

Real Memories of the Civil War

Greene County, Arkansas

Published: Monday, 08 March 2021 09:29

by Mike Scruggs

Words: 1197

Real Memories of the Civil War

Family of Jack and Cindy Ross Bradsher, 1895, Marmaduke, Arkansas.

Published: Monday, 08 March 2021 09:29

My mother, Wanda Bradsher Scruggs, passed away in 2007 at the age of 91, but a few years before that she shared with me some memories of the Civil War and Reconstruction related to her
By Mike Scruggs
Hits: 197

My mother and father, Jack and Cindy Ross Bradsher. My mother was the daughter of the youngest of their seven sons, W. C. Bradsher. Jack and Cindy Bradsher also had four daughters. Both the Bradsher and the Ross families were farmers whose parents had come to northeastern Arkansas in covered wagons in the late 1850's. The Bradsher family had come from North Carolina, and the Ross family had come from Kentucky. Jack Bradsher, being a hard worker, very astute, and affable became a very successful farmer whose sons became successful community leaders in medicine, pharmacy, farming, business, education, and the ministry. Jack Bradsher's farm was near Marmaduke, Arkansas, about 9 miles from Missouri and named for Confederate General, John S. Marmaduke, who later became Governor of Missouri. Both my mother and father grew up in Paragould, Arkansas, a larger town about 12 miles south of Marmaduke.

One thing my mother remembered about Jack Bradsher was that he was a great storyteller, loving to share his stories with children, grandchildren, and guests at Sunday dinner in their home. His wife and her grandmother, Cindy, she remembered as always cheerful and continually singing hymns. She sang hymns in the kitchen as she worked, and she sang hymns to her grandchildren. She often had a little spiritual guidance to assert here and there in Jack's stories.

Once when my mother was a young girl attending public school, she asked Grandmother Cindy if she remembered Abraham Lincoln. Her usually cheerful grandmother allowed in a more serious tone that she did remember him, but that she never thought much of him. Very surprised at her grandmother's response, she asked the reason for her disdain. Grandmother Cindy answered:

"Because when the Yankees came, they took away everything we had."

Real Memories of the Civil War



Cindy Ross Bradsher, born 1852 Kentucky, died 1934 Arkansas. Always encouraging.

Grandmother Cindy had other memories of the war. Her father, James Alexander Ross, was in the 15th Arkansas Rifles. He only served from late July 1861 to December 20, 1861. He had become severely ill with bronchial problems following prolonged exposure to cold, damp weather. He died at home shortly thereafter.

Later in the war, when Grandmother Cindy was about eight-years-old, she remembered Yankee soldiers came to their home foraging for food. They had searched the whole house and were beginning to search the cellar, when her widowed mother, Mary Joiner Ross, confronted the Yankee Lieutenant in charge.

Her mother stood up to this Yankee officer, asking him, "Do you want to be the one responsible for the starvation of these children?" Her bold appeal had its affect. The Union Lieutenant ordered his men to stop searching the cellar. Mary Ross and her four children were left with a little food hidden in the cellar, but little else. Grandmother Cindy never forgot the incident and never had a

Real Memories of the Civil War

Category: [War](#) [Yankee soldiers](#) [Abraham Lincoln](#)

Published: Monday, 08 March 2021 09:29

With a little more home schooling from her grandparents, my mother also learned that the Bradsher family had also suffered in those times. In late April 1865, just after the war, her great-grandfather,

Thomas Jefferson Bradsher, was killed by a band of bushwhackers. They came to T. J.

Bradsher's house one night and demanded money. He insisted he had none, and they left, but returned the next night. In full view of his family and in front of their house, the leader drew a large pistol and threatened to shoot him unless he told them where he kept his money and valuables. When T. J. Bradsher refused, and the bushwhacker cocked his revolver and was about to shoot him, his twelve-year-old daughter, Deanie (Martha), jumped on the gunman's back to try and stop him, but he shook her off and fired the fatal shot, hitting T. J. Bradsher in the head, killing him. This was also witnessed by his wife, Sarah Wisdom Bradsher, thirty-weeks pregnant with their daughter, Callie. At least two of their other three children, Elizabeth and nine-year-old Jack Bradsher, also witnessed this brutal murder. The newly appointed sheriff made no effort to bring these marauders to justice.

After Grandmother Cindy and Grandpa Jack's eye-witness home schooling lessons, my mother realized there could be quite a difference between public school history and real history. And this was around 1925! She also learned from their eye-witness accounts about the suffering of Southern families and the courage of Southern women during the "Civil" War. I believe my mother received not only a history lesson from her grandparents, but also a far more important character lesson about suffering and courage. I believe those lessons stuck. Others have said of my mother that she was remarkable in her unselfish generosity, cheerful patience, wisdom, and on occasions, fearless courage. She was devoted to Truth and the Faith of our Fathers.

Truth and courage are sorely needed in today's morally disintegrating society. It is especially important in recovering these virtues to know our true history. Much of what is published and taught in public schools and colleges today is either a sanitized whitewash or perverted political propaganda. But I have confidence that even in today's politically correct climate, truth will not be blotted out "We cannot" as R. L. Dabney said, "bury true history whose years are those of the God of Truth." William Cullen Bryant, a Northern poet and editor, put it a little differently, "Truth crushed to the ground shall rise again; the eternal years of God are hers." We should also remember the words of Samuel Johnson: "Where courage is not, no other virtue can survive except by accident." No republic can long survive whose people and leaders are not both devoted to truth and resolute in their courage to maintain it. Ultimately all courage, including political courage and courage in battle, is moral courage. Moral courage, more often than not, is tested principally by time, often a long period of time. I believe we can recover both truth and courage, but we had better get busy, for we are well on the way to destruction.

I learned more about the Civil War from my grandfather, Greene B. Scruggs, whose father and my great grandfather, John Berry Scruggs, served in an Alabama company of John Hunt Morgan's famous 2nd Kentucky Cavalry. He was wounded and captured in July 1863, and along with a brother spent two years as a POW at the infamous Camp Douglas near Chicago. Camp Douglas

Real Memories of the Civil War

Category: Mike Scruggs Column
has been described, for good reasons, by one historian, as “eighty acres of hell.” Two other brothers served in Alabama infantry regiments that experienced considerable combat and casualties. I have described their cavalry, infantry, and POW accounts in passages of my book, *The Un-Civil War, Shattering the Historical Myths*, published in 2011.
By Mike Scruggs

Hits: 1197

As a step along the way to recovering truth and courage, I would like to recommend some strong historical medicine, an eye-opening 2007 book, *War Crimes against Southern Civilians* by Walter Brian Cisco. Dr. Clyde N. Wilson, Distinguished Professor Emeritus of History at the University of South Carolina has said of the book, “Americans who read *War Crimes against Southern Civilians* will have a more sober and true, and less self-righteous, understanding of our country.”

My hope for courage in our present 2021 circumstances is best expressed in the words of South Carolina Revolutionary War patriot, Henry Laurens, who was a delegate to the first Continental Congress in 1777 and served as President of the Second Continental Congress from November 1777 to December 1778:

“At a time when liberty is under attack, decency under assault, the family is under siege, and life itself is threatened, the good will arise in truth; they will arise in truth with the very essence and substance of their lives; they will arise in truth though they face opposition by fierce subverters; they will arise in truth never shying from the Standard of Truth, never shirking from the Author of Truth.”