

Wylie typified brave women

LOCAL

THE CHARLOTTE OBSERVER

of Chester's Fishing Creek

In 1860 Hannah Wylie (1821-1882) of Chester District wrote "Reflections on the Wylie Family," which contained accounts of her ancestors' experiences during the Revolutionary War.

Her Wylies, Millses, Kelsos, and Pagans had lived along Fishing Creek and were all Whigs or Patriots. In her handwritten, never-published account, she wrote stories handed down in her family. For instance, her grandmother Kelso, born a Mills, was one of the Chester women who mowed the wheat and oat crops while their men were away at war.

Kelso had gone with her friend Mary Mills to the battlefield at Rocky Mount (near the present town of Great Falls) to hunt for her brother-in-law whom they believed



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to have been killed in the battle there. They found the body only by recognizing his clothing.

Wylie said her grandfather, William Wylie, entered the army very young. He was captured by the British and spent some time in a Winnsboro jail. He was released only to be recaptured and placed in the Camden jail for three months in the winter without heat. This time he was chained to the floor and shared a single blanket with another soldier.

After the war William Wylie married Isabella Kelso. "My grandfather was a very cheerfully disposed man. My grandmother was of a melancholy temperament and very religious. I think she was one who looked on the dark side of the picture. Grandfather was inclined to drink when at public places, which caused her untold uneasiness."

Hannah added that her grandfather Wylie was more forgiving of the enemy Tories who had chained him to the jail floor than was his wife.

William Wylie moved to Alabama, leaving his two oldest children in Chester District and taking the youngest with him. This was fairly typical of the times.

Hannah wrote, "My grandfa-

ther's brothers and sisters were very high minded and honorable and had great respect for the truth. I have heard Father say that he believed old Uncle Jimmie Wylie would have suffered his right arm to be cut off rather than tell a lie."

She quoted her father's favorite quotation of Aunt Margaret, "If ye can say nae guid of a person say nothing."

Hannah said that her father talked of Captain Huck and his gang who threatened to kill her grandfather Kelso for not answering their questions. The old man was deaf and could not hear a word they said. Huck's men believed Kelso was only pretending to be deaf. Kelso's wife spoke bravely to the Tories.

When a pigeon flew close to

Huck he cut off his head. Grandmother Kelso said to Huck, "Dear me, that was a great act to kill the poor thing that was you naw harm."

Huck told her that if she didn't mind, her head was next to come off. She defied him and said that Huck didn't have the power to do so and if he tried, then God would strike him dead.

Earlier that day Huck's forces had "killed a poor boy named Strong." The British had found the boy carrying some harness (he had already hidden the wagon). When he saw the Tories, the boy ran into a wheat field. The soldiers leaped over the fence and captured him. They continued to run their swords through his body until his mother

got there and threw herself over his body."

Kelso was with Strong and witnessed the butchery of the Strong boy. Hannah reported that in her distraction to get to the boy, Kelso tore a gate off its hinges.

This incident was not one of those collected by Daniel Green Stinson of Chester for Elizabeth Ellet's three-volume work, "The Women of the American Revolution," published in the 1840s. But Hannah's tale is typical of the many told of the bravery of the women of Chester's Fishing Creek.

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