

A Home Invasion

The Seabright family of Edgemont St. (then 4th St) Bristol, TN suffered a home invasion by General Burbridge, whose northern forces were under orders to "visit" the homes of the local citizens. One soldier entered the Seabright home, and jerked the blanket from under a sleeping child, about one year old, boasting: "**Wake up you little bastard rebel, and see what a real Yankee looks like.**" Safrilla, one of the two Seabright's slaves became infuriated. She arose and in one blow, killed the Yankee with a heavy fire poker. She told Mrs. Seabright to get into bed and feign illness. Safrilla covered the blood with fireplace ashes, wrapped his burst head in a throw rug, HID HIS WEAPON, dragging the soldier to a cellar door and, pushing the body into the cellar. He was then buried. The soldier was missed by his company, and knowing the area he was assigned, visited the homes. Burbridge threatened to burn the homes, unless the soldier was found. When one of the soldiers companions came looking for his missing comrade, Safrilla answered by saying, "O sho he come here, but I told him they got the pox and he hightailed it and left." Motioning toward Mrs. Seabright she said, "They got the pox, they got the pox. The Yankee search party left at double time. When it was reported to Burbridge the soldier could not be found he threatened to burn Bristol "to a crisp". However one of his officers convinced him he saw the soldier heading toward Blountville, a possible deserter. One explanation is the officer was from the area or had relatives in Bristol. The skeleton of the beaned Yankee was found during an excavation for the Reynolds Building. MAY WE NOT CALL SAFRILLA A TRUE "HOME GUARD"? suffered a home invasion by General Burbridge, whose northern forces were under orders to "visit" the homes of the local citizens. One soldier entered the Seabright home, and jerked the blanket from under a sleeping child, about one year old, boasting: "Wake up you little bastard rebel, and see what a real Yankee looks like." Safrilla, one of the two Seabright's slaves became infuriated. She arose and in one blow, killed the Yankee with a heavy fire poker. She told Mrs. Seabright to get into bed and feign illness. Safrilla covered the blood with fireplace ashes, wrapped his burst head in a throw rug, HID HIS WEAPON, dragging the soldier to a cellar door and, pushing the body into the cellar. He was then buried. The soldier was missed by his company, and knowing the area he was assigned, visited the homes. Burbridge threatened to burn the homes, unless the soldier was found. When one of the soldiers companions came looking for his missing comrade, Safrilla answered by saying, "O sho he come here, but I told him they got the pox and he hightailed it and left." Motioning toward Mrs. Seabright she said, "They got the pox, they got the pox. The Yankee search party left at double time. When it was reported to Burbridge the soldier could not be found he threatened to burn Bristol "to a crisp". However one of his officers convinced him he saw the soldier heading toward Blountville, a possible deserter. One explanation is the officer was from the area or had relatives in Bristol. The skeleton of the beaned Yankee was found during an excavation for the Reynolds Building. MAY WE NOT CALL SAFRILLA A TRUE "HOME GUARD"?

The Bristol incident happened during Stoneman's April, 1865 raid that passed through Bristol, Burbridge being in command of an infantry contingent, as I recall, without looking it up. Incident has been documented from a number of sources.

Before Safrilla buried the body, a folding drinking cup and a picture of a beautiful lady were removed from the soldier's body. The articles are now owned by the historian, Mr. V.N. "Bud" Phillips. My information of the incident is derived from "Between the States: Bristol Tennessee/Virginia During the Civil War", written by Bud.