

Appendix D

Our Whole Union

Published at Macon City, Missouri, by the Printers of the 1st Regiment Iowa Volunteers

Vol. 1

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No.1

SALUTATORY.

We have invariably regarded salutations as a bore, a fearful bore, both to the reader and writers thereof. But as every editor upon assuming the tripod, feels called upon to make his low bow of introduction, lay down his platform and append his name thereto, we suppose we must do likewise – at least we shall to some extent.

Upon arriving in this place we found a fine printing office “laying around loose,” and not at all fulfilling the great end to which all printing offices are destined. The proprietor and editor, as we learned, had broke for some neighboring timber. Or perhaps, impelled by the exigencies of some passing necessity, had departed – no one knows whither – leaving types and presses mute and disconsolate.

A printing office has no more right to remain idle than a pretty woman has to remain unmarried; and particularly should the press be active when there are wrongs to be righted, information disseminated, truth separated from falsehood, and rightful issues presented in contradistinction to false. Such a state of things was in existence here, hence one reason why the idle press should be started.

Again, we feared that the interests of Macon City might suffer when it became known that no newspaper was in being. What western town claims to be a town unless it has its newspaper, its hebdomadal issue, which dwells mainly up the issue of the European was, the “Balance of Power” (we editors like to talk of big subjects, even if we don’t understand them), and which show the immense advantage of the town in which it is published over that of all others. None! And, knowing this, we determined that Macon City should be represented in Newspaperdom – should have its powerful “leaders,” its due quota of editorial “we’s” and “our’s,” should not suffer for the want of home editorial wisdom, should still be able to sustain a home enterprise.

And, again, we fear that our predecessor has wandered politically astray, as he seems now to have physically wandered away, and mayhap, lost himself forever to his missions of readers. Fearing this, we determined to place his paper upon that “straight and narrow way which leads to life everlasting” (politically) – another reason for our present course.

Again, editors owe each other a courtesy which no political differences or diverse nationality can destroy. We saw his paper lying idle, himself absent, his business suffering, and as a brother Quill, we rushed to his rescue. We do it to preserve the reputation of his sheet, to keep it in circulation, to preserve the balance between his business and his absence. In short, we take his place, conduct his paper during his absence, and preserve so worthy a sheet as the *Register* from dying out and being forgotten. To be sure, we have slightly altered the name of his sheet, perhaps a little its tone, possibly somewhat its appearance. Otherwise it is the sheet with a different editor.

Friends, these are the reasons (along with some few others) that have induced us to continue the publication of the *Register* alias the *Union*, during the temporary absence of its respected editor, Mr. Johnson. Are they not sufficient? Do they not show that we feel for a brother in distress, and are willing, by all means in our power, to advance his interests and those of his native place?

Deeming your answer, Good Hearts, to be kindly and cordial affirmative, we shall consider ourself introduced, and with many hopes for a better acquaintance we subscribe ourself.

THE EDITOR

Song. –A lady has furnished us with a very fine piece of Poetry, which, owing to the late hour of its arrival, we are obliged to leave out. The lady will receive our thanks for the favor and our regrets at being unable to insert it.

Track Torn Up. A gentleman from below informs us that the track of the N.M.R.R. at a distance of 25 miles from here is torn up, for some distance, and the bridges at many points are burned.

FLAG RAISING.

Yesterday afternoon, this pleasant little place was the theater of one of the finest scenes that it has ever been the lot of its inhabitants to witness. A large number of the ladies of Macon City, had, since the arrival of the troops, been engaged in getting up an American flag, and by noon it was completed. The soldiers of the 1st Regiment in the meantime had erected a huge and high pole, on the entrenchment on the west side of camp, and soon after Major Porter with an escort of 100 men composed of details selected from each company, and the regimental band, marched out to receive the flag. They marched back to the camp. First went the music vigorously developing that time honored melody, "Yankee Doodle," then came arm in arm Major Porter and an elderly couple, in whose hearts were yet echoing the music born of other days, in the olden patriotic time. Next came the flag borne on either side by some twenty ladies and several old gentlemen, who had determined to rally at least once more under the glorious banner beneath which their fathers, themselves and their children had been born and reared and many had died.

Arriving at the embankment, the ladies and citizens took possession of it, a chain of sentinels keeping the crowd below on either side. The preparations were soon completed. The flag was fastened to the rope, and a moment afterwards a score of fair hands had seized the halliards, and the next instant its long folds spread out gracefully upon the breeze, and it rose slowly up – up, amid the roll of drums and frantic cheers of thousands till at length, high in the blue ether it rested.

One of the ladies, in a brief pertinent address, then made a formal presentation of the flag to the First Regiment, which was received by the crowd with enthusiastic huzzars. Henry O'Commor, a private in Company A, was then called upon for a response, and in a short address, the whole poetry of his nature gushed in answer to this beautiful act of sympathy from the mothers and daughters of Missouri to strangers.

When his thoughts ran the stream of reminiscence, and he recalled the days when that glorious flag waved in proud triumph everywhere, hated by tyrants and loved by freemen; when he recalled the days when the men of Iowa and those of Missouri, and all the States from the North and South stood shoulder to shoulder like brothers, to repel a common foe; when he recalled the days when the women of the revolution gave their all, their husbands, sons and brothers, to purchase that inheritance which we, their sons, are now fighting over; we say, when he recalled all these in the impassioned sorrow of one mourning the loss of a great possession, the feelings of his audience were wrought up to an extent that burst forth in tears. Tears – tears straight from the deep fountains of the heart, rained in torrents from eyes to which the mists of sorrow had long been a stranger; and particularly among the old men who came tottering along with the flag to render one last act of devotion to their whole country, was this emotion visible. The bronzed cheeks of the soldiery too, bore evidence of how deeply they felt the sad condition to which our beloved country id reduced; and as anticipation opened to them a long vista in the future, gory with rivulets of brothers' blood, strewn with the lifeless bodies of sons of a common mother, and littered with the wrecks and fragments of this once glorious superstructure – the Union!

Alas! Alas!! Who wonders that strong men wept as they contemplated with vivid imagination, a ruin compared to which, that which would level the jasper walls, and smite to fragments the palaces of the Eternal City, were scarcely less to be deplored.

After the conclusion of O'Connor's apt remarks, the whole crowd joined in singing the Star Spangled Banner, with uncovered heads, and we doubt not that echoes were borne away till they were heard where has slunk Secession to hide itself and its treason from the light of day. Three times three were then given for the Stars and Stripes, three more for the ladies of Macon City. An event, which, we ventured to assert, will not soon be forgotten by the noble citizens who thus dared to show their faithfulness to their country, or by strangers through whom the offering was made.

God bless the Stars and Stripes and a double woe and ruin upon him who dares to grasp it with a traitors hand.

PROCLAMATION

Headquarters 1st Reg't Iowa Volunteers,
Camp at Macon City, June 16, 1891

To the Citizens of Macon City, and Vicinity:

The loyal troops of the Government are now in camp in this place for the purpose of aiding the execution of the laws, sustaining and strengthening patriotic union men and putting down rebellion. I therefore call upon all those now in arms against the United States in obedience to the call of the Governor of Missouri, to disband and go to their homes without delay, and thus avoid bloodshed and all the evils attendant upon a conflict of arms. Unless armed bands of disloyal troops, whether drilling as Home Guards or otherwise, are disbanded within forty-eight hours, they will be dispersed, taken prisoners and their arms taken from them. I assure the people of North Missouri that no citizen will be deprived of his liberty or property, or his rights as a citizen denied him, so long as he does not interfere with the execution of the United States. All the force under my command, will, if necessary, be used to protect every citizen in the enjoyment of his rights, and no lawlessness, theft or depredations of any kind will be permitted. The homes and institutions of Missouri will be held sacred.

Citizens of Missouri! Come forward and support the old Flag under which the great men of your State have placed their names on the roll of Statemen, and Missouri has obtained her proud position among the States of the Union.

J. F., Bates, Colonel, Commanding.

OUR POSITION

Half the difficulties in the present deplorable struggle between the United States and the revolted States, might have been obviated had there existed a better understanding between the North and South. We mean by this an understanding on the part of each, relative to the true character of the other, its sentiments, desires and institutions.

It is believed, for instance, by many in this State, that the advent of troops hither, is merely a raid of Northern men upon the rights and property of Southerners. Nothing can be further from the truth than this; nothing more remote from the mind of the soldiery here than any such intention.

In conversation, yesterday, with a member of one of the regiments, a lady – and one of high accomplishments, intelligence and beauty, as we infer – vehemently asserted that the whole object of the troops entering Missouri is to steal or give freedom to the Negroes!...

We come not here as Northern men. We come as we believe, citizens loyal to our Government, and with a view of assisting that Government in maintaining its supremacy.

We will not argue the justness of the cause in which we are enlisted, but we desire to place our position in this State correctly before the citizens.

We do not march against Missourians, nor do we cross their soil with hostile tread. We know that certain misguided men, many of whom mistake hasty impulse and unjust prejudice as Patriotism, are determined to plunge this State into ruin. This is resisted by loyal citizens. They asked us for help and we come to their assistance.

We desire no conflict, we only wish to assist the loyal citizens of this gallant State in preserving their integrity. Not a dollar's worth of property will be sacrificed; not a channel of social and business life shall be stopped, but all shall go on in their usual placid course the right stronger than ever in its supremacy, the wrong more certain of retribution. If there are keen bayonets glittering everywhere, it is that peaceable citizens may sleep the more soundly, and enjoy their own undisturbed. If the thoroughfares are now and then obstructed with forests of uniformed men bristling with muskets, bowie knife and revolver, it is that the possession of citizens may be rendered secure and their opinion be formed free from bias from the pressure of wrongful force.

Citizens of Missouri! Will you not do us the justice, to at least purge your belief of the unworthy and unjust idea that we have entered your State other than for the purpose of rendering you more secure in the possession of all you hold most dear?

We wish no conflict with any, nor shall a single hair of any loyal citizen be disturbed by violence. If there are men who persist in their endeavors to precipitate their promising State into all the evils of disloyalty under the lead of unprincipled demagoguism, we must, at every sacrifice, endeavor to put them down. It is a duty we owe to ourselves as citizens of the whole Union, to our Government, to the memory of our Fathers, and to God.

If we must meet, “God defend the right.”

When the First Regiment landed at this place last Friday, it was greeted by a crowd principally of ladies and old men. In the cases of both, their joy of the arrival of troops was unmistakable. The ladies waved their handkerchiefs, gave us their cheeriest smiles, and gathered around us to welcome our coming in warm heart-born words. One old man grasped the hand of a recruit, attempted to speak and burst into tears, sobbing like a child.

What do such facts indicate? It is not that in Missouri there is a love for the Union, which no terrorism can destroy, no circumstances restrain.

Three cheers for the ladies of Macon City – their intelligence will not allow them to be led astray – and a triple three for the old men who yet cling to the glorious precedents of the past.

Strange – It is not often that one enters a printing office conducted under precisely the circumstances of the one in which the *Union* is now being issued. Men in uniform stand at the cases. A row of gleaming muskets in stacks id before the door, beside which paces a sentinel with a loaded piece. The editor’s table is ornamented with a revolver, two bottles of – of – well, something to sustain a drooping spirit weighed down by the responsibilities of this position (editorial) and the dangers of war, a Meerschaum and a pile of ancient exchanges. Military uniforms hang around the walls, bayonet sheaths litter the floor, revolvers and bowie knives bristle in every belt; and in short, the only resemblance to a printing office is the click of types, and the familiar music of the press. We hope that our friens here will not fail to call in and mark the peculiarities of this new Regime.

When the First Iowa Regiment arrived in Macon City, there seemed to exist a fear on the part of the inhavitants, or many of them, that we came as enemies. To this, we are led from the fact that throughout all the length and breadth of this beautiful city, there was not a single American Flag waving to us a friendly greeting.

A night’s residence however seemed to convince the citizens that the thousands who had so unceremoniously pitched their tents in their midst were not foes but friends, for the next day in the afternoon no less than a dozen American Flags waved from various portions of the City. We were glad to see this for more reasons than one. It showed the strong Union sentiment existing among the citizens. It showed that we are not unwelcome. And better than all, it gave the lie to the assertion that many of whose who hoisted the Flag were secessionists. Would they have done this had they not been true to the country whose flag they yesterday hung upon their “outer wall” that all the world might know of their fidelity to the Union?

The fact that they hung out these flags was taken as a compliment by the soldiers, and a company composed of details from the regiment was marched out under Major Porter and Capt. Mathies, and preceded by music, marched in front of each flag, presented arms and then gave three cheers. Only one flag was missed – that erected by Mr. Turner near the Post Office, which owing to the distance from the camp was overlooked till the escort was dismissed. On the part of the regiment, we tender an apology, assuring him that his compliment to the cause and its supporters is fully appreciated although by mistake overlooked. Trusting that he will accept our explanation as the *amende honorable*, we hope to see his flag again flying tomorrow at its usual place, as we notice that today he has taken it down.

Au Revoir! – Citizens of Macon City, this is the first and last number of *Our Whole Union* or Missouri Register. It contains our Salutatory – it also contains our farewell. Our troops are indebted to you for many kindnesses, for which the God of Nations and of Patriots, a thousand times bless you! To those to whom the old time-honored Stars and Stripes are dearer than the Black Flag of disunion, we would say: be firm, yield not an inch; better a million times fill a patriot’s grave than a traitor’s position. Stick to the old Banner of our Fathers’ so long as there remains enough of it to float upon the free winds, and trust that right must and will conquer.

For the whole regiment, and for ourselves, we once more bid you a regretful, perhaps an eternal Farewell!

VALEDICTORY.

Johnson, wherever you are, whether lurking in the recesses of the dim woods, or fleeing a fugitive on the open plain under the broad canopy of Heaven – goodbye! We never saw your countenance, never expect to, never want to; but for all that old fellow, we won't be proud, so Johnson good-bye, and take care of yourself!

We're going to leave you, Johnson. Going to leave you without so much as looking into your honest eyes, or clasping your manly hand, and even without so much as giving utterance to your face, of God Bless you. We're right sorry, we are, that you didn't stay with us and attend to your domestic and other affairs and not leave everything, to skulk away and lose yourself never to return. Oh Johnson why did you, how could you do this?

Johnson we leave you tonight. We're going where bullets are thick and mosquitoes thicker. We may never return. If we do not, old boy, remember us. We sat at your table; we stole Latin from your "Dictionary of Latin Quotations;" we wrote *Union* articles with your pen, your ink, and on your paper; we printed them on your press; our boys set'em up with your types; they used your "galleys," your "shooting sticks," your "chases," your "quads," your "spaces," your "rules," your everything; we drank some poor whisky out of your bottle; and now Johnson after us in your evening prayers, and your morning prayers too, when you say them if you awake in the solemn stillness of the night and implore a benison upon the absent, remember us then!

Once more Johnson – our hearts pains us to say it, that sorrowful work, but once more, and forever, Johnson, good bye! If you come our way, call. Johnson adieu!

Apologetic – Our boys desire us to say, that not being able to find "italics" in the office, they have been unable to make the first (and last) issue of the *Union* look as well as it otherwise would.

Banasik, Michel E. *Missouri in 1961: The Civil War Letters of Franc B. Wilkie, Newspaper Correspondent. Unwritten Chapters of the Civil War West of the River* Volume IV. Iowa City, Iowa: Camp Pope Bookshop, 2001
