

**GEORGE  
T. ULMER**



***ADVENTURES AND  
REMINISCENCES  
OF A VOLUNTEER;  
OR, A DRUMMER  
BOY FROM MAINE***

**George T. Ulmer**

# **Adventures and Reminiscences of a Volunteer; Or, A Drummer Boy from Maine**

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Read This Carefully.

"SHERMAN HOUSE"

EVERY ROOM SPACIOUS AND ELEGANTLY FURNISHED!

THE CUSINE IS UNEXCELLED!

J. IRVING PEARCE, Proprietor.

# **PREFACE.**

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In submitting this little book the author does not attempt to edit a history of the rebellion, nor does he assume to be correct in the date of events to a day. He does not hope or expect to make a hero of himself by writing it, for he was far from doing anything heroic, believing, as he does, that most of the heroes of the war were killed. Perhaps the WRITING of this book may stamp him a hero, and for his audacity in so doing some one may kill him. But he intends to clothe his little work in homely, rugged, commonplace language. Not striving to make it a work of literary merit, only a truthful account of an unimportant career and experience in the army. It may, perhaps, be interesting to some of his comrades, who recollect the incidents or recall similar events that happened to themselves, and thereby serve the purpose of introducing one of the youngest soldiers and a comrade of that greatest and most noble of all organizations, the Grand Army of the Republic.

Respectfully,  
GEORGE T. ULMER.



The Memorable Bombardment of Fort Sumter.

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**B**OMBARDMENT OF FORT SUMTER. This was the beginning and the first sound of actual war which inspired me, and kindled the fire of patriotism in my youthful breast. The little spark lay smoldering for two long years, 'till at last it burst forth into a full blaze. When Fort Sumter was bombarded, I was a midget of a boy; a barefooted, ragged newsboy in the city of New York. The bombardment was

threatened for several weeks before it actually occurred; and many nights I would have been bankrupted, but that everyone was on the “qui vive” for the event, and I got myself into lots of trouble by shouting occasionally, “Fort Sumter Bombarded!” I needed money; it sold my papers, and I forgave myself. When the authentic news did come, I think it stirred up within me as big a piece of fighting desire as it did in larger and older people. I mourned the fact that I was then too small to fight, but lived in hopes that the war would last until I should grow. If I could have gone south, I felt that I could have conquered the rebellious faction alone, so confident was I of my fighting abilities.

In the fall of '61 my dear mother died, and my father who had a great desire to make possibilities out of improbabilities, and believing a farm the proper place to bring up a family of boys, bought one away in the interior of Maine. The farm was very hilly, covered with huge pines and liberally planted with granite ledges. I used to think God wanted to be generous to this state and gave it so much land it had to be stood up edgeways. Picture to yourself, dear reader, four boys taken from the busy life of a great city, place them in the wilderness of Maine, where they had to make a winrow of the forest to secure a garden spot for the house, pry out the stumps and blast the ledges to sow the seed, then ask yourself what should the harvest be?

Father's business required all of his time in New York City, and we were left with two hired men to develop the farm, our brains and muscles, but mine didn't seem to develop worth a cent. I didn't care for the farmer's life. The plow and scythe had no charms for me. My horny, hardened little

hand itched and longed to beat the drums that would marshall men to arms.

After eight months of hard work we had cleared up quite a respectable little farm, an oasis in that forest of pines. A new house and barn had been built, also new fences and stone walls, but not much credit for this belonged to me. Soon after, we received a letter from father stating that he would be with us in a short time and bring us a new mother and a little step-sister. This was joyous news, the anticipation of a new mother, and above all a step-sister, inspired us with new ambition. The fences and barn received a coat of whitewash, the stones were picked out of the road in front of the house, the wood-pile was repiled and everything put into apple-pie order. We did not know what day they would arrive. So each day about the time the stage coach from Belfast should pass the corners, we would perch ourselves on the fence in front of the house to watch for it, and when it did come in sight, wonder if the folks were in it; if they were, it would turn at the corners and come toward our house. Day after day passed, and they did not come, and we had kind of forgotten about it. Finally one day while we were all busy burning brush, brother Charlie came rushing towards us shouting, "The stage coach is coming! The stage is coming!" Well, such a scampering for the house! We didn't have time to wash or fix up, and our appearance would certainly not inspire our city visitors with much paternal pride or affection; we looked like charcoal burners. Our faces, hands and clothes were black and begrimed from the burning brush, but we couldn't help it; we were obliged to receive and welcome them as we were. I

pulled up a handful of grass and tried to wipe my face, but the grass being wet, it left streaks all over it, and I looked more like a bogie man than anything else. We all struggled to brush up and smooth our hair, but it was no use, the stage coach was upon us, the door opened, father jumped out, and as we crowded around him, he looked at us in perfect amazement and with a kind of humiliated expression behind a pleasant fatherly smile he exclaimed, "Well, well, you are a nice dirty looking lot of boys. Lizzie," addressing his wife and helping her to alight, "This is our family, a little smoky; I can't tell which is which, so we'll have to wait till they get their faces washed to introduce them by their names." But our new mother was equal to the occasion for coming to each of us, and taking our dirty faces in her hands, kissed us, saying at the same time, "Philip, don't you mind, they are all nice, honest, hard-working boys, and I know I shall like them, even if this country air has turned their skins black." At this moment a tiny voice called, "Please help me out." All the boys started with a rush, each eager to embrace the little step-sister. I was there first, and in an instant, in spite of my dirty appearance, she sprang from the coach right into my arms; my brothers struggled to take her from me, but she tightened her little arms about my neck and clung to me as if I was her only protector. I started and ran with her, my brothers in full chase, down the road, over the stone walls, across the field, around the stumps with my prize, the brothers keeping up the chase till we were all completely tired out, and father compelled us to stop and bring the child to the house. Afterward we took our turns at caressing and admiring her; finally we apologized