

Civil War Days Recalled

The following article appeared in the local paper many years ago and was written by Samuel Mullet, Co. I, 51st, O.V.I.

My old comrades of the Civil War have been telling in the Index about what happened in the army on Christmas and New Year times, and lots of your readers have enjoyed the story of those strange times. I would like to tell the boys about my New Year's present which I got from some Johnny Reb at the battle of Stone's River in 1863.

Our brigade under Colonel Stanley Matthews occupied the extreme left in that fight, and we were not called into the battle until the 3rd day. We could hear fighting going on at the right, and then again in the center. The rebel skirmish line on our front kept up a continual firing, but they did not advance.

Our brigade was located on the edge of a stretch of timber, and in our immediate front was an immense corn field of probably 75 acres. The corn had been husked on the stalks, and the stalks still stood dead and dry. On the farther edge of this corn field the rebel picket line was established, and ours was located in the same field a hundred or more yards from the edge of the field. The rebel bullets whistled through this corn field cutting off a stalk here and there, but we couldn't see the men who were shooting at us.

All at once on the morning of the 3rd day this corn field was alive with the enemy advancing in one solid line after another. Our brigade met them at the edge of the field, and then the struggle began. Within ten minutes I had been shot, the ball passing between the two bones of my leg and coming out on the opposite side as you see. We retreated some twenty feet, and then every thing grew dark to me, and I dropped helplessly to the ground. In a few minutes I regained consciousness, but the Union line had gone. Just in front, on our left line, I saw Nathan Shannon of Co. C of my regiment, sitting against a tree. He had evidently been severely wounded and had fallen in his tracks. Dragging myself back to him just as the Confederate line swept out of the corn field, an old fellow fired point blank at us within a few feet. The wonder is that none of the other of us was not killed.

I shouted to him, asking him if he wanted to shoot a dead man, and just then the boys in gray crowded about us, giving us water out of their canteens, and asking what command we belonged to. We told them whereupon one of the Confederates said "Gully for

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the Buckeyes," and then all of them charged through the woods.

But in fifteen minutes they came back on the run, taking their wounded with them. Fifty-seven big guns from a hill a half mile to our rear opened up, and Matthews' reserves charging at the same time, the rebel line was swept back like chaff.

Comrade Shannon and I were now in range of our own guns and we crept round on the opposite side of two trees for shelter. Pretty soon the artillery firing ceased and then our boys took after the rebels through the corn field, across Stone's river to Murfreesboro', driving the enemy beyond the town. Bragg then gave it up and retreated along his entire line.

In the afternoon I was taken to the field hospital, and later transferred to Nashville, where I remained four months. Then I was sent to a Louisville hospital where I remained three months more.

So you see that while I didn't get my New Year's gift until January, it lasted me for several months. In July I was sent back to my regiment where I remained until the end of the war.

Samuel Mullet,
Co. I, 51st, O.V.I.