

The Story of ANN RALEY

Mother of the Coppoc Boys

by Richard Acton

A NN RALEY'S SON Edwin Coppoc was going to hang. His leader in the raid on Harpers Ferry, John Brown, had already been executed for treason to Virginia, murder, and inciting slaves to revolt. Edwin and three others were due to die on December 16, 1859. Five days earlier a young Quaker woman of Springdale, Iowa, wrote to one of Edwin's fellow prisoners, "The time will soon be here when . . . Edwin will be executed. If this reaches thee in time give my love and sympathy to [him]. . . . Poor Ann Raley is almost crazy, some think she will not live through it."

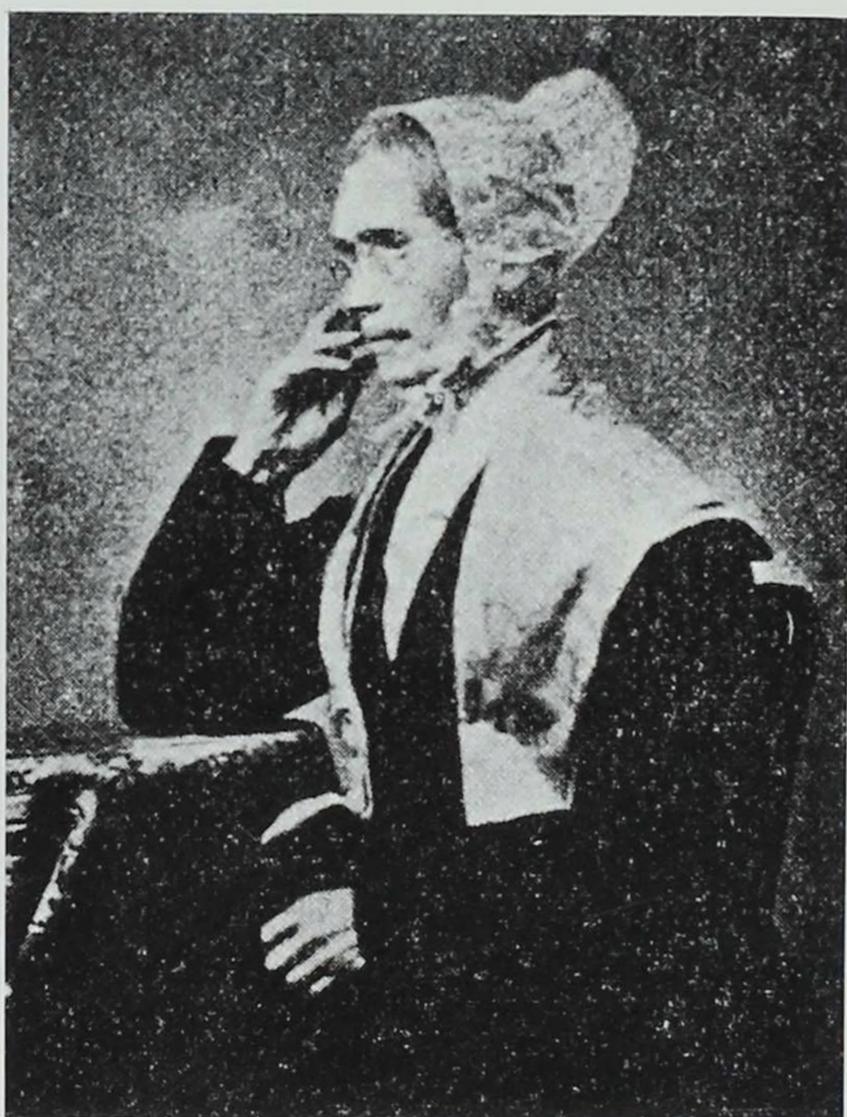
But Ann Raley was both a survivor and a tigress. For years before Edwin was sentenced to death, she had faced tragedy after tragedy and had always overcome them. This time, her Quaker faith would be matched by her clever and deliberate press campaign as she defended her son. Just as the bloodshed at Harpers Ferry foreshadowed the bloodshed of the oncoming war, so the fury of letters and documents that erupted from Ann Raley, the press, and the governor of Virginia portended the shattering

of the Union by the secession of South Carolina.

A NN RALEY was born in 1804, the eldest child of a New Jersey Quaker couple, Joshua and Rachel Lynch. The following year the family moved to Columbiana County, Ohio, where her father was a farmer, Quaker preacher, and school-teacher — a career she too would later pursue in Ohio. As a child she had suffered the agony and disfigurement of the loss of one eye in an accident, and her vision would always be hampered.

Ann married a neighboring Quaker, Samuel Coppoc, in 1831. During the next decade she bore and reared six children — Levi, Maria, Edwin, Lydia, Barclay, and Joseph. In 1841 Ann's husband suddenly died, aged only thirty-seven. The family was left destitute, and Ann had no choice but to split up the children and scatter them locally. Each child was taken in by different relatives or friends. For the next eight years Ann remained in Ohio and con-

"I do not believe in the principle of war, or the taking of human life . . . but my Bible tells me to do unto others as I would have them do unto me, and to undo the heavy burdens and let the oppressed go free."
—Ann Raley



MIDLAND MONTHLY (OCTOBER 1895)

tinued to oversee her children's upbringing.

Then in December 1849 her old father died, and Ann inherited a precious one hundred dollars. Although her roots were in Ohio, Ann determined to use the money to give her family and herself a fresh start in the new state of Iowa. Unbroken prairie at the future Springdale in Cedar County, Iowa, was being sold by the government for only \$1.25 an acre. Quakers had begun to settle there. After the money had been paid in March 1850, Ann gathered together her family — only Barclay was left behind in Ohio — and moved to Springdale. There she bought land, and her elder sons, eighteen-year-old Levi and fifteen-year-old Edwin, built her a frame house and started a small farm.

Ann's spiritual and social center was the local Quaker meeting house, built in 1852. One historian records: "There were only a few families at that time, and the worshipers often came to meeting in the middle of the week just as they left their work — barefooted, and without coats or vests; and it was no unusual thing for families to come in a wagon drawn by oxen." The family

was also involved in village affairs — Levi was elected the first constable of Springdale in 1852.

Early in 1853 Ann remarried. Her second husband, Joseph Raley, was a Quaker widower thirteen years her senior; he went to live with Ann and her family on their farm. A few months later her third son, fourteen-year-old Barclay, left Ohio and joined Ann at Springdale in time for his sister Maria's marriage to a local Quaker youth. After twelve years Ann had successfully reunited her entire family. But the joy was all too short-lived. Just one month after Maria's wedding, Ann's younger daughter, Lydia, died of consumption at the age of seventeen. Two years later the same dread disease carried off twenty-two-year-old Maria.

A NN WAS LEFT with her four sons. She had long endeavored to instill her strongly held Quaker beliefs in them. She was a woman of marked clarity, idealism, and intelligence, and as she



COURTESY MERLIN MATHER (1892 PHOTO)

The home of Ann Raley and family. Note house, right of pine. Just east of Springdale, the farm was an Underground Railroad station. From here, Ann's sons Barclay and Edwin Coppoc left to join John Brown.

put it, worked for "the day when all mankind, free and equal, standing in the image of God, shall live to his glory." Ann's desire for equality encompassed the rights of women. A contemporary Springdale Quaker woman called Ann "a staunch advocate of woman suffrage [who] worked in the cause in her private way. Some thought her a fanatic; be that as it may, she was firm and true to the cause she avowed and never wavered from her purpose."

But it was Ann's belief in freedom and the abolition of slavery that was to win renown for her and her sons. In Springdale itself her house was a station on the Underground Railroad for slaves escaping from the South. Accused of harboring runaway slaves, Ann acknowledged it proudly: "As to my house being a depot for the afflicted and suffering . . . we have not altogether that honor, as there are so many of the neighbors who wish to participate in the generous attention."

Although Ann's sons were imbued with her philosophy of human worth and equality and her abomination of slavery, they failed to conform to the rules of Quakerism. The minutes of the Quaker monthly meeting recorded in the fall of 1854: "Levi, complained of for attending balls & Dances," and a year later, "Levi, dis-

owned [expelled] for dancing." In January 1857: "Edwin, complained of for attending a dance," and six months later, "Edwin, disowned for attending a dance." On the same day the minutes recorded: "Barclay, complained of for striking a man in anger."

Later in 1857 tragedy struck Ann's family again when twenty-five-year-old Levi, her eldest son, developed consumption, as had his sisters. Ann nursed him assiduously, but Levi died in August. Meanwhile, Barclay had developed a consumptive look, and his worried mother sent him off to Michigan and the lakes to recuperate. He returned to Springdale in time for the arrival of John Brown in December 1857.

John Brown was already well known as a veteran and ruthless fighter against slavery in "bleeding Kansas." Now he had decided to invade Virginia and the South to liberate all the slaves. The ten men he brought to Springdale from Kansas were the nucleus of the invading army he envisaged, but most of them knew nothing of his true plans. When he left the men in Springdale for the winter of 1857/58, they thought they were training for further warfare in Kansas. They drilled hard with guns and wooden swords, and spent much time studying

military manuals and history. A mock legislature was held in Springdale in which John Brown's men and local youths debated slavery, suffrage, and reform issues, and deep friendships sprang up between the men and some of the Quaker families and their daughters. Edwin and Barclay Coppoc were fascinated by the men, who left with Brown and two local recruits in April 1858 for Canada. Nearly a year later, in February 1859, Brown reappeared in Springdale for two weeks, on his way to Canada with eleven slaves he had freed in Missouri.

That summer Edwin, now aged twenty-four, and Barclay, twenty, were obviously preparing for something. They sold their oxen, and Edwin hired a black man to look after the farm. One day in July Edwin and Barclay departed for Ohio. A worried Ann guessed that their aim was to join John Brown in Kansas.



"I saw no way of deliverance but by fighting a little. If anyone was killed on that occasion it was in fair fight."

—Edwin Coppoc

ALTHOUGH three or four of the local Quaker men knew something of Brown's plans to invade Virginia, the general belief in Springdale was that Brown and his men would be fighting in Kansas. The news of the raid on Harper's Ferry, therefore, burst on Springdale as unexpectedly as it did on the whole country. Ann would write later: "Some time last summer, two of my sons, Edwin and Barclay, left home without informing me of their destination or designs. On hearing of the unlawful outbreak at Harper's Ferry, we learned with great surprise and horror that Edwin was engaged there, in an action so unlike his previous course of conduct."

On the night of October 16, 1859, John Brown and eighteen armed men, white and black, had taken and held the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry for thirty-six hours in the name of freeing the slaves. Some local slaveowners and armory workers were taken hostage. A handful of slaves were temporarily freed and armed with pikes. Brown's party resisted the attempts of local militia to capture them with rifle fire. Four men of Harpers Ferry including the mayor were shot dead; ultimately ten of the raiders died.

John Brown and his party were finally cap-

tured in the fire-engine house by United States Marines under Colonel Robert E. Lee, and one Marine was killed. Edwin Coppoc was captured unharmed. Two raiders escaped — as did Barclay Coppoc and two others who had been rearguards at Brown's base five miles away in Maryland. These three had never gone into Harpers Ferry or even crossed the state line into Virginia at all. On hearing the raid had failed, Barclay and the others disappeared on foot into the Pennsylvania mountains. Virginia governor Henry A. Wise offered a substantial reward for their capture.

John Brown was tried immediately after the raid and was convicted of treason to Virginia, murder, and inciting slaves to revolt. Although there was no proof that Brown himself had murdered anyone, aiding and abetting were grounds for the murder conviction. At Edwin's



HARPER'S WEEKLY (NOVEMBER 12, 1859)

Edwin Coppoc (center) is handcuffed to John Brown at the arraignment. *Harper's Weekly* artist-correspondent commented, "In person, Brown is gaunt and tall — over six feet, I should think. He walks like a man accustomed to the woods. His face indicates unflinching resolution, evil passions, and narrow mind."

preliminary hearing on the same charges, one of the hostages in the engine house, Joseph A. Brua, testified that Edwin had fired twice and that Mayor Fontaine Beckham was killed by the second shot. In a one-day trial Edwin was found guilty. (The trial records were later destroyed by fire, but apparently Brua gave the same testimony at the trial. Moreover, no evidence was called for the defense.)

Although Harpers Ferry filled America's newspapers for months, the press had been ordered by the court not to publish any details of the preliminary evidence. Furthermore, the press did not publish the evidence of Edwin's trial; the newspaper columns were filled instead with news of John Brown's classic plea in mitigation, delivered the same day as Edwin's trial. Hence, the fact that it was undoubtedly Edwin who had killed the unarmed mayor of Harpers Ferry was not known to his mother or the public at large. Nor did Edwin ever admit murder. Before sentencing, Edwin stated: "I never committed murder. When I escaped to the engine house and found the captain and his prisoners surrounded there, I saw no way of deliverance but by fighting a little. If anyone was killed on that occasion it was in fair fight."

After he had been convicted Edwin wrote to his mother: "I have seen my folly too late and

must now suffer the consequences which I suppose will be death. . . . I hope you will not reflect on me for what I have done, for I am not at fault, at least my conscience tells me so. . . . We were surrounded and compelled to fight to save our own lives. . . . I am happy to say that no one fell by my hand, and am sorry to say that I was ever induced to raise a gun. . . . I am sorry, very sorry that such has been the case." The next day he added to his letter a request: "If . . . you have any sweet cakes or other nicknacks, just send them along. They will go very good here between the iron bars. We get plenty to eat here, but *it is not from home*." A few days later he was sentenced to hang on December 16.

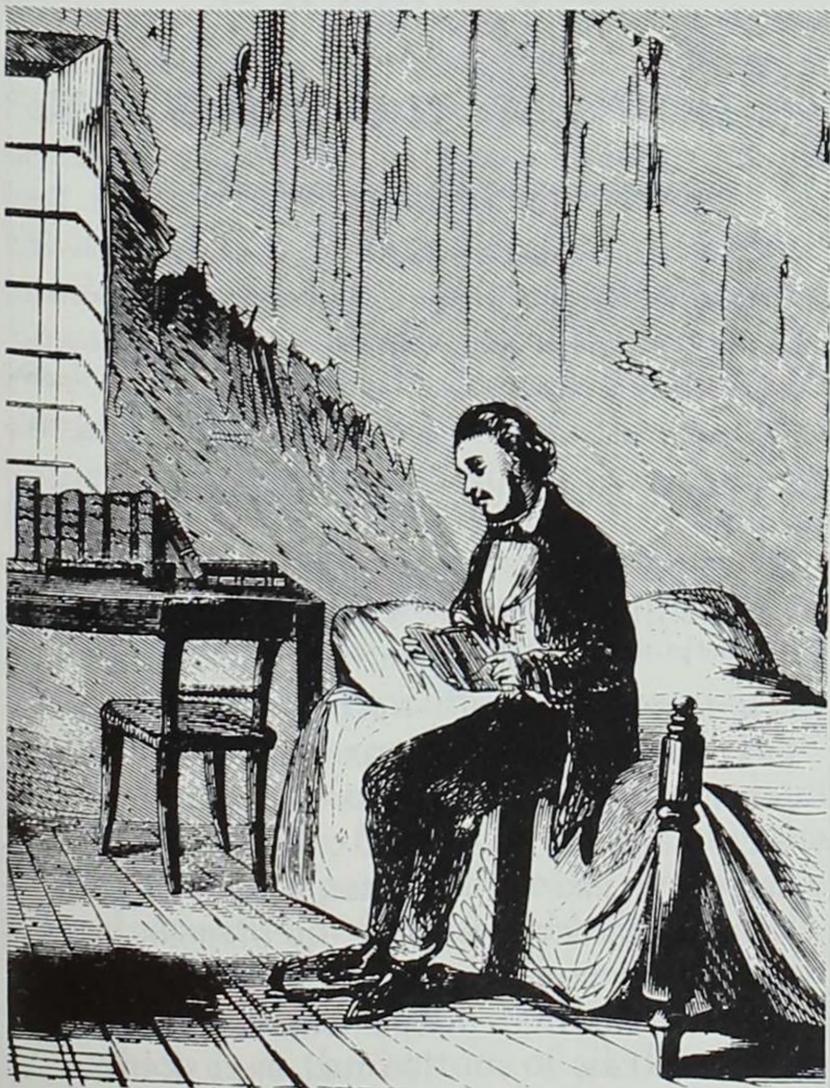
JUDGING FROM ANN'S spirited defense of Edwin, she apparently believed every word of her son's letter and was spared ever being told of the evidence that Edwin had killed the mayor. She asked the Quaker postmaster of Springdale, Thomas Winn, to go to Virginia to plead for clemency. He departed with a petition to Governor Wise signed by two hundred sympathizers.

On arrival in Charlestown, Virginia, Winn immediately called on the special prosecutor, who recalled later that "an old gentleman came

all the way from [Edwin Coppoc's] people to see him, bringing him a pound cake to comfort him. . . . [I] passed him into the jail with the cake for Coppoc." Edwin had his mother's forgiveness — and her cake.

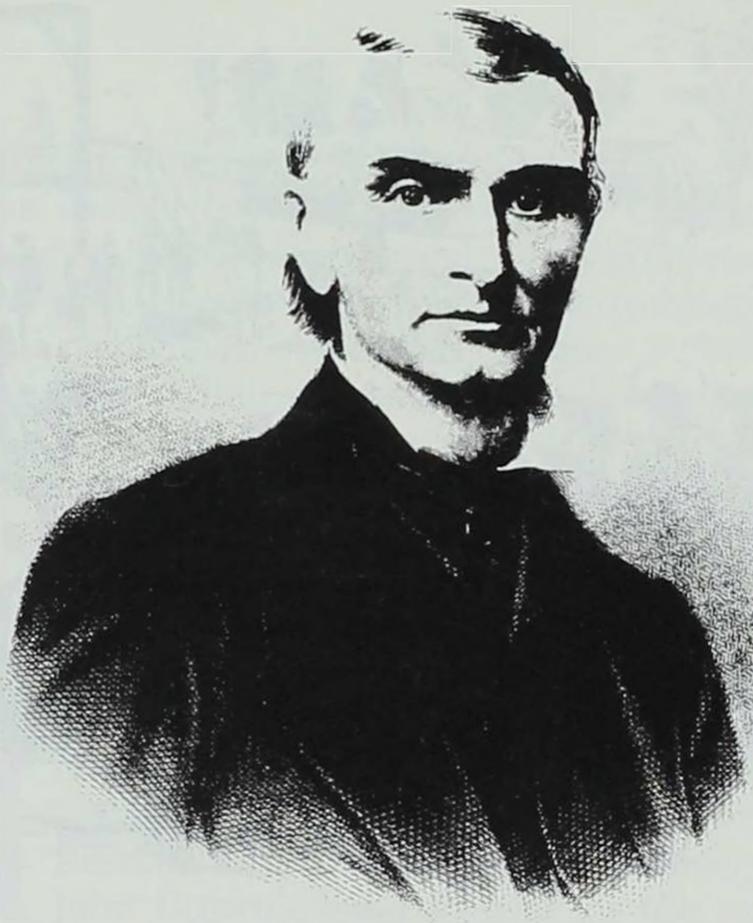
Thomas Winn and other friends and relatives of Edwin's from Ohio lobbied to such good effect that Governor Wise concluded that Edwin's death sentence should be commuted because he believed Edwin had been "careful of the lives of prisoners at Harper's Ferry, and was I think, misled into the crimes there." Wise recommended clemency, but the Virginia legislature — with which the decision lay — thought otherwise, and the hanging was ordered to proceed.

Relieved to learn that Barclay had reached safety in Canada, Ann awaited Edwin's execution, sustained by the depth of her faith. "My anxious desires and intercessions to the throne of grace on [Edwin's] behalf a parent's heart can only know," she wrote, "and I received, on my pillow, in the midnight hour, a full



"I have seen my folly too late and must now suffer the consequences," Edwin wrote to his mother from prison. "I hope you will not reflect on me for what I have done, for I am not at fault, at least my conscience tells me so."

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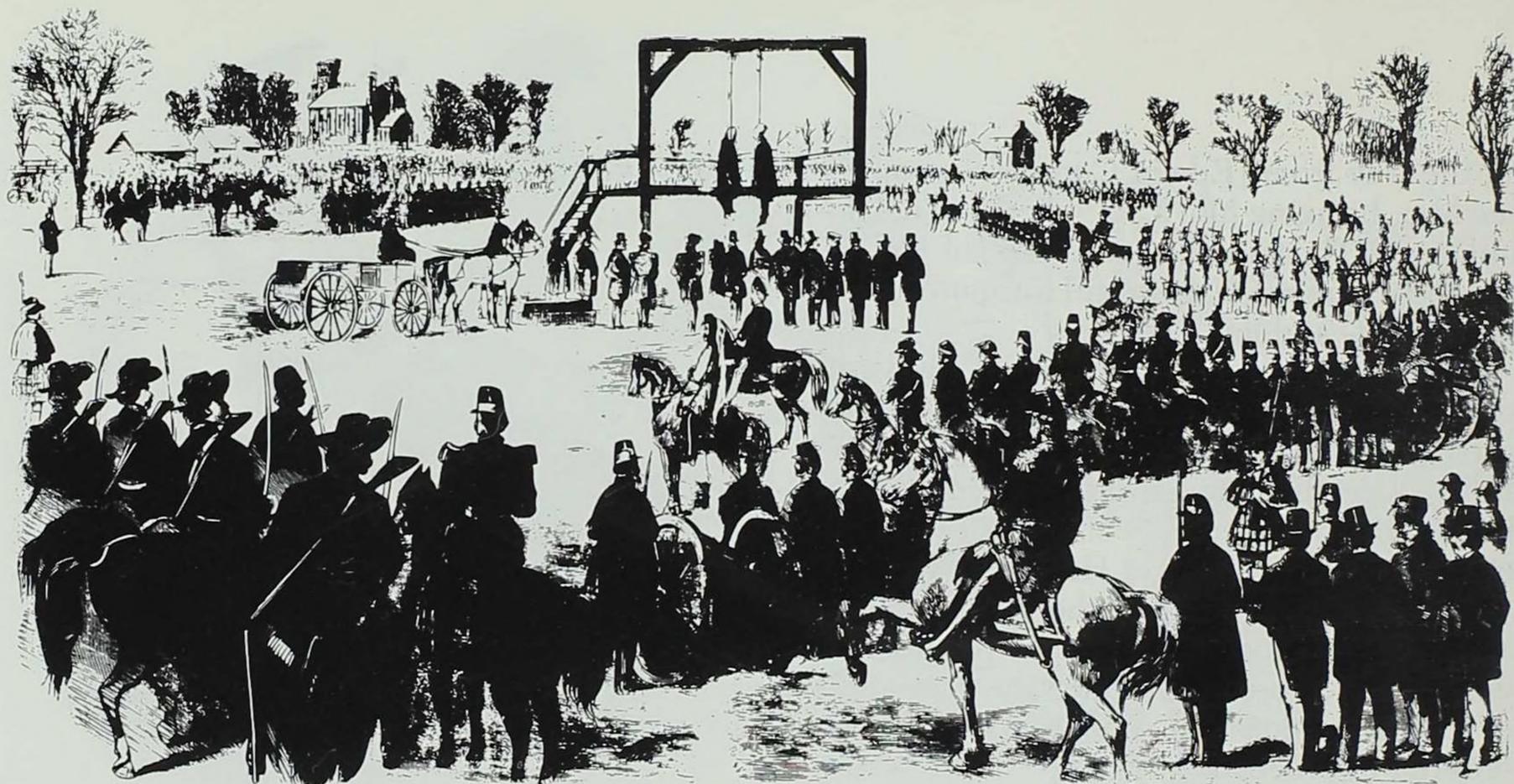


Edwin Coppoc had been "careful of the lives of prisoners at Harper's Ferry and was I think, misled into the crimes there."

—Virginia governor Henry A. Wise

assurance that his sins would be remitted through the pardoning mercy of Jesus Christ our Lord; that he would be supported above the fears of death upon the scaffold, and be received into one of the mansions of everlasting rest. This has supported my poor tired mind through this dark conflict."

Five days before Edwin was to die, Ann fired off a cogent letter to the press — the start of a newspaper campaign on behalf of her sons. The letter was a stout defense in reply to a critical newspaper story about her youngest son Joseph's freeing of slaves in Missouri. She wrote: "That I have a son [Joseph] who feels it his duty to assist the noble image of God to a *land of liberty* I am happy to acknowledge. . . . I have three surviving sons. The eldest [Edwin] is in a Southern jail, about to be offered up as a willing sacrifice to his country, not for the dark crimes for which he has been condemned, but for defending the great cause of Freedom. The second [Barclay] is in Queen Vic's dominions . . . ready to do anything for the great Cause. The youngest [Joseph] is at home attending school, except when the calls



FRANK LESLIE'S ILLUSTRATED NEWSPAPER (DECEMBER 24, 1859)

of humanity as before alluded to, claim his attention.

"I do not believe in the principle of war, or the taking of human life on any occasion," she continued, "but my Bible tells me to do unto others as I would have them do unto me, and to undo the heavy burdens and let the oppressed go free. . . . I feel it a duty to lend my influence in support of these *Divine Truths*."

She ended: "I am proud to say, that I have endeavored to implant the seeds of the great principles of humanity in the minds of my children, and am truly thankful to the great author of my being, that those seeds have taken root and are springing up and producing the fruits which may in time repay the labor."

On the afternoon of the day of Edwin's execution, a young Quaker girl was sent to keep the grieving mother company. Ann greeted her quietly with the words: "I'm glad thou art come. Edwin was hanged at one o'clock today."

The next day Barclay came home.

Barclay had returned for his brother's funeral. Edwin had expressed the wish to be laid by the side of his brother Levi and his sister Lydia at Springdale, but Thomas Winn and Edwin's Ohio uncle Joshua Coppoc — to spare Ann the ordeal of viewing Edwin's body "horribly blackened and disfigured" — took the body to Ohio instead of Iowa. They buried it in a Virginia-made coffin in a Quaker cemetery near Salem, Ohio. Although more than a thousand people attended the funeral, there was a

After the hanging, Edwin Coppoc was buried in a Quaker cemetery in Salem, Ohio. Following a public outcry, the body was then exhumed for a more public funeral. Handbill lists prominent Salem citizens.

FUNERAL OF EDWIN COPPOCK.

The friends of Edwin Coppock and of the great principles of Freedom, for which he sacrificed his life, and to advance which, he suffered martyrdom, being desirous of showing proper respect to his memory have obtained his remains from his relatives, and have made arrangements to inter the body in the Cemetery in SALEM. FRIDAY, DECEMBER 30, 1859.

To meet at the TOWN HALL, at 1 o'clock, P. M. All the friends of JUSTICE, LIBERTY, and HUMANITY, are invited to attend and participate in these solemn rites.

R. H. GARRIGUES,	JOHN HUDSON,
DANIEL BONSALL,	C. H. GARRIGUES,
JACOB HEATON,	JAMES WHINERY,
ISAAC TRESPOTT,	ELIJA WHINERY,
OLIVER MILLER,	ALLEN BOYLE,
JOHN W. FAWCETT,	EDWARD GIBBONS,
J. K. RUKENBROD,	JOEL MILLAN,
ISAAC SNIDER,	J. C. WHINERY,
T. E. VICKERS,	SAMUEL BRUBAKER,
W. P. WEST,	A. WRIGHT,
JOHN McLERAN,	SAML. D. HAWLEY,
A. BRADFIELD,	J. M. BROWN.

clamor in abolitionist Salem for a yet more public funeral. The body was exhumed, placed in an Ohio-made coffin (a deliberate political statement), and reburied in a larger cemetery. This time a vast crowd of more than six thousand attended the service.

ANN HAD BEEN inundated with letters of sympathy from all over the country, but because of her poor eyesight had been unable to answer most of them. A letter to which she did reply was from the Reverend Nathaniel North, a Presbyterian minister in Virginia. He had visited Edwin's cell mate in Charlestown Prison and had seen Edwin a number of times. Just before the execution he had written to Ann of Edwin's Christian preparations for death; of the Quakers who had visited him; of the sadness of the times. Finally he had commended some Biblical verses to Ann to comfort her.

Ann's strongly worded reply expressed barbed gratitude. Her anger at the state of Virginia permeated the letter, and she recognized the national repercussions of Harpers Ferry: "Thy account of my dear Edwin is truly satisfactory, and thy care and concern for his best interest is grateful to my feelings. . . . Edwin did not go into Virginia to commit murder or treason. . . . You have erected a monument in the hypocritical sentence, the mock trial, and the barbarian gallows, by which Virginia will be remembered in the annals of history. . . . But I forgive you. I should be less than my noble son if I did not. . . . He went for a great and noble purpose . . . but he saw his mistake in the *manner* of doing it, this was all he had to repent of on that score."

She turned to the political consequences of the execution: "You are working against yourselves; every murdered son of America whom you send out to the North with the print of the accursed halter upon their necks, and whose funerals are attended by assembled thousands, has the tendency to kindle the fires of indignant hatred against not only the demon cause [slavery] which is at the bottom of all this, but is ready to burst like a volcano on the heads of the actors. The South feels herself insulted. . . . The North is a hornet's nest."

Her next words seemed directed particu-

larly at Reverend North: "Surely, this being the case it behooves every true Christian, every minister of the gospel, every politician of the land, to raise their voices against this great and crying evil, before it is too late . . . before the United States of America be deluged with havoc and blood." She ended the letter in Quaker style: "From thy sincere but unknown friend, Ann L. Raley." North's letter and Ann's reply both appeared in Ohio and Iowa newspapers.

IN THE GROWING FERMENT, the Virginia authorities were determined to bring Barclay Coppoc and the other survivors of John Brown's band to trial for the same charges of treason to Virginia, murder, and inciting slaves to revolt. After the *Muscatine Daily Journal* of December 22 reported that Barclay had been among those at Thomas Winn's return home, a local reader wrote to the new governor of Virginia that "Barclay Coppoc is with his mother in Springdale." Governor John Letcher (who had succeeded Governor Wise) sent a special agent to Muscatine to effect the arrest of Barclay. The Virginia agent, Courtland Camp, arrived at Muscatine on January 9 and stayed under an assumed name at the Mason House Hotel. But he apparently made no effort to go to Springdale.

Ann knew Barclay was being hunted, and now began her fight to save this son. On January 23 she wrote to a friend in Ohio: "Barclay is at home and seems determined to stay, although there are reports almost continuously of somebody being in search of him. He says he has hurt nobody, and will not *run* nor will he be *taken* . . . I think B's friends will take care of him."

"B's friends" were apparently a group of Springdale young men armed and ready to defend Barclay. The Democrat press gleefully reported that they were hypocritical Quakers in arms. The Republican press had it that none of them were Quakers. But Barclay was one Quaker who definitely did go everywhere armed — with no less than four revolvers. The Quaker elders called on him in his mother's house to complain, but he ignored their admonition. Inevitably the Monthly Meeting

recorded: "Barclay, disowned for bearing arms."

On January 23 in Des Moines, the agent Courtland Camp presented Iowa governor Samuel J. Kirkwood with a requisition from Governor Letcher to extradite Barclay Coppoc as a fugitive from Virginia justice. Kirkwood was undoubtedly sympathetic to Barclay's cause (given his remarks about John Brown in his recent inaugural speech). He rejected Camp's requisition on the very narrowest of technical grounds.

Angered at Kirkwood's rejection, Camp ignored the governor's advice to restrain himself and fumed, "I don't care a damn who knows it now, since you have refused to honor the requisition." Anti-slavery legislators who had overheard the argument in the governor's



"You are hunting all through the land a poor fatherless boy, whom somebody has said that somebody imagined, had had some connection with Brown."
—Ann Raley about her son Barclay

office hired a messenger to ride to Springdale to warn Barclay to flee. Obstinate, he refused to budge.

The next day Kirkwood wrote two further reasons to the Virginia governor: the affidavit did not state that Barclay Coppoc had committed the acts charged in Virginia, nor were any of the facts stated on which the special prosecutor had based his belief. Courtland Camp returned to Muscatine to await a corrected requisition from Virginia.

Jonathan W. Cattell, state senator from Cedar County, recognized the great folly of Barclay remaining in Springdale. Having written the original warning to Barclay, he now wrote to Ann's friend Dr. Henry C. Gill at Springdale. It was inevitable that a second corrected requisition would be acted on, Cattell warned, and he feared bloodshed if Barclay did not leave.

Ann Raley now entered the fray over the requisition. She wrote a powerful letter to Virginia governor Letcher and sent a copy to the *Chicago Press and Tribune*. In the letter she explained that her early sympathy for Virginia for "the unlawful outbreak" had turned to contempt because of the manner of the killing of John Brown's men during the raid, the "farical representation of the forms of law," and the hangings of Edwin and the others. But Ann considered that the "most disgraceful part" was that Virginia authorities were "hunting all through the land a poor fatherless boy, whom somebody has said that somebody imagined, had had some connection with Brown." Barclay had signed no constitution or pledge of allegiance to Brown, Ann argued, nor had he been in Virginia during the raid or injured anyone. "Yet you are chasing him with biped bloodhounds and big bloated marshalls, secret patrols and spies, and most inhuman of all, the thousand dollar reward for him dead or alive."

Protective of Barclay as he recovered from a bout of severe asthma, she nevertheless was ready to make any sacrifice for the anti-slavery cause. "My poor consumptive boy has thus far been preserved through all his suffering by cold and starvation in the mountains, and from the clutches of rapacious men," she wrote to Letcher, "yet I would be willing to give up this son, also, with the addition of my own life, if

thereby the distressed bondsmen [slaves] might be liberated.

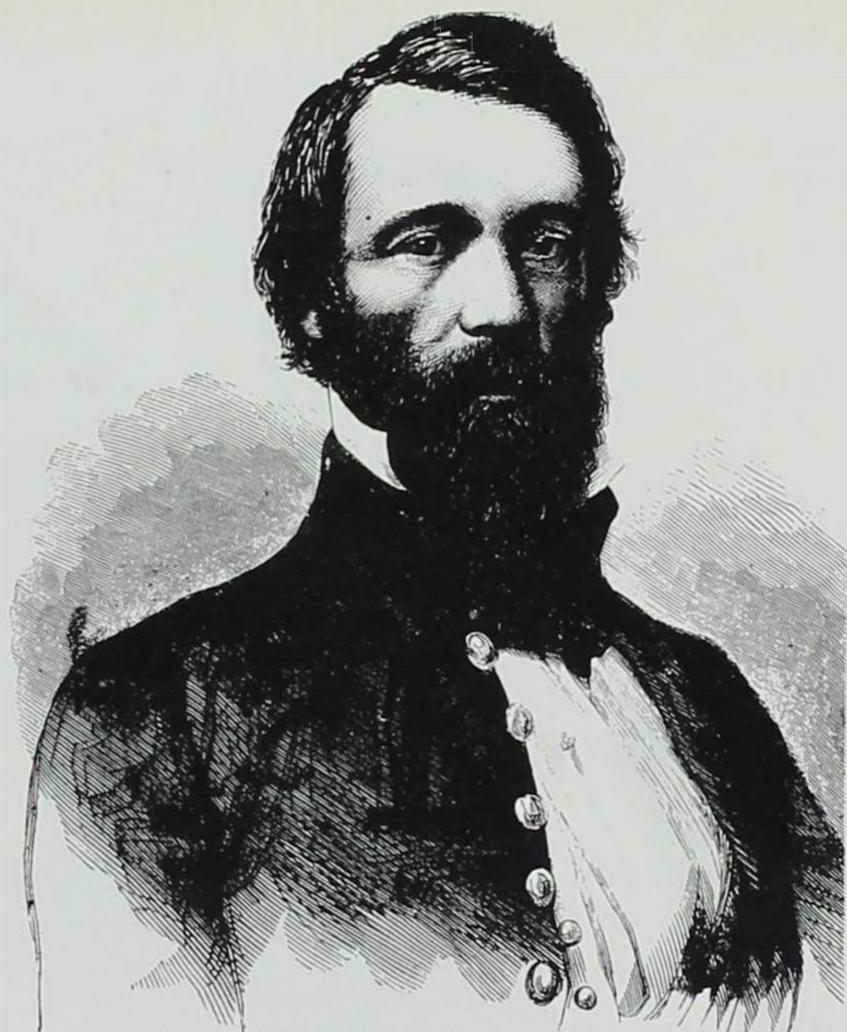
"You hang men for murder while at the same time you are encouraging it by your rewards," she assailed Letcher. "You are hanging men for treason, when thou thyself hath uttered treasonable sentiments in thy inaugural message. . . . You are making radical abolitionists faster than scores of Northern lecturers could do it. Did it never occur to your minds that a few thousand of these might pay you a hostile visit?"

She added a wry postscript: "As thou seems very anxious to have Barclay visit you, if he chooses to go, I shall expect him to receive that kind hospitality at thy house that one of thy sons would receive from me. Perhaps a few months in the genial climate of Virginia might prove beneficial to his health. I think you would soon become attached to him, as he is a pleasant boy, and loves dry jokes."

A few days later Barclay reluctantly gave in to pressure and left Iowa for Chicago, where he arrived on February 8. Two days later the second Virginia requisition reached Des Moines. This time it was based on grand jury indictments charging Barclay with conspiracy, advising slaves to revolt, and murder. Kirkwood could find no legal errors and accepted the requisition. He issued a warrant for Barclay's arrest. The Cedar County sheriff searched Springdale, but by now Barclay was gone.

Letcher did not respond directly to Kirkwood or Ann Raley, but sent a lengthy message to the Virginia legislature, faulting Kirkwood for not honoring the first extradition and for allowing Barclay to be warned. Reminding his legislators of Kirkwood's sympathetic remarks about John Brown in his inaugural address, Letcher stressed that the rejection of the first requisition "ought to impress upon us the necessity of adopting prompt, energetic and decided measures to . . . achieve southern independence."

WHEN GOVERNOR LETCHER'S message was published in the press, the Barclay Coppoc affair became a national issue. The *New York Times* criticized Virginia in a lengthy



"While the great mass of our northern people utterly condemn the act of John Brown, they feel and they express admiration and sympathy for the disinterestedness of purpose by which they believe he was governed, and for the unflinching courage and calm cheerfulness with which he met the consequences of his failure."

—Iowa governor Samuel J. Kirkwood,
1860 inaugural speech

editorial entitled "Preaching and Practice." Ann's press campaign reached new heights when the *Chicago Press and Tribune* printed the whole of her lengthy letter to Letcher, with this preface: "The mother who has lost one son by a violent death at the end of an attempted revolution, and who has another fleeing from men who hunt him for his blood, surely has a right to be heard in their defence."

Various Iowa newspapers also reprinted Ann's letter. Courtland Camp, still lurking in Iowa, called at the offices of the *Muscatine Daily Journal* to denounce the letter as a forgery. Through the press, Ann retorted to "that refined visitor" Camp: "To imagine that such a



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These actions "ought to impress upon us the necessity of adopting prompt, energetic and decided measures to . . . achieve southern independence."
—Virginia governor John Letcher

letter as that would be written, and the name, date and place of residence forged, is too palpable an absurdity to be palmed on an enlightened Republic."

Ann's youngest son, Joseph, headed to Muscatine to hunt out Courtland Camp, only to discover that Camp was away that weekend. A Davenport newspaper later reported that Joseph "swears eternal and deadly hatred" of Edwin's executioners and "declares he would wage war on the angel Gabriel, rather than remain in heaven with the like."

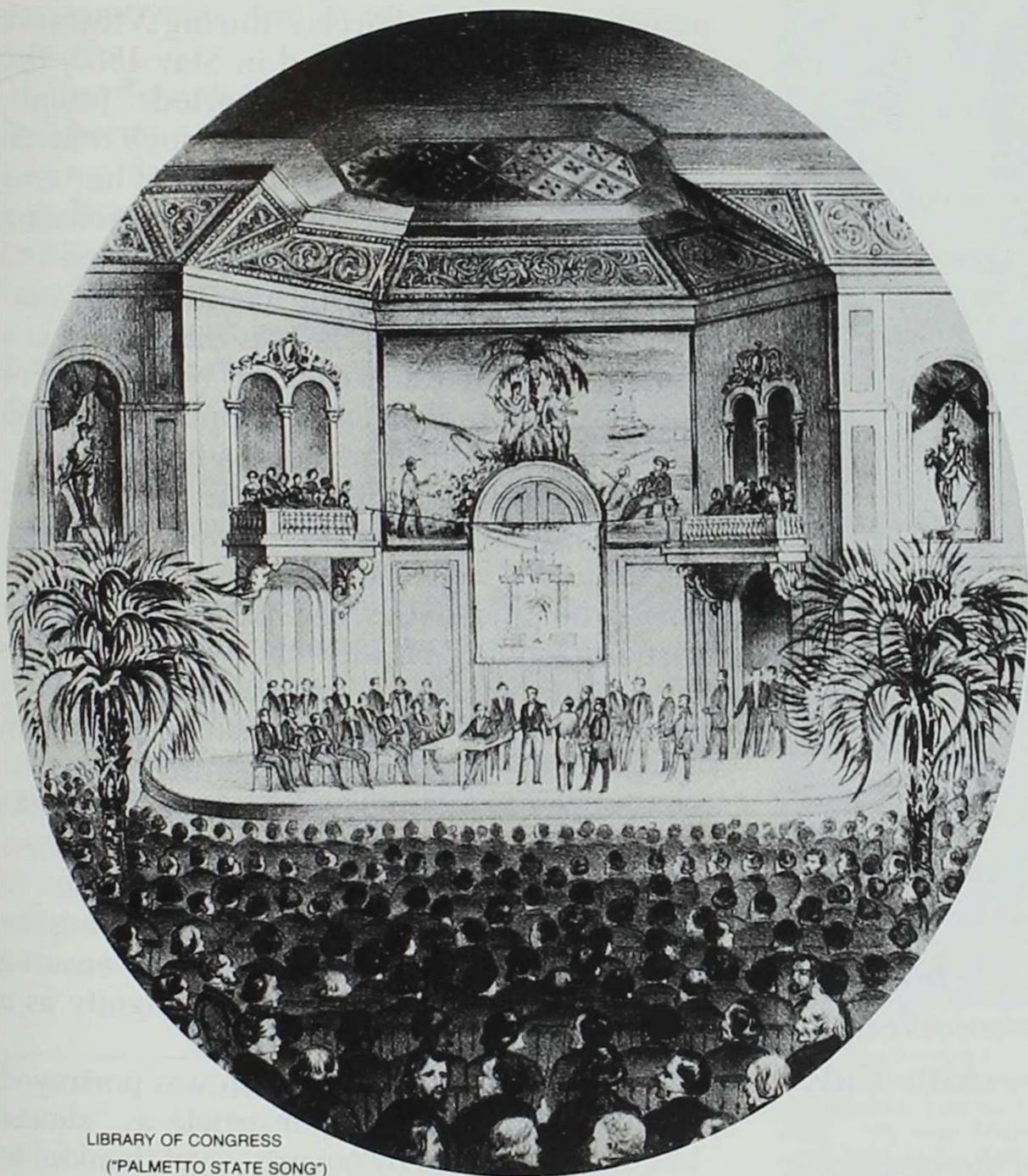
But Ann could fight her own battles — with words. "I have neither the ability nor the desire to be prominent amongst the *literati*," she replied to Camp through the press, "but when circumstances combine to call me out, I

am not ashamed to face the world with my principles; and if those official gentlemen of the South will play roughly with kittens, they must expect to be scratched by them."

Courtland Camp's stay in Muscatine, far from resulting in the capture of Barclay, led to endless ridicule. His talkativeness when supposedly on a secret mission, his drinking, his billiards — all were the subject of comment, and he was generally made a figure of fun. One historian records: "Even the boys hooted at him in the streets, and Mrs. Ann Raley, the mother of Coppoc, sent an invitation for him to come to her house and she would give him his dinner." The *Muscatine Daily Journal* alleged an actual confrontation between Camp and Ann: "A rumor is rife touching one of our citizens, a faithful son of the Old Dominion, who some days ago went out to Springdale for the laudable purpose of reconnoitering the chances for the capture of Coppoc — how a brave old Quaker lady cur-tailed his operations by scissoring off a portion of the caudal extremity of his coat . . . and giving him some sensible advice, which he took — and 'sloped.'" After Camp's departure from Muscatine on February 25, the newspapers dubbed him "[S]camp" and gleefully reported that he had left the town with "a disreputable woman" and an unpaid board bill of thirty-eight dollars.

However farcically Camp was treated, the requisition ended in anything but farce. In fact, the Barclay Coppoc affair, coupled with an Ohio reaction, fueled Southern thoughts of secession. In March the governor of Ohio rejected a similar request to extradite Barclay's two fellow rearguards. The Ohio attorney general could find nothing in the affidavit to suggest they had ever been in Virginia during the raid. Letcher warned his legislature that if Ohio's and Iowa's resistance to extradition was "to become the settled policy of the non-slaveholding States towards us," then Virginia must protect itself from "these gross outrages upon our rights" and "adopt retaliatory measures."

With the election of Abraham Lincoln in November 1860, the hunt for the Harpers Ferry fugitives died away. But in December, South Carolina seceded from the Union. The main political reason, as stated in the declara-

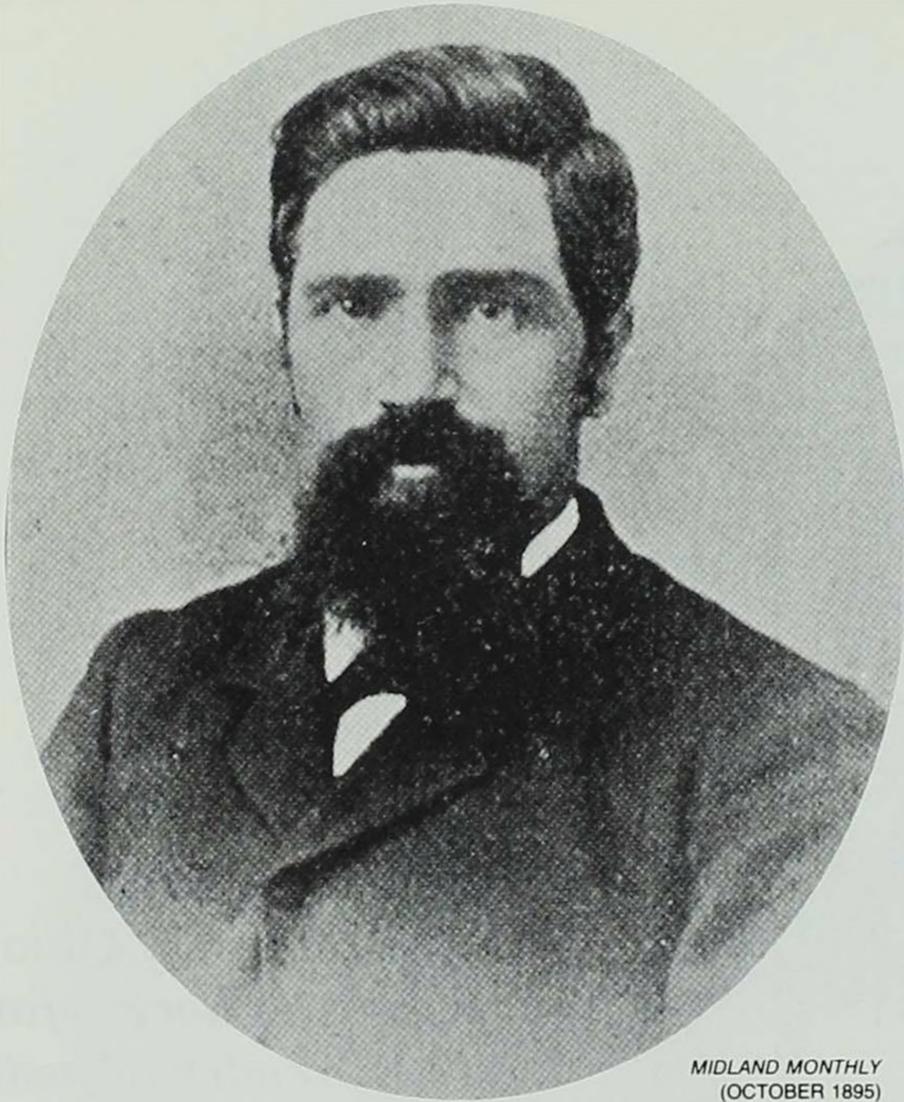


LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
("PALMETTO STATE SONG")

*"The States of Ohio
and Iowa have refused
to surrender to justice
fugitives charged with
murder, and with
inciting servile
insurrection in the State
of Virginia."
—South Carolina
secession convention*

tion of causes justifying secession, was the election by the Northern states of a president "whose opinions and purposes are hostile to Slavery." Two specific constitutional justifications were given. The Northern states had defied the Constitution and Acts of Congress by not returning fugitive slaves to the South. And, despite constitutional provision for extradition between the states, "the States of Ohio and Iowa have refused to surrender to justice fugitives charged with murder, and with inciting servile insurrection in the State of Virginia." South Carolina's declaration of independence thus marked the culmination of Harpers Ferry. Barclay Coppoc and the rearguards from Ohio completed the contribution of John Brown, Edwin Coppoc, and the others to the severance of the Union.

AT THE END OF 1860 Ann paid a visit to Edwin's grave in Ohio. While there she wrote to comfort her sister in Springdale, whose son had been killed in an attempt to free slaves in Missouri: "Dear Sister, I have thought what sorrow is like thine! It is even greater than mine! But on thinking the matter over I see there might be a sorrow even greater than ours. If our sons had gone into some horse-theft, murder, or robbery, and had been shot or slain in the enterprise, it would have been countless times worse, but although going against our will, still the motive for action has to be looked at. They went to liberate their fellow men, not for their own advantage." Then Ann foretold what lay in store for the generation of Barclay and Joseph Coppoc: "And who knows but that under the



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“That I have a son [Joseph] who feels it is his duty to assist the noble image of God to a land of liberty I am happy to acknowledge.”
—Ann Raley

present peculiar crisis, some of the best of our flock may be required as a sacrifice for our country and cause!”

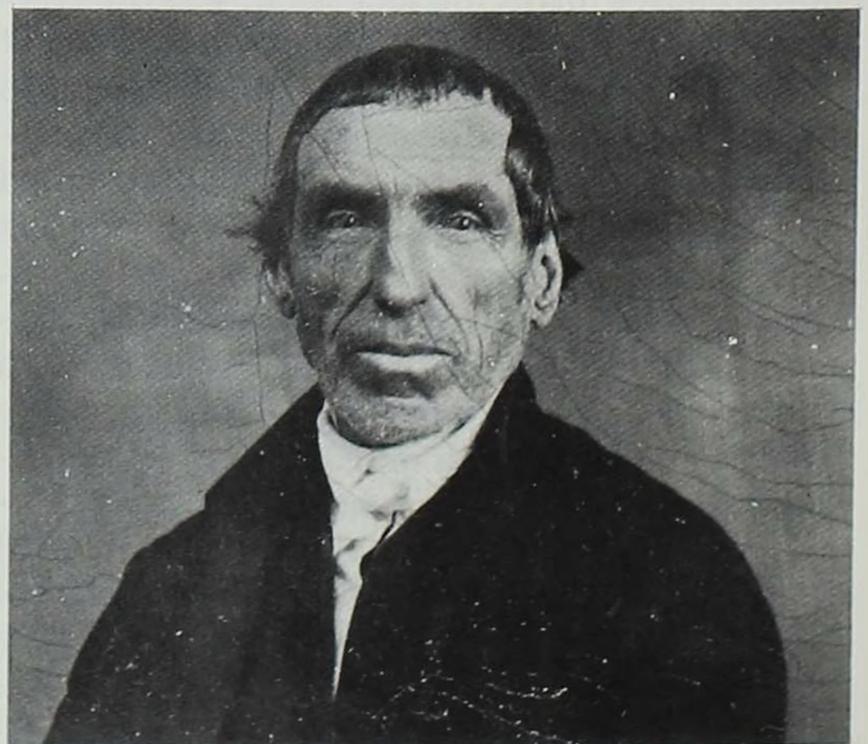
When the Civil War came, twenty-two-year-old Barclay joined a Kansas regiment as a lieutenant, and came home to Springdale to enlist recruits. He left Iowa and took a train at Hannibal, Missouri. Crossing a river there, the train plunged into the river when the bridge was set on fire by Confederate guerrillas. Barclay died of his injuries the following day and was buried at Leavenworth, Kansas. His rifle was recovered from the train wreck and taken to Ann by a Springdale youth. “She was a Quaker woman, and expressed her dislike of keeping weapons,” he recalled later, “and I asked her to let me have it if she disposed of it, which she did.”

Ann’s only surviving child was her youngest, Joseph. Always bellicose, Joseph had failed to follow Quaker pacifism. He had undoubtedly been one of the armed Springdale men pre-

pared to fight for Barclay during Virginia’s attempt at extradition. And in May 1860, the Quaker Monthly Meeting reported: “Joseph, disowned for bearing arms.” Although religion was the fount of Ann’s life, all four of her sons had been expelled from Quakerism for refusing to live up to its principles. Joseph enlisted as a third corporal in an Iowa infantry regiment. After steady promotion he was transferred as a captain to a Louisiana “colored” regiment. For once fortune smiled on a Coppoc — Joseph ended the war unharmed and a major.

After the war, Ann Raley at last had the opportunity to visit Barclay’s grave in Kansas. She returned to live a quiet life at Springdale. Now in her mid-sixties, she had lost none of her zest. In January of 1868 the women’s rights movement launched a national publication, a weekly named *The Revolution*, and Ann greeted the initial number enthusiastically. She wrote: “I have received *The Revolution*. As it is a bloodless one and just such a one as I have been wanting for years, I send two dollars to further it on, with the expectation of having the pleasure of reading something in the ensuing year . . . that will not insult my dignity as a woman. I rejoice in the prospect.”

A decade later, in 1878, Ann was portrayed in a Davenport newspaper article as “almost blind, and pinched by poverty,” yet thankful to “God that she and her family have aided by their sufferings, the *cause of human liberty*.” Later that year her invalid husband died, and



COURTESY MERLIN MATHER

Ann’s second husband, Joseph Raley, died in 1878.

for some years Ann lived on alone at Springdale.

After Joseph Coppoc had left the army, he had become a Baptist minister. He served in various places in Iowa, and was finally pastor at Van Horne in Benton County from 1881 to the spring of 1884. Inspired by a magazine article, "God's Country," Joseph and his family moved to Goose Creek in northern Nebraska. Apparently Ann, now in her eightieth year, accompanied him, and there she spent her last months. In July of 1885, Joseph sent a telegram to his friends at Springdale. His mother had died, and he was setting out to bring her body home.

Ann was buried in the tiny Quaker cemetery at Springdale next to her second husband and near her daughter Lydia and her son Levi who had died so long before. The words on her gravestone give no hint of the depth of Ann's conviction or fire. The inscription is simple:

ANN L. RALEY
1804-1885
THE MOTHER
OF THE
COPPOC BOYS.



COURTESY THE AUTHOR

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND NOTE ON SOURCES

I wrote the story of Ann for my father. I wish to thank my wife, Patricia, and librarians Karen Laughlin and Susan Rogers, State Historical Society of Iowa (Iowa City) for their endless kind help.

Ann's letters were published in *Muscatine Daily Journal* (16 Dec. 1859; 20 Feb. 1860; 1 March 1860), *Muscatine Weekly Journal* (9 March 1860), other Iowa newspapers, and *Chicago Press and Tribune* (17 Feb. 1860), and *The Revolution* (5 Feb. 1868), p. 67. A copy of Ann's unpublished letter to her sister Hannah Ball is in the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library, West Branch. Much information has been obtained from Quaker records, federal censuses, Iowa newspapers, *The New York Times*, histories of Cedar County, Iowa, and Ohio and Nebraska county histories. L.R. Withere'll's articles on Edwin and Barclay Coppoc in *Davenport Gazette* (26 Jan. and 2 Feb. 1878) and C.B. Galbreath's "Edwin Coppoc" and "Barclay Coppoc," *Ohio Archaeological And Historical Quarterly* 30 (1921) were especially useful. The deputy clerk, Court of Common Pleas, Columbiana County (Ohio), Probate Division, detailed Ann's inheritance for the author. Much information about the Quakers at Springdale comes from Lawrie Tatum, "Extracts of Early History of the Settlement of 'Orthodox' Friends at Springdale, Iowa and Their Meetings" (1892, rev. by William Mather 1910) in the Mather-Bush Papers, SHSI (Iowa City). The manuscripts of Governor Letcher's two requisitions are held under "Letcher" and a copy of the affidavit of Jont. Maxson about Barclay's rifle is held under E.R. Harlan correspondence, SHSI (Des Moines). Governor Wise's comment on Edwin is in Wise Family Collection Correspondence (Nov. 22, 1859-Feb. 17, 1928), Library of

Congress Manuscript Division. Other sources include "The John Brown Letters Found in the Virginia State Library in 1901," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 10 (1902-03); *Stones and Sites: Graves of Cedar County, Iowa* (1986); Mrs. E.S. Butler, "A Woman's Recollections of John Brown's Stay in Springdale," *Midland Monthly* 10 (1896); Irving B. Richman, *John Brown Among the Quakers and Other Sketches* (1897); Frederick Lloyd, "John Brown Among the Pedee Quakers," *Annals of Iowa* 4 (1866); U.S. Senate Committee Reports, 36th cong., 1st sess., Rep. Com. No. 278 (Mason Report). Joseph Brua's evidence that Edwin shot the mayor of Harpers Ferry, given in the preliminary examination, is in *The Life, Trial and Execution of Captain John Brown* (1859); other sources are Jeanette Mather Lord, "John Brown—They Had a Concern," *West Virginia History* 20 (1858-59); Louis Thomas Jones, *The Quakers of Iowa* (1914); B.F. Gue, "John Brown and His Iowa Friends," *Midland Monthly* 7 (1897); Benjamin F. Shambaugh, *The Messages and Proclamations of the Governors of Iowa*, vol. 2 (1903). On the justification of South Carolina's declaration of independence see Frank Moore, ed., *The Rebellion Record* 1 (1867); and Henry D. Caper, *Life and Times of C.C. Memminger* (1893). For Joseph's career, see *Roster and Record of Iowa Soldiers in the War of the Rebellion* (1908); and *Minutes of the Iowa State Baptist Conventions* (1881-1884). General secondary sources relied on are Oswald Garrison Villard, *John Brown 1850-59: A Biography Fifty Years After* (1943); Stephen B. Oates, *To Purge This Land With Blood* (1970); Jules Abels, *Man on Fire: John Brown and the Cause of Liberty* (1971); Richard J. Hinton, *John Brown and His Men* (rev. 1894); and Edward Stone, *Incident at Harper's Ferry* (1956), pp. 163-64. The spellings "Raley" and "Coppoc" have been used in all quotations. A fully annotated copy of the original manuscript of this article is in the publication production files, SHSI (Iowa City).