1961

Twenty-Fourth Publication

of the

Oswego County Historical Society

1961

OSWEGO COUNTY WEEKLIES
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FORT ONTARIO

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1961

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BEFORE THE SOCIETY IN 1961

Annual Report of The President

Despite absorption in global matters Americans show an increasing interest in local history and local museums. The Oswego County Historical Society during the past year enjoyed a share of this revival. Programs were varied and well received, and a stream of visitors passed through the museum during the tourist season.

The Society participated in the celebration of the Centennial of the College. A large audience attended a commemorative dinner at Lakeside Dining Hall on April 24, where sidelights of "A Century of Culture in Oswego County" were presented. Presentations included Dr. Charles Wells' colorful review of the theatre, Max Ziel's tall-tales of Oswego's "greats" and "near-greats" on the athletic field, Joseph Shoenfelt's appraisal of the area's architecture, and Dr. Charles Snyder's interpretion of a century of local history. Ralph Faust, a past-president of the Society, served as toastmster.

The annual pilgrimage on August 16 was an architectural tour of Fulton and Oswego. Carl Schmidt of Scottsville, an authority on New York architecture of the early nineteenth century, interpreted the architecure. Th Sociy is graful to residents who opened their homes for the occasion. Activities were concluded with a picnic at Fall-Brook Farm in Oswego Town.

Almost a hundred local historians gathered at Headquarter House on October 30 to attend a seminar on the functions of the town historian. Presiding and directing the discussions was State Historian Dr. Albert B. Corey; assisting was William Tyrrell of the Division of Archives and History. Between sessions guests enjoyed a cafeteria supper at the college.

The Society is cooperating with the State and County Commission for celebration of the Centennial of the Civil War. Francis Riley of Oswego is the Oswego County Chairman. A series of programs featuring Civil War subjects was initiated in 1961, and they will continue to 1965. We plan also to give recognition to Oswego's role in the War of 1812 as the Sesquicentennial of that war begins in 1962.

Noteworthy too in 1961 was the construction of a fireproof vault in the basement of Headquarters House. It will provide storage for our more valuable collections, and is expected to attract additional historical materials to the Society.

The 1961 **Yearbook** is the twenty-third of a series begun in 1939. Titles through these years include subjects on almost every facet of local history in the county. We feel that it has become a significant contribution to local history.

FRED P. WRIGHT

Dedication

Fred P. Wright

During his childhood in Oswego Town Fred P. Wright developed an abiding interest in local history, an interest fostered by his uncles, who were veterans of the Civil War. He recalls attending meetings of the Grand Army of the Republic in the Town, and singing the old war songs.

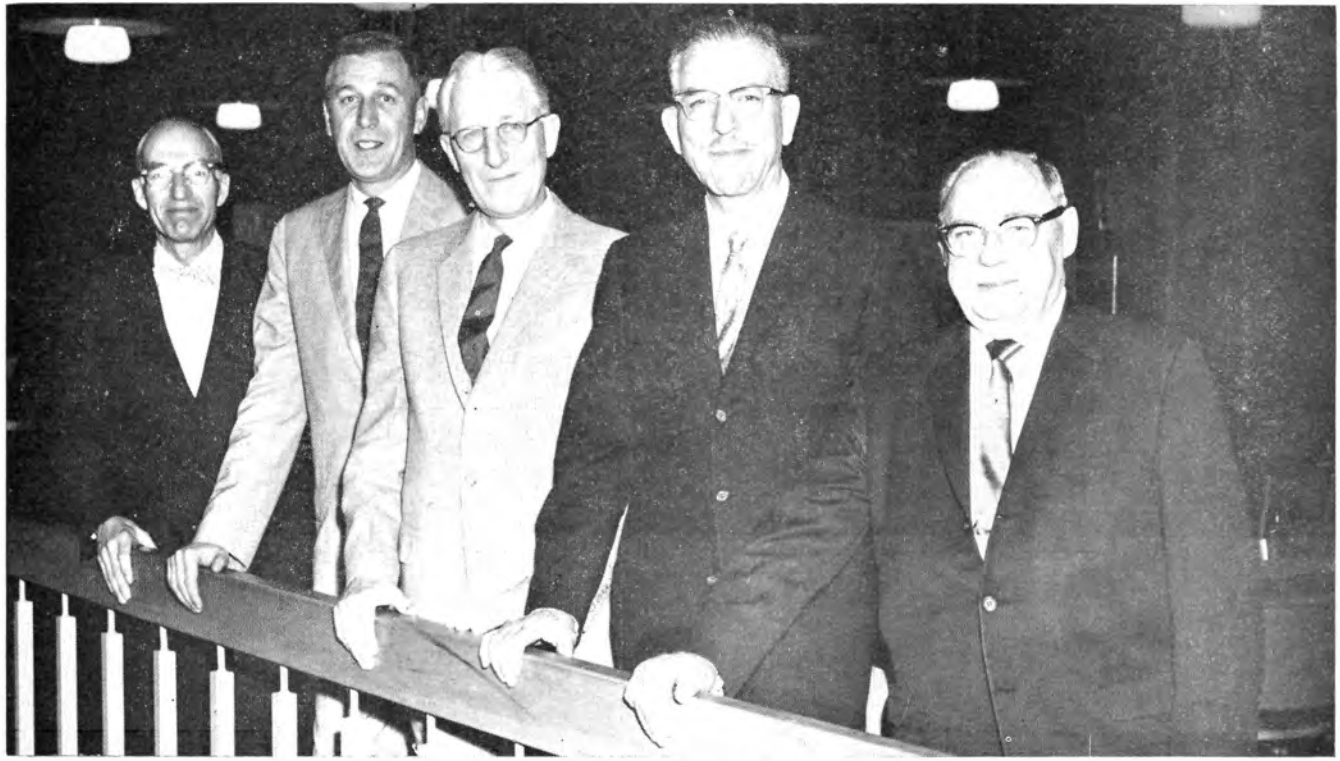
Later, when a merchant in Oswego, he joined the Oswego Historical Society, and in 1926 was elected Recording Secretary. In 1927 he assisted in producing the Pageant of Oswego, performed in recognition of the Bi-Centennial of the building of Fort Oswego. He also expanded the membership of the Society through a door-to-door canvass.

Upon the death of President James Riggs the Society languished for a time. But through the efforts of Wright and Frederick P. Barnes, Edwin M. Waterbury accepted the Presidency, and the Society enjoyed a revival under his dynamic leadership.

In addition to his duties as Secretary for fifteen years, Mr. Wright has been a collector and author of local history. His addresses on Oswego's Civil War heroines, Elmina Spencer and Dr. Mary Walker, were heard by large audiences, and have been read by hundreds in the columnus of the **Yearbook.**

Several years ago Mr. Wright was elected as an Honorary Member of the Society.

In the recognition to Fred P. Wright's untiring devotion to the history of Oswego County this volume is affectionately dedicated to him.



Left to Right: Dr. C. M. Snyder, J. Shoenfelt, R. M. Faust, Dr. C. F. Wells, M. Ziel

Oswego 1796-1828

Fragments of Local History

Part III

(presented by Mr. Anthony M. Slosek, January 7, 1961)

(1962, being the 150th Anniversary)

The events leading up to the War of 1812 and the failure of Jefferson's and Madison's policy of economic coercion need not be related here but Madison's war message revealed this country's grievances. Briefly summarized they include the impressment of American seaman, violation of American territorial waters which sometimes involved the loss of American lives, the Orders in Council and the British instigated Indian warfare on the frontier. The War Hawks, with their motives and inflammatory talk, were a factor in the decision to wage war with Great Britain instead of the equally culpable Napoleon.

On the third of April, 1812, Congress passed an act establishing an embargo on the export f specie, merchandise, etc., for a space of 90 days as a beginning signal for hostilities. On the 12th of April, Captain Asa Wells, with a company of militia was stationed at Oswego to enforce the law. Madison sent his war message to Congress on June 1 and on the 18th Congress voted the declaration. The Northern frontier was criminally neglected. The enemy controlled the lake; the defense was confided to the militia and valuable stores were accumulated at the falls twelve miles to the rear.

On April 2, 1812, general orders were issued from headquarters in Albany for a detachment of militia, from the Counties of Madison, Cortland and Onondaga, under a field officer to hold itself in readiness to proceed to Oswego. April 28, the troops were ordered to their station, the Quartermaster General having directed to make the necessary arrangements for their transportation and the contractor for rations. The Governor, Daniel D. Thompkins, as Commander-in-Chief, embodied the following instructions in the general order: "It is most earnestly enjoined by the officers and soldiers of the detachment, to conduct in their march and after their arrival at the several posts in the most conciliatory, orderly and respectful manner toward the inhabitants and toward the regular troops with whom they may be associated; and to demean themselves in all things as become patriotic citizen soldiers. From the moment of their assemblage they will be subject to the rules and articles of war, which the commanding officer of each detachment is directed to be read to the corps on their arrival at the place of encampment, and to cause one copy thereof to be kept constantly in the encampment at some proper place, where every person belonging to the detachment may have access to it." In July the troops, 450, arrived at Oswego under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel George Fleming of Cayuga County. In the autumn of 1812 Governor Thompkins established headquarters here and was given a review by the above commander.

The troops were discontented over delinquent pay, and by the proverbial grievance of raw recruits, over their rations. Most of the men composing those nine companies were independent volunteers, and had enlisted for one

year only. Their term of office expired on the first of January, when most of them returned home, thus leaving the fort in a very defenseless condition. The old barracks which were standing in good repair at the evacuation by the British had wholly disappeared. The doors, windows and casings had been gradually transferred to the cottages of the settlers. The massive gate was prostrate and decayed.

A part of the militia was quartered on the west side of the river in temporary barracks erected on a ridge running from the corner of West First and Seneca Streets southwesterly to the public square. Barracks of slight construction were also erected in Fort Ontario. There was a magazine in the northeast portion of the fort. A wooden hospital was built on the bank of the lake southwest of the fort. Two temporary and light batteries were erected on the bank in front of the fort on which were mounted four or five small guns, the largest a 12 pounder, some of them without trunnions. A slight breastwork of small poles and earth was erected upon the northern and northeastern walls of the fort.

The first naval engagement during the War of 1812, in which Oswego was concerned, was between the brig (**Oneida**) and the (**Royal George**), in the Bay of Quinte. But a few shots had been exchanged when the (**George**) hauled off, and took shelter under the batteries on shore. The (**Oneida**) then continued her cruise, and soon fell in with a British schooner, which she captured with little trouble. The schooner had on board $12,000 in specie and General Brock's baggage. The prize was taken to Sacketts Harbor. The winter season setting in soon after, closed all naval operations till the next spring.

In the winter of 1812-1813 Oswego suffered in common with the whole country the ravages of an epidemical fever. Its effects were most fatal to those connected with the army and transient prisoners.

BRITISH REPULSED

In the Philadelphia AURORA of July 12, 1813, there appeared an extract of a letter from Fort Oswego, dated June 25, 1813 describing the British attack on Oswego:

Colonel Macomb, commanding at Sackett's Harbor, understanding this place was in a defenceless state, detached Major Carr, (Cass) of the 16th infantry, with 300 men of the 22nd and 23rd regiments to take post here for the protection and removal of property in case of danger. The order was issued in the morning, and by 12 o'clock boats, provisions, ammunition, etc. were collected and ready, and proceeded by rowing, with the wind ahead-at night it increased to a storm, with rain, thunder and lightning; notwithstanding which the officers and men unanimously determined to proceed, and fortunately we arrived safe at this place the following morning, having rowed 65 miles in one afternoon and night.

We were induced to this attempt lest the enemy should be here before us, as it was rumored they were out. On our arrival we found the greatest alarm prevailing, in consequence of the enemy having been seen to the westward. On the following day, learning that the enemy had been seen off Genesee river, the neighboring militia were called upon for a reinforcement of 200 men to protect the town, and the alarm guns were fired-the public property was then removed, and a part of the stores were sent to Sackett's Harbor, as the wind was fair. In the afternoon and evening we dragged a number of large logs up the hill, and erected a battery on the point on the north side of the river, on which we mounted four rusty old six pounders that had been left here as useless, and some of them without trunnions; besides which we repaired an old 12 pounder which was mounted on the point:-these were furnished with ammunition, etc. and left in charge of an officer and 32 men, with orders to spike them and join us if the enemy effected a landing on the south (sic) shore. We then crossed the river with the regulars, and in the course of the night threw up a redoubt west of the town, on

which we had by daylight two 18 pounders, and two brass 12 pounders on travelling carriages, which happened to be in the town. All the artillery men and sailors were stationed in the batteries, when at sunrise the enemy's fleet came in sight. Large fires of dry wood had been ordered to be made, and in a short time we had upward of 100 red hot balls.

Lieutenant Woolsey, of the navy, took charge of the 18 pounders, and Captain Smith, of the 1st regiment artillery, of the brass 12's. The U. S. schooner **Growler** of 5 guns, (one of them a 32) under Lieutenant Mix, moored across the entrance of the river in a range with our batteries. The militia crowding in without arms, arms and ammunition were issued, and they were formed in two battalions under Majors Adams and Parkhurst, and placed as a second line in rear of, and covered by, the redoubt and hill.

At 11 o'clock the enemy's fleet, consisting of the **"General Wolf, Prince Regent, Royal George"** and three others, were abreast of our works, distant about 4 miles and standing in. At 45 minutes past 11 we gave them an 18 pounder, and a 32 from the schooner, which last hulled the **Wolf.** She answered with a 24, which struck the bank under our battery.

The fleet bore up to give their broadsides, and a general fire from all our batteries commenced, which was continued with spirit for upwards of twenty minutes- during which we fired upwards of 160 cannon shot amongst them. They had not calculated on a reception so warm, and after firing a few shells stood off out of the range of our batteries. They soon manned all their boats with troops, and stood along shore to the westward. Our advanced party was sent forward to watch their movements, and with the principal force we took a position on the edge of a thick wood, near the river, with an open field in our front, through which the enemy must pass, if he landed above us. The regulars in the center, with two field pieces; a battalion of militia on each wing flanked on the right by a company of riflemen extending to the lake, and on the left by a company of volunteer marksmen, extending to very thick brush woods, beyond which the enemy could not pass. The worm fence around the field we took up and planted close in front of our line from right to left and filled it in slightly with brush.

Cur line formed nearly a semicircle, so that they must have received the whole of our fire within 120 yards. We were covered by the lake bank from the fire of their ships, and our cannon on the batteries could rake their landing. The militia were pleased with their position and determined to maintain their ground. After carefully reconnoitering us from their mast heads, they stood on, towing their boats to the westward, accompanied by three tenders, which had joined them during the day for the purpose of **conveying off the plunder of this place.**

Expecting they would land at a convenient place three miles further up the lake, orders were given to reconnoitre the ground in the morning, and a position selected half a mile from the town, where, by breaking up a causeway, we could erect a battery across the only road, and give them a ditch and morass to wade through, in an open field, exposed to the fire of whole line; covered by thick woods, and within 100 yards, the brush on each flank so thick they could not turn us.

In case of being driven from either of the above positions, dispositions were made in anticipation, for rallying under the cannon of our batteries, where in case of being broken, every company should rally; and in order to prevent mistakes, or too great confusion, each company was required to collect brush and boughs to make a slight line of breast work in front of their several positions. Our cannon on the batteries commanded the plain- if they attempted our last position, and we were still between them and the town- but towards evening the fleet was out of sight, and we slept on our arms.

The regulars were cool and determined, our militia behaved

well, and I have no doubt would have supported them- they submitted to strict discipline.

We have learned that night the enemy landed, plundered and burned the town at Great Sodus, 30 miles higher up the lake- they killed two and wounded five of the militia who defended the place.

Expecting a visit from them every night, we have taken rest during day, and are under arms every night from twelve until daylight besides keeping out strong picket guards. The militia are returning home, except about 150 volunteers, who will remain a few days longer. They have departed well pleased, after returning their arms and ammunition in good order. We met with no loss, but must have injured the vessels, as our six pounders threw the balls among them.

Our force was 286 regulars, and 480 militia, which increased before night near 800 militia. We have thrown another redoubt, and mounted two 24 pounders in it. One hundred regulars, infantry and riflemen, have since arrived.

As a digression from the serious side of the war, an incident was related by several early inhabitants but best described in Johnson's **History of Oswego County.** Reference is made to William Cooper (brother of James F. Cooper) who undertook to build a "floating battery" for the United States Government in Oswego Harbor in 1813:

"William Cooper was a rather eccentric genius, who then made his home in Oswego. He undertook to build a floating battery, which was to be taken to Sacketts Harbor, and used to defend that post from the British. Full of faith, Cooper went to work at his own expense, the government agreeing to pay him sixteen thousand dollars for the battery when it should be completed and had proved actually capable of being floated to Sacketts Harbor. It was nearly square, and Mr. E. W. Clarke described it as looking like a big, low, half-submerged log house.

"Whatever name the inventor might have given it, nobody else called it anything but "Cooper's Ark". There was a mast in the middle, and when the thing was done Cooper placed it in charge of a Captain Gould, who boldly spread a large sail, and with a few men started for Sacketts Harbor. There were also two or three prisoners aboard, whom the government officers wished to send to the Harbor. The guns were to be put on board at the latter place. The Ark had gone but a short distance (being somewhere off New Haven, as near as it can be learned) when the wind rose slightly; the log craft became unmanageable, and soon went to pieces. Fortunately, all the men escaped to shore without serious injury. Cooper had used up all his means on this curious contrivance, and his loss, together with the riducle to which he had subjected himself, soon caused him to leave this part of the country."

Mr. Cooper did not escape from the wreck of his folly "unharmed". Soon after his return to Oswego from that disastrous voyage, two or three vessels were once sighted in the distance and caused alarm lest they might belong to the British fleet. Cooper, wishing to satisfy himself on the subject, raised a boat crew and started out, but when abreast of Garrison Point, a cannon shot from the fort skipped a cross his bow, which he rightly interpreted as a warning to back water, and obeyed reluctantly. A day or two later after that occurrence Cooper met the commander of the garrison; whom he accosted in language more forcible than polite on the subject of such exercise of his military power in restraining the movement of a private, inoffensive citizen. The commander, becoming exasperated by the abuse, drew his sword and made some demonstrations, from which Cooper did not flinch, but called it a cowardly act to draw a weapon upon a man who was not only armed but a cripple. For such he considered himself since his right arm was then carried in a sling in consequence of injuries sustained among the crashing timbers of his modern ark.

Captain Gould escaped from the

disaster to be drowned at the mouth of the Oswego River when running a hawser out to work in a vessel, an operation which had always to be performed unless the wind was fresh and favorable.

A letter written by a resident showed the feeling and state of mind that existed here in the winter of 1813-1814:

"Business is very dull. Tea is selling for fourteen shillings a pound; tea cups, bowls, plates, etc. all sold. Flannels selling fast. Mr. McNair gives an order for a sawbuck to be sent here as soon as possible. The (**"Growler"**) is in the Harbor waiting Colonel Scott with the regulars from Fort George. (**"The Lady of the Lake"**), the United States dispatch boat is in direct from the army, which lies in Brown Harbor, Grenadier Island."

Another correspondent, in a letter dated Dec. 16, 1813, Oswego had this to say:

"The prospects are rather very gloomy for this place. When the harbor opens Sir James Yeo will have command of the lake in the Spring. We have correct information from Kingston that the enemy has a frigate of 150 feet keel, a ship 120 feet keel, and a schooner under way. This comes from a prisoner released a few days since."

Although there was a feeling that the British would make an attack in the Spring, the usual Winter festivities were not by no means abandoned. Balls and weddings were in order and from the society news of the day it was learned that Mr. McNair gave a pleasant party at his home. Among those present were Mr. Dolloway and lady, Mr. Stevens and lady, Miss C. Dolloway, Catherine O'-Connor, M. and C. Hugunin, E. Bronson, William S. Fitch. March 17, 1814 Mr. T. S. Morgan was married to Miss Harriet Reed, sister of Mrs. McNair.

The following is an extract from a letter dated March 18, 1814:

"We have no prospects of troops for our defense at present. You have undoubtedly heard of the troops from the (Sacketts) Harbor for the westward. So we conquer Canada by marching down the hill and up again. What can we expect from such rulers? Just listen to the words of our honorable Governor (Daniel D. Tompkins) on a petition being presented from the most respectable men in this village of both parties - for guns and praying to be organized into an independent company of artillery for the defense of this place. The petition was presented him by one of his favorites (Liet. Boody, paymaster N.Y. Volunteer regiment commanded by Major John Herkimer) he opens it - in a few moments he asks "To see the letter again." He perused it and exclaimed: No I will not! If I was to lend them guns they would turn them against their country. They would sink it to hell in their power."

BRITISH ATTACK OSWEGO

In 1814, the fort experienced its last struggle as a military post. General Jacob Brown, Commander of Sacketts Harbor, was of the opinion that the British would attempt to capture Oswego in the coming summer. The action of May 5-6 can best be described in the words of the participants.

H.Q., Sacketts Harbor,
May 12, 1814

Sir, - Enclosed is an abstract from the report of Lieut. Col. Mitchell, of the affairs at Oswego. Being well satisfied with the manner in which the colonel executed my orders, and with evidence given of steady discipline and gallant conduct on the part of the troops, I have noticed them in the general order, a copy of which is enclosed. The enemy's object was the naval and military stores deposited at the falls (Fulton), 10 miles in the rear of the fort. These were protected. The stores at the fort and village were not important. I am, etc.

Jacob Brown, Maj. Gen.
Hon. Secretary at War

REPORT. - I informed you of my arrival at Fort Oswego on the 30th ult. This post being but occasionally and not recently occupied by regular troops, was in a bad state of defense. Of cannon, we had but five guns, three of which had lost their trunnions.

What should be done in the way of repair was effected - new platforms were laid, the gun carriages put in order, and decayed pickets replaced.

On the 5th inst. the British Naval force, consisting of 4 large ships, 3 brigs, and a number of gun and other boats were described at reveille - beating about 7 miles from the fort. Information was immediately given to Capt. Woolsey of the navy (who was at Oswego village) and to the neighboring militia. It being doubtful on what side of the river the enemy would attempt to land, and my force (290 effectives) being too small to bear division, I ordered the tents in store to be pitched on the village side while I occupied the other with my whole force. It is probable that this article had its effect and determined the enemy to attack where from appearance they expected the least opposition.

About 1 o'clock the fleet approached, fifteen boats, large and crowded with troops, at a given signal moved slowly to the shore. These were preceeded by gunboats sent to rake the woods and cover the landing, while larger vessels opened fire upon the fort. Capt. Boyle and Lieut. Legate (as soon as the debarking boats got within range of our shot), opened upon them a very successful fire from the shore battery, and compelled them to retire. They at length returned to the ships, and the whole stood off from the shore for better anchorage. One of the enemy's boats which had been deserted, was taken by us, and some others by the militia.

The first mentioned was 60 feet long, and carried 36 oars, and 3 sails, and could accommodate 150 men. She had received a ball through her bow and was nearly filled with water. Piquet guards were stationed at different points, as we lay our arms during the night. At daybreak on the 6th the fleet appeared up under easy sail. The Wolfe, etc., took a position directly against the fort and batteries, and for 3 hours kept up a heavy fire of grape. Finding the enemy had effected a landing, I withdrew my small disposable force into the rear of the fort and with two companies (Romayne's and Melvin's) met their advancing columns, while the other companies engaged the flanks of the enemy. Lieut. Pearce of the Navy, and some seamen, joined in the attack, and fought with their characteristic bravery. We maintained our ground about 30 minutes, and as long as consistent with my further duty of defending the public stores deposited at the falls, which no doubt formed the principal object of the expedition on the part of the enemy. Nor was this movement made precipatately.

I halted within 400 yards of the fort. Capt. Romayne's company formed the rear guard, and remaining with it, I marched to this place in good order, destroyed the bridges in my rear. the enemy landed 600 of DeWaltervilles regiment, 600 marines, two companies of the Glengary corps, and 350 seamen. Gen. Drummond and Com. Yeo, were the land and naval commanders. They burned the old barracks and evacuated the old fort about 3 o'clock in the morning of the 7th. Our loss in killed is 6, in wounded 38, and in missing 25. That of the enemy is much greater. Deserters and citizens of ours taken prisoners and after released, state their killed at 64 and wounded in proportion - among these are several land and naval officers of merit.

(Commodore Chauncey, in a letter about this date to the Secretary of the Navy, states, "The enemy has paid dearly for the little booty he obtained in Oswego. From the best information which I can collect, both from deserters and my agents, the enemy lost 70 men, and 165 wounded, drowned and missing - in all 235; nearly as many as were opposed to them. Capt. Mulcaster is certainly mortally wounded; a captain of marines killed, and a number of other officers killed and wounded). I cannot close this dispatch without speaking of the dead and living of my detachment. Lieut. Blaney, a young man of much promise, was unfortunately killed. His conduct was highly meritorius. Capt. Boyle and Lieut. Legate merit my high-

est approbation, and indeed I want language to express my admiration of their gallant conduct. The subalterns, M. Comb, Ansart, Ring, Robb, Earl, McClintock, and Newkirk, performed well their several parts. It could be an injustice were I not to acknowledge and report the zeal and patriotism evinced by the militia, who arrived at short notice, and were anxious to be useful.

H.Q. Sacketts Harbor,
12 May 1814.

GENERAL ORDERS. – Maj. Gen. Brown has the satisfaction of announcing to the troops of his division, that the detachment under the command of Lieut. Col. Mitchell of the corps of artillery, have by their gallant and highly military conduct on the 5th and 6th inst., gained a name in arms worthy of the nation they serve and the cause they support. For nearly two days they maintained an unequal contest against ten times their number, and but yielded their part when interest of their country made that measure necessary. The companies composing this gallant detachment were Boyle's, Romayne's, McIntire's, and Pierce's, of the heavy artillery, and a few seamen under the command of Lieut. Pearce of the Navy, - in all less than **three hundred men.** The enemy's force by land and water exceeded **three thousand men.**

A particularly graphic account of the storming of Oswego from the British standpoint is given in Snyder's "In the Wake of the Eighteen-Twelvers," in which Malachi Malone of the British ship "Magnet" thus describes the engagement:

"We lay closest to the fort, and they hailed red-hot shot on us from the ramparts. We came back with cold grape and round. They slithered our sails to ribbons and cut up our rigging till it hung in tangled bunches or hemp. 'We can't get out o' here, lads,' hailed Captain Popham, 'for our gear's all gone, but-' A ball whizzed, and his right hand, holding the trumpet, dropped, mangled, but he raised the trumpet with the other and finished- 'We'll give them the worth of their money, since they want us to stay so badly!'

"Up the steep slope of the hill to the fort swarmed two hundred bluejackets with their boarding pikes, Sir William Howe Mulcaster, of the old (**Royal George**), at their head. Sir James Yeo was ashore, too. Along the back of the fort hill, from the landing place, streamed the kilted Glengarries and the De Watteville, in red tunics and white breeches, and the Royal Marines in their silly stiff hats, red coats, and blue trousers. But they could fight, those same Johnnies, and the Yanks, who had spotted them from the shelter of the woods, were now on the run for the fort.

" 'By this time we were on fire. The red-hot shot from the furnaces in the fort made our tarred rigging sizzle and the flame licked up the masts.

" 'Buckets aloft!' called Captain Popham, and the topmen scrambled up the flaming ratlines and laid out along the scorching yards with leather buckets on long lines and soused everthing. I could see through the smoke the bluejackets were up the bank now, and Lieutenant Laurie, Sir James Yeo's secretary, was scrambling over the ramparts first of all. Then another burst of flame along our decks made everybody's heart jump, for fire in a wooden ship, ballasted with gunpowder, is a pretty sure passport to the big beyond.

"The bulwarks had taken fire, but we smothered them with sand and tarpaulins, when there came a yell from aloft. A brace of red-hot chain shot had struck the foretop and sheared away the main top mast stays' 1, where it was stowed there. It floated down like a flaming parachute on to the fo'c's'le head by the powder gangway. The sailing-master rushed forward with a boarding pike, caught the mass as it fell, and pitched it overboard. Then with a scream he dropped the pike and rolled down the gangway. Where his left arm had been hung a bloody mass of seared flesh and shredded jacket sleeve. A red-hot shot had got him.

"I helped carry him to the

cockpit. 'It'll have to come off at the shoulder,' I heard the surgeon say. Jimmy Richardson gritted his teeth, and then above the roar of the guns I heard rounds of cheers on cheers. I rushed on deck, sick with the smell of the surgeon's shambles, and there on the hilltop, with his legs locked around the head of the fort flagpole, I could see a marine hanging. It was Lieutenant Hewitt. He had swarmed up, as nimble as a man-o' warsman, and had torn the big Stars and Stripes down with his hands. The colours had been nailed to the pole.

The Americans gave a good account of themselves but they were outnumbered two to one and gradually forced back by the advancing British grenadiers and marines.

"We'd twenty-two killed and seventy-three wounded; but, on the other hand, we had the flag, we had the fort, we had sixty prisoners, and we had the stores they left behind. There was powder and shot by the ton, and six spiked guns in the fort. We blew them up, and burned the barracks and public buildings in the place, but we didn't rob one henroost, nor turn one family out. Down by the harbour we loaded cordage and cables enough for a fleet, besides 600 barrels of salt and 500 barrels of pork, and as much bread in barrels, and 800 barrels of flour. And what else did we find, d'ye think? Nothing but our old friend the **(Growler)**. Mind the saucy schooners in Chauncey's fleet the year before that wouldn't obey orders off Niagara, and got snapped up by Sir James Yeo? The **(Growler)** was one of them. We turned her into a transport, and as luck would have it, she was recaptured by Chauncey off the Ducks that Fall, along with the **(Julia)** and three others. She was lying in Oswego loaded with three long thirty-two-pounders and four long twenty-four's, intended for the **Superior)** at Sackett's Harbour, when we first hove to off the place. They scuttled her to save the guns, but we found them in her hold, raised her, and towed her home with us, along with a string of batteaux and a trading schooner or two that we found in the place."

From Edwin W. Clarke's cemetery register book, now in the City Clerk's office, the following information is taken: "In the battle there were nineteen of the enemy and six Americans slain. Among the latter, Lieutenant Blaney, U. S. A., a Sargeant named Wright, and four privates. The enemy had two officers killed, one of them Captain Haltaway of the Marines. Their remains were taken away, but the bodies of the seventeen privates were left on the field.

"During their stay the British collected the dead of both parties and put them in two piles in a natural hollow of the earth and covered them slightly with turf torn up for that purpose. The battle ground and the place of burial was about sixty rods east of Fort Ontario. After the enemy had retreated, these mounds were overhauled and the bodies of the Americans taken out, enclosed in coffins, and interred with Martial ceremonies on a rise of ground about eighty rods southeast of Fort Ontario. Lieutenant Blaney, however, was buried in the west village cemetery. Seven soldiers wonded in the battle subsequently died and were buried with their comrades."

NAVAL STORY

At the close of hostilities in the winter of 1814-1815, Commodore Isaac Chauncey commanded probably the most powerful squadron of war vessels which had sailed under the American flag up to that time. His flagship the big frigate, **(Superior)**, 58 guns, a large and more heavily armed ship than the **(Constitution)** which lives in history as **(Old Ironsides)**. In addition he had the frigates, **(Mohawk)**, **(General Pike)**, the **(Madison)** and the brigs **(Jefferson)**, **(Jones)**, **(Oneida)**, and **(Sylph)** and the dispatch schooner, **(Lady of the Lake)**, as well as numerous schooners transports and gunboats **(Lady of the Lake** was a clipper built, schooner rigged vessel of unmatched speed. After the war she was sold into the merchant service, and in 1825 was employed as a packet between Niagara and Little York (Toronto)

owned and commanded by Capt. John Rodgers, whose home was Oswego, for which place he cleared from York on the 24th of November, 1825, from which time nothing was ever heard of the "Lady" or her commander).

This fleet was manned by crews aggregating over 2,000 men, almost all of them from the regular navy and veterans of the sea, carried nearly 300 guns, many of them from twelve to fifteen feet long and with an effective range two miles, and the vessels were commanded by some of the United States navy's best shipmasters, men who had won laurels under Hull and Decatur and Rodgers on the high seas.

Had the war gone on into the spring of 1815, Chauncey's fleet would have been more powerful because there were building at Sacketts Harbor during the winter of 1814-15 two vast ships - of - the line, larger than anything yet produced by the American or British navies and each carrying 130 guns, as well as three additional powerful frigates. These vessels were completed, two of them, the (**New Orleans**) and the (**Chippawa**), remained under ship houses at and near Sacketts Harbor for many years.

The United States Navy Department wished, if it could, to preserve Chauncey's big frigates, built at tremendous expense, in case of a future emergency on Lake Ontario. The ships had all been constructed out of green wood because time was of the essence and there was no artificial process at that time for seasoning wood. Therefore, had the vessels been kept afloat, they would probably have disintegrated within seven or eight years. The one way they could be preserved was to sink them in deep water below the ice level. A ship so sunk, in comparatively cool waters of Lake Ontario, could be expected to last for many years, according to Howard I. Chappelle, a leading authority and author of "History of the American sailing Navy", Chauncey's big frigates were all "mothballed" in this way. The schooners and the brigs and gunboats were all sold but the big ships were put into a "State of preservation".

Hamilton Colton stated: "Captain Robert Hugunin was a reputable sailor; during the war, pilot or sailing master with Commodore Chauncey, afterwards he was master and part owner of lake vessels. He and Matthew McNair bought and raised some of the naval vessels that sunk at Sacketts Harbor after the close of the war. One of them, a brig, he fitted out and sailed himself for several seasons, mostly in the slave trade from the head of the lake to Cape Vincent, his craft being too large for the ordinary demands of Commerce at that time." Colton further stated that "This writer had frequent occasion during three consecutive seasons to pass in and out of the harbor dodging this way and that to avoid collision with the hulks which obstructed navigation inside of Ships House Point."

That Chappelle is correct in his statement is indicated by a list of naval vessels published by the navy department in 1816 in which Chauncey's big ships are listed as "in state of preservation at Sacketts Harbor." In other words, the incomplete ships-of-the-line, were put under shiphouses while the completed frigates were dismantled and sunk in deep water, their location charted.

Few people today have any conception of the magnitude of the ship-building operation at Sacketts Harbor during the war, and Sacketts Harbor was the leading American military and naval base on the Great Lakes. Extensive military works were constructed there and there was always a garrison of troops, large for that time, sometimes as many as 7,000 men.

But the ship-building operation outstripped everything else. If the navy department made an unfortunate choice of a naval commander in Commodore Chauncey, veteran of the War with Tripoli, its choice of a ship builder was most fortunate. It sent here early in the war Henry Eckford, who had learned his trade in Scotland, and he remained here during the entire conflict, at times being joined by Adam and Noah Brown, like

Eckford, noted shipbuilders of their day. All had maintained shipyards on the East River, New York.

It should be kept in mind that about everything that went into a war ship at Sacketts Harbor at that time, excepting the Antwerp oak of which its hull was built, had to be transported from New York City, chains and cables, roping and sail materials, iron works and the big guns which made up its batteries. The few roads of the period were impassable excepting for a few weeks in Summer and virtually all these supplies had to be transported up the Hudson River in sailing vessels, then over the long water route from the Mohawk River to Wood Creek, to the Oswego River, to Lake Ontario and thence to Sacketts.

The job that Eckford did at Sacketts Harbor during the war should rate a larger place in American history than it does. The war on the Northern New York frontier was replete with almost incredible blunders and unsound strategy. But the job of transportation, supply and construction was almost a miracle.

Starting from scratch, Eckford built great ship yards, hospitals and quarters for his workers until his operations encircled the entire harbor and finally expanded into Storr's Bay. He brought ship carpenters, blacksmiths, sailmakers, gun carriage-makers and other artisons from the shipyards in New York, Boston and Portsmouth until the winter of 1814-1815 there were nearly 3,000 of these men working at Sacketts Harbor.

Despite the constant presence of what was then called "lake fever" and the grumbling of his men who disliked this remote post on the frontier, he launched and completed great ships in record time. The **(Madison)** was launched in the fall of 1812 after 45 working days yet she was one third larger than the ocean frigates, the **(Wasp)** and the **(Hornet)**. The **(General Pike)**, 145 feet long, was launched in 63 days from the time her keel was laid, the brig, **(Sylph)** in 23 days, the **(Mohawk)** was on the ways only 34 days and even the brig **(Superior)**, the largest warship which the United States possessed up to that time, in 80 days.

The real test came in the winter of 1814-1815 when Eckford and Adam and Noah Brown joined forces to build Sacketts Harbor, the great ships, **(New Orleans)** and **(Chippawa)** and three heavy frigates, one of which was to be named the **(Plattsburg)**. Concerning this operation, Noah Brown wrote as follows:

"In February, 1815, we received orders to proceed to Sacketts Harbor to build, in company with M. Eckford, two large ships to mount one hundred and thirty guns of very large caliber; hundred pounders on the lower deck and fifty pounders on the middle deck and thirty-twos in the upper deck; likewise three frigates.

"Peace coming on, we did not complete the contract, but we got the large ships in great forwardness, we proceeded on to the Harbor with about 1200 men; when we were stopped, in six weeks, both large ships would have been completed and in the lake. But we returned to New York and had not the pleasure of seeing the largest ship afloat in the inland waters of our State that was ever built."

LOCAL INCIDENTS

This story was told by an "old merchant", none other than Alvin Bronson: "The lakes and frontier were the principal theater of the war. Few escaped its demand for services, and still fewer its ravages, penalties, and inflictions. I was appointed public store keeper for the army by Quarter Master Jenkins of the Ninth district, and of the navy by Commodore Chauncey. While thus employed I was made prisoner by the forces that captured the post in 1814. (Four other residents of Oswego were also taken prisoners on board the fleet; namely, Abraham D. Hugunin, William Squires, Eli Stevens and Carlos Colton). The incidents connected with my capture may interest the public. Sir James Yeo, Commander of the fleet, applied to me for pilots to conduct his boats, loaded with salt and public stores, to his fleet off the harbor. On my replying that I had no men

under my control, all having retreated for safety, he said in anger and with an oath, "then go yourself", with his hands on my shoulder, "and if you get her aground" with another oath "I'll shoot you."

Col. Harvey, the hero of Stony Creek, where Wender and Chandler were captured, called to him from the bank above "that's the public Store Keeper, and may be useful to us". When he ordered me back subsequently he said to me, "you are my prisoner, and can inform me what Army and Navy stores have been sent forward to military posts, what are in the rear of the post, and what if any are scattered in the neighborhood? If you give me this information correctly I shall allow you to remain, if not I shall send you to Quebec." I replied, this is impossible, as my books and papers have been sent away for safety, nor would it be proper if possible. He cut the matter short by adding, "I have nothing to say about your duty," and repeated the proposition, to which I replied that I was ready to go, but asked permission to take a trunk, when he directed Captain O'Connor to see me safe on board the Frigate Prince Regent. I found my trunk, my wardrobe, and my books were all rifled, and I left without a change of linen. About midnight, having burned the barracks, the officers came on board the frigate, when General Sir George Gordon Drummond, inquired for the Store Keeper. On being designated he loaded me with a storm of approbious epithets, in language too vulgar to be repeated, and said "I ought to be strung up to the yardarm for denying that my stores were secreted," which was not true, and added "we found three guns and several anchors, in the river at your wharf."

It is to be hoped these two British Knights are not fair specimens of their order. Col. Harvy, evidently ashamed of his superior officers, apologized for them on our voyage to Kingston next day by saying that they were in bad temper, had suffered much in the attack, that McAllister, Sir James second in command, was dangerously, if not fatally wounded. Col. Harvy was a gentleman as well as a gallant officer, was afterward I believe to Wellington at Waterloo, and Governor of New Brunswick, when, Scott and he revived their Queenstown acquaintance, and maintain pacific relation, until Webster and Ashburton could settle the North Eastern boundary by treaty.

From Kingston I was re-embarked on board the fleets which proceeded to blockade Sacketts Harbor. While engaged on this service a Mohawk batteau, laden with equipment for our navy, being one of a dozen thus laden and bound to Sandy Creek. (Eli Parsons, Jr. river boat loaded with cannon balls foundered; his remains were found at the mouth of the Little Salmon). Some ten or twelve miles from the British fleet, as many more miles from the head over loud, took you to Sacketts Harbor. She had lost her way in a fog, and brought up in the midst of the British squadron, and gave all required information to an enemy. Supposing they had arrived at Sacketts Harbor, an expedition of four gun boats, with two hundred men, two port Captains, and four Lieutenants, was promptly dispatched to capture their fleet, and naval armament. They proceeded cautiously up this winding creek forbidding the escape of the commander's Gig, sent out in charge of Post Captain Spisbury to reconnoiter, and bring news.

"For twenty-four hours no intelligence reached the fleet, other than the report of the swivels engaged, when the **(Lady of the Lake)**, with a flag of truce, came out for money and clothes to take the prisoners to Massachusetts. Commodore Chauncey claimed and procured my release on the ground that I was non combatant. Col. Jenkins having notified me of the expedition preparing for the attack on Oswego, and having confided to my discretion the duty of protecting the public stores by shipment, arrest, or concealment, thanked me officially, for the skill, prudence, and success with which I had discharged this trust, the loss

by the enemy having been very inconsiderable. This was the more grateful as my appointment had been opposed, by Contractor Townshend, of Albany, on the ground of my being a Federalist, opposed to the war, in whose hands the stores would not be safe. Elbert Anderson, of New York, another contractor, advocated my appointment, alleging he had been to Oswego and would pledge himself for my fidelity."

"My faith in history has been greatly impaired from my position, where I could detect the discrepancies between events and their record. For example, the repulse of Sir George Provost by General Brown at Sacketts Harbor, has been claimed and recorded as a brilliant victory, achieved by militia over regular troops. A victory it was, but won by accident, and in spite of cowardice and panic. The truth is **both armies ran away without a fight.** First our militia, after a feeble resistance, burnt their store houses and retreated in a body, so entire that Sir George, who had nearly obtained possession of the post, without a battle, believe their retreat a maneuver to give his rear through the timber and cut off his retreat. To prevent such a catastrophie he beat a hasty retreat. General Brown meantime having no confidence in the steadiness of his troops, had taken the precaution to impede and arrest their flight, brought them back full of courage, to occupy a deserted field, and claim a signal victory, and as such it comes down to us. General Brown was transferred to the regular army, and made a good general and an able commander. It might be noted that General Brown arrested the flight of the militia by a small rifle corps stationed in the bushes to fire on the deserters."

A tale or two concerning a man, Lieutenant Francis H. Gregory, who won for himself honor and glory for his signal bravery and daring may not be amiss. He had been for years spoken of as Admiral Gregory. Then he was only a midshipman, but a few years, and although he had Mr. prefixed to his name he was always called "sir" by the seaman to his face, yet when in the forecastle his favorite appellation among the men was "Dare Devil Harry."

The following incident was related by Hamilton Colton. Lieutenant Gregory, afterwards a commander in the United States Navy, was in the habit at times during the war, of scouting along shore in a light draught cutter, called the **(Black Snake)**. When entering the harbor on one occasion, a man was lost overboard, swept out by the current and drowned. The body was soon afterwards discovered in slack water on the east bar; the Lieutenant dove and brought it up, but his boat, by mismanagement, had drifted away, but with much exertion and peril he finally made a landing with the drowned sailor. Near by on the beach was a military hospital, and some of the invalids were outside, but little able to help themselves, which of course Gregory did not know, but in his wrath he began pelting them with stones and hard words, for sitting idle while he was likely to drown without offering to help him; the poor fellows hobbled off as best they could out of his reach. The sadness of the matter, however, was that a sick soldier in the hospital discovered in the drowned man a brother, who left home twenty years previous and had never been heard from by his relations.

Another performance of Lieuten ant Gregory also made a strong impression on Colton's youthful mind and memory. The same day, a few hours after he had given such evidence of bravery and humanity in trying to save the life of one of his crew, he was engaged in flogging another one for some breach of discipline in the loft of Burt's warehouse, when several of us idle boys crowded in to see the fun. He did not seem to approve our curiousty in the matter, but his attention, and the "cat" he was using to us. At the shore end of the warehouse was an outside stairway, down rushed some frightened youngsters, who did not ven-

ture to look back till a safe offing was gained.

An old sailor (name unknown) who served with Lieutenant Gregory under Commodore Chauncey passed on these incidents. A certain man named Bushnell of Saybrook, Conn., had invented a torpedo to be used in warfare for the destroying of vessels. At this time there was lying off Kingston a large British frigate, ready to sail and intending to join the balance of the fleet at Little York or Toronto. Gregory obtained permission to try and blow the frigate up with one of the torpedos, and during one dark night went on this perilous trip. Clad in nothing but his underclothes and having the torpedo fastened to his body by a rope he let himself over the ship's side and into the water and started on his long swim to the frigate. Just as he reached her, she left anchor, and as it was impossible for him to fasten the explosion to her hull while in motion, there was nothing left for him to do but to return. He did so, landing about a mile above Sacketts Harbor. He was very thoroughly disgusted with the failure of his project, and chancing to come to an old limekiln in a lot close by the village, he placed the torpedo under it, and exploding it, blew the old kiln out of sight, causing more than one resident of the village to wonder what was up.

Some time afterward Gregory captured a British boat in command of a Lieutenant with thirteen men. Doubling a point near the Canadian shore he came upon a British bark about three times the size of the vessel. There was no escape except by strategem. Turning to the Britishers, he inquired, "Can you swim?" "Yes sir," was the answer. "Well I'm very glad of that, said Gregory, "for you are going overboard," swim or no swim, over they went, Gregory giving an extra spin to the Lieutenant as he went over the side. While the British vessels stopped to pick up the men, Midshipman Gregory made good his escape.

Another time while in hot pursuit of an English frigate about the size of his own off the harbor of Toronto (Little York), was surprised by a larger craft, which cut off all chances of escape. The officer in command of the new comer, standing up in his boat, cried out: "We've got you at last, old fellow." The boats were not more than fifty feet apart, and Gregory, highly excited, grabbed a gun from the hands of his men and tauntingly cried out "not this time" and fired. Just as he pulled the trigger his arm was hit by one of his men and his aim destroyed. Further resistance was useless; he was taken and sent on board the English flagship Sir James Yeo, afterwards being sent to Halifax and from there to England where he remained in prison until peace of 1814.

William Squires (1796-1878) came from Danbury, Connecticut to Oswego on foot in the company with Philo Stevens arriving here in May 1812. He then proceeded to learn the trade of a shoemaker with Eli, brother of Philo Stevens.

Among the volunteers who added their feeble strength to that of the garrison for the resistance to British attack in May of 1814 was William Squires. He related as an incident of the day during the attack, one red coat, more ardent than the rest, dashed forward toward the American line, and after being allowed to approach within close distance, was shot down. Squires sprang forward, seized his gun and concealed it among some stones and bushes, where he found it after his release from imprisonment, and was kept long as a relic in his house. After the surrender of the fort, Squires being among the prisoners taken, was brought to the west side of the river, and with another prisoner, the two being under guard of a British soldier, were marched down West First Street to be taken aboard one of the British vessels. The guard pompously but incautiously marched ahead, leading the column of two, Squires bringing up the rear. Watching a favorable opportunity, he picked up a large stone which he flung at the guard, felling him. He then escaped, but was recap-

tured, and with Alvin Bronson, Carlos Colton, Eli Stevens and Abraham D. Hugunin was carried away, a prisoner of war. They were released a few weeks later.

When the British fleet came in sight on May 5, 1814, most of the inhabitants of the town, with household effects and goods on their backs, fled to the country. Those remaining were assembled, and under guard sent over to the fort. In the village barrels of pork, beef, and goods not perishable, rolled into the river. Vessels and boats were sunk. Among these was the schooner (**Penelope**), owned by Mr. Bronson and Daniel Hugunin, Sr. She was raised with little difficulty by the British.

When the fort surrendered the soldiers and sailors landed and began looking. The residence of Mr. McNair on the river bank, with wide hall, large kitchen, a great brick chimney, fireplace and oven attracted a body of sailors. While the men were loading themselves with loot, they found that the cutlasses which they wore were an incumbrance. Unbuckling them they placed them on a table. Entering the room T. S. Morgan saw them and the sailors being busy looking for treasure, he took one of them and hid it in the big chimney. For many years after this, the trophy was shown by the family.

The old Hugunin mansion on Water Street just south of Cayuga Street, was invaded by the British. Mr. and Mrs. Hugunin seized one of them and were in the act of drawing him up to a beam when an officer and detail looking for deserters entered and rescued the soldiers. Some of the soldiers w: nd ered up the river to the Wentworth homestead near First and Murray) and demanded food. The oven was filled with brown loaves just about to be removed and the marauders were so well satisfied with the quality and quantity of the provender offered that they left the house without further molestation.

Orson Barnes tells how (in 1812) an Indian courier "beat a hoss". There was an Onondaga Indian by the name of Jim Beachtree who measured over seven feet, well proportioned, athletic and powerful. Having seen him often, his majestic form presented itself to my mental vision with distinctness. In the War of 1812, when the British were coming to Oswego, a dispatch was sent to Onondaga Hill. A messenger was mounted on horseback who changed horses every ten miles. Jim was at Oswego at that time. The woods were literally filled with Indians from Onondaga to Oswego. He started with the messenger and took a direct line without regard to roads and reached Onondaga in advance of the dispatch and reported the exciting news that the "Red Coats" were coming to Oswego. It is said that Jim took strides like a giant and never slackened his gait until he reached the hill. He was so elated with success, he often told it with exciting interest, and usually wound up by saying "me beat a hoss."

Soon after the capture of Oswego in the month of May, 1814, when no troops were in garrison there, a body of Indians from Onondaga and Oneida, numbering perhaps 200 "warriors bold", under white officers, were employed to aid in protecting government property, then in transit from the seaboard to Sacketts Harbor. They encamped for a time in the lower part of the village in the rear of several dwellings.

The inhabitants were aroused one night by random musket firing, and savage yells, the occasion of which proved to have been an attempt by some British barges to enter the harbor with muffled oars, unconscious it seemed of the presence of such military guards.

They were discovered and the Indians were only waiting for them to get far enough inside to render escape impossible when the discharge of a gun at a public house near the river bank caused a hasty retreat, which with the aid of a quick current at the time they enabled to effect without loss. Whether the alarm was accidental or a preconcerted signal of danger was never known, nor by whom it was discharged.

The villagers were generally pleased with the result, especially after the same Indians aided in capturing the same flotilla a few days later at Sandy Creek, where there was a sufficient force of troops and seamen to prevent their indulgence in the savage instinct of revengeful slaughter, upon which there could have been no restraint had the capture been effected at Oswego.

One "Big Injun" with the Onondaga portion of that force pleaded at several tavern bars for free drinks, on the ground, as he claimed: "Me Capt'in David John Longlegs, me fight all day - Fort George - two shillin's - git no pay too." Possibly the boastful Captain David was numbered among the many "missing" braves on roll call at Sandy Creek after the fight at that place.

(To Be Continued)

History of the Congregational Church Of Oswego

(presented by Miss Margaret Wales, February 21, 1961)

It is indeed a privilege and a pleasure to be asked to speak to you this evening about Congregational history and more specifically about the history of our Oswego Congregational Church. In order to understand the history of the Congregational Church, it is important to review the story of the Pilgrims in England, in Holland and in America.

The mid 1500's in England saw troubled times within the Church of England. There was a movement underway to purify the church from certain objectionable practices. One faction worked toward purification from within the church and they became known as the Puritans. A somewhat more extreme group separated from the church and as early as 1567 had elected their own minister and deacon. This group, under the leadership of Robert Browne, organized a Congregational Church in Norwich in 1581. He was thrown into prison and later fled to Holland.

The section where our Pilgrim fathers lived in England was northwest of Norwich. The Pilgrim district was about 150 miles north of London, a triangular shape with East Retford on the east, Worksop on the west, and Austerfield on the north approximately 11, 7, and 9 miles long containing the towns of Bawtry and Scrooby. In England the Pilgrims suffered many hardships in their endeavors to worship and serve God in the way they felt most fitting. Leaving this extremely small section of their homeland, the dynamic little group migrated to Leyden, Holland, and later to America. Following Robert Browne's book containing the basic principles of Congregationalism and Christ's command, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost", the Pilgrims founded a Protestant denomination which now extends to the far corners of the earth.

In America under the leadership of Elder Brewster, a native of Scrooby, and William Bradford, whose birthplace was Austerfield, the little band of 102 signed the 'Mayflower Compact' and laid the foundations of democratic government in the new colony. The first church, although not called a Congregational Church, was organized on Congregational principle. Later, the Puritans came to our shores, and although the Pilgrims were not of like mind, friendly relations were established between the two colonies and as a result the Puritans established a church in Salem in 1629 which followed the Congregational way. Many present day Congregationalists proudly trace their ancestry to this small band of founding fathers and have gathered into the church many others, so that today there are nearly one and one half million Congregational Christians in the United States and more than 1 million in the world.

Because of the special emphasis on education which the Congregational Church has stressed since the earliest days, within 16 years of landing in America the Congregationalists founded Harvard University, the oldest institution of higher education in this country. So that we could have an educated ministry and so that our young people could receive training in

institutions founded on Christian ideals other schools such as Yale, Dartmouth, Mt. Holyoke, Smith, Wellesley, Oberlin, Grinell and others to the number 46, extending the length and breadth of our land have been established.

On the campus of Williams College, the first missionary organization in this country, the "American Board of Foreign Missions" was formed to send the gospel to non-Christian lands. It resulted from the famous Haystack Prayer meeting of 1857 when a group of young men, students at Williams College sought shelter from a sudden rainstorm in a nearby haystack. Shortly afterwards a "Homeland Missionary Society" was established for the evangelization of our own land.

Today the general structure of the Congregational Church in the United States is General Council, State Conference, Association, and the local church. Our church is in the process of merging with the Evangelical and Reformed Churches in America to form the United Church of Christ. In the merger, the General Synod will be our National Organization, with the General Council a part of the General Synod. First action toward this end was taken in Cleveland, Ohio in 1958. In Oberlin, Ohio in 1959 at the second General Synod a Statement of Faith was adopted, and in the adjourned session of that Synod held in Cleveland in 1960, the Constitution of the United Church of Christ was accepted. Ratification of this constitution by each individual church is the final step in consummation of the union of these two denominations, and it is hoped that it will be effected at our next General Synod meeting in Philadelphia, Pa. in July 1961.

This merger is by no means a new venture for Congregationalists because we are at present officially known as the 'Congregational Christian Churches', the Christian Churches having united with us in 1931. In like manner the Evangelical and Reformed Churches are the union of two denominations; so, the United Church of Christ is an advanced movement of the proposal made by Dr. Eugene C. Blake and Bishop James A. Pike at the recent National Council of Churches Convention in December 1960. Pure democracy is still maintained in the constitution of the United Church under an article which very definitely preserves the autonomy of the local church in matters of creed, ritual, and management of its own affairs. Every action is ultimately in the hands of the individual members of each Congregational Church.

The State Conference is an agency through which the churches can function with united purpose.

Within the bounds of each State Conference are the Associations which are groups of churches within a certain geographical area. In New York State there are nine associations. The Oswego Church belongs to the Oneida Association. The association examines, licenses and ordains candidates for the Christian ministry, accepts new churches on examination, approval and vote, gives fellowship, advice, and counsel to the member churches.

Believing in God, we are a conenant church, with Christ the head. We observe two sacraments-baptism and the Lord's Supper and endeavor to follow the Bible as 'The Book' which reveals the truth of God and the New Testament as a guide to Christian living. The pattern of policy generally adhered to by Congregational Christian Churches is best stated in the phrase, 'In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity.

Acknowledgments: to the Rev. Rees T. Williams for information and valuable assistance in writing the Prologue. To Mrs. Philip Fleischman for proof reading the paper. To Mrs. Charles D. Young for Typing the Prologue.

In 1957 on the occasion of our 100th Anniversary, the history of our local church was compiled and on Monday evening May 13, 1957, the following paper was presented in our sanctuary. Present for that service and speaking on that occasion were former Mayor Robert G. Iles, the President of local

Council of Churches, the Rev. Norman Herbert, the Rev. James A. G. Moore, at that time President of the State Council of Churches and an Associate Minister of the New York State Congregational Christian Churches and Mr. Webb G. Cooper who was master of ceremonies for the program.

Dear Friends, we are gathered here tonight during the week of celebration of our 100th Anniversary to review the history of this our B e l o v e d Congregational Church. Will you kindly allow me to be your guide as we go on an imaginary tour of our Church home?

As we stand outside on this beautiful May evening, we hear the peals of the bell, rung by our sexton, Carl Durdel,who has for so many years fithfully served our every need. This bell, inviting us to come inside, was brought by our ladies from the Second Presbyterian Church which was standing on this corner until 1856. Unfortunately, in that year it was forced to close its' door, leaving many without a pastor and when it was removed to the corner of East Fourth and Bridge Streets to be used as a public hall, later to be sold to the St. Louis Roman Catholic Congregation, our ancestors were even left without a place for public worship.

"Then it was that the Spirit of the Lord put it into the hearts of many brethern to unite themselves in an entirely new organization." As a result of this, and because of letters offering sympathetic assistance and material aid from Congregational brethern in New York, Rochester, Syracuse and Brooklyn, the venture began.

As you enter the Church, notice that the name of our Church is "The Congregational Church". You may ask, "Why not 'The First Congregational Church' "? as so many of us have erroneously referred to it. The First Congregational Church began in 1833, occupying "The Tabernacle", which was built on the site of the present Oswego Theatre. Probably because of the financial struggle of the panic years which followed, this group was forced to disband around 1840. It should be of especial interest to us that this building was later used by Professor Edward A. Sheldon for his "ragged school", which was Oswego's first venture in public education and proudly we can say that he walked with us as a member of our Church and loyal worker in our Sunday School.

Entering the vestibule, lighted by the memorial gift of Mr. and Mrs. Edgar G. Murphy, we pause to pay silent tribute to those members who have served our country during and following World War II, whose names are engraved on the plaque presented by the Mizpah Class. With a prayer of Thanksgiving in our hearts for those who returned safely to us, but a tear in our eye, we remember our friend Charles Bareham, son of Mr. Ernest Bareham, who paid the supreme sacrifice during World War II.

As sunlight streams into our Church during a morning worship service, the memorial windows presented in 1889 are a constant reminder of loved ones. Two of these windows significantly recall the founding fathers, Dana and Eliza Braman, the third window on the right of the pulpit and S. B. Ludlow and Nancy Ludlow first window to the right of the pulpit. Most appropriately is the latter window using the Alpha and Omega symbols, for it was under the leadership of S. B. Ludlow, Cheney Ames, D. A. Braman and Theodore Irwin that our Church was erected. Relying on aid from Churches in New York, especially the Broadway Tabernacle and the Church of the Pilgrims in Brooklyn, these men obtained subscriptions from people here in Oswego and ventured into debt $27,000, only to discover that because of a nation-wide panic, these pledges were practically worthless. Judge Ludlow, sent as an envoy to the New York Churches, was able to secure only $500 from each of the two churches which had generously offered aid. Upon his return to Oswego, the four men banded together, hired day laborers and paid them as they could, with the result that the cornerstone was

laid on Sept. 2, 1857 by the Rev. Henry G. Ludlow of Poughkeepsie, and brother of Judge Ludlow. This cornerstone contains a tin box with the Holy Bible, the confession of faith and covenant adopted by this Church, the manual and six daily newspapers. In the interim twenty-eight charter members had united on July 20, 1857 to form the Congregational Church of Oswego. The charter members were Dana A. Braman and wife, Cheney Ames and wife, Mr. and Mrs. A. R. Ford, Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Brown, Sardis Allen and wife, Herbert M. Harmon and wife, Mr. and Mrs. A. H. Failing, S. B. Ludlow and wife, Mr. and Mrs. D. G. Fort, L. Goulding and wife, Mr. and Mrs. S. B. Hubbard, Wm. J. Kniffin, Mrs. Mary Rathbun, Charles Kellogg and wife, Mr. and Mrs. James Boon.

As a Congregatinal fellowship, they received communion on August 16, 1857 for the first time, and on that day twenty-eight new members were added.

The basement was occupied for Sunday School for the first time on April 18, 1858 and in September of that year the Rev. Henry G. Ludlow became our first warmly welcomed pastor.

On the victorious day, April 13, 1859, our Church was dedicated and our first pastor was installed. In less than two years our congregation had erected and completely furnished a Church building worth $27,000, complete with a splendid toned organ, gathered 163 members, contributed to benevolences and had a Sunday School of 250 members.

Since this memorable occasion in our history many additions have been made. About 1885, it was decided that the basement was unhealthy for year-round use, and as a result, the chapel was begun in 1886. The purchase of the land was made by the Ladies' Aid Society. This lovely akron-styled chapel, which has been completely redecorated this year, was dedicated on Sunday, November 10, 1889, and records report that by 1900 we were free of this debt.

Let's pause for a moment in the chapel to enjoy the beauty of the large round window, a memorial to E. J. Hamilton, who served as the second superintendent of our Sunday School from 1858-1893. He also has the distinction of being chosen moderator of the first meeting, Feb. 20, 1857, held in preparation for the huge task of creating a Church and later chosen one of the Trustees, with Dana Braman, Charles North, Charles P. Kellogg, Edward A. Sheldon, Franklin Everts, Solon Allen, John Staats and Samuel B. Ludlow.

Entering the sanctuary, let us sit in the front section of the Church for a moment to drink in the lovely beauty which surrounds us. Nov., 1889 must have been an exciting month in the annals of our Church bcause it was during that month that not only the chapel was dedicated, but also a beautiful new organ, the gift of Theodore Irwin. The old organ had been sold to the Universalist Church. A concert was given on the evening of Nov. 6, 1889 by Dr. Morgan, a well-known organist from New York, assisted by Miss Maud Morgan, harpist, and our own pastor, Dr. Bacon, violinist. In 1935 the organ was renovated as a gift of the late Mr. and Mrs. D. D. Long, and in 1936 chimes were installed and dedicated on Easter Sunday in memory of Norman S. Bentley by his cousin, Miss Cynthia Beadle, who was affectionately known to so many of the youngsters of this Church as "Aunt Thea". Redecoration of the sanctuary and the chapel was done at that time, too, by Mrs. Charles Eddy, with the assistance of several members.

During the first 55 years the organ and choir were situated on the floor of the sanctuary, in front of a raised pulpit and the organ pipes were in the same position as we see them tonight. It is difficult for us (who belong to the push-button age), to imagine the sanctuary before electricity, especially since there is records of evening prayer meetings. It was in 1907 that the sanctuary was electrified and the organ moved to its present position. Lights were installed in the chapel in 1914. The beautiful chandeliers which now

light our way in the sanctuary were presented on Easter Sunday 1927 as a memorial to Roland S. Hall by his parents and brother, Mr. and Mrs. A. C. Hall and Nelson B. Hall. The communion table, presented by Miss Frances Burchard, was covered with an altar cloth and the pulpit with a scarf which have recently been replaced by our Altar Guild.

During the pastorate of the Rev. Lee James Beynon, Jr., the cross, given by Grace McInernoy, Vesta R. Nugent, Jane S. Judson and Arthur B. Smith in memory of their parents, and matching candlesticks, the gift of Mr. and Mrs. Harold Elkins, were placed on our altar. The flickering of the candlelights casts the shadow of the cross on the lovely Bible, the gift of Mrs. George Penney, and on the pulpit a Bible has been placed by Mrs. Clayton Wise and Mrs. Thomas Zaia, in memory of their father, Rock Vincent, for the convenience of guest ministers.

On those occasions when we observe the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, we are served from a communion service given in memory of Mrs. A. C. Hall. The sacrament of baptism will be even more impressive for us in the future as the lovely new baptismal font, presented by Mr. and Mrs. Harry M. Stacy, is used.

Our offering is placed in silver plates given in memory of D. V. Hardie, who served our Church so faithfully as our Church Treasurer, a post presently served by Judge Adrian K. King. The flags, which have added color to our Church for over a quarter of a century, have been presented to us - the American flag by the Sheldon Class and the Christian flag by the Mizpah Class. Flowers, which we place on the altar in silver vases presented in 1934 by Mrs. Charlotte Diment, land an atmosphere conducive to even more effective worship.

We have received cash bequests from estates of Mr. Fred Barnes, Mr. Wm. N. McCarthy, Mr. A. C. Hall and Mrs. Louise Frost Griffiths. Our lofty steeple, illuminated by a bequest from the estate of Mrs. W. B. Couch, has served as a guiding light to all of Oswego for over a decade.

ROLL-CALL OF MINISTERS

Perhaps the greatest reason for our century of progress lies in the fact that we have had the guidance of sixteen well-educated, competent, and versatile ministers. The first minister, the Rev. Henry Ludlow, born in 1797, studied for the bar, as did his brother, Judge Ludlow, but he gave this up in 1820 to complete his education studying theology at Princeton. Serving our Church during Civil War years and organizing activities of the abolition movement in Oswego effected a loyal patriotic spirit. Days of fasting and prayer were observed and the forty-three members serving in the front lines, six of whom never returned, were comforted and upheld by the thoughts of loved ones at home. Greatly loved by children and adults alike, Mr. Ludlow ceased his active ministering on Jan. 1, 1865 and passed to his reward on Aug. 11, 1867. It was in 1863, during his pastorate that the "Oswego Association of Congregational Churches" was organized. This later developed into the Central Association and more recently the Oneida Association.

Mr. Ludlow was followed by the Rev. S. S. N. Greeley, serving for 8 years, and the Rev. Wm. Smith, serving from 1875-1880. During Mr. Smith's pastorate the first formally organized Women's Missionary group is recorded.

During the pastorate of the Rev. J. A. Biddle the Church began recovering from years of depression and celebrated a triumphant 25th Anniversary, significantly choosing Sunday, July 16th and Thursday, July 20th, 1882, as the celebration dates.

On March 1, 1884 the Rev. Wm. Kincaid became our minister, resigning less than a year later to became District Secretary of the American Board of Foreign Missions, and he was followed in our Church by the Rev. Frank Russell. It was during Dr. Russell's pastorate that the chapel was started, but the task of completion fell to the Rev. Dr. Benjamin Bacon. Dr. Bacon, who later became

a professor at Yale Divinity School, must have been a man of many talents. We have already heard that he was an accomplished violinist, taking part in the dedication of our organ. By way of a clipping in the Church records, this story comes to us. In March, 1922, after 10 years' exposure to the weather, but miraculously in running order, a watch was found by a man climbing a mountain in British Columbia in Canada. It could be returned to its rightful owner, Dr. Bacon, who had lost it in 1911 on a similar expedition, because of the inscription showing that it was the parting gift of this congregation to their pastor.

At the turn of the century our Church was served by the Rev. Charles N. Thorp, who stayed with us from Nov. 9, 1897 to April 30, 1906. Mr. and Mrs. Thorp were our guests at the 90th Anniversary June, 1947.

Arriving in July, 1906, the Rev. Wm. F. Kettle called to the attention of the congregation that 1907 was the Golden Jubilee year. Mr. Kettle has the distinction of being the one minister to be connected with the preparation of two of our anniversaries - the 50th and 60th. Although he resigned, effective Jan. 1, 1917 to accept a position as assistant minister of the Plymouth Church in Brooklyn, he returned to take part in our Diamond Jubilee held in Feb., 1917.

The Rev. Harold C. Feast served from April, 1917, during and after the years of the first World War, until 1920. In Jan., 1920 the Rev. C. S. Osgood came to us from Cleveland, Ohio. His ministry seems especially seasoned with a variety of interesting and important programs. On several different occasions the Rev. Dr. Bruce, minister and Superintendent of our Conference, visited our Church. At that time Dr. Bruce was at Plymouth Congregational Church in Syracuse. Dr. Bruce was also with us in 1947, on the occasion of our 90th Anniversary. It is during Mr. Osgood's pastorate that the first mention is made of our youth attending Wells Conference. Upon completion of 6 years of service in our Church, Mr. Osgood tendered his resignation, effective Jan. 1, 1927. On Feb. 1, 1927, a unanimous call was extended to the Rev. David Doull, who came to us literally from "down under", having been born in New Zealand and educated in Australia. Early in 1933 Mr. Doull resigned to return to his native land and on Sept. 1, 1933 the Rev. D. D. Wilson became our minister. During his pastorate the first mention is made of our Church using the radio as a means of extending service to a wider area. On May 13, 1934 Mr. Wilson and the choir conducted a vesper service from station W.S.Y.R. As youngsters growing up in the Church during the ministry of Mr. Wilson, whom all the young people affectionately and respectfully called "Uncle D.D.", we were vividly impressed with reverence inspired by the Candlelight communion services, a part of the youth rallies and meetings held quite often in this - our beautiful Church.

Resigning in Nov. 1940 because of ill health, Mr. Wilson's successor was the Rev. W. T. Griffiths, coming from our Middleton, N. Y. Church. Do you remember, as I do, the Sunday of Jan. 5, 1941? Rabbi Benjamin Friedman, scheduled to conduct our service, was unable to reach Oswego from Syracuse because of road conditions. Marshall D. Williams, Chairman of the Church Committee and General Secretary of the Y.M.C.A. very capably presided at the worship services, becoming our minister later that January. Mr. Griffiths served our Church during the years of the Second World War. He was especially noted for his fine and inspiring sermons.

Following Mr. Griffiths resignation, the Rev. Lee James Beynon, Jr. served our congregation from April, 1948 to July, 1951. Capably serving our Church, this many-faceted, youthful leader also served the community as Chairman of the local Chapter of the American Red Cross.

In Dec. 1951, after several months without a minister, we indeed felt that our prayers were answered; that God knew our plight and sent us a lovely Christ-

mas present - the Williams family. Mr. and Mrs. Williams have been, as we all know, very active in Church affairs in association, State Conference and General Council. It is difficult to find appropriate words to express the deep love and appreciation we feel for them in the very, very short five years they have been with us in Oswego.

It is no wonder that a Church so blessed with such clergymen as leaders has had laymen who are prominent in our community and state affairs.

In the field of education we have mentioned Edward A. Sheldon, who not only initiated public education in our city, but later became the founder and first President of what is now the Oswego State University Teachers College. His son, Charles Sheldon, followed in his father's footsteps both in the field of education and in active Church membership. Several of our present members are members of the faculty of the College. E. J. Hamilton was for many years principal of the Oswego High School and later appointed Secretary of the Board of Education.

Five of our men have served as Mayors of Oswego, their names being Charles North (3 terms), Daniel D. Fort, Emerson J. Hamilton, Alonzo H. Failing and David D. Long. Quoting Mr. Fred Barnes, "It happened that Mr. Failing's term followed directly that of Mr. Hamilton and that both belonged to the Republican Party." The opposition paper, the Democratic Palladium took notice of this by stating the following: "Deacon Hamilton steps out. Deacon Failing steps in. The equilibrium of the Congregational Church must be maintained."

Our Church has had an abundant share of medical doctors, lawyers, bankers and successful business men. This roster is probably by no means complete, but to name a few - Samuel B. Ludlow, Judge Merrick Stowell, Judge L. C. Rowe, Judge Norman S. Bentley, Loren Goulding, Elias Root,, A. H. Failing, W. B. Couch, who held Book No. 1 and the distinction of being the first depositor in the Oswego County Savings Bank where, at the time of his death, he was serving as President; City Judge D. V. Hardie, O. F. Gaylord, James A. Cooper, W. B. Baker, Joseph B. Hubbard, H. M. Harmon, Wm H. Wheeler, W. J. King, W. P. Wallace, Dr. Switzer, A. C. Hall, Fred Barnes, John H. Davies, George R. Doust, Theodore Irwin, Cheney Ames, twice elected State Senator, and Dr. Stockwell. A humorous anecdote depicting Dr. Stockwell's generousdepicting Dr. Stockwell's generoswife of one of the ministers was seriously ill and the minister worried that he might not be able to meet the bill and so informed Dr. Stockwell whose reply, before turning his attention to his patient, was, "You keep right on trying to save me from going to hell, and I'll keep right on trying to save you and your wife from going to Heaven."

At present, Dr. C. Adele Brown has the distinction of being the only medical doctor among our members. For many years she has been associated with the Oswego Public School System.

Following the example of these men previously mentioned, several of our present members have been honored by being elected to public office - Judge Donald Stacy, Special County Judge Adrian K. King and Judge George M. Penney, who recently resigned, after having been elected four times as County Surrogate, to accept a position as the Director of the Savings Banks Association of New York State. Arthur B. Smith is the President of the Oswego County Savings Bank and Nelson B. Hall is now Vice-President of this bank, succeeding George R. Doust, whom we so sadly miss.

To these men and hosts of others, including our present deacons, trustees and members, who, through lack of time, must remain nameless, credit must go for the financial security which we enjoy this evening. At the beginning, funds were raised by public auction of pews. Later this was abandoned for a pew rental system and vestiges of this action remain under the cushions upon which you

are now seated. In Sept., 1874 the plan of voluntary weekly offerings began, with this Church being one of the first in the country to institute this method. Since the early 1900's the men have participated in a yearly "Every-member Canvass" to support the budget adopted at our annual meeting in January. In this connection Mrs. Cruser's generosity must not be overlooked, for it is she who has helped us through many difficult times.

The Bible's loveliest praise is reserved for a woman's hands - competent, generous and kind. Let us pause to remember the hands which have so diligently labored for us across the years. Through the efforts of our ladies our Church home has been furnished pleasantly. The first women carpeted the sanctuary, furnished the pulpit and gave the communion set. These have been replaced as needed through the years. During the last 40 years, in the collective organizations, the Guild and its Circles, the Mizpah and Sheldon classes and the Altar Guild, we have retired the mortgage on the present parsonage built in 1911, releaded the Church windows to preserve their beauty for future generations, reupholstered the Church cushions, laid the chapel floor, supplied the kitchen with necessary equipment, comfortably furnished our lounge, made draperies for all the rooms surrounding the chapel, furnished a bridal room and a bridal kneeling bench.

Although the task of caring for our local Church has been great, we have not been negligent to the wider mission of the Christian Church. In the early history, missionary work was of a rather informal nature. As early as 1865 it is recorded that missionary boxes were sent to Paxton, Ill. Boxes were also gratefully received by Mrs. E. J. Hamilton's brother, Mr. M. P. Parmelee, a missionary stationed in Turkey. First evidence of formal action was taken when, on a rainy day in March, 1877, three ladies of this congregation, Mrs. W. H. Wheeler, Mrs. E. M. Fort and Miss Letitia Boon - gathered with the pastor, Mr. Smith, to organize the Women's Missionary Society of the Congregational Church of Oswego, auxiliary to the Women's Board of Missions. This group held meetings once a month but by 1884, the ladies held bimonthly meetings alternately as the Women's Foreign Missionary Society and the Home Missionary Society. Mrs. Thorp first introduced the systematic study of missionary textbooks, which had just begun to be issued sometime after 1897.

From these combined groups and the Ladies Aid Society emerged, shortly after World War 1, what we now know as the Women's Guild. The first annual report of this society appears in the year ending in 1919. During the formative years of the Guild, it seems that the women's Sunday School casses, such as the Sheldon class and the Mizpah class, played the role which now is carried out by the three Circles. The Sheldon class took its' name from their beloved teacher, Mrs. Charles Sheldon. In its records I found very interesting reports. Mrs. W. H. Coppernoll was for some time their teacher and recording of the preparation to present our Church with the American flag is very delightful. In March, 1931 a birthday party was held at the home of Mrs. W. P. Wallace to raise funds for the purchase of the flag. Each member was to contribute a penny for each year of her life, but as it turned out, one would have thought every member was well over 100 and well on the way to vieing with Methusalah himself. A covered dish supper was enjoyed at tables decorated with clusters of small flags and a word contest to see who could make the greatest number of words from the one word "Americanism" in a ten-minute period was conducted. Needless to say, they were successful in raising the necessary funds and on the Sunday nearest Memorial Day, the flag was carried down the center aisle by Mr. Fred Gaylord, followed by members of the class, while the organist played the National Anthem. The flag, presented by the President, Mrs. Arthur Owens, was received and accepted by Mr. Harry

M. Stacy on behalf of the Church, who, in closing asked the congregation to join in the salute to this lovely new gift. Even today we enjoy the companionship of at least 3 ladies who were active members of the Sheldon class - Mrs. Howard Stone, Mrs. Fred Perau and Mrs. Loretta Booth. Mrs. George Sinnamon, a very clever member of this class, expressed conditions in the Church, State and Nation in a poem written in 1932, which reads as follows:

ORIGINAL POEM BY MRS. GEORGE SINNAMON, SHELDON CLASS

A rumor we heard sometime ago
We, I mean the Sheldon Class you know,
About our Church; Oh it was so very sad
We hardly believed it could be so bad
That the state of our finances was so low.

Who or what was to blame for such a condition?
Was it Hoover or perhaps prohibition?
No, it was neither, I am happy to say
T'was just things came altogether one day.

We were told the only thing to help this shortage
Was, oh horrible thought, to put on a mortgage
Why, when we heard such dreadful news
Our hearts went clear down to our shoes.
Some asked how come this awful slump?
I told you, because all came in a lump.

A three year insurance; a street to be paved
You know, over its condition we all had raved,
Even electricity gave us a jolt
Our steeple surely felt that bolt.

Then a dark something, stalking through the air,
We could not remove it, tho we knew it was there.
Depression, I've been told is its name
And its effect has been about the same.

You all remember the annual meeting
When Rock, who did considerable speaking
Told us "everyone must do his or her bit
Not just find fault, and talk round and sit"
That was what he meant, I know
Perhaps he did not say it just so.

We must get busy that mortgage to pay
Not let it go on day after day
The bank would not stand for even a Church
To go on like that, leaving it in the lurch.

So our president, Mrs. Owens, who fails us never
Gave us a scheme which we thought right clever
A dress she brought, t'was in a sorry plight
She said some patches would make it all right
When she explained it all the class nearly had a spasm,
It was so chuck full of enthusiasm.

Then some conditions we were told
Never refuse a patch be it silver or gold
And bank bills would help us nicely along
Even if we thought them not very strong
Must not think we're confined to our class
The rule is "let no woman pass".

A generous friend, who is never short
Had told what he'd do to help hold the fort,
For every class acting on Rock's kindly hint
He would equal its effort if he broke the mint
Dollar for dollar he would surely give
With joy in our hearts we cried
"Long may he live."

Then the Parson, whose words
give us courage and strength
Preached about faith, he spoke at
some length
It was just what we needed to help
us stay
Right on the job till we could say
The substance of things hoped for
has come our way.

Our loving gratitude to our Pastor
we give
For all his help the right way to
live
And Thanks we give to every kind
friend
Who so graciously helped us clear
to the end.

As a class we have tried to do our
bit
Hoping as we go on there will be
more to get
But most of all may we hope and
pray
For God's blessing on us all the
way,
That He will give us strength,
through sunshine and shade
To be loyal and true to the vows
we have made.
Lest we forget.

Unfortunately, written records of the Mizpah class have been lost but their love for our Church is manifested in the Christian flag presented by them as a memorial to Mrs. Doull, whose death occurred in Dec., 1931, and the war memorial plaque in our vestibule. It was through the efforts of the Mizpah class that our present Pilgrim hymnals were purchased.

Music has always played an important part in the life of our Church. John A. Barry, who was a journalist and later editor-in-chief of the Palladium, was our first organist and Mr. Ira Lewis was director of the choir. Mr. Barry served in that capacity for nearly 30 years - 1859-1888. At one time a distinguished pianist and composer, Mr. Gottschalk, while giving a recital in Oswego, was house guest of Mr. and Mrs. Barry for several days. As a tribute to his hostess, he composed the music for the hymn "Holy Spirit, Truth Divine" (No. 496) which has been so colorfully sung tonight and, playing it in our church for the first time some 90 years ago. Mr. Gottschalk dedicated it to Susan Reed Barry.

Three organists following Mr. Barry were Mr. Manville Andrews, Mr. Sloat and Prof. E. E. Favreau. At the Sunday worship service during our Golden Jubilee, we find Mr. Richard J. Schuler, organist, Mr. Harry J. Cooper, director, and Mr. Fred Gaylord, bass. At the evening service that day a duet was offered by Miss Adeline Lewis and Mr. Robert S. Kelsey, with a solo by Mr. Webb G. Cooper at a Tuesday evening gathering.

Ten years later at the Diamond Jubilee we enjoyed the music of a quartet composed of Mrs. Raymond Long, Miss Gladys Lewis, Mr. Arthur J. Scriber and Mr. Webb Cooper. Still lingering in our memory are the voices of Mrs. Elloween Perry, Mrs. Leon Brown, Mrs. Harriet Bingham, Irene Doull, Casper Loadwick, Rock Vincent and Mrs. Ted Prescott, who sang "The Lord's Prayer" more beautifully each time she rendered it. Mrs. Helen Smith Patrick served as organist before Mrs. Charles Watts began a period of 17 memorable years as our organist. During part of this period, Prof. Zeno Nagel of Syracuse University, was director and on Good-Friday evening, April 18, 1930, our choir presented a cantata "The Seven Last Words". When Mrs. Watts was forced by illness to terminate her work, we were grateful to Mrs. Beryl Lewis Hill, Mrs. Dorothy Schultz Hanlon, Mr. Richard Schuler and Mrs. Mildred Weeks, who supplied for us until Mr. Charles Lower in 1946 became our organist and choir director. We were thrilled at the 90th anniversary to have Mr. Lower at the organ and Mrs. Charles Watts once again at the piano. With deep regret we learned that Mr. Lowers' resignation would take effect after our Easter Service in 1948.

Through the efforts of Johnson Cooper, the choir remained intact and although we were without an organist for several weeks, we

were at last able to secure the services of Mrs. Wallace Clark as organist, and later Mr. Wallace Clark as choir director, to carry on the effective ministry of music in our Church. During the early years that Mrs. Clark was our organist, Miss Naida King became director, winning national acclaim in "Ebony", being the only Negress director of a white choir in this country.

Among our present traditions is an annual Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion with a Cantata, which is taped and broadcast locally on Christmas Day, bringing special joy to the lives of our shut-ins.

With the advent of the Williams family ,the choir benefited with the addition of two excellent voices. We especially miss Hugh, who is now in the services of our country, for it is a great pleasure to hear his voice in our midst as the choir processes in the beautiful robes, the gift of Mr. Lewis Clark, which have recently replaced robes given in 1927 by Mrs. W. W. Buck and Mr. Raymond Long, in loving memory of Irene B. Long. As a congregation, it gives us much pleasure to watch the musical career of Evelyn Batchelor unfold, and we are especially pleased that she is using her unusually fine talent in the service of our Heavenly Father, both in our local church and as organist at Wells Youth Conference. Spring Concerts presented by the choir have been a recent innovation and on March 31, 1957 we enjoyed the selections of our quartette composed of E. A. Malefyt, Cameron Widrig, Jr., Wallace Clark and Johnson Cooper.

Realizing that the Church is nourished by the Christian education of its members, this Church has, through the years, maintained a Sunday School which has in true Congregational spirit changed to fit the needs of the time and the students. Since the early twenties it has been the ambition of most youngsters in this Church to grow quickly to the age where he or she could attend Wells Youth Conference. It was at Wells that most of us had the fortunate experience of becoming acquainted with this evening's guest, the Rev. James A. G. Moore, associate minister of our State Conference. Our "Uncle Jim", as he is known to countless thousands throughout the state, has always seemed ready and never too busy to listen with sympathetic ear to the most trivial problem.

For many years Miss Pearl A. King served not only the youth of our Church, in our Sunday School, but loyally served as registrar at Wells. In our local Church she tells me that Christian Endeavor, Youth Pilgrim Club and Pilgrim Fellowship followed each other in that order. My earliest recollections in this Church were the Sunday evening Pilgrim Fellowship meetings in the late 30's. We attended regularly so that we would be allowed to attend the spring and fall rallies. What fun it was to spend the week-end as guests in Congregational homes in other communities. This practice was terminated in the early years of 1940's, I presume because of the strict transportation regulations imposed by the Second World War.

In more recent years our Junior High youngsters have been able to enjoy the rich experience of a week at our Lisle Congregational Christian Conference Center.

For several years, under the guidance of Mrs. Williams, we have conducted successful daily vacation Bible Schools for children below Junior High age. The system of week-day religious education was initiated sometime in 1924 and since that time countless members have served to help this endeavor.

Under the leadership of F. Perry Reynolds and the newly elected Chairman of the Church School Committee, Donald Serrell, our Sunday School seems to be gaining members and momentum. Mr. and Mrs. Williams' ministry to the college students has been gratefully received as is evidenced by their loyal attendance at Church services and valuable assistance in the choir. Recently the program of Christian education broadened to include a young adult group, who were inspired in February by their

guest, the Rev. Carlton Johnson, minister of Stewardship for our conference. During Lent this year, a Bible class was formed and it is sincerely hoped that this class will continue in the autumn with the reorganization of our Church program.

In closing, I am grateful for help from many sources and I acknowledge the services of Mrs. Donald Serrell as typist, David Stone, President of our Pilgrim Fellowship who is helping me tonight with the public address system, and Miss Pearl A. King, Mrs. Charles Watts, Church Clerk Mrs. Willard Parsons, Mrs. Harry Stacy, Mrs. Gus Orzesek, Mr. Harry King and Mr. Webb Cooper for information which has made this nearly insurmountable task a very pleasant and rewarding experience.

It is a difficult task to estimate the power and missionary influ ence that this "The Church for all people" has had in the community, the association, the State Conference and General Council affairs in its century of existence. In the words of Mr. Kettle. "The real history of a Church is found in the lives of its members, in their individaul experiences and achievements, in the impulses and results of each individual life, and such history only the recording angel can write and the eye of God can read."

In records of the Church the words of Merritt A. Switzer, for so many years our Church Clerk, express fluently our feelings tonight. "We should hold our connection with this Church as a prized possession, realizing that it identifies us with the work of our Good Shepherd, and giving for its advancement the best that lies within our power. Sacrifice has made it possible for us to enjoy its benefits. We should be willing to make great sacrifice for our possession and for those who are to follow."

And now - as we pause on the threshold of our second century, let our prayer be that through the guidance of our Heavenly Father, our story shall be His story.

John C. Churchill:

The Puritan As Politician

(presented by Mr. H. Fred Bartle, March 21, 1961)

The American puritan deliberately molded a new society in his own image. He preempted the Bible and **Pilgrim's Progress** and made them peculiarly his own; Luther's theses and Calvin's **Institutes** helped to explain to him what he was doing, but it is unlikely that he acted because of them. He wrote America's first declarations of liberty--but liberty only to do God's good work on earth. Both his energies and his follies combined to establish the paterns of our nation-hood, patterns which remained undefiled until late in the nineteenth century and which even today characterize a significant portion of our nat ional character. The puritan elan vital was not only paced by rigor, inflexibility and piety, but also by the Elizabethean appetites to which the puritan was legitimate heir. The puritan was a fundamental positivist, and as such he showed little inclination to compromise either with himself or with the foolish. He may, on occasion, have been a believer in moderation, but always moderation zealously accomplished.

That Mr. Churchill was a puritan is evidenced not only by a journal he kept as a young man, but by the whole demeanor of his public endeavors. That he was a politician is amply proven by the fact that he was twelve times a candidate for some public office. His role in local history is justified not only by his career, but also because he represents a purely American type typical of many nineteenth century American: the interaction of puritanism and politics as they sometimes waged war and sometimes waged peace.

Churchill was almost-but not quite--a Mayflower descendant. He was sixth in descent from another John Churchill who left England in 1620 on the **Speedwell**, the ship which would have accompanied the Mayflower on its voyage had not disablement forced it to return to England. Churchill did make a successful trip to the new hemisphere the following year, settled in Plymouth, and eventually married the daughter of a royal land grant recipient. (1) John Churchill's descendants edged westward. His great-great-great grandson Samuel established a farm on the western side of Lake Champlain in what is now Clinton County, New York, in 1804. On this farm he married Martha Bosworth in 1814, and there, on January 17, 1821, their second son, John Charles, was born. The nearest village is called Mooers.

This was, of course, frontier Although not strong as a youth and inclined toward bookishness, Churchill could mow, pitch hay, ride a horse and shoot a rifle--although by his own admission he was an abominable shot.

He was, in his own words "fitted for college" (2) at the Burr Seminary, Manchester, Vermont. From there he moved to Middlebury College, taking his A.B. in 1843. His diploma records his name as Carolus Johannes Churchill. (3) The countryscape around Middlebury during Churchill's years there was rich with religious fervor and almost seasonally some kind of reform swept down from the northern counties of Franklin and Chittenden with the sering force of a flash fire. All in a generation western Vermont produced Thaddeus Stevens, Horace Greeley, John Humphrey Noyes, William Miller,

Joseph Smith, the Dullerites, and such doleful revivalists as the appropriately named Increase Graves and the half-mad Jedediah Burchard. (4) Middlebury College itself was subject to periodic "seasons of refreshing." But as the fundamentalism raged down from the north, the Arminian heresy moved slowly up from the south. To be sure, Mr. Churchill did not overly succumb to it, but his own writing proves that he arrived on the scene after the battle had been fought, and lost.

He did very well at Middlebury, graduating Phi Beta Kappa and at the head of his class. This at a time when the Middlebury curriculum included Xenephon, Livy, the **Iliad**, Horace, Cicero, Demosthenes, Sophocles, Euripides, John Locke, algebra, logarithms, trigonometry, mensuration of distances and heights, navigation and surveying, spherical trigonometry, conic sections, rhetoric, logic, natural philosophy, botany, geology, minerology, and natural theology. (5) Grades were recorded with 12 as the top possible score. Churchill's four year averages are especially interesting for the subjects at which he was poorest:

Latin	10.3
Greek	10.1
Mathematics	10.4
Natural History and Astronomy	9.5
Chemistry	10.0
Natural Theology	8.4
Moral Philosophy	10.6
Rhetoric	10.5
Oratory	8.6 (6)

He did not miss a single class or chapel session until halfway through his third year at Middlebury.

In the fall of 1843, Churchill became a teacher of Latin, Greek, Mathematics and Rhetoric at a seminary in Castleton, Vermont. He also supervised (and rearranged) the school's library and served as tutor (i. e., housefather) to the students in residence. Privately, he read and did not question Blackstone; he also studied law in the office of Squire B. F. Langdon, who was not only Castleton's leading lawyer but also the father of a pretty daughter. Churchill's contempt for games--he felt they were a wicked waste of time--did not encompass Saturday night backgammon jousts at the squire's house. Another part of his busy life at Castleton included helping "fit" a younger brother for college. The two brothers were especially fond of fishing expeditions together--to garnish both the mind and the supper table.

Churchill did not like teaching and remained at Castleton only until the conclusion of the spring term in 1845 although he had been asked to remain. After a summer vacation at his father's farm at Mooers made somewhat embarrassing by his non-acceptance of a new stepmother, he became a tutor at Middlebury College. While in Middlebury he studied law in the office of Horatio Seymour (not to be confused with Governor Horatio Seymour of New York---although the Vermont Seymour did become a United States Senator). From July 1846 to January 1847 he attended lectures at the Dane School of Law, Harvard. From January to July 1847 he read law in the offices of J. A. Spencer in Utica, New York; a junior partner in Spencer's firm at that time was the mercurial Roscoe Conkling who thirty years later was to win Churchill a nomination perhaps at the expense of winning the election. While in Utica he was admitted to the New York State bar. In September 1847, Churchill returned to Middlebury to accept the chair of Professor of Language. This turned out to be his final teaching stint for in December 1847, at the conclusion of Middlebury's first term, he moved to Oswego, New York, established himself as a lawyer and remained an Oswego resident for the remainder of his long life.

Throughout the year 1845, Churchill maintained a small diary which has been preserved. (7) His faithfully recorded daily entries would tend to indicate that he kept other journals for previous and subsequent years, but none of them have been found. The introspection and unembellished frankness give many clues to the young

Churchill's ideology and character. Its intense personal quality is indicated by the fact that he left it unsigned.

The 24-year old Churchill was economical with words, a habit he did not retain in later life. Only once or twice during the year did he permit himself to lapse into rhapsodic:

> Our morning prayer bell rings (he wrote on October 4, 1845) now just before the sun arises, and the effect of the purple light of a bright morning upon the foliage of the mountains as we look towards the mountains is in the highest degree beautiful. The deep blue vault of heaven where the last star has just gone out, a few fleecy illuminated clouds just above the horizon, the golden glow produced by the rays of the yet unseen sun where the heavens and the mountains meet, the deep shadow below, and the dolphin like glories of the dying year present a picture not easily forgotten.

This a typical passage should be contrasted with a more characteristically laconic observation on November 9, 1845, that the falling snow outside was beautiful enough, but that warmth was preferable to beauty anytime!

The journal is rigorously puritan. First of all, it is dogmatic. Right was right and evil must not be suffered to endure on the earth. As an early missionary had surveyed the scene, "Vermont belongeth to the world, and Christ can never rule the world till Vermont is subject to His truth." As a teacher he had voted to expel an errant student from the Castelton Seminary because he had "had a spree in his room." To Churchill, nowever, the spree itself was not serious enough an infraction to merit dismissal, but the student had compounded his behavior with a false denial, and "such duplicity was . . . too dangerous to be allowed to remain." (8)

The young Churchill was not lacking in either self-righteousness or self reproach, a curiously puritanical combination. He frequently accused himself of laxity and sloth; how little time there was! A moment of forgetfulness during which he forgot to give a class an assignment occasioned a severe rebuke to himself and a solemn injunction that such a thing should never happen again. This is somewhat reminiscent of Jonathan Edwards famous diary entry in which he reproached himself most bitterly for not having contemplated sternly enough upon the glories of God. There are no suggestions in any journal entry that anyone who disagreed with him on any point whatsoever could possibly be in any other condition than in error.

Another prudent and revealing entry refers to his father's remarriage; his mother had died on May 15, 1844.

> Today (June 24, 1845), I suppose has been solemnized the marriage of Father and Mrs. Forbes. Custom may give her a right to expect the appelation of mother from the family, but I shall be excused from ever associating that name with any other than her whose memory I have so much reason to cherish. Still the wife of my father deserves and shall receive the respect which is her due.

At another time he commented approvingly of Shelly's **Prometheus Unbound:** ". . .the stern submission of the Titan--the inability of threats of personal suffering or the promise of happiness to move his resolution . . ." (9)

The puritan had to be sure and stern, for he was engaged in a great personal combat--a cosmic struggle not so much for the salvation of his own soul but rather because the universe consisted of good essences and bad essences (like most puritans, Churchill abhored materialism) and the role of the good man was to combat the bad essences. The devil--a very real, persistent, incarnately evil devil--lay siege to the grog shops, the boy's rooms, the churches of the universalists, the halls of the legislature, and the very dwellings of anyone who left them momentarily unfortified.

> How singular is the apathy which professed Christians and believers in the truth of revela-

tion, manifest in regard to that future stake which the Bible has made known to us.
We talk of every thing but that which is most worthy to engage our attention--are watchful for every interest save our highest interests--and then we studiously avoid as topics of conversation--and too frequently exclude them even from our thoughts. (10)

Today has been a sabbeth (March 16, 1845) unprofitably spent. How mad is the folly which owing a Divine Providence and knowing the necessity of gaining his favor still spends in indifferent pursuits the hours of that day which he has reserved for his peculiar worship. If the religion of the cross be no fiction than is the favor of heaven worth an effort to obtain.

Both of these quotations point out the value of winning, as opposed to losing heaven, and there is no specific evidence in Churchill's journal that he had undergone regeneration. Consequently heaven was still a problem. However, a minor one compared to the matter of living the good life here on earth to its fullest. The law was Churchill's calling and he submitted to the call with all the vigor he possesed, despite the early lures of languages and literature. For others there were other callings. This comment after a visit to a metal casting plant (March 31, 1845):

On the whole I was favorably impressed with furnace life. The employment is said to be a healthy one--it must require such skill and attention to succeed as would be likely to make those employed intelligent, and they seemed cheerful.

Churchill drew character in either black or white, but not in shades of grey. He either approved of someone as virtuous or disapproved of them as wicked. He could give himself totally to Roscoe Conkling or deny himself completely from Andrew Johnson. The posture of positive judgment was retained throughout his life, especially as he saw the Godly hand of retribution descend upon the south after the civil war. Here are some samples from his journal:

Of a man named Pease: He appears void of common sense-a monomaniac in fact. (11)

Of a man named Conant: An able fellow but a slave to self-conceit. If circumstance favors him he will make an impression in the world but circumstances also have it in their power, by calling out, and putting in too strong light his worse side to mar his success. He would do wisely to. . .learn humility. (12)

Of a woman named Boardman: She is a woman of superior mind--able and accustomed to think for herself. Although her beauty would hardly make her fortune in any matrimonial market in the world, her good sense, sound judgment, clear understanding, and womanly kindness would make her a prize when obtained. (13)

Churchill's religious dogma was fundamentally simple: the voice of God had no intermediaries on earth. He called "primitive" all "prophets, apostles, evangelists, priests or bishops, elders an deacons." He even looked somewhat askance at missionary activities; "These men (missionaries) are doing much but perhaps it might be said that the spirit of commercial enterprise is doing more to evangelize and Christianize the world." (14) He was not able to deny the appeal of unitarianism completely and commented favorably upon Channing's great 1819 sermon at Jared Sparks' ordination, although he prudently added that he considered this not typical of unitarianism. He endorsed Calvin and calvinistic dualism--man's role on earth was the stewardship of the soul; "earthly calling" was to train the soul for heaven. "It is a remarkable fact that the doctrines of Calvin have ever been held rigidly by the stern foes of despotism whether civil or ecclesiastical."

(15) As Calvin was Churchill's great saint, so Jefferson was his great devil. "The influence of Thomas Jefferson. . .is. . .most banefully felt. The legislature of. . (Virginia) remains under infidel control---so prejudiced a g a i n s t Christianity, that nobody for a charitable or moral purpose has ever received a charter from it. The University--the pet of Jefferson--has ever been a hotbed of infidelity. . . .it (is, at the University of Virginia) considered proof of a small mind to believe in the existence of God--and the acts of lawless violence and bloodshed there perpetuated have shaken and disgraced the country." (16)

Churchill's religious attitudes did not lead him, however zealous he was, to be a minister. Although he had considered the possibility briefly as a young man, "the allotments of Providence" deemed otherwise. Attention was called to Churchill's lay activities near the end of his life in a speech by Middlebury's then President Samuel Boardman,". . .Although Christian ministers are most conspicuous in the promotion of Christian progress, yet the work is by no means restricted to their agency. . .Such elders as. . .John Churchill are scarcely less efficient in the church than clergymen." (17) In Oswego, Churchill joined the First Presbyterian Church and was for twenty years the Superintendent of its Sunday School. Then on March 18, 1872, he was one of the twelve founders of Grace Presbyterian Church. In his **Landmarks of Oswego County,** Churchill explained the reasons for the change, "The idea for another Presbyterian church in the city originated from twelve to fifteen years before this (1872). Several persons believed, as early as 1858, that the time had come for a new society on the west side of the river. Their opinion never changed. This conviction was based upon the fact that not a pew, and hardly a sitting, could be had at the time in the old edifice." (18)

To round out his theological views, his attitude toward predestination is learned from a comment about Channing:

> . . .his (Channing's) views of the recuperative power of human nature seems to appeal more plausibly to man's pride than reason. If sin had not shattered the fair workmanship of the deity, so as to make a new creation--a **new birth**—necessary, it might **seem** to be true. (19)

Puritan postivism in temporal affairs was matched by passiveness in spiritual affairs. Churchill's comment on revivals was simply that, "The seasons when God shall revise his church as well as others, are in his power." Or, upon the death of a friend approximately his own age:

> Willard Norton, I learn. . .is dead. A sad loss to his parents for he was an only son. I hope it may have the effect to make more serious minded his giddy sister, who needs but to have the better qualities of her heart gain the ascendency to become an excellent young lady. Willard, I believe, was prepared as he hoped for death, if I mistake not a subject of the revival in the Seminary two years last spring. (20)

Churchill represented a combination of self-respect and self-restraint, holding both equally in high esteem.

> Self-respect is a great assistance to correct behavior. Confident in his own real worthiness man dares to do what **he** thinks right and does it with a boldness which commands at least the respect of others. But self-respect is lost when one does not maintain the mastery over his own mind its passions and its impulses. Circumstances recommend to me a cultivation of self-control as a means of acquiring more self-respect. (21)

In the conscious formulation of his own personality, Churchill was much more concerned with the individual man's relationship with God than he was with man's relation to men. This is responsible for the accent on self-ness. He was distressed by the maxim that "men had rather talk of their

faults than not to talk of themselves at all." He preferred an individual, inviolable morality which could never yield to expediency. His opposition to public lotteries and gradual movements toward total temperance were youthful manifestations of this view. His feeling that the South could be brought back into grace only by punishment represented a mature application of the same idea.

Like many other intelligent and educated men of his time, Churchill was curious about advances in science. He went to lectures on phrenology and, like Emerson, took it seriously. He became interested in physiology and punctiliously observed that uncared for "small ailments become big ailments." Churchill's scientific interests lay mostly in the field of geology. In March, 1845, his professor of chemistry at Middlebury College was appointed State Geologist for Vermont--itself an interesting comment on the broad scientific skills practiced at that time. Churchill followed Adams' work with interest and enthusiasm and commented with great irritation at an editorial critical of an Adams' report which stated that nine-tenths of Vermont's mineral resources lay in the western half of the state. The revelation of this fact undermined the plans of a group of railroad promoters to build a railroad along the eastern side of the mountains. Churchill wrote that it was "not his (Adams') fault if as high priest of nature he sought to discover her truths and when successful to reveal them to others."

Churchill's early attitude toward politics shows a consistency which he retained throughout his entire life. To be sure, he was an anti-slavery Whig, but to him "slaveholding is rather a misfortune than a crime." To Churchill it was the struggle against slavery that deserved the full expenditure of his energies. On several other occasions in his diary he commented rather passively about the existence of slavery as indeed the Puritan was a passive individual when confronted with the accomplishments of God. He was anti-Texas and anti-Oregon but did look longingly at the eventual acquisition of Canada. Also as befits even a Whig in his geographical area, he was a low tariff man. The Whigs in upper New York State and in Vermont were the poor man's party. He confessed in an entry dated October 23, 1845, that he had "been guilty of the heresy of questioning the experience of a tariff for the sake of protection and was met by a ready taunt, that bookmen were always following vague theories in spite of the evidence of experience and common sense." To justify his own opinions to himself he entered statistics showing Holland's prosperity which he credited to that country's extremely lenient tariff policies. He saw as the great stumbling block to world-wide tariff revision the necessity for a "kinder feeling" among the nations of the world.

If he advocated kinder relations between nations, his conservative concept of the sternness of domestic government remained firm. His comments on the anti-rent wars in Columbia County, New York, were always directed against the tenants and in favor of a rigid interpretation and application of the laws which had evicted them. When Governor Silas Wright of New York commuted the death sentences of two anti-renters, Churchill, who had no use for Wright anyway, observed that "Mercy is an ornament to any government but is a dangerous feeling when law has been trampled under foot by an armed mob as in this case." There can be little doubt that Mr. Churchill's righteousness was politically colored. For example, his anti-rent position can be contrasted with his eager acceptance of the authenticity of the forged William Lyon McKenzie letters promulgated by a group of unscrupulous Whigs to embarass Governor Wright.

Churchill's partisanship is seen in the brief and grudging tribute to Andrew Jackson written when Old Hickory died.

> Andrew Jackson, whose death has been for some time antici-

pated, has at last paid the debt of nature. The time which had intervened since, he has borne a part in the public offices of government, has served to soften some-what the asperity of party feeling, and nearly all unite in honouring the memory of one who as a soldier served his country nobly, and as a politician at least independently. (22)

This comment is perhaps the most gracious observation he ever made about a Democrat. Upon the receipt of President Polk's annual message for 1845, Churchill commented "President Polk is a man of less ability probably than any other who has ever held the chair, always excepting John Tyler."

Mr. Churchill himself was totally incorruptible, but his incorruptibility was so excessive that it led him to believe that his side was so completely virtuous that his opposition literally had to be at least incorrect and probably immoral as well. This serious partisan blindness remained with him throughout his entire public life.

Several unintentionally amusing passages in Churchill's journal refer to his interest in marriage and his lack of knowledge about the courting process. "Somehow in the presence of ladies," he complained, "my courage seems to ooze out at my fingertips." However, once settled in Oswego he became somewhat bolder, bold enough at least to marry Cathar ine (sic) Sprague. (23) daughter of an Army officer, on October 11, 1849. They had six children, three of whom survived their father. (24)

Churchill's public career began early. At 29, in 1850, he served the first of three disconnected terms as Oswego city attorney. The second was in 1853 and the third not until 1874 after he had been retired from Congress. In 1853 he became a member of Oswego's first school board, representing the second ward. This was the school board which convinced E. A. Sheldon to leave his post as secretary to the Syracuse school board and take a similar position at Oswego. He remained on the school board until 1856 and then rejoined it briefly in 1879-1880.

The previous year he had been president of the Oswego Atheneum, whose object had been to found a library, establish a reading room, and to inaugurate lecture and debating courses. Nothing came of the Atheneum's efforts and none of its officers or directors were immediately associated with the founding of the Oswego Public Library in 1854, although it must be assumed that the interest aroused by Churchill's group pointed to the need for a library.

In 1857 he became Oswego County's district attorney, and in that capacity prosecuted the only man ever hung in the county, a murderer named Dennis Sullivan. He was elected county judge in 1860 and served until 1864. Also during his tenure as judge, he was appointed by Governor Morgan to superintend the draft for Oswego County, a rather thankless job that was eventually assumed by an officer appointed by the federal government. Churchill's own account of the draft cites 516 names drawn (in the city), 53 names of men who served in the Army, and 11 names of men who hired substitutes. The county totals were 1910, 88, and 57. The substantial difference between the numbers called and the number who served is accounted for either by physical disability or payment of the $300 commutation fee. Churchill's wry comment on the draft was simply, "It was the last time this kind of an experiment was tried during the war." (25) Throughout the war, Churchill remained in Oswego as judge, draft superintendent, and general proselytiser for the Union cause. He addressed various patriotic meetings and on one occasion presented a sword to Colonel C. C. Marsh, "who had distinguished himself in the west under General Grant."

In addition to public offices, Churchill became one of the first directors of the Oswego Second National Bank, organized January 26, 1864, only three days after the organization of the First National Bank. He was one of the organizers of the Oswego Rural Cemetery

Association in 1865 and remained its secretary until his death in 1904. At various times he served on the board of the Oswego Normal School and the local YMCA. In addition, Mrs. Churchill was a member of the Board of Directresses of the Oswego Orphan Asylum and the Board of Directors of the Oswego Home for the Homeless. At one time she and Mrs. Dewitt C. Littlejohn were fellow vice presidents of the Home for the Homless.

Churchill was first elected to Congress in 1866 from the 22nd district of New York which at that time combined Madison and Oswego county's turn. Littlejohn who customary for the congressional seat to be shuttled back and forth between the two counties in the district, i. e., in 1858, M. Lindley Lee (Oswego) was elected; in 1860, William Lansing (Madison); 1862, Dewitt C. Littlejohn (Oswego); 1864, Sidney Holmes (Madison). (26) Consequently, 1866 was Oswego county's turn. Littlejhon who had been speaker of the New York State Assembly and had been very prominent in Oswego's economic development, was anxious to win another term. In a letter to Gerrit Smith, Littlejohn noted that the Niagara Ship Canal Bill which he had so ardently sponsored, would not pass Congress. "This being so, the sentiment in this city is almost unanimous in urging me to be a candidate for Congress. In view of the interest at stake I consented." Littlejohn continued:

> Mr. Churchill is a candidate, and he has the support of Mr. Holmes (the incumbent). Joseph Marsh and others in Madson and the plan is to carry delegates for Mr. Holmes, and in the convention to transfer them to Churchill. Now Madson (county) in good faith cannot ask for the candidate. It belongs and will come to Oswego, and Madison must choose between Mr. Churchill and myself. This being so, I should feel mortified if she preferred Mr. Churchill. I am for the Midland R. R. and am its President, and Mr. Churchill opposes it. I am for the ship canal which would make the Midland R. R. one of the best on the continent. Mr. Churchill is opposed to it. . .(27)

Littlejohn's analysis of the political situation was correct. Madison did indeed have the power to choose between the two men and Madison did indeed choose Churchill, who went on to defeat his Democratic opponent by 5,600 votes. We can assume that Littlejohn was properly mortified. Churchill's congressional career cast some doubt about the Littlejohn claim that Churchill was against the Niagara ship canal. (28) Churchill went on to be the first congressman from that district to be reelected since 1848. One of the effective issues that reacted in Churchill's favor was the charge of moderation against Littlejohn; Churchill campaigned as a Radical Republican and in Congress he proved that he was one.

Under the then existing law, Churchill would not have taken his seat until December 1867, but the Radical Congress had decided to keep itself in continuous session as a means of blocking any independent executive action by President Johnson, and on March 4, 1867, the day the short session of the 39th Congress ended, the first session of the 40th Congress began. Churchill was assigned to the Committee on the Judiciary. His maiden appearance before the House occurred on July 15, 1867, when he introduced a bill to authorize the Secretary of the Treasurey to ease the licensing procedures for ships engaged in Great Lakes commerce. (29) This bill, like all the others he introduced, save two, died in committee. One bill he offered passed the House and died in the Senate and one other subsequently became law. However, as a member of the Judiciary Committee he served on a subcommittee of three who drafted the fifteenth amendment to the constitution, certainly not a difficult document to compose since it is only two sentences long and most of it is lifted from the old Northwest Ordinance.

As a freshman representative in an overwhelmingly Republican House dominated by the fearsome Thaddeus Stevens, Churchill immediately placed his vote at the disposal of the radical majority. In July 1867, for example, he voted to prevent President Johnson from removing military department commanders without the consent of the Senate or a recommendation from the Commanding General of the Army---who was, of course, General Grant. This certainly gives an unusual constitutional twist to the fact that the President is commander-in-chief of the Army and Navy. He voted for all the stern radical measures including the impeachment articles against President Johnson. He prepared a speech attacking Johnson, but was unable to get it printed in the **Congressional Globe.**

His first parliamentary experience did not occur until the second session of the 40th Congress in December. He had moved that the House should vote an appropriation to enable three specifically named ex-members of the House to receive complimentary copies of back issues of the **Congressional Globe.** The freshman Churchill was taken to task for this by the polished and skilled Elihu Washburne of Illinois who with some zest proposed to amend Churchill's motion so as to make it unpalatable to the House while simultaneously announcing that as soon as this should be accomplished he (Washburne) would then move to lay the motion on the table. (30) Churchill's friends did not get their copies of the Globe--at least at government expense--but Churchill had learned his first lesson in tactics. Although not a frequent speaker, he grew to be a capable parliamentarian and during the remainder of his time in the House he was never again so outmaneuvered by those more familiar with the Houses's complicated rules. He learned how to oppose a harbor improvement in South Carolina until a harbor improvement in Oswego had been considered. And although not often victorious, his persistence never wavered to find appropriations for his own district.

The major portion of his appearances before the House concerned Judiciary Committee business. In his second term, he was chairman of a committee on election frauds and in that role he presented five cases, four of which were sustained by the House. Curiously, the four recommendations the House accepted all called for the replacement of Democrats by Republicans and the one the House rejected called for the seating of a Democrat. In his role as chairman of the disputed elections committee, Churchill moved in early 1870 to keep the entire Georgia delegation from being seated.

As Congressman, Churchill performed the usual amenities for the "folks back home" just as all other congressmen did. He presented petitions--87 of them in four years. He introduced motions calling for information about his district's transportation facilities. He fought for what he considered his district's share of the yearly pork barrel. However, in four years, he only introduced two private bills, neither of which passed.

In May 1870 he attempted successfully to have the House lower the duty on flour, meal of oats and wheat, arguing that Oswego mills were penalized enough by the difficulty of transporting wheat to them and that they would profit by a cheeper source of wheat from Canada.

In December 1869, he reintroduced Littlejohn's Niagara Ship Canal Bill which in January 1870 was referred out of committee to the floor. In the debate, Churchill pointed out the military advantages of a Niagara ship canal in case the United States should "want to go to war" with England. He emphasized increasing population in the East accompanied by its decreasing ability to produce food. He cited the benefits to Oswego from the ship canal by citing that in 1866 Canada sent to England 3,334,812 bushels of wheat down the St. Lawrence and 5,854,187 to England via Oswego and the New York State canal system. He argued that it would be cheaper to ship wheat to New York via Oswego than via Buffalo because of

the decreased mileage on the internal canal system, but that as of 1866, the economic advantage was Buffalo's by approximately one cent per bushel. One of his principal arguments was that a vessel carrying 30,000 bushels of wheat needed no more crew and cost no more to operate than the 16,000 bushel vessels which at that time were the largest the Welland Canal could handle. Typical of Churchill's congressional style, which still was flavored by his classical education, are statements he made arguing for the bill's passage:

> The average annual appropriation for the defense of the seaboard would alone suffice to commence and carry on the construction of this great work. **Fas est ab hoste doceri.** It is worth our while to observe the course pursued by our ancient an possibly future enemy. (31)

Churchill also pointed out, in speaking for the canal, that the distances from Oswego to Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, Boston, and Portland were shorter by rail than the distance to those cities from Buffalo.

> The New York and Oswego Midland Railroad, which is also under most efficient management, being pressed forward to completion, will give a connection between Lake Ontario and New York forty miles shorter than any existing route. The Oswego and Rondout road, being built under the energetic presidency of a member of this House, will furnish, when completed, the very shortest communication between Lake Ontario and the deep water of the Hudson. The effect of the competition of all these roads and routes on even terms with the New York Central and Erie Railroads and the Erie Canal, for the trade of the west, I need not explain to this House. They know what the effect would be, and know that it would revolutionize that trade, and by regulating and cheapening transportation would confer benefits which we cannot compute upon both the east and the west, I will no longer detain this House. He is said to be a real benefactor of his race who makes two blades of grass grow where but one grew before. But he is equally, and far more vividly a benefactor, who by wise legislation brings closer together the producers and the consumer, and gives cheap bread to the one at the same time he secures a more ample renumeration for his labor to the other. (32)

However, Churchill's efforts were to no avail. After lengthy debate, the issue went back to committee and did not rise up again while he was in Congress. Churchill was still plugging for the ship canal as late as 1892 when he addressed a meeting at Syracuse and told of the advantages of a ship canal from Buffalo to Syracuse via Oswego. (33) He used the same arguments in 1892 that he had in 1869--the benefits of bringing food to the consumer cheaply.

Churchill was also a financial conservative on some portions of the appropriations bills that passed his scrutiny. Very much in the manner of his fellow congressmen, he was concerned about the lavish use of federal money in other congressmen's districts. He did, however, in 1868, attempt to order the mothballing of the six revenue cutters that had been hastily constructed for lake service in 1864 on the grounds that they had never captured a single smuggler, cost too much money to operate ($161,000 annually), and were only used by officials of the executive department for pleasure cruises. His specific proposal to lay up the six vessels in such a manner that they could be reintroduced into active service if necessary was replaced by a motion giving the Secretary authority to withdraw the vessels at his discretion, something he was already empowered to do. Later on, Churchill reversed his position on the revenue cutters. The vessels had been laid up as Churchill had requested, but by 1870 he wanted them back on the lakes. In February 1870, he stood alone to with-

hold unanimous consent to call up a bill that would have put five of the cutters up for sale, and in June 1870 he moved to get the five laid-up cutters back into commission. Even if the cutters couldn't catch smugglers, he admitted, they could "give aid to vessels in distress upon. . .(the) lakes. (34) His efforts were not successful. He was first ruled out of order, persisted, ruled in order, and then defeated by majority vote.

Churchill, who had served as a county judge and would end his career as a justice of the New York State Supreme Court, made repeated efforts to have the salaries of federal judges in New York State raised. He pointed out the most interesting fact that in 1868, New York State supreme court justices were paid $10,000 per year, New York City magistrates were paid $6,000 per year, while federal judges in New York received only $4,000 per year. His motion that they be raised to $5,000 per year was growled down by Thaddeus Stevens himself. A subsequent effort to raise them to $6,000 was similarly defeated.

Churchill had two legislative successes of importance. The first was local. On June 15, 1868, he introduced House Joint Resolution No. 296 which called for the construction of wharves in the Oswego Harbor. The resolution was introduced in the closing days of the session and passed both houses the day after its introduction. In his **Landmarks**, Churchill referred to his success in the third person, at the same time honestly admitting that the work itself was not durable:

> During 1869 there was built the extension northward of the lighthouse pier which was 432 feet long and thirty feet wide. Its object was to shelter vessels from westerly waves at the entrance to the river where its current must be met, and the harbor was much improved by its construction . . . The estimated cost was $1,161,682, but the actual cost of construction (not including maintenance) was considerably less than that. That so large an expenditure was justified in order to foster and accomodate the business of the port is indicated by the single fact that the duties collected by the government in that year were $1,282,-884; more than the total estimated cost of the outer harbor. The subject was strongly presented, the approval by Congress of the plan was secured, and the first appropriations therefor were obtained by the Hon. John C. Churchill, who then represented the district in Congress. This method of construction (framed timber cribs thirty-five feet square, each divided into nine compartments by four bulkheads all filled with loose stone; each crib having a grillage bottom formed of timbers crossing each other and screw-bolted and planed; the cribs united above water by a continuous superstructure six feet high of timber, also filled with loose stone and covered with a deck of three-inch plank laid across the work) was used throughout the entire work (which occupied eleven years) with slight modifications. Experience has shown that the cribwork was lacking in the strength and stability which the exposed location needed. (35).

The only bill he steered successfully through both houses was introduced on January 5, 1871, passed by the House on February 15 and by the Senate on February 25. (36) It called for the enforcement of the rights of citizens to vote. One provision of his bill made false registration a misdemeanor; this of course gave the federal government authority over registration, a right not unchallenged to this very day. Another called for United States deputy marshals to be election supervisors in judicial districts and that they should report directly to federal judges. A third section would have a "chief supervisor of elections" appointed federally for each federal judicial district. Federal personnel would guard and scrutinize registration and elections. They would station

themselves in polling places and remain with the ballot boxes until "the last vote was counted." These election supervisors would have the power to arrest and the power to call out military forces if needed. Perhaps the most significant speech about the Churchill bill was made in opposition to it by Representative Eldridge, a Democrat from Wisconsin. His attack brings out the bill's merits more sharply than Churchill's own explanation of them:

> Of all the legislation proposed by this or any other Congress, there is none in my judgment, more unwarrantable and un justifiable than that proposed by this bill. It is absolutely atrocious. . . .(without precedent, it stands alone, original as it is hideous and revolting. . . .It will bind the several states hand and foot, and deliver them to the Federal Government subjugated and helpless, the mere tools and slaves of Congress. (This, of course, was clearly one of the purposes of the radicals.) Sir, this bill is the crowning act of centralization and consolidation. Stealthily and by somewhat measured step heretofore has been the march of Federal power upon the rights and jurisdiction of States; but this reaches the point and accomplishes State destruction by a single bound, by one grand act. It brushes away at once and finally all State machinery and local authority and substitutes Federal bayonets. It not only subju gates and subjects all local and state offices and officers to the Federal will, making them the instruments of its execution. loading them with pains, penalties, and forfeiture for its neglect, but makes them criminals for obedience to the laws of the State whose officers they are and to which they are bound by their solemn oaths. It creates a host of new offices before unknown, and fills the land with spies and informers with large pay and emoluments for their filthy work. It establishes and ordains a multitude of crimes heretofore not known in our law. . . .It seeks to overawe free American citizens and control their votes by the meanance of the sword and the presence at the voting precint of the soldiers of the Army. . . .It's very title is a false pretence, if not a lie, adopted for the purpose of defrauding the p e o p l e and cheating them into the support of a most infamous measure:
>
> An act to enforce the rights of the citizens of the United States to vote in the several States of this Union.

(It is a) scheme for propping up the waning fortunes of the Republican party. . .By conferring suffrage upon the colored race have we lost the rights our fathers secured to us by the Constitution? In giving freedom to the slaves have we become slaves ourselves?

The bill did become law, although somewhat dubious use was made of it. It was repealed in 1894. Churchill himself, in summarizing his congressional career had this to say: "He (referring to himself in the third person in the Landmarks of Oswego County) introduced . . . (an) act to secure the purity and freedom of elections at which members of congress were chosen, which subsequently became law, and furnished means for national supervision of elections. The determined attempt to repeal this act, and the equally determined defense. . .(of) it. . . show the importance attached to it." (37)

On March 3, 1871, Churchill reported out a report of the House Committee on Expenditures on the Public Buildings and asked unanimous consent to have it printed. This accomplished, he retired the following day to private life.

As a final footnote to Churchill's congressional career, it should be mentioned that he may have one more honor due him for his service. On the 13th of December 1870, he had moved to amend the section of the general postal laws which read, "That the Postmaster General may establish, in places where letter carriers are employ-

ed, receiving boxes, for the deposit of mail matter, and shall cause the matter deposited therein to be collected. . . ." so as to insert after "where letter carriers are employed" the additional clause, "also in other places, where in his judgment the public convenience requires it." (38) At the present time the public convenience requires receiving boxes on street corners, in public buildings, and many other places. John Churchill may have some claim to being the father of the corner mail box.

Churchill's retirement from Congress---he was succeeded by William Lansing of Madison County who had already served a term before Littlejohn---did not mark his retirement from politics. He practiced law in Oswego, and from there was selected to be a delegate to the Republican National Convention which met in Cincinnati, Ohio, to nominate a successor to President Grant. New York had 70 votes out of a total of 756. (39) In spite of the delegation's size, it was strangely alienated from the rest of the convention. The reason for this is not difficult to ascertain. The front running contender for the nomination was the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the brilliant, charming, and slightly tarnished James G. Blaine. Other prominent contenders were Secretary of the Treasury Benjamin Bristow---the choice of the reform elements of the Republican party--, Oliver Morton, the paralized Senator from Indiana who had been that state's governor during the Civil War, Governor Hayes of Ohio and Governor Hartranft of Pennsylvania, both Civil War generals. The New York delegation supported Senator Roscoe Conkling, almost, but not quite, to a man. A violent antipathy between Blaine and Conkling assured all the delegates that New York would under no circumstances vote for Blaine. Consequently the Blaine forces concentrated their efforts elsewhere. The floor leaders for the other candidates assumed that New York would stick with Conkling and concentrated their efforts elsewhere, too.

As expected, Blaine led on the first ballot with 285 out of a needed 379. Morton and Bristow followed and Senator Conkling with 69 of New York's 70 votes, plus a scattering of isolated votes from southern states, stood fourth. Five inconclusive ballots followed in which Blaine's vote fluctuated between 286 and 308, in which Conkling's votes went steadily down from 99 to 81, but always with 69 of New York's 70 votes, and in which Governor Hayes' votes crept steadily up from 61 to 113. As the seventh ballot began, it appeared that a definite trend to Blaine had set in and that he would be nominated. However, the pressure of Blaine's strength brought all of his enemies together--around the one candidate whose vote had steadily increased, Governor Hayes. When the time came for New York to cast its votes, it was apparent that if it remained with Conkling, Blaine would be nominated. Acting without instructions or advice from Conkling, who had neither attended the convention nor had contacted even his own floor manager, Stewart Woodford, by telegraph at any time during its deliberations, the New York delegation split 61 for Hayes and 9 for Blaine. In spite of this, the Blaine supporters were still confident of the nomination because they anticipated the delivery of Hartranft's Pennsylvania delegation to their column. As it turned out, Pennsylvania split almost evenly between Hayes and Blaine and when balloting was ended, Blaine was 28 votes short of a majority while Hayes had 5 votes to spare. The nomination of Hayes was then made unanimous. The Conkling forces then tried to nominate Stewart Woodford for the vice-presidency, but were humiliated when the convention selected an anti-Conkling New Yorker, William Wheeler. Wheeler, incidentally, was a close personal friend of Churchill.

The seriousness of Conkling's candidacy is questionable. He had been supporting Grant for a third nomination until it became obvious that Grant in 1876 was a lost cause. Then, although he permitted New York State to support him, he did

nothing to promote his own candidacy. It is very likely that his interest was mostly in keeping the nomination away from Blaine. Churchill was not one of the nine New Yorkers who voted for Blaine on the seventh ballot. The one New York State delegate who refused to vote for Conkling was George William Curtis.

The Democrats nominated Samuel Tilden, the Governor of New York State, and Tilden went on to lose the election, thanks only to extensive nationwide fraudulency in vote counting, a practice the Churchill bill was designed to curb. The Democrat Tilden carried his home state and the Democrat Lucius Robinson was at the same time elected governor.

Mr. Churchill's next political venture took place the following year, with a familiar cast of characters. In 1877, there were several New York statewide positions up for election: secretary of state, comptroller, treasurer, attorney-general, and state engineer. The Republican party assembled in Rochester on September 26 to adopt a platform and to nominate candidates.

The convention was called to order by Alonzo B. Cornell, the Republican state chairman, who was generally considered a Conkling man. Oswego County's three delegates were Thomas S. Mott, William H. Goit, and Alfred Farnham. Thomas C. Platt, then a member of the House of Representatives, was selected permanent chairman of the convention and assumed the gavel after a short and rather acrimonious speech criticizing President Hayes. On September 27, the convention heard two keynote addresses. The first was by the reformer George W. Curtis who defended the Hayes administration and, although with considerable delicacy of language and without referring to him by name, took Senator Conkling to task for his recalcitrant performances of non-support for his own party's President. Curtis was followed on the platform by Conkling himself who proceeded to level the full force of a vocabulary rich with invective at Mr. Curtis. Conkling delivered a long, violently emotional castigation of Curtis and his Republican reformers to the convention standing in front of a floral design in which the word "Harmony" was inscribed with red flowers over a background of white flowers. There were approximately four hundred delegates to the convention and something over one hundred of them were Curtis supporters. The party functionaries listened with increasing incredulity as Senator Conkling snatched defeat from the jaws of possible victory with a speech that despite its intemperance had been prepared over a week in advance. (41)

Early speculation for the leadership of the ticket had named both Warner Miller of Herkimer and George B. Sloan of Oswego as possible candidates for secretary of state. However, immediately after Conkling had exhausted himself, Hamilton Fish, Jr., was quickly nominated for secretary of state and as quickly jumped up to withdraw. (42) At this point the convention adjourned for the night. The next day, the staunchly Republican New York **Times** severely criticized Conkling for splitting the party and for "bossing" the convention.

On September 29, the **Times** headlined its report of the Rochester convention: SENATOR CONKLING'S DEARLY WON VICTORY. The sub-headings were: "The work of the state convention completed - Hon. John C. Churchill nominated for secretary of state - The other candidates on the state ticket - Mr. Conkling's unprovoked attack on Mr. Curtis and its effect - the 'great senator' inan unenvviable position." The New York **Times** editorialized about the Republican candidate for secretary of state in just one sentence, ". . .(He) is a gentleman who has served two terms in Congress without doing anything very remarkable."

In spite of the party's raucous split, Churchill lost to Democratic candidate Allen C. Beach by only 13,200 votes in a lightly contested election. Beach, who carried 24 counties to Churchill's 36, had car-

ried New York County by 29,651. (43)

Churchill's next public office was the Oswego school board. However, in 1880 his political fortunes improved. Supreme Court Justice Noxon had died and Alonzo Cornell, whose devotion to "Harmony" had parlayed him into the governorship, appointed Churchill to fill the vacancy. In the fall of 1881 he was elected to a full fourteen-year term. Churchill remained on the State Supreme Court for the fifth judicial district until reaching the mandatory retirement age of 70. He was the guest of honor at a reception at the Oswego Fortnightly Club on New Year's Eve, 1891, and the following day he became a private citizen once again.

During his retirement he edited with the help of two co-authors a compendious volume called **The Landmarks of Oswego County,** published in 1895. The book shows Churchill turning full cycle; it is like the curriculum at Middlebury College--full of geology, botany, history, biography. It is as complete as Churchill could make it. Referring to himself always in the third person, **Landmarks** covers the public career of Mr. Churchill to his own advantage and somewhat to the disadvantage of Churchill's fellow Oswegonian, Dewitt Littlejohn, who is mentioned but only infrequently.

He continued to practice law in partnership with his son Lawrence for another ten years, finally retiring at the age of 80 in September 1901. He died on June 4, 1905 of heart failure. His grave is in the "first citizens" section of Riverside Cemetery in a plot only a few feet away from the much more conspicuously marked grave of Littlejohn.

Substantially bearded, at least in his old age, Mr. Churchill gave to the end of his life the appearance of stolidity and substance, although as a non-participant in Oswego's economic life he never became wealthy. As he approached eighty-five he became the last leaf on a tree that had flowered many generations previously. He had lived on through the age of puritanism into the age of Victorianism, from the age of zeal through to the age or half-participation, from the age of absolutes through to the emergence of pragmatism. How anachronistic a sentiment for a man still alive in 1904 to have written fifty-nine years earlier, "If good men were as vigilant and active as the wicked, one generation would reform the world."

Footnotes

(1) John C. Churchill, **Landmarks of Oswego County** (Syracuse: D. Mason & Company, 1895) III. p. 57.
(2) **Ibid.**
(3) **Catalogus Senatus Academica et Eorum Qui Munera et Officia Academica Gessuerunt Quique Aliquovis Gradu Exomati Fuerent in Collegio Medioburiensi in Republica Viridimontana, MDCCCL., p. 8.**
(4) See David M. Ludlum, **Social Ferment in Vermont, 1791-1850** (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), p. 26 ff., and Zadock Thompson, **History of Vermont** (Burlington: Chauncey Goodrich, 1842), II, p. 217 ff.
(5) Thompson, **op. cit.,** II, p. 154.
(6) Transcript on file in Abernathy Library of American History, Middlebury College.
(7) In the Library at the State University of New York, College of Education at Oswego, New York.
(8) Diary, October 29-31, 1845.
(9) Diary, January 3, 1845.
(10) Diary, April 20, 1845.
(11) Diary, March 7, 1845.
(12) Diary, September 18, 1845.
(13) Diary, July 8, 1845.
(14) Diary, June 12, 1845.
(15) Diary, December 19, 1845.
(16) Diary, June 22, 1845.
(17) **A Record of the Centennial Anniversary of Middlebury**

College (Middlebury: John Wilson & Son, 1901), p. 44.

(18) **Landmarks**, p. 431.

(19) Diary, September 21, 1845.

(20) Diary, August 30, 1845.

(21) Diary, April 19, 1845.

(22) Diary, June 30, 1845.

(23) This is Churchill's spelling. Mrs. Churchill's name on her death certificate is spelled "Catherine". She died on March 4, 1899.

(24) Laurence, 1850-1862; Katharine, 1854-1899; John C., Jr., 1856-1928; Eliot (Mrs. Walter Fisher), 1858-1935; Alice, 1860-1895; Laurence, 1862-1936.

(25) **Landmarks**. p. 25.

(26) James Hadden Smith, **History of Chenango and Madison Counties** (Syracuse: D. Mason & Company, 1880). p. 516.

(27) Gerrit Smith papers, Syracuse University Library.

(28) The hope for a Niagara ship canal persisted in Oswego from the opening of the Oswego canal to the turn of the twentieth century, for it would have meant an opportunity to compete with Buffalo as a Great Lakes outlet.

(29) **Congressional Globe**, Fortieth Congress, first session, I, p. 656.

(30) Congressional Globe, Fortieth Congress second session, I, p. 153.

(31) **Congressional Globe**, Fortieth Congress, third session, I, p. 403 ff.

(32) **Ibid.**

(33) **Oswego Daily Times**, February, 26, 1892.

(34) **Congressional Globe**, Forty-first Congress, second session, IV, 4680-4681.

(35) p. 354.

(36) Debate on the bill is found in the **Congressional Globe**, forty-first Congress, third session, II, 1273-1280.

(37) **III**, p. 57.

(38) **Congressional Globe**, Forty-first Congress, third session, I, p. 86.

(39) See **Proceedings of the Republican National Convention held at Cincinnati, Ohio, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, June 14, 15, and 16, 1876, Resulting in the nomination for President and Vice-President of Rutherford B. Hayes and William A. Wheeler**, (Concord, N. H.: Republican Press Association, 1876).

(40) See Alfred Conkling, **The Life and Letters of Roscoe Conkling** (New York: Charles L. Webster, 1889), 494-515, and Donald Chidsey, **The Gentleman from New York: A Life of Roscoe Conkling** (New Haven: Yale University Press 1935). p. 200.

(41) The entire text of the speech is available in Conkling, **op. cit.**, 538-549.

(42) New York **Times**, September 27, 1877.

(43) New York **Times**, November 8, 1877.

A Century of Culture In Oswego County

(presented by C. M. Snyder at the Society's banquet, April 24, 1961)

DINNER MEETING

On Monday evening, April 24, 1961, the Society held a dinner meeting at the Lakeside Dining Hall, on the lake-shore at the State University College at Oswego. It was a part of the Annual Festival of Arts at the college. On view, also, were an art exhibit and a prize-winning film on tne Civil War.

The program featured "A Century of Culture in Oswego County." Short presentations included: The Theatre, by Charles Wells; Architecture and Art, by Mr. Joseph Shoenfelt; Recreation and Athletics, by Mr. Max Ziel; Local History in Perspective, by Dr. Charles M. Snyder. Mr. Ralph M. Faust, a Vice-President of the Society, served as Master of Ceremonies.

Early Oswegonians had little time for history; and when they paused to reminisce upon the past, it was to their old homes in New England or down-state that their thoughts turned. It was not until a second generation grew up here with a pride in the achievements of their parents and a little time to cultivate this pride, that local history as an activity was born. By the 1840's Edwin W. Clarke, who came to Oswego as a child in 1806, was incorporating historical items into his records as Village Clerk; in 1845 he attempted to organize an historical society, but he appears to have received little response. About this time, also, George H. McWhorter, the local Collector of the Port, was probing into the ruins of Fort Oswego, and searching for materials concerning the crumbling stockade, which was Fort Ontario.

The crisis of Civil War inevitably focused attention upon the landmarks of the nation's growth. A host of historical societies were formed throughout the State; and with its rich heritage to promote it, it is scarcely surprising that Oswego felt the impulse. A short item in the Oswego **Palladium** on February 8, 1864, serves to illustrate it. Syracuse, and other cities, it noted, had organized to preserve and collect the history of their localities. In Oswego the march of progress had almost obliterated the old landmarks.

Was it not time for action; and who, it asked, would get it started. Less than a week later the **Oswego Commercial Advertiser** reported that the local Assemblyman, Abner C. Mattoon, had introduced a bill in the legislature to incorporate the Oswego Historical Association. Named as directors in the bill were: Alvin Bronson, Edwin W. Clarke, Hiram Hubbell, Enoch Talcott, Orville J. Harmon, Ransom H. Tyler, John C. Churchill, Abner C. Mattoon, Charles Rhodes, Charles H. Cross, J. Wells Pitkin, Henry L. Davis, Albertus Perry, Thomas A. Weed, Alonzo H. Failing, Sylvanus A. Huntington, DeWitt C. Littlejohn, and Edward A. Sheldon.

The charter bill passed in the Assembly, but failed in the Senate, presumably due to the last-minute rush of business. A year later the same bill was reintroduced and passed. However, with the war concluded, and amidst the pressing problems of Reconstruction, interest lagged, and the local action required to meet the terms of the incorporation was not forthcoming. The Directors met on April 27, 1866 to formalize the failure; the charter was dead. A second charter obtained a year later was equally unproductive.

Meanwhile, the fiftieth anniver-

sary of the founding of Oswego County was celebrated at Doolittle Hall with appropriate festivities, including a dinner, toasts, and a patriotic address; the latter delivered by Judge D. P. Brewster. The venerable Alvin Bronson presided.

It should be noted that Oswego's failure to support an historical society was not typical of the response in the neighboring towns. The Old Pioneers and Settlers Association flourished in the post-Civil War era. We are indebted to Bradley B. Burt for much of the spade work; also for writing and saving the annual reports of their gatherings at Dempster Grove, and for a collection of obituaries.

Interest in local history rebounded in 1896 with the Centennial of the evacuation of Fort Ontario by the British. This was not an isolated situation, it might be added; for the books of Captain Alfred Mahan and young Teddy Roosevelt on naval power, concern for the suffering Cubans, and pride in our new steel fleet recast a patriotic renaissance. Elaborate plans were fashioned for the proper observance of "Evacuation Day," including a commission to the city's young marine artist, Charles H. Grant, for a canvass depicting the raising of the American flag over the stockade. This painting, incidentally, hangs today in City Hall; and a copy, also by Grant, has recently been given to the Society by descendants of the artist.

Twenty-five thousand people converged upon Oswego for the celebration on July 15, including Senator Thomas C. Platt, and General Nelson Miles, the Commanding General of the American Army. General Horace Porter delivered the principal oration at the parade grounds of the fort, and George Tisdale Clark, of Oswego, added an historical address. Five days before the Anniversary, the organization of the Oswego County Historical Society was consummated; and William Pierson Judson was elected as its first President.

The Society quickly made an impact upon the community. In 1898 it erected the first historical marker in the city: a boulder and plaque on the site of Fort Oswego at the corner of West First and Van Buren streets. You have all seen it; the iron fence enclosing the monument, by the way, was once part of a fence around the White House. The Society also published the address of George T. Clark, delivered at the Fort in 1896 - its first publication.

Nineteen-thirteen was a banner year for local historians, when they served as hosts for the fifteenth Annual Meeting of the New York State Historical Association. The varied program included a series of meetings in the old First Presbyterian Church, a parade to Montcalm Park, where a monument was dedicated on the site of Fort George, and an excursion to Kingston, Ontario. Local speakers included Frederick W. Barnes, who spoke on the fur trade at Oswego; and among the visiting participants was the young, distinguished and handsome Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Assistant Secretary of the Navy.

The Society was inactive after 1915, when its President John D. Higgins and past-President William J. Judson moved from the City. It revived in 1924 with Fred Barnes, Elliot B. Mott, Miss Harriet E. Stevens and Dr. James G. Riggs furnishing much of the inspiration. For the first time in the Society's history, women were admitted to membership; in fact, they went over-board to elect Miss Stevens as Secretary. Dr. Riggs was elected as President; and he continued to furnish leadership until his death in 1935.

Meanwhile, the two comprehensive histories of the County: Crisfield Johnson's **History of Oswego County (1877)**, and John C. Churchill's **Land Marks of Oswego County** (1895), were major contributions to local history. And, of course, I should not overlook the famous King Louis XV Medal, which Theodore Irwin, Sr. purchased in France, and which his son presented to the Society in 1913. Commemorating General

Montcalm's victory at Oswego in 1756, it is one of our most cherished possessions.

The Society's revival in 1924 was the signal for an Old Home Week in 1925, which, according to the local press, attracted the greatest crowd gathered in the city in many years. Dr. Lyda Penfield directed the pageant depicting the story of Oswego, beginning with the glaciers; the girls of the Normal School and Oswego High School portraying a symbolic representation of the action of the glaciers. If you will pardon a pun; it must have been a slow movement! The dancers were led by Miss Louise Cays. A few scenes later, Mr. Frank Wagg appeared as Alvin Bronson.

A year later the Society in cooperation with the State Historian erected dozens of historical markers at appropriate points across the County; in 1927 it participated in the erection of the St. Leger Tablet on the Post Office lawn. In 1932 the Bi-Centennial of Washington's birth was the occasion for a great pageant in the Armory, where Mr. and Mrs. Edwin W. Waterbury appeared in the grand march as President and Martha Washington. In these activities, it might be noted, the Society worked closely with the Fort Oswego Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Upon the death of Dr. Riggs in 1935 the Society again languished for several years, but revived in 1937, when Edwin W. Waterbury was induced to accept the presidency. Fred Barnes and Fred P. Wright ,the Society's Secretary for some 16 years, were instrumental in directing Mr. Waterbury's boundless energies into this channel; and the latter's leadership is indicated in the growth in membership: from 32 in 1937, to 300 in 1946.

The Society now met regularly with a major assist from Ralph Faust, American Historian at Oswego High School, who served as Program Chairman; the first Year book was published in 1939. The 22nd was issued several months ago.

In 1947 the Society was the recipient of the magnificant Bates-Richardson mansion, the gift of the Bates family, providing it with one of the finest museum properties in New York State. Meanwhile, the Society assisted in making historic Fort Ontario a state museum. For the above achievements the Society received an Award of Merit from the Society for State and Local History. A membership drive, accompanying the acceptance of the Bates-Richardson property, brought the membership to 500.

During these years, also, Ralph Faust wrote concise histories of Oswego and of Oswego County, which have been read by thousands of children in our local schools. I have never seen a copy of either of these works which did not bear the marks of repeated use. Also, at this time Miss Elizabeth Simpson of Mexico, Oswego Co., wrote her **Mexico, Mother of Towns**, one of the finest local histories to be published in this state. I hope that it will serve as a model for historians in other towns of the County.

Now to hastily bring us up to date, may I point out a major contribution to local history, not a week old. I refer to Dr. Dorothy Rogers' splendid **Oswego, Fountainhead of Teacher Education**, the history of the college's first hundred years. Edward Austin Sheldon, I.B. Poucher, James R. Riggs and Ralph Swetman; the "Oswego Movement," a century of student life, changing philosophies and methods of pedagogy, the recent expansion program under the leadership of President Foster S. Brown; these and many more subjects are found here. I recommend it to you.

What of local history for the future? The early families who pioneered Oswego County have moved on to new frontiers; few remain in our midst. If local history is to prosper, newcomers must take a more active role. We have an exciting heritage, and our children are waiting for an acquaintance with it. Last week I

was invited to speak before 400 Junior and Senior School Yorkers from Onondaga and Oswego counties at Phoenix. They were eager and attentive. The volume of visitors at the Fort and Headquarters House Museum increases yearly. We have a responsibility, an opportunity and a challenge; let us both save and enrich this heritage for future generations of Oswegonians.

Gilbert Crocker's Civil War

24th Regt., N.Y.V.

(presented by Rodney E. Johnson, May 16, 1961)

The first signs of spring had roused the farm folks of Orwell Town from a long, sleepy winter which was necessarily isolated from much outside activity in 1861. The routine chores of a nineteenth century New York farmer kept him and the members of his family busy. There was wood to be cut and roads to be broken after the heavy, northern Oswego County blizzards. Some of the men worked in the heavy woods (which covered a good deal of their town and even more of their neighboring towns of Boylston and Redfield to the north and east). There they were engaged in logging, preparatory to the opening of spring when their winter's stock of logs might be hauled to the sawmills. In 1854 the Orwell Tannery, which had been built in 1838, was rebuilt on a much larger scale by Weston and Lewis. A large number of men depended upon this for a supplement to farming and the bark-men were already preparing for their summer's work stripping the hemlock. (1).

There were the usual visits back and forth between neighbors and relatives. In many instances it is difficult for us to draw a line between these two categories in a small community. Families had intermarried continuously since the first settlers made their way into Orwell in 1806. People from the outlying farms would drive to the Post Office at least once a week for the mail, the provisions at the general store and the inevitable visits around the stove and cracker barrels of that wonderful institution. Of course, there was church, but many farmers were very infrequent members of the congregations in the wintertime when traveling was more difficult. When the men read the weekly papers there was always the talk of politics with a good number of the local commentators favoring the new Republican party and its successful presidential candidate, Abraham Lincoln. These men met with opposition, however, and many hot arguments ensued.

With the coming of warmer weather in March and the first thaws, the farmers began the annual maple sugaring which was especially popular in this heavily wooded north country. This activity kept them busily engaged for a time, but there was still an interval between sugaring and the time when the snow would melt so that the spring's work might be started or when it was warm enough to shear the sheep of their winter's wool. Many hours were undoubtedly spent sitting around in Beecher's Feed Store debating the problems of the day and what each would do if he could be down there in Washington "fer a few days to show them fellers how we could run things!"

It was to such heated discussions as this that the younger men and boys listened and which so well prepared them for the days of "war fever" just ahead. One of these young men was a twenty year old farm youth named Gilbert Sidney Crocker. He was the oldest boy in his family, living on a farm about three miles north of Orwell. His parents were Sidney Crocker and Mary Stowell Crocker and he had one brother and

seven sisters at home on the farm. (2) His father had several relatives in the area, but his mother supplied the family with untold aunts, uncles, cousins, and more peripheral relatives than we can today know. She was descended from Orwell settlers who came before 1812, and by 1854 there were six distinct Stowell families living in the town. (3).

We know little of Gilbert's early life, but as the oldest boy on a rocky Orwell farm, we may be certain that he received early instruction in the arts of farming and stone-picking as well as wall building, (if we may judge from the great number of stone walls or fences to have survived in that area). We also may assume that his formal education obtained at the end of his road in School House No. 7 was somewhat limited. Very much practiced, in those days, was the policy of sending the boys to school for only the winter term and then, often, very irregularly. Gilbert Crocker's correspondence effectively demonstrates this limitation but additionally, it proves the statement that we learn best when we feel a definite need - Gilbert's spelling, grammar, and style all greatly improve between 1861 and 1865. (4)

When the war finally came with the assault upon Fort Sumter and President Lincoln's call for 75,000 volunteers, on April 15, 1861, the people of Orwell, with the others in the Union, were ready to respond with great zeal and a masterful showing of patriotism. In Oswego, the **Times** carried War headlines on the 13th which were followed by an extra on the morning of April 15, 1861, to announce the call to arms. Local papers in every part of the county picked up the news so that the most remotely located resident was thrown into a feverish state of excitement.

It was under these circumstances that men and boys from the cities and towns, from farms and from every walk of life rushed into the glorious business of defending the flag!

On the 16th of April, 1861, a meeting was held in Oswego where measures were adopted for the immediate raising of a regiment of volunteers. Recruiting began with spirit so that in just ten days, on the morning of April 26th, one company was ready to leave for Elmira. The first local regiment was to be known as the Twenty-fourth Regiment, New York Volunteers and its first company was, of course, Company A. The company command fell to John D. O'Brian (who, according to local tradition, was the first officer to be commissioned in the state under the President's first call. (5) Thousands of spectators attended this leave-taking as Company A departed for Elmira, the rendezvous center. Contemporary reports describe the press of the crowds, making it difficult to board the cars at the Oswego and Syracuse Railroad depot.

Meanwhile, two more companies were organized in Oswego. Church services, preparatory to their departure, were scheduled for the West Baptist Church but were adjourned to Doolittle Hall to accommodate the overflow crowd. Here, "for three hours the fires of patriotism glowed brighter and brighter as each (clergyman) took a turn at the bellows". (6)

Back in Orwell, Gilbert Crocker was making a very important decision. Whether he did much debating with himself before he enlisted, we do not know. We do know that he elected a military life and signed as a member of Company G, then being recruited at Sandy Creek. It would be interesting to know what factors were considered by this young man - how much of the final decision was based upon patriotism and how much of it might have been attributable to somewhat less grand but happy human emotions of boredom with his lot on the farm, a desire to get out in the world and see some sights away from the confinement of his family, or even the promise of much more money than he could hope to make at home on his father's farm. It will probably never be

possible for us to know these things, though we may conjecture, from what we have learned of his nature, that these several considerations were blended in Gilbert Crocker's mind when he left Orwell for Elmira on May 9th.

Sandy Creek and Orwell folks turned out in force to send its company off to war. Boarding a train of cars already carrying a company from Ellisburg, Jefferson County, the recruits proceeded to Rome on the old Watertown-Rome Railroad where they transferred to the New York Central and continued their journey to Geneva. Gilbert's first letter home relates:

> Just got off from the steam boat at some place i dont know whare we are waiting for our dinner i saw a good deal since i started i hope you are all well when we get to almira i will write a gain (7)

Four days later, Gilbert had had time to see his trip with more detachment and his description is an interesting one:

> The first day we got to Geneve whare we staid all night in the morning we took the stemer to Watkins 40 miles t was a nice day we could see the farms on both sides of the lake they looked as nice as any thing could there is not any stone here nor did not see any after we got below richland (8)

This absence of stone, we can imagine, was indeed a wonder to any boy who had been raised in northern Oswego County! The second letter home tells of their arrival at Elmira about nine o'clock at night and that it rained all the afternoon. The first government issue Gilbert received was an "oil cloth and a blanket." He reported that:

> We staid to a curch last night and are here today we slept on the floor. . .i feel just as well as though i was to home it is a nice place hear but i dont hardly know what to rite (9)

It may be of interest to note that Company A also slept in a church upon their arrival at Elmira. It was not long, however, before the newly arrived men would be received in a style more suited to soldiers, because on May 14th, 1861, Gilbert writes:

> Since i comenced to rite i herd the captain say that we would get to the barricks tommorow it is on the fair ground they are new it is a nice place with a pond of water full of fish so we can fish if we want to (10)

During their stay at Elmira, several of the men "flunked" and were not mustered into the service. "They were taken by their indignant comrades and pretty severely shaken in a blanket, into which pailfuls of water had been thrown." This treatment, a correspondent of the Pulaski **Democrat** explained in the June 6th, 1861, issue, "is applied to all who, by any such conduct, render themselves particularly odious." It would appear that the "flunking" was considered to be deliberate by many of the other men. (11)

Morale of our soldier was high while at Elmira and generally throughout the war; in letter after letter he tells of the "good times we have." His early description of life at Elmira reflects this good spirit as he says:

> I am well and contented i like a soldiers life iff it is like this with plenty to eat and nothing to do but walk around i should like to be at home a little while to tell some off them that was afraid to come we have beef steak and good bread and butter in the morning and coffe and the same for supper and potatoes and a plenty of it i have been all over the sity it is a nice plase i would not come home if i could the boys have just opened a box of cake and chees the boys have got there hands full of bread and butter we will soon start for dinner we bord in a bording house up town (12)

Gilbert Crocker was at Elmira from May 10th until July 3rd with very little to do to occupy his time. Recruits continued to arrive from many areas of central and western New York so that every facility was taxed, although there

was new building going on constantly. Without an organized military life and with very little drill, even, soldiers spoil for activity. In the thirteen Crocker letters written home from Elmira, these problems are apparent. It is of interest to note that where there was an opportunity to make some pocket money, Gilbert was on the job as he recalls:

> I have been down to the baracks this morning and I worked 2 hours for 25 cents some of the boys have worked 3 or 4 days for a dolar a day but they are more to work than there is work to do (13)

In all wars soldiers write often of morale, camp life, and food and in this matter the Civil War was not an exception. These concerns arise over and over in his letters as when he says:

> All that we have to do is to eat and sleep we shall probly get to driling to in a weeck or 10 days we have a good time now if we dont never again but i have not heard of any but what fare well. . .we have anuff to eat and that what is good beef steak three times a day there is about 9 thousand soldiers in the city now the streets are full of people all the time but evry one minds his own business if i was at home and knew as much as i do now i would inlist a gain the furst chance i had it dont seem as though we was a way from home (14)

Concerning the opinions of tne home folks, Gilbert always seems almost desperately eager to dispel the slightest suggestion that things are not good with the 24th Regiment. When he heard a report from home he answered it thus:

> Uncle ed rote that he herde the boys were home sick and that they had hard fare there is some of them that are homesick a little but not a nuff but what they all eat well we have good fare a nuf and plenty of it eggs once a day and milk evry other night most of the boys have gained from five to ten pounds in weight so i gess they are not starved very bad yesterday we got two tubs of buter and some chees and cake . . . i stood on gard last night it was a pleasant night this morning i saw the sun rise for the first time since i have been here we dont have breakfast till half past 7 in the morning to night for supper we (had) puding and milk apale sauce fride cakes mr. baulding from sandy creek is here today . . . it is fun a nuf to be a wake when the rest are all a sleep and here them talk in there sleep (15)

Again, he was typically aroused at a story from home and said:

> You say you heard that we had to run 20 miles and back i should like to know who told you it is no such thing we have to go a bout 50 rods to drill the place where we drill is on the fair g r o u n d it is smoth and nice i have not been on drill since thursday we dont do a nuf to give us a good apitite (16)

In a similar vein and in the same letter, he reports:

> We have fine times here if any body says we fare hard you tell them it is not so we have buter chees and cake now that come from home i dont want any beter fare than we get here (17)

Men became restless over the delay in receiving uniforms and pay. These grievances were repeated in the Elmira letters in comments such as the following:

> We have not got our clothes yet bu(t) probly shall get them next week the oficers say we shall get our pay next tuesday the fourth of June my money is not all gone yet (18)

Another letter reports that:

> We could a had our cloths last week but the captin said he was a going to have some better ones we dont need any cloths as we dont do any thing (19)

By mid-June there was a strong feeling of unrest building up and we find:

> The compenes have got so that they wont drill they say if they dont get there uniforms or money this week they will all go

home they say that they cant hold us any longer as 40 days is the longest that they can hold us if we dont get any cloths or money (20)

As soon as large numbers of men were thrown together sickness resulted and the perennial camp disease of measles (and later, mumps) made its appearance. After referring to other boys who had measles, Gilbert reports that he has also caught them but that his case was light and he was outdoors every day but one. He adds that "the wirst there is a bout the mesels is the coof but i am a getting well now." (21) A week later he had recovered sufficiently to wait on table, his first duty following the measles.

It seems certain that young Crocker had not been away from home at all before 1861. The enthusiasm with which he reported, on his second day at Elmira, "I saw a mountain last night and a great many things that i never saw before" (22) seems to support this conclusion. Is it any wonder, then, that the plaintive note of a homesick lad should creep into his letter when he wrote:

I want you when you get this to rite a gain and rite a long leter rite all a bout the things at home how they get a long you did not say how you get a long with the work i want you to rite all a bout it (23)

Another quotation in this vein:

I should think some of the folks mite rite when they rite to me i will rite to them you did not rite what the nabors wase a doing it dont cost any more to send a long leter than a short one if you new how glad we are to get a leter you would rite offen now be shure to tell them all to rite (24)

When some of the boys had grown restless with the inactivity and what must have seemed to them a waste of time, they often took matters into their own hands. One such incident was reported thus:

Every night there is lots of the men that runs the gard they cetch some of them last night thare was 15 run the gard all at once they have begun to run the gard a gain this afternoon (25)

When the food became too bad, the boys knew how to deal with the problem. Gilbert writes that:

We have good fare now when they dont give us good fare we just tell them we will tare there cook house town (sic) and they give us the best they can las week the regement a crost the river took there diner and dug a big hole and buried it and lored there flags half mast and put up two black flags after that they had first rate fare (26)

The officers and men both recognized the need for entertainment as a morale-booster as we see when we find that "we have debating scholl and all kinds of sports here" or "last week was cort week here we try all the men acording to law they tride hank corse and fined him a pound of tobaco." (27) This episode is the more remarkable when one realizes that "hank corse" was 2nd Lieut. Henry B. Corse of Company G who later, as a 1st Lieut., was killed at the second Bull Run.

While most sources give May 17, 1861, as the date when the 24th Regiment was sworn into the United States Service, Gilbert writes on June 26, 1861, that, "we was swore in to the united states service saturday last." (28)

In passing, it may be of interest to hear Gilbert's account of their uniform issue which finally occurred on June 26-27. "We have got part of our uniforms yesterday we got our guns we shall have to drill five hours a day now." (29) The following day he reported, "We got our cloths today so we shall send them (old clothes) home we got two pair of shirts and two pairs of drawers two pairs socks they are wool." (30) Finally came the report, "We have got a gun nap sack haver sack canteen catrich box cap box and belt." (31)

What a relief to the 24th Regiment when their orders finally came and they left Elmira behind

them for Washington! They traveled on the cars by way of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and Baltimore, Maryland. With the Baltimore riots of April 19th (when the 6th Massachusetts, marching from depot to depot, was attacked by citizens) still fresh in everyone's mind. Gilbert mentions the fact that they marched through the city but that they had no trouble.

The 24th went into a camp just outside Washington where they lived in tents. Gilbert reports that there were four men to a tent and he adds that the water was not very good. The tents offered some difficulty as when "it rained for two hours and the water was running all around some of the tents had six inches of water in them but our tent was on a hill"! (32)

What a welcome change this new life was with the bustle of military affairs and the coming and going of so many people! There was sickness in camp from dysentery (33) but Gilbert was not affected. He reported that they posted guards at all of the city wells for fear of poisoning. From the early days away from home and his interest in seeing a mountain, Gilbert had made a rapid adjustment to the much more worldly life he found himself leading. On July 10th, he wrote:

> I have been up to the white house and captial I went all through them you cant think how nice they are the captial inside is all white and grey marble (34)

Invariably the northern soldier was interested in the Negro who was an object of some curiosity to him. Gilbert often made some mention of them in his letters. His first such reference was:

> There is ten nigers to one white man tell edy (Gilbert's young brother) that the little nigers no biger than he is are round blacking boots and selling pies i saw a little niger today and he wanted to know if we came here to fight we have fine times (35)

In a letter he said, "Tell edy that i cant send him a niger now but when i come home i will fetch him one"! (36) Still another reference to the Negro was made in a letter to one of Gilbert's sisters when he said:

> Tell ed and mine that i see lots of little nigers every day no biger than them i was on gard close by a nigers house the other night and of all the noises that i ever hurd them beat all you could here them half a mile (37)

Gilbert never fails to defend his regiment and company against all rumors, for war rumors were a great morale problem in camp and at home. A good example follows:

> Some of the boys got letters last night saying that they had hurd at orwell that we are all sick and ded but it is no such thing some of the boys are sick a day or to at a time but they are not so sick but when they have a chance to go out they are all well (38)

Twenty year old men often like to eat and soldiers, especially, have always had that reputation. Our boy from Orwell often concerns himself with the subject. Of course, by the nature of the Civil War arrangement of company rations being issued (when there was a good supply line) and the men preparing them without special training, eating three square meals a day was a rather uncertain affair, lending itself rather naturally to a good bit of discussion and comment. This concern was undoubtedly heightened, in the letters we find, by the requests from home to tell about what they were given to eat or the "fare" as it was commonly called.

On July 10th, Gilbert reported that they no longer had to drill and so:

> All we have to do is cook our meals we have salt (?) beef and pork and a few beans little rice and some crackers that are as hard as bords and coffe twice a day we have some fresh beef once in a while thare is pedlers a nuff around here with pies and cake so we can by a little once in a while (39)

Within a week's time he was writing:

> As to the fare that we have it was not very good at first but we

have enuf now we had for brakfast beef steak bred and coffe and that is good a nuf for any body that dont work (40)

We will recall that Gilbert mentioned the peddlars and their pies. This subject came in for a good deal of discussion in the newspapers because in some cases southern sympathizers or secessionists had poisened pies which were to be sold to the Union troops. Mrs. Crocker must have been concerned for her son and written him to urge him to beware of peddlar's pies. His reply was:

You dont want me to by any pies here but there is not much danger i gess the captin bys them theme that sell are union folks thare has not been any poisened yet and they sell to all the regements (41)

So much for your confidence, and all well and good, Private Crocker, but we shall turn now to a letter you wrote nearly a year later from a camp across the river from Fredericksburg in which you reported to your mother that:

There was a man died day before yesterday he had been sick quite a while and begun to get better one off the boys bought a pie and he eat it the doctor thinks that was what killed him he was in company h (one of the two Volney Companies) (42)

Reflecting his concern for the home life of the farm as it related to the dairy, Gilbert wrote asking:

How much buter have you made and what is it wurth a pound they sell chees for 16 cents a pound here i gess that they dont make buter here for i have not seen any we have plenty to eat and more than we do eat tomatoes are ripe they sell them for one cent a pece there is a setler goes with the regement he keeps every thing to sell that we want but i shant spend much money unlese i am a blige to thare is no need of our spending money as long as we have a nuff to eat but thare is some that did not send any home that have spent every cent it is something like a fare here every day th are is pedlers with all kinds of things to eat 43)

While at Arlington Heights at Camp Sullivan that August, Gilbert described his supper and the local market in another letter to Mrs. Crocker:

We have just been to super we had tea bread and meat we get corn and cabeg we can by tomatoes for 50 cents a bushel we have a plenty to eat here water melons are ripe there is corn hre 12 foot high but not much ears on it (44)

Perhaps the most complete expression of Gilbert's views on health and food are to be found in a letter written to Gilbert's sister from Arlington Heights' Camp Sullivan:

I am well and so are all the rest our company is the wellist company in regement there is not one sick now only cal burch and he is not very sick last night we had on dres prad most as many a gin men as any other company the reason why we are so much helther than the rest is because we dont by every thing to eat that we see some of the compnes when they got there pay bought pies and cakes and throde (sic) there bread a way we have good new bread every day we have four kinds of meat one day salt pork fresh beef and bacon potatoes were 10 shilings a bushel here buter is 25 cents a pound and not good for nothing at that we can get good molases for 80 cents a galon here (45)

In order that we not neglect, entirely, the military activity of the regiment, let us see what they are doing in Washington. Between drill and improving their camp, the men are kept busy at first but by the end of July they are given a more important task. Gilbert's letter of July 21, 1861, tells:

We have just got orders to start we are ordered to take 2 days rations and our blanket we shall start within an hour it is 10 oclock at night i dont know whare we are a going we expect to go all day but did not thare has been a battle all day

we could here the canon roar from here we leave our nap sacks behind i have not got time to rite any more (46)

The cannon that they heard had, of course, been Bull Run and they were being ordered to the front to cover that retreat. No one knew at the time that the 24th would be in advanced positions for three weeks on two days' rations, but let Gilbert tell it in his own words:

We . . . went down to the arsenal 5 miles and got our rifles (They exchanged their Springfield muskets for the more effective Enfield rifles.) got back just at daylight we sleep a bout an hour when we got up eat our breakfast packed up our things and started for virginia it comesed to rain in the morning and *it rained till the next morning* all the time we crossed the long bridge in to virgina and marched a bout 6 miles we got thare a bout 4 oclock we went in to a horse barn staid thare 2 hours when we ware called out to go as pictes we went a bout 2 miles we ware posted a bout 5 rods a part we staid thare till most morning in the rain just as wet as we cold be we went back to the barn and slep a bout 2 hours when we ware ordered to fall in to the ranks we marched out on the spure (sic., R.R. spur?) and staid thare all day we kep our things on all the time and our guns in our hands for we expect to have to fight that night we laid out doors on the ground redy to start at a minets notice the next day we went a bout a mile and went to work and made a brest work we work till most night when we went in to the woods a bout ½ a mile and scatered round in the woods for we expect that the rebles would be on us shure they are within 3 miles of us some of our boys have been shot at and shot back in return but thare was not any one hurt the inhabents are leving for Washington we expect to have a fight any hour we are staying in the woods we slep in the woods last night this morning we had our rations . . . we have got the bridge so that we can blow it up if the rebles get on it . . . we are well and redy to fight (47)

While they were ready to fight in spirit, it seems apparent that the regiment actually required more time to whip the recruits into a fighting unit. It was probably a fortunate thing that the enemy did not follow up their victory. Two days later, Gilbert writes, "The rebels shot a man in the bellvill compny day before yesterday by the name of fox that is the only man that has been hurt." (48) As the men adjusted to their new position at Bailey's Cross Roads, the life of their camp seems to have settled into such a normal routine that Gilbert's letters for this three week period are *most casual. He seems entirely* nonchalant although they are there without tents, blankets, or other baggage. In one letter, Gilbert is especially lonesome for word from home. He says that:

Some of the boys got a leter saying that they would not put the letters in the offic at orwell because we cold not get them but we get our letters here just as well as we did in washington and if that is the reason that you dont rite i want you to rite i gess that we shall go back to our tents monday so you must be sure and rite and rite a good long leter rite all a bout the crops and every thing you can think of because i want to no *how every thing looks there* and you can just as well as not rite all a bout them i suspose that you think it is no news to rite a bout the crops and such things but if you would rite all a bout every thing it would be wurth $5 to me (49)

We find it difficult to realize how very naive and unsophisticated a farm boy of the 1860's could be. An understanding of this is enhanced by the almost quaint phrasing of a comment Gilbert makes in a letter to his parents while he is still on this picket duty: "Some of the officers think they will not have much fighting the news here is that they are trying to setle the fus in the house of con-

gress." (50)

Gilbert's concern for the welfare of his parents is voiced repeatedly. He is especially sorry for his father and the additional work which Mr. Crocker must shoulder. (It could be that, as the eldest son, he feels a bit guilty to be off to the wars instead of home working on the farm.) In any event, Gilbert is most dutiful throughout the war in sending his pay home. They often sent it collectively from a company as his letter of August 5, 1861, indicated:

> When i rote last i had not got my pay we got it last saturday and we are a going to send it home today by express we send it all to gether to mr. lewis and he will pay it to them that it is a going to i have sent $14.50 cents to you i thought it would do you more good than it would me (51)

And again:

> You must not wory on my acount for i feel first rate the most troble that i have is that pa will have to work to hard to get his work done but i shall sen my money home as fast as i get it it will help him some (52)

Back in Washington after their duty at Bailey's Cross Roads, the Regiment was once more quartered at Arlington Heights, Camp Sullivan. Company G must have been down in strength because Gilbert reports that there has been some talk of "geting a nuf men to fill the company up to a hundred men." (53) A few days later he suggests that any of the boys who want to enlist should come on to Washington or write to Captain Ferguson as they want some more men.

Military discipline must be imposed in a volunteer regiment, albeit on a somewhat less rigid scale than in a regular army unit. Volunteers were slow to forget that they were citizens so that the Articles of War seemed too brutal to them. One court martial was chronicled by Gilbert in this manner:

> There has been four men in the regement cort marshel one would not do his duty they made him carry 20 pounds of stone fore hours a day for 5 days two more had to cary the stone thre days and pay 3 dolars the other run the gard he had to pay 3 dolars and stay in side of the gards for 9 days (54)

Actual battle fire has not been experienced yet, but there are always camp accidents to add interest and even humor. Two such incidents were described by Gilbert who wrote: "charley charles shot his gun off the other morning by accident and the ball went through his big toe and there was a man in the bellvill compny that fell down and broke his arm." (55)

The men did a good bit of walking and marching and traveled on the cars only for long distance troop movements. It is not difficult therefore, to sense sore feet when we read, "I wish i could see billy (Gilbert's horse) and ride after him i hante had a ride in a wagon since i left home." (56)

The regiment

> moved back with in two miles of the city (at Arlington Heights) we can see the city plain the reason why we moved back was to be formed in to a brigade there is four regements all rite a long to gether we can see hundreds of bugges and wagons from where we are and canons i dont no how many it is the plesenttes place here we have had for a camp (57)

The 24th Regiment, New York Volunteers, was brigaded with the 14th New York Volunteers (Brooklyn Zouaves), the 22nd and 30th New York Volunteers and about three months later, the 2nd United States Sharpshooters, under command of General Keyes. (58)

Gilbert's letters which refer to pay are an exercise in filial duty, as he invariably sends the bulk of his money home, keeping very small amounts for incidentals.

Inactivity after their return from Virginia and before they got into winter quarters prompted a comment which may be of interest as Gilbert writes, " I dont see as thare is any more danger of fighting than thare was when we first came here but i suspose that they (Confederates) want to get a

govt. ready be fore they begin." (59)

The Twenty-fourth went into winter quarters at Upton's Hill where they built Fort Upton. Gilbert was not part of the construction crew at Fort Upton but was detailed, instead, to stay back at Camp Keyes. He writes to his sister from there in October saying:

It is lonesum here now as the boys are most all up on munsons hill there is a few of us left here to take care of things i gess that they will be back in a few days we that are left here dont have any thing to do . . i gess there is not much danger of a fight very soon here the boys are making a fort up most to munsons hill i dont no what made the rebles leave they had the woods all round munsons hill surounded with a brest work of rails they had torn all the fens down (60)

Two days later the regiment moved to Upton's Hill where Gilbert wrote to his mother that:

We moved up on uptons hill yesterday it is near munsons hill it is a pleasant place here I had ruther soldier it than to pick up stone but I should like to be at (Orwell for a visit with you? section of letter missing) (61)

He gives us a good glimpse of camp life as he continues:

You want to now what we do for lights we have candles half a one a night they are made of sperm and are so hard that the sun wont melt them but they give good light we have tea twice a day but we have to by a part of it there is cabeges and potoes here that we can by - every day if wa want to we had some cabbages for super I have got so I can cook most eny thing we get a chicken once a while beef steak once a week we have a good deal more than we can eat but we can sell it for the money we got a wash bord and tub the other day I washed a shirt and rubed the hide off my fingers in five minets but I got it clean after a while and my fingers have got well a gain (62)

Scouting was always a pathway to adventure and a welcome relief from camp boredom. In this same letter he reports an expedition made by five men from Co. G and Captain Barney with seven of his men from Co. K (Ellisburg company) who

Went out a scouting and two miles beyond falls curch they saw six horse men a coming they shot at them and they ran but they got one of them and five horses and six sadles 13 pistols one sword and one over coat bill semore mat samsons frank baker bill moriey wallice outercark from our company were out bill semore got 3 pistols they shot one of the horses ded I guess (63)

While some soldiers wrote often of affairs of the heart, both real and imagined, Gilbert Crocker had either a very Victorian sense of propriety or he had found no opportunity to meet the fairer sex. The soldier in the ranks, it should be realized, had much less opportunity in these matters than the commissioned officers. One of the few references to a desire for feminine association is found as he tells his mother that "I have not heard a woman's name in so long (that) I dont know how it would sound." (64)

Gilbert shows a very human nature when he compares his lot with the life he had known in Orwell. He asks:

How much does milo get a month I should think wages would be high there is so many a coming here I believe we will make the most money this winter

And then he adds this crowning touch, "And we shant have to break roads in the snow neather"! (65)

We find Gilbert referring to some local boys who must have enlisted in a cavalry unit during the summer or fall. He writes:

The compney that the boys have gone in have not got here yet I heard they was in troy but was a coming to washington soon they are a going to try and get them in this brigade I hope they will the boys had beter

come in this compny it is not so easy work to be a cavlaryman as it is a privet they have got to take care of there horses and keep them a looking good (66)

The special interest here depends on our ability to know what Gilbert Crocker's future held. Little did he know, as he wrote this, that he would, himself, enlist in the cavalry in 1864!

The shortage of money back home, of which he had heard rumors, and the cost of everything, both at home and in camp, occupied Gilbert's thoughts on many occasions. From their winter quarters at Upton's Hill he reported that "There is plenty of money here and every thing els that we need only boots they ask from five to seven dollars a pair and they are sail (sail cloth or canvas or sale?) boots at that." Little wonder that he and many of the others sent "to home burch to have him make them boots." (67) (Homer J. Burch of Orwell?)

One night the boys in Gilbert's tent had a little sport:

The other night our tent blowed down in the night when it was so dark that we cold not see a foot but we went and got a light and I guess you would a laughed if you had seen us put it up in the rain we did not stop to dress wink held one part and I hild the other and filo pines it down but we have got it so now that it cant blow down we want the only ones that had a rain that night the water was so deep in the river that the long bridge was all under water I dont know whether it has gone down or not. (68)

Gilbert must have been a good looking young man with perhaps a touch of vanity if we are to judge from his several references to having his likeness taken and then being dissatisfied with the results! He writes to his parents in November, saying, "You want to see how I look I went and got my picture took some time ago but it looked so that I did not mean to send it but william hoollis was a going home so I sent it by him I dont want you should let any one see it I will get it took a gain as they have got a house built to take them in now." (69)

Gilbert wrote one letter to his mother during the fall of 1861 which is a most complete description of their "fare" and food management. He reassures his mother with:

You may know I dont have very hard times as I never we'ghed so much in my life as I do now we have plenty to eat and that what is good a nuff for any body we have fresh beef twice and three times a week besides salt pork and beef and bacon with beans peas rice homeny coffe tea shugar molases we draw our rations and cook them all to gether only the shugar and molasis we get a pound of shugar for 8 days we have the best kind of bread it is most Jenerly warm when we get it every morning when the bread wagon comes they all start for there bread they have a two horse wagon load for the regement I wish you cold be here and see how we live most of the boys have got a fire place in there tents we have not got any in ours yet but we are a going to have one (70)

A practice which is of interest was the policy of allowing the men so much money for rations on the company level. If they didn't require the entire amount for a given period of time the cash residue was turned back to the company. Gilbert reports that Company G received $45 for rations that they had not drawn and he used this as proof that they were eating well.

Drill is always good for some comment in soldierss' letters as we see from Gilbert's correspondence. The army life with its inconveniences seems to agree with him because he reports that they carried their knap sacks four hours, yet didn't feel very tired. He adds that, "It is not half as hard work to cary them as it was at first we have a battalion or a division drill a bout every day but it is not very hard work to drill now." (71)

Early in the summer they had

five men to a tent but in Upton's Hill they used the small shelters very much like the present day pup tents. Gilbert described his accommodations for his mother in a letter of December 19th. At that time they had 101 men in Company G and he wrote:

I guess we shall stay here all winter as the oficers are making them log houses I am going to make one and set my tent on it it will be a bout 6 x 7 feet we have got a floor in it now and a straw bed to sleep on I have got two woolen blankets one of them is lined with bead tick and a india rubber blanket that I had give to me and the other that stays with me has got one blanket and two bead quilts so we can sleep just as warm as though we ware in a bead the boys have not all got straw beads. (72)

His tent mate was a fellow referred to as "ame" who took care of the cooking for both of them, according to Gilbert, "rather than do anything else"! (73)

The last letter wrote in 1861 was to his sister in which he said, "Tell mr peabody to rite me a good long letter and I will send him a little niger when I get down south where we can catch one." (74)

Gilbert had a great interest in his younger brother "edy" and sent messages to him on many occasions. In one letter he sent "edy" word that he didn't believe he could send him a gun but he offered him, instead, a pair of his old pants which might be cut, down to size! (75)

The men celebrated New Year's Day, 1862 with special festivities. They played ball most of the day while in the afternoon they "had a greased pig to catch but there was so many that he cold not run fur." (76)

Many of the horses diedduring the winter, perhaps from overexposure and reported "horse distemper" as they had to stand out doors. One driver lost a team worth $300. It was apparently possible to get a paid job as a teamster on the supply wagons. Gilbert's friend or relative known to us only as "Wink" did this during the winter of 1862. (76)

We are led to wonder whether or not the humor is intended as Uncle John (constantly referred to in the letters and a Civil War version of the Sgt. Bilko type) is reported in one letter to have said he was going to "by a watch and a revolver he says a watch is so handy when on gard"! (78)

We may be justified in feeling critical of the limited drill and the nearly complete disregard for rifle practice during the war. Certainly the policy reported by Gilbert Crocker would not be conducive to producing expert marksmen. While country boys would have a good knowledge of firearms at that time, many of the city-bred recruits would be either wholly or partially lacking in this skill. Writing from Camp McDowell, Va., Gilbert relates:

I went and shot at a mark a few times I shot 60 sixty roods (rods) at a tree a foot through the second time that I shot I hit the tree we have to pay for our catriges iff we shoot them at marks so I dont shot much . . . we have all got new catrige boxes and belts. (79)

Gilbert wrote to his sister, asking her to give his respects to "all the school girls" (80) so we feel that he is not entirely without hope!

His mother sent him pictures of the family and gloves; of the pictures, he declared that he "would not take $1000 for them" as they all looked just as they had when he left home. (81)

Uncle John shows a good Yankee instinct for making money:

I suspose uncle John will have between 30 and 40 dollars to send home he makes lots of money washing and doing chores for the likeness man but you must not say anything about it to any one. (82)

The Civil War was not without certain military practices which are easily recognizable today. One of these was sick call. Crocker gives a good description of the time-honored methods:

Our regement had to go out on picket sunday and stay two day

I had a cold so I went to the old doctor and got excused when we dont want to do anything we go to the doctors and get excused iff we make the doctor belive we are sick it is just as well sometimes there is a dozen goes to him some are lame some have a lame shouldier we have lots of fun when we go to the doctors. (83)

Wood always presented a problem where there were so many men in a close area (as in winter quarters), burning large amounts of fuel daily. In addition, the inefficient fireplaces in the shelters were not noted for getting the most heat from a cord of wood; therefore, the problem of a supply which was near the camp site was one which was seldom solved. Attempts could be made, however, and this is the account of one such attempt:

Sunday, after they the regement had gone out on picket what fewe off us ware left here thought we would have some wood without fetching it so far so just after dark we got to gether and while part watched to see iff the gard ware a coming the rest cut down a big oak after it fell we went back to our tents and in the morning we went and cut it all up and carried it to our quarters thinking how lucky we ware not to get in the gard house I went to work and cut mine up and put it all in my tent I had just got it in when the officer off the gard come a long and wanted to now who cut all that wood Some off the boys told him they cut it so he told them to go to the gard house but most off the boys did not now who cut it so they did not have to go to the gard house after they had got all the boys in the gard house they made them fetch there wood to the gard house so ended our geting wood we have to fetch most off our wood bout a hundred rods there is a few trees close by but the general wont let them be cut but we get once in a while one (84)

The orders came early for moving out of camp in 1862. On February 28th, Gilbert wrote that they had been ordered to pack up everything and taking "one shirt one pair off drawers one pair socks one blanket wish (which) we will put in our nap sacks," they went out on picket duty. (85) This led right into the march south as a part of the general movement of the Army of the Potomac under General McClellan. The 24th advanced to Bristoe Station and then Catlett's Station and finally the heavy march towards Fredericksburg.

Gilbert reports the scene which they found at Manassas where the rebels had "a lot off logs painted for canon" (86) as well as the quaker guns at Centerville. He describes the march to Alexandria in some detail. Upon their arrival at Alexandria, they received instructions to return to Upton's Hill as "the boats had not come to take us to richmond." (87) Gilbert continues by saying:

I am geting pretty tuogh since last sunday we have marched to days with our nap sacks and it rained bouth days wednesday thursday and friday we had a brigade drill and tuesday we went to centerville I feel just as well as i did before we started only my feet are some sore i dont feel any thing off that pain in my side now (88)

The justifiable pride of a strong body in good health .

From a camp near Falmouth Gilbert wrote a long and descriptive letter to his mother in which he tells of their experiences on the march to the Fredericksburg area and reports conditions there:

We have not crossed the river yet but I think we shall before long they have got two bridges a crost the river one is a pontoon bridge the other is built off cannall boats I went down to the river this forenoon some off our cavaldry went a crost the river last night and this morning some off our wagons went a crost and got some hay and corn I went down the river three miles the city runs down the river two miles it is not very wide it is a nice place most

off the buildings are brick there is two curches I saw the boats that the rebles burnt tne morning that we come in there is two large steamers they run them a shore then burnt them all the chains and bolsts are there there is twenty off our boats here in the river they cant go up the river any farther than fredricksburg we got news Sunday that the rebles had left yorktown I dont see how the rebles can hold out much longer as we are geting there strongest places we got daily papers every day we dont have much to do now Saturday we moved our tents out in the lot then we went to work and set out pine trees each side off the alley so it is shady and nice uncle John & I tent together we do our own cooking we get flour and meal to make pancakes meal is only $1.00 a bushel buter is 40 cts a pound some off the sutlers have got here so we can get anything that we want we have plenty to eat. (89)

The forced march to Falmouth in April is described by Crocker in mile-by-mile detail:

Since I rote last we have marched 40 miles a head we started monday in the afternoon and went 8 miles that night wednesday morning at 6 oclock we started a gain we went 22 miles stoped and eat our super then went 3 miles farther and to bed for the night we had been a sleep bout 5 hours when the long roll beat and we started a gain our cavaldry was a head off us 3 or 4 miles and the reb els fired on them and killed 7 and wounded 5 more they killed 7 off the rebels and took 5 prisoners the rebels retreated back to the other side off the river and burnt all three off the bridges we came up while they ware on fire we are camped this side off the river close to the town off falmouth it is the rappahannock river it is the largest place I have seen since we left washington we have not got posesion off it yet but will have as soon as we get the bridge built we got here at 10 oclock yesterday we cold see the rebels take down there tents a cross the river 3 miles off and soon after we got here they set there camp on fire and started off we cold see them march a long but they ware out off reach off our guns they looked as though they wure in a hury I wish we cold have got a cross the river I think they would have been in more off a hury! . . when we marched through falmouth all the folks ware standing in front off there houses the nigers ware all a grinning but the white folks looked rather sober last night some off the rebels that are a cross the river hoisted the rebels flag and some that ware union took it down and they had quite a fight among them selfs the rebels sunk 22 steamboats 4 miles b e l o w here . . . I fetched my nap sack all the way a good many throde theres a way I did not think I cold cary miine when we started . . . I dont now how long we shall be here we may start in a hour we dont now one day where we will be the next. (90)

The farmer in him causes Gilbert Crocker to observe, of the Rappahannock River Valley:

I went through a peace off winter wheat and it was nee high and it was as even as a floor all over there was as much as 30 acres in one lot (91)

It is the best looking cuntry that I ever saw there is hundreds off acres off winter grain sown and it looks nice peach trees are blown (April 18) there is two men a ploughing in (on the) right of our camp. (92)

While near Falmouth, Gilbert writes that: "There is plenty off nigers here they come crost the river by the dozen one old niger said that he new the Yankees was going to get massas corn when he was hoing it last sumer." (93) He goes on with, "We have lots of fun with them (negroes) we get 5 or 6 to gether then hire them to dance and sing they will do anything we tell them to." (94)

Gilbert had become a good business man who felt called upon

to instruct his father in the mysteries of a check which was apparently a rare method of handling money in Orwell in 1862! His letter states that he, "got 26 dollars 20 dollars is in a bill wish (which) you will have to put your name to then it will be just as good as any money put your name on the back a crost the shortest way."(95)

He continues, "I wil send $22 dollars iff you want it to use use it and iff you dont want to use it let some good man have it and take his note on intrest." (96) Is this the unsophisicated boy from the country?

As their camp got established opposite Fredericksburg, the 24th settled into a more comfortable routine, drilling an hour night and morning and having the rest of the day to themselves. Their sutler got there and now that goods were coming straight from Washington, prices were lower. While good molasses was 44¢ a gallon, dried apples cost $9.00 a bushel. (97)

The army, with its leisure time, has taken its toll of Gilbert, however, causing him to lament, "I never urent money so easy as I do now. I should hate to have to go to work now"! (98) A few days later he wrote, "I should like to be there to make garden iff it was not such hard work it dont seam as though I cold ever go to work a gain iff I should get home." (99)

Certainly a note of great curiosity, is an intriguing report, from this location opposite Fredericksburg, that, "I have seen where washington's mother is b u r i e d- there is a marbl monument the rebels used it for a mark to shoot at it is a crost the river." (100)

On May 8th the report was that, "We dont have much to do now and we can go where we are a mind to this side off the river . . . we have got the stars and stripes up in fredericksburg we have not crosed the river yet and I dont now when we shall I suppose there is quite a lot off rebels a crost the river waiting for us." (101)

The perennial need of the soldier to receive long, detailed letters from home in order to maintain a high morale was pitted against the fact that the home fold (especially busy farm families) often had little time or inclination to write involved letters with detailed news. The soldier, by comparison, was much of the time in need of something to fill idle hours and letter writing was a natural answer. We find Gilbert voicing the familiar cry for more news on many occasions, as when he says, "I want you should rite what you are a doing and how every thing gets a long you dont rite half long letters a nuff every thing from home is news that we get from home some off the boys get a pulaski paper once in a while and you cant think how close we read it." (102)

Gilbert wrote on the 22nd of May that, "The cars run a crost the river now . . . we get soft bread now it is baked in fredericksburg." (103)

Five days after this letter was written, the 24th got under way in its anticipated advance toward Richmond where they were going to support McClellan. The orders were reversed on the following day, however, and they began to march to Catlat's Station (on their way into the Shenandoah Valley to hold "Stonewall" Jackson away from Washington).

Our story will not follow the 24th in this operation but we will join Gilbert, instead, as he relates, "I am in washington in the hospital, last friday we started for cutlet (Catlet's) station I came as far as falmouth and got tired out and stopped saturday they sent us all to washington . . . I have got the same old pain in my side that I had before (at home?) I can walk round but cant cary my nap sack nor shant try to till I get well." (104) Five days later he reports, "I was at the Cliffburn hospitall the next day we were sent out off the hospital to make room for the wounded they took us 6 miles from the city to a fort where the 58th reg is camped and we are going to stay here till we get well . . . we have got a first rate place to stay there is two out off our company here whare

I stay there is 4 off them they have got the best house that I have staid in in quite a while they have got a stove and do there own cooking we have a table to eat on once more we have soft bread and potoes I have been out strawbeering twice and got all I cold eat and we have had some for super twice . . . I saw in the paper that the devision ware in W.nchester I dont now when I shall get with the regement a gain there is some from sandy creek in the 58th." (105)

His illness seems to have been righting itself because he wrote in mid-June that, "I have got bout well a gain but I cant get to the regement I have not hurd from it since I left I have been to Washington once and am going again in a few days." (106) At this point, he is staying with Co. E of the 59th Regiment.

Gilbert was sent to Fort Pennsylvania where he wrote that when they wanted to go any where they just went and didn't wait to get a pass. They had to look out for the guard and not get "catched", however. There were three companies there while the rest of the regiment was out in the other forts. It is enlightening to read his comments on the local farmers whom, he reported, "dont farm it much they have all turned pedlers every house is a grocery." (107) He also mentioned that the papers carried news that the bridge they had built over the Rappahannock at Fredericksburg had been washed away by high waters so that it would have to be built back. Then the optimistic opinion followed that once this was accomplished, they would be able to march right on to Richmond and, we are to conclude; the war would be over!

On the 2nd of July it rained all day and was so cold that the majority of the men stayed in their beds all day to keep warm. Concerning the strength of their brigade, Gilbert notes that there were only 2200 men left in their brigade of five regiments (normally around 5000 troops). (108)

Things are so quiet that Gilbert mentions that he, "dont now but I shall get one off my teeth filed, we have a dentist in our company." (109)

The camp routine throughout July was varied by berry picking and visiting around in the companies. They could sometimes sell the berries; Gilbert made as much as two dollars from one such expedition. Whenever they went on marches, they often had an opportunity to forage freely. As we read accounts of the good things they found on the land and of the "plenty off chickens and honey we took up five hives off bees" (110) or "our men take everything they come to" (111), we can feel nothing but sympathy for the civilian population of the south.

General Pope is reported as saying that, on future marches, they will live as they "go a long and not cary so much." (112) Crocker chronicles a return to Camp Halstead of their quartermaster who "got 300 barles off flour 150 head off cattle and 5 horses they take all the hay and grain they want to feed the teams." (113)

It was on this subject that Gilbert was apparently facetious (nearly the only record we have of this facet of his personality) as he explained to his mother from Camp Halstead, "New potoes are big a nuff to eat I am going out some day to dig some our garding (garden?) is quite a ways from the house so we dont go very often our erly chickens are big a nuff to kill we have had some a number off times." (114)

Like many of the volunteers, Gilbert was resentful of those men who remained home. Of them, he writes, "I hurd that the govener of new york state had caled for 50,000 more men and that they had to draft them I hope some off the boys that wold not come when we did will have to now"! (115)

The boys would always have fun in camp and their pranks and antices were endless sources of amusement to them and made news in their letters home. The negro was not as great a novelty now as in those first days of the war but, northern boys still found him a good source of entertainment. That some of the stunts were not ex-

actly kind reflects not so much callousness on the part of the Union soldier as it does an almost total disregard, at that time, of the sensibilities of the colored man. An example in point is the following incident, related by Crocker:

> We have got three little nigers in our company and we have lots of fun with them we get them to dance fight or bunt a barell we told one of them we would give him a dollar iff he would bunt a stave in a pork barell he bunted ot 3 or 4 times and give it up he said it would take him all day. (116)

The Battle of Cedar Mountain was fought on the 9th of August 1862. Of the battle ground there, Gilbert informs us:

> We ware camped to the foot off cader mountain four days we went a crost the battle ground where the rebels buried their dead we cold (sic) see there feet and hands sticking out off the ground the rebels had 25 thousand men in that battle we cold see where the canon balls cut the tops off the trees off (117)

Seven days after Gilbert wrote this, his regiment was at the second Battle of Bull Run. There, on August 28th, Doubleday's Brigade (Union) broke and ran through Hatch's Brigade (under command of Col. Sullivan of the 24th) sweeping the local boys with it. (118) During this battle Major Barney was killed at the head of his command, Company K from Bellville. A quotation from the diary of Lieutenant Robert Oliver, Jr., of Oswego, the 24th Adjutant, will serve as a summation of the battle:

> Awful turn of affairs. My clothes torn by balls. Col. Beardsley wounded. Our loss probably 60 killed and wounded . . Lost our colors . . I rallied brigade and brought them to camp . . Major Barney is killed . . Col. Sullivan drunk . . nothing left of our brave regiment; poor Barney." (119)

We see how badly hit the 24th was when we read in Oliver's diary a few days later:

> We have only 116 men for duty in the regiment . ... . raining awful . . . stood up all night . . .Am nearly given out. Capt. O'Brien commanding regiment; our loss 293 killed and wounded and missing. (120)

The official figure was 237 in killed, wounded and missing. (121)

To learn of Gilbert's experiences, we must turn to a letter which he wrote to his mother twenty days later from Mount P. Hospital:

> I have got over my fever but am so weak that I cant get off from my bed . . . I come here the 3rd of this month . . . it was true what you saw in the paper (he is vague here but refers to the battle reports in the local papers) I run round till I got shot at 10 or a dozen times so I thought I would not run round any more so I lade down till morning when I found the regiment but just as I got to them they started a gain but I cold not go with them I got in a wagon and rode to alexandry and the next day we come to washington (122)

Before we suspect our soldier of any dishonorable purpose, we shall see that the "fever" to which he referred was typhoid. He was indeed, very ill, as he remained in this hospital until November and then in another hospital until the 8th of December. Fifteen days later, he gave a good description of hospitals as he wrote:

> I am getting stronger I can walk round some with a cane I had the typhoid fever we have got a large tent with a floor in it there is 16 off us and 2 nurses each one of us has a bead (sic) quilt and sheets we have clean close (sic) ever week I have just got me a new pair off pants and shoes and a coat we drawed them in the hospital you want (sic) know what we have to eat in the morning we have bread and butter and tea for dinner we have meat and potatoes for supper bread and butter and tea and apple sauce there is plenty of pedlers round with apples and peaches and every thing els you can think off

from a pigs foot to a chicken pie . . . there is 1200 in this hospital (123)

Strength returned slowly as a letter to his sister reveals: "In the morning I feel stout a nuff to go a mile but by the time I have gone 10 rods I am all tired out." (124) He reflects the casualties suffered in the news that "they have put our whole devision into one brigade." (125) This would be approximately 1/3 - 1/4 strength.

Gilbert's referral to two wounded officers is not at all specific as he asks his sister, "Do you know when the captain and lieutenant are coming back how bad ware they wounded?" (126) Captain Ferguson of Company G was wounded at South Mountain on September 14, 1862 (127) while Company G's 1st Lieutenant Calvin Burch from Orwell was wounded at Second Bull Run. (128) 1st Lieutenant Henry B. Corse of Company G was killed during that battle. (129)

One of the most engaging glimpses of life at a hospital is afforded us by these few sentences written to Mrs. Crocker:

> The Doctor has just been round I dont take much medicine since I cold get round when he gives me any I put it under my pillow for a day or two and iff it dont help me I put it down a crack in the floor"! (130)

Concerning peddlars in camp, Gilbert notes:

> The doctors here sent all the pedlers off last Saturday one off the boys got his breakfast off a pedler and at 11 oclock he was ded so the doctor sent them all a way there was two that had shantes and they did not go so the boys tore one off them down and took every thing he had the the other one they burnt to the ground with every thing in it (131)

Echoing the feeling of everyone who has ever spent money imprudently, Gilbert confides to his mother:

> I dont now when I shall get my pay I get a long just as well when I dont have any money as I do when I have it iff I have it I spend it and it does me no good! (132)

Another letter in the same vein was written a bit later when he confessed that he:

> Would not care whether I got any pay till my time was out if it was not for sending it home iff I dont have it I shant spend it but as long as I have got money I have to spend it there is so many pedlers round with every thing to tempt a feller . . milk and water is 10 cts a quart and the way that they sell butter they get 75 or 80 cts a pound eggs 30 cts a dozen (133)

Gilbert chronicles the return of prisoners on several occasions. He leaves the impression that they were many times in poor health- a fact which is borne out by all reports of prison camps (both north and south). One such account follows:

> There was 600 off our men come in to the city this week from richmond they have been prisiners 6 months we have got 3 in our tent they did not have but one shirt while they were there the first night that they staid here in the morning they cold not find there pants the lice had carried them off so they all got new ones! (134)

As October drew to a close, Gilbert felt better and told his father that he was feeling nearly well enough to rejoin the regiment but added that he didn't think he would try to do it for awhile. In fact, he thought it might be a good idea to try to stay there until the 24th went into winter quarters - if he could. (135)

Gilbert reflected the many rumors surrounding McClellan's removal on November 5th in a letter to his sister with the comment that, "There is not much news here now only the removal off McClenlan there is all sorts off rumors why he was removed some say that they ware a fraid he would close the war to soon and others say (it) was because he did not move fast a nuff"! (136) He gives a fair range of choice! This question, incidentaly, is far from settled today – 99 years later!

Gilbert finally left the Harwood Hospital on December 9, 1862 and after some difficulty, reached the 147th Regiment with whom he spent the night. On this same day, the 24th moved into their old camp ground, across the Rappahannock from Fredericksburg, at Falmouth. They were now under the new commander, General A. E. Burnside. Here Burnside committed one of the costliest blunders of the war. The Confederate Army was fortified on a wooded height upon which the Union Army made a frontal assault.

Gilbert described his experiences in trying to rejoin the regiment in this fashion:

> The next day (the 10th of December) we started and went to falmouth and found that the regement had crost the river we staid and saw them fight a spell then we went back in the woods and staid all night in the morning we went up to the wagon train and from there we could see the rebels an our menn fight they fought hard all day saturday I dont know how many men was lost but there must have been a good many as the rebels was (up on) a hill behind brestworks and our menn ware in the open field but our regement did not lose a man as they ware in the left (on picket duty) sunday and monday there was not much firing monday we went a crost the river we went most to the regiment but as we had no guns (137) we come back part way when we built a fire and got some super then we went to bead we had not laid down but a fewminutes when we found that the army was falling back so we got up and come back a crost the river we went bout a mile and stoped for the night we had not got to sleep when it begun to rain so we had to get up -- we sot - up the rest off the night in the morning the mud was bout a foot deep we got some breakfast then we started for the regiment through the mud and rain we found part of them before noon . . . our company and company B are together (Letter damaged here) (138)

After the battle, the army moved northward, pitching camp at Belle Plain on the Potomac. Gilbert settled down to the routine of winter camp with the 24th. With three other fellows he built a "shanty". He reports that they drew rations for 25 men in Company G but that the Regiment had 10 companies once more. High prices were significant enough, in his sight, to warrant their mention in a letter which Gilbert wrote to his mother. He lists: "aples four for 25 cts potoes 12 for 25 cts flour 9 cts a pound." (139)

The building of "shanties" was later described in this manner: "We have built small log houses and covered them with our shelter tents we have got small fireplaces in our tents." (140) His mother asked him if they had beds. His reply:

> Only the ground our tent is 6 foot by 8 and we have got two bunks in one and 3 foot wide one a bove the other then we have got small poles with a lot of seader boughs then we put our ruber overcoats under us so it makes a very good bead then we have got a table and a cubard to put our dishes in and when we wish we take a ketle and go down to the creek make a fire and wash them we boil them to kill the lice iff we are where we cant wash and get lousy we turn our shirts rong side out and let the lice run them selves to death trying to get on the inside a gain (141)

The 147th Regiment had gone out of Oswego County in the fall of 1862. We will recall that Gilbert stayed with them the first night out of the hospital in December. Of them, a little more than a month later, he has this to say:

> The 147th regt are in our devision now they are incamped a bout a mile from us there is a good many sick they have got tired off soldiering they would give all they are worth iff they cold get out off the survice (142)

Later he follows this with more disparaging comment:

Dell paddock dont like soldering he trite (sic) to hire some one to forge his discriptilert (sic, an ID description?) so he cold go to washington when we went on the march the other day most all the 147 ware sick or premted (sic) to be they thought it was a awful hard march . . . iff they had been with us last spring when we come to Fredericksburg they would a thought they had some hard marching (143)

More than a month later, Gilbert was still strong in his criticisms - one is curious to know how much of this may have been inspired by sheer disgust at what seemed to be a weak-kneed lot of men and what part of it might have represented a certain jealousy. He reports, "I have not been over to the 147th but once since they have been here ther is so many sick or prend (sic) to be that I dont like to go there all they talk a bout is going home." (144) He even follows this up in a satirical tone as he reacts to a report rom home that men in the 147th have apparently written back with complaints about the food. He says, "It is to bad that the 147th dont get a nuff to eat I have not seen a time since we left home but what we had a nuff to eat only once or twice when we ware in a march and the teams did not get up." (145)

On January 20, Burnside called the men from their winter quarters for a march toward the Rappahannock, an expedition which was dubbed the "mud march" - an appropriate enough designation! Roads were so deep with mud that they were literally impassable - and the rain fell steadily. Two days later, after all of the wagons and artillery were stuck fast in the mud, the entire project was abandoned. Gilbert made mention of this march and he sets down several observations on the general subject of mud:

You cant think how mudy it is they have to make a new road most every day we marched from here the 20th and expect to cross the river we marched to falmouth the first day and stoped for the night it rained all night but we had to march again in the morning but we only went three miles and it got so mudy that the teams cold not get a long so we had to stop we staid there that night it rained all the time then we got orders to go back to our old camp the mud was more than a foot deep most off the way where the regiments had to march so most all off the boys fell out and come back the best way they cold walk we got back to our ould camp all right but some mudy but the next night it was read off on dress prade (sic) that every man that fell out off the ranks was fined three dollars for privets and five dollars for corprals and sergents to be took out off our pay next pay day most all off our company was fined and I among the rest but I had rather pay three dollars than march with the regt when it is so mudy it is the first fine I ever had to pay I dont think that we will move a gain in some time I have seen 22 horses on one wagon and then they had all they could do to draw it. (146)

In March, the monotony of camp life was broken for twenty five men from each regiment who were selected to go on a special scouting party behind enemy lines. Gilbert was one of those to go and he gives the following account:

Tuesday we started down the river and ware gone four days we went bout 80 miles we went on board off the boats tuesday in the afternoon we landed wednesday bout 10 oclock and went three miles from the river but did not see any thing we camped in a peace off woods wednesday night thursday morning we had orders to take 25 men out off each regt to go a scouting we started just at day light and went down to the river where we took small boats and went a crost the bay we went bout a mile when we got a rebel cornell we sent him down to the boat then we went on to the next house some two miles there we got 4 mules we left 5

men with them and went on we had not gone more than a mile when we come a crost 5 men they ware close by a peace off woods we hollerd to them to halt two off them stoped but the other three run into the woods but we went in to the woods and found two off them one off them got a way one off them had a haver sack with a lot of
mail in it he had come from richmond and was going in to mariland iff he cold get a boat but we told him that we would save them the troble so we fetched them a long with us we went 5 or 6 miles further we got 25 mules and horses and 4 prisners we had lots off fun riding our mules we got ropes and made britles some off the boys got throde head over heels but we got back to the boat all safe and sound but rather tired we had quite a time getting our mules on bord we had to draw them on with ropes we got them all on just at sun down then we got 1000 bushels off corn and bout 50 nigers on bord we got a lot off cattle but did not have room on the boat to put them so we had to let them go a gain we all went on the boat wednesday night and started up the river but did not go but a little while the wind blode so hard that we had to lay still all night and all day friday we had all the oysters that we ware a mind to open we cold pick them up on the shore any whare we got to camp yesterday in the afternoon I got a big ham most every one off the boys had a ham or hen to fetch I opened two quarts of oysters and fetched them to camp we had a oyster super last night I should like to go on just soch a march evry week where we went is a narow strip off land between the potomack and the rappahannock we went down the potomack there has never been many soldiers down there it was the nicest looking country that I have seen in virginia . . . there was 200 men went out off our brigade we got 8 prisners and bout 50 mules and horses (147)

How very different was the outlook of another Oswego County man from the 24th Regiment, Lieutenant Colonel Robert Oliver, who, as luck would have it, was also on this "scouting mission". He can, therefore, offer us invaluable parallel accounts! At the outset, Colonel Oliver was impressed with the importance of the sound of a "secret mission into enemy territory" but by the second day the secret mission was losing its appeal. He wrote in his diary, "Don't like such stealing expeditions." He did take this opportunity to trade a Union pony for a blooded Virginia horse but was later ordered to return the horse by his disapproving colonel! (148)

Here we are able to see a vast difference in the way two men looked at the same situation. Perhaps this conflict of opinion could be attributed to difference in background, education, social position, home enviroment, and basic personality.

Picket duty and a good number of court martials for desertion and drunkenness made up the routine of the camp once more. One of the most spectacular of the desertions was one which we would least expect. On March 19th Gilbert wrote that:

> The captain of Co. k went home on a furlow and state (sic) over his time and was fetched back under gard he is having his trial I dont know what they will do with him they took him for deserting (149)

This incident was also reported by Robert Oliver who identified him as Captain Phillips. All other officers' leaves were held up, awaiting his forced return and court martial. On March 17th, with Captain Phillips back in camp under guard. Lieutenant Colonel Oliver and several other officers did get leaves for 10 days. Appended was an admonition that failure to return on time would automatically cost them their commissions! (150)

Rumors were flying around the regiment concerning the date when their service would be completed.

Gilbert reflected in mid-March that if the weather continued to be nice, he was afraid that they would have to march but he "hoped not."

No one knew which date they should be mustered out but he thought it should be May 17th, "that being the time that we began to draw pay from the United states." (152) He was also undecided about re-enlisting — there were stories around the camp that htey might go back to Elmira, be given a 30 day furlough and then be mustered out with a chance to enlist for another year. He finally said that he would come home first, no matter what he eventually did. (153)

The spirit with which Gilbert blasts those at home who don't care to come down into Virginia is strong and certainly sincere! He wrote that:

I have hurd that some off the boys that have got letters from home that the folks round there think that they had better keep us down here now that we are here and save sending them down here I suspose they think iff they keep us that they wont have to come there is some round there that I would like to see drafted some off them that are all the time a blowing because the army dont move and do something it will do for them to talk when they are at home with a good fire to sit by and a good bead to sleep in but let them come down here where we are are and lay out dooars when the snow is a foot deep and they wont be in such a hury for the army to move I suspose they would be willing to have us all killed iff that would end the war before they had to come but iff they kill us all they will have some thing to for what there is left off us are tough and expects to get home to see them drafted. (154)

By March 24th he felt certain that they were going to move because the officers had takn down their large tents and turned them in. They also had two pack mules per regiment to carry the officers' baggage. The officers had sent to Washington and bought thirty dollars worth of white gloves and blacking for the review. Hooker had, by this time, replaced Burnside. Of him, Gilbert reports, "the boys have all got great confidence in General Hooker or fighting Joe as he is called I hope that he will have better luck than Burnside had." (155)

With all the excitement in the camp concerning the forthcoming trip home, Gilbert finds time to write, "tell ed that they use mules to ride and draw wagons I wish that I had one and cold get him home they will keep fat on what a horse would die on." (156) This would seem to indicate that the farmers around Orwell had never used mules and that they were a novelty to our farmer-turned-soldier!

By the end of March, Gilbert had dysentery and was detached from the regiment for a few days. They were counting the days now until they would be on the way!

Hard luck befell two of his comrades who were, "court marshaled for insulting the cornell they have been sent to the rip raps for 18 months." (157) (The Rip Raps was the name of a prison camp in Virginia). This must have been a hard sentence to serve, during 16 months of it, the rest of the regiment would be back home, mustered out of the service!

The white gloves and blacking were put to good use, as on April 2nd General Hooker reviewed their division. Gilbert also reports that, "there has been two captains dismissed from our regt for being absent without leave they lost all their pay. (158)

Lest we think that this problem of deserting men and officers did not plague the Confedercy, we have an account of picket duty the 24th was on when there "was a lot off rebels come to give them selvs up to us there was one whole company officers and all they said that there was lots off them that would come iff they cold get a way they were sent a crost the river for forage so they come and give them selves up." (159)

Some tense days were experienced when Co. A men, figuring

their time from April 24th when they arrived at Elmira, threatened to do no more duty after that date. (160)

To learn how these men came out, we turn once again to Robert Oliver's account in which he reported that when marching orders came on the morning of April 27th, Co. A balked. "Co. A handed in a petition refusing to march. I don't know what will happen to them," Oliver despaired. As the time for falling in approached, nerves were taut and at the zero hour they reached the breaking point. When the order to march was given, twelve of the company stood fast. They were thereupon taken to the front of the brigade and two regiments drawn up in line with loaded guns. Gen'l Wadsworth told them they must immediately return and take their arms or be shot on the spot. They preferred the former, and all returned to duty.' Thus the crises passed." (161)

The entire regiment felt better when they were officially notified that they would be retained until the 17th of May.

On April 16 Gilbert wrote that they expected to march every day. They were to carry 8 days rations. He added that the cavalry had left three days earlier.

Two days later, he writes the last letter from Virginia in 1863. He states that he has "got bout well a gain but dont do any duty yet I have not done any since moving now we had a very hard rain this week I hurd that the rappahannock rased 16 feet . . . I owd some to the sutlers some off the boys owd him $40 a dollar dont go a great ways here butter 50 cts a pound and every thing els acording there is a bakery here they bake pies and biskets pies 25 cts a piece and small att that there is plenty of oranges round now they are 5 cts a piece we can get oysters and fresh fish all we want oysters are $1.00 a bushel in the shell. (162)

The 24th had their leisure time cut short at the end of April when they moved with the army into the Fredericksburg area and took part in the Battle of Chancellorsville. They did picket duty during the six-day engagement, however, and so were spared the fury of "Stonewall" Jackson.

After Chancellorsville, they marched north to Aquia Creek on the Potomac, and on May 12 at 9 p. m., took ship-board for Washington which they reached early the next morning. A day later, they entrained for Baltimore, where one poor soldier, who had lived through two years of war, lost his life when he fell under the cars. (Robert McKinsey, Co. F). The next day they arrived in Elmira. (163)

On May 21 Gilbert wrote to his mother that:

I . . . did not think we should have to stay here so long but I dont see as there is any signs off our geting a way yet the cornel is drunk all the time we are having a good time here . . . when we come home we are all a going to sandy creek to take super I should rather come home but the captain wanted us all to go to sandy creek with him when we find out when we are a going we shall send word so that you can all be up there I dont now if there is any thing els to rite I will wait til I get home. I am well so no more this time

Gilbert Crocker (164)

During these last days at Elmira, we may imagine the bustle and anticipation here, in the county, awaiting the homecoming of the heroes. To see this episode unfold, we turn to a description written by Dr. Charles McCool Snyder, based on his research among our 1863 newspapers:

The City Council voted $300 for the festivities, and a citizens' committee prepared a monstrous demonstration. Meanwhile, eyes were glued to the columns of the local papers for word of their (The 24th's) departure from Elmira.

On Monday afternoon, June 1, the Daily Times announced that they would entrain the following morning and arrive during the afternoon. The news set the en-

tire community in motion, and by the following noon, Oswego was decked in bunting and its streets overflowed with spectators. At 3 o'clock the City Hall bell began to ring, acknowledging the receipt of a telegram that the troops had left Syracuse and were on the last lap. The church bells relayed the word to the adjacent countryside.

The throng converged upon the railroad station at West First and Utica streets to get the first glimpse of the "remnant of Oswego County's first offering in the War of Freedom." During the long wait, the Mechanics' Sax Horn and the Union bands filled the air with patriotic medleys. Then, about 5:00 a prolonged blast from the locomotive's whistle announced its approach. Cheer followed cheer as the train stopped and the men poured out to greet relatives and friends. After some delay, the men were gotten into their places and the parade began. Leading off was the Mechanics' Sax Horn band; then, in order, the 48th. Regiment of Oswego Guards, the Union band, veterans of the 24th Regiment with Col. Beardsley, Lt. Col. Oliver, Major Richards, Adjutant Hill, Quartermaster Richardson, and Surgeon Murdoch mounted and leading the way. Behind the marchers, in carriages, came the disabled and wounded and the Clergy of Oswego; next, the fire department, and finally, Oswego citizens in carriages. The regimental colors with Bull Run, South Moutain, Antietam and Fredericksburg enscribed, drew universal attention.

The parade crossed the lower bridge, circled and returned to the west side, halting in West Park, where appropriate ceremonies were performed. Mr. William Lewis, esq., presided, and the Rev. Mr. L. M. S. Haynes of the First Baptist Church offered the prayer, which included a condemnation of Copperheadism. The Hon. D. G. Fort, a former mayor, then delivered the address. At its conclusion, Col. Beardsley, Capt. J. D. O'-Brien, Col. Sullivan, a former commandant of the regiment, and Adjutant Hill responded briefly for the regiment. And finally, the Marshall for the affair . . . Robert Oliver, Sr., invited the boys to a banquet awaiting them at Doolittle Hall.

The latter, served by the "generous hearted ladies of Oswego," was sumptuous, and entertainment was furnished by a traveling troupe of musicians. At its conclusion the "Boys in Blue" went to their respective homes for additional celebrations appropriate for heroes. (165)

Knowing that the train did not arrive until 5 p. m. and that there was the inevitable delay in forming the parade; considering the length of the prescribed route and the Victorian penchant for lofty and lengthly phrases, and knowing the certainty with which the "generous hearted ladies of Oswego" would have laid a bountiful table, we may assume that our heros were not able to leave for "their respective homes" at an early hour!

Whether Gilbert stayed for the formalities of the Oswego welcome or not, we have no way of knowing. If he did, (and without evidence, it would appear that all men who returned with the regiment would have gone, in a body, to Oswego), it was undoubtedly necessary for him to remain in the city over night, continuing his journey homeward the following day. The Sandy Creek company would have gone either by horse and wagon or, perhaps, lake vessel as far as Port Ontario or some other convenient point and then traveled over land to the village of Sandy Creek. Upon their arrival there, Captain W. D. Ferguson's "supper" would be awaiting them.

It was in this manner that Pvt. Crocker returned to civilian life -- to Beecher's store -- to the rocky fields of his father's Orwell farm. He would never, again, be the same provincial, inexperienced, farm youth who had gone off to

war two years earlier. The war would certainly become a memorable event in thousands of lives, in great numbers of them, perhaps, the outstanding event of a lifetime.

The agrarian life did not content Gilbert long, however, nor hold him either. On December 28, 1863, he was mustered into the United States Army as a Corporal of Co. G, 24th Cavalry. This is another story, which must await another telling. Sufficient to say that he was wounded at the Battle of Cold Harbor when a ball went through his leg above the knee. He was mustered out of the army the second time on June 1, 1865 as a Seargent.

After buying and clearing a piece of timber land in Vorea, about three miles east of Orwell, he built a house and barn on it and was married to Aurelia Stowell on January 29, 1869. They became parents of three daughters, Sarah Maude, Celia Marie, and Ethel Mary. (166)

Gilbert Sidney Crocker was always a farmer. When he was no longer able to carry on the work of the farm, he sold it and moved into the village of Orwell in 1911.

There he remained active and able to hunt, fish and grow large gardens. He was especially fond of fishing for speckled trout and deer hunting up at Benson Mines.

On May 13, 1926, death claimed our old soldier in his 85th year.

Footnotes

GILBERT CROCKER FOOTNOTES

(1) Crisfield Johnson, **History of Oswego County, New York,** (1877), 300.

(2) Mrs. C. M. Babcock of Freeport, Texas, a grand-daughter of Sidney Crocker and the daughter of Gilbert Crocker.

(3) B. J. Hunter, (Large Wall) **Map of Oswego County, New York,** (Philadelphia, 1854)

(4) Gilbert Crocker's experiences in the Civil War are based on a collection of 161 of his letters now owned by a Great-Nephew, Mr. Grant DeLong of Phoenix, New York, and, until recently, in a Sandy Creek farmhouse. It may be stated here that all quotations from the letters are rendered exactly as they were written, including the total lack of any form of punctuation.

(5) Charles M. Snyder, "Oswego County's Response to the Civil War", **New York History,** (Cooperstown), XLII, No. 1, 75.

(6) Pulaski **Democrat,** May 2, 1861.

(7) Gilbert Crocker to Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Crocker, May 10, 1861.

(8) Gilbert Crocker to Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Crocker, May 14, 1861.

(9) Gilbert Crocker to Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Crocker, May 11, 1861.

(10) Gilbert Crocker to Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Crocker, May 14, 1861.

(11) Snyder, **New York History,** 75.

(12) Gilbert Crocker to Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Crocker, May 14, 1861.

(13) Gilbert Crocker to Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Crocker, May 16, 1861.

(14) Ibid.

(15) Gilbert Crocker to Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Crocker, May 31, 1861.

(16) Gilbert Crocker to Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Crocker, June 4, 1861.

(17) Ibid.

(18) Gilbert Crocker to Mr. and

Mrs. Sidney Crocker, May 31, 1861.
(19) Gilbert Crocker to Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Crocker, June 12, 1861.
(20) Gilbert Crocker to his sister, June 19, 1861.
(21) Gilbert Crocker to Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Crocker, June 12, 1861.
(22) Gilbert Crocker to Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Crocker, May 11, 1861.
(23) Gilbert Crocker to Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Crocker, May 31, 1861.
(24) Gilbert Crocker to Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Crocker, June 4, 1861.
(25) Gilbert Crocker to sister, June 19, 1861.
(26) Ibid.
(27) Gilbert Crocker to sister, June 19, 1861.
(28) Gilbert Crocker to Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Crocker, June 26, 1861.
(29) Ibid.
(30) Gilbert Crocker to Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Crocker, June 27, 1861.
(31) Gilbert Crocker to Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Crocker, June 30, 1861.
(32) Gilbert Crocker to Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Crocker, July 10, 1861.
(33) Charles M. Snyder, "The Olivers and the Civil War", **Oswego County Historical Society Yearbook**, (Oswego, 1956), 19.
(34) Gilbert Crocker to Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Crocker, July 10, 1861.
(35) Ibid.
(36) Gilbert Crocker to Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Crocker, July 18, 1861.
(37) Gilbert Crocker to sister, August 28, 1861.
(38) Gilbert Crocker to Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Crocker, July 18, 1861.
(39) Gilbert Crocker to Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Crocker, July 10, 1861.
(40) Gilbert Crocker to Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Crocker, July 18, 1861.
(41) Gilbert Crocker to Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Crocker, July 18, 1861.
(b2) Gilbert Crocker to Mrs. Sidney Crocker, May 22, 1862.
(43) Gilbert Crocker to Mrs. Sidney Crocker, August 12, 1861.
(44) Gilbert Crocker to Mrs. Sidney Crocker, August 18, 1861.
(45) Gilbert Crocker to sister, August 22, 1861.
(46) Gilbert Crocker to Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Crocker, July 21, 1861.
(47) Gilbert Crocker to Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Crocker, July 25, 1861.
(48) Gilbert Crocker to Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Crocker, July 27, 1861.
(49) Gilbert Crocker to Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Crocker, August 3, 1861.
(50) Ibid.
(51) Gilbert Crocker to Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Crocker, August 5, 1861.
(52) Gilbert Crocker to Mrs. Sidney Crocker, August 12, 1861.
(53) Gilbert Crocker to Mrs. Sidney Crocker, August 18, 1861.
(54) Gilbert Crocker to sister, August 22, 1861.
(55) Gilbert Crocker to Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Crocker, August 15, 1861.
(56) Gilbert Crocker to Mrs. Sidney Crocker, August 18, 1861.
(57) Gilbert Crocker to Mrs. Sidney Crocker, August 28, 1861.
(58) Johnson, Crisfield, **History of Oswego County, New York**, (1877), 76.
(59) Gilbert Crocker to Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Crocker, September 20, 1861.
(60) Gilbert Crocker to sister, October 8, 1861.
(61) Gilbert Crocker to Mrs. Sidney Crocker, October 11, 1861.
(62) Ibid.
(63) Ibid.
(64) Ibid.
(65) Ibid.
(66) Gilbert Crocker to his sister, October 24, 1861.
(67) Gilbert Crocker to Mrs. Sidney Crocker, November 6, 1861.
(68) Ibid.
(69) Gilbert Crocker to Mr. and

Mrs. Sidney Crocker, November (?) 1861.
(70) Gilbert Crocker to Mrs. Sidney Crocker, November 16, 1861.
(71) Gilbert Crocker to Mrs. Sidney Crocker, December 19, 1361.
(72) Ibid.
(73) Ibid.
(74) Gilbert Crocker to his sister, December 19, 1861.
(75) Gilbert Crocker to his sisters, (no month) 1862.
(76) Gilbert Crocker to Sidney Crocker, January 3, 1862.
(77) Ibid.
(78) Ibid.
(79) Gilbert Crocker to Sidney Crocker, January 10, 1862.
(80) Gilbert Crocker to Tirza Crocker, January 8, 1862.
(81) Gilbert Crocker to Mrs. Sidney Crocker, January 10, 1862.
(82) Ibid.
(83) Gilbert Crocker to Mrs. Sidney Crocker, February 18, 1862.
(84) Ibid.
(85) Gilbert Crocker to Mrs. Sidney Crocker, February 28, 1862.
(86) Gilbert Crocker to Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Crocker, March 12, 1862.
(87) Gilbert Crocker to Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Crocker, March 16, 1862.
(88) Ibid.
(89) Gilbert Crocker to Mrs. Sidney Crocker, April 6, 1862.
(90) Gilbert Crocker to Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Crocker, April 18, 1862.
(91) Gilbert Crocker to Mrs. Sidney Crocker, April 6, 1862.
(92) Gilbert Crocker to Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Crocker, April 18, 1862.
(93) Gilbert Crocker to Mrs. Sidney Crocker, April 24, 1862.
(94) Ibid.
(95) Gilbert Crocker to Sidney Crocker, April 25, 1862.
(96) Ibid.
(97) Gilbert Crocker to Mrs. Sidney Crocker, May 16, 1862.
(98) Ibid.
(99) Gilbert Crocker to Mrs. Sidney Crocker, May 22, 1862.
(100) Gilbert Crocker to Mrs. Sidney Crocker, May 16, 1862.
(101) Gilbert Crocker to Mrs. Sidney Crocker, May 8, 1862.
(102) Ibid.
(103) Gilbert Crocker to Mrs. Sidney Crocker, May 22, 1862.
(104) Gilbert Crocker to Mrs. Sidney Crocker, June 1, 1862.
(105) Gilbert Crocker to Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Crocker, June 6, 1862.
(106) Gilbert Crocker to Mrs. Sidney Crocker, June 5, 1862.
(107) Gilbert Crocker to his sister, June 16, 1862.
(108) Gilbert Crocker to Mrs. Sidney Crocker, July 3, 1862.
(109) Ibid.
(110) Gilbert Crocker to Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Crocker, July 13, 1862.
(111) Ibid.
(112) Gilbert Crocker to Mrs. Sidney Crocker, July 25, 1862.
(113) Gilbert Crocker to Mrs. Sidney Crocker, July 30, 1862.
(114) Gilbert Crocker to Mrs. Sidney Crocker, July 17, 1862.
(115) Gilbert Crocker to Mrs. Sidney Crocker, July 10, 1862.
(116) Ibid.
(117) Gilbert Crocker to sister, August 21, 1862.
(118) Snyder, "The Olivers and the Civil War", **Oswego County Historical Society Yearbook,** (Oswego, 1956), 23.
(119) Ibid.
(120) Ibid.
(121) Ibid.
(122) Gilbert Crocker to Mrs. Sidney Crocker, September 17, 1862.
(123) Gilbert Crocker to Mrs. Sidney Crocker, October 2, 1862.
(124) Gilbert Crocker to sister, October 6, 1862.
(125) Ibid.
(126) Ibid.
127) Johnson, **History of Oswego County,** (1877) 384.
(128) Johnson, **History of Oswego County,** (1877) 304.
(129) Johnson, **History of Oswego County,** (1877) 384.
(130) Gilbert Crocker to Mrs. Sidney Crocker, October 17, 1862.
(131) Ibid.
(132) Ibid.
(133) Gilbert Crocker to Mrs. Sidney Crocker, December 8,

1862.

(134) Gilbert Crocker to Sidney Crocker, October 23, 1862.

(135) Gilbert Crocker to Sidney Crocker, October 23, 1862.

(136) Gilbert Crocker to sister, November 11, 1862.

(137) (132 men fit for duty when the 24th marched into Virginia on October 26. Of these, 20 men had no arms.) Snyder, "The Olivers and the Civil War", **Oswego County Historical Society Yearbook** (1956) 24.

(138) Gilbert Crocker to Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Crocker, December 16, 1862.

(139) Gilbert Crocker to Mrs. Sidney Crocker, January 1, 1862.

(140) Gilbert Crocker to Mrs. Sidney Crocker, January 5, 1862.

(141) Gilbert Crocker to Mrs. Sidney Crocker, January 30, 1862.

(142) Gilbert Crocker to Mrs. Sidney Crocker, January 18, 1863.

(143) Gilbert Crocker to sister, January 30, 1863.

(144) Gilbert Crocker to sister, March 1, 1863.

(145) Gilbert Crocker to sister, February 14, 1863.

(146) Gilbert Crocker to Mrs. Sidney Crocker, January 30, 1863.

(147) Gilbert Crocker to sister, March 8, 1862.

(148) Snyder, "The Olivers and the Civil War", **Oswego County Historical Society,** (1956), 26.

(149) Gilbert Crocker to sister, March 19, 1863.

(150) Snyder, "The Olivers and the Civil War", **Oswego County Historical Society,** (1956) 26.

(152) Ibid.

(153) Ibid.

(154) Ibid.

(155) Gilbert Crocker to Mrs. Sidney Crocker, March 24, 1863.

(156) Ibid.

(157) Gilbert Crocker to Mrs. Sidney Crocker, March 28, 1863.

(158) Gilbert Crocker to Sidney Crocker, April 3, 1863.

(159) Gilbert Crocker to Sidney Crocker, April 3, 1863.

(160) Gilbert Crocker to Mrs. Sidney Crocker, April 12, 1863.

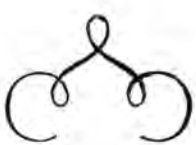
(161) Snyder, "Olivers . . . **"Oswego County Historical Society,** (1956) 27.

(162) Gilbert Crocker to his sister, April 18, 1863.

(163) Snyder, "Olivers . . . **"OCH Society,** (1956), 27.

(164) Gilbert Crocker to Mrs. Sidney Crocker, May 21, 1863.

(166) Biographical information on Gilbert's later life furnished by his daughter, Mrs. C. M. Babcock, Freeport, Texas.



Silver Tea Featured Costumes Of A Century Ago

(May 21, 1961)

The Society held a silver tea on Sunday, May 21, 1961, featuring the costumes of a century ago. Of particular interest were the Morrill gowns, a collection of costumes recently acquired by the society from the descendants of Senator Justin Morrill. The gowns belonged to Mrs. Morrill and her sister, and were worn at White House receptions during the administrations of Presidents Lincoln, Johnson and Grant. Heavily jeweled and ornamented, they are among the finest period costumes to be found in museums throughout the country. On view, also, was a display of old dolls, dressed in period gowns, from the collection of Mrs. C. M. Snyder.

The social committee, headed by Mrs. Charles F. Wells, served light refreshments. Assisting Mrs. Wells on the committee were Mrs. Paul Goodwin, Mrs. Johnson Cooper, Mrs. W. Seward Salisbury, Mrs. Ralph Faust, Mrs. John Storm, Mrs. Anthony Slosek, Mrs. Perry Reynolds, Mrs. Charles Snyder and Miss Dorothy Mott.

Eighty-First Regiment,

New York Volunteers

(presented by Mr. Joseph C. Dewine, November 21. 1961)

When President Lincoln issued his call for volunteers on April 15, 1861, Oswego County was one of the first in the state to answer this call. War meetings were held throughout the remainder of the year, the first of which brought forth the organization of the 24th New York Infantry. After the forming of this regiment, the spirit of patriotism carried over to such an extent that plans were immediately made to form a second regiment from the county.

A War meeting was likely to be called at any time; such was the feeling of the day. Flag raisings and speeches were the order of the day and it has been noted in the local newspaper of the time that these meetings drew crowds of such great capacity, the halls and grounds were often filled to over flowing.

The first meeting that concerned Oswego's newest regiment was held on August 29, 1861 in Doolittle Hall with Mayor Fitzhugh, Dewitt Littlejohn, and William Duer as speakers. The special guest of the evening was Colonel Thomas W. Gantt who had recently been appointed "Aide" to General McClellan. Colonel Gantt is a brother-in-law of D. C. Littlejohn. Even though Gantt was suffering from a bad cold and could scarcely talk, he was called upon to say a few words as to the action he had recently encountered in Missouri and the West. He hailed the work of General McClellan and "brought down the house in an outburst of applause." The audience was estimated upwards of over fifteen-hundred people. In response to loud calls, Dewitt Littlejohn took the stand and stated "that rather than supplying another company for the 48th regiment stationed at the fort, we must have another full regiment from old Oswego since Governor Morgan had allowed the use of Fort Ontario as a recruiting and staging area for New York troops." Reports were heard that six or eight companies were being recruited throughout the county and a telegram received that day from Syracuse stated that Onondaga County wished to add a company to any newly formed regiment.

Judge Carroll of Oswego stated, "he had determined to know no (political) party till this war was over. He had hoped that but one ticket would be presented for the suffrages of all loyal men, but circumstances may render it necessary for Republicans and Democrats to run separate tickets in the fall- if so, let there be no excitement, no bitterness, no speeches. Let us simply go to the ballot boxes on election day, deposit our votes quietly and abide the result." Judge Carroll was the son of Charles Carroll of Carrolton, one of the first signers of the Declaration of Independence.

During the first week of September, Captain G. W. Berriman, of the New York Zouaves, set up a recruiting office next to the **Commercial Times** office complete with The Sax band, nightly fireworks, and speeches from Littlejohn, Duer and others. Shortly after Captain Berriman's company moved into the fort and set up camp with the other companies, the regiment received its designation as the 81st New York Volunteer Infantry. Colonel Edwin Rose of Suffolk County, a West Point graduate, was appointed by Governor Morgan as its first com-

manding officer. Major DeForest, a member of the staff of the New York Militia, and Major McAmbley, an Oswego alderman and businessman, were also appointed by the Governor. As was the custom of the day, all other company grade officers were elected by popular vote of their fellow enlistees.

One of the first companies organized was Company "K" of Mexico and Albion. These men elected J. Dorman Steel, the Principal of Mexico Academy as their Captain. Companies "C", "E", and "I" were consolidated into the other companies of the regiment shortly after Christmas of 1861, and these were then filled with the "MOHAWK RANGERS" from the Utica - Rome area bringing the regiment up to a total strength of 1100 men.

In January of 1862, in a ceremony in the West Park, Major McAmbley was presented with a sword by the citizens of Oswego. D. C. Littlejohn as chairman of the **Committee of the Citizens of Oswego** gave Major McAmbley credit for making Fort Ontario a military depot. The citizens also presented the troops with a beautiful set of Regimental Colors, both state and national. When the captains and lieutenants had been elected, the companies were paid for the first time and uniforms and equipment were issued to all men at government expense. This was not always the case during the first months of the war, since many men had to have uniforms made by local tailors or use civilian clothing made over to resemble various uniforms. It might be noted that the 81st was one af the first regiments in the state to be completely out-fitted with the "new" standard Federal Blue uniform, since many of the state units called before this time wore Militia type uniforms of coarse grey cloth of various shades. Many southern gentlemen were in cavalry and artillary units during the Mexican War and they carried on in the local state militia units afterwards; many of these units having very ornate field grey uniforms. This may be the reason the official color of the Confederate States Army was adopted as field grey.

Before reporting to Fort Ontario, ten men who had enlisted in (the original) Company "C" claimed they had been well treated at Camp Littlejohn which was set up in the vacant lot adjacent to the **Times** office. This is contrary to some reports of the time that charged that privations resulted in medical discharges for two local men after they had been enlisted and while still stationed at Camp Littlejohn, downtown. Some desertions did take place from there as well as later from Fort Ontario but on the whole, morale seems to have been good. Some of the unrest may have stemmed from the regiment's feelings toward Major DeForest who had placed two of his brothers in official positions as officers of various companies, one a lieutenant and one a captain. In doing this he tried to push out a Lt. Kinlock, who is said to have been the best trained man in the regiment, having been a member of the old Oswego Guard. In fact Lt. Kinlock was so well thought of by the local citizens, he had recently been presented with a sword by the town. Since the regiment could ill afford to lose such an officer, he was transferred to another company. The only other incident that was reported locally at the time occurred at the fort. A lieutenant by the name of Adkins had ordered a drummer boy (probably in his early teens) to do something, and this order was countermanded by Major McAmbley. Whether or not the boy voiced an opinion is not reported, but Major McAmbley, "grasped a musket from the sentinal on duty and ran the bayonet into the arm of the drummer boy. The officers and men of the company gave three cheers for Adkins and three groans for McAmbley." In less than four months from this date Major McAmbley was killed in the battle of Fair Oaks.

On the 20th of January the regiment boarded the train for Albany where they joined with Companies "C", "E" and "I" to bring the total actual number of the regi-

ment up to eleven hundred men. The **Commercial Times** called for all absentees to report back for duty before the regiment left Oswego, and estimated the total strength at this time to be 830 men but doubted that more then 750 would leave here. The newspaper attributed the large number of desertions to Lt. Col. DeForest, the most unpopular man in the reg't.

The **Utica Herald** of January 21st reported that the Oswego regiment, 756 strong, passed through that city at 5 p. m. on the previous day with 17 cars filled with men wearing blue overcoats. This was due to the fact that the march from Fort Ontario to the train depot was conducted in a blinding snowstorm. This had no effect however on the prolonged and tearful leave-taking. It went on to mention that there were many ladies on the train traveling with the 81st. Here the unit stayed over for two days and continued on to Albany on January twenty-third.

Upon their arrival at Albany, orders were issued by General Rathbone that the election of the Second Lieutenants in Companies "B" and "E" were null and void and now elections for these posts would be held (replacing Col. DeForest's two brothers). Orders were also received from the same headquarters that the regiment would be again consolidated, this time into eight companies.

About two weeks later Lieutenant John Oliver left Oswego for the Albany headquarters in charge of two deserters in irons; George Brewin and Patrick Mishude, both of Company "H", who were apprehended in Pious Hollow. Mishude had just returned from Canada the day before (Feb. 2nd.). Lt. Oliver also took with him several other men who had been left at the fort on the sick list. Among those left at the fort was a Lieutenant John Edwards who had just resigned after being made a Captain; the resignation was due to continued illness.

The **Commercial Times**, on February 5th 1862, ran an editorial to the effect that since the regiment was now in the state capital, under Governor Morgan's nose so to speak, they trusted that the governor would not permit one obstinate man (Col. DeForest) to break up the entire regiment. Certain necessary steps should be taken before the Eighty-first departed from the state to insure this would not happen. Even though the regiment was commanded by Col. Rose, most of the work of running it was evidently taken over by Col. DeForest and as events would have it, he would shortly become the regimental commander due to the severe illness of Col. Rose before the unit saw its first action. From all available accounts DeForest was a soldier of the "old school" who believed in strict discipline and harsh measures to counteract breaches of this discipline.

After consolidating the companies and bringing the reg't. up to nearly full strength, they moved in mid-February from Albany to New York City and after spending the first week in a tent camp in Central Park they took up station at Camp Washington located on Staten Island. While the Oswego soldiers stayed at Camp Washington their time was spent with various other units on the island helping the Engineers build two more forts. These were called Fort Richmond and Fort Tompkins. Before these jobs were completed the 81st moved south on March fifth through Philadelphia and Baltimore to their new base at Kalorama Heights, D. C., a defensive post somewhere on the western side of Washington. Upon arrival they were assigned to the Fourth Army Corps under the command of Maj. Gen. Ernest D. Keyes in McClellan's Army of the Potomac. They were placed in Brig. Gen. John D. Palmer's Third Brigade of Gen. Silas Casey's First Division.

It was at this time, according to the diary of Daniel Austin of Mexico, that the regiment received four months back pay and with this, ". . .hucksters came and made some beehive (of activity). The soldiers needed belts to hold their knives, hatchets and revolvers. One salesman even sold shields to wear in the vests. He

said it would stop a musket ball. These goods were soon lost or thrown away".

On March 28th General Keye's 4th Army Corps crossed the Potomac to Arlington, Virginia, where the members of the 81st met their friends from Oswego County stationed there with the 24th New York Infantry. The visit did not last long however, because soon the 81st boarded boats for Fortress Monroe near Norfolk. The plan was to make a move with four army corps from Washington toward Bull Run; than withdraw short of there, board boats and proceed down the lower Chesapeake and march straight up the Peninsula of Virginia through Yorktown on to Richmond in record time. The major problem was that Lincoln could not agree to McClellan's plan since it would leave the capital open to attack by the Rebel Army. There was a thirty day argument. President Lincoln finally agreed, "on condition that 40,000 men are left here to cover the Washington forts". General "Mac" reported that it would not be difficult since there were five army corps in the area; McDowell's, Sumner's, Heintzelman's, Keyes' and Banks' the last of which would bottle up the northern end of the Shenandoah Valley. With one whole army corps left behind there would still be over 150,000 men against Confederate General Johnston's 120,000 troops. The Federal Navy could support the flanks from the rivers of Virginia, while the army corps cut the rebel line of retreat from Manassas. It would then be easy to march into Richmond from the south in the greatest surprise move of the war.

Although Federal agents had reported from 100,000 to a quarter million Rebels in varying amounts, there were not or never had there been more than 58,000 Confederate soldiers on the Peninsula at any one time. Since the Lincoln-McClellan debates had been given full coverage in the newspapers; and General Johnston had followed them closely. It seems incredible that any general would state how, when and where he was going to surprise his enemy, but Little Mac did just that.

When the Army of the Potomac came marching down to Bull Run (in their well publicized "feint") they found only ". . .the smoking debris of a storehouse which gave a sinister aspect to the famous landmarks".

April 1st, the ships landed on the rims of Hampton Roads and set up camp near Newport News. There the men from Oswego saw the spars of the sunken Union warships **Constitution** and **Cumberland** which had been sunk a few days previously by the Confederate ironclad **Merrimac** in one of its first engagements. As Keyes' 4th Corps moved north to Yorktown with Heintzelman's Corps on his right, they encountered heavy salvos of artillery on April fourth. At this point, the 81st was one of the regiments selected to move around behind Yorktown and attack from the rear (or north). A little river, the Warwick, crosses the peninsula and was of such little consequence it was not even noted on the Union Army maps. Keyes found this had been dammed into an impassable marsh with heavy fortifications on the other side. With direct, on the spot, orders from McClellan, Keyes was held in position and was reinforced by Sumner. Within a day, McDowell's Corps was expected to arrive from the north and the Rebels would be caught in a squeeze from the North and South.

On the night of April 4th, General McClellan received the greatest surprise of his life. A telegram from Lincoln stated that McClellan had not kept his promise to leave 40,000 men in Washington for the defense of the capital, so McDowell's whole corps was being retained for the purpose.

Since McClellan had not actually said that Banks' Corps in the Northern Shenandoah was supposed to act as the shield for the capital, one of the best moves made by the Union so far in the war fell through. McClellan then decided to put Yorktown under siege, even though most of the Confederate artillary were wooden guns. The campaign lagged for

about two months. On May 5th, Confederate General Magruder evacuated Yorktown before the siege-line became too tight. McClellan then followed him closely up the Peninsula, established a supply base on the York River at West Point and sent his pickets as far as Seven Pines, just a few miles from Richmond. It did not seem to bother Gen. McClellan that the rebels were between him and Richmond, rather than making a desperate march from Manasses.

The 81st Regiment found itself south of the Chickahominy River at Savage Station, facing General Johnston's army. However, only small skirmishes took place for the first few days. During this time, Professor Thaddeus Lowe the well known balloonist from Washington, was making daily observations from just behind the Union lines. The great balloon was filled with ether gas (if available) or hot air from a bonfire. Troops on the ground held the balloon in place by the use of long ropes. Private Daniel Austin recalls in his diary that, "Sergeant Williams of our Company "K" was in charge of all the men who worked the guylines of Professor Lowe's balloon".

The end of May saw some very bad weather; almost a continuous rain. Pvt. Austin speaks of the soaking rain and says it was almost impossible to keep dry that many men were becoming sick. Among these was Colonel Rose, the regimental commander of the 81st. He returned to New York during the last week of May.

The night of May 30th brought a regular tropical hurricane to the area of central Virginia. At dawn on May 31st three-quarters of the Confederate Army, about 60,000 troops in all, came sloshing through the mud against the divisions of Couch and Casey which formed Keye's left flank. The 81st took the full force of the attack, being the first regiment of Casey's Division. Austin states that they were fighting in the woods and, ". . . I would lay on my back and load, then turn out and look for a mark." The regiment was in a very exposed position and made a hasty retreat, falling back through their camp and seeing it destroyed by men from Huger's Confederate 5th Division. This unit was to have worked around behind the Federal lines and attacked their rear while the rest of General Johnston's force hit the main Union line. Huger was late getting to the rear of the line, though he surprised Couch and Casey they put up such a strong defense against the attack, it was nearly noon when the Union command broke up; partly killed; partly wounded and partly captured. When the battle began, McClellan rode up and immediately saw through Johnston's plan and ordered Sumner's Corps to the south bank and brought up every piece of artillery in the Union Army command.

In the early morning, when the main attack was begun, Major McAmbley and Captain Kingman were killed and Lt. Col. DeForest was very nearly killed with a bullet hole in his head. This left command of the regiment to Capt. J. B. Raulston of Company "A". In the afternoon's action, Keye's shattered left flank swung like a door with its back to the Chickahominy River, but did not break. The tremendous amount of Union artillery being brought to bear and the fact that General Joe Johnston was wounded, took all the fire out of the Rebel advance. General James Longstreet, who succeeded Johnston in the field, ordered a retirement just at the time Brig. Gen. Phil Kearney, with the remnants of the cavalry and floating infantry units (including some troops of the 81st), went forward in a charge that carried all before it. The whole position up to and including Fair Oaks (or Seven Pines) was retaken by northern forces.

The **Commercial Tiimes** of June 4, 1862 in an editorial, was very critical of McClellan for his dispatch branding General Casey's First Division as cowards. The facts showed the division was far under strength and listed some of the casualties in the Oswego regiment. Along with McAmbley, De-

Forest and Kingman it listed Lt. John W. Oliver, who was wounded in the arm. The 81st was one of the regiments which held the line between the Chickahominy on the north and Malvern Hill on the south. For seven days the Army of Northern Virginia, under the command of General Robert E. Lee, who succeeded General Johnston, seemed to be all over the area at the same time. A cavalry general, newly made, by the name of J.E.B. Stuart rode north, east and south so fast, that the rear supply line of the Fourth Corps, (including the 81st) was cut across the railroad line at West Point destroying many Union supplies. Stuart returned to Richmond without the loss of a single man.

On the morning of June 27th, Lee was advised that Jackson was ready to move, and on signal, Longstreet stormed out of the forest toward Gaines Mill, with A.P. Hill on one flank and D.H. Hill on the other, bent General Porter's line into a crescent and then a horseshoe under the pressure of the attack. If Gen. "Stonewall" Jackson struck now, the Army of the Potomac was gone. But Jackson did not strike. The troops in his command were within five miles of the battle sitting on the ground and waiting for orders, while their commander stood on a hilltop having a prayer for himself. When his officers asked for orders he glared at them and said nothing, but stayed on the hill all afternoon while Longstreet and the Hills' tried to break the Union line. When McClellan saw how the battle was going he told Porter to stand as long as possible with the sagging line while he lined up artillery on the southern bank of the Chickahominy to cover Porter's retirement. He also ordered all the railroad trains driven into the river and all supplies not to be taken along to Harrison Landing to be burned. Just as all the Union forces began their withdrawel. Gen. Jackson finished his session of prayer and came up on the run.

The last big move of the Seven Days Battle was Lee's effort to cut the Union force in two at Glendale and drive it into the White Oak Swamp. Longstreet and A. P. Hill were supposed to attack from the west toward Richmond while Jackson and D. H. Hill were to cut through the swamp and strike from directly behind the lines to the east. Once more Jackson did not appear.

July 1st saw the men of the 81st New York among the troops in Keye's Corps which captured the high plateau in the marsh called Malvern Hill. This position just two miles south of Glendale, proved the next day, to be the downfall of the Confederate rally. Lee thought that McClellan's fight was gone after six days of retreat and near disaster. Lee ordered the entire Confederate force to attack up the steep slope of Malvern Hill even though he knew the artillery to be lined up tier upon tier to the top of the plateau. It was the worst failure of all for the Rebels --- the Union guns cutting the line of grey to pieces before they ever got started.

Through a mistake on the part of the Southern troops, when a Massachusetts regiment led a charge with much shouting, the Rebels thought this to be their own war-cry and came forward in full force into the face of the Union cannons. General Lee withdrew from the area that night with 7,000 men lost.

The Oswego regiment then moved to Yorktown, Va. and built winter quarters. Both the wooden barracks and the wedge tent stockades were used in this area. A stockade of this kind was simply a log or board wall about four or five feet tall with a wedge tent secured at the top of the wall, in a lean-to fashion. Often the closed end was made into a fireplace with mud and clay packed inside a wooden outer case. This provided some amount of heat for the winter but was often more smoky than warm.

Daniel Austin states that his company completed the building of winter quarters at Yorktown, but the regiment spent only one night in the barracks before being ordered to move south to North Carolina. He states ". . .the boys

were very mad. An extra guard had to be placed on duty to prevent them from burning the barracks to the ground."

The unit arrived at Morehead City, N.C. on New Years Day of 1863 and on the 19th, headed for Port Royal, South Carolina, aboard the **City of Bath.** After encountering some rough weather off Cape Hatteras, the **City of Bath** on which Major Raulston now led the 81st ran into Port Royal harbor ahead of the general's flagship **Cohobby.** The general was so mad at Major Raulston that he placed him under arrest. As the ship ran up toward Beaufort for coal and water, it ran aground on a sandbar and the troops were landed on St. Helena Island.

The 81st left Port Royal on April 15th for Edisto Inlet and ". . . . banged away at Charleston for four days --- then back to Hilton Head. Here they were towed on an old sailing ship **Morton** with the 98th N. Y. Regiment aboard. Some one cooked the officers' hams, and then "who stole the hams" was an issue between the 81st and 98th from then on."

The summer of 1863 was spent on the Carolina coast between Beaufort and Morehead City, evidently on coastal patrol. On October 17th the regiment moved to Newport News and built winter quarters nearby. By this time they were used to building quarters for themselves and then leaving them behind. As they moved upstream to Central Virginia, Austin reports that Company F's baggage was plundered by guerrillas (possibly Moseby or Morgan at this time and place), and the fall and winter were spent hunting guerrillas on the borders of Dismal Swamp, Va.

Since the regiment was activated in the early months of 1862, by February 1864 their time was up, and they were given the opportunity to re-enlist as a unit and receive good sized bounties, about $1,000 total, from the county and the state. Austin notes that three-fourths of his company "K" re-enlisted as well as two-thirds of the entire regiment, and they were immediately sent home on furlough as the 81st N. Y. (Veteran) Volunteers under the temporary command of Lt. Col. John B. Raulston. The unit arrived in Oswego on March 5th 1864 and stayed for more than 30 days.

The **Oswego Daily Palladium** of Wednesday March 9, 1864 carried the following story on its first news page:

"A Noble Present And it's Acknowledgement"

"One of our city contemporaries has already announced that the returned members of the 81st, after receiving the local bounty on their re-enlistment made up a purse of $400. and gave it to MRS. McAMBLEY, the sorrow-striicken widow of the late Major of this regiment, who fell at the Battle of Fair Oaks. This generous act is one that does credit to the heads and hearts of the gallant soldiers of this regiment. Mrs. McAmbley makes acknowledgement of the receipt of the munificient present in the following beautiful & graceful language:

Oswego, March 8, 1864

To the Officers & Soldiers of the Eighty-First (Oswego) Regt.:

It is with heartfelt thankfulness to you, and with gratitude to my Heavenly Father, I acknowledge your gift to me, which I received from your Surgeon, and my friend, Dr. Rice. I know it was given by those who loved my husband, and cherish his memory still. With you he lived, with you he suffered, with you he died. --- Soul agonizing as the thought is to me, yet I have the comforting assurance that he did what he could, and the cause for which he suffered was worthy the sacrafice we have all made. The citizens of Oswego gave me a lot in the cemetery for my husband, and the four hundred dollars given by you, I desire to use in erecting a monument to his memory. The inscription shall remember you.

Last Saturday I rejoiced that you were again permitted to return and gladden the hearts of so many made desolate by your absence, and in the moment tried to forget the desolation of my own,

but the memory of a loved husband, now sleeping in the swamps of the Chickahominy, made your joy almost insupportable to me, yet I feel that I know Him in who I believe, and to the loving kindness and tender mercy of our Heavenly Father would I remember you all. Your sincere friend,

Mrs. M. J. McAmbley
(signed)

The following day the **Palladium** carried the following advertisement:

200,000 More Volunteers Wanted VETERAN BOUNTY $852. For Old Reg'ts. In The Field. $300. NEW RECRUITS $677. will be paid on Enlisting and $150. paid in Elmira.

E.P. Burt & A.P. Getty
Recruiting Agents
167 W. First St. Oswego

Palladium - March

Palladium — March 11, 1864

PUBLIC NOTICE

Lt. Col. J. B. Raulston, of the veteran 81st Regiment, has opened a recruiting office for the regiment at the corner of West Bridge and First Streets. It can safely be said, that no stronger inducements can be offered to volunteers than are presented by this organization. The 81st has seen much active service and Col. Raulston is a capable and efficient officer. To those who meditate entering, we would say call on Lt. Col. Raulston of the 81st.

NECROLOGY

MRS. WILLIAM F. CANOUGH
Lacona, New York, August 15, 1959

MRS. FREDERICK CONDE
Oswego, New York, September 30, 1960

WILLIAM F. KRANZ
Mexico, New York

JOEL R. BAKER
Troy, New York

MRS. ARTHUR W. GRAVES
Oswego, New York, April 7, 1961

MRS. ALICE MAGNUS
Oswego, New York, July 26, 1961

MISS MABEL O. BURT
Oneida, New York, November 25, 1961

Programs for 1962

January 16:

"THE HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY OF THE OSWEGO RIVER VALLEY"
by Albert McCarthy

February 20:

"NINETEENTH CENTURY LIFE IN OSWEGO TOWN"
(A) "Avon Calling" by George DeMass, Jr.
(B) "Aurora Walker Coats, A Not So Ordinary House Wife"
by Dr. Charles M. Snyder

March 20:

"THE ITALIAN MIGRATION TO OSWEGO, AND ITS IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY
by H. Fred Bartle

April 17:

"THE O. AND W. RAILROAD, A CENTURY OF STRUGGLE"
by William F. Helmer

May 15:

"FORT ONTARIO AND THE WAR OF 1812"
by Wallace Workmaster

October 16:

"THE 110th OSWEGO COUNTY INFANTRY IN THE CIVIL WAR"

November 20:

"THE 147th OSWEGO COUNTY INFANTRY IN THE CIVIL WAR"

MEMO

MEMO