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FOUND IN THE ATTIC
BY JERRY H. POST

Copied by H. Ward

Jeremiah Hopper Post, or Jerry H. Post as his name was written in the Volunteer Service of the Army during the war of the rebellion of 1861and 1865, was born in New York City in the state of New York on the 3rd day of December 1842. His great-grandfather on the paternal side was a revolutionary soldier. His grandfather on the same side was drafted in the war of 1812and furnished a substitute. Peter A. Post, his father, was employed, at the time of the birth of the subject of our sketch, by Kipp and Brown, the owners of a stage firm. His mother's maiden name was Hopper, a descendent of Revolutionary ancestors.

The life of the subject of our sketch was romantic and filled with perils from his birth. We will record but a few incidents! In early childhood his father moved to Newfoundland, a small village, located partly in Morris and partly in Passaic County in the state, New Jersey. He purchased a tannery. It was allowed to go to ruin. The plank which covered many of the vats began to decay, and he tumbled into them, and, on one occasion, was fished out only with enough life left to resuscitate him.

After going through a little more than the ordinary experiences of childhood, and receiving a good, common, school education, he worked for his father. The struggle between Slavery and Freedom, between the competion of a Slave's no pay and paid labor, between Free trade with foreign countries on the one side and Imports and Duties on foreign imported goods onthe other, between the Union of the States or the Disruption of them, came upon the

The Secessionists during the winter of 1860 were preparing to maintain by the force of arms the right to withdraw from the Union. Fortifications were built .The militia of the seceeded states were organized into Regiments to enter the field at a few days notice The Unionists made no attempt to raise military forces until April 1861. By this time the secessionists had become well organized and laughed at the efforts made by the Unionists to force them to allegiance after every attempt to win them back to their allegiance had failed. The Secessionists succeeded in getting control of the forts

and harbors in their section, which belonged to the United States, the arsenals and many factories for munitions also the custom houses, Post-offices and Post-roads and allured many of the officers of the National Army, who had been educated at the expense of the United States

to join them. The secessionists claimed that slavery, the principal cause of the war, was permitted by the divine law because it was of civine origin. The Unionists claimed that Slavery of human-beings was opposite to the laws of God and Man, and should not be sanctioned by the laws of the country. They claimed that men had no right to buy and sell human flesh. They claimed that mankind had no right to force into servitude a part of the human race to work for the other part without pat. Besides these evils they claimed there was a still greater one. Children were slaves or free according to the condition of their mothers. Sometimes masters made concubines of their female slaves and according to their State laws had a right to sell their own offspring the same as animals. If Slaves escaped from inhuman owners to Canada, the owners claimed they had a right to pursue them, retake them and force them back into service and compel them to undergo such punishment as they see fit to inflict. These are only a few of the evils the majority of the people said were connected with the condition of slavery. These pluse many others such as: Selling Husbands away from their wives -- Wives from their husbands -- Children from their parents -- And forcing husbands and wives into new relations with other men and women without the sanction of law and only at the will of the masters. These were principles the one side was fighting to maintain and by military coertion compel the other side to adopt.

The secessionists, having started in sooner than the Unionists to prepare for the struggle, had the advantage at the beginning and was most successful in the early

battles which were fought.

When the call to arms throught the free states was made by the National government, many volunteered to go into the army. But after a few reverses came to the Union Army, a gloom seemed to hang like a cloud over the friends of the Union cause and the people began to feel discouraged and were less ready to go to the aid of the Nation. But there were many hopeful hearts left who believed that Divine Providence was on the side of Freedom. They started to raise a new army to take the field. Among the

volunteers was the subject of our sketch.

There is no citizen who has suffered more for their country than I have. My wounds have never healed. For years I had to draw my water with a Catheter. Wherever I attended to either of the necessities of Nature it was in pain at the time and it would scarcely disappear when would be necessary to undergo the distress again. I could see others active and energetic around me. I could see them make progress in the struggle of life while I had to be content to nurse my wound and bear my burden alone. My pension brought me scarcely the necessities of life. The comforts of life were unknown to me so far as my own enjoyment was concerned, and why? because I had served the interest of the country in the vigor of my youth with more zeal and better than I had my own personal welfare and advantage.

Nothing but my intregity of character and fine sense of honor kept me from leaving the service. I had pledged my word to serve as a volunteer and I determined to keep it if I left my homes to bleach on the field of

battle.

The reason of my re-enlistment was because I felt that there would still be harder fighting to be done in the coming year than we had yet to go through and I Knew the only way for me to get home -- something I was anxious to do -- would be to re-inlist and get a furlough which was promised to every soldier who would renew his term of service. So far as the bounty or monty inducement was concerned it never had any influence on me as the great risk. I had to run through exposure and by fighting was always uppermost in my mind. At that time I had formed no family relations, had no one to care for but myself, was only a youth, had the world before me, and felt that I was as able as anyone to make my way though life, so long as I kept my health and did not contract any disability by exposing myself to the hazardous perils of a cruel and criminal sectional war. But the country was in trouble. The government appealed to the loyal and patriotic sentiment of the youth and manhood of the land. The youth were more susceptible to the appeals than the mature years of manhood. I was a youth and responded to the appeal

Inthe charge of Pennsylvania in the month of May 1864 I received a bullet wound of the abdomen that was supposed to be fatal, but it proved otherwise. After being in the hospital thirteen months I was discharged although I was

scarcely able to get home. I came to Newark on crutches and lay all winter on my back at the home of my brother, Elisha Post, in Beecher Street. I received only eight dollars per month pension while my expenses were a great deal more. In the Spring of 1866 I began to creep around. I wanted to make my home in Newark. But could find no chance to get any occupation to make a living. My idea was to open a cigar and tobacco store—something that would be a light business and suitable to the physical state of my health.

The Volunteer Soldiers of 1861 and 5 did not get their disability in the service of their friends but for the service of their country. Because the soldiers is a crificed their future in life for the sake of the entire country, is no reason why their relations and friends should be called upon to support them. Such a policy on the part of the government would be a continuation of their sacrifice upon the soldiers, their relations and friends. A country that would ask for such a sacrifice on the part of the soldiers and their families would be unworthy of an existence among the civilized nations of the world.

WhenI went in the army, I determined to test the value of merit alone. I made up my mind not to run any unnecessary risk and to my knowledge, I never did; while I never refused to perform my duty that I was ordered to undertake no matter how hazardous the duty might be. I went in the Army as a Private soldier and was discharged from it as First Sargent of a company and the promotions I received were given to me without any solicitation on my part.

Among the predominating desires of my heart were a love of home and a craving for domestic peace. This craving seemed impossible for me to supply. When I read the paper I would pick out every case of divorce, every family brawl or trouble, with the intention of wrenching the unsatisfied desire from my heart; but torture it as I might it would come back with redoubled force and energy. Finally I formed the resolution of satisfying the desire if it could be done without imposing upon a woman by misrepresentation or fraud. I braced up enough courage to let my affiancee know the condition of my disability

at that time with many a misgiving on my part as to what she would do but as the old saying goes "Love laughs at locksmiths" so the cobwebs of fate were brushed away and we became husband and wife.

I thought a great many quack medicines and paid a great deal of money out to different doctors who represented that they could cure me; but after many trials and a great deal of expense, I found that all the remidies recommended to me were more harmful then productive of good results. Finally I concluded to follow the advice of Dr. F. H. Hamilton of New York City and let nature take her course which ever may the result might be. My would seemed to be less troublesome than when I was taking medicine.

I knew that when I did marry I might entail suffering on my family unless some other means than what I could provide to aid us was secured. The Pension I received was no where near adequate and my wound was liable at any time to unfit me for the lightest kind of labor. My wife used her needle and in this way helped to meet the family expenses.

A great deal has been said about pacifying, and conciliating the rebels and about not saying anything to hurt their sensitiveness, but they should have thout about their sensitiveness before they attempted to destroy the Union and the physical ability of myself and my comrades. We have a sensitiveness about allowing our wives to fly the needle from day to day and night after nightin addition to attending to the household duties to live respectively and as other people with whom we associate as well as other men who live in the neighborhood no higher in the social scale than ourselves.

I went in the army in October, 1861 in the 19th year of my age, after earnest solicitation and a strong representation of the impending need of the country. I received a severe wound that unfitted me for any active pursuit in life.* I was discharged in 1865. I served in the army when I should have been fitting myself for some trade or profession. After I was discharged in June, 1865, I made my way home on crutches. The winter of 1865 and 66 I was confined to my bed and was paying board, furnishing fuel, and met other expenses, on only \$8.00 per month pension. When I was able to get around, I found that what little money I had was being used up and *For note see page 6.

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I tried to get something to do to furnish myself with a living. Every I attempted to do anything my old wound would break often and I would struggle along in that way. Finally my pension was raised to \$15.00 per month, and afterwards to \$20.00, then \$25.00, and finally another small increase. My pension and what I have earned has not averaged more than half as much as any ordinary, industrious, without "vicious habits" would have averaged or earned. The wound has caused a good deal of expense besides the suffering from it, and the denial to myself for a number of years of every man's normal rights, to live and eat under his own vine and fig-tree.**

My only aim is to--First-encourage patriotism, Secondto incubate sound, practical, religous principles, and
Third- to awaken a broader sympathy for equal rights without regard to rank, wealth, or educational conditions.
In the fall of 1861 when the life of the Union was

In the fall of 1861 when the life of the Union was trembling on the verge of separation and when the hearts of strong men wavered in view of the reverses which were overtaking the armies of the Nation, but a lad of eighteen with the vigor of bodily health and a strong constitution, I reluctantly but full of hope and patriotism, consented to enlist as a private soldier. The best part

*I fought in over a dozen battles, was in a large number of skirmishes, and was under fire some thirty-five or forty times.

**I have seen a number of young men with less intelligence, less ability, less industry, less perseverance, and certainly with no abdominal pain caused by a bullet wound outstrip me in life in every way. My own experience, I dare say, is only a repetition of the experiences of many of my old comrades.

of my life was laid at the alter of my country. Inever sought an oppurtunity to expose myself to danger. I never ran away from one that I was ordered to face. When the enemies works or a battery was to be stormed, with youthful courage, vigor, and impetuosity I was among the foremost to secure the advantages of a victory. Always true to my colors, always true to the principles of our constitution and to the Union, and never questioning the commands of my superiors, I served the country through the trying ordeal regardless of the consequenses to life, limb, or future welfare. The country in its prosperity is amply able to pay every dollar of compensation for all disabilities contracted in her service. I have no resentments against those under whom I served, no bitterness of feeling to purify against any class of men who are now loyal to our Constitution and laws. My only desire is to see our country, our whole country, move on in her destiny among the great family of nations.

Destiny seems to have determined that I should go into the Union army and get wounded. Equity resolved that I should have a pension, if not entirely adequate to the disability at least as near adequate to it as the conscience of Uncle Sam would stretch itself on the side of justice and integrity. Duty to the State by a small portion of the inhabitants makes it obligatory on the part of the large portion to compensate the smaller portion for any disabilities contracted in the service. Duty and tobligation are reciprocal. If a man owes his duty to the state in hazardous undertakings, the state is under obligation to compensate the man to the full extent of the disability contracted in the State's service. Such an obligation is only consistent with the right of compensation on one side as well as the duty to face. the danger on the other side. Civil society is the institution of man for mutual protection. A man's right to his health, strength and liberty is a natural and inalienable right and if it is injuroiusly taken from him even under the plea of patriotism he should be given the power to compel the author of the injury restitution or satisfaction to the full money value of his loss. If he is not able to secure such compensation, the government he served should secure him anadequate compensatiion for whatever disability he received or contracted even if it should be necessary to do so at the mouth of the cannon or the point of the bayonet.

Magnanimity to rebels on the part of the government is not generous when it is done at the expense of a lot of disabled patriots. The compensation of the patriot is simply an act of justice. I fought in my youth, was badly wounded and now consider that I have a perfect right to do my share of the talking.

I was in over a dozen battles, as many more skirmishes, under the fire of cannon from fifty to a hundred
times, was struck by a few bullets, had several hairbredth escapes, and consider that I have a right to do a
little of the crowing as well as those who smelt the
powder from some hill, housetop, or temporary observatory.

I have met men in life with whom I have nodoubt I could successfully compete in both physical and mental ability if it were not for the old wound which I received while helping to defend the authority of the United

States government.

Whenever a young man shows that he possesses the elements of a good character and a sound integrity, coupled with faithful industry and fair business ability, it is pretty evident that he will make a stir in the world if he is not disabled in his country's service.

I doubt very much whether the wound will permit me

to attend to the duties of any office.

Self-preservation is the first law and the reputation of the pention is as dear him as it is to any class of men.

My wound is not likely to improve now. It has been on one too long . If I had not attempted to do the hard muscular work that I have it might bebetter than it is now . It is over thirty-three years since I received it.

I am well aware of the fact that I cannot stand the mental exertion that a man can who is in sound bodily health. If allowed to work in my own way, I can accomplish

something.

The men who did the fighting during the war of the rebellion have found from sad experiences that it does not pay them to sustain the expenses of sentimental organizations to the continual sacrifice of their material interests. The personal cost of them is enormousin the aggregate and the benefit does not repay them for the outlay.

The events I passed through in the Civil War are not

pleasant for me to recall and I would prefer to have the waters of oblivion roll over them if it were possible to do so.

The long continued discharge and suffering I have undergone from myold wound has made me sensible of my inability to stand the physical and mental endurance of a man who has not suffered as I have from such an injury.

The condition of my bodily health caused by an old wound received in the charge of Spottsylvania makes it necessary to decline the acceptance of any office of responsibility, and I have no desire for any office that is simply one of monor.

A WORD ABOUT PENSIONS

Permitmone who from circumstances has studied the Pension System in its different hearings to have a word to say on the subject, Duringthe last year it has been kept prominently before the public. The justice of pensioning those who risk their life and physical health for the sake of a nation, I do not think anyone, except a healthy wretch of one who has no regard for the welfare of his country would deny or attempt to refuse. The fact that fraudulent cases are bourneon the rolls, reflects not only upon all the pensioners but upon those who have previously administered theoffice and upon Congress itself for allowing that branchoof the government to be run with such laxity. If the present office holders who think these are fraudulent cases will in their search for them, render full justice to those who are entitled to compensation for their disabilities they will find, in my opinion, more cases that deserve an increase than cases founded upon fraud. If the attempt at fraud on the part of the pentionees in obtained pensions proves untrue, it is not only an act of justice to increase the pention of these who are not getting an adequate compensation for the disabilities they got at the time of the nation's peril and when it was either death or disability to the volunteer soldiers.

THE END