

Roswell, GA: The Civil War Exile of the Roswell Mill Women

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You all have probably heard of the Trail of Tears, when the Cherokee Indians were sent from North Carolina and Georgia to Oklahoma by force in the 1800's.

But very few people know the story of another forced exile that took place during the Civil War in Roswell, Georgia.

In 1864, at least 400 and possibly as many as 700 mill workers, nearly all women, black and white and their children, were arrested as traitors and shipped North by force, and very few of them ever made their way back home.

It was July, and the Atlanta Campaign was in full swing, General Sherman burning and slashing his way to Atlanta and his March to the Sea. Seeking a way to cross the Chattahoochee, General Kenner Garrard began his twelve-day occupation of Roswell, which was completely undefended. Everyone except the mill-workers had fled the city. The mills, two cotton mills and a woolen mill, remained in operation, making cloth for uniforms and other military needs, like rope and canvas.

The day after Garrard arrived, he sent a message to Sherman that he had discovered the mills and was in the process of destroying them. Sherman messaged back that the destruction of the mills met his "entire approval." He then added,

"I repeat my orders that you arrest all people, male and female, connected with those factories, no matter what the clamor, and let them foot it, under guard, to Marietta, whence I will send them by [railroad] cars, to the North. THE POOR WOMEN WILL MAKE A HOWL...Let them [the women] take along their children and clothing, providing they have a means of hauling or you can spare them."



How does one justify making war on women and children? How does one ever justify it?!!

"War is Hell," Sherman said.

May the war criminal Sherman burn in hellfire as hot as the flames he brought to our people.



Then, a day later, he added, ""Whenever the people are in the way, ship them to a new country north and west."

The women and a few men who were too old or too young to fight and all the children were rounded up and marched, under guard, the ten or so miles to Marietta and brought to the abandoned Georgia Military Institute. Along the way, Garrard added more people who seemed to be "in the way."

There was another factory in the town of New Manchester on Sweet Water Creek due west of Atlanta where the women were also transported. But that city was burned to the ground and never rebuilt, so the women never returned and their fates have been lost.

See the Mill ruins on YOUTUBE:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sG-LKrF6MTE&feature=fvsvr>

From Marietta, they were loaded into boxcars, given several days' rations, and taken, not knowing where they were going or what their fate was to be, to Louisville, Kentucky, where many were unloaded, while some others were taken across the Ohio River into Indiana.

In the beginning, the women in Kentucky were fed and housed by a Louisville refugee hospital, but then they were left to find living quarters and employment on their own. The ones in Indiana struggled from the beginning, taking whatever work they could find. They were uneducated and knew nothing but mill work. There was very little possibility that they would get home, and most were illiterate and could not write to anyone to let them know where they were.

Many of the women died from disease, which reached epidemic proportions, and others of starvation or exposure.

Eventually, not knowing if their husbands were alive or dead, many of the women who survived remarried in the North. In the South, men came home from the war to find their wives and families missing, and presumed them dead, and remarried.

Some few of the women did make it back. One such case was that of Adeline Bagley Buice. She had been pregnant when she was shipped away, and it took her five years to get back to Roswell with her daughter, only to discover that her husband had given her up for dead and remarried.

In 1998 that the Roswell Mills Camp No. 1547, Sons of the Confederate Veterans, undertook a project to try to identify the victims and locate their descendants. Intensive advertising and research led to many of the descendants being located, mostly in the North, and most of the mill workers were identified. In 2000, the city of Roswell erected a monument to these exiles.

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The sad thing is that the howl of the women, loud as it much have been, resounded for so short of time through the years. How can a lesson be learned, if the stories are not told?



Rhetta Akamatsu is an author and journalist who lives in Marietta, which is part of metro Atlanta. Her latest book is *Haunted Marietta*, which combines history and the paranormal to tell stories of her home town.. Rhetta has visited nearly every historical place in the Atlanta area and fully intends to visit whatever she's missed so far.

<http://www.examiner.com/historic-places-in-atlanta/roswell-ga-the-civil-war-exile-of-the-roswell-mill-women>

The Monument of Honor
Old Mill Park, Sloan St. Roswell, GA
Dedicated July, 2000



On Sunday, July 10, the workers (who were women and female children) may have been sexually assaulted by Union infantry soldiers prior to the arrival of Garrard's cavalry to take them to Marietta.

THE STORY OF THE ROSWELL MILL WORKERS DEPORTATION

On July 5, 1864, Federal General Kenner Garrard's cavalry reached Roswell and finding it undefended, occupied the city. General Garrard reported to General William Sherman on July 6, 1864 that..." there were fine factories here. I had the building burnt, all were burnt. The cotton factory was working up to the time of its destruction, some 400 women being employed."

Former Associate Dean of Emory University, Webb Garrison writes of the destruction of the Roswell Mills. He says..."incidents of this occurred repeatedly throughout the Civil War. Had the usual attitudes prevailed, the destruction of the industrial complex would have ended the matter. That it did not was due to the temperament and inclination of the man (Sherman)."

When General Sherman did next would shock good people in the North and create a mystery that has endured to this day. On July 7, 1864, Sherman reported to his superiors in Washington... "I have ordered General Garrard to arrest for treason all owners and employees, foreign and native (of the Roswell Mills), and send them under guard to Marietta, whence I will send them North."

On July 7, 1864, Sherman wrote to General Garrard..."I repeat my orders that you arrest all people, male and female, connected with those factories, no matter the clamor, and let them foot it, under guard to Marietta, then I will send them by cars to the North."

A northern newspaper correspondent reported on the deportation... "only think of it! Four hundred weeping and terrified Ellens, Susans, and Maggies transported in springless and seatless army wagons, away from their loved ones and brothers of the sunny South, and all for the offense of weaving tent cloth."

On July 10, 1864 General Thomas reported the arrival of four to five hundred mill hands, mostly women, in Marietta. Other documents indicate that an undetermined number of children accompanied their mothers. Webb Garrison writes of the women's arrival in Marietta..." for the military record that closed the case in which women and children were illegally deported after having been charged with treason." He further writes... "Had the Roswell incident not been followed immediately by major military developments, it might have made a lasting impact upon opinion. In this century, few analysts have given it emphasis it deserves."

In conclusion Dr. Garrison writes..." The mystery of the Roswell women, whose ultimate fate remains unknown, is one of major importance in its own right. Even more significant is its foreshadowing of things to come."

The mystery of the Roswell women is made up of four to five hundred tragedies. Most of these stories are lost to history; however, three men involved in the monument are either related to or descended from the mill workers. Wayne Bagley of the Roswell Mills Camp of the Sons of Confederate Veterans is related to Adeline Bagley Buice. Adeline was a seamstress working at the Roswell Mills while her husband was off to war. Deported north with the other women, she went all the way to Chicago. Left to fend for herself as best she could, it would be five years before Adeline and her daughter would return to Roswell on foot. In time, thinking her dead, he remarried. Adeline's grave, in Forsyth County is maintained with a special marker by the Sons of Confederate Veterans.

George Kendley, also a member of the Roswell Mills Camp, is descended from John R. Kendley who served early as a Sergeant in Company H, known as the "Roswell Guards", 7th Regiment, GVI, Army of Northern Virginia. He was captured, paroled, and returned to work in the mill. John later served as a Lieutenant in Company A, Roswell Battalion. Because he was paroled, he had to leave early when Union troops got close. If captured, he would have been shot on the spot.

Wayne Shelly is a member of the Nathan Bedford Forrest Camp of the Sons of Confederate Veterans in Rome, Georgia. His grandmother was a teenage mill worker and her mother and her grandmother also worked at Roswell Mills. All three were charged with treason and deported. The mother died on a train between Chattanooga and

Nashville, Tennessee. The grandmother died on steamship on the Ohio River, after being carried aboard in a rocking chair. Wayne's grandmother married a Confederate Veteran in Louisville, Kentucky. The two tried to make a new life in Indiana; however, the deportation had ruined the health of the young mill worker and a doctor advised that she she would not live through another Indiana winter. The couple moved south to Cartersville, Georgia.

The War Between the States was without question Roswell's moment on the stage of world history. If Roswell has a history, it is surely in the part the mill workers story.

-Excerpt from the Dedication Program for the Mill Workers Monument
July 8, 2000

http://www.roswellscv.freesevers.com/story_of_the_roswell_mill_worker.htm

Confederate Units from Roswell

The Roswell Battalion
Local Defense Troops
Company E, Cobb's Legion Cavalry Battalion
"Roswell Troopers"
Company H, 7th Georgia Volunteer Infantry
"Roswell Guards"



Area Map From Historic Roswell Convention and Visitors Bureau

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The Roswell Founders Club

Located in The Old Bricks (1840) Built for the employees of the Roswell Mill, "The Bricks" are among the oldest apartments in the U.S. They overlook Vickery Creek and the mill village with its cottages and narrow winding roads. During the Civil War, Union troops took over and used The Bricks for a hospital. After the War, the Bricks were found to be undamaged and the mill houses were able to be repaired. Today, The Bricks serve as home of The Roswell Founders Club, the social, cultural, and business entertainment center of the Roswell, North Atlanta area.

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Founders Cemetery

(Sloan Street) Contains the graves of some of Roswell's Founding Families, including Roswell King, James Bulloch and John Dunwoody. The many unmarked graves are graves of the family servants.

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Vickery Creek Entrance and Dam

A thirty-foot dam and millrace were constructed on Vickery Creek in the mid-to-late 1830's to supply power for the mills. Today, one may enjoy the scenic beauty of Vickery Creek and observe the mill ruins by hiking Vickery Creek Trail. The trail is steep and has numerous steps, so be sure you have on proper hiking shoes and are in good physical condition.

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Roswell Mill

The first mill in Roswell was fully operative by 1839. Many mills would follow and a settlement would soon become a town. During the Civil War, Roswell Mill was a leading manufacturer of materials used by the Confederacy, The mills were burned and the workers were charged with treason and sent north. The mill standing today was built in 1882. It operated as part of the Roswell Manufacturing Company until 1945 when Southern Mills purchased it. Southern Mills operated until 1975. It has been restored as office buildings and is still a vital part of Roswell's Historic District. The structure to the left rear of the mill is the ruins of the old machine shop. The original mill site has been identified near this area.

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Lost Mill Workers of Roswell Monument

Located in Old Mill Park on Sloan Street, the monument is dedicated to the 400 women who were sent north when during the Civil War the Union Army occupied Roswell. Their fates remain a mystery.