

“And ever the stars look down, On the stars below in Fredericktown.”

Over the past 145 years, several local heritage and tourism-minded citizens have been responsible for promoting the life and legend of Barbara Fritchie –former Frederick resident and nationally known heroine of the American Civil War. However, many are not aware of the fact that thanks should also be given to an equally legendary industrialist for introducing countless Midwest residents, and travelers alike, to the famed flag-waving “Dame.”

The Dearborn Inn, located in Dearborn, Michigan, was built in 1931 by Henry Ford to serve passengers arriving and departing from the automobile pioneer’s aptly named Ford Airport. Sitting directly across the street from the aviation hub, Ford’s 179-room Dearborn Inn was the first country’s first “airport hotel.” In 1937 the Colonial-themed Inn’s accommodations were expanded to include guest cottages that were replicas of homes of noted Americans. These five dwellings were arranged in a village-like setting behind the main hotel. Today, the faux hamlet still contains these buildings, revolutionary statesmen Patrick Henry and Oliver Wolcott, and the star of John Greenleaf Whittier’s poem –Barbara Fritchie.

The Dearborn Inn and adjacent guest replica homes reflect Henry Ford’s admiration for American history.¹ His ideal expanded to include the reconstruction and acquisition of several other important “heritage” buildings to form nearby Greenfield Village, part of the larger Henry Ford Museum and touted as the largest indoor-outdoor collection of our nation’s history.

Today, the Dearborn Inn with its “colonial village” is listed on both state and national historic home registers, while being managed by the Marriott Corporation. Located in close proximity to the Henry Ford Museum, the Inn not only offers a more traditional hotel experience, but for \$200+/night, one can still stay in the Barbara Fritchie house.

Hotel guests and other visitors to this unique Michigan attraction have the chance to learn the romantic tale of Ms. Fritchie and her dramatic defiance of September 1862. The hotel’s brochure offers a short biography and picture of Dame Fritchie, while guests have the opportunity for more interpretation through reading the 30-stanza poem written by legendary New England poet, and abolitionist, John Greenleaf Whittier. This is quite helpful because to most of Dearborn tourists, particularly younger generations, Barbara Fritchie is certainly not a known quantity. But then again, how many of us can rattle off the many accomplishments of Oliver Wolcott?

Unfortunately, there are many residents here in Frederick City and Frederick County that are just as clueless when it comes to Barbara Fritchie and the poem that bears her name. Many mistakenly believe her claim to fame is serving as the one-time proprietor of a nostalgic, diner-style restaurant, west of town on US route 40...the one with the candy cane out front. Those who do know Barbara’s story and can recite portions of the poem, are pleasantly surprised to learn of the inclusion of Barbara Fritchie among the legends of the nation at the “Henry Ford Museum,” not to mention the fact that there is a replica of her house ten miles west of Detroit, Michigan.

This particular structure in the “Wolverine State” came just ten years after the first replica Barbara Fritchie house was built in downtown Frederick on West Patrick

Street, along Carroll Creek. Thanks to private investment and ownership over the last 80+ years, Frederick is extremely fortunate to have had a designated physical location to recount the life and times of a woman who became a national icon and household name just months after her death in December, 1862 at age 96. The Barbara Fritchie House and Museum continues to introduce the fascinating character and her beautiful poem to new generations of Americans.

Dame Fritchie

Barbara Fritchie's life spanned an amazing time in our country's history, including three major conflicts on American soil: the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812 and the American Civil War. Barbara is reported to have come into contact with some of the leading characters associated with each of these conflicts: George Washington, Francis Scott Key and Stonewall Jackson (or at least Union Gen. Jesse Reno). What amazing times she witnessed, as transportation means grew with the construction of the National Pike, B&O Railroad and C&O Canal. Technology and manufacturing improved as well. She certainly witnessed as much, if not more, over her lifetime than neighbor Jacob Engelbrecht, it's just a shame she didn't write any of it down in a diary.

Born Barbara Hauer in 1766, she would move with her family to Frederick from her native Lancaster. Her own life of 96 years was quite humble and frugal, typical of a former Pennsylvania German of the period. Supposed affiliations with "the father of our country" and the author of the National Anthem did wonders in showing her patriotism and loyalty, both in life and death. And most notably, Barbara was a noble challenger to the most feared member of the CSA.² Interactions with American greatness helped combat years of local aspersions, disgrace and controversy attached to her married surname of Fritchie. Barbara's father in law, Caspar Fritchie, was executed in 1781 as one of seven men found guilty of a Tory Conspiracy plot in Frederick. Three were hanged.³

While the "sands of time" did much to distance Barbara from the past wrongdoing of her father-in law, she was also doing a great job outliving all those that could remember the ugly family incident of the Revolutionary period. Ironically, the Fritchie name, would again find itself in question all over again, just a short time after her death.

The controversy surrounding Whittier's immortal "Ballad of Barbara Fritchie" has been around since the poem first appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly Magazine* in October 1863. Support and criticism for Whittier's masterpiece has been oft published and equally well justified. The actual chain of events that serve as the basis for the poem have been debated by historians, Frederick citizens, Fritchie relatives, clergymen, literary critics and Civil War veterans including former Confederate Gen. Jubal Early.

All in all, the most interesting aspect of the entire legend is the worldwide fame and popularity that the poem enjoyed, both at the time of its writing and well into the first half of the twentieth century. The other major intrigue comes with an exploration into Whittier's motive(s) in writing the classic "David and Goliath" tale set against the backdrop of the "War Between the States."⁴ Interesting questions have arisen over the years. Was the ballad written in the name of abolition, perhaps to help bolster enlistments and/or re-enlistments in northern states at a time when many Union men were losing enthusiasm in the ideal of preserving the entire Union? What was the effect on

inspiring patriotism among Union leaning citizens both during the civil war period and a century afterwards?

This “flag centered” poem starring a Frederick resident created a patriotic fervor that rivaled a poem written by another one-time Frederick resident nearly fifty years earlier. Entitled “The Defense of Fort McHenry,” Francis Scott Key’s ode to the stars and stripes eventually became the National Anthem in 1931 by an Act of Congress. The difference between the two works is that Francis Scott Key was immortalized thanks to his poem, while Whittier’s “Ballad of Barbara Fritchie” immortalized the city of Frederick as much as it did Barbara. In either case, her (either Fredericktown’s or Fritchie’s) legendary “defense of the flag” and firm stand against the Confederate cause was captured for posterity through Whittier’s pen. The clustered spires became known far and wide, and put the fair town on the proverbial map so to speak, thus securing Frederick’s standing as a bonafide tourist town.⁵ But who thought about heritage tourism while in the midst of the war, the immediate focus of readers was on a departed hero. The majority of new visitors to Fredericktown in late 1863 and 64 came by hospital ambulance and others less fortunate by casket.

As Frederick would become the chief benefactor of the poem, Whittier had created for himself a “double edged sword.” With both the monetary success and the acclaim the poem had won, “the Ballad of Barbara Fritchie” would clearly become the New England poet’s Achilles heel and a target for harsh criticism.⁶ Fall, 1863 saw the poem being printed in newspapers throughout the north. The neigh-sayers would soon follow as letters to editors contested the authenticity of the events depicted in the prized work.

Whittier was challenged to reveal his sources and plenty of characters seem to have been involved in the process, foremost of all, popular American novelist Mrs. E.D.E.N. Southworth, the Superintendent of Army nurses, Dorothea Dix and a Georgetown resident named Valerius Ramsburg, who was a grandnephew of Barbara Fritchie.⁷

Perhaps if Whittier had not taken a “literal” approach, he could have said that Barbara Fritchie was simply the personification of Fredericktown and her residents and their steadfast loyalty to the Union cause. And with this line of thinking, who better to represent the ferocity and terror of the Rebel Army than Gen. Thomas Jonathan “Stonewall” Jackson? Instead, Whittier contended that the poem was based on factual events that had been relayed to him. In a letter to the editor, which appeared in the *Frederick Daily News* edition of August 29th, 1912, Dr. Cyrus Cort of Overlea (Maryland) said that Whittier should have claimed that he had taken poetic justice with the “Ballad of Barbara Fritchie.” Cort lectured in his letter: “An historian who confines himself to a bare recital of naked fact, without allowing any room for the play of a vivid imagination, will produce dull and uninteresting narrative. The case is still worse with a poet.”

Several letters first appearing in Baltimore and Washington papers were often reprinted in other major cities. One such publication was the New York Times, and it is very interesting to see how a mix of local New York residents took it upon themselves to separate fact and fiction through letters written to the paper’s editor. With this paper alone, one can find nearly forty “Fritchie-inspired” pieces dating from 1869 –1934. Articles and heightened interest in Ms. Fritchie appeared in conjunction with the

demolition of the original Fritchie house (1869); the death of Whittier (1892); Clyde Fitch's play *Barbara Frietchie* (1899); the building of a Fritchie Memorial/Monument in Frederick (1913); and the opening of the Fritchie replica house/shrine in Frederick (1927).

From a literary point of view, the ballad is still considered to be one of the finest examples of American prose ever written. This opinion was certainly held by former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill. On May 17, 1943, Mr. Churchill implored President Franklin Delano Roosevelt to honor him with a stop at Frederick's Barbara Fritchie House. The party was traveling back to Washington DC after a stay at the presidential retreat Shangri La (later named Camp David). In front of the replica home and museum, Churchill dazzled his entourage with a complete recitation of all 30 couplets of Whittier's poem. 8 Churchill would recite the poem verbatim to Harry Truman a few years later on a train en route to Missouri. This was quite a feat as most people are lucky just to remember the opening two couplets:

*Up from the meadows rich with corn,
Clear in the cool September morn,*

*The clustered spires of Frederick stand,
Green-walled by the hills of Maryland.*

Of course, the most popular line within the poem is Barbara's supposed verbal contribution:

*"Shoot if you must this old gray head,
But spare your country's flag," she said.*

In the early 1960's, nearly one hundred years after the September 1862 confrontation, this latter quote was still relevant in popular culture, as it was spoken on national television by Bullwinkle J. Moose of the *Rocky and Bullwinkle* cartoon program. In a parody of the famed Fritchie event, Bullwinkle played the role of Dame Fritchie, while his antagonist, Boris Badenov, made a fitting Stonewall Jackson. 9

Having been familiar with the poem, legend and life of Barbara Fritchie for quite some time, I recently became strangely interested with the last lines that Whittier penned in his final stanza of the poem:

*"And ever the stars look down,
on the stars below in Fredericktown."*

Whether it was purely a coincidence or by design, I'd like to bring attention to the poet's utilization of the word "stars." The dictionary has multiple meanings for this word. Whittier of course was referring to the night sky's celestial bodies in the stanza's top line. However the second "stars" alludes to the meaning we would apply to outstanding theatrical performers and the like. However, why did Whittier use the plural *stars* instead of the singular *star*? Barbara was the sole hero of Fredericktown wasn't

she? ...the only civilian brave enough to stand up to the enemy? Was Whittier trying to tell us that there was more than one “star” deserving of praise and gratitude from above?

Many historians believe that Barbara Fritchie is the embodiment of multiple individuals who displayed bravery on behalf of the Union during the Invasion of 1862. With her subsequent death and the sympathy (and outrage) to be gained from the general public, Whittier’s best “David” would come in the form of a feeble, kind-hearted woman of 95...not to mention one that could not refute the event from actually happening, or have direct heirs that would be affected by the posthumous “stardom” of a deceased parent.

Thanks to aged newspaper accounts, some first hand, three other ladies of Fredericktown and County appear to rival Ms. Fritchie in displaying unique acts of patriotism during the Confederate invasion of Maryland of September, 1862. The demonstrations of each of the three individuals could possibly justify Whittier’s plural use of *star* in the final line of his poem.

None of these women would receive international fame or a lasting legacy...nor do any of their names appear in Dearborn, Michigan. However, each of the three have more credible stories and accounts of their particular actions. As has been often said on this subject, the ballad could likely have been a “blending of stories” involving two or more of these women, with Barbara personifying the stubborn face of the town’s defiance to bow to the rebels. In 1888, three years before his death, Whittier himself even admitted this possibility in an introductory note for his famed Ballad within a published collection of his works.¹⁰ In addition to some basic factual information about other potential “stars,” I’d like to point out several coincidental ties that seem to connect these ladies together.

Mary Quantrill

Mary Ann Sands was born in Frederick @1824. She was the oldest of three children born to George Washington and Mary Ann Sands. The family resided in the 200 block of West Patrick Street, just a short distance up the hill west from the Barbara Fritchie household. The Sands family, living in Frederick, can be found back to the 1820 census. Mary’s father was listed as an educator. She is known to have two brothers. The older of the two, George W. Sands Jr.(@1824-1874)- would become a lawyer and apparently had an interest in writing poetry.¹¹ On the internet, a facsimile can be found of a strange book (or publication) of poems entitled “Mazelli,” written in 1849 by George Jr. from Frederick City. On the dedication page of this work, the author states that he has not written for fame and humbly dedicated the work to Samuel Tyler, Esq member of the Maryland bar for “his services as a friend, and admiration and respect for his character.”¹² Professor Samuel Tyler was a noted lawyer, writer and one-time Frederick resident whose brothers William and John made great contributions to the welfare of town. Tyler would write a biography about Roger Brooke Taney and was an outspoken critic of the Fritchie legend, having letters on the subject printed in the New York Times.¹³

On February 8th, 1854, young Mary Sands became the wife of Archibald Richey Quantrill, a printer and at one time a compositor on the *National Intelligencer* newspaper in Washington D.C.¹⁴ Mr. Quantrill was the son of Captain Thomas Quantrill, a British immigrant who raised a company of soldiers in Hagerstown for the War of 1812. Captain

Quantrill was described as a brave soldier who participated (and was injured) in the Battle of North Point. One of Archibald's brothers named Thomas Henry Quantrill had move to Stark County, Ohio and started a blacksmith business.¹⁵ Thomas Quantrill's oldest son named William Clarke would become complacent with his profession as a teacher and would eventually move to Kansas, then Missouri. It was this William Clarke Quantrill that would gain fame and infamy as the noted rebel guerrilla, whose name spread terror across Missouri and Kansas from 1860 until his death in 1865. Quantrill became a feared outlaw and his gang was responsible for the Lawrence, Kansas massacre of August 1863 in which 200 anti-slavery Unionists were ruthlessly killed. Among Quantrill's Raiders were Jesse and Frank James and the Jim and Cole Younger. (A related sidelight comes from Williams History of Frederick County which contains the biography of Albert L. Haines of Valemont Farm, Linganore District. Haines' uncle, Charles Haines, was reported to be one of a party of six Union soldiers that captured Quantrill after he was shot and fatally wounded near Taylorsville, Kentucky.)¹⁶

Meanwhile, Mary's brother, George W. Sands Jr., was practicing his legal career in Howard County and would become States attorney for the County by the mid 1850's. He would be elected state delegate from that county and serve as an outspoken Unionist and opponent to slavery. Sands would participate as a delegate to the Constitutional Convention of 1864 and was quite active in constructing the third state constitution of Maryland that abolished slavery, taking effect November 1, 1864. ¹⁷ He was also a US collector of internal revenue under President Lincoln.

George W. Sands (Sr.) passed away prior to 1860, but his widow Mary Sands is found in the census of that year living with an Elizabeth Shaffer, perhaps a daughter or other relation. This home was on the south side of West Patrick Street next to the house of John Ebert and his third wife Mary. Mr. Ebert's second wife had been Ann Fritchie, the sister of John Caspar Fritchie (husband of Barbara Fritchie).

Mary Quantrill was found to be living in Washington D.C.'s 1st Ward in the 1860 census, with Archibald's profession listed as a claims agent. The family at this time included six children, four of which were from Mr. Quantrill's first marriage to Frederick another Frederick native named Mary Westenberger. ¹⁸

By September of 1862, Mary was known to be living (with her mother) and working in Frederick. With the serious threat to the Union's capital city during wartime, Mrs. Quantrill likely came to her hometown in hopes that it was out of the reach of the Confederacy and a safer choice for her children. Archibald Quantrill remained in Washington at this time. The elder Mrs. Sands is listed as blind in the 1860 census, so perhaps Mary was also involved in care giving for her mother as well.

Several accounts say that Mary Quantrill operated a small private school from the home on West Patrick at this time. Some of the Ebert children (Barbara Fritchie's grandnieces) were students. William's *History of Frederick County* contains a biography that makes reference to Mrs. Quantrill specifically. The biography of Samuel Davis, a miller and storekeeper in Fountain Mills, New Market district states that he was married to Rebecca Ebert, former student and next door neighbor to Mary Quantrill. At the end of his biography, the author makes the point to say "In the connection it might be said that Rebecca Ebert, (*daughter of John Ebert and second wife Ann Fritchie*), was a pupil of Mary Quantrill, who was really the woman who waved the flag which occasioned Whittier's famous poem." ¹⁹

“Mrs. Quantrill at the time of the incident was a handsome woman,” says author William E. Connelly in his 1909 biography of William Clarke Quantrill entitled *Quantrill and the Border Wars*. Connelly goes on to state that Mary Quantrill was “The True Heroine” of the day (not Barbara Fritchie), and that “Mrs. Quantrill appears to have been a woman of superior intelligence. She has for many years a teacher in Frederick, and was a frequent contributor to the “Evening Herald” of York (PA). It is said that she always felt keenly the injustice Whittier had done her.”²⁰

The “Mary Quantrill incident” survives written in her own hand, originally sent to the editor of the *Washington Star* newspaper (Washington D.C.). This particular letter was copied from the *Star* and published in the *New York Times* on February 15, 1869. (insert letter to editor)

Mary’s first hand account is corroborated by neighbor Henry M. Nixdorff who operated a general store one half-block down the street from Mary’s home. Mr. Nixdorff wrote a book in 1887 entitled *The Life of Whittier’s Heroine Barbara Fritchie*. In this work, the author felt compelled to defend Ms. Fritchie’s real life persona as a patriotic woman, kind neighbor and God-fearing Christian above all. This offering, with its personal anecdotes and colorful depictions of the aged town character, countered the more fact driven/no nonsense book written by Caroline W. Dall entitled *Barbara Fritchie: A Study*. Nixdorff’s account of the Quantrill event of September 10, 1862 goes as follows:

“I happened to look up the street, and saw a very intelligent lady, a neighbor, standing on her front porch, with a small Union flag in her hand waving it and making apparently the most earnest remarks to a Confederate officer who had ridden his horse over on the pavement up to the porch where she was standing. I was afterward assured by those who had the pleasure of being present that such glowing words of patriotism fell from the lips of Mrs. Quantrell that the officer looked on and listened with wonder and surprise, and whilst he was present would not allow his men to do her the least of harm. After his departure however, some of the soldiers belonging to the army came and knocked the flag from her hand, breaking the staff into several pieces.”

Mr. Nixdorff even went so far to have five neighbors who had apparently witnessed the event up close, sign a statement that said his account was genuine.²¹

Mary Quantrill seems to have moved to Washington DC (perhaps for good) in 1863-64. This could have been in response to the “explosion” of publicity that Whittier’s poem created in Frederick, not to mention the disappointment and dismay she would personally experience. The town wasn’t big enough for two “flag toting heroines,” even though the celebrated one had died just three short months after the incident.

I experienced great difficulty trying to locate the Quantrill family in the 1870 U.S. Census. After countless attempts utilizing the popular internet site *Ancestry.com*, I finally found the family in question under the name of Archibald and Mary Richey. The infamy associated with the Quantrill family name, thanks to the exploits of William Clarke Quantrill, must have been too overwhelming for a peaceful existence free of criticism in the nation’s capital. Archibald’s middle name would serve as a less auspicious choice. Three daughters were living with Mary at the time: 14 year-old Virginia (Virgie), 11 year-old Julia and 4-year-old Georgie. By the 1880 census, the

Quantrill family name would reappear as Archibald and three daughters (Mary, Julia and Georgie) are found living on K Street in the North East part of the District of Columbia. Unfortunately, Mary had died the previous summer on August 1, 1879 at age 56. Her obituary was included in two local newspapers of the period, boasting the following headings: Death of a Heroine (*Frederick Examiner*) and Death of the Genuine Barbara Fritchie(*Daily Times*).²² Mary Quantrill was buried in a family plot in Glenwood Cemetery, Northeast Washington, DC. Sadly, her grave, along with many family members, is not marked with a tombstone.

It has been repeatedly said that Whittier, late in life had admitted that he had been mistaken about the whole matter. Virgie Quantrill Browne (Mary's daughter and accomplice in the 1862 flag waving affair) stated in magazine articles (of 1891 and 1892) that Whittier had written her several letters "expressing regret that he had given publicity to a false idea and robbed the true subject of justice." However, it appears that she never published or made public any of the letters.²³

On February 7th, 1903, an article appeared in the NY Times concerning an estate auction of Whittier's personal manuscripts, books and letters. Although the winning bidder is not named, a bid of \$160 entitled someone the original manuscript account of the famous Barbara Fritchie war incident at Frederick, MD in the handwriting of the novelist Mrs EDEN Southworth, Georgetown, DC July 1863, sent by her to Whittier and used by him as the basis for his celebrated poem, accompanied by a letter of Mrs Southworth, July 21, 1863; a letter of Mary A. Quantrill of Frederick, who claimed the honors involved in the incident, Washington July 15, 1876, to Whittier asking him to do her justice as the real heroine; also typewritten copy of the letter written by Whittier in 1885 to Francis F. Brown, editor of "Bugle Echoes," making mention of Mrs Quantrill and of his having based the poem on Mrs Southworth's communication....\$161. These items eventually found their way into the manuscript collection of the Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College (Philadelphia, PA).

In the May 22, 1912 edition of the Frederick Evening Post, an article appears that references the "Fritchie incident." It referred to an article written by Elizabeth York Miller and published in "Munsey's Scrap Book" magazine of July 1908. This article had reported: "It is Quantrill who deserved the honor which was bestowed upon Barbara Fritchie. From various documents, letters, verbal testimony of citizens of Frederick, her claim as the real heroine of Whittier's poem is incontrovertible."

Amazingly, Quantrill and her family seem to have remained humble about the incident and did not get caught up in writing to the papers until later.

Where was Frederick's Historic Preservation Commission in the spring of 1869?

Barbara Fritchie's heirs sold their famous relative's house to George Eissler for use as a dyeing and scouring business. In late July of 1868, a disastrous flood washed away part of the old Fritchie property and caused the home to be condemned by the city. Mr. Eissler moved to a new home across the street, and the Fritchie house was put up for auction. The town fathers were interested in widening Carroll Creek at this location. The original Fritchie household was purchased from the city for \$300 in early April and upon the terms of sale was fully dismantled and removed by May 15th of 1869 amidst the protest of the the Frederick Examiner's editor and others. Jacob Engelbrecht even comments on this in his diary.²⁵ Interestingly, the sole bidder, new owner of the property

and man in charge of the demolition operation was prominent city contractor James Hopwood. 24 This was the same James Hopwood who was the father of Miss Mary Hopwood, the young girl who supplied Mrs Quantrill with a second flag after her first was destroyed. Perhaps Mr. Hopwood and other leaders in town had heard enough about Barbara Fritchie. If anything else, they certainly were not Tourism minded! Mr. Hopwood would build a two story brick house on the property and would be responsible for building a new wooden bridge over the creek at this location.25

Nannie Crouse

The daughter of George Warner and Ellen Crouse was born in Illinois on December 16, 1844. Mr. Crouse was a native of Pennsylvania, while Mrs. Crouse was from Virginia...both parents having family ties to both north and south during the Civil War. The Crouses and their eight children lived on the south side of West Main Street, in a house located just west of the later constructed Doctor A.A. Lamar Hospital/dwelling. Mr. Crouse was listed as a saddler in the 1860 census however other accounts have said that he was a baker and confectioner in 1862. Based on census records it seems as if he and his family had recently come to Middletown after living in Illinois and Pennsylvania. Nancy, or Nannie as she would become known later, was one of six sisters. Her older brother George V. Crouse had enlisted in the Union Army and was serving in Company G of the 7th MD Infantry. The youngest member of the family was another brother Charles, born in 1853. 26

The story of Nancy Crouse has always been a favorite of Middletown residents earning her the title of “Valley Maid” as she too would have a poem written about her patriotism during the Invasion of 1862. In the December 11th, 1901 edition of the Frederick News, appeared an article that had recently been published in the Commercial Tribune newspaper of Cincinnati Ohio. The writer claimed that this was the true basis of the Whittier poem. Here’s an excerpt of that article:

“Recently Mrs. Nancy Bennett was a guest of her brother, Mr. Charles M. Crouse, a prominent merchant of Cedarville, Ohio, and one day, in speaking of his sister he remarked that she was the real heroine of the poem. Said Mr. Crouse: I do not know how they got Barbara Fritchie’s name connected with the matter. She was a distant relative of our family and lived at Frederick, eight miles from Middletown, and at no time during the invasion of the Confederates was she able to leave her death bed at the time. It is known that Mrs Southworth, the novelist, related to Whittier what she knew of the incident, but he garbled the facts to suit his fancy, or else he did not get the straight of it at all. At any rate, I can vouch for the truth of the matter, though I was only a boy of 10 years.

“My father was a red hot Union man, and of course, us children were demonstrative patriots; especially Nan, though a girl of few words. Her demonstrations were acts. We had a neighbor, a hotel keeper, who was as strong a sympathizer for the Southern cause as we were for the North, and he openly and daily taunted my sister whenever he saw her, particularly when she would fling to the breeze from the second story window of our house her big flag. “One day on returning from the grist mill with a boyfriend we met Jackson and his staff. He asked me several questions concerning Middletown and the roads thereabouts. He was a very pleasant, kindly spoken man, and his personality

affected me pleasantly. On leaving us he asked if there were any Yankees about. "You'll find plenty of them if you go far enough" I replied boldly, though with considerable trepidation for the consequence. "He smiled and rode away. The next day a detachment of cavalry galloped into town, no doubt at the instigation of our neighbor to secure the offending flag, which was floating as big as life, in the wind –but here," said Mr. Crouse, "I had better let someone else say the flattering things about my sister. A citizen of the town stood across the street during the raid and took in the scene, which he graphically described in an article read at the anniversary of the battle of South Mountain. The following is an extract:

(newspaper article shown)

The Valley Register added that the story is correct except for the fact that the company of about 20 Confederates which made a dash out to Middletown from the main army in Frederick, were not Louisiana Tigers but Virginia soldiers under command of Captain Edward Motter, youngest son of the late John S. Motter, who formerly resided at the fountain two miles east of town.²⁷

Although later histories recount Nannie's rival hotel keeper as Samuel Riddlemoser, the census of 1860 shows the hotel to be owned and operated by Riddlemoser's son-in-law Andrew Poffenberger. Two black servants are listed living with Poffenberger as well.²⁸

One year after the incident on September 9, 1863, Nannie Crouse would marry John H. Bennett of Frederick. Bennett worked a wheelright. It would have been interesting to know her particular mindset during the Jubal Early invasion and ransoming of Frederick in July of 1864. Did she dare contemplate flying a flag in the presence of the enemy prior to the eminent Battle of Monocacy?

Nannie and John would raise eight children in their home located at 24 West South Street. A poem "The Ballad of Nancy Crouse" was written sometime around 1906, as it appears in the Valley Register and Frederick News that year. The poem was written by poet/novelist Thomas Chalmers Harbaugh at his home in Casstown, Ohio. Harbaugh was born in Middletown in 1849, but his family removed to Ohio just two years later in 1851. A nationally published author, Harbaugh could have been inspired to write the poem about his birthplace after seeing the Charles Crouse interview of 1901 in the Ohio newspapers.

(Ballad of Nannie Crouse) 29

The "Valley Maid" would pass away on February 22, 1908 at the age of 63. Nannie Crouse is buried in Mount Olivet Cemetery. To the left of her grave is that of Henry M. Nixdorf, author of *Life of Whittier's Heroine of Barbara Fritchie* and former neighbor of both Ms. Fritchie and Mary Quantrill.

Two more interesting ironies, perhaps three, have become evident involving the formerly mentioned patriotic females. Both Barbara Fritchie and Mary Quantrill had a "despicable in-law" which could have resulted in an insecurity calling for each of these ladies having an accentuated sense of duty to demonstrate their Union pride. Interestingly, even though it was after the fact, Nannie Crouse's mother in law (Mary Bennett) was born Mary Suman. This same Mary Ann Suman Bennett was a great granddaughter of Peter Balthasar Suman –one of the seven men found guilty of treason in

the 1781 Tory Conspiracy. He was also executed on August 17th, 1781 with fellow conspirator (and Barbara's father-in-law) Caspar Fritchie.

Susan Groff

The following news story appeared in the Philadelphia Inquirer on Wednesday, October 22, 1862

Special Dispatch to the Inquirer:

Frederick, October 21, 10pm -During the recent rebel raid into this state, the wife of a federal officer, the latter of whom is connected with the Potomac Home Guards, seized some ninety rifles belonging to our men, and threw them into a well in a main street in this city, to prevent them from falling into the hands of the Rebels. This lady is the wife of Lietenant Groffy(sic), of the regiment referred to. Her patriotism has been the subject of warm commendation, in social circles, during the past week. Today the rifles were shipped to Washington by LB Perkins, Government detective.

This was the only newspaper article that appeared during the fall of 1862 pertaining to any of the four women of note. The "rifle hiding hero" not formerly named in the Philadelphia newspaper story was Mrs. Susan Groff, wife of Captain Joseph Groff. The Groffs are best remembered for the large Victorian guest house/hotel they built on the northwest corner of North Market and 7th Street in 1884. Later this building would become the first home of WFMD and was later razed in March 1973 to make way for a parking lot.

Susan Groff was born Susan Smith on March 11, 1828 in Woodsboro, Maryland. She was the daughter of John Smith and Susan Ebert. Susan married Joseph Groff on January 1, 1852 and the couple took up residence in Walkersville for a short time afterwards. Susan's husband was born near Lancaster (PA) in 1822 and came to Frederick as a young man, perhaps attracted by shipping opportunities with the C&O Canal. By 1856, the Groffs were living in Philadelphia where they ran a hotel and kept a stockyard. The spring of 1861 saw the Groff family back in Frederick where they opened a store selling various goods at public auction. 30 They later turned this venture into a hotel located on the west side of Market Street between 3rd and 4th streets (today the site of another parking lot). It would later become known as the Arlington Hotel.

The Groff's were said to be ardent Unionists and Mr. Groff and his sons participated in the famed "war between the states." Professional genealogist and descendent of Joseph and Susan Groff, Alice L. Luckhardt of Florida, wrote a story about her great, great grandfather for the June/July 2007 edition of History Magazine. The article was entitled "The Defiant Flag Waver," and depicts Captain Groff involved in Frederick City's first recorded flag related incident of the four year conflict. In the Spring of 1861, Joseph Groff reportedly placed his 20 foot long Union flag over N. Market Street for all to see, attaching one side to his business establishment on one side of the street and the other to an adjacent building across the street. Supposedly southern sympathizers threatened Groff to remove his flag before they would have Mr. Poffenberger, a large combative gentleman and supporter of secession, come immediately

into town from his home on the town outskirts. (*This couldn't be the same Poffenberger who was feuding with little Nannie Crouse in Middletown was it? Or a relative?*) Despite the threat, Groff was unmoved and welcomed anyone to come try removing his flag. He received no takers and Poffenberger never appeared. Groff would help create Frederick's first Home Guard Company and would eventually recruit men to form Company B of the First Home Potomac Brigade. For good luck, Groff supposedly took his supersized flag with him into military service abroad.³¹

While her husband went off at war, Susan ran the affairs of the hotel. At the time of General Lee's invasion of Maryland in September 1862, , Captain Joseph Groff was stationed at Harpers Ferry. Along with son William, Capt. Groff would be captured by Stonewall Jackson's troops. He would be paroled and would see action at Gettysburg in July 1863. As a matter of fact, he was wounded on July 3rd 1863 at Spangler's Spring in command of his Union company. He managed to make his way back to Frederick where a surgeon removed the bullet. After being given time by the Army to mend his wound, he returned to his company and active duty in early September 1863.

After the war, the Groffs raised eight children and operated a brickyard at the southeast corner of Eighth and N. Market Streets.. They also purchased the land that would become Hood College for the supposed purpose of using it for his garden to grow fresh produce for the hotel endeavor. This had formerly been the site of Deutsches Schuetzen Gesellschaft Park, a social and stock endeavor formulated by leading German descended residents. Present day Broadbeck Hall served as the clubhouse for the group, which came complete with an old fashioned beer garden to accommodate stockholders. The property was renamed Groff Park. The Groffs would eventually trade this property to Margaret Scholl Hood and the rest is history. At this point the Groffs built their large Victorian dwelling on the northeast corner of Seventh and North Market, along with a series of neighboring rowhouses extending west on Seventh Street. ³²

Susan Groff died in March 11, 1911 and is interred with her husband in Mt. Olivet Cemetery. Her obituary includes an impressive list of pallbearers including Major EY Goldsborough, Col William P Maulsby and Capt Eli Frost among others. ³³ Unfortunately, there is no specific location given for the Frederick well in which Mrs. Groff hid the Union firearms for safekeeping. Perhaps the original site could have morphed into the famous fountain at the head of N. Market Street, situated in front of the later built Groff House? That would have been a good three block hike for Mrs Groff, but could serve as a romantic ending and commemoration to this virtually untold act of bravery connected to Lee's occupation of Frederick in September 1862.

And what did famed diarist Jacob Engelbrecht say about these four women? It is well known that he blasted the notion of Frietchie confronting Jackson and the rebel horde. He claimed that Whittier dreamed it all up in the confines of his New England home. As for the other three.....not a word was recorded regarding any of them.

So the question needs to be asked again, did Whittier mean to say *star*, or *stars* in the final line of his epic poem? Since he pluralized the word anyway, it wouldn't hurt to give three special women of Frederick: Mary Quantrill, Nannie Crouse Bennett, and Susan Groff their just due for unselfish acts of patriotism performed during the legendary Campaign of 1862. Even the straight forward, literal accounts of each of these anecdotes

have the power to conjure up scenes of great drama and excitement in the mind of any reader.

“Flags of Freedom and Union wave (s) over *each of these heroic ladies’* graves.”

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3. Dorothy M. Quynn, “The Loyalist Plot in Frederick,” *Maryland Historical Magazine*, vol. 40, no. 3 (1945), 201-210.
4. Various New York Times articles and books listed under sources
5. “Frederick and Dame Barbara,” *News* (Frederick), 29 August 1912, 4.
6. Samuel T. Pickard, *Life and Letters of John Greenleaf Whittier*, (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1898), 456-459.
7. Dorothy M. & William R. Quynn, “Barbara Frietschie: Appendix,” *Maryland Historical Society*, vol. 37, no. 4 (1942), 405-409.
8. Winston Churchill, *The Second World War: The Gathering Storm (Vol. 1)*, (London: Houghton-Mifflin, 1948), 711-712.
9. “*Bullwinkle’s Corner: Barbara Fritchie*,” Rocky & Bullwinkle television program, Show #13, 1961.
10. John Greenleaf Whittier, *Anti-slavery Poems: Songs of Labor and Reform*, (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1888), III, 245.
Whittier’s introductory note for *The Ballad of Barbara Fritchie*:
“This poem was written in strict conformity to the account of the incident as I had it from respectable and trustworthy sources. It has since been the subject of a good deal of conflicting testimony, and the story was probably incorrect in some of its details. It is admitted by all that Barbara Fritchie was no myth, but a worthy and highly esteemed gentlewoman, intensely loyal and a hater of the Slavery Rebellion, holding her Union flag sacred and keeping it with her Bible; that when the Confederates halted before her house, and entered her dooryard, she denounced them in vigorous language shook her cane in their faces, and drove them out; and when General Burnside's troops followed close upon Jackson's, she waved her flag and cheered them. It is stated that May Quantrell, a brave and loyal lady in another part of the city, did wave her flag in sight of the Confederates. It is possible that there has been a blending of the two incidents.”
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- Census (database online), *Fredericktown, Frederick, Maryland; Roll M432_292; Page 7; Image 16*.
- The 1850 census shows 18-year old Lewis C. Sands living with the Sands family as well. His occupation is listed as butcher.
12. George W. Sands, *Mazelli and Other Poems*, Frederick, 1849, Dedication page
 13. “Barbara Fritchie, The Pleasant Story about Her Has Exploded,” *New York Times*, 26 April 1875, (internet database).
 14. William Elsey Connelley, *Quantrill and the Border Wars*, (Cedar Rapids: The Torch Press, 1909), 22.
 15. Connelley, 17.
 16. Thomas J.C. Williams, *The History and Biographical Record of Frederick County (Vol. 2)*, (Hagerstown: L.R. Titsworth and Company, 1910), 1203.
 17. Edward C. Papenfuse, et al., *The Archives of Maryland, new series, An Historical List of Public Officials of Maryland, Vol. I.* (Annapolis, MD: Maryland State Archives, 1990), (internet database).
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 19. Williams, 1462.
 20. Connelley, 27-28.
 21. Henry M. Nixdorff, *Life of Whittier’s Heroine Barbara Fritchie*, (Frederick: Great Southern Printing and Manufacturing Company, 1902), 30-31.
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