


Peter Kumler Bonebrake - Civil War Wound

Sergeant Peter K. Bonebrake of the 33rd Iowa Infantry Volunteers was wounded at the Battle of Jenkins' Ferry. The Federal troops were scattered in such haste that they could not stop to pick up the injured and that meant that many men died who should have recovered. Bonebrake was one of the wounded left on the field where a spent musket ball had struck his shoulder. He fell and could not move and would have bled to death if help had not come. He was saved by a black boy called Clem whom he had befriended. Sergeant Bonebrake lay helpless all afternoon and night. He knew that he had to get away from the battlefield before morning and was weak from loss of blood and lack of food. Some had already begun robbing the sick and the dead. One of the mules that had been used to pull artillery and it still had the bridle and some other portion of harness on. Clem caught him, and lifted Sergeant Bonebrake onto the mule's back. Leading the mule, he set out after the retreating Union Army hoping to overtake them. But the mule was slow, and the soldier on his back could not hold on safely. In the early afternoon they were halted by a group of three guerrilla horsemen who were not Southern soldiers but who lived by robbery. They three discussed what to do with the soldier and the boy. Two of them voted to shoot both, but one advised against it possibly thinking that the soldier would not survive. Then they shot Clem and rode away. The sergeant sat on the mule's back all the rest of that day and night. He dared not get off lest he could not get on again. He was have-starved and only partially conscious. The mule stopped for long intervals to eat grass and Peter toppled but held on. Eventually, after three days, they reached the Federal camp. How he had been able to stay on the mule's back, he could not tell. He was almost delirious when he struggled into a camp which proved to be that of the 33rd Iowa Infantry. Some of his own company carried him into the regimental hospital where food was brought to him. He ate very little. One of the doctors remarked that he could not live until morning. He dropped to sleep but awakened at early dawn. He knew that an operation to remove the bullet would be the finish. He did not know the Regimental doctors but he determined to reach his Company Hospital and the doctor he knew. He was too weak to stand, so he crept on hands and knees, much of the way. He rested at frequent intervals and sometimes was certain that he had fainted. Just as dawn was changing to daylight, he reached the hospital, fainted, as his friends recognized him and carried him to the improvised hospital. The good doctor saw that an immediate operation was necessary. So with Peter stretched out on a rough table under the light of a lantern, the bullet was removed, and the wound soon healed and the sergeant returned to his company in Little Rock. Grant County, Arkansas, Saline Territory Civil War Article USGENWEB NOTICE: In keeping with our policy of providing free information on the Internet, data may be freely used by non-commercial entities, as long as this message remains on all copied material. These electronic pages cannot be reproduced in any format for profit or other presentation. Graciously provided by Lou Ann Lunsford. Copied from a Special Edition of "THE MERRY GREEN PRESS" <http://files.usgwarchives.net/ar/state/military/>

 **Date:** Apr 1864

 **Place:** Battlefield, Jenkins Ferry, Arkansas

 **Description:** Account of wounding of Peter K. Bonebrake