it is such singular weather for January. I said my poetry this evening; I was considerably agitated during its recital, but managed to say it pretty well. Soon after school was out Bettie Miller and Miss Lockurt called to see sister and me. I wasn't very glad to see them however. Bettie has fallen off a great deal and she and Miss L. are both so awfully affected; I was really afraid they would fall back into the dining-room they rolled their eyes back so far. It was equal to ducks in thunderstorms. As soon as they left cousin Mattie, Annie and Josie and an extremely overseer-ish looking man whom Cousin Mattie introduced as "my cousin, Mr. Lockitt" came in. Before they left I think we were all about as bored a set as ever was seen, I sat up and played the dummy most of the time they staid for I couldn't think of a thing to say, I could only wish to gracious they would go. I was so entertained I have scarcely got done yawning yet. I am so delighted that this is Friday and I don't have to go to school tomorrow. What a blessed thing it is that Saturday comes once a week so we bread and butters can rest from our weekly labors. I had intended being so much better this year than last, but I ain't a bit. I find

not even a servant with me – it was the first time in my life I had staid in a room wholly by myself. We didn't come upstairs till 11 and I sat up till twelve or half past writing to K.G. as Cousin T. expected to cross this morning. This morning I wrote to Linnie & as Cousin T. had started to take Floy over the river, Sallie begged me to spend the day with her so I went. I had a very pleasant time – the same soldier who was here last night was there to dinner – we called him the long haired man as his hair comes nearly down to his shoulders. He seemed quite pleased to see me & he struck up a chat right off. When I came home I found Dr. S. here – he has never been any farther than the Bogue Phalia on account of the battle at Vicksburg. *Mr. Byrne*⁶⁷ came too this evening – he is a very handsome young man, and what makes him more interesting, was wounded at the battle of Shiloh right through the face. The scar doesn't disfigure him at all.

July 25th, 1863

A long time has elapsed since I last wrote & so many events have happened that I can't begin to record them all – I'll only mention some of them. Dear little Flossie died on the 17th of June of diphtheria, Aunt Ann & the rest of her family got here the day before she died – little Annie died a day or two before of the same disease. I cant help thinking it was a blessed thing for them to be taken so young from this world of sin & sorrow, for if they had lived they might not have been saved whereas now we know they're with Jesus. On the 4th of July Vicksburg fell! Oh! that I should have to write it! I was perfectly stunned when I heard it & utterly refused to believe it for several days – but at last I was compelled to yield to the stern reality of it. I felt so humiliated to think that Vicksburg my pride & boast had fallen & to think how the hated yankees would exult over it. But our men had to surrender because they were starved out – they were allowed to come out with all the honors of war – their colors flying & the officers with their side arms – that was some consolation. We have seen a great many paroled prisoners from there & they all blame Pemberton. Oh! if he did sell Vicksburg scarcely any punishment would be too great for him. Everyone seems to think that the Confederacy has sustained no material injury in the fell of V. & the Yankees must think so too as they don't exult over it one bit – 'twas the humiliation of having to surrender to Yankees that I hated worse than all. On the eighth or ninth my dear brother Willie came home. I was so perfectly delighted to see him – he looked so well & so handsome, and has such a beautiful uniform – Confederate blue pants with a gold stripe down them & a grey jacket trimmed with gold. Ben came the day before Willie, and they are still with us. The days pass by too quickly while Willie is with us & they are shaded by the thought of his having to leave us next week. Alas! That there should always be a shade to every spot of sunshine in this world. But I don't think of that often. I am too glad dear Willie is with us now, for that. We have had another visit from the yankees since I wrote last. A gun-boat lays at the Point nearly all the time and last Monday evening it took a notion to come into the Lake – it stopped at the landing & Willie & Ben (not Bert this time) skedaddled from here in a hurry, but they didn't get a start till the men had come off the boat as Ben was wholly “en dishabille” when they landed. Four or five of the officers came into the house – said they didn't come

& Cousin T. were still here. Monday Aunt A. went over to Aunt E's & Sister Cousin L. & Sam went to *Greenville*⁸⁰ on business. (Note: This statement is hard to understand for it is known that the little town of "old" Greenville had been burned in 1863, leaving, as I understand, only two or three homes standing. K.J.S.) It was a very cold day & there was a little snow on the ground, which had fallen the previous night. Aunt A. staid on at Aunt E's until Tuesday evening. Sister, Cousin T. & Sam didn't get back from Greenville until nearly eight o'clock Monday night. Mother & Father got so uneasy about them they were just dispatching Alick to look for them when they got here.

Tuesday Cousin T. spent the day at Aunt E's – neither Sister nor I went with her, it was too cold – that evening she and Aunt A. both came back here. Lieut. Evans was here this morning to show us a copy of his orders about cotton & other things. Yesterday, Wednesday, was a very cold disagreeable day and Aunt A. & Cousin T. didn't go home as they intended doing – for which I was very glad. Cousin Willie came in from the Creek & so did Cousin Leroy, that evening and Lt. Evans, Mr. Evans & Mr. Ernest came to supper & staid all night, so we had quite a crowd. I don't think Lt. Evans ever passes us by – he comes so often but I am always glad to see soldiers. Lt. E. has been wounded seven times – once at Chancellorsville & six times at Gettysburg and yet he looks as stout & well as if he had never been hurt. Mr. Evans promised me a copy of their orders and if he gives it to me I'll copy them here. This morning two more of Capt. Blackburn's scouts were here – the coldest looking mortals I almost ever beheld – one if them was a mere boy too, and didn't have any overcoat – nothing but a thin grey jacket not near long enough in the arms, and although we all thought it was a bitter cold day, he said he didn't think it was very cold. Our dear soldiers, how uncomplaining they are amid such hardships! Tears rise to my eyes and my heart is filled with love to them when I think of it. Sister gave this boy a coat of Father's which he had worn a good deal, but which was still a right good coat & a very warm one. About eleven o'clock they all left. I finished David Copperfield today, I like it very much – I loved poor little Dora, although she was such a deplorable goose. Sister and I pulled some sugar candy tonight, the pulling wasn't very agreeable, but eating it afterwards was.

January 28th, 1865

Yesterday I sewed on a pair of pants for Sam & commenced "The Cruise of the Sumter and Alabama" a very interesting book, and a novel called "Frank Fairlegh" which I also like very much. It was still very cold. Today we received a letter from my dear brother Willie, in which he says he is still safe & well & will be at home about the tenth of Feb. Oh! I was so thankful to see again his dear handwriting & to learn from it that God had mercifully brought him safe through all the hard fighting he has been in & that he will soon be home again! But mingled with the joy of that thought comes the bitterness of the thought that I will never again welcome my darling Bert home – that I will nevermore on earth clasp him in my arms & see his dear face again, for he sleeps in his early grave for our Country's cause. God of mercy! How can I bear it! But my darling said we must not grieve for

and me about Capt. Stone and Mr. Buckner in a very knowing and insinuating way. I know he thought he pleased us, though, for he is one of the best and kindest hearted men in the world. Cousin Willie came over late in the evening and stayed all night, which rather increased my state of desperation, for he is so miserably dull and uninteresting. I was thankful when bedtime came and I could slumber in blissful oblivion of rain and bores.

Tuesday morning Uncle, Cousin Willie, and Capt. Stone left. Eugene R. came up and sat an hour or two. The Rain has ceased, but Eugene cast a damper over my spirits, for oh! Mercy! He is so stooped. Not an idea in his head except the insane one that he must talk, and that he cannot do it. It's terrible to see his frantic endeavors. When he left, Mr. Trezevant came and stayed until about four o'clock. What a contrast between the two! Mr. T is an incessant talker and talks very well, too. He is well read and very intelligent. In short, is a perfect love of a man. Father was still sick yesterday with a cold and toothache. He is better today. I sewed yesterday evening after Mr. T. left instead of sleeping, so I was quite sleepy about nine o'clock last night and retired. I must acknowledge I was disappointed that Mr. Buckner didn't come up, and slightly provoked, too, for it was such a beautiful evening. I thought he must be sick, however, and this morning I heard that he was. I hope he isn't much sick and that he can come up this evening. I have been sewing and darning this morning and I think I shall read and sleep until suppertime now.

Nine o'clock. Well, when I got up this evening, supper was almost ready and Sister had gone to see Mrs. Lonsdale and Pattie R. Eugene came home with Sister but only stayed a short time, for which I was duly thankful. Sister saw Mr. Buckner coming up to Mrs. Aldridge's this evening. She says he looked perfectly dreadful and said he had been very sick. Just got up this evening. I don't suppose he felt well enough to come on here. I am so sorry.

August 30, 1866

I have been sewing quite industriously today, trimming a gown with Valencia lace and insertion. How strange it seems to me to be sewing on my wedding clothes! I cannot realize it. I was sitting in Mother's room sewing this morning when Mr. Buckner arrived. I was positively quite nervous and embarrassed, which rather astonished me, as I thought I had almost got over that with him. He looked badly and says he is not well yet. He stayed about two hours but we were only by ourselves a short while as Mr. Haycraft came and then Dr. Smith. I wanted to ask Mr. Buckner to come back tonight, as Patti will be here, but I don't know why it is, I never can ask him to come again. I thought today his hands were almost as fascinating as his eyes. They are so small, soft, and white. The prettiest hands I ever saw a man have. "A touch of thy hand makes me tremble. Oh! Why do I love thee so!"