

**5 August 1861 – New York Times**  
**August 1861 - Baltimore Exchange Washington Correspondent**  
**Notes of the Rebellion**  
**Story of Escaped Prisoners from Sudley Church**

The Washington correspondent of the Baltimore Exchange gives the following as the story of Private Doherty, of the New York Seventy-first, who escaped from Sudley Church in company with Capt. Allen, of the Massachusetts Eleventh, and private Waldorf, of the Wisconsin Second:

“About 4 o’clock on Sunday afternoon just as the chances of the field were beginning to turn against the National troops, and the Seventy-first had their hands full, a shell took off the foot of a comrade of Mr. Doherty, his rear man, in Company A. Mr. D. immediately proceeded to carry the poor fellow to the hospital, and had hardly done so when the bugle sounded the retreat, and his regiment, with the rest of the troops, were retiring rapidly, leaving him far behind. He at once made a dash for his own freedom, and gained almost alone an open field, where a party of Confederate troops under Capt. Barker, took him prisoner, and conducted him to the hospital at Sudley Church. Here he found Dr. Pugno amputating the arm of a private of the Seventy-first and assisted him to the best of his ability in the performance of various surgical operations the whole afternoon. Twelve surgeons were prisoners in the church, and these remained there for the relief of the wounded – nearly all of whom were Nationals – all night. There were 286 wounded at this place, 70 being exposed in the open air for lack of accommodations, the rest in the black-smith’s shop, carpenter’s shop, and church.

On Monday morning most of the prisoner’s surgeons were removed to Manassas, all being required to give their parole; but all declined except Drs. Pugno, Swift, Winston, Buckstone and DeGrath. These latter returned and resumed their duties in the hospital. During the absence of the surgeons, twelve of the wounded died. Thirty-two had died up to the time of Mr. Doherty’s escape.

On Friday night about five minutes before 10 o’clock, by a preconcerted arrangement, Capt. Allen and Messrs. Doherty and Waldorf – who had from the first been allowed a reasonable freedom of movement – approached the guard at the blacksmith’s shop. I must not forget to mention that Mr. Waldorf was wounded in the arm, and that Capt. Allen had contrived to exchange his officer’s uniform for that of a private, and that he successfully affected to be wounded also. By an arrangement with a Rhode Island soldier, they were to be informed by a signal when the guard should reach a certain point on his beat.

Thus prepared, they approached the sentry, and assuming the character and tone of Confederate officers, called out to him “half past 10 there!” – they having previously ascertained that the guard was to be relieved at 10 o’clock. The man, suspecting nothing, immediately walked to the end of his beat to look for the relief; at once the signal was given by the Rhode Islander, and the three prisoners leaping a fence, noiselessly crossed a little brook, and were quickly concealed in the woods. Mr. Doherty believes that they were not missed till the roll-call the next morning.

They pushed forward with all speed that night and all of the next morning, steering by the moon, until, at 2 ½ o’clock on Saturday afternoon, they reached the house of a Mr. Macon. Here they resolved, at all risks, to stop and make inquiries. By Mrs. Macon, who was alone at home, they were so closely catechized as to render their situation peculiarly uncomfortable. They pass for men of the Fourth Alabama Regiment, and she showed that she was familiar with that corps, by inquiring as to the fate of two officers named Grey. Doherty told her that one of them had been killed. This she promptly denied, from the strength of other information which had reached her, but her suspicions were removed by the explanation that “the Grey we mean was a private.” The fugitives, however, seeing that Mrs. Macon was by no means a person of easy credulity, lost no time in relieving her Southern hospitality of their presence.

Near Leesburgh, still passing for Alabamians, they met a man who was satisfied with their story that they were picking blackberries, and had got separated from their regiment. He kindly informed them that they would find their comrades at Ball’s Mill waiting for artillery. Near Milford they met a little boy and girl who directed them for information, to the house of a Mr. Edwards, where they arrived at 5 P. M., on Saturday.

Here also they perceived they were suspected for a horseman rode up and, after conferring with Edwards, departed hastily – when they slipped away. As they were pressing with all speed towards the Potomac, a party of about ten horsemen came suddenly upon them and ordered them to halt; but as they had a high fence on their right inclosing a cover of trees, they took no further notice of the challenge save to leap the fence, the horsemen discharging their pistols at them, and take refuge among the trees. Some farmers of the neighborhood, hearing the firing, were promptly on the spot with their guns and joining the horsemen, took down a part of the fence, and began a search. Meantime the fugitives had cut down branches from the trees, and with these and some light brushwood, concealed themselves effectually. Mr. Doherty assures us that as the troopers beat the woods, the horse of one of the them actually trod lightly on his leg, as he lay in his hiding place.

After perhaps an hour and a half of ineffectual search, they abandoned the woods, and took to the road, concluding that the prisoners had given them the slip, and got off in that way. Before going, however, they left a man on guard, who very soon lay down on a log but a few feet from his hidden foes. Doherty, almost exhausted, had availed himself of the occasion and this cozy concealment, to take a nap, and when he was roused by the captain, who whispered that they must be moving, he had just dreamed that he was a prisoner again, and could not easily shake off the impression.

Their guard was still sleeping, and they might easily have killed him with a six shooter, their only arms, but forbore from fear of bringing the people down upon them. At 1 ½ o'clock Sunday morning they reached the Potomac. Here they found a solitary horseman, who made a sudden rush, no doubt to give the alarm, whereupon they plunged at once into the river, and partly by swimming, partly by wading, reached Long Island, 17 miles from Washington

Mr. Doherty assures me – and Capt. Allen will, I believe, cordially indorse his statement – that nothing could exceed the magnanimity of the Confederate officers towards their prisoners wounded or unwounded. Not a harsh word fell from them to mortify or insult the men who had just struggled with them, sword to sword, and bayonet to bayonet; but, on the contrary, they displayed a lively solicitude for their comfort. This kindness was especially conspicuous in the artillery and cavalry officers.

Capt. Ball, who, whilst a prisoner at Washington, had been guarded by a detachment of the Seventy-first, was assiduous in his hospitable attentions. He and his men (who were not in the fight as has been reported) sent milk, eggs, and brandy. A farmer in the neighborhood, named Ricketts, was very kind. He and his wife sent the National wounded, soup, gruel and a young lamb. They feel especially grateful to Capt. White and Patrick and Col. Barker. The latter said to them, "Take good care of yourselves, boys, and see that your wounded have what they require."

Gen. Beauregard rode up to the hospital, and gave particular orders that the enemy's wounded should be well attended. I am happy to record the manly evidence of these gentlemen. No dying man's throat was cut, they say – no dead man robbed.

Fair Play