

## 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Regiment, 4<sup>th</sup> Division, Missouri State Guard

The crowd assembled on Locust Street in front of the old Christian church stilled only for a moment in anticipation as the Plattsburg Brass Band stepped off to the celebratory notes of "Dixie." The band led the parade on this beautiful spring day in mid-March 1861. Immediately behind the band strode two handsome and strapping young men bearing a beautiful Confederate 1<sup>st</sup> National flag, said to be the first Southern flag ever made in northwest Missouri. In spectacular style, the flagstaff had been wound with red, white, and blue ribbons and the flag ornamented with heavy silk cords and tassels.

This new and beautiful flag was created by the ladies of Plattsburg at the home of Colonel and Mrs. Turner; a home later nicknamed "Rebel Headquarters." "The flag was formed of three wide bars, two of which were red and the center one of white satin. The field was a square of blue, bearing seven bright silver stars. The stars were designed and painted on the blue field by a Union man, a Mr. Rogers, who was an expert workman, and Mrs. Turner gave him in exchange for the seven silver stars five silver dollars."

Parading behind the flag were three of Plattsburg's loveliest young ladies robed in pure white and garlanded with flowers. Miss Brooks, the presenter, was flanked on either side by Misses Laura Scarce and Sallie Craig. With this trio came the seven seceded states represented by seven little girls, all of whom were dressed in red, white, and red and crowned with flowers. Each of the seven carried a small National flag on which was written the name of one of the Southern states. The little girls were Misses Ella Lincoln, Sallie Shoemaker, Mary Gibson, Maggie Young, Bettie Whittington, Mary Lyons, and Florence Turner.

Following this group of Plattsburg's youth was a large assemblage of speakers, visitors, and citizens of the town and county. To the rhythm of Southern patriotic tunes, the procession wended its way through the town to the college building where the ceremony would be held.

Several companies of men were assembled under the command of Col. John T. Hughes and captains Cromlow, Bainbridge, and Clark. Later they would be absorbed into the 4<sup>th</sup> Division, Missouri State Guard. This day, however, was singularly theirs as friends and neighbors gathered in their honor.

It was standing-room only in the packed auditorium. Miss Brooks stood beneath a floral arch, and in the name of the Southern ladies of Plattsburg, presented the flag to the Honorable Upton M. Young, who accepted it on behalf of the soldiers assembled. The presentation speech was appropriately stirring and the acceptance speech was remembered as being full of Southern fire and patriotism. Young's closing words were, "... and if need be, protect it with our lives.

Little South Carolina then took her place beneath the floral arch and spoke these solemn words to her six sisters:

Sisters: Listen to the voice of South Carolina. We are standing here alone. Dangers crown thick on every side. But we are not afraid. Oh, no! We will watch and pray and keep our house in order; and if from the windows of our beautiful home we see an enemy approach we will say, "Go tarry with our half-sisters who are married to your people."

Our tall, grown-up brothers have become cold, and proud, and insolent. They would chastise us into obedience to their whims and caprices; but we will resist. We are strong in our love for each other-in our devotion to this lovely land, bequeathed to us by our patriotic fathers. It is our garden-our garden of blossoms and fruits, and flowers. Sweet birds will sing to us from orange groves. Soft winds shall fan us. We will dwell in peace and joy under our own vine and fig tree. No serpent shall enter our paradise. Angels will guide and guard us. Heaven will protect us. It is our own-our native land.

Once more the Plattsburg band erupted with the strains of "Dixie," to the delight and excitement of all present, after which were delivered speeches, strong and patriotic, by Gen. David R. Atchison, Col. John T. Hughes, Mr. Charles Ingles, Mr. Craig, Mr. Winslow Turner, and others. Many young men that day made their decision to stand for their state.

It was a day and an occasion the refused to be forgotten. Indeed, it was vividly etched into memory of one of the young ladies present. Looking back through the decades, she remembered: "Many good and brave men, both old and young, enlisted on that day to march forth at the call of their state and country-never again to return to home and friend. They died as brave men ever do, loyal and true to the banner for which they fought and neath which they fell. We should revere their names, honor their memory, preserve their heroic deeds in history, and twine into wreaths the fairest and sweetest of Missouri's flowers to lay upon their graves.