

John Higgins (spoken by Dora)

FIRST VOICE (female):

June 29, 1863

After breakfast, I was getting the children ready for Sabbath School & I told my son John to come home after school to stay with his sister Dora and little Frank while I went to church. As John came in at the front gate, I heard a terrific yell & Dora screamed, "Rebels, Ma!" I thought it impossible. The next moment I saw a whole column with the Rebel Flag charging furiously down past William Brewster's, and the next a discharge of musketry and cannon in the rear & I broke through the charging columns with the pistol balls flying, rushed through the back way to Church just in time to warn Mr. Higgins, Mr. Bowie, Mr. Dawson, and Williams to stay in the Vestry Room for they, the Secessionists, were vowing vengeance on them.

I remember nothing but the thick rank and clanking of sabers, yells, and furious charges. & I resisted opening the store and stayed there six hours, repelling their persistent endeavors and having a full view of their movements & there were three brigades of rebels in all, about 8000 &

Relieved, I thought all had gone and went to the Church to tell my prisoners to wait another hour and they would be safe. When Mr. Bowie said, "here comes a squad," there was an ominous halt outside and the door opened. There was a dead silence but in the growing dark I could see that Mr. Higgins and Mr. Bowie were deadly pale &

I broke down once only, through the day, and that was when the children knew that their father was a prisoner &. About one o'clock I heard the back gate slam and someone call, "Dora, It was Mr. Higgins!" The Rebels took him out towards Laytonsville, but felt uneasy about having prisoners, particularly because Federal troops were passing through Rockville and they had no horses for the three prisoners.

SECOND VOICE (male):

Dora and John Higgins lived in Rockville with their seven children. They ran a store and John was a County Commissioner and Union supporter. During the Civil War, Maryland was a slave state with numerous confederate sympathizers as well as supporters of the Union. Many county residents enlisted in the Confederate army, but many more served on the Union side. Federal troops were stationed here to protect Washington, D.C. and troops from both sides traveled through the county to battles such as Antietam and Gettysburg. To learn more about the Civil War in Montgomery County, visit www.montgomeryconnections.org