

## *Clayton Woman Observes Jefferson Davis' Birthday; Flies Confederate Flag*

Miss Nancy Caroline Hanley, 93 Years Old,  
Was Ardent Secessionist in Civil  
War Times.

The Confederate flag flies again today from the porch of an old fashioned house at 7600 Westmoreland avenue, Clayton. The occasion is the annual celebration of Jefferson Davis' birthday by Miss Nancy Caroline Hanley, 93 years old, who has lived in the house since it was built by her father in 1855.

In a grove of handsome elms and oaks, the two-story colonial brick structure stands almost hidden from view, though only a few feet from the street. The oldest dwelling in Clayton, it once overlooked the 106-acre farm of Martin Franklin Hanley, who laid out the road of that name a block west. Now the house is surrounded by modern homes, built since the land was subdivided a quarter of a century ago.

Her mind alert as that of a woman many years her junior, Miss Hanley enjoys life today as fully as her dozens of nieces and nephews and their children and grandchildren, to whom the picturesque house is a family rendezvous. She resides with two nieces, Miss Barbara and Miss Byrd Anne Yore. Miss Barbara is a teacher at the Hempstead School and Miss Byrd has been active in Democratic politics.

### **Likes Will Rogers' Philosophy**

Unlike many persons of her age, Miss Hanley's interest in current affairs is on par with those of the past and, in conversation, she moves with ease from one field to the other. An ardent newspaper reader and radio listener, her favorite modern philosopher is Will Rogers, who, as she believes, interprets trends of today more truthfully and keenly than any other person.

Over the fireplace of her small sitting room are pictures of Robert E. Lee and "Stonewall" Jackson, and on the other side of the room hangs a large newspaper likeness of Col. Lindbergh, who ranks in her esteem with the heroes of her youth. She is certain that, if Lindbergh could have been a Confederate soldier, he would have "stood right up" with the others.

Through her mother, a member of the Walton family, Miss Hanley is descended from one of the first settlers of St. Louis County. Her great-grandfather, William

Walton, a Revolutionary veteran, came to the county about 1800. Her father, Martin Hanley, settled there some years later, first residing near Olive Street road, where Miss Hanley was born.

### **A Civil War Story**

“When we moved here,” she related yesterday, “our house was the only one for a considerable distance around and it commanded a splendid view over fields and woods towards St. Louis, which was then east of Grand avenue. Our farm extended south to what are now the Rock Island railroad tracks and adjoined the farm of Ralph Clayton, whose old home burned down several years ago.

“West of us were hundreds of acres of wooded land, most of which belonged to Mr. Clayton. Later he donated part of the land for the town of Clayton where the courthouse now stands. On the north we could see as far as St. Charles Rock road. That oak tree in front of the house (a magnificent specimen four feet in diameter) was then 50 or 60 years old, my father said. We go to St. Louis on the Olive street plank road, and it was a fine road.”

Miss Hanley’s favorite story of her Civil War experiences concerns the invasion of their farm, early in the war, by 75 Union soldiers, who demanded breakfast. At the time several Confederate soldiers, friends of the Hanleys, were hiding in the woods to the west.

### **Hid Shirts in Hoop Skirts**

“When the officers made their demand,” she said; “my father refused them and the officers ordered the men to take what they could find. But my mother, though she, too, was a passionate secessionist, interceded and we agreed to feed them. Meantime my sisters and I were bust trying to find a place to hide six Confederate shirts we had made for our boys. The only place we could think of was under our hoop skirts, and there the shirts stayed until after the soldiers left.

“Well, the officers agreed to send part of the men to the next farm for breakfast and we set out breakfast for the others in the back of the house. The officers – there were three or four of them – had their meal right in this room. While they were waiting they practiced with their pistols at a paper target on the oak tree in front. None of them could hit it and finally one of them asked me to shoot. I didn’t know much about shooting, but he insisted that I try. So I did, and hit closer than any of them. It was just luck, of course, but it seemed to make quite an impression on them.

“After breakfast one of the officers noticed our piano and asked if somebody would play some Southern songs. One of the girls then played and we sang, while the officer turned the pages for my sister. They were nice gentlemen, even if they were Yankees. But they never got near our friends in the woods.”

### **Belonged to “Know-Nothing” Party**

Still fresh in her mind also is her recollection of major events of those days that now are history. With her father she attended the State convention in St. Louis in 1861, at which it was decided that Missouri would remain in the Union. And still rankling in her mind is the memory of the battle of Camp Jackson, in St. Louis, which settled for all time the question of Missouri's loyalty to the Union.

The Hanleys were members of the Know-Nothing, or Native American Party in the 50's, but later returned to the Democratic standard. Miss Hanley has always voted that ticket, except that "I didn't vote for Al Smith; I didn't like his "Sidewalks of New York" campaign, nor his stand on liquor."

As to Lincoln, "he was not a bad man," she thinks, but was a shrewd politician and was forced by political pressure into many measures he might not otherwise have approved. "But the books you young folks have read about Lincoln were written chiefly by the bullet of Booth," she believes.

### **Listens to Radio**

She is a strong supporter of Roosevelt and his politics and is captivated by his radio voice, which she thinks is the best on the air. She listens much to the radio, but turns it off "when the trash comes on" and turns to her newspapers.

A regular church-goer? No, she has not attended a church in many years. "My nieces sometimes tell me I ought to belong to all the churches because I find so much good in all of them," she said. "But I can't subscribe to everything in any of them so I don't think it would be honorable to belong. I was brought up by the Bible, though, and have tried to follow the teachings of Christ, so I hope I may be acceptable when my time comes."