

## William Boyd

(1821 – 13 Feb 1884)

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*The Evening Star, November 10, 1859, p. 3*

### **Dr. W. Boyd – Another Osawatomie Brown on a Small Scale.**

The individual whose name heads this paragraph will be remembered by many of our citizens as the little quack doctor who has been living in and about Washington for the last two years or so. He resided on the Island, and at one time was a huckster in the Centre Market, and was frequently seen loafing about Bacon's corner, opposite the Seventh street end of the market. He was also a prominent speechifier in the meetings of the infidel club, held at the old Masonic Hall last winter. It will be seen from the appended letter, which our Mayor received last evening from a prominent citizen of Westminster, Md., that the quack doctor has been playing a deep game after the school of "Osawatomie" Brown, and has made a failure:

Westminster, Nov. 5, 1859

Dear Sir: On Tuesday last, a white man was arrested in our county with a two-horse wagon containing two negroes, with all the necessary baggage and provisions. They are now in our jail. The negro woman says she was brought from the college in your city. The negro man has not revealed where he came from, but the white man says he came from Washington; and the whole conveyance is well prepared to aid negroes. The white man is fully identified as the man who was with Col. Lee's black last spring, and who was taken from her in July last by one of your city officers. He says that he owns but one fifth of the horses and wagon, and to keep those horses at livery until our April term, they will be of heavy expense. Your inquiry touching this matter might lead to the arrest of others. This man is of small stature, rather sandy beard and mustache, and speaks as though he is a Yankee. I have considered my giving notice a duty, and hope it my turn to good account. Yours most respectfully,

Geo. Edw. Wamplée

Capt. Goddard informs us that this letter describes, to a turn, the individual who attempted to run off Col. Lee's negroes; and it is more than probable that the Doctor is caught at last, and will be remanded to Virginia for trial there, for his known complicity with that affair. The negro woman who is now in Westminster jail with him is thought to be a slave owned by Clark Mills, the artist, who ran away from her master about a month since. The man is her husband, who was hired by his master (a gentleman of Prince George's county) to some person in Washington, and who disappeared about the same time she did.

*Evening Star, November 15, 1859, p. 3*

### **Dr. Wm. Boyd**

This agent of the underground railroad, whose arrest at Westminster, Md., for running off slaves has been chronicled in the Star, has not yet arrived in this city, although he reached Baltimore last night, and was expected here this morning. It is probable that some formalities have temporarily interfered to delay his being handed over to the authorities here by the State of Maryland. The mode of obtaining a prisoner for trial here, when arrested outside the District, is much more cumbrous than that of State upon another, through a Governor's requisition.

*The Evening Star, November 19, 1859, p. 3*

### **The Case of Boyd**

The witnesses against Dr. Boyd, who is confined in the jail here on a charge of running off slaves, have arrived in this city, three in number, from Westminster, Carroll county, Md., and the trial of the accused was to be held at the jail this afternoon.

*The Evening Star, November 21, 1859, p. 3*

### **Dr. Boyd, The Slave Abductor**

The final examination of William Boyd, who styles himself Dr. Boyd, charged with abducting slaves, the property of Mrs. Howell and Major Russell, both residents of the District of Columbia, came off at the jail at 1 o'clock Saturday afternoon. Captain Goddard, Chief of Police, presiding. The prisoner, who is a small, thin, sharp nosed, dyspeptic looking, sandy whiskered genius, say about 118 lbs. weight, in seedy snuff colored coat and grey nether garments, was released from the cell in which he is confined and brought into the office of the jailor, where the witnesses were examined in his presence, Capt. Carrington acting as his counsel.

Mrs. Howell stated that she lost her female servant on the night of the 16<sup>th</sup> of October last. It was the Saturday night prior to the night of the breaking out of the Harper's Ferry insurrection. The servant waited at the tea table that night at 7 o'clock, and at 8 o'clock, one hour afterwards, she had disappeared, and witness never saw or heard of her again until she learned of the Westminster officer that a woman answering to her description was in the jail there, when witness proceeded to Westminster and identified the woman as her slave. She had been living with witness some three years and was married to a man who is owned by Maj. Russell. Witness conversed with the man they called Dr. Boyd, in the Westminster jail, and he asked witness if the woman was her's; and when witness replied that she was, he responded that it would then "be a very hard case for him." This was all that Boyd said to witness. The woman's husband, though a slave of Maj. Russell's, has permission from his master to go where he pleases in the District, and to hire himself out where he pleases. He had a room in G street, near a wood-yard. Witness called at his room in searching for her servant, but found no trace of her there.

Mr. Wm. Delphey testified that he is a constable at New Windsor, which place is situated in Carroll county, Md., about seven miles from Westminster, and some fifteen miles from the Pennsylvania line. Witness arrested Dr. Boyd at this place while he was going in the direction of the Pennsylvania line. When witness stopped him he was driving a two-horse wagon, which looked like a huckster's covered wagon, and appeared suspicious. When arrested Boyd asked what he was arrested for, and witness replied that there had recently been pilfering committed in the neighborhood, and that he was suspected, and ordered him to get off the wagon and go into the magistrate's. By this time quite a crowd had collected, and some were examining the carriage, the oil cloth cover of which was securely buttoned down at the sides and behind; and some persons behind laid hold of the oil cloth to remove it. Boyd observing this cried out that if any man attempted to lay hands on his wagon he would blow his brains out. The excitement, which was growing more apparent in the crowd every moment, now came to a head when some one cried out from behind that there were negroes in the wagon. When it became known what the character of his cargo was, Boyd asked witness to step up to the seat of the carriage and he would tell him all about it. He then informed witness that the woman was a slave, and that the man was like a free man, having permission from his master to go about pretty much as he pleased. The negroes were taken out and Boyd taken to the magistrate's office. The wagon, besides being closely covered with oil cloth, had cloth curtains all round the inside which were nailed close down to the wood; and there was a space in the back part of the wagon where the negroes were concealed with a curtain drawn across in front of them; the curtain was of black cloth, and was so arranged that

when one looked in at the front the cloth appeared to be against the extreme back part of the wagon. When before the magistrate, he (Boyd) refused to give his name, until the commitment was being written out, when he replied, in answer to an interrogatory, that his name was Dr. Wm. Boyd. He said there were provisions in the wagon, and desired witness to get some of them out for him to eat; witness went across the street, to his own house, and got food for him. In the wagon witness found sacks of feed, bales of hay, food for persons, utensils, etc.; and Boyd wanted his horses well cared for with the feed in the wagon, which he said was enough to last them until something should turn up to release him from his embarrassment. Witness took the team to Westminster, and had the horses stabled there and the wagon taken care of. There was great excitement amongst the crowd all the time at the magistrate's office. Witness, before taking Boyd to the Westminster jail, told him to give up his weapons, if he had any, Boyd gave up to witness a dirk knife and an old double-barrel pistol. On one of the sacks of feed in the wagon was the name of A. Lee, feed merchant, Georgetown.

Mr. E.A. Atlee, a magistrate, testified that he was present at, and witnessed all the circumstances of, the arrest, which were in substance as stated by Mr. Delphey, whose testimony he corroborated.

Mr. J.B. Greenwood testified that he was engaged with a number of men in drawing heavy stone to construct a dam some few miles this side of New Windsor, and was attracted to Boyd and his wagon as they passed by, thinking there was something suspicious about the concern; this suspicion was increased by the conduct of Boyd, who appeared desirous to avoid observation, and went by hastily. Witness spoke of his suspicions to his companions, and finally witness sent a man ahead of Boyd to New Windsor to inform the officers, and to make all sue, followed behind the team all the way, arriving at New Windsor at the same time Boyd did, and witnessing his arrest. Witness was one of the first to discover the negroes concealed in the wagon. Witness was the ore suspicious of him this time from having twice before seen him pass by in a surreptitious manner. Witness remembers the last time that he passed that way before; he was so anxious to avoid observation that he drove his team hastily over a very rough and stony place some distance from where the men were at work, rather than come nearer where the road was good.

The evidence closed here, and the prisoner was finally committed to jail to answer a charge of abducting slaves, at the next term of the Criminal Court.

*The Evening Star, November 22, 1859, p. 3*

### **Honorably Dismissed**

Alfred Lee, the well known colored feed man, who was arrested on suspicion of complicity with Dr. Boyd in the running off of slaves, appeared at the time appointed for his hearing, and not a particle of evidence being exhibited against him, he was dismissed by Justice Donn.

*The Evening Star, January 13, 1859, p. 3*

### **Criminal Court**

Today – William Boyd, known s Dr. Boyd, was placed on trial on a charge of stealing slaves from their owners, for the purpose of conveying them away into a free State. The testimony of the Maryland officers, who caught Boyd near Westminster with the slaves in his wagon, was in substance the same as given before Justice Goddard at the jail at the time of his arrest. Mr. Carrington conducts the case on the part of the defendants.

*The Evening Star, January 14, 1859, p. 3*

### **Criminal Court**

Dr. Boyd – The trial of Dr. Wm. Boyd, for stealing negro slaves, which was pending when our report closed yesterday, was concluded and given to the jury, who returned a verdict of guilty as indicted. It may be proper to state that there were four several indictments against the Doctor, two for stealing slaves, and two for transporting them to a free State. The trial yesterday embraced the two indictments charging the larceny, and the verdict of guilty embraced both. The remaining cases are still to be tried. Mr. Carrington, for the defendant, put in a motion for a new trial of the cases investigated, and will argue his motion at a future day. Boyd was not sentenced therefore.

*The Evening Star, January 16, 1859, p. 3*

### **Criminal Court**

In the two cases of the United States agt. Wm. Boyd, for stealing slaves and conveying them out of the District of Columbia, tried on Saturday, the following instructions were prayed by the counsel for the defendant, and granted by the court to the jury, who nevertheless returned a verdict of guilty.

1<sup>st</sup>. If the jury believe from the whole evidence that the prisoner, Wm. Boyd, removed the negroes in question from the country of Washington, D.C., for the purpose of carrying them to the State of Pennsylvania, or to any other free State, or with a view to liberating said slaves, and not with the intent of converting them to his own use, or of making them his property, then, and in either case they should acquit.

2d. If the jury believe from the evidence that the said Boyd was on his way to Pennsylvania and overtook the said slaves mentioned in these indictments, on the road, and received them in his wagon, and concealed them there, in order to recover them to said State, then he is not guilty of stealing. This instruction was granted without remark.

3d. In order to commit the prisoner at the bar the jury should believe from the evidence that he took the negroes in question, in the county of Washington, District of Columbia, with the intention of converting them to his own use. This instruction was also granted without comment, as were the two following: If the jury believe from the evidence that the prisoner at the bar took possession of the negroes in question in the county of Washington, D.C., and carried them thence to New Windsor, Carroll county, State of Maryland, without the permission and against the will of their respective masters, still they should acquit, unless they further believe from said evidence beyond a reasonable doubt, that his intention in taking said negroes and carrying them from the said District as aforesaid was to convert them to his own use and make them his own property.

4<sup>th</sup>. If the jury believe from the evidence that the prisoner at the bar has proved a good character, they should consider that circumstance in connection with the other circumstances in the case, as a fact tending to show the intention with which he took possession of said slaves and carried them to New Windsor as aforesaid.

*The Evening Star, February 4, 1859, p. 3*

### **Criminal Court**

The Court met this morning, at 11 o'clock. Messrs. Carrington and Lloyd, counsel for Wm. Boyd, lately convicted of stealing slaves, appeared before Judge Crawford to argue a motion for a new trial of the cause. The principal grounds in the motion were alleged to be that the verdict which convicted Boyd was contrary to the evidence elicited at the trial; that it was contrary to law, and contrary to the instructions of the Court. The argument was opened by Mr. Lloyd, who was followed by Mr. Ould on the part of the United States, who was addressing the Court when our report closed

*The Evening Star, February 6, 1859, p. 3*

### **Criminal Court**

On Saturday, after our report closed, the argument of counsel in behalf of Wm. Boyd, convicted of stealing slaves, was concluded, and the Court reserved the matter for a few days' consideration before deciding upon it. Boyd, who was in Court during the argument, was then remanded to jail.

*The Evening Star, February 7, 1859, p. 3*

### **Criminal Court**

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The Court then gave its decision in the motion for a new trial of Wm. Boyd for stealing slaves, which was heard on Saturday last. The motion was overruled on the ground that the jury in their verdict found a state of facts with which the Courts could not interfere. Boyd was then placed at the bar and sentenced to hard labor in the penitentiary for seven years in each of the two cases which have been tried, making fourteen years in all. Two other cases charging the prisoner with conspiring with slaves yet remain on the docket against him.

**RG ?? , p. 265-266**

**Abraham Lincoln**

**President of the United States of America**

To all to whom these

Whereas it appears that on the sixth day of February 1860 one William Boyd was indicted and convicted in the Criminal Court of the District of Columbia on the charge of larceny and was by the said Court sentenced to be imprisoned in the penitentiary of said District for the term of seven years on each charge.

And whereas the attorney of the United States for the said District of Columbia has given it

*The Evening Star, June 10, 1865*

### **Desperate Riot**

**Brutal Assault upon Negroes by Soldiers!!**

**Houses Quitted and Property Destroyed!!**

**Dr. Wm. Boyd Assailed and Terribly Injured by the Rioters!!**

Between 11 and 12 o'clock today a desperate disturbance occurred in the shape of a murderous assault by a number of soldiers said to belong to one of the brigades of the 20th corps upon a number of inoffending colored people of the Seventh Ward. From the best data that can be obtained, it appears that this brigade were this morning on the east side of the canal between the bridges of Maryland and Virginia avenues, awaiting a conveyance train en route to Louisville, and that during the morning a number of the men visited the disreputable houses and tippling houses (occupied by white and colored) in Pear Tree Alley and adjacent places, where they indiscriminately attacked the inmates, driving them from their houses, breaking up their furniture, and helping themselves to liquor and edibles. The crowd numbered from 150 to 200 and they commenced to knock in the doors of houses as they proceeded in their riotous course, some twenty or more having provided themselves with axes, breaking up the furniture, etc.

In Chinch Row, situated in the square between 1st and 2d streets and Virginia avenue and D street, every door and window was broken, the terrified inmates barely getting away in time to save themselves. The rioters showed particular animosity against the colored people, and the sight of one of

them was the signal for a rush at him, and when unfortunately any fell into their hands they did not escape without being robbed of what money they had, and they were besides badly beaten in almost every case. This crowd went through 2d and 3d streets, taking in their range the alleys near by, beating all colored folks they met and helping themselves to what they wished in the houses, particularly those occupied by people of color, who, at last having borne with their treatment until forbearances ceased to be a virtue, they resisted, when a fight occurred, the soldiers using revolvers as also did the colored people in self defense, for a time the reports being so quick that they sounded as if a battle was going on.

The soldiers stopped at the saloon of Ben Bowzer, colored, at the corner of Virginia avenue and 1st street, and while some of them robbed him of his watch and money and beat him, others helped themselves to his ice cream, cakes, etc. Here it was that the biggest fight took place, a number of the negroes going to the protection of Bowzer, and bricks, stones and balls flew thick and fast.

Dr. Wm. Boyd, living near, went out with a revolver in hand, and commanded peace, when a soldier struck him in the face with a brick, fracturing the cheek and jaw bones in a terrible manner, and also destroying the sight of one eye. Others of the soldiers made a rush for him, and one was in the act of cleaving his head open with an ax, when a number of women stepped in and succeeded in persuading them to spare his life.

The soldiers and the colored people fought for some time in F street, first one party being victorious and then the other until the guard stationed on 4 1/2 street (Hancock's 5th regiment) made their appearance, and soon restored order.

Sergeant Hepburn, of the tenth precinct police, was on the ground promptly with officers Weeden, Walsh, and others, but they were unable, outnumbered as they were, to do anything effectual to restore peace.

A messenger was at once dispatched to Col. Ingraham, Provost Marshal, who promptly sent a guard to the scene of the disturbance, and set about arresting the rioters.

It is impossible at this time to tell how many and who have been injured besides Dr. Boyd.

It is said that one of the soldiers had his bowels ripped open and that two or three others were shot. It is also reported that 7 or 8 colored people who were attacked in their houses were very badly hurt.

Dr. C.M. McCoy was in attendance on Dr. Boyd, and expresses the opinion that it may be necessary to remove most of the bones on the injured side of the face.

*The Evening Star, June 12, 1865*

### **The Riot on Saturday**

On Saturday afternoon, the force of Veteran Reserves, under the command of Captain Bush, which was dispatched to the scene of the riotous proceedings in the Seventh Ward by Col. Ingraham, Provost Marshal, at the request of Superintendent Richards, aided by a detachment of Hancock's 5th regiment and the police of the tenth precinct, in charge of Sergeant Hepburn, succeeded in restoring quiet. A strong guard was posted throughout that section of the city, and all soldiers without passes or other authority were arrested or taken to their camps. The place, when the guard arrived, was filled with loitering gangs of soldiers, some of whom gave the guards to understand that they intended to clean and burn out Pear Tree, Fighting and other noted alleys in that locality that night, but the transportation being ready for them before night, they left, and thus any renewal of the disturbance was avoided.

Capt. Bush, with the reserves, and Sergt. Hepburn, with the police, while taking measures to prevent a repetition of the disorderly scenes, made an investigation as to the origin of the affair in the morning. It is alleged that it originated from some of the prostitutes of that locality blackguarding some soldiers, who becoming enraged attacked the houses, drove out the inmates and smashed up the furniture. The disturbance would have perhaps stopped here, but for the instigation of some of the

notorious "bummers," of Georgia renown, who joined the soldiers and pointed out to them the houses of the colored people as objects to be attacked, and forthwith all such were broken into and pillaged. The names of some of these parties are in the possession of the police and the officers will bring them up to answer for their rascally deeds.

During the afternoon officers Weeden, Sessford, James, Barker, and Wallingsford, aided by the military, arrested the following persons and took them to the station where yesterday Justice Roswell disposed of their cases: Mary Jane Taylor, Till Light, Cornelia Tyler, Caroline Snyder, and Julia Fleet, keepers of the notorious ranches; jail for a hearing. Margaret Kennedy, Sarah Stephens, Kate Light, Maria Woodbeck, Mary Whitaker, Ellen Geissett, Mary J. Carr, Susan Richardson, Sarah Brown, Marry Stephens, drunk and disorderly; fined \$10.90 each. Ellen Kavanaugh, Jenny Lee, Margaret Russell, Nelly Kittier, and Jane Clark, do.; fined \$6.90 each. While at the station Maria Woodbeck required the services of a mid-wife, and during the night she gave birth to a stillborn child.

Dr. Boyd, whose injuries we noticed on Saturday, lies in a critical condition, there being but little hopes of his recovery, and yesterday, anticipating his death, he took an affecting leave of his family. There are none others very seriously injured in the row, although a number were bruised by stones etc.

*The Evening Star, February 14, 1884*

### **Death of an Anti-Slavery Crusader**

#### **Wm. Boyd, Former Abolitionist and Worker of the Underground Railroad, Dead**

William Boyd, well-known as an earnest anti-slavery man, and before the war one of the most active workers of the underground railroad, by which slaves were secretly taken to the free states, died yesterday at his residence in South Washington, aged 64 years. Dr. Boyd, as he called himself, was a native of the north of Ireland, and was by trade a tailor. He came here over thirty five years ago, and although at that time there was scarcely a thought of freeing the slaves he boldly proclaimed his sentiments, and soon became known as such a friend to the colored race that he would take any chances to aid a slave to obtain his freedom. Holding extreme views as an atheist, and, being radical in the temperance cause as well, he associated himself, about 1856 or 1857, with Wollford Stone, Amon Duvall, Wm. Biddleman, B. Chambers, sr., W.W. Levy, W.P. Wood and W.A. Bargy (all of whom are now dead excepting Messrs. Levy and Wood), and formed a club or association, one of the objects of which was to advance the cause of the freedom of slaves. They met for a long time in Temperance hall (now Marini's), on E street, but they were not united in sentiment, some of them--Chambers, Levy and Wood--being opposed to extreme measures and rather in favor of preventing the spread of slavery than destroying it. Dr. Boyd advocated running off the slaves one by one, and determined to engage in the work himself, and when a runaway arrived he generally was secreted by Boyd till he got his wagon--one with a false bottom, in which the runaway could hide--ready, and then he would start, apparently to buy up country produce, and would make his way to the Pennsylvania line. Other members of the organization knew of this work, and when Dr. Boyd was serving a sentence for kidnapping they aided his family. The inauguration of Mr. Lincoln found Dr. Boyd imprisoned in the penitentiary, and a strong petition having been presented to the President, he was pardoned. His friends had also, through the influence of Hon. Owen Lovejoy, secured the employment of Dr. Boyd's son as a page in the House of Representatives to enable him to support the family--a mother and daughter, besides the father and son. During the John Brown agitation the friends of Brown frequently stopped with Boyd, but they advised against Brown's scheme. When Brown was holding Harper's Ferry one of his men, who had left him there, came here and was kept close by Boyd for some days, and the latter calling Senator Sumner's attention to the fact, the Senator furnished the means for his escape.

During the war Boyd was, as might be expected, an earnest Union man, and was active in organizing the republican ward clubs, particularly the 7th ward club, and under the Bowen regime he served one term in the board of common council. Of late years he has made a business selling herb medicines and dealing in produce. Dr. Boyd, soon after the war, was pointed out to some soldiers as a negro worshiper, and he was badly beaten by them, losing one eye, and he never fully recovered. He was struck with paralysis about ten months ago, since which time he has been more or less an invalid.

*One of the First Underground Railroad Exploits of Boyd was in 1848.*

Slaves belonging to citizens of this District and members of Congress had been mysteriously missed for sometime, and considerable uneasiness was felt and people were on the alert. Boyd had been suspected, and on this occasion, Capt. Goddard, of the auxilliary guard, was out in the county looking for the underground railway. The slaves had been missed, and quite a commotion had been raised throughout the city. Capt. Gooddard and his posse got on the trail of them in Montgomery county, Md., and came up with Boyd's carriage in the night, and ordered a halt, Boyd giving no attention to the order except to cut his horses with the whip, putting them in a lively trot. Taking advantage of a steep hill, Capt. Goddard took a fence-rail from the side of the road and ran it through the spokes of the hind wheels of the vehicle and locked them. Possession was at once taken of the team and its contents, and all were brought back to the tavern corner 8th and D streets. The slaves were returned to their owners, and Boyd was sent to the penitentiary. The vehicle he used had been built for the purpose--a covered wagon, built very strong for country travel, and made bullet-proof up as high as a person's head would reach while seated. This carriage was an object of much curiosity for some time.

*The Evening Star, February 15, 1884*

**The Funeral of Dr. Boyd**

**The** funeral of the late William Boyd took place at his residence on Virginia avenue at two o'clock this afternoon. The deceased was not a believer in christianity, and, in accordance with his wishes, the services of a clergyman were dispensed with. Dr. Smith, a spiritualist and friend of the deceased, made a short address to the persons assembled, and at its close the body was removed to its last resting place.