

Carroll Yesteryears
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Carroll Resident Mullinix Played Role in Civil War By Mary Ann Ashcraft

What is it about the Civil War and its participants which fascinates Americans, especially those of us living close to Gettysburg? We never tire of reading articles that capture aspects of that turbulent period.

My curiosity was piqued by an article that appeared in this newspaper on July 1, 1938. It mentioned that Francis L. Mullinix, a Civil War veteran who had served as a drummer in Company F, 7th Maryland Volunteer Infantry and was then living in Westminster, would be attending the veterans' reunion associated with the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg. He had recently celebrated his 89th birthday.

Records show Francis Mullinix enlisted as a "musician" on March 15, 1864, when he was 15 years old and only five feet tall. Because of his age, his mother must have given her consent just as she'd given it for his older brother Charles to enlist in the same unit in August 1862 at age 17. Did she have misgivings? It seems likely because military records reveal Charles had already been hospitalized twice with typhoid fever in the 18 months before Francis signed up. Was the \$300 bounty being paid to men who enlisted in Maryland in 1864 an inducement? It is hard to say. Until that point, the 7th Maryland had not seen much action. Perhaps his mother hoped its luck would continue.

But Ulysses Grant's bloody spring campaign to capture Richmond began in early May. Suddenly, the 7th Maryland found itself in the desperate fighting at Spotsylvania Court House, Virginia, on May 10 and 11. Charles was shot in the forearm and admitted to Emory Hospital in Washington a week later. After nine days, he was sent on to Summit House Hospital in Philadelphia where a report said, "Patient very much debilitated upon admission." His arm was never amputated, a drastic procedure, but one which Civil War surgeons found could prevent the often deadly infections in leg or arm wounds. By July 1, Charles was dead and laid to rest in a cemetery in Philadelphia. Francis, however, survived the rest of the war with no mention of injury or illness and left the military at the age of 16 with the U.S. government owing him 5 months of back pay and \$160 in bounty money.

Francis didn't stay in Maryland. In the 1870s he married a girl in Kentucky when he was 25 and she was 16. They eventually settled in Saline County at the southern tip of Illinois where they raised a family of 10. Census records between 1880 and 1910 show him employed as a laborer, then as a coal miner, and eventually as the postmaster in his small town.

What brought him home to Carroll County as an old man and kept him here for several years even after the 75th anniversary ended? Was it childhood memories or wartime experiences or both? It is nice to know his military service as a drummer in Co. F, 7th Maryland Volunteer

Infantry is preserved on his gravestone in Liberty Cemetery, Saline Co., Illinois – Francis L. Mullinix – 1849 – 1943.

Mary Ann Ashcraft is a library volunteer at the Historical Society of Carroll County.



Image credit: Historical Society of Carroll County

Image caption: This souvenir commemorating the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg in July 1938 was probably available to the many visitors to the event as well as returning veterans of the Civil War.