

Maj. Solomon (Sol) Street

Sol Street was one of 18 children born to Anderson and Keziah McBride Street, one of the earliest settlers of Tippah Co. Miss. Sol was a carpenter by trade and enlisted early in the war (1861) in the Magnolia Guards which later was merged into the 2nd Miss. Infantry. He served at First Manassas, Seven Pines, and the Seven Days Battles. After North Miss. was invaded in 1862 he hired a substitute under the provisions of the Conscription Act and returned home.

Street next is on record as having been made a captain in the Citizen's Guards of Tippah Co. Technically he was under Gen. Chalmers' command but was able to detach himself from the Gen.'s command so that he could harass the Federals along the Memphis and Charleston Railroad between Memphis and Corinth.

Street establish headquarters of sorts in an impenetrable bottom of Tippah Creek, from which he operated an efficient and unorthodox intelligence system which served him well in his military activities. By 1863, Street had earned the enviable description of "noted Guerilla" and the unsubstantiated title of Colonel.

Finally, Street saw that his days as the leader of an independent group of hit-and-run fighters were numbered. He evaded (regular) Confederate service for the last time by moving into the extreme southwest section of Tenn.

Street's military career reached its peak while he was serving as a Major in the 15th Tn., a battalion under the command of Gen. N.B. Forrest.

After the engagement at Ft. Pillow, Tenn., the following account details Street's last days, which were spent in the Bolivar, Tn. area.

In Dec. 1862 William Galloway, a Saulsbury, Tn. farmer had an altercation with Street over the sale of cotton. Street killed Galloway without provocation.

Galloway had a son named Robert who swore he would avenge his father's death, sending word far and wide that he would kill Street on sight. Robert was not quite 17 but enlisted in Capt. Higgs' Independent Scouts and bided his time.

It was over a year before he ran across the man he had sworn to kill. On May 2, 1864, just after Forrest's command, numbering about 200 all told, had had a brush with over 1,000 Federal troops near Bolivar, Higgs' Scouts camped with Forrest's troops at Bolivar and there Robert met Maj. Street. True to his word, he avenged his father's death.

Shooting a Major of his command was to Forrest an unpardonable crime and young Galloway was placed in charge of a guard of ten men with the cheering information that as sure as the sun rose in the morning he would be shot, and admonished him to make his peace with his God. The guards were instructed to "bind him fast and have him forthcoming when called for, or their lives should answer for his escape." Forrest also ordered that he should be tied with a rope and two men at a time should stand guard over him, one of whom should "hold on to the rope." Accordingly, his hands were tied, a long rope was placed around his neck, which one of the guards held in his hand.

The first two to have charge of him were John W. Key of Washington, D.C. and L.H. Russ. Russ was about 16 years old and not much bigger than a piece of chalk--and for that reason was called the "baby of Forrest's escort." From the first his sympathies were enlisted on the side of the prisoner. Getting into conversation with Galloway, he got the entire story of the killing, talked it over with the guards, and won over the most of them to the idea of letting him get away. Russ stayed awake the whole night, and every 2 hours when the relief was changed, he asked, "is he still there?" hoping to that each succeeding relief would give him a chance to "skip".

Later Key and Russ were on duty guarding the prisoner in the corner of a rail fence and the two begin talking in a way to let Galloway know he had better untied himself and make his get-away. "That fellow is a fool to stay here and get shot," said Ross. "If he tries to get away I shall shoot at him--but I won't hit him," replied Key. "If I was in his place, I'd make a break for our horses over there and take one and ride like the devil," said Russ, "and I would not care if he got mine." Key was holding the rope and Russ laid down across it between Key and the prisoner, and Galloway worked around, got his knife out of his pocket, cut his bonds and stole away quietly to the horses. He preferred to leave on foot rather than give them any chance to track him, as they would be able to do had he taken a horse. Reveille was sounded just as he disappeared in the woods.

Waiting a sufficient time to give Galloway a chance to make his escape, the two guards began shooting their revolvers and running in an opposite direction from that taken by the prisoner. "Boots and Saddles" was sounded at once, the escort formed in lines and in two minutes Forrest put in an appearance, supposing the Federals were about to attack them.

On learning that the prisoner had escaped, and none of the guards being able to tell how it happened, the dashing cavalry leader began cursing the guard, damning them individually, collectively, in detail and by sections; damned his whole escort from the highest officer in it to the cook--not one escaped his wrath--and after cursing all of the State of Tenn. in general and Bolivar in particular he order the guard under arrest, with the statement that he was about to march to Tupelo, Miss., and on arrival there he "intended to shoot every damned one of the ten guards." They were ordered to fall in the rear of the escort and the march began.

On the way to Tupelo, the guards were all disheartened at the prospect of being shot except the "baby" who kept saying "Don't worry boys, Forrest won't shoot ten of his escort--good men are too scarce to kill 'em that way."

Arriving at Tupelo, Forrest put the guard in a little old shanty in which a number of goats had been housed for a year, again telling them he would shoot the whole ten of them at sunrise. They were kept there for a week or more, when Russ one day climbed up the old fashioned chimney while some of his companions engaged the attention of the guard, climbed down the roof made his way to his company quarters and got Capt. Jackson and Maj. Strong to intercede with Forrest for their release.

Russ made his way back to the goat pen the same way he got out, and Forrest, who had somewhat cooled down by this time released all except Sgt. Sims, who was Sgt. of the guard, declaring he would court-martial and shoot him. Sims stayed in the goat pen a week longer, when he was tried by court-martial and there being no evidence to convict, he went free. Sims never knew till long after the war who turned the prisoner loose.

Many years later Galloway was visiting the Masonic Library during the meeting of the grand bodies and on looking over the register saw Russ' name. They had not met but each had a letter from the other. Galloway immediately went up to the lodge room, walked in, closely scrutinized every face and at last saw the features of the boy who 39 years before, snatched him from the jaws of death and gave him life and freedom. Going out

into the anteroom, he had the Grand Sentinel call Russ out of the chapter room, and when he came Galloway found that he had faithfully remembered the features of the "baby of Forrest's escort."

Then, of course, that fearful night was reconstructed. The writer through a friend met the two and had the story told for his edification. It is no fairy tale, but an actual incident of the war. When Galloway was asked how he could remember the face of Russ so well, he remarked that the features of his preserver were burned into his very soul, and that he could never forget him. He added: "As long as I live that boy shall never want for anything and I have told my wife that, if I died before she does, she must share her last crust with him if he needs it, and you can safely bet that she will cheerfully do so."

Both are Masons and this cemented the bond of friendship between them. Cal Street, a brother of the man Galloway killed was also a Mason. They are firm friends, but the killing has never been mentioned between them and probably never will be.

Shortly after Galloway had returned to Saalsbury, after the war, some of Maj. Street's friends went quietly to work to have him tried by civil authority for the killing of Maj. Street. The Sheriff put a quietus to it, saying: "Boys, Bob Galloway has more friends in this country than Street ever had and if anything more is done toward trying him for what he did during the war, there will be a heap more dead men lying around loose in this neighborhood than you ever saw--and they will be those who stir up this matter too."

Here ends the account of how Robert Galloway was saved from the grave by L.H. Russ, a boy who took chances of being shot himself to save a total stranger. The two are fast friends and will be while life lasts.