Civil War Wedding

"Marse Green says to come right away: he's going to marry Miss Fanny to the captain—soon as I can get the preacher!"

It was oppressively hot that day in April of 1862, and the military climate was even worse. The forts below New Orleans had fallen, and her people waited, filled with foreboding, for the arrival of the Yankee fleet from downriver.

Those who could were leaving the city, and Green, a prominent lawyer, had determined to send his three daughters to his plantation near Amite the next morning at dawn. When he spoke of the plan to one of his friends, however, the friend brought up the matter of Green's daughter Fanny. She was engaged to a Confederate captain who, after being wounded at Shiloh, had come to New Orleans to recuperate.

"What are you going to do with the captain?" asked Green's friend. "He can't stay here—he'll be captured. And he can't go with those young girls; not without a chaperone."

"You're right!" said Green. "The captain must marry Fanny without delay!"

Green sent his servant to get the preacher and to invite a few friends to the wedding; he rushed home to announce the decision to his family.

He found the girls surrounded by trunks, boxes, bags, barrels, baskets. Kindly neighbors were helping them sort and stow piles and piles of household articles—and the confusion increased when Green made his announcement.

"Dear Fanny must be married in white," cried one neighbor woman, and all began to ransack trunks and drawers for a pretty white gown Fanny had somewhere! At last it was found, and then there arose a clamor and frantic search for white stockings.

No one had the temerity to mention white gloves—they were of the past, as gone as the many other luxuries the people of the South had learned to do without.

The preacher arrived. Fanny, calm and lovely in her white gown, joined her bridegroom in front of the hastily assembled guests.

The captain, dazed and sick from his injury, stood shakily in a shabby Confederate uniform—his only suit. His skull had been fractured, and his head was heavily bandaged; but he made a handsome groom in spite of it.

The ceremony was about to begin, when a guest suddenly said, "We have no refreshments!" She rushed home and quickly returned with half a cake and a pitcher of brown-sugar lemonade.

Someone produced a plain gold ring, and the preacher began: "Dearly beloved, we are gathered together in the sight of God to join this man and this woman in Holy Matrimony...."

Fanny and her captain were soon man and wife. They were toasted with lemonade; the wedding ring was returned to its rightful owner with thanks; and the minister was paid—with a $50 Confederate bill.

You are invited to submit unusual Deep South stories; $5 will be paid for each one used. Manuscripts cannot be returned unless stamped, self-addressed envelope is enclosed. Indicate source of material.