



MICAJAH MCPHERSON



“We have Fought the Good Fight and Kept Our Faith”



Micajah McPherson, a trustee of Freedom Hill Wesleyan Methodist Church and abolitionist, was lynched about a mile and a half southeast of here. Although there are different stories about his lynching, they agree that he was an innocent man lynched by vigilantes who the authorities protected.

According to his descendants, after the Confederate conscription act was passed in 1862, riders approached McPherson's house one day and demanded, “Where's your boy?” “The Hunters” —



Home guards and guerrillas frequently terrorized civilians, taking horses, seizing conscripts, and looting houses, *Harper's Weekly*, Dec. 24, 1864

the Chatham County sheriff's men, Home Guards, and McPherson relatives seeking conscripts — were looking for McPherson's service-age son, Tommy, who was in hiding. The two had worked out a plan to keep the boy fed, and his father from lying. When young McPherson returned an empty food basket to the house for refilling, he left a note inside that said where to deliver the full basket. His father then could say truthfully that he did not know where his son was.

Dissatisfied with McPherson's denials, the Hunters dragged him to a split-rail fence, forced his hands into the narrow space between two rails, and then jumped up and down on the upper rail. When his answer did not change, they hauled him into the woods, fired a shot at his house to intimidate his family, and hanged him from a large dogwood tree by the creek.

McPherson survived the hanging, however, saying later that a noise startled the Hunters, who fled. He heard one of them say, “I do not believe the old SOB is dead yet.” Years later at a church service, according to tradition, McPherson



Micajah McPherson and his wife, Phebe McPherson – Courtesy John Braxton

approached a stranger to the church and told him, “You are one of those that hanged me.” The stranger left and never returned.