The War Work of the
Women of Dallas Co.

In all the annals of history no greater example of patriotism can be found than that, displayed by the Women of the South in the Cause of the "Southern Confederacy" and in those darke stormy days - those days that tried the hearts of the bravest men - the Women of Dallas County - stood preeminent in their loyalty & devotion

And now that the ~~corroding~~ corroding finger of Time is ~~surely~~ slowly but surely eradicating all memories of the past & so few are left to tell us of those eventful years hallowed by the sacrifice of our best & bravest - it seems but a fitting tribute to the memory of those women that all record connected with their work should be gathered together & perserved that it may be handed down to future generations a beacon light in history to forever bring to mind the saintly courage - the heroic endeavor & the self sacrifice of our Mothers and grand Mothers The Confederate Women of Dallas County

For this purpose as the U D C Chapter of Selma I have collected the following facts from memory tradition & extracts from old papers

Anna Mc. G. Fry

After the letter

On April 20 1861 a flag was presented to the "Magnolia Cadets" in Selma at Watts hall. The flag bore a magnolia wreath on one side with a cross of eight stars on the reverse. It was presented by Mr James Averett in behalf of the ladies of Selma and was received by Lieutenant McCraw.

On July 30 1861. the ladies of Selma presented a flag to the Dallas Rangers. This flag was presented by the Rev A. M. Small Minister of the Presbyterian Church of Selma and was accepted by the Rev Mr Watkins of The Rangers.

There were a number of Military aid Societies formed by the Ladies of Dallas County there are only ten of these societies of which any record can now be found.

The Ladies Military Aid Society of Cahaba The Ladies. The Ladies Military Aid Society of Selma. The ladies Military Aid Society of Planters ville. Summerfield Soldiers Aid Society. Ladies Aid Society of Pleasant Hill. Ladies Relief Society of Centre Ridge. Ladies Aid Society of Orrville. Soldiers Aid Society of "Harrells Cross Roads.

Unfortunatly none of the Constitutions of these societies have been perserved but it is learned that in Dallas County four Months was the tearm of Office.

The Cahaba Ladies Military aid Society was organized May 1st 1861. The first meeting was held in the parlor of the Dallas Hall Hotel.

Mrs E. W. Pettis was elected President Mrs Simeon Watts vice president Mrs George W. Gayle secretary. Mrs Thomas Portis

treasurer. The ladies at once went ~~[illegible]~~ ardently to work. Making clothing + tents for the Cahaba Rifles and bondages to be sent to the front. In 1863 or 1864 Cahaba was made a Military Post and a prison was established there in which several thousand Yankees were confined. There was also a large Government hospital where the ladies of Cahaba took turns in nursing the sick and wounded soldiers not only the ~~sick~~ ~~and~~ the Confederate soldiers but all ~~who~~ prisoners who needed their ministration. During all the four years ~~this society~~ ~~four years~~ the war continued this society never ceased its work and contributed a generous fund in aiding the Government to sustain the hospital. The private citizens also made liberal contributions in money and provisions and both summer and winter the young girls of Cahaba kept the hospital ~~supplied~~ filled with beautiful flowers from the yards and greenhouses for which the place was famous.

No record can now be found of the Officers selected of the Ladies Military Aid Society of Cahaba but for the first four months of 1861 and the early part of 1865 when Mrs Thomas Walker was President Miss Lizzie English vice president ~~and~~ Miss Margaret Bush secretary & Mrs. H. I. F. Coleman treasurer. During these years the ladies of ~~Cahaba~~ the town gave ~~many~~ beautiful tableaux and suppers to raise funds to buy ~~clothes~~ the many things needed for the soldiers and their efforts did not cease until the end came in 1865 when all hope for our beautiful dream of a Southern Confederacy was lost ~~ceased~~ and we had to yield to the overpowering numbers of a foe reinforced by European mercenaries ~~and~~ with against whom ~~which~~ we had only our Southern boys to combat

The first meeting of the Ladies Military Aid Society of Selma was held July 1-1861 in Watts hall. When bandages and lint were made to be sent to the seat of war. The second meeting of this society was held in the same place July 15th where contributions, of cloth and clothing were brought to be packed to be forwarded to the army.

On July 20th Gov Moore published a request to the ladies of Alabama in which he asked each lady in the state to knit one pair of socks to be deposited with the Probate Judge of each County who would send them to the Governor at Montgomery where they would be forwarded free of charge to the soldiers at the front."

But even before Gov Moore made this request the women of Dallas County had been unwaried in their work but now they at once responded to the task assigned them and hundreds of pairs of socks were knit by the different societies, not to mention those knit by the young girls, many not in their teens and the negroe women, under the supervision of their mistresses - ladies, too far away from the social centers to join a Military Aid Society. In 1862 on New Years Eve a fancy ball was given by the ladies of Selma and a lunch the next day. The proceeds were donated to the Magnolia Cadets. On Feb 22 1862 Mrs James Norris was elected President of the Ladies Military Aid Society of Selma. Mrs Tredwell vice President Miss Gertrude Goodwin Secretary. Miss Ella Watts assistant Secretary. Mrs Joseph Hunter and Mrs G. M. McConico book-keepers. From October 30 1861 to Feb. 22. 1862 this society cut out and made for the soldiers 1008 articles of clothing, received $570.60 & paid out $565.65. The Valley Creek Ladies Aid Society contributed largely to the Confederate Cause in 1861-1862. Two large boxes of supplies were sent to the Delaven Hospital in Virginia besides bedding and clothing to the 28 Alabama at Corinth Mississippi.

The first Meeting of the

It has been claimed that the records of the Summerfields Ladies Aid Society have been better kept than any other society in Dallas Co. In addition to the Ladies Aid Society the ladies of Summerfield formed a company known as the Ladies Reserve. They dressed in uniform and had regular drills and were ready at any time to engage in hospital work or any other good work needed to help the Confederate Cause. The little girls of Summerfield were also very patriotic. They formed a society and devoted themselves to work for the Southern Cause. Many were the articles they made to be sold to purchase supplies for our soldier boys. and it is a great pity that none of the names of these bright young girls have been perserved from the oblivion that the intervening years have brought.

I have neglected to state that the Ladies ~~Aid~~ Soldiers Aid Society of Summerfield was formed July 15 1861 Previous to this time it had been in existence as a neighborhood society and had made many contributions to the Confederate Soldiers.

The Ladies Military Aid Society of Plantersville was organized July 29 1861 in the Church at that place. Mrs Kate Peebles was elected President. Miss Georgia Driskell Secretary and Mrs George T Vincent Treasurer. ~~Miss~~ Misses T Driskell L Wailes & T & E Peebles were appointed the Committee to draw up the constitution and the by laws. Miss G L Driskell Mrs A Peebles & Mrs L Butler were appointed a Committee of arrangements. This society at once offered their searvices to make the uniform and clothing for the Brooks Light Artillery then preparing to start to the front.

The Harrells Cross Roads Society was formed Aug 17 – 1861. Mrs Warren Brantly was elected President. Mrs N. C. Gill vice President. Miss Jennie More Secretary Mrs Ann More. Treasurer. ~~[illegible]~~ This Society was indefatigible in its labors – Cloth was spun and woven by many of the ladies themselves. or by their seaconts under their supervission – Cloths were made and sent in huge bales to the soldiers – Large boxes were packed – so with the most delicious hams, bacon. Cordials wines jellies. and forwarded monthly either to the boys at the front or to some hospital in need of delicacies for the sick soldiers. the stuckest self denial was practiced at home. but the our soldiers had to be supplied with every luxury that these darke stationary days afforded.

The Pine Flat and River Beat Aid Society was most zealous in making contributions to our soldiers in the field. In addition to the large quantities of clothing made and sent off to the soldiers, they sent many things for hospital purposes among these seven dozen bottles of black-berry & Mint Cordial. not to mention wines and jellies that the sick so much needed.

The names of some of the members of this Society that can still be remembered are – Mrs. T. M. Adams. Mrs Phillip Millhouse Mrs Harris Walker Mrs J Winemore Mrs Tipton. Mrs. William S Smith. Mrs E. A. Reese. Mrs T. K. Davis Mrs E M Vasser. Mrs J B Duke. Miss M Adams. Mrs J. H. Hick-son. Miss Ann M Barnes. Mrs J. C. Barnes

Mrs Conego Mrs Carter Cleveland
Mrs Maggie Hudson Mrs E Moody and
Miss Tilsby contributed generously in both
time and money although not members
of this society.

It is said to be a well substantiated fact
that many articles of clothing were made
and sent to our soldiers by some of negro
servants who belonged to Mrs Reese
& Mrs Cleveland, which speaks volumes
for the affectionate sympathy & loyalty
of the southern slaves to their owners.

It is a well known fact that the
ladies of Dallas County did not confine
their sympathies and work alone to the
soldiers of Ala. In October 1861. a public
appeal was made by Mr John Robbins
Mrs W B Mitton and Miss E L Peters
of Selma, in behalf of the Maryland
soldiers. There was a most generous re-
sponse to this appeal and on Nov
19th a large shipment was made to
the Marylanders. It should here be stated
that a part of this contribution came from
Union town in Perry Co.

On the night of the 22 of October
a tableau was given by the ladies of
Selma to raise additional funds to
furnish supplies to the Maryland troops.

The four months term of office
of the Ladies Aid Society of Selma expired
On October 30 - 1861. New officers were
then elected. Mrs Platenberg President

Miss E. E. Furgerson secretary Miss Ella Parkman assistant secretary and Miss Sallie Nance ~~assistant secretary~~ treasurer. There was a board of eight directors - also a purchasing committee composed of Mrs Lindsey, Mrs N. Waller, Miss Sallie Nance and Miss Ella Murphy.

In 1862 the Ladies of Dallas County contributed a liberal sum to the building of the Ladies ~~Gun Boat~~ Gun boat. This enterprise was started by an ardent Southern woman of Mobile but unfortunately had to be abandoned. The ladies of Selma then formed what was known as "The Ladies Hospital Association" with a board of managers.

It was then agreed that all the gun-boat fund should be resolved into a hospital fund to be used for the benefit of the sick and wounded soldiers.

The Selma Ladies Hospital Association then called on all the patriotic associations throughout the State of Alabama to ~~cooperate with them in taking in similar action~~ and this call was unanimously responded to in the most patriotic manner.

The Soldiers Hospital in Selma or as it was more frequently called The Ladies Hospital was kept supplied with every thing needed for the sick and wounded by the ladies of Dallas Co. But as before stated they did not confine their work alone to their own County.

The Confederate Government had now established a hospital at Gainsville for the sick and wounded soldiers

of the Western Army. and the Ladies Military Aid Society of Selma, at once appropriated the rooms of their Society as a depot to receive all supplies & intended for the Gainsville hospital and had them packed & shipped to that place.

In the "Selma Reporter" of Dec 4 - 1862 we find the following paragraph.

"The Ladies of the Military Aid Society of Selma are all the time hard at work and the generality of our citizens cooperate with them. We hazard nothing in saying that Selma has done - and is yet doing more for the soldiers in the service, than any other city of its size, in, or out of the Confederacy".

The articles above mentioned sent by the Ladies Aid Societies of 1862 does not represent by half. the many articles sent by women of the County to the soldiers on the field, and, to the hospitals in Alabama, Mississippi and Virginia.

The same heroic work was continued during 1863. When it became harder and harder to obtain the many things necessary to contribute the ~~actual necessities~~ Much less the comfort of our soldiers Clothing was needed - bedding became necessary and then it was upon a suggestion made by Mrs A A Lapsley in 1860 - the carpets were taken up from the floors and made into blankets and sent to the front.

The Carpet of Shady Grove Church near Burnsville was sent to the army of Tenn. and nearly all southern homes resounded to the echo of bare floors: every carpet that could be used was sent to the soldiers. The ladies of the Confederacy had now learned to ~~spin~~ dye, corde, spin, and weave. and it was no uncommon sight to see the men of Dallas County dressed in full suits of our beautiful Confederate Gray homespun - in which they appeared handsomer than ever before

On Feb 27-1862 new officers were elected by the Ladies Military Aid Society Mrs William Platenburg President Mrs William Norris Vice President Miss Eudora Conoly Secretary Miss Emily Fargerson assistant Secretary, Mrs McConico Treasurer, Mrs Henry and Mrs Tredwell purchasing Committee Mrs Maples general directress. Mrs Cater, Mrs William Norris, Mrs Waller Mrs Lindsey, Mrs Kent, Mrs Hendree Mrs Fargerson Mrs Conoly, Mrs Watts, Mrs Fellows assistant directresses.

'The Selma Reporter of Feb 12-1863 says "The generality of the ladies of Selma have shown great devotion to the ~~Confederate~~ Cause of the Confederacy and have done much for our soldiers but the amount, as well as the manner of the work of the Ladies Military Aid Society, has elicited especial praise for those so nobly and

patriotically engaged. From what we have seen we are satisfied the ladies have the taste and skill, energy and patriotism to do more, and better work for the soldiers, in a shorter time than any other like number of ladies in the Southern Confederacy."

They do not weary of well doing but all the time are calling for more work. More means to purchase material to be made into garments for our brave defenders and we are glad to see that many of our citizens are opening their ~~hands~~ purses with liberal hands in response to calls made upon them."

On the last of June. the four months of the Ladies Aid Society having expired new officers were elected.

Mrs William Norris president, Mrs Sarah Nance vice president, Mrs Jane Kent Secretary; Mrs S. F. Hobbs Treasurer. The same directresses were continued in office. There is said to be a partial report of the secretary extant which shows the many and various articles received and the purpose to which the donors wanted them applied.

Near the last of September or on the 1st of October 1863. the ladies of Selma. brought before the people of Dallas County the propriety of establishing a wayside hospital in that city as a resting place - not only for the Confederate soldiers - but also for the many unfortunate female refugees - and other deserving Confederate exiles - who in their

distress, were compelled to remain a while in Selma dependent upon the hospitality of its citizens.

Quoting from an old paper - the writer says

This practical sympathy for their less fortunate country women shows the exalted character of the women of ~~Selma~~ Dallas Co

For at this time owing to the pressure of the enemy in Mississippi and Tenn. Central Alabama ~~is~~ was filled with refugees from those unfortunate states. Most of them - refined and cultivated people.

In response to this call The Ladies Military Aid Society met with the citizens of Selma at 4 o'clk at the City hall on October 15th and the ways and menaces were then and there adopted for the building of the Wayside Home" which was completed and ready for use about the first of Nov.

Here many refugees were housed and cared for until they could find ~~homes~~ suitable homes.

This house was a large brick building on the corner of Broad and Water streets. and was convenient to the river landing and the rail road depot

It was a pleas ant place. not only for the refugees - but for the weary and wounded Confederate Soldiers who were constantly passing through Selma.

The Wayside Home was well supplied by the people in Dallas Co and the other counties in Ala.

The last report of the Selma Military Aid Society was dated Feb 17-1864.

Mrs M. G. Kent was its secretary

By the end of 1864 every hospital throughout the South was crowded - nearly every home held sick and wounded soldiers - that had to be nursed and cared for. Every able bodied man was at the front. Every boy that could shoulder a musket had enlisted and the burdens of life now fell heavily upon our women - but they did not falter, neither did they murmur or complain.

With the sublime courage of a Cornelia they worked hoped and prayed! ~~to the~~ If our soldiers could only be victorious, if the Confederacy could only be saved! no burden was too heavy - no sacrifice too great!

And when in 1865 our army was defeated not by the force of arms - but by the overwhelming numbers with which they had to contend - for we had the world to fight against - and our boys come back - to ruined homes - poverly stricken ~~wounded~~ maimed, wounded, ~~and~~ bare footed and ragged - then it was our Dallas County women - ~~rose~~ like all the women of the South arose - to the grandeur of their devotion and welcomed them as ~~heroes~~ heroes the greatest heroes - the world ever afforded. Heroes of a cause tho forever lost - still lives. treasured in the strong tower of every southern heart

"And there we will keep it for ever!
Yes! for ever and a day!
Until its walls shall crumble in ruins
And fade from memory away!"

Anna M. G. Fry