

G. A. R. MEN HECTIC CIVIL

CALL BACK WAR DAYS

5-31-1929

Veterans live over again scenes at bloody Gettysburg, Shenandoah Valley

Fragments of the memories of long ago, memories that have endured nearly three-quarters a century were gleaned yesterday from veterans of the Civil War, of whom 83 are now living in the Buffalo district.

Calvin A. Brainard, signally honored by comrades of the Grand Army who several years ago elected him senior vice-commander, was persuaded to turn the pages of his life back to the day when, as a boy of sixteen, he went with his father from their farm to Arkwright Center, near Fredonia, where a recruiting station was located.

"I'm going to enlist," Calvin told his father.

"Sure, go ahead," said Mr. Brainard, positive that the boy could not be accepted. But he was, and reluctantly the father gave his approval. Both became members of Co. F. of the 154th infantry.

No Tents at First

"It was the Cattaraugus County regiment—not the Chautauqua County organization—we had wanted to get into. But that was filled first, and they moved our companies in with the Cattaraugus men. "I don't suppose I ever completely got over that," said Comrade Brainard yesterday, laughing.

"We were sent to Washington and encamped on the Virginia side. Had no tents at all at first. We were in a number of battles and skirmishes, and most notably at Gettysburg. I guess one doesn't have to say any more than that.

"After that we were sent to New York to quell the draft riots and served there for six months, and after that I was assigned to special duty in the capital.

"I remember one job in particular that was very exciting. I was one of a group of eighteen ordered to convoy 170 prisoners from New York to Washington. They were bounty jumpers, and pretty tough lot. They would have murdered us as soon as not. So we kept them below decks the whole time and gave them to understand that the first man that showed his head would be shot.

"Below them, in the lower part of the hold, hospital stores were carried, and we found that some of these rascals would let one of their fellows down by the heels into this hold to fish up choice morsels from the stock below—canned goods and so on. We had to threaten to shoot them to stop that."

Finally Joins Artillery

John Maxwell, marshal of yesterday's parade, was a sailor on a tramp sailing vessel in the Mediterranean when he heard his country was at war. From that time on,

their ship moved with particular caution, fearful of privateering. But months later, it arrived in Boston, and John came ashore. He had run away from home to go to sea years before and had not intended to return. But in a Boston sailors' boarding party, he met a man who had been in Buffalo and a wave of

came from the table and took the first

Arriving at a hotel and then went out to enlist in the navy. But he

turned him down—thereby losing an able seaman. An infantry recruiter approached him, but John didn't fancy the infantry. In the hotel lobby he saw a smart looking artilleryman. He looked very natty in his uniform. He looked good. At that psychological moment, the officer breezed up to John and invited him to enlist. In a twinkling it was done.

Uniform Needs Remodeling

"I was given a uniform that would be the far man in the circus," the marshal of many Buffalo Memorial Day parades said. "I took it to the tailor who cut it down to fit me. Then I hired a horse, mounted and rode out to the farm to see my mother."

John's mother then lived on a farm near the place where the present Dunlop plant is located. After some hours he came riding up to the farm and saw his mother at the gate. She looked for a moment upon the soldier that came riding up, wondering what business he could have with her. Then—

"Johnny!" she cried.

They were together after years of absence—those long, eventful years of young manhood—and here he was in uniform, ready to start for the wars. He must not go. She would do anything to stop him.

"You're not of age," she reminded.

"If you don't let me go, I'll enlist anyway, and you won't know where I am," he said.

Nevertheless, with John's stepfather, they went to the recruiting office to protest. But the stepfather protested a bit too much. John's mother rallied to his support.

"This man is not his father," she told the recruiting officer. "His father was a soldier. He was killed in the Mexican war. I shall not keep a soldier's son out of the army. I give him my permission to go."

A few months later found John Maxwell in the thick of the fight.

Skirmish on Plantation

One reminiscence he offered from his many memories.

"We were under fire in a plantation yard one night, with the shells spattering all around us. We could hear the bullets hum past and spatter through the big farmhouse. But sometimes one would make a terrible racket. It was really frightening, and we couldn't understand what caused it.

"Finally one of my men crept out to the other side of the barn. There he found a great pile of barrels, stacked up in a kind of pyramid. They were dry and resinous, and when the shot hit them they made this ghastly noise. So we knocked the pile down and didn't mind after that.

"Another time one of my men came to me at night and said, 'They're coming, sergeant—the Rebels are coming up through the pasture.'

"So I went to look. There were bushes and stumps and trees in the pasture, and sure enough, I could see them move. The longer I looked the more they moved. But there was nobody there at all, I found out later. It happens that way—when you watch a thing long enough, it moves. But I never could persuade some of the boys that it was an illusion."

Blows Colonel's Head Off

Commander Frank M. Fisher, now 79 and the youngest but one of the Buffalo posts, enlisted at fourteen as a drummer boy in the Eleventh Indiana infantry.

"I saw service in the Mississippi Valley campaigns, was at Memphis and several months at New Orleans. Later I was with Sheridan in the Shenandoah Valley. I remember plenty, but I don't like to talk about it.

"Were there many youngsters? Well, I guess so. You know there was Johnnie Clem, who finally retired a few years ago as major general. Johnnie was a drummer boy of twelve years once, and on a battlefield where almost everybody was dead, a Rebel colonel spotted Johnnie.

"You little son of a such-and-such," he said. "I'll kill you."

"Just then Johnnie lifted up a rock he had found on the ground and blew the colonel's head off."

Youth Today Same As Ever, But More of It, Says Veteran

Is youth wilder today than of yore?

Hear Comrade Calvin Brainard on this.

"I came back from the Civil War on the Fourth of July," he said yesterday. "There was a big celebration, and I was part of it. I danced all night.

"In fact, I danced all night every night for a week straight after that.

"Youth is just the same today as it always was. There's more of it, that's all."

Courtesy of Benedict R. Maryniak, Lancaster, N.Y.