

Dyson Boothroyd:

A Soldier of Two Stones

In preparation for Memorial Day, I thought it fitting that I devote some time to the person and service of Dyson Boothroyd, whose service to his country is commemorated by not one but two monuments in the Delphi area.

Dyson was, according to the Hoosier Democrat and Comet from Flora, Indiana, the son of Jerry and Ellen Boothroyd, and was born in Yorkshire, England in 1839. He was one of a family of nine children and, following in the footsteps of his father, became a stone cutter. Jerry had made the trip to America during the 1850's, and, having travelled to America, found it to his liking for a new home for his family, and found Rochester, NY to his liking and targeted that area as a new home for his family. When Dyson was sixteen years old he enlisted in the British Army as all young lads do, and served for four years in Ireland. Knowing that trouble was brewing between the British Empire and India, he would be called to take up the sword again.

He arrived in Delphi with his younger brother Alfred in October of 1860 and entered into the trade of stonecutting with J.L. Knight for a few months. After spending a few months in Whitestown, IN, he returned to Delphi in March of 1861 and rejoined Knight. Although he was tired of war, he became a ninety-day recruit.

According to an account of the service of the Ninth Indiana, "The Battle of Laurel Mountain, also known as Laurel Hill, pitted 3,500 forces under Union Brigadier Thomas A. Morris against what Morris perceived to be superior forces of 4,000 under Confederate Brigadier General

Robert S. Garnett. McClellan had ordered Morris to occupy Garnett while McClellan's own force of 5,000 attacked 1,300 men under Lt. Col. John Pengram at Rich Mountain" As a part of Morris' brigade, the Ninth Indiana, taking cover behind trees, exchanged fire with Confederates, who were behind breastworks. Tiring of the stalemate that ensued, the Union troops charged the breastworks and did "well enough, considering the hopeless folly of the movement, according to Ambrose Bierce.

To give more specific information about Boothroyd, "After Corporal Boothroyd of the Ninth's Company A was wounded in the neck and paralyzed during the charge, Bierce (Ambrose Bierce, who would later become a well-known Civil War author) carried Boothroyd 'fully twenty rods (100 m) under enemy fire to safety, only to see him die later, according to an Indianapolis Journal reporter's account.

According to the Delphi Times of Saturday, August third, "The first duty performed by the Company was the burial of their lamented companion-in-arms, Dyson Boothroyd, who fell while noble fighting for his country's honor at Laurel Hill, his body having been lying in one of the vaults of the Court House awaiting their return. After the solemn duty had been performed, with military honors, and, after taking the last, sad, look at the final resting place of their much-loved and honored brother soldier, the company returned to town and disbanded. After the sadness occasioned by this first sorrowful day had to some extent worn away, the manifestations of joy expressed between the soldiers and their friends beggar description. . . . "

His initial burial was in the Delphi City Cemetery on East Monroe Street, in a burial ground given over by the original donor of one

hundred acres of land for the City of Delphi. This is presently the site of the City Park.

Several years ago the City fathers decided that the graves should be moved, so Dyson's remains were moved to the IOOF Cemetery and another stone was created to memorialize his final burial. According to reports, his brother Alfred served as the carver for the marker for his final resting site, thus the title of this writing—a soldier of two stones.

The present marker to commemorate the first Carroll County casualty of the Civil War was erected by the G.A.R. circle in 1924, and in May of that year the group met at the site to place the stone, which came from a farm northeast of the City. Accompanying the location of the stone as a part of the Memorial Day ceremonies was a cooperative dinner in the shelter house, which is still standing.