

= Isaac Parsons (American military officer) =

Isaac Parsons (January 7 , 1814 ? April 24 , 1862) was an American planter , politician , and military officer in the U.S. state of Virginia (now West Virginia) . Parsons served as a justice of the peace of Hampshire County 's District 3 from 1852 to 1853 . He later served as a member of the Virginia House of Delegates representing Hampshire County from 1854 until 1857 . Parsons was the grandson of Virginia House Delegate Isaac Parsons (1752 ? 1796) , the great @-@ grandson of Colonial Virginia military officer William Foreman (died 1777) , and the grandfather of First Lady of West Virginia , Edna Brady Cornwell (1868 ? 1958) .

Parsons inherited his family 's Wappocomo plantation north of Romney . In 1855 , fugitive slave Jacob Green escaped from Parsons ' Wappocomo plantation to Pennsylvania along with several other slaves . Parsons and his nephews went north to pursue the escapees , resulting in the arrest of his nephew , James " Zip " Parsons III (1831 ? 1893) . The arrest and trial of Parsons ' nephew caused a dispute between the states of Virginia and Pennsylvania over the latter 's refusal to execute the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 . Following the trial , a dispute ensued between Parsons and Charles James Faulkner over legal fees in 1857 . At the time of the dispute , Faulkner was a member of the United States House of Representatives from Virginia 's 8th congressional district . Parsons declared that Faulkner had originally offered his legal services at no cost during his nephew 's trial .

Following the onset of the American Civil War , Parsons served on Hampshire County 's " committee for safety " . Parsons received permission to raise an independent company of mounted infantry to provide defense along the border . He served as a military officer in the Huckleberry Rangers and Company K of the 13th Virginia Volunteer Infantry Regiment in the Confederate States Army . Parsons died of natural causes following a skirmish with Union Army cavalry at Grassy Lick Run in 1862 .

= = Early life and family = =

Isaac Parsons was born on January 7 , 1814 , in Hampshire County , West Virginia (now West Virginia) . He was the third son of James Gregg Parsons (1773 ? 1847) and his wife Mary Catherine Casey Parsons (1773 ? 1846) .

The Parsons family was a prominent family whose ancestors had arrived to the Thirteen Colonies from England in 1635 , and relocated to Hampshire County around 1740 . Parsons ' paternal grandfather , of which he is a likely namesake , Isaac Parsons (1752 ? 1796) served as a member of the Virginia House of Delegates representing Hampshire County from 1789 until his death in 1796 ; and operated a public ferry across the South Branch Potomac River . Through his mother , Parsons was a great @-@ grandson of Colonial Virginia military officer William Foreman (died 1777) . Parsons was raised through childhood to adulthood on his family 's Wappocomo plantation north of Romney .

= = Wappocomo = =

Following the death of James Gregg Parsons on January 25 , 1847 , his last will and testament dated November 7 , 1846 , and probated February 22 , 1847 , devised Lot Number 21 including Wappocomo (referred to in the will as the " Casey tract ") to his son Colonel Isaac Parsons (1814 ? 1862) . Parsons ' brother James " Big Jim " Parsons , Jr . (1798 ? 1858) , inherited the Collins tract (Lot Number 20) and his other brother David C. Parsons (1803 ? 1860) inherited Lot Number 13 . Parsons and his brothers also inherited the nearby " Jake Sugar Rum tract , the McGuire tract , and five town lots in Romney " . Parsons eventually acquired Wappocomo plantation outright , and in 1861 he undertook a two @-@ story stone expansion to the main house at Wappocomo . The ballroom in the upper story of this addition served as the scene of many events and parties .

= = Political career = =

Following the ratification of the 1851 Constitution of Virginia , Parsons was elected to serve as a justice of the peace for Hampshire County 's District 3 in 1852 and 1853 . Parsons served in this office alongside David Gibson , T. M. Davis , and Joseph C. Pancake .

Parsons served as a member of the Virginia House of Delegates representing Hampshire County from 1854 until 1857 . Parsons represented Hampshire County , which was a multi @-@ member electoral district , in the following sessions of the Virginia House of Delegates : the 1854 session alongside Jesse Lupton ; the 1855 session alongside Jesse Lupton ; the 1856 session alongside Asa Hiatt ; and the 1857 session alongside Asa Hiatt . Prior to the American Civil War , Parsons was an ardent proponent of Virginia 's secession and the passage of an Ordinance of Secession .

= = Jacob Green affair = =

In August 1855 , Jacob Green , a slave owned by Parsons , escaped from Wappocomo farm with four other slaves from neighboring plantations . In October of that year , Green returned to Parsons ' plantation in Romney , and persuaded four or five slaves from neighboring farms owned by Parsons family relatives to escape with him to Pennsylvania .

A party of eight to ten men , including Parsons and two of his nephews , James " Zip " Parsons III (1831 ? 1893) and a Mr. Stump , went north in pursuit of the escapees . In the course of the pursuit , they captured two of Stump 's escaped slaves , who were sent back to Hampshire County . James Parsons III was the son of Parsons ' brother James " Big Jim " Parsons , Jr . (1798 ? 1858) , and his wife Elizabeth Miller Parsons . With information obtained from the two recaptured slaves , Parsons went to Johnstown , James Parsons III to Hollidaysburg , and Stump to Altoona , where they hoped to intercept Green as he headed west on the Allegheny Portage Railroad and Main Line Canal toward Pittsburgh . James Parsons III intercepted Green at Hollidaysburg , but local abolitionists thwarted his attempt to capture Green , and he was arrested and arraigned for kidnapping .

Upon learning of the arrest of his nephew , Parsons sought the assistance of Charles James Faulkner , a prominent Martinsburg lawyer and United States House Representative from Virginia 's 8th congressional district , and of James Murray Mason , a United States Senator from Virginia . Faulkner and Mason both offered their legal services for James Parsons III 's defense . The Virginia General Assembly pledged its support to Parsons and to Virginia 's slaveowners in defending their constitutional rights and to protect them from prosecution . Virginia Governor Henry A. Wise appointed John Randolph Tucker to attend Parsons ' trial as a " special commissioner " of Virginia . The dispute between Virginia and Pennsylvania escalated , and on January 31 , 1856 , an article published in the New York Herald read " Threatened Civil War between Virginia and Pennsylvania " .

Parsons , Faulkner , and Tucker traveled to Hollidaysburg for James Parsons III 's trial . Faulkner provided for Parsons ' legal defense , leading to his acquittal as having acted legally under the provisions of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 .

In September 1856 , Faulkner billed Parsons \$ 150 for his legal services . Parsons disputed the charge . In a series of articles in the Virginia Argus and Hampshire Advertiser , he declared that Faulkner had originally offered his services at no cost ; that he had been lauded publicly for his generosity in doing so without ever denying that he had been working pro bono ; and that he was practicing " duplicity and deception " in trying to win a reputation in his district through " specious acts of munificence " .

James Parsons III and his brother William Miller Parsons (born 1835) were later proprietors of the Virginia Argus and Hampshire Advertiser . In a series of articles published in the May 14 and May 21 , 1857 , issues of the Virginia Argus , Parsons chronicled the 1855 arrest of his nephew for attempting to capture his fugitive slave and the resulting dispute between the Parsons family and Faulkner over legal fees in 1857 .

= = American Civil War = =

Following the onset of the American Civil War , Parsons began serving on Hampshire County 's " committee for safety " . Parsons served on the " committee for safety " alongside James D. Armstrong , John M. Pancake , David Gibson , Dr. S. R. Lupton , John C. Heiskell , J. W. Marshall , W. A. Vance , R. K. Sheetz , Angus William McDonald , James Sheetz , John T. Pierce , James W. Albin , Charles Blue , Robert Hook , R. B. Sherrard , G. W. Gore , George William Washington , and John Johnson . The " committee for safety " continued to meet until May 29 , 1861 . Parsons , Pancake , and Armstrong were permitted by the Hampshire County Court to execute bonds for and on behalf of the county to raise money to fund " war purposes " .

On May 18 , 1861 , the Hampshire Guards and the Frontier Riflemen convened in front of the Hampshire County Courthouse in Romney before departing to fight in defense of the Confederate States of America . Parsons and a dozen of his men led the wagon train conveying these volunteers to Green Spring on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad mainline , where Parsons and the volunteers departed by train to Harpers Ferry .

Parsons traveled to Richmond , where he received permission to raise an independent company of mounted infantry to provide defense along the border . Parsons set about enrolling volunteers , and within a short period of time , he enlisted approximately 30 men . Following its organization , the company became known as the Huckleberry Rangers of the Confederate States Army 's 13th Virginia Volunteer Infantry Regiment . The following personnel were elected to serve in leadership positions within the company : Parsons as its captain in command ; John Blue , first lieutenant ; and his son Isaac Parsons , Jr . , second lieutenant . Parsons and his company utilized flintlock muskets , which they had retrieved from the loft of the courthouse , and additional sabres and flintlock horse pistols which had last been used during the American Revolutionary War . Parsons provided Lt. Blue with a Minié ball rifle reportedly seized from John Brown at Harpers Ferry .

Parsons again traveled to Richmond with a supply of cattle , and returned to his company 's camp on the North River in Hampshire County around November 15 , 1861 . Upon his return , Parsons was anxious to learn about the condition of his family and property at Wappocomo and needed an additional change of clothing and a blanket . Accompanied by Lt. Blue and Adam Parrish , Parsons traveled west along the Northwestern Turnpike to around Pleasant Dale , where they set about traversing a series of roads and paths until nighttime when they reached Sugar Hollow 2 miles (3 @. @ 2 km) north of Romney . Parsons stayed behind in the hollow while Lt. Blue and Parrish started out for Wappocomo to retrieve a set of Parsons ' clothes . Lt. Blue and Parrish approached Wappocomo with the knowledge that Union Army forces kept a guard at the main house there day and night . Lt. Blue circled around to the rear of the mansion at Wappocomo and knocked on the window of his uncle , Garrett W. Blue , who was residing with Parsons ' family . Blue warned his nephew about the Union Army soldiers possibly stationed on the home 's front porch , and he subsequently fetched Parsons ' daughter Kate , who provided Lt. Blue with a parcel for her father .

Lt. Blue and Parrish returned to Sugar Hollow where Parsons was awaiting them , and Parsons set about locating pine from which to make torches to light their way out of the hollow . Parsons carried with him a small hatchet , and he began splitting pine in the darkness to fashion a torch . Parsons accidentally struck himself in the knee with his hatchet , and Lt. Blue applied a handkerchief to the wound to stop its bleeding . The three men traveled through the dark and rain to the nearby home of Frank Carter , where they ate and dried their clothes by the fire . The following morning , the three men mounted their horses and traveled to Rev. Harris ' home , where Parsons and Lt. Blue parted with Parrish . Parsons and Lt. Blue continued east over Town Hill and reached George Thompson 's residence on the Little Cacapon River , which had risen due to the previous night 's rainfall . Parsons and Lt. Blue remained with Thompson for two days until the Little Cacapon River subsided , and traveled to Blue 's Gap , where they set up camp . There , Lt. Blue received orders from Col. Angus William McDonald to carry out an expedition to Romney for General Stonewall Jackson to ascertain the number of Union Army infantry , cavalry , and artillery present in and around the town . Lt. Blue departed for Romney with Parsons ' son Isaac Parsons , Jr . , and W. V. Parsons accompanying him . Throughout 1861 , Parsons " gratuitously " provided Confederate soldiers with food at his table and horses from his stables at his Wappocomo plantation .

In 1862 , Parsons had part of his family moved from their Wappocomo residence to Shull 's Gap on the Lost River in Hardy County . Romney physician Dr. Lupton and his wife were also residing with Parsons ' family at Shull 's Gap . In March , Union Army forces were no closer to Romney than Green Spring , which allowed Parsons and his wife Susan Blue Parsons to return to their home at Wappocomo with their younger children . Parsons ' eldest daughters Kate and Sallie stayed behind with his son Isaac Parsons , Jr . , who had arrived from New Market , and a Mrs. Dawson and Dr. Lupton and his wife . On March 24 , 1862 , Parsons ' eldest child and daughter Kate died . Despite recovering from illness , Lt. Blue carried the news of Kate 's death and met Parsons halfway to Romney . Parsons instructed Lt. Blue to proceed on to Romney where he delivered the news to his wife Susan . The Parsons no longer felt safe in Romney , and returned to Shull 's Gap . Parsons and Lt. Blue traveled to Harrisonburg , where they remained for a few days , and decided to return to Hampshire County . Lt. Blue traveled to his family 's residence 4 miles (6 @. @ 4 km) north of Romney , and Parsons to his residence at Wappocomo plantation . Lt. Blue was subsequently captured by Union Army forces and held at the Wirgman Building , from which he later escaped .

Parsons , his sons , and other Confederate soldiers encountered Union Army cavalry along Grassy Lick Run south of Romney on April 24 , 1862 . Parsons carried a double @-@ barreled shotgun , and proceeded to fire his weapon at the Union forces at close range . As Parsons made his escape from the Union Army forces , he saw his son fired upon as he ran across the road , and supposed he had been killed . He traveled to the home of a Mr. Hott , and told him of the news of his son 's possible death . Parsons became pale and was helped down from his horse by Hott 's sons , so he would not fall . According to Hott , Parsons died moments later .

Parsons ' body was transferred to Wappocomo for burial in the Parsons family burial ground . Union Army forces assumed Parsons had died in the skirmish along Grassy Lick Run , and claimed the right to examine his body to search for wounds which would serve as sufficient cause to destroy his property . Professor Nelson , a Presbyterian minister and instructor at the Potomac Academy , was a friend of the Parsons family , and denied Union Army officials access to Parsons ' body . As a compromise , Professor Nelson allowed Union Army officers to be present in the room while Parsons ' corpse was examined . No wounds were found on Parsons ' body , and his remains were interred in the Parsons family burial ground at Indian Mound Cemetery . On April 26 , 1862 , acting Quartermaster Lt. F. H. Morse completed the death certificate for Parsons although the circumstances of Parsons ' death were not recorded . Captain William Firey of Company B , 1st Maryland Cavalry and Captain C. W. Shearer of Company B , 3rd Maryland Infantry , Potomac Home Brigade were present for the examination of Parsons ' body and attested there was " no evidence of gun @-@ shot wounds or any other violence on him " . Witnesses present at the examination were William Vance and George William Washington .

Parsons drafted his own will and testament , and it was proved without issue , and later cited in the Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia case French v. French (1877) . His wife Susan Blue Parsons died on October 2 , 1889 and was interred alongside Parsons at Indian Mound Cemetery . In her Parsons ' Family History and Record (1913) , Parsons ' relative and family genealogist Virginia Parsons MacCabe said of Parsons : " he was broad minded and conservative , gifted with good common sense and judgment , his honesty and integrity was unimpeachable . "

= = Personal life = =

Parsons married Susan Blue (1817 ? 1889) on May 18 , 1836 . Susan Blue was born in Hampshire County on January 9 , 1817 , and was the daughter of Uriah Blue , Jr . , and his wife M. Elizabeth Donaldson Blue . Parsons and his wife Susan had nine children consisting of four sons and five daughters . Through his daughter Sarah Louise , Parsons was the grandfather of Edna Brady Cornwell (1868 ? 1960) , who served as First Lady of West Virginia from 1917 until 1921 during her husband John J. Cornwell 's (1867 ? 1953) term as Governor of West Virginia .