

*Credit for discovering the information in this article about Lisanna belongs to **Lynn Till and Lillie Mae Vaughn** both of whom worked many years to uncover small bits and pieces of the story as it is known today. Discovery of each bit of information is cause for celebration.*

Confederados. Lisanna Vaughan Brownlow 6th child of James & Mary Vaughan was born in 1847. She married John W. Brownlow in 1867 in her home state of Mississippi. John was born in 1841 in Tennessee, and it is assumed they both died in Santa Bárbara d'Oeste, Brazil, but the dates of their deaths are unknown.

I was surprised to hear the story of Lisanna from my mother, Lillie Mae Vaughn, sometime in the early 1950's. The surprise came from the fact that mother had told us many family stories as children, but Lisanna's was a very big story that we had not been told. Recently mother and dad, Jack Vaughn, had been talking a lot about James and Mary Vaughan and that likely caused Lisanna's story to come to mind.

Lisanna's legendary story was sketchy with missing detail. After the Civil War Lisanna and her husband had decided to leave the United States and move permanently to Brazil. Her husband had been a Confederate soldier and was devastated because the South had lost the war. He felt he could not live in the United States. Many former Confederate families moved to Brazil. She and her husband bought passage on a ship bound for Brazil, but they encountered very stormy weather that blew them off course and the trip took much longer than planned. The weather was so bad that Lisanna had a miscarriage and lost a child. When they arrived in Brazil, Lisanna sent a letter home that told the story of the disastrous trip. The original letter was lost many years ago, and some of the mysteries the letter would clarify have to be rediscovered in bits and pieces.

It took many years to find out more detail including the discovery that Lisanna's husband was John W. Brownlow. The only information on their marriage is that John and Lisanna were married in early January of 1867, and boarded the sailing ship Talisman in New Orleans on January 10, 1867 bound for Rio. The trip will be described in more detail later. The trip to Rio was as bad as Lisanna's letter stated.

At the conclusion of the Civil War, life was very difficult in the South. Southerners felt badly about losing the war, many of their homes had been burned, much property destroyed, livestock killed, and it was difficult for families to even have enough food. The "carpetbaggers and scalawags" took over many local governments and imposed laws that were not well received. Many southerners believed they had lost too much, living conditions were too poor, and they had to leave the U.S.

Some foreign countries saw an opportunity to profit from these conditions. Brazil in particular offered to help pay the cost of moving to Brazil, land was made available at a very good price, and tax incentives were given. One could buy hundreds and even thousands of acres of land at a discounted price. It is estimated that 10,000 to 20,000 southerners immigrated to Brazil. Robert E. Lee and Jefferson Davis spoke strongly against leaving the U.S. urging southerners to stay. Lee and Davis were still held in high esteem. If Lee and Davis had not spoken against leaving, thousands more would have left and they likely would have gone to Brazil. Our Vaughan ancestors may have been influenced by

the stance of Lee and Davis as they made a decision to move west to Texas (but most of them later moved back to Mississippi).

Col. William H. Norris, a former Alabama senator was the leader of the southerners that John and Lisanna joined for the trip to Brazil. According to Wikipedia, on 27 December 1865, (William H.) Norris and his son Robert C. Norris arrived in Rio de Janeiro aboard the ship *South America*. Norris helped establish a Confederate American presence in Americana and Santa Bárbara d'Oeste where slavery was still legal and began cotton planting. On 10 January 1867, the rest of the Norris family (Francis Johnson Norris and other family members and Lisanna & John Brownlow left New Orleans aboard the *Talisman* bound for Rio. After a bad storm, with damage to the ship, they wound up in the Cape Verde Islands and did not reach Rio until April 19, 1867. The *Talisman* was so long overdue that the Confederates in Rio had almost given up and were thinking the ship had been lost.

On August 31, 1975, *The Register* printed in Danville, Virginia, printed the following information about the *Talisman* voyage.

“When the voyage of the *Talisman* began, the ladies aboard were ordered by the ship’s captain to remove the hoops from their skirts ... the ladies stacked the steel rings on a shelf in the sleeping quarters designated for ladies and children, and the voyage progressed under apparently normal conditions. The passengers survived attacks of scurvy and near starvation.” After weathering a very bad storm(s), “The ship was sailing along on a calm sea one beautiful day when land was sighted” ... “As the ship neared land, the passengers spotted palm trees.” They thought they were arriving in Brazil, but they were in Africa. “The captain of the *Talisman* was completely perplexed until he searched the ship and found the steel hoops on the shelf.” The hoops had caused a wrong heading on the compass which had resulted in the ship being steered to the Cape Verde Islands. The hoops were discarded and the ship set sail for and arrived in Rio.

Apparently the storm(s) damaged the *Talisman* so badly that it was eventually condemned:

- 1) The *New York Herald* for 23 May 1867, page 9f, reported that the schooner *Talisman*, Johnson, master, arrived at Rio de Janeiro on 19 April from New Orleans, and sailed on 22 April for Pernambuco.
- 2) The *New York Herald* for 16 July 1867, page 9f, prints the following under Disasters: that the schooner *Talisman*, Johnson, master, from Rio de Janeiro for New Orleans, put into Antigua 11th ult(imate) leaking, was surveyed, condemned, and sold on the 18th at auction for (10 pounds).

Undoubtedly the ship was so badly damaged from the storm(s) that John and Lisanna and the other passengers were fortunate that the *Talisman* held together long enough for them to get to Rio.

There is much information that confirms that John and Lisanna left New Orleans for Rio de Janeiro in January 1867 and that they did arrive in Rio. There is the old family story of Lisanna going to Brazil and that she wrote a letter back to her family describing the trip. What has been learned about the actual trip aboard the sailing ship *Talisman* matches to a remarkable extent what Lisanna said in her legendary letter. There are documents that state that John W. Brownlow was on the *Talisman* when it left New Orleans. Judith McKnight Jones, a Confederate descendant, wrote about

the immigration and family trees. Her book, *Soldado Descansa!* Sao Paulo: Fraternidade Descendencia Americana, 1998, lists some 400 families and is in Portuguese. John Brownlow is mentioned two times in her book.

What is missing is that no one has found Lisanna's name in any document or record. At that time in history, the man was recognized as the head of family, and the mention of the husband being present usually means that the wife and family were also present. No burial record or place has been found for John or Lisanna. Many of the original Confederados are buried in Campo Cemetery in Santa Bárbara d'Oeste, Brazil, but neither John or Lisanna are buried in Campo Cemetery. There is no record or story to indicate that they came back to America. Did they move to another city in Brazil? Did Lisanna have another name that she used in Brazil? Did John and Lisanna have any children? The mystery that remains drives us to continue looking for more information. **We need confirmation that we have cousins in Brazil! We probably do.**

Any of the Confederados who went to Brazil because slavery was legal in Brazil were to be soon disappointed for in 1888 Brazil abolished slavery. Brazil was the last country in the western hemisphere to abolish slavery.

The Confederados started schools and permitted the children of slaves and freedmen to go to school. They learned Portuguese but also kept English as a secondary language, and many their descendants still speak English today.

The following is a quote from: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confederados> The *Confederados* also have an annual festival, called the *Festa Confederada*, dedicated to fund the Campo center (cemetery). The festival is marked by Confederate flags, Confederate uniforms and [hoop skirts](#), food of the American South with a Brazilian flair, and dances and music popular in the American South during the antebellum period. The descendants maintain affection for the [Confederate flag](#) even though they identify as completely Brazilian. The Confederate flag in Brazil has not acquired the same political symbolism as it has in the United States.

We continue onward to collect bits of information until we identify and find our cousins in Brazil.

Festa Confederado: <http://www.vice.com/read/welcome-to-americana-brazil-0000580-v22n2>

Campo Cemetery and Chapel: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Os-Confederados-Brasil/263483417358>

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