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SERVED IN DEFENSE OF UNION

No. 32

Patrick Joseph Fenton

Saturday August 15, Roscoe Fisher



Corporal Patrick Joseph Fenton, a volunteer in the 11th Connecticut regiment of infantry, three times commander of Solowick post, No. 8, G. A. R., of Brattleboro, and at present president of the 11th Connecticut Regimental association and an aide-de-camp on the staff of Commander-in-Chief Gardner of the G. A. R., saw a lot of hard service during the nearly two years he spent in the service in '64 and '65. During that time, although his nose was broken and he received three scratches from bullets, he never missed a roll call.

Mr. Fenton was born Aug. 8, 1841, in the village of Carey, parish of Dunquin, County Kerry, Ireland, a son of Joseph and Elmine (Fitzgerald) Fenton. His father came to the United States in 1847 and a year later sent for his family to join him.

Mr. Fenton, Sr., had employment on the construction of the Vermont Valley railroad. His family followed along with him as the construction proceeded and had their first shanty where the Bradley house now stands. They next located for a time at the mouth of the West river and finally on the Haven property in East Dummerston. Upon the completion of that road in 1851 or 1852 the family came to Brattleboro from East Dummerston and Mr. Fenton has since lived here.

Mr. Fenton entered the employ of George B. Folsom, a wealthy New York resident, who had a summer home here as a servant in 1857. During his service in the family he saw and knew many men of prominence of those days, including Generals Scott and Dix and such famous newspaper men as the elder Bennett, Greeley and Raymond, who were many times guests at the home of his employer, and the Prince of Wales, who came over in 1869.

Mr. Fenton was still in the employ of Mr. Folsom, whose son has a fine residence in Lenox, Mass., when Sumner was fired up. He saw the first regiment that started for the front—the 7th New York—march through the streets of that city.

With Patrick O'Grady, Mr. Fenton went to Connecticut and enlisted for three years in the 11th Connecticut volunteers, being assigned to Company G of that organization, a company that lost a total of 127 men during the service from all causes, while the regiment's total losses were 1126.

Mr. Fenton was the first of the recruits to be subjected to medical examination and young O'Grady, who was only an inch or two over five feet, became anxious as to whether he would be accepted because of his small stature.

When it came his turn the surgeon asked him how tall he was. "I'm not sure, sir, whether I am five feet 10 or 10 feet five," replied O'Grady. The answer so pleased the surgeon that he told the young recruit to put on his clothes, saying, "You'll make a good soldier."

At Yorktown after a 12-mile march, soaked to the skin from a driving rain. On May 4 Company G was fortunate enough to be assigned to a transport which was a coal barge from which soft coal had just been unloaded. The men were not allowed on deck although the hatches were left open. The next morning several planks were necessary before anyone could recognize his neighbor. They were landed at Bermuda Hundred and started on the campaign for Petersburg and Richmond. At the Halfway House O'Grady and about 250 others were captured from the 11th Connecticut and the remainder of the troops retreated to Bermuda Hundred, where the troops were set to digging breastworks clear across the peninsula.

On June 1 the regiment started from White House landing and on the morning of the 3d charged in the battle at Cold Harbor. For seven days the men of the 11th Connecticut and other troops lay in trenches they had dug by melting their canteens and using them as shovels with the dead and wounded lying on the ground in a stench that at times was overpowering. Finally a flag of truce was recognized and the troops were allowed to bury their dead.

During this terrible time John Long, now of Brattleboro, crawled along from the 11th Mass., of which he was a member, and visited for two hours with Mr. Fenton. Five minutes after he had left an officer informed Mr. Fenton that his little friend had been killed. Mr. Fenton crawled to where the body was lying and, turning it over, discovered that it was not his friend but the body of an officer. He was so pleased that he jumped to his feet and a sharpshoot-er promptly put a bullet through his clothes that raised a ridge across his chest. The following day Mr. Long and John Sears, the latter from the 11th Vermont, paid him a visit and an officer dubbed them the "three Hs."

Soon afterward they were put on transports and sent up the James river. It was a beautiful moonlight night and Lieutenant Dickinson asked Tom Flynn if he had ever seen a finer moon than that. "Sure," replied Flynn, "you ought to see the moon we have in Ireland."

On June 15 a start was made for Petersburg and Mr. Fenton says the hardest day's work he ever did was on the 18th of that month, when the regiment was deployed at 4 in the morning as skirmishers and was out of water by 10 o'clock and remained so all day under a galling fire. After a trip back to Bermuda the regiment was sent back to Petersburg and remained there practically all summer. In the battle of August 3 before that city the regiment was so defeated that at all that night only 85 men and one captain answered to their names. After a time at Fort Harrison, where Mr. Fenton was one of those detailed as headquarters guard at General Ord's headquarters, the regiment had been recruited up to 600 men and went to Broadway Landing, where it remained until after Thanksgiving. There Mr. Fenton cast his first vote for president and voted for Abraham Lincoln.

They wintered in Chapin's farm, seven and one-half miles from Richmond, where General U. S. Grant and President Lincoln visited the troops and President Lincoln spoke to them from horseback. On the morning of April 3 the 13th New Hampshire was sent forward and climbed the breastworks in front of Richmond as skirmishers signalled that the place had been evacuated. The main body promptly fell into a column of fours and a mile from the city the major bearing a white flag was met. The column of colored troops that was marching forward by a shorter route was halted to permit the white troops to enter the city first. With the brass band of the 13th New Hampshire at their head the column entered the city, a portion of which was burning. The streets were packed with colored people who welcomed the Union troops with shouts and singing.

Arms were stacked in the square and with hand engines and powder the troops fought and extinguished the

James. Mr. Fenton with others went to inspect the capitol buildings and there found a soldier from an Ohio regiment occupying the speaker's place in the House and "giving us blazes" for disturbing the quiet of the peaceful citizens of Richmond. The troops were soon turned out of there and guards placed.

After doing police duty for three months Mr. Fenton received news that his father was ill and asked for a furlough of 20 days to go to Brattleboro. General Devens, to whom the application went, demanded to know whom the corporal knew in Brattleboro and Mr. Fenton promptly replied that he knew the general's brother. General Devens replied that he had no brother, but that his cousin of the same name lived here. He then made the furlough 30 days and Mr. Fenton made the journey, catching up with his regiment at Lynchburg, Va. The regiment was stationed for some time at Newstead, Craig county, Va., and finally mustered out at Hartford, Conn., arriving there on Christmas eve and the men being paid-off January 6, 1866.

In telling his war record Mr. Fenton said: "There was 24 or 25 of us Irish boys who went to the front who belonged here. They went from different states. I am proud to say that there was not a coward or deserter among them."

Mr. Fenton returned to Brattleboro and worked a year on a farm for Alfred Waite. He worked for some time in the gas house, one summer in Connecticut and for nearly a year on the construction of the Hoosac tunnel. He returned here and worked in the machine shop of Ferdinand Tyler and on Jan. 3, 1882, entered the employ of the Estey Organ Co., where he is still employed.

Mr. Fenton married, May 5, 1878, Sarah Hart, the ceremony being performed at St. Stevens's church, 28th street, New York, by Rev. Father Curran. Mrs. Fenton died March 1, 1893, leaving three children. They are John, employed by the Dunham Brothers Co., William, a plumber employed by Patrick Fleming; and Miss Helen, who keeps house for her father. Mr. Fenton has also one brother, J. J. Fenton, a merchant of Bellows Falls, and three sisters, Mrs. Daniel Sullivan of Bellows Falls, and Mrs. Luke Ferriter and Mrs. Patrick Fenton, both of Brattleboro.

He is a member of Sedwick post, G. A. R., of St. Michael's Roman Catholic church and of the 11th Connecticut Regimental association.

WEST BRATTLEBORO. Rev. E. J. Lewis of Jackson, Ohio, formerly pastor of the Congregational church here, is a guest of Miss Maria L. Stedman.

Harland Harris went to South Newfane today to visit two or three weeks with his grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Smead.

Mrs. Addie Ranger of Williston street has bought of Charles Mixer, a lot on Melrose street, where she intends to build this fall.

Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Winter and children who have been visiting at E. H. Davenport's, have gone to George Winter's to visit.

Mrs. Frank Covey and two daughters of Dorchester, Mass., came Monday afternoon to visit her sister, Mrs. W. F. Mixer, two or three weeks.

Mrs. Cornelius O'Keefe attended the wedding of their son.

Mrs. Agatha Stafford, who had been visiting relatives in Readsboro and Wilmington, has returned home. Mr. and Mrs. Perry Davis of Wilmington and little daughter, spent Sunday with Mr. and Mrs. John Stafford.

Mrs. Carner of Readsboro and Wilmington came Monday to spend the day with Mrs. W. F. Mixer. This morning they left for Boston to attend a training school for corset fitters. They will return the last of the week.

Several operations were performed by Dr. Lynch at the Melrose hospital yesterday. Joseph Dunlevy was operated upon for necrosis of the jaw, Mrs. Eleanor Morrison of Organ street for acute appendicitis, Miss Grace Fitzgerald of Pine street and Donald LeKay of this village for the removal of tonsils and adenoids.

Up to Him. "Won't you get me an automobile, dear?" said the young married woman. "But the expense, wife!" replied the husband. "Oh, you know you promised to keep nothing from me after we were married!"—Yonkers Statesman.

Publicity. "Of course you don't care for cheap notoriety," said the man of ideals. "My dear sir," rejoined Senator Sorghum, "there is no such thing as cheap notoriety nowadays. Advertising of every description costs something."—Washington Star.

A Case of Necessity. "Do you write often to your husband when you go away for the summer?" "Yes, I have to. He never gives me money enough at one time to last very long."—Detroit Free Press.

Spirited Conversation. "Isn't it strange how much intellectuates you?" asked the cheerful idiot. "Not at all," replied the boob. "It is written in bars, isn't it?"—Cincinnati Enquirer.

As Usual. Bill—How did her singing strike you? Jill—Oh, as usual, I was the innocent bystander.—Yonkers Statesman.

Practical Health Hint. Delirium. The cause that underlies a case of delirium must first be found, because the treatment will vary in accordance with it. Few of us are called on to deal with delirium tremens or with the delirium of starvation or with that terrible form known as acute delirious mania, which generally ends in death. But the delirium that accompanies typhoid fever, pneumonia or the acute infectious fevers of childhood is of common occurrence, and it is well to know that much can be done to prevent it or to bring relief after it has gone and until a doctor can be secured. Sedative treatment, such as a warm bath with cold applications to the head, will often ward off an attack, but when there is great prostration of strength stimulation is usually necessary. Delirium is always exhausting. See that the patient's strength is kept up as far as possible and never leave a delirious patient alone, even for a minute. There are too many cases of sick people falling from open windows.

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