

Diary of a Southern Girl's Life

and how the civil war changed it

June 21st, 1870

Hello, Journal. My name is Samantha Pratt (although I like to be called Sam) , and today is my birthday. I turned 16 years old, and my mother thought that I should have something to confide to as I grew older. Personally I think it's a little ridiculous, as well, not much happens to me. I don't go to school anymore, but my father still wants me to keep up with my education, so he hired a tutor, along with my housekeeping and chores. Ugh, my father. I do love him but sometimes he can be kind of closed minded. He doesn't approve of my going out in society too much, but he lets my brother Henry do whatever he wants, and Henry is barely fourteen! Honestly, sometimes it's like I'm living in the 1700's. It's 1870 for goodness sake!

Oh well, at least I have the Fourth of July. The whole town comes together and eats lots of food and dances, Later we usually set off firecrackers. The fireworks don't excite me that much, but I do love dancing. I can do all sorts, like the Waltz, the Two Step, and the polka.

July 3rd, 1870

I haven't had a lot of time to write recently, but oh I can't hold off. One of the most exciting things that happened in our town is going to happen tomorrow. As you must know, tomorrow, is the Fourth of July! But that isn't all, I'm getting ahead of myself. Today I was sitting in the parlor with my mother and my closest friend when my dad came in, fuming, with a newspaper in his hand. " Have you seen this Laura?!" he said, and handed it to my mom."

What's the matter Adam?" she asked, placing it on the table. "It says that a bunch of African Americans are going to protest at the Fourth of July celebration tomorrow, demanding that they should be allowed to attend. We have to stop this." my dad exclaimed. My mom sighed and looked at Lydia and I. " Girls this conversation is not for you, you may go out to the porch."

This is where everything kind of went sideways. As the whole country knows, the Civil war ended 5 years ago, and people are still adjusting. I for one, think that race doesn't matter. The town celebration is for everyone, not just the white families. After all, the war is over and people should get over their prejudices. However, not everyone thinks that way. My mom agrees with me, along with my friends, and a good amount of the women in the town. Sadly, only the men are allowed to vote on the rules for these gatherings (Grrr) , so they will probably end up getting their way.

July 4th, 1870

Today is the day! Finally. I have been waiting for today for months and months. It's the only day a year where me and Henry can stay out late with the adults. (Well besides the New Year). I know I might be too old for this, but secretly, I love the fireworks. There's just something about the excitement and the feeling of the whole town together that really makes today feel special. Well not the *whole* town.(Hmph) If you haven't been able to tell from yesterday, I'm still angry. Why should people who have been living in this town for their WHOLE life, be barred from a public event. Lydia agrees with me. We were talking, and she had a crazy idea. I can hardly bring myself to say it, but maybe she's not wrong. Lydia wants to protest at the celebration. She thinks maybe it'll change their minds. Honestly, I'm not too optimistic, but it's worth a shot. I must go now, I am visiting Lydia.

July 4th, 1870

Oh, I know I can never find time to write twice in one day, but I couldn't let this go unrecorded. I'll slow down. When I first walked into Lydia's house, she had jars of ink and sheets of brown paper. At first I was confused, but then it hit me. We really were going to follow through with the protest. We went out back and made the signs, then said goodbye. Now I'm sitting in bed, at home, with the posters tucked under it, waiting for tonight. The more I've thought about it, the more sure I am. We knew plenty of African Americans before the war, and I thought my parents were over the prejudices. Well, I guess that's not fair, It's just my dad holding on to the past. I have to just hope he doesn't disown me after this (just kidding...)

July 5th, 1870

We did it! Last night, we stood outside the entrance to the celebration and protested. Surprisingly, no-one stopped us, although a few of my dad's acquaintances looked murderous. Henry's friends even joined in. The Women's Society was standing close, and at the end of the day, approached us and asked us a bunch of questions. I wonder what that was about? Anyway, I now have to get to my chores, goodbye.

July 6th, 1870

Oh my gosh. I can't believe what just happened. Just this morning, my mother and the president of the Women's Society approached Lydia and I. They want us to use club funding and organize more protests!! Apparently they are also sick of the mistreatment and prejudices against

all of the african americans. Anyway, the rest of the year is going to be very exciting, finally I'm being heard and making a change in my small town. Signing off for now, Samantha Pratt.