

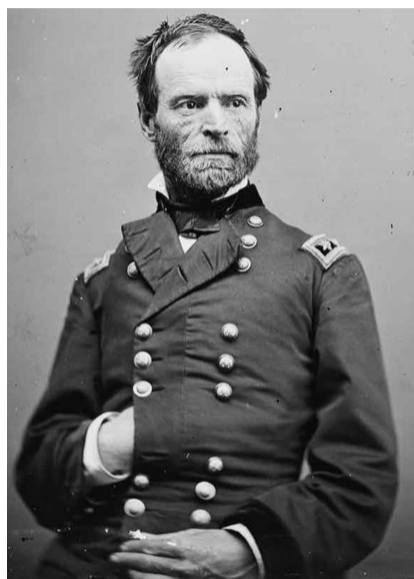


BLUE AND GRAY DISPATCH

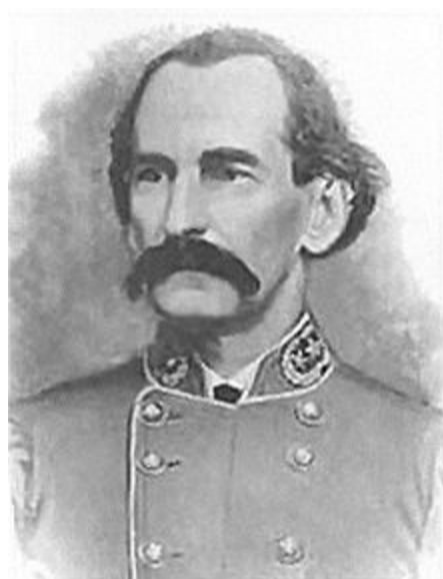
General Sherman's Confederate Girlfriend

By Norman Dasinger Jr

In 1836, William T Sherman was a cadet at the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York and his roommate that year was Marcellus Stovall from Augusta, Georgia. The Stovall family was well known for their entrepreneurial spirit and owned several successful businesses in Augusta and other towns in Georgia. Cadet Stovall stayed only one year at West Point but during a visit from his family, including his sister Cecilia, roommate Sherman would remember the Stovall's for the remainder of his life.



William T. Sherman during the Civil War



Marcellus Stovall as a Confederate General

Future general Sherman was smitten with Cecilia after dancing with her at an event at West Point. He followed up his interest by writing to the 16 year old beauty. Later, Cecilia would note that she told him, "Your eyes are so cold and cruel. I pity the man who ever becomes your antagonist. Ah, how you would crush an enemy!" Young Sherman replied with feeling. "Even were you my enemy I would love and protect you!"

Obviously, young Billy was interested in her but the correspondence soon ceased. Maybe Cecilia ended it but probably, her father, Pleasant, played a role in closing this long distance romance. Cecilia would marry Charles T Shelman and the newlyweds moved to Cass (now Bartow) County, Georgia near Cartersville and into a large plantation on the banks of the Etowah River.



Cecilia Stovall Shelman



Cecilia's home, Etowah Heights

As the years passed, apparently, Sherman kept up with the location of Cecilia. Because in 1864, as commander of the combined Union Armies in the campaign to capture Atlanta in the War Between the States, fate would have it that the path of the soldiers and their leader went directly through Cartersville.

Once he arrived in Bartow County, Sherman began to search for the exact location of the Shelman home, called Etowah Heights. He found it! He stopped at the gate that led up the slope to the house and asked an older black man about the whereabouts of Mrs. Shelman. He was told the family had left the area in anticipation of the arrival of the Yankee Army. Sherman immediately posted guards to protect the house and its contents and he handed the man a message:

"You once said I would crush an enemy and pitied the foe. Do you recall my reply? Although many years have passed my answer is the same. I would ever shield and protect you. That I have done. Forgive all else. I am only a soldier".

Cecilia and Charles would return to Etowah Heights. They would have seven children. He would die in 1886 and she in 1904 and they are both buried in Cartersville.

Brother Marcellus would move to Rome, Georgia in the 1850's and would become a Confederate general fighting against his old roommate while defending Atlanta.

Based on this story, Cecilia must have had a powerful effect on the young West Point cadet in 1836.

Blue and Gray Education Society will be hosting a tour of Dalton, Georgia - part of Sherman's Atlanta Campaign with historian Bob Jenkins. You are invited to join us! Click on the Blue and Gray Education link below for more information or to register.

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