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# OSWEGO COUNTY

## in the

# CIVIL WAR


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# OSWEGO COUNTY, NEW YORK IN THE CIVIL WAR

by

CHARLES McCOOL SNYDER


## 1962

## YEARBOOK

OF

## THE OSWEGO COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

AND

## THE OSWEGO COUNTY CIVIL WAR CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE

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# Preface

No apology would be needed at any time for a study of the Civil War as it is related to Oswego County, New York. Long before the concept of "total war" had been formulated, Oswego County, along with many others, had approximated this goal. In the mustering of its manpower and the over-all sacrifice of its citizenry, there was little that remained undone. It was an effort, also, which was sustained and intensified over the span of four long years.

The Centennial of the Civil War seems an appropriate time to gather up the scattered local materials before they are further dispersed and lost, and to use them to tell the story of the war. My intention has been to see as much of the war as possible through the eyes of those who lived through it, or in some cases, just a part of it, but not to overlook the perspective of a century.

The limited source materials inevitably give emphasis to those whose letters and diaries have been preserved. Fortunately the sources include accounts written by both officers and men in the ranks, and they are rather well distributed over the nine different military detachments included in this study.

There is, of course, much which cannot be included, and it is my hope that readers may be stimulated to pursue the facets of the war which may interest them.

I am indebted to many people for assistance in this project. I am grateful to the staff of the Oswego Public Library and the librarian of the Mexico Central School for the many volumes of newspapers which they made available, and also to Anthony Slosek for the documents which he extracted from the archives of the Oswego County Historical Society. The Oswego Palladium Times and The Pulaski Democrat opened their files to me.

Previous studies of the Civil War in Oswego County have been almost indispensable, and I would single out for special thanks Rodney E. Johnson, Joseph Nero, Edward Oram, Joseph Dewine, The Rev. James Nicholson, Mrs. Stanley M. Gifford and John Demos. I am indebted to Fred P. Wright for his studies of Elmina Spencer and Dr. Mary Walker, and to Mrs. Ina Kirk Cooper Lane for her assistance in the preparation of the material on the Twelfth Cavalry in which both her father, Alonzo Cooper, and her mother, Mary Cooper, were involved. I am also grateful to Mrs. Frederick L. Stone for the use of family papers relating to Lt. and Mrs. Edwin Poland.

Mrs. Frances Dann made the Lansing Bristol papers available, and Elizabeth Simpson supplied the diaries of Leander Tuller and Henry Wheeler, and furnished, also, details on the Mexico area. Mrs. David Russell permitted me to use the Walter Stewart letters, and Mrs. Arthur Hart provided the Francis Pease diary. The Oliver papers were made available by the generosity of Minnie Oliver and her son Robert Oliver.

I would like to offer my thanks to the veterans of the Civil War who were most helpful in the preservation of the records: Major H. H. Lyman of the 147th; Lt. Alonzo Cooper of the 12th Cavalry; Colonel Wardwell Robinson of the 184th; Surgeon Carrington Macfarlane of the 81st, and Captain Nelson Ames of the First Artillery. I would offer the same commendation to the Sons and Daughters of Veterans.

I am grateful to the New York Historical Association for permission to reproduce materials from articles which I wrote for NEW YORK HISTORY relating to Oswego and the Civil War.

Finally, I am indebted to the Oswego County Historical Society and the Oswego County Civil War Centennial Committee for underwriting the costs of this publication.

Charles McCool Snyder

# Oswego County Civil War Centennial Committee's Forward

The Civil War Centennial Observance 1961-65 has a particular meaning to residents of Oswego County, since the County has the distinction of having one of the most outstanding records among the counties of the Nation during this titanic struggle for survival.

At the time of the war, the total population of the County was about 75,600, and we were credited with 12,500 men. Approximately 11,000 men served in the Armed Forces, mostly volunteers, which number represents fifteen percent of the total population, and about seventy-five percent of its voting population. The latter figure seems almost incredible until we realize that as many enlisted who were under the voting age as those who were over; the average age being about 23 years.

It is the hope of our County Committee that a review of the unselfish service to the cause during the war will serve as an inspiration to the present generation. It is our wish that the reading of the history of our local citizen-soldiers will rekindle a greater sense of patriotism and devotion to the principles which have made us a great nation. It is also our hope that a firm determination and resolution will be made by this present generation to carry on and to promote these principles and ideals, which best represent the true meaning and the best hope for the future of our great Republic. It is the further wish of our Committee, that the History of the Civil War in Oswego County as prepared by Dr. Charles M. Snyder will inspire our people to better inform themselves and as a result have a greater appreciation of what was accomplished during these trying years.

In selecting the County Committee, the Chairman tried to make it representative of the villages, towns and cities comprising the County. He appointed citizens known to have a deep interest, and in many instances, having family connections with the Civil War in the County. Included were sons and daughters of Union Veterans, members of the Woman's Relief Corps, civic leaders, teachers, members of the press, Civil War buffs and local historians; and in general, those who would be interested in making the Centennial a successful and meaningful experience for the people of Oswego County.

Francis T. Riley, Chairman
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# CHAPTER I

## What Oswego County Did In The War

(Address by H. H. Lyman, late Adjutant 147th N. Y. Volunteers, at Oswego County Veterans' Reunion at Pulaski, N. Y. August 24, 1895.)

I have been requested by your Committee to make a brief statement as to what Oswego County did for the Union Cause, as a sort of introduction to the more interesting exercises.

To many, this may seem an unnecessary and perhaps a tedious part of the program, but it must be remembered that a full generation has elapsed since those terrible times, and that more than one-half of the people of to-day only know of the War of the Rebellion by hear-say, tradition and history.

I see in this little gathering, people who were not born when their fathers enlisted, and yet to-day they are here with THEIR children, some of whom are almost men and women, to do honor to the old veterans, who have now mostly reached that point in life where age, if nothing else, should command veneration and respect.

Other things being equal, all prefer to hear a matter discussed by those who have had experience and personal knowledge of their subject. This is especially true of the old soldier, who takes but little pleasure in hearing the scenes of war discussed by those who do not know a ramrod from a lanyard.

In this respect, we are particularly fortunate to-day in having with us two veteran soldiers, both of whom are not only able and eloquent orators, but also comrades of our own local regiments, who will talk to us as friends and brothers having a common experience, and from whose patriotic lips many of us have before, and often, heard the grand old story of freedom, union and loyalty,-men who in our country's darkest days, with us, risked their lives to uphold its flag and its principles, and who since the war have stood with us shoulder to shoulder up on the solid ground of fraternity, loyalty and charity, always ready and willing to defend the weakest, and honor and assist the poorest and most humble comrade of the Grand Army.

The population of Oswego County at the outbreak of the Rebellion was 75,600.

It was excelled by no county in the State, in promptly and fully responding to its country's calls, and is credited with having furnished 12,500 men for the War, as shown by the records of our War Committee. Many of these, however, were re-enlistments of men who had served in short term regiments; some had been discharged for disability, and re-entered the service; and some even, who had deserted, repented of their foolish action, and again entered the service.

As to the exact number of individual men furnished, I am unable to state, but in round numbers, not far from 11,000, or fifteen percent of its whole population, and seventy-five percent of its voting population.

These figures will seem almost incredible, until you know that

nearly as many enlisted who were under the voting age as those who were over, -- the average being about twenty-three years.

We had five regiments of infantry and two batteries of artillery, composed mostly, and some of them entirely, of Oswego County men, namely, - the 24th, 81st, 110th, 147th and 184th Infantry and Ames' Battery and Barnes' Battery. The 24th Cavalry was also called an Oswego Regiment, but actually had but three Oswego Companies and they were largely re-enlistments from the old 24th Infantry.

We furnished a batallion each for the 12th Cavalry and the 189th and 193rd Infantry. We sent 300 men into the 1st Artillery and 241 into the United States Regulars, and being a lake county, with at that time a large sailor population, sent hundreds into the navy, besides many to the Engineers and other branches of the service.

I have given considerable time and study to this matter and have traced out and looked up 80 separate organizations, in the field rather than to form new ones.

Many of our men served four years and some even five, and upon adjustment and final settlement, it was found that Oswego County had furnished in excess of her quota, when reduced to years of service, an equivalent of 5000 years of service.

The law gave us re-payment for this at the rate of $300 per year or a total draw-back or refund due from the State in cash of $1,500,000; but the State disputed and repudiated its liability for excess of men and service furnished after July, 1864, and finally compromised by paying into our County Treasury $552,-700, for this excess of 5000 years service.

After furnishing the full quota of men required by the government and State, and doing their whole duty in the field and on the sea, they actually earned for our County a million and a half of dollars, in what might be called as over-time, - over half a million of which was actually secured to its treasury, and it was not the soldiers' fault that the balance earned was lost to the County

So much for the raising of Oswego County men for the struggle: Let us now briefly glance at what they did.

Oswego County was present and helped open the great struggle for the Union; and her "Old 24th Regiment," that stalwart contingent of the "Iron Brigade," covered itself and its native county with glory through all the early campaigns of Pope, McClellan, Burnside and Hooker from Bailey's Cross Roads, through Sulphur Springs, Bull Run, South Mountain, Antietam, Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville; making for itself and us a record which will grow brighter and more glorious so long as mankind read history.

Oswego County was at the siege of Yorktown, and through all the weary marches and bloody battles of McClellan's Peninsular Campaign. Under Grant, it led the charge at Cold Harbor, where Oswego men of the gallant 81st went down before rebel masked batteries and double lines of intrenched infantry like grass before the Mower's scythe.

The remnant of this brave regiment, after a full score of desperate battles, was the first to enter conquered Richmond; and Oswego County boys were the first to raise and unfurl the old Flag over that spiteful and rebellious Capitol City, for the possession of which so many thousands of lives had been sacrificed.

Oswego was there when the grand and final assault was made up on Port Hudson, that strong fortress which had so long successfully blocked the Mississippi against the Union Armies. She not only gave Banks and Farragut efficient aid in opening this great water-way, but for a long time did important and valuable service in the lower Mississippi Country.

Day after day, and month after

month, her brave sons faced dangers more terrible than batteries, and more deadly than bullets; campaigning in a hot, malarious climate, to which they were unused; scouting and skirmishing through miasmatic bayous, swamps and low lands; doing coast and guard duty in the fever stricken districts of Florida and the Gulf, with men sinking down to their death daily, helpless and hopeless; conditions which could only be faced, a strain which could only be endured, without demoralization, by men of the mental, physical and moral stamina of Oswego's 110th Regiment.

July 1st, 1863, Oswego was represented and made glorious at Gettysburg, where, partly on the lands of freedom's great champion, Thaddeus Stevens, she opened the great and decisive battle which marked the turn of the tide in America's great war for human liberty.

Here 380 Oswego County boys desperately battled with a whole rebel brigade, with no immediate support for thirty minutes, stubbornly holding their ground, although flanked and nearly surrounded, and tenaciously holding the position assigned them, until ordered to retreat.

At a cost of 72 killed and 144 seriously wounded, in that brief space of time, they had delayed and broken Lee's advance division, broke up and rendered possible the capture of a large portion of two rebel brigades, and, what is of greater importance, gained valuable time, which secured to Mead the advantageous fiield of Gettysburg upon which to fight the greatest battle of the war.

On this identical spot, the people of the State of New York, in grateful remembrance "of what they did there," have erected a noble granite shaft, which not only recites the facts above stated, but bears in large letters accross its tablet, the legend "147th N. Y. Vols. Oswego County, N. Y."

The handful of its survivors did not rest upon their Gettysburg laurels, but recruited and reinforced, followed the blood red moon,- that famous standard of Wadsworth, of Doubleday, of Reynolds, of Newton and of Warren- by day and by night, whereever it lead, from Gettysburg to Appomattox.

Again we find Oswego at Harrison's landing and Burmuda Hundred during the eventful siege of Petersburg; and in the Shennandoah Valley at Fisher's Hill, and the famous battle of Cedar Creek, where our boys of the 184th were not like their glorious commander, Phil Sheridan "Twenty miles away", but on the front line, where they helped to turn back the strong tide of battle upon which Early was riding up this historic Valley, winning much praise for their cool bravery and soldierly conduct although this was their first engagement.

Our County was not only in the very first campaigns and battles of the War, but was nobly represented in Grant's closing campaign from Petersburg to Appomattox, and the famous Apple-Tree.

The 24th Cavalry, mostly old re-enlisted veterans, took the field with Grant in the Spring of '64. During their one Year's service they were in 35 skirmishes and battles, and wound up their eventful service by opening the last day's work of the Army of the Potomac at Appomattox.

They were on the skirmish line engaged with the rebel cavalry when orders were received to "cease firing". The white flag was advanced, and the shattered fragments of what was once Lee's proud and victorious army laid down their arms, while cheer upon cheer, that fairly raised the roof of the heavens, rolled up and down the Union lines.

In the brief time allowed me, I cannot follow details. There were over 2000 battles fought for the Union, and in most of these were to be found some of Oswego's 11,000 soldier or sailor heroes.

Her men were present at the crucial test between the little Monitor and her powerful adversaries the result of which revo-

lutionized naval warfare. She had a representative on the Kearsarge, when she sent the piratical Alabama to the bottom of the sea; and a brave officer from this little village of Pulaski was with Farragut when he ran the batteries below New Orleans, and, as it were, tore open the mouth of the sluggish and sullen old Mississippi, and once for all cured her of her rebel lock-jaw.

No words of mine can do justice to the patriotism and loyalty of our Oswego County people during those dark days; neither is the credit and praise all due to those who enlisted. Our people as a body were enthusiastically patriotic and loyal from the start.

Our women were especially noted for their hearty support of the cause and their liberal contributions and zealous work for the relief of the sick and wounded.

I could speak at length of the many kind acts and brave deeds of Oswego's noble and patriotic army nurse, Mrs. R. H. Spencer, who went with my own regiment, and who, for faithful and efficient service, was soon promoted to a wider field of usefulness, as New York State Agent, and later as United States Agent, for the relief of sick and wounded soldiers. "May God bless and comfort her in her old age," is the prayer of thousands of veterans who received kindness and relief at her hands in the days of their sickness and distress.

The many deeds of patriotism and acts of loyalty and devotion to the Union cause of numerous religious and civic bodies and citizens of our County generally, is a matter of record which will always be referred to with pride by Oswegonians.

Our Country was not saved alone by its men in arms, but by the unselfish patriotism of its whole people, who stood solidly behind its soldiers at the front, always ready to furnish needed means and material or, if required, to fill the depleted ranks, caused by the waste and ravages of war. In this, Oswego County was a marked example of zealous devotion. The results of their patriotic efforts and the part taken by the men representing them at the front, I have truthfully stated in the figures and facts already presented.

Oswego County, in the war, had reason to be proud of her veterans, and her veterans had equal reason to be proud of Oswego County.

# CHAPTER II

## Oswego County's Response To The War

Oswego County at the outset of the Civil War a century ago was a microcosm of the bewilderment and uncertainty which characterized the nation at large. The drift toward sectionalism reflected by the War with Mexico, the controversy attending the Compromise of 1850, the Fugitive Slave Law, "Bleeding Kansas," the Dred Scott Decision, John Brown's Raid, and the election of 1860, left their impact wherever people gathered, whether it was in Doolittle Hall, Oswego's political forum, the churches or on the streets.

Evidence of the confusion attending these events was manifest in the variety of political factions which emerged at this time. There was a hard core of abolitionists, who were always opposed by a much larger body of moderates. There were hard shell and soft shell Democrats, depending upon their willingness, or lack of it, to accept southern leadership. There were also "Silver Grey" Whigs, Conscience Whigs and Free Soil Democrats, who now called themselves Republicans. But a closer look at this new party affiliation revealed cleavages not harmony. Abolitionist Republicans vied with conservatives, and Seward and Weed Men competed with Greeley Men for the control of the party. By 1860 some of these appelations were already obsolete, and competing in the elections were Republicans, Breckinridge Democrats, Douglas Democrats and Bell Whigs.

The Democratic and Republican parties were almost evenly matched in the City of Oswego, but in the towns and villages, Republican majorities were usually sufficient to place the County in the Republican column. In 1859 Republicans carried the County, and sent their nominees to the State Legislature. This, plus Seward's leadership in the presidential race augured well for 1860. However, Lincoln's nomination at Chicago, with an assist from Greeley, invited Republican factionalism. Democrats, meanwhile, failing to reconcile sectional discord, nominated northern and southern candidates, Stephen A. Douglas and John C. Breckinridge, respectively, and virtually handed the victory to their Republican opponents.

With victory in sight Republicans staged monstrous demonstrations at Fulton, Oswego and Hannibal, where Oswego's mightiest orators of that day, DeWitt C. Littlejohn, Cheney Ames and John C. Churchill, and such national figures as Senator Henry Wilson of Massachusetts, and the abolitionist spokesman, Joshua Giddings, competed for the plaudits of the crowds. In the election Republicans carried both the City and County, and thereby contributed to Lincoln's election in the State and nation. They also returned Littlejohn to the Assembly, where, as Speaker, he would be in a pivotal position in the opening scenes of the war.

Oswegonians had their choice of two local daily papers in 1860: The morning PALLADIUM and the afternoon TIMES. Democrats read their news in the early hours of the day; Republicans, in the cool of the evening. Elsewhere in the county readers had

their choice of a variety of weeklies, including the Pulaski DEMOCRAT, the Mexico INDEPENDENT, the Fulton PATRIOT, the Phoenix REPORTER, and the Sandy Creek TIMES. Newspapers were closely attached to one or the other of the political parties; personnel of the PALLADIUM, for example, held posts, which appear to have been sinecures, in the customs office during the Buchanan administration; a situation which was hastily reversed in favor of the TIMES' staff upon the inauguration of Lincoln. Local news, therefore, was strongly colored with politics. Fortunately for the reader, telegraphic news service was available to the dailies, providing terse summaries of recent events. Newspapers also borrowed heavily from the metropolitan dailies.

It might be of interest to note the news of the assault upon Fort Sumter, as relayed to the Oswego readers by the TIMES:

WAR! WAR!
THE CONFLICT COMMENCED
ASSAULT ON FORT SUMTER
ITS GALLANT DEFENCE

Charleston, April 13. The cannonading is going on fiercely today from all points--from the vessels outside and all along our course, Fort Sumter is on fire.

Charleston--At intervals of 20 minutes firing was kept up all night at Fort Sumter. Major Anderson ceased firing from Fort Sumter at 6 o'clock this morning. Fort Sumter seems to be greatly disabled. . . . The federal flag at half mast signalled distress.

The newspapers also put out war "extras" when events of unusual interest occurred. The TIMES, for example, ran an extra on the morning of April 15, 1861, just after the firing on Sumter to announce President Lincoln's call for 75,000 volunteers. Two years later, the PALLADIUM issued two extras the same evening to report Grant's assault upon the Confederate army in the Battle of the Wilderness. For a time the two papers shared the responsibility for such extra editions, but the suspension of the PALLADIUM as a daily for more than two years limited its usefulness. The Civil War, understandably, proved to be a time of stress for Democratic presses.

The churches in Oswego were inevitably drawn into the sectional controversy. When certain of the ministers assailed the Fugitive Slave Law they were charged by their critics with dragging the church into politics. The Rev. Mason Gallagher of the Church of the Evangelists, after delivering a series of antislavery sermons, acknowledged that he had "unfavorably affected some dozen families" whom he expected would withdarw to the newly opened Episcopal Church (Christ Church) on the West Side. But despite heavy financial obligations, which made some of his congregation apprehensive, he decided to continue: "I have given offense to all the so-called conservatives in town," he wrote, "But I believe there is virtue enough in the place to sustain the untrammeled and fearless preaching of the gospel. I shall persevere with the help of God." (1).

Sometime later Christ Church was engulfed by a divisive issue. After Lincoln's election and the secession of the states of the deep South, the Rector of the Church, the Rev. Anthony Schuyler, declared from his pulpit that slavery was "no heinous sin," and called upon his congregation for forbearance and peace. His sermon created a furor in the community. The TIMES dubbed it a proslavery sermon, and attacked it editorially, but it published the sermon at Mr. Schuyler's request. The controversy continued as readers offered their shades of opinion in the columns of the paper. (2).

While it is commonplace today to refer to the Civil War as an "Irrepressible Conflict," it did not appear to be inevitable to contemporaries. Perhaps it is always that way; certainly the American public did not expect war prior to Pearl Harbor, or before Wilson's war message in 1917. In any event few Northerners or South-

erners anticipated a civil conflict despite atrocities in Kansas, the election of a "Black Republican" President by a sectional party, the secession of southern states and the resignation of southern members from Congress, the organization of the Confederate States of America and the seizure of federal post and customs offices and military installations. Nor was Lincoln's firm resolution to hold federal properties in his inaugural an acceptance of war.

But the situation changed over-night with the word of the firing on Fort Sumter. In fact, the psychological effects of this event can hardly be exaggerated. Some historians have held that Lincoln manipulated the Sumter crisis so as to incite the South to fire the first shot. Whatever the case, the assault upon the fort galvanized the North into action. With few exceptions people accepted the call to arms with enthusiasm; enmities between Republicans and Democrats; abolitionists and conservatives were momentarily suspended.

Ira Brown, editor of the TIMES responded with a bristling editorial:

Grim visaged war is upon us. Our dispatches today disclose the fact that the rebel authorities have assumed the responsibility of opening a causeless, senseless warfare upon the government of the United States. The days of bullying are passed. The slaveholders who for the past 10 years have kept this otherwise peaceful country in a constant uproar, have at last proceeded to the dire extremity of war. . . . .

Men of the North! Are you ready to accept the issue? The noble government of your fathers is assailed with armed force. Will you in this hour forget whose sons you are, whose inheritance you possess? . The die is cast. Let party differences be thrown to the winds. Perish dissension when our country is in peril! All together let us stand ready to accept the consequences and do our duty like men in whose minds yet linger the recollection of Bunker Hill, Yorktown and Saratoga. To arms! Down with the rebel flag — up with the good old banner which our fathers have carried in triumph on the road to glory! (3)

Before continuing with the story of recruitment, a few comments on the general characteristics of the county would seem appropriate. Oswego County in 1860 was basically rural. Hundreds of small farms dotted the countryside, western competition in grain and meat not having taken its toll in the area. Perhaps most surprising was the sizeable population of the towns in the northern and eastern parts of the county, where lumbering still vied with agriculture as the principal employment. Orwell, for example, had a population of 1435 in 1860, and furnished 184 soldiers for the Civil War. Today its population totals about 660. Similar comparisons could be made of Redfield, Albion, Amboy, and others. Conversely, the population in the southern towns of the county was less dense than in 1963.

Fulton was still a village in 1860, whereas Oswego was a growing city, with many features of a boom town. Its population of about 17,000 had more than doubled in twenty years. And the older populace, for the most part of New England lineage, now shared the city with recent arrivals, largely Irish, Germans, and French - Canadians. One cannot turn the pages of the secretary's record of the John D. O'Brian Post of the Grand Army of the Republic without being impressed by the number of Irish and German names among the veterans recorded there.

With railroads limited to the Oswego and Syracuse line, and the Rome, Watertown and Ogdensburg system in the northeastern section, transportation was slow and laborious, and recruiting had to be taken to the towns and villages, with Oswego serving as the nerve center.

As the Legislature assembled to implement Lincoln's call for troops, Oswegonians gathered on

April 16 to take measures to raise a regiment of volunteers. Ten days later the first company of the Twenty-fourth Regiment was organized in Oswego. Others were added hastily in Oswego, Parish, Volney, Sandy Creek, and Fulton.

Communities failing to place companies in the 24th Regiment were nonetheless demonstrative. Rallies, it is safe to say, were staged in almost every village across the County, including hamlets as tiny as Richland Station and Sand Bank (Altmar). Pulaski, for example, initiated the organization of a company during the last week of April with the usual flag raisings and oratory. Their company was attached, momentarily it proved, to the 37th Regiment. N.Y.V. (The Irish Rifles). At the rendezvous headquarters on Staten Island, dissatisfactions with the food and quarters (in the process of construction) reached a climax when the commanding officer, Captain E. Peckham, failed the medical examination, and was rejected. So many of the men thereupon withdrew from the outfit, that the company was disbanded; some returning home, and others enlisting in other organizations. Readers of the Pulaski DEMOCRAT were treated to details of the fracas by a correspondent, W. D. Moffit, who wrote to the newspaper to defend himself against charges that he had fomented the dissolution of the company. He admitted to complaining when forced to eat "Dutch slosh," but declared that he would do it again to obtain decent fare. (4)

The disbanding of the Pulaski company was not a permanent loss, since the State's quota, including that of the County, was oversubscribed, and many organizations were rejected. There would be more opportunities during the months ahead.

Oswego, it might be noted here, had a tradition which facilitated the formation and training of military units. Small detachments of United States Regulars had occupied Fort Ontario for many years. Worthy of mention also, was the 48th Oswego Guards. This military body dated back to 1838 and enrolled through the years some of the community's most prominent citizens. During the war it furnished more than forty commissioned officers, most of whom went into local regiments. It was thus a training ground for Civil War officers, one family, that of Robert Oliver, furnishing three officers from the ranks of this company.

After filling the ranks of the 24th Regiment recruitment ceased for a time while the public awaited the anticipated march upon Richmond, the Confederate Capital. But the debacle at Bull Run on July 21, 1861, shattered this fantastic hope, and instituted a second round of enlistments. Oswego County's project was the 81st Regiment, N.Y.V.

With the usual lull in military operations during the winter months, recruiting activities eased off, but they revived in the spring of 1862 with the organization of the 110th Regiment.

The early flush of enthusiasm for the war had now subsided. McClellan's grand offensive was stalling, and casualties mounting. Recruiting had to be expanded and intensified.

Perhaps the County's most effective recruiter was D. C. Littlejohn. As Speaker of the Assembly at Albany he carried resolutions in support of Lincoln's initial call for troops - to Washington. Enroute, at Baltimore, he witnessed mob violence against the Sixth Massachusetts Regiment. Hastening to the Capital he broke this startling news to Secretary Seward. While in Washington he joined an improvised military company commanded by Cassius M. Clay which patrolled the streets for several days while awaiting the arrival of the state militias. In the fall, after turning down an oppointment from President Lincoln as Consul to Liverpool, England, he declined to run for reelection to the Assembly and devoted much of his time to speaking. During the winter and spring of 1862 he cov-

ered every town and village in the county interpreting the war, rallying popular support and enrolling enlistees. Oswego's more eloquent spokesmen included also, Mayors Henry Fitzhugh and Daniel G. Fort, State Senator Cheney Ames, Assemblyman Elias Root, former Congressman William Duer, Judge John C. Churchill, and attorneys Alfred B. Getty and Wardwell G. Robinson, and President of the Board of Trade, William I. Preston. In Fulton there were Congressman M. Lindley Lee, State Senator, Richard K. Sanford and Assemblyman Willard Johnson; in Pulaski, State Senator Andrew S. Warner, Judge Sylvester C. Huntington and Postmaster John B. Watson.

Leaders in Parish were Assemblyman Harvey Palmer and Melzar C. Richards; and in Mexico, the Rev. M. D. Kinney, the Rev. Thomas A. Weed, Judge Cyrus Whitney, attorneys John J. Lamoree, Timothy W. Skinner and George G. French, and Choristers Stebbins R. Orvis and Lewis Miller. The Clergy, it might be added, were active everywhere, as were chaplains, surgeons and officers, who were occasionally sent home to assist in recruiting. Among the latter the Rev. Mason Gallagher might be singled out; also Dr. J. B. Murdoch. Serving with the 24th Regiment, they brought back to the people of the County the last word from the boys at the front. Incidentally, it was not unusual for leaders to have a personal interest in recruitment, expecting to receive commissions as their reward. Such was the case of J. Dorman Steele of Mexico in the organization of the 24th Regiment. Others who might be cited were Littlejohn, commander of the 110th Regiment with the rank of Colonel; Wardwell G. Robinson, commander of the 184th Regiment with the rank of Colonel; Jonathan Tarbell, of the Oswego TIMES, Major of the 24th Regiment.

The work of the above mentioned leaders went a long way toward completing the 110th Regiment in the summer of 1862, and the momentum generated contributed to the formation of the 147th Regiment a few months later.

Recruiting by the fall of 1862 assumed increasing significance, since counties were now held responsible for quotas, and failure to meet them would require conscription, a prospect viewed with alarm by all.

Despite the County's splendid record of enlistments in 1862 it was necessary to invoke the controversial draft act in 1863. Considering its acceptance elsewhere, it is not surprising that Oswegonians were disagreed upon its merits and apprehensive of its reception. At the outset the Republican TIMES advocated the recruitment of Negroes to fill the ranks. If freedom was important to the slave, it argued, he should be willing to fight for it. When the details of the bill were published, the TIMES sought to soften the blow. It emphasized the possibility of deferment: No married man, thirty-five or over, would be taken, nor a man with dependent parents or children under twelve. A man with two members of his family in the service would also be deferred. Even a bachelor, if over thirty-five, might be rejected, if he hurried into matrimony, it noted by way of reassurement.

The Democratic PALLADIUM opposed the draft law. "Every soldier," it insisted, "needed now to fill the armies of the United States -- 100,000 are enough, unless it be to subvert the government and break up the states --- every soldier now really needed can be got now voluntarily, with the usual bounties, or if not thus, the states can and will cheerfully as heretofore provide the men. Why then, force a draft by arms? Why convulse society?" it demanded. The TIMES answered its not too friendly neighbor with the observation that while Oswego County had furnished more than its quota, New York State was twenty thousand in arrears. Where quotas continued to be

met, there would be no draft, it declared. During the previous three weeks it noted, Lieutenant Alonzo Cooper had accepted forty-six volunteers for the 12th Cavalry, N.Y.V. from the Oswego area. Governor Seymour, it observed, might encourage enlistments by supporting the state bonus as Governor Morgan had done. (5)

Most vulnerable of the draft law's provisions was the commutation clause. If a draftee did not wish to serve, he might hire a substitute and be freed from future calls, or he might pay the sum of $300 and be removed from the current group of conscripts. Critics charged that this provision proved that the conflict was a "rich man's war," a claim which the TIMES denied, arguing that the $300 commutation fee would tend to keep the cost of substitutes near this figure; that otherwise the price might be pushed up to $1,000 or more, and thereby make it impractical for a poor man to obtain a substitute. Gerrit Smith, prominent Abolitionist, defended the law before an Oswego audience. Comparing it with conscription systems in Europe he hailed it "the most considerate toward the poor man of any similar law ever enacted." (6)

But a few days later Oswego's newly elected Democratic Mayor, Lathrop A. G. B. Grant, while calling for support in subduing "this most wicked and gigantic rebellion," singled out for criticism, "the one odious discriminating clause" of the conscription law. (7).

There is no doubt but that the citizens were apprehensive as the date for the implementation of the draft on August 4, 1863, approached. Beween July 13 and 16, New York City was beset by mobs which took some four hundred lives and destroyed millions of dollars in property. Reports circulated that riots might be expected here, and that men identified with the enforcement of the act were arming themselves on the "higher Law" principle. One rumor had it that "loyal leaguers" went to church "armed with weapons of death." The PALLADIUM seized upon this report to castigate those "brave souls who do not dare to face a rebel, (but) become remarkably valorous, and are brave enough to venture to Church and Sunday School well protected with shooting irons!" (8) By contrast, the TIMES defended the carrying of weapons. Pointing to the Pilgrims, who held a Bible in one hand and a musket in the other for protection against Indians, it observed that an ounce of prevention was always worth a pound of cure. However, it belittled the likelihood of violence. (9)

When the Fulton PATRIOT in a column entitled "Mutterings in Fulton," reported that there were threats of a draft riot, and that "well known citizens" would be held responsible, the village trustees called upon the editor to divulge his information on the "mutterings" and "well known citizens." He refused, explaining that there was no authorization in the village charter requiring the trustees to supervise the PATRIOT'S editorial department. The incident ended here. (10)

To allay misgivings the TIMES emphasized the material benefits which would accrue to those possessing the "lucky numbers."

| | |
|---|---|
| U. S. Bounty | $102.00 |
| State Bounty | 100.00 |
| City Bounty (if offered as the Mayor suggested) | 300.00 |
| | $502.00 |
| One year at $13 per month | |
| One year's service | $156.00 |
| | $658.00 |

(almost $2 per day!)

Soldiering will be the best business for the future. (11)

On August 4, the draft came to Oswego. The proceedings were held in front of the Grant Block at the Southeast corner of West First and Bridge Streets (The

building was removed in 1958), which housed the office of the Provost Marshal. Officiating was Provost Marshal A. L. Scott, and on hand also were the Enrollment Board and thirty-seven members of the Invalid Corps. The order was read for the drafting of 2,068 men and an additional fifty-percent to offset rejections. John D. Taylor of the fourth ward, totally blind, was blind-folded according to the law, and took his place. The wheel was revolved and the initial card drawn. The first name called was that of Theodore W. Brown, a soldier who had lost a leg. A good natured cheer indicated at least a momentary relaxation. A little later the name of William T. Tiffany, a local lawyer, brought another round of applause. It was apparently comforting to see that lawyers were not immune. The drawings continued through the long afternoon.

That evening the conscripts formed a procession headed by William I. Preston, and held a "regular jolification." Stopping at the Provost Marshal's office they called for speeches, and heard responses from Post Master Henry Fitzhugh, Colonel Samuel R. Beardsley and Preston. Each stressed the virtues of patriotism, and the need for obedience to the draft. The conscripts were then furnished with roman candles to provide a prodigal display of fireworks. The fun continued until a late hour and "all retired in good humor." (12)

At Phoenix draftees also celebrated their new status. They collected all of the old guns which could be found, some from garrets where they had been since the War of 1812, and led by the Juvenile Martial Band, paraded the streets of the village much to the amusement of the citizens. (13)

The draft seems to have left no occupations immune. In Mexico the conscripts included: 1 clergyman; 1 lawyer; 2 justices of the peace; 1 merchant, 1 druggist; 3 wagon makers; 2 hotel keepers; 1 medical student; 2 carpenters; 2 coopers; 3 teachers; 1 dentist; 2 daguerrean artists; 1 butcher; 1 harness maker; 1 marble worker; 1 millwright; 1 clerk; 70 farmers and 6 with employment undefined. (14)

While most draftees accepted the law, a minority sought to evade it. The TIMES reported that some were applying to the British Vice Consul for papers giving them protection as aliens. But the newspaper warned that those who had voted would not be protected. A few were said to be "skedaddling" across the Canadian border. These were reminded that such desertions meant exile for life. The TIMES noted also, that the draft had developed an exraordinary number of sharks in the area. "Several half-starved lawyers, who don't often get any business, have been taking advantage of the anxiety of drafted men to become exempt, to charge the most exorbitant rates for their services in making out the necessary papers." (15) For a service which the city lawyers collected 50¢, these sharpers, the TIMES claimed, were charging $50. This large sum, the paper alleged, was expended in bribing the Enrolling Board. Actually, the "Copperhead" lawyer had simply obtained the exemption from the Provost Marshal for a legitimate reason without charge, and had pocketed the $50.

To remedy this evil the Enrolling Board issued the following notice: "It having come to the knowledge of the Board of Enrollment, that drafted men have been imposed upon by sharpers, pretending that exemptions can only be procured through them, notice is hereby given, that reputable lawyers will furnish all the papers necessary to aid in securing exemption, at prices ranging from fifty cents to two dollars. Any person who charges more is seeking to impose upon and defraud you. (signed) A. L. Scott, Captain and Provost Marshal; D. Q. Mitchell, Commissioner; J. B. Murdoch, Surgeon of the Board." (16)

Shortly after the publication of

the above notice, the TIMES reported that most of the "sharks" had withdrawn from the business after reading the warning. On the same day, August 25, it noted that the initial draft of thirty conscripts and substitutes had departed for Elmira for mustering into the army. Churchill, in THE LANDMARKS OF OSWEGO COUNTY, stated that the total raised through this draft was 145, of whom 88 were paid substitutes.

A year later a second draft stared Oswegonians in the face. It might be avoided, of course, if the quota could be raised by enlistment; but for a time the latter lagged. Groping for a solution an imaginative group of twenty-five men sent the local recruiting agents, E. B. Burt and A. B. Getty, to Newport News, Virginia, a military district occupied by Federal troops under General Benjamin Butler, for the purpose of procuring substitutes among the freedmen; expecting, I assume, that they could be hired cheaply. The agents wrote that they had found a few substitutes, though the place was filled with bounty jumpers, but that General Butler had issued an order prohibiting the removal of the freedmen from the district; that they would therefore, try to enlist them as a part of the Oswego quota, provided the city would pay the bounties required. Meanwhile they would try to hide the Negroes there, awaiting a reply. The City Council quickly voted bounties up to $300 (including the agents' fee), but the project fizzled and the agents returned home empty handed. Incidentally, the writer considered this scheme quite ingenious until he discovered that Jefferson County was trying to do the same thing. (17)

Last minute recruiting proved fruitful; the draft was avoided in the city and most towns, and the enlistees became the nucleus for the County's last regiment, the 184th N.Y.V. This regiment saw little action, excepting four companies which fought in the Battle of Cedar Creek and witnessed Sheridan's famous ride and the resulting victory.

In February, 1865, the draft was set up a third time. Again some of the towns obtained sufficient enlistments to make conscription a dead letter, but in others the wheel turned and the slips were drawn. The first and third wards in Oswego, for example, filled their quotas through enlistment, while the second and fourth resorted to the draft.

Looking at the war as a whole it is obvious that voluntary recruitment was far more significant than conscription; yet the threat of the latter in promoting enlistments can hardly be exaggerated.

As has been seen, when enlistments lagged, bounties served as a stimulant. As early as July, 1862, the State was offering $50 and the County an additional $50. By January, 1864, the County was paying $300 bounties, and by December, 1864, the sum was increased to $300 for one year; $500 for two, and $700 for three years. Meanwhile, the Federal Government had increased its offer to $300. Thus a volunteer might pick up $1,000, in installments of course. This, when laborers' wages were about one dollar per day!

To those who remained hesitant the Mexico INDEPENDENT offered the happy thought that the war would not last long, and they might never fire or draw a sword. (18)

The bounties, of course, were a temptation to the unscrupulous, and the newspapers commented frequently upon "bounty jumping," though in justice to Oswego's enlistees, few items concerned local incidents. Desertions were much more common, and Fort Ontario was some times used to house those who were apprehended. Henry Horton, for example, who had "gone over the hill" from the 147th Regiment, and William Churchill, who was AWOL from the 81st Regiment, were arrested near Richland Station while riding in Merrick Du Bois' wagon. They had print-

ed fictitious names on their luggage, but had failed to deceive the local constabulary (19). On another occasion the TIMES reported the death before the firing squad of a Central Square lad, Joseph Cushman, after convictions for desertion from five different regiments. (20)

A final item on recruitment. The OSWEGO TIMES of November 24, 1906, reported that D. T. Savage a painter, working at the Kingsford farm on the West Fifth Street Road, had d iscovered that an old tool house on the grounds had once been used for recruiting purposes. In fact he had enrolled in it in 1862 to join the old 12th N.Y. Cavalry, when it was at West First and Bridge streets, where the First National Bank stood in 1906 (Marine Midland). The lettering on the building was still distinct, "Headquarters, Ira Harris Guard, Recruiting Station $200 paid." Incidentally the writer visited this spot on the old Kingsford farm in 1958, and obtained a few pictures of this tool house. Though leaning sharply, the letters "3rd WARD RECRUITING STATION" still stood out. Sad to report, the old building collapsed during the great snow of December, 1958.

For the people of Oswego County, responsibility for the soldier went beyond recruitment and bounties. Since the government provided no special allotments for dependents, and a private's pay was thirteen dollars per month, voluntary contributions of many kinds were in order. As the first enlistees signed up in the spring of 1861, civic minded people acted immediately to provide for the welfare of the soldier's dependents. Two weeks after Lincoln's call for troops the Pulaski DEMOCRAT reported about fifty enlistments and a sum of $1,100 for their families. Judge S. C. Huntington accepted the chairmanship of a special fund raising committee which received contributions as large as $100 (21) Similar groups were organized in other villages across the county. In Oswego the Common Council supplemented private donations, voting sums of $5,000 on at least three occasions. Between September, 1862 and May, 1863, the Oswego Committee distributed $4,429 to some 137 families; 24 in the First Ward, 30 in the Second, 24 in the Third, and 59 in the Fourth. In all, assistance was given to 473 individuals. The draft was expected to add new names to the list. (22)

Women in the villages organized Soldiers' Aid Societies, which performed a variety of services. The Oswego society, for example, held a festival in July of 1862, which yielded eighteen large dry goods boxes of clothing and bedding, books and pamphlets and miscellaneous items. The following spring they dispatched boxes of clothing, dried fruits, wine and jellies to the wounded of the 24th Regiment. They made similar gifts to the sick of the 81st Regiment, including a sum of money for lumber and sash for the camp hospital at Yorktown, Virginia. They offered special thanks to the "little children of the primary school, on the east side, and to their teacher, Miss Davis. . . . most hearty thanks for the beautiful quilt . . . made by those children in their leisure hours at school." (23)

In response to a request from Lt. Col. W. D. Smith of the 110th Regiment stationed near New Orleans for 600-8--havelocks, the Oswego Ladies' Society, headed by Mrs. John E. Lyon, purchased 272 of them, and 500 straw hats to help protect the soldiers from the tropical heat. The Mexico chapter of this organization, through its Secretary, Mrs. Luther H. Conklin, responded to a similar request from the 24th Regiment. They also dispatched to the 110th Regiment and to the Sanitary Commission prodigious quantities of foods and materials for the sick and wounded; one shipment, for example, included 341 pounds of dried fruit and liberal quantities of shirts, socks, drawers, handkerchiefs, lint and old linen. (24)

At Oswego the Ladies Society

sponsored a program featuring an address by Gerrit Smith. It served two purposes to facilitate a favorable attitude toward the war and to raise money; the receipts, at ten cents a head, going to needy soldiers' families (25) The program was so successful, that they brought Smith back for additional lectures.

Oswego also supported a local chapter of the Christian Commission, which distributed religious literature and fresh fruits to the sick and wounded, and served the Sanitary Commission in its many activities.

Still another agency with at least one local chapter, was the Freedmen's Relief Association of Mexico. Organized in September, 1863, with Cyrus Whitney as President, it performed many laudable acts in relieving suffering and hardship. (26)

From the illustrations cited above, it is obvious that the home front was active throughout the war in providing aid to the needy. It constitutes one of the most salutary aspects of the war.

In any appraisal of woman's work in the war special mention should be given to two local women for outstanding contributions: namely Elmina Spencer and Dr. Mary Walker

Elmina Spencer a 43 year old Oswego housewife and school teacher, joined her husband when he enlisted in the 147th Regiment in September, 1862, taking an oath also, to serve her country. She went with the regiment to Washington and began to make herself useful in improvised kitchens and tent hospitals. For a time she moved with the regiment, and was at the battle of Gettysburg to help ease the pain and anguish there.

Later, she set up headquarters at Belle Plain to aid the wounded streaming in from the Wilderness, and when General Grant's base was moved to City Point, she went there also.

She was appointed to the New York Agency for the Relief of Sick and Disabled Soldiers by Governor Seymour, and entrusted with the distribution of thousands of dollars in provisions, foods, clothing and medical supplies. In this capacity she visited the various Oswego County regiments and often served as an intermediary between the soldier and his family. At City Point she was struck by flying debris, when an ammunition ship exploded, and was partially paralyzed for a time. But she refused to retire and was still serving selflessly at the war's close. (27)

The irrepressible Dr. Mary E. Walker, a native of Oswego Town, belonged to the first generation of female physicians in America. After engaging in medical practice and dress reform activities for a few years, she went to Washington upon the outbreak of the war in quest of an appointment as assistant surgeon. When the 29 year-old physician found that the army would have none of her, she assisted in Washington hospitals without a formal appointment. By sheer perseverance she finally received the coveted commission, the first of its kind.

In 1864 she was captured while ministering behind Southern lines in Tennessee, and spent four months in Castle Thunder, a military prison in Richmond. She was later exchanged. At the War's end she received a Congressional Medal of Honor from President Andrew Johnson, another unique achievement for her.

Her eccentricities in dress, a complete adoption of male attire, in her later years tended to overshadow her war-time contributions. (28)

The initial enthusiasm with which Oswego people entered upon a "three months' war" to crush the rebellion could not be sustained through four years of bitter conflict. Many aspects of the war soon became controversial: Lincoln's handling of his generals; Presidential leadership, including the use of martial law; a negotiated peace short of vic-

tory; the handling of occupied territory; the emancipation of slaves; the use of Negro troops; conscription; and post-war reconstruction, for example, were all aired in the arenas of public opinion, around the cracker barrel, in the taverns, on the street corners and in the columns of the press. Republicans at the outset hoped to rally all political persuasions to the support of the war. They went so far as to drop the term "Republican" and substitute "Union" in its place. But Democrats, though generally in support of the war, refused to be merged into the Union mold, and were as busy with politics throughout the war as in the years before. Republicans soon gave up their efforts at a coalition, and it was politics as usual by 1862. In that year Democrats backed Horatio Seymour for governor against General James S. Wadsworth, the Republican nominee. They capitalized upon the despair attending Union defeats: McClellan on the Peninsula, the Second Battle of Bull Run, and Antietam; while Republicans sought to identify all Democrats with "Copperheadism." "Republicans go to war to fight; Copperheads stay at home to vote," asserted the TIMES.

Locally, the Democrats were handicapped by the suspension of the DAILY PALLADIUM.

On election day Seymour carried the State, but Oswego County was an island of Republicanism. Wadsworth carried the city by 33 votes, and the County by 2000. The Republican nominee, D. C. Littlejohn, went to Congress, and the Republicans chose the County's three members to the Assembly. The over-all picture was discouraging to Republicans, however. How could the fight against traitors be continued, the TIMES asked, when southern sympathizers such as Seymour and Fernando Wood, Mayor of New York, were endorsed by the public. In March, 1863, Oswego Democrats elected Lathrop A. G. B. Grant as Mayor, defeating the incumbent, Republican, Daniel G. Fort.

But Republicans revived later that year. The draft riots in New York City, the publicity accompanying Clement Vallandigham's peace proposals, Fernando Wood's Peace Convention in New York City as well as Union victories at Vicksburg and Gettysburg served to restore Republican prestige.

Oswego Democrats in the main were War Democrats, but the Republican press reminded them of the company they were keeping. With Democrats on the defensive, Republicans carried the elections in 1863, though Grant won a reelection as Mayor the following March.

In the elections of 1864 the PALLADIUM (again a daily) protested against the violation of constitutional rights, Republican corruption and the multiplication of officers and costs, but with little apparent effect. They also exploited the division among Republicans: the moderates or conservatives, that is, the Weed, Seward, Littlejohn faction; and the Radicals, the dominant Republican element in Congress, and headed in New York State by Roscoe Conkling, each of which controlled an Oswego newspaper in 1864. the ADVERTISER by the former, and the TIMES by the latter. The Radical faction blocked Littlejohn's bid for reelection to Congress, but Republican schisms failed to injure the party on election day. Oswego County gave Lincoln 2,500 of his 7,000 majority in the State.

Oswego City, however, chose McClellan, Lincoln's Democratic opponent, by a majority of 120. The City also preferred Seymour over the Republican nominee for Governor, Reuben Fenton, by 91 votes. Fenton, however, carried the County and the State. Republicans were thus in the ascendancy as the war entered its final stages.

Incidentally, it is of interest to note the PALLADIUM'S comments upon the renomination of Lincoln. "We never knew a Presidential nomination," it declared, "to be received with a

feeling so destitute of enthusiasm as that which characterized the announcement of Lincoln's renomination yesterday." There were no demonstrations; no parade; no fireworks. Of similar interest are the remarks of a local Democrat, Delos De Wolf, speaking at the McClellan acceptance rally:

"There are two men before the people; one a clown, mountebank, an obscure jester and reckless tyrant; the other a soldier, statesman, patriot and Christian gentleman." (29)

Amusing to those who were urging an all-out prosecution of the war, but hardly pleasing to its critics, was an ingenious, though rather expensive "joke" played by a wealthy Oswego miller, John E. Lyon. Determined to embarrass alleged "Copperheads" among the officers of the First Presbyterian Church in Oswego, he secretly arranged to have the choir sing "The Battle Cry of Freedom" at a Thanksgiving service on November 24, 1863, without previous announcement; upon the assumption that the "Copperheads" would not participate, and would be made conspicuous by their silence.

He paid the chorister $250, and divided an equal sum among the members of the choir, and obtained the consent of a ranking deacon. The latter, incidentally, showed his mettle by replying, "Sing it if it drives every "Copperhead" out of the shed."

At the designated time "the song was sung with soul-stirring energy with the full power of the organ as accompaniment."

"The Union Forever,
Hurray! Boys, Hurrah!
Down with the traitor,
up with the stars,
While we rally 'round the flag
boys, rally once again,
Shouting the battle-cry of freedom."

". . . We will rally from the hillside, we'll gather from the plain
. . . And we'll fill the vacant ranks with a million freemen more
. . . And although they may be poor, not a man shall be a slave
. . . And we'll hurl the rebel crew from the land we love the best
. . . Shouting the battle-cry of freedom."

"The singing of that patriotic song on this occasion set all minds at rest, who before may have had doubts as to how (this church) stood affected on the great question of the hour."

Weeks later county soldiers were still repeating this story around their campfires. (29B)

For a concluding observation of Oswego's response to The Civil War let us follow a few of the more controversial issues as they were reported and interpreted by the TIMES. Reflecting the Radical viewpoint as it evolved, the paper was frequently critical of Lincoln's leadership. It objected to the Presidential order rescinding General Fremont's proclamation in Missouri, confiscating property including slaves of people in rebellion. It was critical again when General Hunter received a similar rebuff in Georgia. It applauded General Burnside's arrest of the peace Democrat, Clement Vallandigham, and deplored Lincoln's modification of his military sentence. (30) Similar to numerous other northern papers it took a dim view of General Halleck's talents. Referring to him as a "fifth wheel," the paper denied that campaigns could be directed from Washington, fifty miles from the front. (31)

It was convinced that Lincoln had removed his best men from positions of command: Generals Hunter, Fremont and Butler and had replaced them with mediocrities.

In agreement with the Radical

philosophy, the TIMES urged that conquered territory should be treated as "insurrectionary districts are always treated by governments strong enough to subdue them. The leaders should be punished as traitors, the estates of the more prominent among them confiscated. All should be disarmed. Garrisons should be maintained at proper points to preserve order, to secure the supremacy of the courts of justice, to protect black citizens and white strangers in the rights which they have never enjoyed in those regions . . . Until all these things are secure the government has no right to sheathe the sword. Not only has the President no legal or moral right to make slaves again of the men whom he has made free, he has neither moral nor legal right to make peace, until they are secured in that liberty wherewith he has made them free, and all its incidents." (32) The impending clash between Lincoln, and later President Johnson, and the Radical Congress is clearly forecast here.

It might be noted that the TIMES' Radicalism was unacceptable not only to the Democrats, but also to the moderates or conservatives, which were referred to above. In November, 1863, Littlejohn, local leader of the moderates attempted to take over the TIMES through foreclosure for unpaid financial obligations. But when T. S. Brigham, who had been hired to be the new editor, entered the establishment to take over, he was forcibly ejected to the street; and when he attempted to serve a warrant, he found the building locked. Later, when that day's edition of the paper was dispensed through a window lowered from the top, the warrant was slipped inside through the same aperture. Meanwhile the publisher, James N. Brown, managed to secure the funds to pay his debt and thereby save his paper. Having failed to secure the TIMES, the Littlejohn faction established the DAILY ADVERTISER on February 1, 1864. Needless to say, the Democratic PALLADIUM made the most of these Republican dissensions. (33)

The newspapers, of course, featured the closing scenes of the war as they unfolded before Richmond, Lee's retreat from the Confederate Capital, and his surrender at Appomattox Court House. On Saturday of the same week, on April 15, 1865, it published an "extra" to report the assassination of President Lincoln:

PRESIDENT LINCOLN ASSASSINATED

He Was Shot While in the Theatre Last Night

SECRETARY SEWARD STABBED AND EXPECTED TO DIE

Mr. Seward's Son Also Stabbed

HIS RECOVERY CONSIDERED DOUBTFUL

ARREST OF THE ASSASSINS

Later in the afternoon the regular edition of the paper appeared with its columns shaded in black. Seven columns, a rather remarkable achievement in news gathering, detailed the assassination, and the events which followed.

At noon, the City Hall bell tolled a solemn dirge. Flags on public buildings, homes and ships in the harbor were displayed at half-mast. A special prayer service was announced for the next afternoon at Doolittle Hall.

Oswego County reflected the panic, furor and confusion following John Wilks Booth's escape. On April 27, the Mexico INDEPENDENT reported that a very suspicious appearing man had passed through Colosse on the previous Sunday; that he seemed to be in a great hurry and told an improbable story. Some people believed he was Booth or one of his men making his way to Canada. The paper doubted this, declaring that there were reports every day of Booth's arrest. (34)

A final glance at local opinion as Vice President Johnson assumed the presidential responsi-

bilities for Reconstruction: Writing to Gerrit Smith, John B. Edwards, Smith's land agent in Oswego, observed that in numerous discussions with his townsmen, that in the light of the horrid massacre, it was generally agreed that the leaders among the traitors should be dealt with severely.

Some people, he continued, believed that God had removed the "Great and Good Lincoln" because he would have been too indulgent to traitors, and that Johnson, with a touch of Andrew Jackson's spirit, would act more vigorously.

Smith disagreed, declaring that a truly religious attitude was one of mercy, and that vengeance was the result of spurious religion. The North, he insisted, was but a little less guilty than the South in causing the war. In defense of his position he dispatched copies of a recent speech, entitled "No Treason In the Civil War" to the local papers.

"Our wicked PALLADIUM commends your position of mercy to all Rebels," Edwards responded.

"Yes your late writings are very unpopular, excepting the Copperheads, but you are used to unpopularity."

A few months later Edwards reported to Smith, that he hesitated to publish the most recent of Smith's addresses, since people felt that he had published too many already. (36)

The eccentric and detached Gerrit Smith might propose tolerance to the vanquished and go so far as to offer to pay Jefferson Davis' bond to release him from prison, but the rank and file in Oswego would have their pound of flesh. Four terrible years of sacrifice could not be forgotten overnight.

POST SCRIPTUM

A tale of two horses:

Two Civil War horses survived the conflict to gain recognition in post-war Oswego. They were "Dick" and "Reb."

Adjutant Robert Oliver of the Twenty-fourth Infantry, in his haste to reach Elmira, was unable to obtain a horse prior to his departure. But his friends came to his aid, and purchased "Dick" for him. Dick had no pedigree, but his owner rated him "the nicest horse in Washington. He rides beautifully, and follows me all over the camp like a dog. I have been offered $175 for him, but shall never part with him till a bullet takes him." (37) And later, after an exceptionally hard march, he noted, "I was all right only my poor horse, who had only one feed of corn in two days (was exhausted). But the little fellow feels first rate (now)."

(38) "Dick" survived the two years of Oliver's enlistment, and returned to Oswego at the war's close.

Robert Oliver died in 1871. In his funeral procession three companies of the Twenty-fourth Regiment preceded the hearse, and "Dick" fully caparisoned, followed. Additional companies of the veterans brought up the rear. Robert Oliver, Sr. now assumed responsibility for the steed, and none ever received more tender care. Through the years the old horse bearing the aging Robert, Sr. headed the parades on Memorial Day and the Fourth of July. His sleek chestnut coat, arched neck and dignified bearing were familiar to hundreds of Oswegonians. At last, on January 26, 1885, at the majestic age of 33, the ancient war-horse took his last walk. The saddle he wore through the war, and a hoof, are possessions of the Oswego County Historical Society.

Oswego's second equine relic was "Reb," the property of Lt. Alonzo Cooper of the Twelfth Cavalry. "Reb" was a mare, which had been captured from the Cavalry of Wade Hampton in North Carolina. At the war's close, Cooper brought her back to Oswego. "Reb" had the lines of a blooded horse, and showed off to advantage, whether under the saddle or to a buggy. She too walked the parade routes, where horse and rider became fixtures.

Finally, in 1884 at the ripe age of 22, she died from an accident suffered in her stall.

Both horses received sizeable obituaries in the local press.

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## Footnotes

(1) Gallagher to Gerrit Smith, Dec. 8, 1856, Smith mss, Syracuse University. This was the second edifice of the Christ Church, the first having stood in West Park.
(2) Oswego DAILY TIMES, Feb. 6, 7, 1861.
(3) Quoted in "The Rise of the 'Fourth Estate' in Oswego County," by Edwin M. Waterbury, Oswego County Historical Society YEARBOOK, 1942, 51.
(4) IBID., June 13, 20, 1861.
(5) Oswego TIMES, July 23, 1863
(6- IBID., July 31, 1863
(7) IBID., July 30, 1863.
(8) IBID., July 30, 1863.
(9) IBID., July 30, 1863.
(10) IBID., Aug. 1, 1863.
(11) July 31, 1863.
(12) Oswego TIMES, Aug. 5, 1863.
(13) IBID., Aug. 15, 1863.
(14) IBID, Aug. 14, 1863.
(15) IBID, Aug. 22, 1863.
(16) IBID.
(17) IBID., Aug. 13, 15, 1863.
(18) Mexico INDEPENDENT, January 26, 1865.
(19) Oswego TIMES, May 19, 1863
(20) IBID., July 1, 1863.
(21) Pulaski DEMOCRAT, May 2, 9, 1861.
(22) Oswego TIMES, May 20, Aug. 25, 1863.
(23) IBID., March 2, 3, 1863.
(24) IBID., June 5, 1863
(25) John B. Edwards to Gerrit Smith, Feb. 26, April 13, 1864, Smith mss.
(26) John C. Churchill, LANDMARKS OF OSWEGO COUNTY, 587.
(27) See Fred P. Wright, "Elmina Spencer, Heroine of the Civil War," YEARBOOK, Oswego County Historical Society, 1954, 39-46, also L. P. Brockett, WOMAN'S WORK IN THE CIVIL WAR, (Philadelphia, 1867), 404-415.
(28) See Charles McCool Snyder, DR. MARY WALKER, THE LITTLE LADY IN PANTS (Vantage Press, New York, 1962).
(29) PALLADIUM, June 8, 1864.
(29B) John B. McLean, A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF OSWEGO, Oswego, 1890.
(30) IBID., May 14, 1863.
(31) IBID., May 14, 1863.
(32) Oswego TIMES, April 21, 1863.
(33) Oswego PALLADIUM, Nov. 21, 23, 1863.
(34) Mexico INDEPENDENT, April 21, 1865.
(35) Edwards to Smith, May 31, 1865.
(36) Edwards to Smith, Oct. 25, 1865.
(37) Oliver MSS, Oswego Co. Hist. Society, July 12, 1861.
(38) IBID, April 20, 1862.

# Chapter III

## The Twenty-Fourth Infantry;

## First To Answer The Call

Oswego County's response to President Lincoln's call for 75,000 troops on April 15, 1861, following the firing on Fort Sumter, was almost spontaneous. The long months of uncertainty had ended, and Republicans and Democrats, country folk and city folk, closed ranks, and put their shoulders to the wheel. Oswegonians gathered on the evening of April 16 to take measures to raise a regiment, and ten days later the first company of what was to be designated as the Twenty-fourth Infantry was off for Elmira, with Captain D. O'Brian in command. There is a local tradition that O'Brian was the first officer to be mustered in New York under the President's call.

Its departure was attended by thousands of spectators, the press of the crowd making it difficult to board the cars at the Oswego and Syracuse depot.

The first company was followed by a second and a third in rapid succession. Church services preparatory to their departure, scheduled for the West Baptist Church, were adjourned to Doolittle Hall to accommodate the over-flow crowd. Here "for three hours the fires of patriotism glowed brighter and brighter as each (clergyman) took a turn at the bellows." Additional companies were initiated at Parish (D), Volney (E), Sandy Creek (G), Fulton (H), Oswego (F) and (I), and Ellisburg (K), the latter in Jefferson County. Other communities were not represented only because the regiment was completed before their companies were filled. The Sandy Creek and Ellisburg contingents received send offs on May 9 as they departed by way of the Rome, Watertown and Ogdensburg Railroad.

Commanding the regiment was Colonel Timothy Sullivan. Other regimental officers included Lt. Colonel Samuel R. Beardsley, Major Johathan Tarbell, Surgeon J. B. Murdoch, Ass't Surgeon Lawrence Reynolds, Quartermaster, Charles T. Richardson, Adjutant Robert Oliver, Jr., and Chaplain Mason Gallagher, Rector of the Church of the Evangelists in Oswego. Captains of the companies were: (A), John D. O'Brian; (B), Edward M. Paine of Oswego; (C), Francis C. Miller, Oswego; (D) Melzar Richards of Parish; (E), Orville J. Jennings of Fulton; (F), Archibald H. Preston, Oswego; (G), William D. Ferguson of Sandy Creek; (H), Albert Taylor of Fulton; (I), Levi Beardsley, Oswego; (K), Andrew J. Barney of Ellisburg. Incidentally, the average age of the commissioned officers was twenty-nine, surprisingly young; and of course it dropped as resignations and replacements occurred.

We think of our forefathers as men of peace, who left their ploughs or shops at the call of their country. However, this truism tends to overlook another old American tradition: the pride in a local company of militia. As

Jefferson expressed it, "A well disciplined militia, our best reliance in peace, and for the first moments of war, till regulars may relieve them." Perhaps the local militia was not always "well disciplined," but it was unquestionably an asset in this emergency, since a good proportion of the original officers had received training in the 48th old Oswego Guards, which dated back to 1838. In all, this militia furnished more than 40 commissioned officers during the war, six of whom came from two families: three each from the Raulstons and Olivers.

The 24th probably missed the battle of Bull Run in July because of the shortage of uniforms. They were assembled in Elmira by the second week of May and mustered into the service on May 17, but they waited another month to be uniformed. During the war Elmira became a huge rendezvous center as well as a prison camp, but when the 24th arrived, there were only church auditoriums to house them. Gilbert Crocker, twenty, of Orwell, perhaps the regiment's most unsophisticated private, had these somewhat quaint first impressions to offer:

"Just got off from the steam boat at some place I don't know whare (SIC.) We are waiting for our dinner. I saw a good deal since I started. I hope you are all well. When we get to Elmira I will write again." (The place was Watkins Glen or Jefferson.)

A few days later he continued:

"We staid (SIC.) to a church (SIC.) last night and we are here today. We slept on the floor . . . I feel just as well as though I was home. It is a nice place hear (SIC.) about. I don't hardly know what to rite (SIC.). (2)

If there was no tradition for handling malingerers, the boys invented one. When 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 explained, "is applied to all who, by such conduct, render themselves particularly odious." (3)

Uniforms, when they arrived, included pants and jackets of gray, and coarse gray overcoats. The caps were blue. Most, of course were ill-fitting. Least appreciated were the arms. They anticipated rifles, but received instead, smooth-bore muskets of the Mexican War vintage.

On July 3 the regiment boarded the cars of the Pennsylvania Northern Railroad for Washington. At Baltimore they marched through the city along the route where the Massachusetts Sixth Regiment had been attacked by a pro-southern mob a few weeks before. However, there were no threats of violence. "They knew by the expressions on the countenances of the men that we were not to be trifled with," a soldier observed. (4) They arrived at Washington on schedule, and were marched across the Potomac River bridge to a campsite near Arlington.

They quickly received at least a taste of the realities of war. The atmosphere was charged with expectancy. Regiments were arriving and departing daily, destinations unknown; dysentery ran through the camp, and sentries were posted at the wells to prevent them from being poisoned.

For several weeks the men divided their time between drill and camp construction, but they were then rushed to the front to cover the retreat from Bull Run. On the day following that debacle, with no equipment but blankets and two days' rations, they moved into advanced positions, and remained there for three weeks. Fortunately, the enemy did not follow up its victory, and the 24th was given the much needed time to whip raw recruits into a fighting unit.

Through the late summer and autumn they erected Camp Upton, and did their share of picket duty. The latter took them to

stations a few miles south of the Capital, where they could observe Confederate troops at drill and on parade. There were occasional skirmishes between pickets, but no large-scale operations.

Their proximity to Washington helped to provide diversion from the routine of camp life. When duties were not too pressing, they could visit the public buildings, attend the theatre, play billiards, and perhaps remain over-night to enjoy the comforts of a hotel. On one trip Adjutant Oliver attended the President's levee. In his diary he noted that he had observed more diamonds there than he had ever seen before in his life. Unfortunately, he did not elaborate. (5)

Oliver's letters and diary reveal a stream of visitors from Oswego scarcely credible to a generation which remembers the difficulties incumbent upon travel during World War II. Visitors received a warm welcome, and celebrations sometimes continued into the night. To mention one such happy occasion: Mr. and Mrs. O. H. Hastings and J. E. Lyon and family visited the camp. "They stayed all night; we had a splendid time playing euchre and (imbibing) hot whiskey. The band serenaded them. In fact it was the pleasantest evening ever in this camp." (6)

Among the wide-eyed Oswego arrivals was Robert Oliver, Sr. Timing his visit so that he might see both Robert and Joseph, the second of his sons to enter the army as a member of a Wisconsin regiment, he entered into camp life with a zest, which might have exhausted men many years his junior. He took his turn at target practice and made a commendable showing; and when a courier reported that the "Rebels" were firing on Union pickets, he strapped a revolver to his side, jumped on a horse, and galloped off with the major to investigate. He must have been disappointed to find that the enemy had withdrawn. A day later he thrilled to see President Lincoln and General McClellan review some twelve thousand troops. During quieter moments he slept on a board in a tent, ate army rations, and swapped military yarns with the boys. Unfortunately, there is no record of the recital of his trip in his store or home.

In December, Major Tarbell was appointed to a Lt. Colonelcy in another regiment, and the officers scrambled to fill his billet, and the captaincy it would open. Promotions originated at the Headquarters of the New York State Militia in Albany, so that the successful candidate was apt to be the one who could exert the greatest pressure there. Oliver's approach was to get recommendations signed by leading citizens of Oswego, and he listed the following as desirable: DeWitt C. Littlejohn, Henry Fitzhugh, Henry M. Ames, Elias Root, Luther Wright, James Platt, John W. Judson and Joel B. Penfield, quite adequate "Who's Who" in Oswego for that time. His father obtained the recommendations and carried them to Albany, a routine he repeated on several subsequent occasions. In this instance he failed, and Captain Andrew J. Barney of Company K received the promotion.

During the winter of 1861-1862 military operations were limited to picket duty; and even drill was curtailed due to the sea of mud which covered the ground. The men of the 24th, mean-while made themselves as comfortable as their limited resources permitted. Camp life was now more monotonous than it had been in the fall, and sometimes it was downright disagreeable. For Oliver there was one evening when everything went wrong. In a note to his wife he lamented:

> Bad luck seems to be my misfortune tonight, and consequently I am not in the best of humor. The smoke of my stove instead of passing off by the proper channel comes out of the stove door, and my tent is so full of smoke I can hardly breathe. A few minutes ago my candle went out, and after

hunting about in the dark spilling a plate of applesauce, I found a candle, but had no match, and in finding that spilled the ink. Besides all that, the mail has just arrived, and no letter from home . . . Added to all of this it is raining hard, and tomorrow morning at 8 o'clock I have to go in command of the brigade on picket for two days. Now do you blame me for feeling cross and ugly; and so I won't write anymore. (P. S.) I have to go out in the rain to get some ink to direct this, and of course my boots are off. Everything is wrong end up, and I had better go to bed or I shall fall down and step on myself.

(P. P. S.) It will be a wonder if I don't burn myself with the sealing wax. (7)

One gets the impression that at the close he was beginning to enjoy his misery.

We are indebted to Private Crocker for an additional incident illustrative of life in camp. The army, of course, consumed prodigious quantities of wood, and much of it had to be carried for considerable distances. There was always the temptation to cut any trees remaining near the camp which were protected by "higher ups" for shade or beauty.

Sunday, after the regiment had gone out on picket, what few of us ware (SIC) left here thought we would have some wood without fetching it so far. So just after dark we got together, and while part watched to see if the guard ware (SIC.) 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 (SIC.) not to get in the guard 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 of the guard came along and wanted to (k)now who cut all that wood. Some of the boys told him they cut it, so he told them to go to the guard house; but most of the boys did not (k)now who cut it, so they did not have to go to the g(u)ard house. After they had got all boys in the g(u)ard house, they made them fetch there (SIC.) wood to the g(u)ard house. So ended our getting wood. We have to fetch most of the wood (a)bout a hundred rods. There is (SIC.) a few trees close by, but the general won't let them be cut, but we get one once in a while." (8)

By early March rumors of advance filled the air, and the camp took on a hustle and bustle. Even the mud began to dry. On March 18 they marched toward Alexandria, presumably to board transports for McClellan's Peninsular campaign. But enroute orders were received to halt and make camp. They did not embark; instead, the regiment was attached to McDowell's Corps for operations between Washington and Richmond, and for the defense of the capital.

The spring campaign was initiated on April 4, when they were brigaded with the 14th New York Volunteers (Brooklyn Zouaves), the 22nd and 30th New York infantries, and the 2nd United States Sharpshooters under General C. C. Augur, and moved with McDowell across the old battlefield at Manassas. They encountered rain, which became so heavy that they made camp. The driest spot to be found was within their shelter tents, which were pieces of cloth, two feet by six, buttoned together. Two men might get under one if they left their legs protruding outside. It was too wet to light fires, and they subsisted for several days on little more than hard tack. On the fourth morning early risers burst out with a round of cheers. Some assumed that McClellan had gained a victory on the Peninsula, but an investigation revealed that it was simply that the sun had broken through the clouds.

The march was resumed with the pickets occasionally skirmish-

ing with the enemy. On April 17 the regiment camped on an estate with a fine southern residence, and Colonel Sullivan and Adjutant Oliver decided to accept the unoffered hospitality of the owners for a good night's rest. The occupants, a widow and three children, were "frightened to death. They had an idea we would rob and destroy them and all their property. They seemed surprised to find gentlemen in the Yankee army." (9) Their "southern comfort" came to a sudden end. They had scarcely nestled upon a rug when the camp alarm sounded. It proved to be a false alarm — their pickets had fired on their own messenger. But by the time the confusion had cleared the night had waned.

Several days later they reached Falmouth, though not in time to prevent the enemy from burning the bridge across the Rappahannock, which they had hoped to use to enter Fredericksburg on the other side. Thirty-four miles in twenty hours had not been fast enough!

Private Crocker again provides us with a glimpse of the regiment at its arrival:

(Fredericksburg) is the largest place I have seen since we left Washington. We have not possession of it yet, but will have as soon as we get the bridge built . . . . We could see the rebels take down there (SIC.) tents across the river three miles off; and soon after we got there, they set there (SIC.) camp on fire and started off . . . . When we marched through Falmouth all the folks ware (SIC.) standing in front of there (SIC.) houses. The Nigers were all a'grinning, but the white folks looked rather sober. Last night some of the rebels that are across the river hoisted the rebel's flag, and some that ware (SIC.) union took it down, and had quite a fight among themselfs (SIC.). . I fetched my (k)napsack all the way. A good many throde (SIC.) theres (SIC.) down. I did not think I cold (SIC.) carry mine when we started. (10)

The troops rested, and awaited reinforcements. While they camped here, slaves in the vicinity flocked into the neighborhood until almost every man in the regiment had a "contraband" or valet. Fredericksburg, from their vantage point, appeared deserted. However, on Sunday morning the sound of church bells indicated that life continued there despite the proximity of the Yankees.

During the next few weeks reinforcements poured in, and General McDowell set up headquarters there. Boatmen and carpenters were at work building pontoons to span the river, and on May 20 the bridge was in place. Three days later the growing army was reviewed by President Lincoln and Secretary of War, Edwin Stanton; and then on May 25 the anticipated advance toward Richmond got under way.

The next day it stopped. Amidst a flurry of rumors the army did an about face, and began a forced march westward toward Catlet's Station, the nearest railhead connecting the Tidewater with the Shenandoah Valley to the west. The elusive "Stonewall" Jackson had unexpectedly moved down the valley and now threatened Washington. McDowell's plans to support McClellan, thus went into the wastebasket.

Reaching Catlet's Station on the third day, the men of the Twenty-fourth Regiment boarded the "cars" and proceeded to Manassas, where they were fed and hurried on toward the Blue Ridge. They rode in open cars in the rain. Approaching Front Royal in the Shenandoah Valley, their train collided with another, but the Oswego boys escaped serious injuries. Arriving at Front Royal, after a delay of several hours, they were hastily despatched to Strasburg. However, a short distance from their objective the locomotive lurched to a halt. The bridge across the Shenandoah River had been burned.

Having failed to reach the

Shenandoah front, they returned to the Tidewater, and arrived at their previous campsite near Fredericksburg after a grueling march.

On a quiet Sunday, Surgeon Murdoch and Oliver and a New York HERALD correspondent rode to Fredericksburg to attend church. "There were 50 ladies and one gentleman present, and a great portion were in mourning. Was almost insulted by some of the ladies," Oliver reported. But his chivalry overcame his reservations about southern hospitality. "I feel sorry for the poor women, alone and unprotected from the violence of rude and brutal soldiers." (11)

During their encampment here the command of the brigade passed to General John P. Hatch, a former Oswegonian, and the *Twenty-fourth Regiment* became the senior unit of the First Brigade and First Corps.

On August 5 the regiment moved west under General Pope, who had been brought out of the West to replace McClellan. Impetuous, and unwilling to wait for units of McClellan's army enroute from the Peninsula, Pope moved against Lee in the Warrenton-Manassas section. Lee divided his army and sent Jackson around the Union right flank to strike its headquarters and supply depot. Whereupon, Pope moved against Jackson, expecting to consolidate his own forces before Jackson could rejoin Longstreet. His gamble failed, and he advanced against the entire Confederate host.

On August 29, shortly before sunset, King's Division with General Hatch commanding, charged the Confederate position, expecting to find the enemy in retreat. Instead, the two brigades led by General Doubleday and Colonel Sullivan of the Twenty-fourth, confronted General A. P. Hill's Division, protected by stone fences and woods. The fighting was furious, but the result inevitable. A member of the 24th recalled that they had right-flanked and found a temporary refuge in a streambed, but a murderous fire from both front and flanks eventually hurled them back. Fortunately, the dust of battle mingled with the deepening twilight partially obscured them. At 2 a. m. the following morning they retreated toward Manassas, leaving their dead and wounded on the field.

Oliver found time for a hurried entry in his diary:

> 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 . . Brought what men I could find in, and camped at Centerville.

And a few days later, on September 2 and 3, 1862 he continued in his diary:

> Fell back to Fairfax; we have only 116 men for duty in the regiment . . . . raining awful . . stood up all night . . . . Am nearly given out. Captain O'Brian commanding regiment; our loss 293 killed, wounded and missing.

The official figure listed five officers and 57 enlisted men killed in action; and one officer and 17 enlisted men, who died from wounds; also eight officers and 89 enlisted men wounded, who subsequently recovered. An additional 59 were labeled as missing, for an aggregate of 237.

Incidentally, Gilbert Crocker had the following graphic description of his experience.

> "I run a round, till I got shot at 10 or a dozen times, so I thought I would not run around any more, so I lade SIC). down till morning; when I found the regiment. But just as I got to them they started again. But I co(u)ld not go with them. I got in an (ambulance) wagon and rode to Alexandr (ia). And the next day we come (sic.) to Washington." (12)

No explanations were asked for his rather unorthodox behavior.

His condition was diagnosed at the hospital as typhoid fever. He remained hospitalized for more than three months.

Meanwhile the Twenty-fourth Regiment, or what was left of it after subtracting the casualties, after only a few days' rest, was hurried northward to intercept Lee's daring advance into Maryland.

In this emergency the discredited General Pope was removed from command, and McClellan was called upon to defend Washington. Lincoln could scarcely have made a more popular move, in so far as army personnel were concerned. Morale revived, and song and story returned to the camp fires. McClellan crossed the Potomac in quest of the elusive Lee.

The First Corps marched to Frederick, and across the Catoctin Ridge to Middletown, where the principal units converged. On September 14 the army moved up the slopes of South Mountain along the several roads crossing this 1200 foot spur of the Blue Ridge. The First Corps was placed on the right flank and assigned the Tabor Church road leading circuitously into Turner's Gap.

As they approached the top, the rear guard of Longstreet's Corps poured volley after volley into the advancing columns. The fighting was intense for a time on the rugged mountain slope, as the attackers threaded their way around boulders and through rocky crevices. Numbers soon counted, however, and the thin line of defenders retreated over the crest and down the western slope. At sunset the Union forces rested on the summit.

The following day McClellan established his headquarters near the foot of the mountain, and prepared to launch an offensive against the Confederates at Sharpsburg in the valley below. His failure to act at once, permitted Lee to consolidate his scattered detachments, and neutralized his initial advantage.

On September 16 McClellan made his move. The Twenty-fourth Regiment, attached to Phelps' Brigade, along with the 23d, 30th and 84th New York Infantries, and the second regiment of Berdan's United States Sharpshooters, moved with the First Corps across the Keedysville bridge and the upper fords of Antietam Creek, to take a position to the north of Sharpsburg, and on the east side of the Hagerstown Pike. This put them on the right flank of the Union army. In the late afternoon their skirmishers engaged the Confederate troops of D. H. Hill, but they soon withdrew to await the morrow.

At dawn Philips' brigade with Gibbons' Iron Brigade at their right moved forward. They crossed the Miller farm, pushed through the East Woods and into the cornfield, to become famous in a few hours. Here they were met by the Confederate infantry. The fighting which followed was desperate beyond measure. There were charges and countercharges with bayonets and clubbed muskets. In several hours the corn was shredded, and the field covered with hundreds of dead and wounded. Both contestants eventually pulled back, leaving the fighting on that flank to the artillery. Meanwhile, the tide of battle shifted to the center, and in the late afternoon, to the left of the Union line.

By nightfall, the battle of Antietam was over, a slaughter termed by one military expert as a defeat for both armies.

How did the Twenty-fourth Regiment fare?

Lt. Oliver, who had been home on furlough, and had arrived at Antietam the day after the battle, rode around the battlefield searching for his comrades. "I never knew the horrors of war until now," he reported. "It is past description." (13) He found scarcely twenty men fit for duty, and the gallant Captain O'Brian, who later gave his name to a Grand Army of the Republic post in Oswego, lay in a tent hospital with a leg amputated. On October 3 President Lincoln and Gen-

eral McClellan reviewed the army. "They gave a sharp look at our poor brigade. Our regiment had only 86 rifles; that was all we could raise." (14)

With the ranks depleted, promotions were in order, and the officers busied themselves obtaining recommendations. Oliver was hopeful of receiving temporary command of the regiment with the rank of major, and left no stone unturned to obtain it. But he was embarrassed to find himself in competition with Captain O'Brian, who was ambitious to advance in the service despite his disability. Oliver signed a recommendation for O'Brian, and awaited the outcome with some trepidation. And when it was reported that he was to be the new major, and not O'Brian or the other captains of the regiment, the atmosphere among the circle of officers grew cold. Oliver, it might be noted, was thus "jumping" several of his superiors by advancing from Lieutenant to Major. "I went and saw O'Brian," he confided, "and he acted a little disappointed. I told him I would not accept. He said I was very foolish; that I ought to accept. He was very friendly, but somewhat disappointed; left him good friends. The officers are feeling sore. They use me very politely."

A few days after assuming temporary command, Oliver recorded a state of mind which commanders on land and sea have felt through the ages: "I am lonesome; have no associates." His promotion appears to have been popular with the men in the ranks, however, and the officers became more cordial as their initial disappointment wore off.

On October 26, 1862, the army broke camp and marched southward, recrossing the Potomac near Harpers Ferry. It did not seem an auspicious start to the men of the Twenty-fourth. "It seems to bad to march this little regiment into Virginia again," Oliver wrote his wife. "We have only 132 men fit for duty, and they are suffering for clothes, shoes, blankets, and twenty have no arms. It would make your heart ache to see the poor fellows at night laying alongside a fire without blankets, overcoats or tents. I give them my overcoat every night; that is all I can do for them." (15)

Morale was low; both officers and men were absent without leave, and officers were putting one another on report for irregularities.

On November 10th the army stood in review to take farewell of McClellan, who was again removed from command for his failure to follow Lee more closely after his retreat from Maryland. "Poor fellow, my heart aches for him. Our main prop is gone now. I am willing to give up," was Oliver's diary tribute to the colorful leader.

Continuing to edge southward under General Burnside, the army reached Falmouth, their old campground across the Rappahannock from Fredericksburg, on December 9th. There Burnside committed one of the costliest blunders of the war. With the Confederate Army in an almost impregnable position on the wooded heights just beyond Fredericksburg, he made a frontal assault, sending charge after charge against the deadly Confederate musketry and artillery. When they retired at nightfall the field was strewn with their dead. Northern morale hit a new low; perhaps the lowest of the war.

The role of the Twenty-fourth may be told briefly. On Thursday, December 11, 1862, Union artillery threw a heavy cannonade against Fredericksburg and the heights beyond, and before sundown the troops began to cross the river on pontoon bridges. Bringing up the rear, the Twenty-fourth Regiment crossed over the following afternoon, and lay that night upon their arms. The next day they went out as skirmishers, and while the action was exhausting, there were few casualties. On the following day the armies rested, and there was little firing. On Monday evening the regiment was sent forward to support a battery (except one company

which went on picket duty). Oliver made hurried entries in his diary. Noting that they had retreated at double quick for two miles and had crossed the river safely, he wrote: "I am nearly gave out, but for a little whiskey I should . . . . I am sick and perfectly demoralized; never was so sick of the war. Think the rebels have earned their independence . . . . Oh I am homesick, five months from today (the expiration date of his enlistment) . . All down on Burnside . . . rumored that Seward has resigned and little McClellan is coming back. He is the only man that can fetch this army up."

The account he wrote to his wife on December 18, with a flair for the dramatic, contrasts sharply with his hurried diary entries:

I was sent for and ordered to have my regiment fall back to where the brigade was. There I learned for the first time that we were to retreat, and my company was to be left out front to be either taken prisoners or killed. You can't imagine the feelings I had to thus leave my friends and comrades to the mercies of the enemy, for I was sure they would be taken; but I could not help it, and with an aching heart I left them. They did not know anything about it, or that the army was going to retreat. Well we got safely across the river, and Lt. Hill of our regiment, who is acting adjutant, was detailed to go and call in the pickets after the whole army had got safely across. He gave me all his money and a letter to his Mother, and with a "God bless you, Major," left me to do his duty; and well did he do it, for all the pickets got safely across the river without losing a man. I was never so thankful to get out of any battle I was in as this one.

After the battle the army marched northward, and several days later pitched camp at Belle Plain on the Potomac.

New Year's Day, 1863, was filled with diversions: A shooting match among the officers for a purse of fifty dollars. Surgeon Murdoch came out the victor. Then there was hot toddy. But a few days later Oliver was counting the days until May 17th. The January 26th entry in his diary reads: "9,590,400 seconds more to stay in the service." The resignation of Colonel Sullivan stimulated the officers to another scramble for promotions.

On January 20th, General Burnside interrupted their short-lived winter encampment with a march toward the Rappahannock, an expedition appropriately dubbed "the mud march." Roads were a morass, and rain fell steadily. By the second day artillery, baggage, wagons and everything was stuck fast. Two days later the whole expedition was called off, and the army sloshed back to their old camp.

Private Crocker took a short-cut, with the following results:

. . . . it rained all night, but we had to march again in the morning. But we only went three miles, and it got so muddy that the teams could not get along, so we had to stop. We staid (SIC.) 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 of the way where the regiments had to march, so most all of the boys fell out and came back the best way they could walk. We got back to our old camp all right, but some mud(d)y.

But the next night it was read off on dress p(a)rade that every man that fell off the ranks was fined three dollars for privets (SIC.), and five dollars for corp(o)rals and serge(a)nts to be took (SIC.) off our pay next pay day. Most all of our company was fined and I among the rest." (16)

Again the routine was picket duty and a growing number of court martials for desertion and drunkenness. Some regiments received furloughs, but the undermanned Twenty-fourth obtained

very few. At length, when Captain Phillips was successful in getting one, he remained away without leave. Other furloughs awaited his forced return. On February 23rd Oliver received official notification of his promotion to Lieutenant Colonel, a testimonial to both his conscientious service and his hard working father at Albany. He was justifiably proud. "I am satisfied now," he confided to his wife. I flatter, and am vain enough to think that I have got but my just desserts. But I may be mistaken and ought not to be the judge."

In March, 1863, fifty of the regiment were chosen to participate with several hundred picked men in a secret mission into enemy territory. They headed down the Potomac in the afternoon on several river boats. At daylight they entered an inlet, and marched to Heathsville on the peninsula between the Potomac and the Rappahannok rivers. They entered the town and took a few prisoners. The next morning they sent out foragers, who rounded up horses, mules, grain, confederate mail and mail carriers. "Don't like such stealing expeditions," Oliver noted. On their return trip, when they put in at the St. Mary's River on the Maryland shore to patch their leaking vessel, a crowd of contrabands climbed aboard, and Oliver was delegated to remove them. "It was lucky for us," he recorded, "as the bunboat had orders to arrest us for taking them. "The party was back safely at Belle Plain the following day. (17)

Private Crocker, who also made the trip, had a real holiday:

> We got 25 mules and 4 prisoners. We got hopes and made britles (SIC.) Some of the boys got throde (SIC.) head over heels . . . . We had quite a time getting our mules on bo(a)rd. We had to draw them on with ropes . . . . Then we got 1000 bushels of corn and about 50 Nigers on bo(a)rd . . . . The wind blode (SIC.) so hard that we had to lay still all night . . . We had all the oysters that we were in mind to open . . . . We got to camp yesterday in the afternoon. I got a big ham. Most everyone of the boys had a ham or hen to fetch . . . . We had an oyster supper last night. I would like to go on just such a march ev(e)ry week. (18)

On March 17 Captain Phillips was back in camp under guard, and several officers obtained leaves of absence for ten days. Appended was an admonition that failure to return on schedule would automatically cost their commissions.

With the coming of April the roads were again drying, and new campaigns were in preparation. On April 9th President Lincoln and the new commander, General Joseph Hooker, reviewed the army. But there was little enthusiasm among the regiment. Some of the men anticipated that the expiration of their service would fall on the second anniversary of their actual enlistments, and they objected angrily when a ruling came from the War Department that the date would be that of their muster into the United States army on May 17. "Oh, how the men are blowing," Oliver noted. "Am fearful there will be a large row." (19) When orders were issued to have two days' cooked rations in haversacks and to be ready to move at a moment's notice, there was an uproar. Men were drinking heavily, and Oliver feared that if the marching orders came, he would be compelled to make a batch of arrests. Fortunately, the order was not given. Morale momentarily improved, and the officers breathed more easily.

But when a similar situation occurred a week later, another "row" broke out among the men in Company A, whose two-year enlistments were due to expire on April 24th, just a few days away. When the 24th dawned, the officers anxiously awaited the outcome, and they were pleased to observe that members of Company A went on doing their duties "like men." Receipt of a telegram that they would be mustered out

at Elmira on May 17 helped to ease the tension, or so it seemed.

When marching orders came on the morning of the 27th, however, Company A balked. "Company A handed in a petition refusing to march. I don't know what will happen to them," Oliver despaired in his diary. 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 crisis passed.

During the next week the men of the Twenty-fourth had little time to fret over their release. They moved with the army into the Fredericksburg area and took part in the battle of Chancellorsville. Not being among the brigades under General Howard, they were spared Jackson's spectacular strike, which made possible another major victory for General Lee, and another humiliating defeat for the Union. The regiment did picket duty, but otherwise took no active part in the six-day engagement.

At its close, they marched north to Aquia Creek on the Potomac, and on May 12, 1863, took passage for Washington. A day later, they entrained for Baltimore, where one poor soldier, who had lived through two years of war, became intoxicated, and lost his life under the cars. The next day they arrived in Elmira, the men "feeling like colts." (20) And there on May 29 the regiment, to be remembered locally as a unit of the "Iron Brigade," was mustered out of the service of the United States.

While the boys of the 24th Regiment were going through the mustering-out process at Elmira, admiring home-folk were eagerly preparing for their return to Oswego. 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 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 entire community in motion, and by the following noon Oswego was decked in bunting and its streets overflowing 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 Second Bull Run, South Mountain, Antietam and Fredericksburg inscribed, 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. William Lewis presided, and the Rev. L.M.S. Haynes of the First Baptist Church offered the prayer, which included a condemnation of Copperheadism. D. G. Fort, a former mayor, then delivered the address. At its conclusion Col. Beardsley, and Capt. J. D. O'Brian and Col. Sullivan, former officers of the regiment, and Adjutant Hill responded briefly for the regiment. And finally, the Marshal, Robert Oliver, Sr., invited the boys to a banquet awaiting them at Doolittle Hall.

The dinner, served by the "generous hearted ladies of Oswego" was sumptuous. Entertainment was furnished by a traveling troupe of musicians. At its conclusion the veterans went to their respective homes for additional celebrations.

A final sidelight. Due to the intensity of the political controversy raging at that moment, the committee had announced that partisanship would have no place in the activities. But knowing "Little Mac's" popularity among the soldiers, and not wishing to lose an opportunity to make political capital, Democratic partisans of McClellan displayed a large picture of him along the line of march. If the TIMES a Republican paper, can be offered as testimony, the strategem failed dismally, as the troops passed by in silence.

The men of the Twenty-fourth had completed their tour of duty before the battle of Gettysburg was fought. Both the men and the community seem to have assumed that their obligation was fulfilled; their job done. The writer has found no evidence to suggest that the public expected them to re-enlist and perserve as soldiers until the victory was won. A substantial minority, it is true, did return to the service, the largest single delegation joining the Twenty-fourth Cavalry which was recruited later in the year. Private Crocker, for example, turned up as Corporal Crocker in this regiment. They also supplied officers for the 184th Regiment. But reenlist or not, as Oswego County's first regiment to Volunteer, they continued to hold a special place in the hearts of their contemporaries.

# Footnotes

Sections of this chapter have been taken from the author's article in NEW YORK HISTORY. "Robert Oliver, Jr. and the Oswego County Regiment," XXXVIII, 276-293 (July 1957). This has been done with the permission of the publishers, the New York State Historical Association. The author is grateful to the Association for this favor.

(1) PULASKI DEMOCRAT, May 2, 1861.

(2) Rodney E. Johnson, "Gilbert Crocker's Civil War," YEARBOOK, Oswego Co. Hist. Soc., 1961, 50.

(3) PULASKI DEMOCRAT, June 6, 1861.

(4) July 6, 1861, Oliver MSS., Oswego Co. Hist. Soc.

(5) October 4, 1861, Oliver MSS.

(6) Robert Oliver's Diary, January 16, 1862, Oliver MSS

(7) February 12, 1862, Oliver MSS.

(8) Rodney E. Johnson, OP CIT., 60.

(9) Oliver MSS.

(10) Rodney E. Johnson, OP CIT 61.

(11) July 13, 22, 1862, Oliver Diary

(12) Rodney E. Johnson, OP CIT., 64.

(13) Oliver Diary, September 20, 1862.

(14) Oliver Diary, October 3, 1862

(15) Oliver MSS., October 29, 1862

(16) Rodney E .Johnson, OP CIT., 67.

(17) Oliver Diary, March 6, 1863

(18) Rodney Johnson, OP CIT., 68

(19) Oliver Diary, April 12, 1863

(20) Oliver Diary, May 15, 1863

# Chapter IV

## The Eighty-First Infantry;

## First To Enter Richmond

The rout at Bull Run on July 21, 1861 dispelled hopes of a short war and stung the North to renewed action. Mass armies would have to be formed, and the war effort redoubled. President Lincoln's call for 500,000 troops was hastily apportioned among the states and districts, and Oswego County faced its second recruitment.

The initial drive was limited to a proposal to place the local militia on a war-footing, and General Rathbone, in charge of recruiting in Albany, dispatched Major Jacob J. DeForest, Inspector of the Ninth Brigade, New York State Militia, to Oswego to implement the plan. However, he soon discovered that sufficient enlistments from the militia were not forthcoming and Oswegonians had to face the more exacting responsibility of finding recruits at the bench and on the farms.

The War Committee launched the drive at a 'kick-off" meeting at Doolittle Hall in Oswego on August 29. Before an over-flow crowd, estimated at more than 1500, veteran legislator and diplomat, William Duer, demanded that "our next compromise be made in Richmond," and Colonel Thomas W. Gantt, an aid to General McClellan, lauded the heroics of "Little Mac," now in the national spotlight after his "self-proclaimed" victories in western Virginia Tension mounted as the area's most gifted orator, DeWitt C. Littlejohn, stepped to the rostrum. Brushing aside the modest proposal to activate the local militia, already depleted by enlistments in the 24th Infantry, he declared that they must enlist an entire regiment from old Oswego, and train it at Fort Ontario, which Governor Morgan had designated as a rendezvous center. He reported that as many as six to eight companies were already underway across the county, and that a telegraph from Onondaga County contained an offer of another. He was repeatedly interrupted by bursts of applause.

His peroration was a testimonial to an unstinted and nonpartisan support of the war effort:

> "He had determined to know no party til this war was over. He had hoped that but one ticket would be presented for the suffrages of all loyal men, but circumstances might render it necessary for Republicans and Democrats to run seperate tickets in the fall. If so, let there be no excitement, no bitterness, no speeches. Let us simply abide by the result." (1)

Littlejohn's enthusiasm was contagious. During the days immediately following, he, Duer and others carried the crusade to Fulton, Gilbertsville, Hannibal, Scriba, Mexico and elsewhere, and recruiting centers opened in their wake. In Oswego G. W. Berriman initiated a company of Zouaves at "Camp Littlejohn" on a vacant lot on West First Street. In the evenings the Sax Horn Band added sound and color to the festivities.

J. Dorman Steele, the Principal

of Mexico Academy, headed the drive for recruits in the Mexico area, and was eventually elected as Captain of Company K.

In Oswego John McAmbley, business man and Alderman, and credited with making Fort Ontario a training center, accepted a commission as Major on the regimental staff.

From Albany Governor Morgan dispatched Colonel Edwin Rose to head the infant regiment. Rose was a graduate of West Point, class of 1830. Like many other officers, who returned to the army after years of inactivity, he was compelled to delegate major responsibilities to his subordinates. As a result, DeForest who was named Lt. Colonel, and was soon to be identified as a disciplinarian and taskmaster, assumed much of the leadership.

Despite the early enthusiasm, companies proved easier to initiate than to fill. Potential enlistees were advised that only captains and first lieutenants had been el--ected to date, and that other company officers would not be chosen until companies were filled to 64 men. They were also reminded that the enlistees were already receiving pay, and were being equipped and uniformed at the expense of the government.

Through the autumn months one company after another was officially organized, and by January the tenth was at last mustered. Nine companies had been recruited in Oswego County: A, B, C and D in Oswego; E in Gilbertsville; F in Fulton; H in Hannibal; I in Oswego Town; K in Mexico. Company G was added from Syracuse.

The following were the regimental officers;

Colonel, Edwin Rose; Lt. Colonel Jacob J. Deforest; Major, John McAmbley; Surgeon, Dr. William H. Rice; Ass't Surgeon, Carrington Macfarlane; Adjutant, Edward A. Cooke; Quartermaster, Roger A. Francis; Chaplain, David McFarland.

Captains of the various com panies at the outset were:

William C. Raulston (A); Augustus G. Bennett (B); Franklin Hannahs (C); L. C. Adkins (D); Lyman Kingman (E); T. Dwight Stow (F); Henry C. Thompson (G); John B. Raulston (H); D. B. White (I); J. Dorman Steele (K).

Testimonials to the regiment from a grateful public began on December 10 when Major McAmbley was presented with a sword at a ceremony in West Park. On Sunday, January 6, 1862, the Clergy of Oswego exhorted the regiment at a farewell service in Doolittle Hall, and Judge William Allen, President of the Bible Society, and ChaplainMcFarland gave a copy of the New Testament to each recruit. Two days later in West Park Mayor Henry Fitzhugh presented a stand of colors, and Littlejohn concluded the ceremony with his peerless oratory.

Despite the pageantry, however, the combination of DeForest's rigorous indoctrination and the freezing winds off Lake Ontario appear to have dampened the enthusiasm of the personnel in the final weks. There were desertions and complaints against DeForest for foisting two of his brothers upon the regiment as officers. The disability list lengthened and the surgeon's staff was over-taxed. Major McAmbley accidently slashed the arm of a drummer boy in an altercation with a sentinel, and the grievances of the men were aired in the local press.

On January 20 the regiment, with its muster list of 830 shrinking to a count of 750 marched from the fort in a blinding snow storm to the Oswego and Syracuse depot, where an immense crowd awaited them. Leave taking was prolonged and tearful, but at length they boarded the special train of seventeen cars, and departed for Albany. Two weeks later Lt. John W. Oliver brought up the rear with a delegation of convalescents and two deserters in irons.

At Camp Rathbone in Albany the regiment resumed training. Letters from the camp indicate continued hostility to DeForest, and dissatisfaction with the food.



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Some of the boys, it appears, were ready to "lift the tables," that is tilt the contents upon the floor, but learning that the 78th regiment had tried it, and had been compelled to pay the costs and remain for a week in confinement on bread and water, they gave up the scheme. (2)

The regiment was augumented by the addition of three companies of "Mohawk Rangers" from the Utica area, and thereby brought up to full strength. To make room, members of companies C, E and I were consolidated into other units.

After a few weeks in Albany the regiment moved to Staten Island, where they helped erect barracks at Forts Tomkins and Richmond. The camps overlooked New York Harbor, waters crowded with commercial and military shipping. Oliver, with obvious local pride, observed that some of the ships were "most as large as you see come into Oswego.' 'He was less favorably impressed with the camp's accommodations. They were "the horriblest old shanties that you ever saw without a stove or a spear of straw," and when a severe storm struck the area, they huddled in the cold until the weather moderated. (3)

They broke camp on March 5 and entrained for Washington. Here they were stationed on Kalarama Heights, an elevation overlooking Rock Creek, and a natural defense line about three miles north of the city. They were assigned to the Army of the Potomac; Fourth Corps (General Ernest Keyes); Third Brigade (General John D. Palmer);; First Division (General Silas Casey).

They found time here to visit the the capital and their comrades in the 24th regiment, a few miles away. They also enjoyed the luxury of four months' pay. Daniel Henry Austin, a Mexico volunteer, recalled that they were beseiged by hucksters with belts, knivs and revolvers. There were also shields to be worn inside their vests, and guaranteed by the vendor, to stop a musket ball. Most of the purchases, he added, were soon lost or discarded. (4)

Then amid a flurry of rumors of an imminent march on Richmond, they boarded transports on March 29, and headed down the Potomac with General McClellan's forces destined for the Peninsular Campaign. The expedition sailed into Chesapeake Bay and entered the James River at Hampton Roads. From the transports they saw the spars of the CONGRESS and the CUMBERLAND protruding from the water, victims of the Confederate ironclad MERRIMAC several weeks before. They disembarked at Newport News on April 1, and a few days later pushed northward across the peninsula with the Fourth Corps.

What started out as a short-cut to Richmond soon bogged down into a protracted campaign. McClelland spent a month in a siege of Yorktown at the eastern extremity of the Peninsula, while engaging in a spirited battle of words with President Lincoln over the withholding of troops for the defenses of Washington.

Early in May, however, the 81st moved up the Peninsula through Williamsburg and up the left bank of the Chickahominy. The spring rains seemed interminable, and the men sloshed along over water-soaked terrain, with their clothes and blankets aprpoaching saturation point. Colonel Rose was stricken with a fever, and Lt. Colonel DeForest assumed command of the regiment.

Confederate land mines added to their discomfort. Possibly none was more miserable than Lt. John W. Oliver. He had been plagued by poor health since leaving Oswego, and had spent more time in hospitals than with the regiment. His depression is suggested in the following note to his family:

"Camp Starvation Near Richmond,

Here a man has either got to be well or dead. They don't recognize anything else . . . If a man is sick and not able to do duty, they say he smells powder and is a coward . . . Today I feel as if I could not breathe another breath . . . I only wish that I was well or out of it, or be some-

where that I could take care of myself for a few days. Here we are up to our ankles in mud, and nothing much to eat." (5)

McClellan pressed forward as the Confederate army yielded ground, and at last reached points within ten miles of Richmond. Then on May 31 at Fair Oaks (or Seven Pines) the Southern army under General Joseph E. Johnston counter-attacked. The movement coming in the early morning after a tropical storm, struck the Union army without warning, and crumpled Keyes' Corps on the left flank. Casey's Division, including the 81st, took the full force of the attack. It was a horrible experience for the unexperienced Oswego soldiers. In an open field, where they were exposed to both infantry and artillery, they fought back until overwhelmed.

A member of the regiment recalled their experience as follows:

The enemy in front, screened by a thick undergrowth of bushes, poured several volleys of musketry into the regiment, and, although this was the first regular engagement in which they had participated, yet they stood like veterans. Volley after volley was poured into the bushes with deadly effect. Soon finding that they could not maintain their exposed position, the regiment fell back in good order to the edge of the woods in their rear. During this time both field-officers fell. Lt. Col. DeForest was shot in the breast; Major John McAmbley and Captain Kingman were killed and left on the field, together with many privates. Captain Wm. C. Raulston, being the senior officer present, then assumed command, and in the position then taken they kept up a constant fight with the enemy in front for two hours, when a large force, afterwards ascertained to be a brigade, entered the field they had left and deployed in such a manner as to approach them both in front and flank. To save themselves from being taken prisoners, the order was given to fall back towards the centre of the line . . . While moving in that direction the centre gave way and was being forced down the road. To meet this they were obliged to change direction, passing through a thick wood and slashing, gaining open ground half a mile in the rear of the first line of rifle-pits, which they entered and continued the fight until the day closed—the enemy in possession of the battle-field, including the camp, with all the tents, the personal baggage, and extra clothing of the men and officers . . . At night they lay on their arms, and the following day was spent in burying the dead." (6)

Private Austin noted in his diary, "I would lay on my back, and load; then turn over and look for a mark." (7) But he was soon compelled to get back on his feet and join in the retreat.

The line finally held on the bank of the Chickahominy, and McClellan's counter-attack pushed the Confederate forces from the field. General Johnston fell wounded, and his absence may have turned the tide of battle. Johnston's loss, however, gave General Lee his opportunity to command, and to win immortality.

The 81st was a shambles, with 137 casualties, of whom 37 were dead. As mentioned above, their camp was totally destroyed. Lacking tents and blankets, they sought shelter from the rain in sheds and barns. The wounded were taken to the base at White House on York River, and shipped to hospitals as distant as Washington and Boston.

During the concluding month of McClellan's campaign on the Peninsula, the 81st was held in reserve, and spared further losses. At its conclusion they retreated with the Army of the Potomac to its new base at Harrison's Landing on the James.

The theatre of war now shifted to the Manassas axis, and large segments of McClellan's forces were withdrawn from the Peninsula and transferred to General Pope. The 81st, however, remained

in occupation. In August they moved northeastward from the James, and four days later reacned Yorktown. It was an exhausting march, and many fell by the way side from heat and fatigue. They made camp inside the fortifications at Yorktown.

The regiment, which had been reduced to less than half of its original personnel, was strengthened in September by the arrival of 118 recruits from Albany. Another member of the DeForest family, Lt. Bartholomew S. DeForest headed the detachment, and assumed the duties of Quartermaster. Incidentally, the historian is indebted to him for his memoirs of the regiment, which he published shortly after the war. He found the regiment without tents, and their clothing little more than "ingenuity could devise." (8)

The condition of the regiment improved, however, and convalescents returned to duty, though medical discharges ended the careers of Colonel Rose and T. Oliver. In November Colonel DeForest returned to assume command; but his health remained delicate.

Quartermaster DeForest described their celebration of Thanksgiving Day in late November. Food was abundant now, and the officers enjoyed a "sumptuous board." After the meal they relaxed with songs, selecting "Red, White and Blue," "Hobbies," and "The Sword of Bunker Hill," as appropriate. They also exchanged jokes and stories, and concluded the festivities with the customary toasts. The Colonel's was tinged with pathos: a stirring appeal for a renewed dedication, delivered with a voice made tremulous by his recent wounds, and delivered under the tattered colors of the regiment. (9)

The regiment constructed winter quarters at Yorktown, ransacking the country-round-about for wood and bricks. Tents were made more liveable with chimneys, topped with barrels to aid the draft. But after occupying them for a few nights, they were ordered to the Carolinas. Private Austin observed that the men were enraged, and then an extra guard was posted to prevent them from burning the barracks. (10) Tempers cooled, however, and on December 29, the regiment embarked for Beaufort, North Carolina.

During the winter of 1862-1863 the 81st was almost continually on the move. After three weeks at Beaufort, they sailed for Port Royal, near Charleston. They encamped on St. Helena Island.

While on the island a soldier noted that they had spent six weeks on one of the famous sea islands, which produced the finest cotton in the world. It was "now a field for the experiment of mitigating some of the barbarisms of slavery," as Yankee troops assisted in the settling of freedmen upon newly cleared fallow land." Incidentally, St. Helena was also established as a recruitment center for the freedmen by General Hunter, and personnel in the regiments on the island were invited to apply for commissions, and command the former slaves. There was an enthusiastic response from the 81st, spurred undoubtedly by the offer of a promotion which went with it. The following members of the regiment accepted commissions in the Third South Carolina Colored Regiment:

Captain A. G. Bennett (promoted to) Lt. Colonel; Sergeant N. Miles, First Lieutenant; Sergeant Edwin Slack, First Lieutenant; Private John E. Jacobs, Second Lieutenant; Private B. G. Reed, First Lieutenant; Corporal James Anderson, Sergeant Major; Sergeant Seward Zimmerman, First Lieutenant; Sergeant E. Clark, Adjutant; Lieutenant R. H. Willoughby, Captain; Lieutenant Henry Sharp, Captain; Private Wm. G. Cornwell, Second Lieutenant.

Members of the 81st reflected the shifting of public opinion at this time against the toleration of Copperheadism and in support of conscription. "If you tolerate any Copperheads in Oswego or Rome," one soldier advised, "by all means provide them transportation as far as Canada before the 81st returns from the War." (12) At a public rally the regiment drafted a reso-

lution endorsing conscription: "If any refuse, leave them to the scorn of Mothers and wives," it advised. They also called upon President Lincoln to use the authority, which Congress had provided, to recruit Negroes in both North and South as General Hunter had done in South Carolina. (13)

In April the regiment moved to the North Edisto inlet and Hilton head in preparation for an assault on Charleston. But when it was disbanded, they returned to Beaufort. Here on the North Carolina coast they were divided for a time into several detachments for garrison duty.

The monotony was occasionally relieved by raids into enemy held country. In early July, for example, several companies joined an expedition from New Bern which moved southward toward Wilmington. In six days they covered 90 miles, and returned loaded with live-stock and provisions. A short time later they sailed out of Pamlico South and into Albemarle Sound, and up the Chowan River to the proximity of Winton. Here they were joined by several regiments of cavalry. They occupied Winton and Murfreesboro, and the cavalry reached a point ten miles from Weldon before they were forced back.

Surprising to the writer, and also to Quartermaster DeForest and the other four officers involved, was the arrival of their wives at Morehead City while the regiment was out on a raid. DeForest noted that his wife had come by water, by the way of Cape Hatteras, and had spent eight days enroute. The wives remained at Morehead City from June until October. More will be said subsequently about wives in the occupation zone of North Carolina. But which wife came first to face the perils involved, remains shrouded in mystery. (14)

In October the regiment was ordered to Virginia, and encamped briefly at Newport News on ground which they had occupied eighteen months before. A month later they crossed the James River to Northwest Landing near Norfolk. Here they joined a raid into the Dismal Swamp in search of Guerrillas.

While stationed here they received a fine silk American flag from Mr. and Mrs. E. C. Ingersoll of Lee, Oneida County. The regiment was formed in a hollow square, where the presentation was made by Captain Ballard, and the acceptance by Colonel DeForest. As will be shown later, the flag was to see memorable service during the next twelve months.

In February veterans with less than one year to serve were invited to reenlist for three years. Reenlistment would entitle them to thirty-day furloughs, and bounties. The offer was welcomed by many of the men as an opportunity to see the "Dear ones at Home," and also to collect more than $800 in bounties. For a private, this sum equalled his monthly pay for five years. Two-thirds of the personnel accepted.

The reenlistees went home to Oswego County by the way of New York City. In New York they were reviewed by the Mayor, and at Albany, by Governor Seymour and the Legislature. On Saturday afternoon, March 5, 1865, at 5 o'clock, they came home to a hero's welcome. The scene at the station with husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, fathers and children locked in warm embrace was so overpowering to a local newspaperman, that it left him wordless. Bells and cannons added to the greeting, and a parade, 10,000 strong, despite inclement weather, marched to the Music Hall on Water Street. Here they were greeted from the flag-draped balcony by Mayor Grant. Colonel DeForest responded for the regiment. He recalled Mayor Fitzhugh's challenge to the regiment two years before: "Go boys, go, and sustain the glorious stars and stripes, just presented to you, and you not only, but your children will bless the day, and feel proud when they remember that their fathers helpedh to crush out the great rebellion of 1861." His words would continue to spur them, he said, until they would return again with the task

completed. (15)

The crowd then surged into Doolittle Hall for a "magnificant and bounteous repast." There had been nothing to equal the celebration since the return of the 24th regiment the year before.

Brimming over with gratitude members of the regiment contributed $400 to the widow of Major McAmbley, and she, in return, vowed to erect a monument to her husband on a plot donated by the people of Oswego.

Seeking to use the enthusiasm of the moment to their advantage, officers of the 81st opened a recruiting office at West First and Bridge Streets. One of their advertisements read:

200,000 MORE VOLUNTEERS WANTED FOR OLD REGT'S. IN THE FIELD: $300 WILL BE PAID ON ENLISTING, & $150 PAID IN ELMIRA.
VETERAN BOUNDY: $852
NEW RECRUITS: $677
E. P. Burt & A. P. Getty
Recruiting Agents
167 W. First Street, Oswego

Another proclaimed:

PUBLIC NOTICE

Lt. Col. J. B. Raulston of the veteran 81st Reg't has opened a recruiting office for the reg't. at the corner of (West) Bridge & 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.

A discordant note amid the merry making occurred when officers of the regiment presented Colonel DeForest with a sword in a ceremony at the Revenue House. A letter to the TIMES signed "Candor", alleged that officers had contributed under duress. But the controversal Colonel had his defenders as well as his critics. Fortunately, the dispute did not break into print until the regiment was enroute to Virginia.

At Yoktown in April, 1864, they were assigned to the First Brigade, First Division, Eighteenth Corps of the Army of the James, commanded by General Benjamin F. Butler. They proceeded to Bermuda Hundred on the James River, where they constructed fortifications, and served as skirmishers. In May they engaged in a series of actions designed to hold Confederate troops close to the defenses of Richmond, while General Grant moved southward from the Rappahanock. They saw action at Swift Creek, Proctor's Creek, Drewry's Bluff and Bermuda Hundred, and sustained 28 casualties in these operations.

Later in the month the Eighteenth Corps made a lightning-like move by water from the James to West Point on the York River where they joined the Army of the Potomac, and on June 1-3 fought in the Battle of Cold Harbor. It was Grant's last bid to drive directly into Richmond, and he ordered wave upon wave of infantry against the protected positions of the enemy. Casualties in two days exceeded those at Antietam and Chancellorsville. The 81st joined in a series of desperate assaults bloody beyond description. In scarcely forty-eight hours more than 70 officers and men fell dead or mortally wounded, including the color guard which was wiped out. Casualties, including dead and wounded totaled 215. Among the former were captains W. W. Ballard, James Martin and Lt. J. W. Burke. Colonel DeForest lost a foot, and five of the regimental captains were wounded. At the end of the carnage only one-third of the personnel answered at roll call. Survivors were concentrated into four companies.

Despite such appalling losses, they had no respite from action. The Eighteenth Corps was speedily returned to Bermuda Hundred, and moved against the Confederate defenses at Petersburg. On June 15 they barely failed to break the Confederate line. Success here would have thwarted the frenzied efforts of the Southern command to ring Petersburg with fortifications. The regiment lost 36 in

killed and wounded.

Unable to drive the Confederates from their fortified positions, the Union army settled down to a siege. The 81st spent a few weeks in the Petersburg trenches, and then moved back to Bermuda Hundred. Enroute, Private Austin reported an incident, illustrative of the frustrations of the march. A driver became intoxicated and pulled out of line crossing the Appomattox River. His wagon plunged into the river. Headquarters' baggage, tents, books, mess kits and blankets were lost, and three mules drowned. Upon their arrival at Bermuda Hundred, the men dined on hard-tack, and borrowed blankets, if they could find a lender. "Poor Bob, drenched to the skin, stood for two hours lightly on his toes with a tent cord around his thumbs, and a bight fastened to the limb of a tree." (16)

On September 29-30 the regiment participated in the battle of Fort Harrison (Signal Hill) or Chaffing's Farm, a surprise assault upon one of the fortifications of Richmond. The 81st was the first to plant its flag on the enemy's works, and captured several cannon, a battle flag and a considerable number of prisoners. But their losses were again high: 18 dead and another 50 wounded. The fall of Fort Harrison created a panic in Richmond, and squads of guards roamed the streets seizing able-bodied men, for the defense of the city. (17) The advantage was not followed up, however, and the siege continued into fall and winter.

Early in November the riddled regiment finally escaped from the battle-line and journeyed to New York City for police duty through the Presidental election.

They later returned to the Richmond front, but were spared further combat.

On January 1, they replaced the national colors which they had received a year before. It had served in the engagements at Violet Station, Drewry's Bluff, Cold Harbor, Petersburg, Fort Harrison and Second Fair Oaks. Its staff was broken in four parts. One of these breaks occured when a Minie ball stuck between the hands of Color-Sergeant Evan Michaels, inflicting a motal wound. Four of the color-guard had also been killed. The eagle surmounting the staff had been carried away and not recovered. Thirty-six bullet holes could be counted in the tattered emblem.

When the Confederate Capital fell on April 3, 1865, the 81st was deployed as skirmishers. It was the first regiment of infantry to enter the beleaguered citadel. "This was the last and crowning act of this noble and gallant regiment. On entering the city their first work was to release the Union prisoners confined in Castle Thunder and Libby Prison, putting in confinement the same number of rebels. Then our starry flag was raised above the prison wall, amid the deafening cheers of the soldiers and the now happy contrabands and prisoners." (18)

The regiment was mustered out of the United States sevice on August 1, 1865 at Fortress Monroe. Finally, on September 19, just four years and five days after their first muster into the service of the United States, they received their discharge, and the 81st was no more.

# Footnotes

(1) OSWEGO TIMES, August 30, 1861.
(2) Oliver MSS., Oswego Co. Hist. Soc.
(3) Oliver MSS.
(4) MEXICO INDEPENDENT, August 5, 1937.
(5) Oliver MSS.
(6) Crisfield Johnson, History of Oswego County, N. Y. (Philadelphia, 1877), 79.
(7) MEXICO INDEPENDENT,

August 5, 1937.

(8) Bartholomew S. DeForest, RANDOM SKETCHES AND WANDERING THOUGHTS . . . . WITH A HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE SECOND OSWEGO REGIMENT, EIGHTY-FIRST, NEW YORK STATE (ALBANY, 1866), 17.

(9) IBID., 25-26.

(10) MEXICO INDEPENDENT, August 5, 1937.

(11) J. E. Mallette, published in the OSWEGO TIMES, March 17, 1863.

(12) OSWEGO TIMES, April 18, 1863.

(13) Bartholomew S. DeForest, OP.CIT., 44-45.

(14) IBID., 59-94.

(15) IBID., 141-142.

(16) MEXICO INDEPENDENT, September 8, 1937.

(17) E. S. Miers, ED., A REBEL WAR CLERK'S DIARY, By John B. Jones (New York, 1958), 427.

(18) Bartholomew S. DeForest, OP. CIT., 251-252.

# Chapter V

## The One Hundred-Tenth Infantry;

## From Bayous To The Dry Tortugas

"We are Coming Father Abraham . . . . . "

In the spring of 1862 with McClellan's fine army about to descend upon Richmond or so it seemed, the enlistment of soldiers was suspended by Secretary of War, Stanton. The action proved to be short-sighted. Four months later, with McClellan's offensive blunted, and his army backed precariously against the James River, recruitment offices were reopened, and a new army of 300,000 was in the making.

Congress provided the guidlines in the, so called, "draft of 1862." States were to be given quotas, and permitted to raise them according to their own systems, but if they failed to meet their assignments by voluntary means, deficiencies were to be made up by conscription. In a matter of days war committees were again in action: banners flying, drums a'beating, and oratory reverberating through the hot July air.

Oswego County's quota was one regiment, and her response was magnificant. Elias Root, a prominent business man and former assemblyman was appointed Chairman of the County War Committee by Governor Morgan. Others named included D.C. Littlejohn, Cheney Ames, D.G. Fort, B.E. Bowen, Thomas Kingsford, Delos DeWolf, A.F. Smith, E.B. Talcott, A.C. Mattoon and Henry Fitzhugh of Oswego, and R.K. Sanford and Willard Johnson of Fulton. The committee launched its drive at a giant rally in Doolittle Hall, Oswego, on July 24, 1862. Supplementing the throng from Oswego were delegations from the towns and villages across the county: Willard Johnson was on hand with a contingent from Fulton, as were Robert Simpson and C.S. Sage with delegations from Scriba and Williamstown, respectively.

Chairman Root opened the meeting, and nominated Delos DeWolf as President. Additional honorary Presidents invited to the platform included the venerable Alvin Bronson, Henry Fitzhugh, D.P. Brewster, Simeon Bates, the aged James Platt, the city's first mayor; Thomas Kingsford, and others. DeWolf called for "300,000 more," and Cheney Ames delivered a short exhortation. Then E.B. Talcott, speaking for the war committee, and in a manner worthy of the Broadway Stage, introduced the question of a colonel for the regiment. It would require the right man, he said, one who had unusual qualities for leadership, and the respect of the entire county. The committee, he declared, had found such a man, but he could accept it only at great personal sacrifice. He had been considering the offer for some hours, and had promised to give his answer that evening. With the audience clinging to each word, Talcott called for DeWitt C. Littlejohn.

Littlejohn was no stranger to the audience. In fact, he was the county's most widely-known, and possibly, also, its most controversial personality in the Nineteenth Century. At 42 he had no military

experience, yet none appeared to doubt his capacity for the leadership. He had come from Albany to Oswego in search of a career in business, and had subsequently become a partner of Henry Fitzhugh, forwarder and miller, State Canal Commissioner, and manager of the Oneida Lake Steamboat Company. Littlejohn had also entered politics, advancing rapidly from local offices, including two terms as Mayor of Oswego, to the New York Assembly. When in his mid-thirties he was elected Speaker of the Assembly. He eventually served for a record five terms. He was closely associated with the Whig machine of Weed and Seward, and was frequently mentioned for governor. One of the finest orators in the region, his memorable denunciation of Nativism before the Assembly was widely circulated. He was Speaker of the Assembly when the Civil War started, but refused a renomination in 1861. He also turned down an appointment as Consul to Liverpool, then the most lucrative of foreign diplomatic posts, possibly, because the Panic of 1857 had left him in serious financial straits. Whether he assumed the command with reluctance, as represented, can not be answered, but his response was accepted, for the moment at least, at its face value.

The mentioning of his name by Talcott unloosed a deafening roar. In the words of the local press, there was "great applause and three cheers and a tiger." (1)

The tall, slender and dark complexioned Littlejohn (to be frequently compared to Lincoln in his later years) strode to the podium, and gave his answer. As recorded by the Times reporter, he declared:

Fellow Citizens: My heart is almost too full for utterance at this expression of your wishes and confidence. I have often said in private conversation that when the time came that it was necessary to rally the forlorn hope to uphold our government and its institutions in the hour of darkness, when it was necessary to put forth still greater exertions, I was prepared to go forth at the call of my country, but until that hour came, the sacrifice was too great for me to make.

When your committee appraised me of their wishes I took a few hours to consider before I gave my reply. What shall be my reply? Without military education or knowledge you call me to this responsible trust and place in my keeping the lives of your sons. I feel deeply this expression of your confidence, and a profound sense of my responsibility. I have ever held it to be the duty of a man to respond to the plainly expressed wishes of his fellow citizens, and that theory compels me to say now, I accept the position tendered me. (Great Applause) But I accept it with a condition. It is that within the next thirty or sixty days you send forth one thousand of your most athletic young men to battle for their country. You have thrown upon me great labor, and you must stand by me. Tomorrow I must begin to learn to be a soldier. I do mean to be a soldier and if God spares my life, you shall be able to point with pride to the man you have selected." (2)

Concluding his words of acceptance, he launched into a typical recruitment oration. In the course of his remarks he noted that the County Board of Supervisors had voted a bounty of $50 to each enlistee. It inaugurated locally a practice which was soon to be a potent force in attracting recruits. In addition to the sum paid by the county, enlistees also received $100 from the United States, and $50 from the State, or a total of $200. Of this sum $125 was payable at once: $25 Federal, $50 State, and $50 county.

A series of war meetings followed at Mexico, Sandy Creek, Pulaski, Phoenix, New Haven, Scriba, Hannibal, Central Square, Constantia, and Cleveland. Littlejohn spoke at each, fanning the sparks of patriotism with his im-

passioned oratory.

His vigorous leadership was at once apparent. Two officers in the local 48th Company of militia, Colonel James Doyle and Lt. Col. Henry Clay Devendorf of Central Square, initiated companies, as did Thomas Kehoe, an Oswego butcher, and Wm. I. R. Rasmussen of the Old Oswego Guards.

Companies from Fulton, Pulaski, Mexico, Sandy Creek, Hannibal and Hastings were speedily filled, and a contingent from Constantia on August 15 completed the organization. The recruitment appears to have been one of the most rapid on record. In fact the momentum precipitated the formation of five or six companies which were fiilled too late for incorporation, and they became nuclei for the 147th Infantry and the Twenty-first Independent Battery of Light Artillery.

The companies rendezvoused one by one at Fort Ontario, and on August 15 the membership totaled 1225. It should be noted, however, that a few of the recruits remained long enough only to collect their bounties, and then "skedaddled" to Canada. Guards were strengthened to discourage additional desertions.

Several days prior to the departure of the regiment the community tendered it a "magnificant ovation" on the fort grounds. The entire country-side appears to have turned out, jamming the streets with wagons and carriages. Littlejohn was eulogized for his services in the legislature, and presented with a splendid sword and trappings (now in the Museum of the Oswego County Historical Society), also a spirited horse, fully equipped for war, the gift of Theodore Irwin, an affluent Oswego miller and art collector. Littlejohn responded with "great eloquence and feeling:" What he had accomplished, he ascribed to his "determination to practice industry, temperance and honesty." About to leave this "beautiful city," and "old associates," he desired to depart as friends with all — if in the excitement of political campaigns he had uttered harsh or unkindly words he wished to retract them and be forgiven. He declared that he had received too much credit for raising the regiment; that the War Committee had set it in motion, and "a generous people had responded." He expected the sacrifice of lives; if there were deserters, "Let them be driven forth from you in contempt," but if they returned with honor, he asked that they be taken by the hand." "The eyes of many a strong man," a reporter noted, "were suffused with tears as he closed his pathetic speech." (3)

On August 28, amidst a tumultous send-off, the regiment boarded the cars of the Oswego and Syracuse Railroad and departed for Baltimore. They changed cars at Syracuse, and proceeded to Albany. There they boarded a transport for Amboy, New Jersey, and continued to Philidelphia on the Amboy and Camden line. The ladies of the Soldiers' Relief Association fed them at Philadelphia and at Baltimore. At the Maryland border Colonel Littlejohn supplied ten men in each company with rifles and three rounds of ammunition, and officers loaded their pistols and put on their swords. Soldiers on a previous train had been threatened by a crowd at the Havre de Grace ferry. But there were no threats, and they reached Baltimore on schedule.

Here they encamped at Fort Patterson on the eastern fringe of the city, and settled down to a routine of drill. The inexperience of the officers was offset in part by the employment of Captain Archibold Preston of the 24th New York Infantry, as drillmaster. He must have had his difficult moments if the following account by Jesse Miles of Fulton is not too greatly exaggerated:

"Last Thursday the regiment was drilled for the first time in loading and firing, using blank cartridges. It was real laughable to see some of the men maneuver. One of the boys in Company I put in four charges; he was so excited that he did not notice whether his piece

discharged or not. Some of our boys would set their pieces at recover, shut up both eyes and fire. Others would get them half cocked and swear if they did not fire. They were of course much excited. But we shall soon become more deliberate and cool I think." (4)

Scattered sources suggest that life at Patterson was pleasant, and the few who contracted camp fever were housed comfortably in Patterson Hospital adjacent to the Fort. Peter Kitts of Fulton wrote that several of the boys had suffered from rheumatism, but that they had gone swimming, and were cured! Others endured "distemper" and "bilious colic." Food was abundant. "We have meat and potatoes once a day," a recruit noted, "and hard bread crackers. The boys threw them at a barrel that sat on top of the chimney, and (k)nocked two staves out of it the first time they hit it. You would laff (SIC.) to hear the boys grone (SIC.) when they roll over; the crackers prick them so." (5)

Company E was detached from the regiment for a few weeks, and stationed at Perryville across from Havre de Grace on the Susquehanna River. Here they guarded the railroad terminal and the ferry. New quarters, an abundance of food, the culinary skills of Leander Tuller of Mexico, and an opportunity to see country life in Maryland combined to make life interesting.

The men were well supplied with reading materials by the Oswego Young Men's Christian Union. Quartermaster, W. D. Smith commended the men for their good behavior, high morals, and attendance at the Chaplain's services. He reported little drunkenness and gambling, and no more profanity than one might hear from a similar gathering of men in Oswego. Colonel Littlejohn, he advised, was determined that their sons should not go back home to be "pests of society." "No better man could have been sent with us for camp life," he continued, "and if we go on the field we can trust him there." (6)

A question soon arose, however, regarding Littlejohn's future with the regiment. Scarcely four weeks after his arrival in Baltimore, he received the Republican nomination for Congress. The seat usually rotated between Oswego and Madison counties, and 1862 was Oswego's year. There was no organized opposition to his nomination from the Radical Republican faction, which had not altogether concealed its joy at seeing the popular Littlejohn in uniform. Why he accepted the nomination so soon after entering the army is not entirely clear. But his first love was politics, and his brief detour into the military service probably enhanced his prospects for the nomination. He may have assumed that the thirteen months separating the election date from the first regular session of the new congress would be ample time to complete his military obligations. In any event, he accepted the nomination, and was elected by a substantial margin in November. Thus the seat was his, if and when he chose to occupy it.

In the election of 1862 there was no absentee soldier's ballot in New York State, and Republicans attributed their narrow defeat in the gubernatorial race to it. By barely a few hundred votes Democratic Horatio Seymour won over Republican General James Wadsworth. A straw vote conducted among the men of the 110th would appear to substantiate this claim. Whereas Oswego County went to Wadsworth by a 5 to 3 ratio, the 110th gave him a ratio of ten to one (583 to 63). Republicans saw to it that the soldier voted in 1864.

Speculations over Littlejohn's possible retirement were stilled a short time later when orders were received to board transports for an unannounced destination. Rumors included points as close as Newport News and as distant as Louisiana and Texas. They sailed down Chesapeake Bay and anchored at Hampton Roads, where they remained for several weeks. Drills were held at Newport News, and the men whiled

away idle hours visiting points of interest. They discovered that the home of former President Tyler was occupied by families of Negroes who had "simply moved in;" they saw the hulks of the CONGRESS and CUMBERLAND, reminders of the exploits of the MERRIMAC, and went aboard the famous MONITOR.

At length on December 4 in convoy with 14 ships carrying some 10,000 troops, they weighed anchor, and steamed into the Atlantic. They were lashed by gale winds off Cape Hatteras, and the ERICSSON, on which most of the 110th were passengers dropped out of formation to engage in rescue operations. They towed the THAMES to Hilton Head off the South Carolina coast, and then pushed on to Ship Island near the mouth of the Mississippi River. Here the men were transferred to river craft, and taken to Camp Mansfield a few miles above New Orleans.

They were now attached to the Army of the Gulf (19th Army Corps), numbering about 30,000 men, and commanded by General Nathaniel Banks. They were brigaded with the 114th, 116th, 128th, 135th, 150th New York regiments, and the 38th Massachusetts under General William H. Emory. The objectives of this army were to oversee the civil government which had been installed in Louisiana in 1862, to direct military movements against Confederate forces in Louisiana and Texas, and to cooperate in the opening of the Mississippi River, blocked by Southern strongholds at Vicksburg, Mississippi, and Port Hudson Louisiana.

With no pressing military duties to perform, the men used the opportunity to view at first hand the strange appearing bayou country and its people. Trees which remained green through the winter months were a novelty; also the plantations, and the sights and sounds of old New Orleans. They were impressed by the fertility of the bottom land and the dense vegetation; also the cane fields and sugar mills, many of them now untended. But there was no sound of grinding. "The bell hangs in the yard to call the slave to toil, but there is no slave to call."

Cottages in the slave quarters, described by travelers as better than the houses of the laboring man in the North, proved to be little more than a cover for the heads of their occupants, with "just enough lumber in them to hold the whitewash on the outside, and to give an air of neatness to the estate." (8) They also saw clusters of Negroes huddled near their camp, unwilling to return to their masters. They were surprised at the abundance of live-stock, cotton and corn, and the scarcity of able-bodied men. They had apparently fled from the occupied sections, leaving many "poor, lone widows."

One soldier's letter recorded the appearance of the old folks:

> "Every day you will see the old planters' families coming into town in their ancient carriages, drawn by a span of mules that are so old the government would not take the trouble of driving them off, with a harness composed of ropes, straps and chains, with an old niggar, whose head is as gray as a rat, for a driver. For most of the niggars have gone the same way as the mules; and this splendid equipage, escorted by a cavalryman, for they are not allowed to pass through the picket lines without a g u a r d . . . . I notice that the occupants of many of these vehicles are dressed in garb, the color of their hoary headed driver, plainly showing that many had friends with the Rebs; and again you will see them in the richest silks and satins and jewelry, and if they were seen in old Mexico (New York), they would make people stare." (9)

Of course the men were particularly interested in seeing southern belles at first hand. One noted that there were some very good looking girls in New Orleans. "But the way they do put on their southern airs if they see a soldier going along the street; it is dangerous to risk more than one

eye at a time." (10) Another Oswego County boy observed that more than one-half of the ladies wore red, white and red roses on their bonnets as evidence of their Confederate loyalty. It was pleasant, but rare, he added, to see a single sprig of blue. (11)

While the men of the 110th were becoming acquainted with their surroundings, they were not forgotten by the friends they left behind. When Lt. Colonel W. D. Smith wrote to the Soldiers' Aid Society in Oswego for assistance in providing 600-800 havelocks (a cloth covering for a cap, with a flap shielding the neck), which he believed would be needed to help endure the heat of the summer, he received an immediate response. The committee, presumably lacking patterns to make them or wishing to gain time, appealed to the Sanitary Commission of New York City for help. The Commission located 272 of them, which they donated to the Oswego committee, and supplied in addition 504 "strong servicable straw hats for which we paid $147." They also forwarded to Louisiana other items collected in Oswego: flannel and cotton shirts, drawers, pillow cases and comfortables; also boxes of dried *fruit, tea and bandages.* Mrs. John E. Lyon of the Oswego committee then appealed to county women for donations as small as twenty-nine cents to pay for a single straw hat. Though the response to her request is not known, it can be assumed that the money was raised, for the committee answered many calls, and distributed dozens of boxes to county soldiers. The havelocks were probably one of its least serviceable contributions; soldiers do not seem to have worn them. (12)

Late in January, 1863, reports began to circulate that Colonel Littlejohn planned to resign from the service, and return to the North. It came as a shock to the men in the ranks, many of whom had fallen under his spell, and had enlisted before their ardor cooled. "Every hour of the day is the indignation of the men expressed at such talk, and reference made to the language he used at Sandy Creek and other places, while raising the regiment. I presume you remember it, about his 'sinking into the ground if he should leave them and come home.' " (13)

The OSWEGO TIMES expressed disbelief after his "emphatic declarations," unless his health should require it. It should be noted, however, that the TIMES, though nominally supporting Littlejohn, was about to become his most violent critic.

The rumor was soon substantiated. On February 4 he appeared before the regiment formed into a hollow square, and presented his valedictory. He attributed his decision to pressing business responsibilities, and a dissatisfaction with the Department of the Gulf for its protection of slavery. Slaves, he declared, should be freed. He also chafed under the limitations imposed upon him by his position. His views were unsought by those in command. As congressman-elect he would be unable to take his seat, if he remained on military duty. Finally, he would be leaving the regiment in the competent hands of Colonel Clinton H. Sage, and Lt. Colonel W. D. Smith.

For once, Littlejohn's eloquence failed. "There was a considerable hard feeling towards him in the regiment," a private observed, "and they have not been at all backward in letting him know. He is frequently hailed while passing through the camp with no very respectful terms about the promise he made before we started . . . . If he leaves us now I do not call him any better than a deserter."

"Everything passed off quiet; not a cheer was given." (14)

It might be noted, however, that all references to his resignation were not critical. One defender declared that his contributions would live in the memory of Oswego County people long after his critics were dead and forgotten. (15) But his critics were more numerous than his defenders, and the veteran vote was in-

jurious to his political aspirations after the war.

The first assignment beyond Camp Mansfield went to Companies A and D. They were ordered to go up the Mississippi to guard property, including slaves, who were acquired to remain on the plantation. What will the people of Oswego think, one soldier asked, when they hear that we are protecting rebel property, and preventing Negroes from joining us? Had the men realized a few months ago that this would be their duty, "it would have required more than the eloquence of our noble colonel to have brought out the men of these companies. If we take care of the property and bind down the slaves while the master and his sons are fighting against us, we cannot succeed." (16)

In March other units of the regiment were ordered to the vicinity of Baron Rouge on a foraging expedition. They welcomed the sight of hills there, the first they had seen since leaving Maryland. They marched and countermarched for a week, and returned with cotton and corn.

Later that month the regiment moved with Banks' army against Port Hudson on the east bank of the Mississippi about twenty-five miles above Baton Rouge. The strategy called for a coordinated assault by Farragut's gunboats and the Army of the Gulf. Like Vicksburg, Port Hudson commanded the river from bold bluffs rising 70 to 90 feet, and was well fortified on the land side with redoubts and trenches manned by artillery and sharpshooters. General Frank Gardner, the Confederate commander, had about 7,000 troops at his disposal.

As the army approached the citadel's defenses Farragut, on March 14 moved up the river to the batteries. He pushed his flagship, HARTFORD, and one gunboat past the batteries, but his other ships could not withstand the heavy fire. The MISSISSIPPI ran aground, and was burned to prevent capture. The others slipped out of range. With the gunboats silenced, Banks halted the entire operation. Actually he had little choice; for the moment he concentrated his forces at Port Hudson, Confederates hidden in the bayous overran his flanks, and jeopardized New Orleans.

The 110th returned to the periphery of New Orleans, and encamped briefly at Algiers on the west side of the river. They then joined an expedition into the Bayou Teche country. The Bayou Teche ran parallel to the Mississippi about 150 miles west of New Orleans. It was a rich agricultural area, and a Confederate stronghold. Opelousas on the bayou had become the provisional capital of the state following the occupation of Baton Rouge. As in most of the Louisiana campaigns Bayou Teche was a joint army and navy project. Banks moved his troops by way of Grand Lake to outflank General Richard Taylor at Fort Bisland, while Farragut occupied key points on the Red River to cut off Confederate access to Vicksburg. Union troops occupied Opelousas, and in the process, took more than one thousand prisoners, several transports, and vast quantities of cotton and live-stock.

The 110th, commanded by Colonel Sage, contacted the enemy at several points on the long march, but did not get into action. By the close of April they were back at Algiers.

In May, Banks initiated a second assault on Port Hudson, approaching the fortification from both north and south, while gunboats operated on the river. He stormed the stronghold on May 27, but the action was not coordinated, and was called off after six hours. Union losses were heavy, Confederate casualties, light. A Negro regiment, recruited in Louisiana from freedman, participated in the battle, and tested the Negro in combat. The 110th was among the units held in reserve.

Banks placed Port Hudson under siege, and unleashed a second assault on June 14. Action began at daylight, when Union cannon opened a heavy bombardment on enemy fortifications. The infan-

try then advanced on three fronts. Those on the left and center were soon halted, but on the right troops led by Brig. General Halbert E. Paine gained positions within 50 to 200 yards of the Confederate trenches, only to lose them "in a disastrous repulse, our members unable to cross the crest just in front of the works." (17) Four companies of the 110th, A, B, E and I, commanded by Major Charles Hamilton participated in this assault, sustaining 36 casualties. During the charge they crossed an abatis of felled trees and a broad ditch, and advanced to the foot of the sloping glacis. A wall of lead from the parapet just above forced them to seek cover in the abatis. The other companies were dispatched to the west side of the river to intercept reinforcements which might be enroute to the beleaguered fortress. They witnessed the cannonading, but took no part in the action.

Banks' second failure to enter Port Hudson prolonged the siege into July. On July 4 Grant forced the surrender of Vicksburg, and only Port Hudson impeded the opening of the river, and the severing of the Confederacy. General Gardner held out just four days longer, and on July 8, having learned of Vicksburg's fate, accepted the inevitable. The Mississippi, as Lincoln quaintly expressed it, now flowed unvexed to the sea.

With the Mississippi River in Union hands the Army of the Gulf carried the war into Texas and the Red River country. On September 4 General Frank S. Nickerson headed an expedition against Sabine Pass on the Louisiana-Texas border. Some troops were landed there, but were unable to cross swamps separating them from their gunboats. As a result the attack was made by the latter only. They proved to be no match for the Confederate cannon, and after several ships had been lost, the attack was called off. After an eight-day boat ride the 110th was back in Algiers.

They did not enjoy the trip. For they had been on the move since spring with little rest in a fever - infested country, and showed the effects. In the words of their division commander, General William H. Emory, "The first brigade is in a state of destitution and demoralization, first, from the long continued absence of any permanent brigade commander; and secondly, from the absence of so many officers and men; and thirdly, this brigade was not allowed any rest after the fall of Port Hudson, but was placed on picket duty in the rear of Port Hudson, thence transferred directly on crowded transports, without change of clothing, and both officers and men are necessarily filthy beyond endurance, and utterly broken down. . . .

"Two of the regiments, the 110th and 162nd New York, are infected with swamp fever, and are incapable at this time of any effort." He asked for a visitation and inspection, and declared that it was beyond his power to correct the situation. (18)

Three days after Emory drafted this report, the 110th was on the cars for a repeat performance in the Bayou Teche country! During the final siege of Port Hudson in July Confederate forces had again converged upon the bayou country, overwhelmed and scattered Union defenders, and created a panic as far east as the banks of the Mississippi. They recaptured Fort Bisland and Brashear City (now Morgan City), a strategic railhead on Grand Lake. Banks had no choice but to invade the region a second time.

Federal forces reoccupied Brashear City on the heels of a Confederate withdrawal, and reached Fort Bisland a few days later. They then marched northward through New Iberia, Carrion Crow Bayou and Opelousas, skirmishing enroute with the retreating enemy, but failing to strike an effective blow. After occupying key positions near Opelousas, the procedure was revearsed. Union forces withdrew down the Bayou as Confederates followed. The writer is indebted to Private Peter Kitts for a first-hand account of one

day's action near Vermillionville (Lafayette). It was November 11, 1863:

"The day the shells and pieces and solid shot flew was not slow I assure you." They had fallen into line at five a. m., when aroused by the beating of drums, and had alternately marched and halted for several hours. The cavalry then dropped to the rear to decoy the enemy into advancing within range of the artillery. This left the infantry flattened to the ground, but a few rods from he advancing enemy skirmishers. At this point the Union battery opened fire, their shot and shell flying just over the heads of the infantry. "Why it would fairly draw us out of our boots every time our folks fired with them (SIC.) 12 pounders. Then pretty soon the Rebels opened with their pieces, and the way the shell flew around us was not slow you may bet; but thanks to the Lord there want (SIC.) only three wounded and one killed in our regiment; no one from our company hurt. The colors were hit twice by pieces of shell . . . . It was a good movement too; for the way the Rebels turned somersaults in the air would not be believed." (19)

The 110th spent the last weeks of November, and December and January in camp near New Iberia. Early in 1864 Colonel Sage resigned, and was succeeded by Major Charles Hamilton, remembered for his courageous leadership at Port Hudson. In February the regiment was ordered to Fort Jefferson on Garden Key in the Dry Tortugas.

A short comment upon those who would remain behind: Casualties on the battlefield had been light: a total of 55 were listed as killed, wounded or missing; and of this number thirty recovered from their wounds. But the cemeteries and hospitals of Louisiana told a different story. More than one-hundred and fifty had died from disease, and many more remained in the hospitals. One of the more fortunate among the latter was Henry Wheeler of Mexico, who was convalescing in New Orleans from a fever contracted at Port Hudson. He was able to leave the hospital in December for occasional strolls down town. He denied that he was homesick, but his observations suggest a touch of melancholy. "Officers are thicker here in the city than toads after a shower. They are getting big pay and good living, and what do they care how long the war lasts, as long as they can stay here. And I have come to the conclusion myself that there is no use of fretting the cattle. . . . . There is no news of any consequence . . except a courtmartial now and then of some officer that the others find fault with because he can steal more than they can."

But Wheeler also had lighter moments: Venturing out among the crowds near Trivoli Circle he observed the excitement at the approach of the Christmas holiday week. "They appear to make a sort of fourth of July of it: firecrackers and rockets and such are around in great quantities. The sidewalks are lined with silks and finery, and the places of business are doing a great business." (20)

News of a transfer to Fort Jefferson was scarcely reassuring to the men of the 110th Regiment. They had spent more than a year in distant Louisiana; and to be shifted to a more isolated post where their sole responsibility would be to guard Federal prisoners was no answer to their supplications. The islands, seventy miles westward from Key West, were named by their discoverer, Ponce de Leon, "Las Tortugas," because of the great number of turtles which gathered there. "Dry" suggests an absence of fresh water on this tiny coral strand.

The construction of a medieval-like bastion, designed as a link in a chain of coastal defenses between the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean, was begun in 1846, and work on it was continued through the Civil War. The hexagonal brick fort was a half mile in perimeter, with walls

eight feet thick and fifty feet high. At one corner a light-house rose above the superstructure. Inside the walls was a parade ground, fringed by a few orange, lemon and palm trees.

At the outset of the war Fort Jefferson was one of several southern fortifications which were not seized by the Confederates. Not needed for the defense of the Union, due to the naval supremacy of the North, it was converted into a prison, with its gun rooms and magazines used as cells.

The little fort surrounded by the blue waters of the gulf, and under a sub-tropical sun, might be an ideal spot for a vacation, but its deadly monotony made it a prison for both convict and guard.

Most of the companies of the 110th appear to have departed from New Orleans aboard the steamer MERRIMAC on February 24, 1864. They reached Key West two days later, and were taken to Fort Jefferson the next day. On March 1 the regiment took formal possession of the island fortress. Guard duty and drills, eating and sleeping, filled many hours. Yet countless others remained, and as shall be seen, the ingenuity of the soldier was tested to the extreme. Eighteen months before, the men had looked forward to their war experience with a spirit of adventure; now they sought to preserve their sanity by keeping busy.

Details of the life of the regiment at Fort Jefferson may be followed in the small pocket diaries kept by Private Leander Tuller of Mexico and Corporal Harrison B. Herrick of Granby.

A typical day might consist of guard duty: 76 men were required, 51 for garrison and 25 for bastion watch. Formal drill was held for two hours, bayonet practice being interspersed with other exercises including artillery drill. Company inspection and dress parade were daily fixtures at 5 p. m., and on Sundays, a morning inspection sufficed, except for the contingent on guard.

A short resume of Leander Tuller's daily life might serve to illustrate the routine of the regiment, though it is doubtful whether many of the men kept up with Tuller's pace. In addition to his regular guard duty he was assigned to the hospital as a nurse. His work included cleaning and whitewashing as well as care of the sick, and incidental carpentry.

His first recreation appears to have been the collecting and cleaning of shells, and cutting them into buttons. On one occasion he reported that a group of 30 had been out collecting them. A short time later his interest shifted to turtle eggs. On May 11 he started out with other egg hunters at 3 a. m. for East Key. They returned with 26 dozens. In between times he went fishing and sailing. His all-absorbing interest, however, was the collecting and pressing and arranging of sea mosses. He became so skillful that his collections were in demand, and he sold some of them for sums as high as $30. This was more than a private's pay for two months. Tuller observed on one occasion, that he had "moss on the brain." (21)

Descendants of veterans of the 110th Regiment in the county recall seeing such seaweed collectons when children, and the Curator of the Fort Jefferson Museum reports that there are several collections among their holdings, and that they are well-preserved and colorful.

The arrival of ships every few days with mail, supplies and prisoners as well as news and gossip also enlivened the routine. When there was nothing better there were card games, liquor smuggled in from Key West, or walks around the angled ramparts. During summer months the intense heat tended to keep recreation seekers in-doors.

Tuller reported little about the hours on watch. But there appear to have been frequent attempts to escape as well as lesser infractions of the rules. Escapes in small craft were not unusual, but the long distance to the mainland usually permitted

the captors to intercept them. The usual punshment for misconduct was the tying up of the culprit with his toes barely touching the ground. Tuller noted that the toughest were soon begging for mercy. Once, when two sailors were missing, the entire prisoner-personnel of about 700 was carried to Long Key, which lay nearby, while a minute search was made. The sailors were eventually discovered and reincarcerated. There were also altercations between guards, and a variety of accidents. Both prisoners and guards occasionally fell from the bastions into the shallow moat, and island hopping for moss and shells was rendered hazardous by unexpected changes in the weather. Intoxication was a recurring problem, and arrests were made for drinking while on duty and supplying liquor to prisoners.

But with all of the above diversions there was monotony. One entry in Tuller's diary reads: "Looking for mail all day. It is as dull as a jack knife; two years ago today I enlisted. I maid (SIC.) a fool of myself." (22)

A Pulaski soldier, with an obvious sense of humor, related "one day's work" for the family back home:

"The boys have nice times here, hunting shells and bleaching coral, with fishing, boat races, etc. At evening have singing, instrumental music on the violin and flute, at 9 p. m. we play the tattoo, and at 30 minutes past 9 the drummer beats taps. Then we retire. Then commences the skirmish with the fleas. We light a candle and, after the battle is over, we fall asleep, and in the morning give in our 'official reports' of the fight. After breakfast we play the 'police call,' the call for 'tonics,' then go to our rooms and brighten our brass for a 'guard mount.' After that is over, we go to our rooms, go to bed and sleep --- if possible. If we cannot get any sleep, we read or write, and at 12 m. we play the 'dinner call,' which we execute with great energy, for then we go to our companies, and 'grub' — fresh beef, potatoes, bread and tea. Then we retire and sleep, or go out in a boat and hunt shells and coral. After we come in, we begin to fix for 'dress parade.' After dress parade comes 'retreat,' and 'sundown gun.' This comprises our day's work until 9 p. m., then we play the tattoo and retire." (23)

Incidentally, officers had some advantages, seldom given to the men in the ranks. They could find reasons to take trips to Key West, and though it seems to have occurred rarely, an officer might be visited by his wife. Tuller noted the arrival of the wife of Captain Henry C. Devendorf of Hastings. He also mentioned a fishing party, and a dance aboard a gunboat, for officers only.

One rather surprising omission was the absence of church services. The Rev. Edward Lord of Fulton was assigned to the regiment at the outset as Chaplain, but he resigned before the regiment reached Fort Jefferson. In July, 1865, when they were about to leave the island, Tuller noted that there was preaching by the Chaplain of the 161st Regiment, and that it was the first sermon they had heard in many months.

Perhaps the most controversal issue during the eighteen months at Fort Jefferson was the arrival of a colored regiment. Rumors that they were to be relieved first made the rounds. But when the regiment arrived (99th Regiment U. S. Colored Troops), they were garrisoned at the fort and assigned to share the duty, rather than replace the 110th. Enthusiasm was quickly dispelled. "Everybody was mad about them, especially the officers," Harrison B. Herrick observed. (24) Several days later he noted that several of the men in the 110th had a "muss with the Darkeys about water, and it came near ending in a free fight with all hands. It ended with Little of Company I coming near shooting one Negar, so near that he cut the wool (hair), and he run the bayonet halfway through him." (25)

The experiment in integration

lasted just three weeks. The 99th Regiment was then removed to Key West for duty elsewhere.

As the spring of 1865 approached (It came early at Tortugas.), the men of the 110th eagerly awaited the collapse of the Confederacy. At the sight of smoke or sails on the horizon, they flocked to the dock to learn the latest news. In this manner, early in March, they received the fall of Charleston, S. C. and Wilmington, N. C., two Confederate strongholds on the Atlantic coast. Then it was the fall of Richmond and Appomattox.

On April 25 Peter Kitts reported, "We received the joyful news of the fall of Richmond and Petersburg, and at 2 p. m. a salute of 200 guns was fired in honor of the occasion. We were all greatly rejoiced over the news. Webb's Minstrels were here, and the band played several lively pieces. It took 1100 pounds of powder to fire the salutes."

But three days later their joy was turned to gloom, when word arrived of Lincoln's assassination. A letter to the local press explained how they learned of the tragedy.

"Yesterday the ELLA MORSE hove in sight, and it was sung out, 'Good news coming', as all of the bunting could be seen. But on nearer approach it was noticed that the flags were at half-mast. The inquiry flew from mouth to mouth, 'What does that mean?' . . . . You can imagine our feelings when it was announced from the deck of the steamer as it touched the wharf, 'President Lincoln is dead! ' ' Fell by the hand of an assassin! ' None could find language to express their thoughts and feelings. In suppressed tones orders were issued for lowering our flag to half-mast. . .

"Some prisoners . . . expressed themselves as glad that the President was assassinated, and wished it had been done years ago. But they soon found themselves confined in a dungeon on a diet of bread and water. Some of our soldiers not on duty were so indignant that, could they have reached them, they would have administered justice without mercy . . . . One of these prisoners was tried for murder, found guilty, and sentenced to be hung, but the President commuted his sentence to imprisonment for life at this post; and that was his gratitude." (26)

Peter Kitts gave a similar account of the incident, but added that three of those who cheered the assassination were tied with only their toes touching the ground. "They soon came to time," he related, "and begged and cried and stormed and prayed and cussed, but no one had any sympathy for them; although it was hard to see them suffering." (27)

The next day flags were at half-mast, and cannon were fired every half hour from sunrise to sunset.

With hostilities at an end the men waited for their relief. They put in much the same routine as before, but their hearts were not in it. "Everything as dead as a door nail," Herrick recorded, and "dead as ever." Outings to neighboring keys, however, continued to interrupt the monotony. "Went to Loggerhead," he noted. "We had a jolly old time. Henderson rode a turtle. I was quite tired when we got back to the Fort about one o'clock." And again, "Went over to Loggerhead on a party in the evening. Sullivan blacked up and sung and danced some. He, Kinney and Barney got pretty high." (28)

On July 7 Herrick observed that he had signed a petition with a good share of the noncommissioned officers to be sent to Governor Fenton to learn why they had not been relieved. Interest mounted momentarily on July 24, when a transport came in with several prisoners, who had been convicted by a military court of collaboration with John Wilkes Booth in the assassination plot. Among them, incidentally, was the famous Dr. Samuel Mudd, who had set Booth's broken leg, and had been arrested as an accomplice. Dr. Mudd remained a prisoner for several years, when his heroic services in

a yellow fever epidemic won him a pardon from President Johnson in February, 1869.

Just after noon on July 28 a ship came into sight bearing the 161st New York Infantry. Their warm welcome was a foregone conclusion. Even so, patience was required, for another two weeks were passed while the regiment awaited transportation. Veterans of the World Wars and Korea will recall the torture of such a vigil.

"Dull as hell all day," Herrick grumbled on August 8.

Finally, on August 16 the steamer TONAWANDA arrived to pick up the "exiles." After a rough voyage they reached New York on August 24, and Albany the following day, where they were mustered out, three years to the day after they had been mustered. A few days later ,the not-so-weary-anymore soldiers were celebrating amidst their families and friends.

## Footnotes

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# Chapter VI

## The One Hundred Forty-Seventh Infantry; Immortality At Gettysburg

Perhaps Oswego County's best remembered regiment was the 147th Infantry, New York Volunteers; and it truly deserved its recognition. Its glorious stand at Gettysburg alone would merit immortality.

Its beginnings are closely linked to the 110th Regiment, since units unable to gain admittance became the nucleus for the 147th. Under the spell of the fiery eloquence of D. C. Littleohn, "The farmer left his field, the artisan his bench; all pursuits gave way to the extreme necessity of the hour, and the men hastened to enrol their names under the sacred banner of their country." (1)

The formal drive for a new regiment was launched during the third week of August, 1862, while the 110th Regiment awaited transportation from Fort Ontario. "Tremendous" war meetings were staged in East and West Park in Oswego, and subsequently in the various wards, towns and villages throughout the city and county.

If there was anything different in the appeal it was the emphasis given to the ethnic and religious groups. The Irish and Germans were especially active in the recruitment of the 147th. The Rev. Michael Kelly, Pastor of St. Paul's Roman Catholic Church in Oswego urged his parishioers to enroll. The Church advocated allegiance to the state, he noted, unless the government were tyrannical. He pointed to the zealous advocate of the war as a means of preserving freedom under the Constitution by Archbishop Hughes of New York. A few weeks later the Irish ladies of the third ward presented a beautiful silk banner to Captain Patrick Regan of Co. I; a company which was Irish from "A" to "Z" (or at least to "W" or "Y"). W. I. Preston made the presentation, and lauded the Irish for their valor in the war. (2)

At another rally the German ladies of the city contributed a flag to Captain Delos Gary's company (G), which had a substantial German flavor. The presentation was made by the Rev. Jacob Post, Pastor of the German Lutheran Church. The flag of black, red and yellow, he observed, had significance for Germans; the BLACK suggested the threatening aspect of the future; the RED was symbolic of blood to be shed for the GOLDEN LIBERTY. Scarcely an able-bodied man remained in his congregation, he added. Following Captain Gary's response, Mr. Post addressed the audience in German. (3)

As the organization of the regiment shaped up, it included Andrew S. Warner of Sandy Creek, a former Assemblyman, as Colonel, and John G. Butler of Onondaga County, who had army experience as Lt. Colonel. The Adjutant was an Oswego Newspaperman, Dudley Farling, and the Quartermaster, Benjamin F. Lewis. Dr. A. S. Coe of Oswego was appointed Surgeon, and the Rev. Harvy E. Chapin of Sandy Creek, Chaplain. All of the captains and almost all of the other commissioned officers had

very little military experience, and there would be frequent resignations and promotions before the regiment would be prepared for combat. Exceptions were Major Francis C. Miller, a former captain of the 24th Regiment, Captain Nathaniel A. Wright who had served as a Sergeant in the 24th and Captain George Harney, who had been orderly sergeant for several years in a company of regulars.

The companies as they were recruited reflected the following regional break-down:

Companies A, B and I were recruited from Oswego; C from Richland, Albion and Williamstown, and D from the Fulton area. E enrolled men from Sandy Creek, Redfield, Orwell and Boylston; F from Mexico, Palermo and New Haven; G from Oswego and Scriba. H was filled by enlistees from the eastern towns: Constantia, Parish, Amboy and West Monroe; and K from Oswego, Scriba and Fulton.

The regiment was mustered on September 22 and 23, 1862, and departed for Washington on September 27. The leave-taking had been postponed from hour to hour while orderlies worked feverishly to round up deserters. Eleven were eventually discovered, some drunk and others in hiding. They failed to find all of them, however, and when an officer left Oswego the following week with a detail of deserters, the local press facitiously referred to them as Oswego's "fifth regiment." One deserter, who appeared to personify innocence was entrusted to escort other deserters. But at Syracuse he disappeared a second time, and was subsequenty assigned to a cavalry regiment at Staten Island. (4)

The regiment took a rather roundabout itinerary to Washington: from Syracuse to Geneva by rail; Geneva to Watkins Glen by steamboat, and thence to Elmira by rail. They paused at the latter long enough to receive Enfield rifles before boarding cattle cars on the Pennsylvania Northern Railroad for Baltimore. They spent a night at Baltimore as guests of the 110th Regiment, which had recently begun an encampment there, and then went on to Washington. A day later they crossed the Long Bridge to Camp Chase. Several days later they recrossed the Potomac to Camp Morris just beyond Georgetown on the western fringe of the District, where they were put to work on the fortifications, road building and construction consumed more time than drill, and the men were soon grumbling. Also, many were soon stricken with a variety of camp maladies.

But there were pleasant moments too. On Sunday afternoon, November 2, while on dress parade, a carriage drove up and stopped. Its occupants were recognized as President Lincoln and Secretary Seward. They greeted Colonel Warner and chatted briefly about the 147th. The President was introduced, and the regiment presented arms and displayed the colors. Lincoln then stood up and drove along the entire line. Sergeant Lansing thought that Lincoln looked younger than he had expected, whereas Seward was an old gray-headed man. They had a smart bay team, he observed, which could really "jerk" a carriage. (5) Having completed his unofficial inspection the President drove on amidst cheers from the men.

Nearby Washington was an attraction. The Capitol, Whitehouse, parks and statuary received the attention of the soldiers. But of special interest were the Patents Office, with its displays of machinery and collections of Washington's furnishings and clothing, and the Smithsonian Institute, replete with life-like birds, reptiles and mammals.

There were also unexpected incidents at camp. When a Dahlgren cannon at Fort Penn sent a shot buzzing across the camp, some of the boys followed its flight, saw where it burried itself in the sand, and chased after it hoping to retrieve it. They soon uncovered the ball, hefted and measured it. They then dragged it about, until interest lagged, for the edification of pickets in the vicnity. (6)

One quite unexpected asset proved to be Mrs. Elmina Spencer, an Oswego housewife, who decided to go to war with her husband, R. H. Spencer, a corporal in the regiment. She had the knack for making herself helpful, and comments about her—and there were many—were invaribly favorable, "She is right on hand," Bristol noted on October 13, "it seems good to see her ministering to the needy." (7)

Removed from their homes and loved ones the men faced the temptations common to strange and distant places. But one circle of camp-mates thought that they found a way of resisting them. "Father gave me some advice in regard to morals," Bristol wrote. "Perhaps he would like to know the agreement that a few of us made two days ago; that is, not to use intoxicating drinks, profane language or tobacco whilst we stay here." (8) He did not identify the group, so the pledge can not be evaluated. However, Bristol seems to have exemplified the qualities which he advocated.

At Thanksgiving time the boys were recipients of many boxes of eatables appropriate to the season. Company K received a giant 300-pound box of cooked turkeys, chickens, mince pies and other favorites from their well-wishers in Oswego. They served the food the following day, and when all had their fill they had seven baskets left over. Before the meal was digested, however, they received marching orders. Stuffing what they could jam into their knapsacks they were in line and moving in an hour and a half, disposing meanwhile of stoves and furniture at "sacrifice" prices. (9)

Marching in a brigade of six regiments they moved back through Washington and eastward into the Maryland countryside to Fort Carroll, arriving after midnight. The next morning they resumed their march, and continuing it for three days reached Port Tobacco on December 4. They were ferried across the Potomac to Aquia Creek, General Burnside's supply depot for his anticipated offensive against Richmond by the way of Fredericksburg. Incidentally, the men were willing to believe that Maryland people were secessionists; and they foraged liberally as they marched. According to Private Pease one night's activities netted about 50 rods of rail-fence for fires, 17 sheep, a cow and a yearling, plus an assortment of turkeys and hens. (10) They made camp at Aquia Creek, placing their shelter tents together and filling the open ends with brush to ward off the cold.

They were set to work unloading barges, probably their heaviest labor since entering the army. Corn, for example, was handled in three-bushel bags and carried from the hold of a barge to the dock. They next went out on picket duty to guard a bridge between Aquia Creek and Fredericksburg. They heard the heavy firing on December 13, but were unaware of Burnside's costly failure and the ghastly sacrifice of lives at Fredericksburg, until the following day.

After the battle they moved down the railroad to Falmouth, the Union headpuarters on the north bank of the Rappahannock. On Christmas they were guarding the railroad depot here and assisting the removal of wounded. Pease noted that he had helped some of the wounded get into the cars, and described the plight of one who had lost both arms when he rushed forward to raise the colors. The colonel proposed three rousing cheers for him; the response was deafening. Pease added that his Christmas dinner was about the same as usual: hard-tack, pork, coffee, a little soup and some raw oniion which he relished. "I thought of Santa Claus and the Christmas presents which were dealt out on the day; Thought to myself I would like to be home to enjoy Christmas, but I am in a different business, and must attend to it." (11)

During the weeks after Fredericksburg the men of the regiment invariably reflected the depression and disillusionment which swept across the nation. Was the Union worth the blood and sacri-

fice, was asked over and over again. The long lines of wounded awaiting transportation to Washington and conversations with veterans encamped in the neighborhood (including Oswego's 24th regiment) undoubtedly contributed to their despondency. They were looking for scape-goats and found them among the officers. "Some of our milk and water officers . . . have concluded that they are not made for the business and have resigned," one man reported, "Among the regiment (was) our wooden captain, who made such great promises while raising his company, and who has fulfilled them in such a cowardly and contemptible manner. He started for home this morning; the men rejoice that he has gone" To indicate that the complainant was not just ranting against higher authority, it might be noted that he regretted that their first lieutenant, C. L. Gridley has resigned. "He is man we all love and respect, and shall be sorry to part with." (12)

Lansing Bristol was ready to believe that some of the generals were not above suspicion, "The head generals are most of them Rebs," he exploded. He noted that Burnside's corps commanders had gone against "pushing the thing at Fredericksburg," and that General Sumner had two son-in-laws serving in the Rebel army. "It is a universal feeling among the old soldiers," he continued, "that they have had enough, and many of them say that they will never go into another fight. The new recruits are not spoiling for a fight by any means; and as regards the Nigger, most of them would say DAMN the Nigger. It is a queer state of things; it looks like an absurdity, fighting as we are, and the fighters feeling as they do."

Bristol also expressed a lack of confidence in the management of the war. "One thing is certain; everything is carried out with a view of making money; and as to bringing men on a level, especially as regards the whites, it is as far as white is from black."(13)

Undoubtedly, the depths of their despondency were reached during the famous "Mud March" in January. Stung by criticism General Burnside decided to take the offensive iimndrnte. Camsp i-windm fensive in mid-winter. Camps were dismanteled and furnishings discarded, and the army plodded forward. In two days it was hopelessly bogged in the mud. A steady rain added to the miseries of the marchers. With the impracticality of the operation demonstrated, Burnside countermanded the order, and the men returned to their old camp-sites to salvage what remained. Historians have aptly phrased this moment the nadir of the war.

The dismal winter months at F a l m o u t h, however, indirectly strengthened the regiment. The officers, who were ill or dissatisfied, resigned and their replacements, frequently coming from the ranks, were younger and better adapted to the exigencies of command. Colonel Warner and Lt. Colonel Butler, both of whom had spent weeks on sick-leave, resigned and Major Miller and Captain Harney, men of experience, took their places. There were also changes in the officer-personel of the companies. When spring came the regiment was smaller, but it was obviously more rugged and effcient.

When the mud began to dry in the spring of 1863, campaigns were again on the planning board, and the Army of the Potomac had a new commander, General Joseph Hooker. In March the 147th was attached to the Second Brigade of the First Division of the First Corps.

Late in April General Hooker moved west from Falmouth across the Rapidan and into the Wilderness, hoping thereby to avoid a frontal assault such as Fredericksburg. But the army had gone only a few miles when they ran into trouble. Lee had anticipated the move, and had taken a position athwart the Union front. On May 2 the armies met in the battle of Chancellorsville, an engagement remembered for Jackson's brilliant flanking movement which crushed

the Union right. It is remembered too as his last battle.

The 147th moved out from their camp with the first corps on April 28. Their objective was to keep Confederate forces near Fredericksburg from joining Lee. They later moved to the battlefield to form a reserve line. When the firing ceased Lt. Joseph Dempsey of Co. K walked over a low hill in front of their position, where Southern infantry had unsuccessfully charged against Northern artillery near the center of the line. It reminded him of "a large pasture of sheep lying down, to see the dead rebels covering the ground for acres in their gray uniforms." (14) He noted that the regiment had heard the Rebel yell every time they charged, and he attributed the collapse of the Union right flank to the fearsome sound. The 147th remained in line for several days, then withdrew with the army to Falmouth. Hooker did not renew the offensive.

On June 12 the regiment was again in motion. Lee had moved west and north toward Washington, and no one could forecast where he might strike. Sergeant Bristol succinctly recorded the first day on the road: "We left camp at sunrise the morn of the 12th. After a forenoon's march we halted an hour for dinner. When we started again the division was brought together on a plain to see a man shot. . .He was shot sitting on his coffin. That night we camped 24 miles from where we started. Very good trot for one day with a load of 40 pounds to carry." (15) The second day was even rougher. After a rest in the evening they marched through the night, leaving a trail strewn with surplus clothing and other non-essentials. By morning they were to Manassas. On the third day they reached Centerville; on the fourth they rested uncertain of Lee's movements. They needed the respite. The weather was unseasonably hot and dry, and on the day before many had straggled. Bristol had been hard-pressed to obtain straggling permits for his men, for to fall out without one was to invite arrest for desertion. "Some of the doctors," he complained, "have as much heart as the horse they ride on." . . . . . .

Having located Lee near Hagerstown, Md., the March was resumed. They crossed the Potomac at Edwards Ferry west of Washington on June 26, and encamped near Middletown the next evening. The friendly attitude of the people along the roads, the neat villages, well tended farms, and the beautiful rolling hills covered with ripening wheat heartened the marchers. "The boys stand it amazingly," Bristol noted. "But they have to; we have such tyrannical laws (about falling from the ranks)." (16) On June 28, after a strenuous hike over Catoctin ridge they reached Frederick. They marched the following day as an escort for a wagon train, and halted at 11 P. M. in Emmitsburg just below the Pennsylvania border. They had covered 26 miles. On the last day of June they went into camp at Marsh Creek about four miles from Gettysburg.

From the hindsight of a century it is hard to realize that here on the eve of the great battle even the existence of Gettysburg was unknown to most of the soldiers. Yet, no one at that late hour could assume its inevitability. But over-night the picture cyrstallized, when Confederate troops in Hill's Corps moving eastward from Cashtown Gap encountered Union cavalry commanded by General Buford just west of the town.

Since the first day's battle on July 1, 1863, was the 147th's "day to remember," it would be appropriate to permit several eyewitnesses to describe the battle as they saw it. The first two reminiscenses were written a quarter-century later, and were read at the dedication of the battlefield as a national cemetery. The third account was written from a convalescent camp four days after the battle.

### RECOLLECTIONS OF LT. J. VOLNEY PIERCE OF CO. G (17)

The sun had started the fleecy clouds up the side of Round Top, as the long roll sounded from the

brigade headquarters, July 1, 1863. General Cutler was an early riser,—his tent packed, horse saddled. The throbbing drum notes of the division found instant echo from Cutler's Brigade, and he and his men were ready to march. My breakfast, two hard tack and a tin cup of black coffee. This was my fighting meal, and the only one till July 4th. What a full meal would have done for me on that occasion, history will never record.

On marching from Emmitsburg to Marsh Creek, June 30th, the First Brigade led the division. From Marsh Creek to this battlefield the Second Brigade led; and the brigade formation from right to left was: eighteen men of the One hundred and forty-seventh New York, under Sergt. H. H. Hubbard, as headquarter guard, followed by the Seventy-sixth New York, under Major Grover; Fifty-sixth Pennsylvania, Brvt. Brig. Gen. J. W. Hofmann; One hundred and forty-seventh New York, Lieut. Col. F. C. Miller; Fourteenth Brooklyn, Brvt. Brig. Gen. E. B. Fowler;; and Ninty-fifth New York, Maj. Edward Pye.

The distant reports of artillery tingled the ear as we marched up the Emmitsburg Pike. White circles of smoke rising in the air told of bomb bursts where the gallant cavalry boys were defending the line of Willoughby Run and awaiting our coming. Orderlies with despatches dashed past us to the rear with encouraging intelligence that "The Rebs were thicker than blackberries beyond the hill." Pioneers were ordered to the front, fences were thrown down, and, as we passed into the fields near the Codori House, the fierce barking of Calef's Battery redoubled. With it came the order, "Forward, double-quick! Load at will!" Then was heard the wild rattle of jingling ramrods, as we moved towards the sound of the cannon. No straggling now; the old musket was clinched with firmer grasp. The death grapple was at hand. As we crossed the rocky bed of Stevens' Run, Hall's splendid battery dashed past us.

Horses with distended nostrils, sides white with foam, now wild with excitement, hurried to join in the melee. A fence at the crossing of the Fairfield Road hindered the battery. We climbed the fence, and passing to the south of the Seminary plunged headlong over the hill into the narrow valley between the Seminary and the McPherson House ridge.

The air was full of flying fragments of shell from Confederate guns beyond Willoughby Run. The Fourteenth Brooklyn and Ninety-fifth New York were moved to the front of the McPherson House, from the rear of our column.

Lieut. Col. Miller, not having any orders, halted the one hundred and forty-seventh near the garden with a picket fence at the McPherson House, a few rods east of the stone basement barn on the south side of the pike, and rode forward for orders. Hall's Battery again overtook and passed us in our rear, going to our right, across the Chambersburg Pike, and into position between the pike and railroad cut. Lieut. Col. Miller returned and ordered us by the flank to the right at a double-quick in rear of Hall's Battery, now in position on the third ridge.

We crossed the railroad bed, and the moment the left of the regiment cleared it the order came, "By the left flank; guide centre!" We are now in the line of battle moving to the west. The Seventy-sixth New York and Fifty-sixth Pennsylvania, with the headquarters guard, had preceded us, moving along the rear of the second ridge, and were some distance to our right and rear, on the second ridge, and not on alignment with us. While we were advancing in the wheatfield the battle opened on our right, and the bullets from the enemy were flying thick and fast as we marched rapidly towards our opponents. The wheat heads fell with rapid noddings, as the bullets from the Confederate line commenced their harvest of death. Men dropped dead, and the wounded men went to the rear before they had emptied their muskets; Corp. Fred Rife and his file closer, Hiram Stowell, drop-

ped dead, one upon the other. We continued to advance in the nodding wheat of death until our left touched on the railroad cut, supporting Hall's Battery. "Lie down! fire through the wheat close to the ground!" The battle was now on in all its fierceness; a continuous roar of musketry drowned all orders. Lieut. Col. Miller received a wound in the head, and his frightened horse carried him from the field. On Maj. George Harney the duty fell to command; none more worthy than he. On this field he wore a "star" in the estimation of his command.

Capt. Delos Gary dropped on one knee, close in my rear, with a bullet wound in the head; Capt. Than. Wright, just to my right, was pounding the ground and yelling at the top of his voice to "give them h---." The firing of the enemy in my immediate front slackened, and the enemy retired towards the right. I moved my men forward a few yards further to the crest of the ridge with the men of Company C, and discovered a line of Confederate skirmishers on our front, advancing from the valley up a slope towards a rail fence, firing as they advanced into Hall's Battery, while the battery was fighting for dear life. A detachment of Confederates gathered in a fence corner, a short distance beyond the cut. I immediately ordered, "Left oblique, fire." The order was responded to by the two left companies, G. and C. Several rounds were fired into the skirmish lines; it became too hot for them, and I saw them return down the hill with several of their number stretched on the hillside. Hall's Battery had been fighting that skirmish line in a death grapple. "Artillery against skirmishers is like shooting mosquitoes with a rifle." The Confederate skirmishers had the best of it up to the time the left of the One hundred and forty-seventh Regiment opened on them. The moment the battery was relieved from the force of the attack it began to limber to the rear, and, as the Confederate skirmishers fell back, the battery disappeared in a cloud of dust on the Chambersburg Pike. While this was taking place on the left, the battle reopened on the right with redoubled fury, and the cry came down the line, "They are flanking us on the right." The right companies, by Major Harney's orders, swung back on the south side of the railfence; the left front of the regiment was relieved of pressure from the enemy, who either laid concealed close under the ridge at the west end of the railroad cut, or had passed towards our right to crush that. The fight was again fierce and hot; the boys on the right were falling like autumn leaves; the air was full of lead. Men fell all along the line. . . .

Closer pressed the enemy. A regiment—the Fifty-fifth North Carolina—was pressing far to our right and rear, and came over to the south side of the rail fence. The colors drooped to the front. An officer in front of the centre corrected the alignment as if passing in review. It was the finest exhibition of discipline and drill I ever saw, before or since, on the battlefield. The battery was gone from our left; Wadsworth seeing our peril ordered his adjutant general, Capt. T. E. Ellsworth, to ride in and withdraw us. With his coal-black hair pressing his horse's mane, he came through the leaden hail like a whirlwind across the old railroad cut and up the hill to Major Harney, who gave the command, "In retreat, march!" As I started with my men to the rear I found Edwin Aylesworth mortally wounded, who begged me not to leave him. I stopped, and with Sgt. Peter Shuttz, assisted him to his feet, and tried to carry him; but I could not, and had to lay him down. His piteous appeal, "Don't leave me, boys." has rung in my ears and lived in my memory these five and twenty years.

Sergeant Shuttz was killed soon after near Oak Ridge. The time spent in assisting Aylesworth delayed me, so I was among the last to leave the field.

Finding the enemy so close upon us and the way open — the route we came in by — I followed

several of my men into a railroad cut. A Squad of Confederates were at the west end of the cut, behind some rails, and as we struck the bottom of that railroad cut, they saluted u s with all their guns, and each one loaded with a bullet. I did not stay to dispute possession for they evidently intended "to welcome us Yanks with bloody hands to hospitable graves," and I climbed up the rocky face of the cut, on the south side, and made my way with many of our men across the meadow between the railroad cut and the Chambersburg Pike crossed the pike into a small peach orchard, and I overtook the colors in the hands of Serg. William A. Wyburn. Just as I joined him he received a shot and fell on the colors as if dead. I tried to remove the colors, but he held to them with true Irish grit. I commanded him to let go, and to my surprise he answered, "Hold on, I will be up in a minute," rolled over and staggered to his feet and carried them all through the fight, and was commissioned for his courage.

We joined Major Harney and right wing of the regiment on the east slope of Seminary Ridge, on the north side of the Chambersburg Pike, refilled our canteens, and with the Fifty-sixth Pennsylvania and Seventy-sixth New York marched immediately over Oak Hill again into the corn fields, to the ground they occupied at the opening of the fight. From thence back to Oak Ridge, and assisted Paul's Brigade in the successful attack on Iverson's Confederate Brigade, and lay for some time among the oaks on the ridge, under a severe shelling from Confederate batteries, and then moved to the left of the railroad cut on Oak Ridge and filled up with ammunition, when the order came, "In retreat; down the railroad track and through the town!" Called roll in the Cemetery among the tombs of generations past, only to renew the combat on Culp's Hill; and then two days more of battle and death, continuously under fire and on active duty from July 1st until the sun went down in battle smoke on the 3d. How well they fought! How well they acted their part! Call the roll of the 380 who answered at Marsh Creek, July 1st. At Culp's Hill 79 responded. A loss of 301 out of 380. . . .

## RECOLLECTIONS OF ADJUTANT HENRY H. LYMAN (18)

July 1st, the regiment together with the balance of Wadsworth's Division, was hurriedly moved from Marsh Creek, by way of the Emmittsburg Road, to Gethysburg, and went into line west of the town about 9:30 a. m., relieving Buford's Cavalry which was contesting the advance of Hill's Corps on the Chambersburg Pike. It reached the line of battle by crossing the fields from the Codori buildings to the Seminary; thence westerly down the slope to the garden fence just east of the McPherson buildings, where it was halted for a very short time; and thence moved by the flank across the Chambersburg Pike, through the hollow in rear of the position taken by Hall's Second Maine Battery, northerly, crossing the old unfinished railroad in the hollow at our near grade, faced by the left flank and moved to the west between the railroad cut and the rail fence on the north of said cut, advancing until met by the heavy fire of the enemy who were coming up the opposite side of the ridge.

The position of the regiment when it first became engaged was about six or eight rods in rear of the line of Hall's Battery and on the opposite or north side of the railroad cut which at that point was deep. On its right and somewhat to its rear was the Fifty-sixth Pennsylvania and Seventy-sixth New York, but not connecting with it on the right. The fighting was at very short range and very destructive. After about fifteen minutes engagement, the Seventy-sixth and Fifty-sixth were withdrawn. The enemy, viz., the Forty-second Mississippi, were in the western end of the cut and covered its front, while

the Second Mississippi and the Fifty-fifth North Carolina were bearing down from the north on its right, one company of which had been thrown back along the rail fence to meet them.

General Wadsworth, coming up the line from the left and observing our position, ordered Capt. T. E. Ellsworth, his adjutant general, to ride up to us, and if no conditions existed which, in his judgment, required our continuance in that perilous position, to withdraw the regiment at once, as he supposed had already been done at the time of the withdrawal of the Fifty-sixth Pennsylvania and Seventy-sixth New York. Captain Ellsworth reached the line just as Major Harney was consulting his senior captains as to whether it was best to remain and take the almost certain chances of being cut off and captured, or to retreat without orders. The order was given: "In retreat, double-quick, run." In getting off the field, no order or line was observed. Some kept to the north side of the old railroad over the second ridge, now known as Reynolds Avenue; but the galling fire of the Second Mississippi and Fifty-fifth North Carolina, who were advancing from the north, drove most of them across the cut towards the Chambersburg Pike.

About the time that the enemy, who were pursuing us in a disorganized and yelling mob from the west and north west, had reached the second ridge and were halted to see where they were and where they should go, they discovered a line of battle at the Chambersburg Pike which immediately attacked them and advanced, causing several hundred of the Forty-second Mississippi, Second Mississippi, and Fifty-fifth North Carolina to jump into the deep cut at the second ridge for cover and defence, where they were captured by the Fourteenth Brooklyn and Ninety-fifth New York, who had been hastily moved from the front of the buildings and formed by Colonel Fowler to meet the enemy which he saw bearing down from the north. Fowler's force was also joined on his right by the Sixth Wisconsin.

After this first engagement, about seventy-five men and officers were rallied in rear of Seminary Ridge, and again moved with the brigade to the west to take up the first line, but finding it untenable on account of heavy artillery fire from the north and west withdrew and advanced northerly along Oak Ridge to a rail fence, where they soon became engaged with the troops of Ewell's Corps, assisting in the capture of Iverson's Brigade. During the last of the first day's fighting they were supporting a battery near the Seminary. In the retreat through the town, the regiment was badly broken and jumbled up, but was again rallied and assigned position in the reformed line on East Cemetery Hill, which it held until the morning of the 2d. when it was moved to Culp's Hill just east of Stevens' Battery, where it lay in the second line until 5:30 or 6 p. m.

The battle of Gettysburg was to the One hundred and forty-seventh its most notable one, not only on account of its remarkable experience at the railroad cut, but it was the field of its greatest loss. It carried to the first line of battle 380 men, of which it lost 76, killed and mortally wounded, and 144 wounded, most of whom fell during the first half hour. Of the 60 or 70 who were captured in falling back through the town, most of them returned within five or six days. No New York regiment lost a greater percentage of its men in this battle.

(Adjutant, or Major, Lyman was disturbed by accounts of the first day's battle which glossed over the heroism of the 147th regiment. He revisited the battlefield, and wrote dozens of letters to survivors seeking to pin down the details. Much of this correspondence is in the Civil War collection of the Oswego County Historical Society.)

**LETTER FROM PRIVATE FRANCIS M. PEASE, CO. F, OF NEW HAVEN TO HIS PARENTS**

(19)

West Chester, Pennsylvania
July 7, 1863

July 1st we was (SIC.) ordered in the morning to pack up immediately and march. We started about 7 o'clock. When we got within a couple of miles from Gettysburg off to the south of the town we saw two or three shells burst in the air. This was the Rebs shelling our cavalry which was on ahead. We began to think that there was fighting close by. We was (SIC.) ordered to load our pieces, which we did. We was (SIC.) then ordered on a double quick. We went so for some ways. The road was so crowded that we could run but part of the way. The horses of the artillery was (SIC.) now on the run. The Reb cannon balls soon began to hum over our heads, some pretty close. Our batteries soon began to return the fire. As we came up in a little hollow we was (SIC.) ordered to lay (SIC.) down. The cannon balls flew over our heads pretty thick, some of which struck just behind us and made the dirt fly fiercely. We was (SIC.) soon ordered to raise up and march by the right flank off to our right. We marched forward some 40 or 50 rods. We then left flanked. We now for the first came in full sight of the Rebs. They were not more than 30 or 40 rods off and their colors flying. We was (SIC.) now ordered to get down or partly lay (SIC.) down and commence firing, which we did very briskly.

The old 147th Regiment, N.Y.V. sent volley after volley of balls into the Rebs. The balls whistled round our heads like hail. The men very soon began to fall very fast and many wounded. There was a corporal by the name of Franklin Halsey of Mexico was shot dead through the head. He stood right by my side. We fought for some 15 or 20 minutes, when the Rebels flanked us on our right, and commenced to advance on us in large numbers. The fire was very rapid from both sides. We got no orders to retreat until the Rebs got up very close. We then was (SIC.) ordered to retreat, which we did at a fast rate. We left awful sight of dead and wounded on the field as we retreated.

We got into an old railroad ravine, and was going along as fast as we could, but not very, for the road was so crowded. Besides, there was (SIC.) a good many wounded men that had hobbled along and got into the ravine. The Rebel balls whistled over the ravine like hail. Soon the Rebels came up each side of the bank in large numbers, and we had to throw down our arms and surrender ourselves to them as their prisoners.

We was (SIC.) then marched to the rear for a distance of one or two miles and put under guard. Well that was the first time that ever I was put under guard. When they marched the prisoners all back that had been taken in this first engagement, I found that there was (SIC.) about 60 from our regiment that was (SIC.) prisoners. There were five from our company. They were Horace Creever, Chester Drake, Christopher Avery, Benjamin Baker and myself. . . .

When we was (SIC.) in battle I did not look around very much to see who was shot or wounded. The balls would buzz by my ears like bees. I expected every minute some of them would hit me, but as good luck would have it, they did not. I did not get so much as a scratch.

I saw a number of Rebel Generals after I was taken prisoner. I saw old Gen. Lee, Gen. Longstreet, also Gen. James Lane. Lee is a smart looking old chap and is gray as a rat. He wears a long gray beard. The fight continued all day the first of July. Where we fit (SIC.) was south of Gettysburg. The Rebs finally drove our men so they took possession of Gettysburg.

July 2d: The Rebs dealt out rations to us today, fresh beef and a pound of flour apiece. They also let us have their pots to boil our meat and their bake kettles to bake our dough after we got it wet up, which we did with some old dishes they furnished

us with. We wet it up with cold water and salt only, and put it in the bake kettles and baked it. After it was done I took a biscuit cut it open. I thought to myself it would make a good whetstone, but rather poor bread. But we was (SIC.) hungry, so we ate it very well.

July 3: The fight is still going on today very hard. We saw a great deal of their wounded as they fell back to the rear. There was terrible heavy cannonading heard all day the 2d. We was (SIC.) parolled the 3d of July; took oath not to take up arms against the Confederate States until we were properly exchanged as prisoners. Along in the P. M. we were started on a march under a flag of truce towards Carlisle to be delivered up to our forces a distance of 20 miles or more. We marched some 5 or 6 miles and stopped for the night.

July 4th: This morning we passed through Benderville. Here the people brought out plenty of good victuals for us to eat which we took in our hands and marched along. We marched to within 8 or 9 miles of Carlisle and met a lot of our cavalry. We was (SIC.) then delivered over to our forces. The Rebel Guard which was a number of the 17th Virginia Cavalry then went back with their flag of truce.

July 5th: This morning we started for Carlisle. On the road we met regiment after regiment of New York militia, men out for 20 days. Arrived in Carlisle about 11 o'clock. Here the Rebs burnt the railroad bridge and destroyed some buildings but a short tme ago. Got on the cars and left Carlisle for Harrisburg at 12 o'clock noon, arrived in Harrisburg at 1 o'clock. Stayed there for a half hour. We are now to be sent to West Chester to go into Parole Camp . . .

On the second day of the battle the 147th Regiment, reduced to less than a company in numbers, took a defensive position on Culp's Hill, an extension of Cemetery Ridge, and the extreme right flank of the Union line. In the evening the Confederates assaulted the hill in force, despite its steep slopes and the strong positions of its defenders, hoping to flank the Union position. Though they obtained a lodgment, they were eventually driven down the slope.

A small rectangular monument today marks the spot where the shattered regiment held the line here. In fact the improvised breastworks are still visible.

On the third day the 147th simply waited at their posts. They heard the awesome bombardment preceding Pickett's Charge, but due to the broken terrain and wooded canopy of Culp's Hill were unable to witness the so-called, "Highwater mark of the Rebellion," at the center of the line.

The regiment rested on July 4 and 5, and on the sixth set out for Emmitsburg. They crossed fields strewn with the carnage of the three days' battle and hunddreds of Confederate dead lying where they had fallen. During the next few days they crossed the Catoctin ridge and South Mountain to a point only a few miles to the rear of the Southern army, which was waiting on the north bank of the Potomac for flood waters to recede. General Meade did not order an assault, and on July 14 probing parties found that the army had crossed the river.

The Union army followed slowly, the 147th crossing the Potomac at Berlin on July 18. They subsequently moved south to Warrenton, and then eastward to the Rappahannock.

But in October they were back in the Warrenton region seeking to prevent the Confederates from severing their communications with Washington. A cat and mouse game was continued through the autumn, with one army, then the other, taking the offensive. But there was little action.

The repeated movements gave the regiment little opportunity to dig in or to stock its commissary. But in January they finally settled down at Culpepper and enjoyed a respite from the march.

They erected a variety of shelters to protect them from the cold. Spirits rose and the health of the men improved.

A visitor who saw their camp at the end of February noted:

"The huts are all neatly constructed, being built up of logs and covered with shelter tents, each hut containing a splendid 'old fashioned' fire-place, the heat of which, as it issues out, adds comfort to all the inmates of the tent, besides convenience, as the cooking is all done in these fire-places." (20)

A second row of "snug, neat tents" housed the line and staff officers, and in the center stood Colonel Miller's headquarters.

The folks at home contributed boxes filled with dried fruits and other choice eatables, and on several occasions the men found ways of showing their apperciation. When the widow of a soldier killed at Gettysburg was discovered to be in need of funds to support her children, they passed the hat, and dispatched $172 to her. (21) They also furled their battle-soiled flag, and sent it home as a gift to the city of Oswego, after first parading to take a last look at their beloved banner. The tattered flag, pierced by thirty-five balls and its staff broken at Gettysburg, was presented by Captain Gary to Major Lathrop A.G.B. Grant, who accepted it. (22)

Meanwhile, officers had gone to Elmira to seek conscripts and substitutes to bring the regiment back to normal strength. The veterans awaited their arrival with some reservations, and of course, saw about what they expected when they put in an appearance. Several hundred reached camp in September, and more in October, until they totaled more than four hundred, and out-numbered the original members. Bristol noted that the regiment was much changed, and that many of the new arrivals could think of little except going home, Winning the war seemed of little importance to them. "In short, they act like fools." (23) Deaths, sickness and resignations had again decimated the ranks of the officers, and the roster by the spring of 1864 scarcely resembled that of the year before. Gone was Captain Gary from wounds sustained at Gettysburg; also missing were Captains Parker, Huginin and Slattery, victims of prolonged illnesses. Major Harney was promoted to Lt. Colonel, Adjutant Farling to Major, Lt. Lyman to Adjutant, and Lt. Dempsey to Captain.

By March the regiment had intensified its drills in preparation for another year of campaigning. They were transferred at this time to the Fifth Corps, Fourth Division and Second Brigade. They were anxious to see what General Grant could do, but at the same time apprehensive of the day they would break camp and move forward. On April 28 Sergeant Bristol received a commission as Second Lieutenant of Company D.

On May 4 at 1:00 a. m. the regiment took the line of march with the Army of the Potomac. They crossed the Rapidan at Germanna Ford the next morning. About noon they entered a dense, scrub pine thicket, appropriately termed the "Wilderness." Here the fourth division formed into a battle line and pushed ahead. After advancing for several miles in foliage so dense that the line was soon disjointed, they encountered a volley from their hidden foe. They were repulsed and driven back. Reforming, they advanced again, and were thrown back as before. At dawn the next morning they pressed forward a third time, and were met with grape and cannister, and severely mauled. Flanked on both sides the division edged back, some losing their way and falling into the hands of the enemy. Unless their comrades had seen them go down, the missing might be dead, wounded, captured or just lost. Colonel Miller was missing and reported killed; Adjutant Lyman was missing and reported captured. The regiment sustained 171 casualties, 57 of whom were designated as missing.

In two days Union losses ap-

proximated those at Fredericksburg or Chancellorsville, but instead of retiring and preparing to fight later, in the manner of his predecessors, Grant ordered a forward movement designed to take the army out of the Wilderness. It was successful, but Lee was soon in his path again. At Spotsylvania the regiment lost 43 men, and at North Anna and Totopotomy 20 more. At Cold Harbor, where Grant attempted another frontal assault, the regi- remained in the pits, and escaped with 11 wounded.

During the next two weeks the 147th moved with the army to the east of Richmond, and crossed the James River to assault the Confederate capital from the south. They arrived at Petersburg in time to join in the push against its defenses on June 17 and 18. The regiment was caught here in an exposed position, and pinned down through a long afternoon under a broiling sun. The cover of night permitted them to retreat to the Union line. There were 61 additional casualties to record.

The regiment was again in a pitful state. It had endured grueling marches and exhausting action through six weeks, almost without cessation, and the siege at Petersburg was a welcomed interlude. They took their turn in the trenches, but were permitted to move back and relax between watches. They were also in close touch with Elmina Spencer, who was now working for the Sanitary Commission at City Point. "Every time any of our boys are there," Bristol noted, "she sends us something from the Commision. Our post boy goes down occasionally with a horse, and brings back a load of pickles, lemons, oranges and tobacco, etc. Such things are valued very highly by us. Yesterday Charlie (our post boy) went down again, and has just come back. Mrs. Spencer came with him and brought a fine lot of things, so that every man in the regiment will get something. She is all of the time on the lookout for the New York boys. Everybody knows Mrs. S. Day before yesterday she gave me a pair of socks. In them was a note from the knitter, a lady in western Massachusetts. She expressed great pleasure in knitting for the soldiers, and wished the receiver to write her, which I did yesterday." (24)

The regiment was on the reserve line at Petersburg when the famous tunnel under the Confederate forts was exploded on July 30, and did not participate. The problem of Civil War security and censorship is suggested in a letter from Bristol to his father dated four days prior to the blast. He had talked to an officer working on the tunnel, and detailed the information in his letter. If he mailed it promptly, his family at Granby Center may have had the intelligence before the Confederate army heard the explosion!

On August 19-21 the 147th moved with the Fifth Corps to the south of Petersburg to fight the battle of the Weldon Railroad. As at Gettysburg they were exposed when an order to retreat failed to reach them, and they were mistakenly shelled by their own artillery. However, the error was discovered in time to permit its evacuation without heavy casualties.

On September 30 they participated in the battle of Pebbles Farm, where Union troops captured several forts. They were also engaged at Hatchers Run in October in a forest reminiscent on a smaller scale of the Wilderness the previous spring. Lt. Col. Harney, commanding the regiment, was wounded and captured. In December they raided the Weldon Railroad again, but had little to show for it except the col and privations of a long tramp.

News from Oswego, that bounties up to $700 were being offered for one year's service, was accepted with indignation by the veterans now serving their third year. Bristol referred to the "dastardly cowards" who preferred to vote huge bounties rather than

enforce conscription. If any of the soldiers ever returned, and had fifty cents, they would have to spend half of it to pay off the debt, he averred. "Let them draft and have no commutation. If a man is fit for duty let him come or send a man equally as good as himself. In that way we should have an army in the field, instead of having, as we now have, three-fourths in hospitals and on the deserters' list, and a part of the balance in the field. (25)

The winter was spent on the siege line, with one conspicuous exception, another battle at Hatchers Run on February 5, 6, and 7. The action occurred southwest of Petersburg, and was planned to sever its communications with the South. With General Morrow out in front trying to rally his shattered command, volunteers were asked to carry the brigade colors forward. Captain McKinley of Co. I first took the colors, but Captain Coey, commanding the regiment seized them and advanced. Whereupon McKinley, took them out of his hands and carried them to Morrow. Adjutant Lyman noted that the effect was electric. The whole brigade followed the colors with a rush. Morrow was supported, and the Confederates were eventually forced to withdraw. Coey was severely wounded, and later received a Congressional Medal of Honor. Captain Dempsey, who pulled his company (K) to the front, and was wounded, was commissioned Brevet Major; U.S. A. for gallant and meritorious service in battle. Lansing Bristol was shot down and killed as he stood in front of his company (D). "His loss was a cause of sorrow to the whole regiment," Lt. Alexander King reported to Bristol's family. "He had no enemies. All speak of him as a noble young man and a brave officer." (26)

A notable gain for the regiment was the return of Colonel Miller. The report of his death in the Wilderness was p r e m a t u r e, though it had been repeated in the papers for some weeks. He had been wounded, but had convalesced in a Confederate hospital at Lynchburg. He was later moved to Macon, Ga., where he was a prison mate of Lt. Cooper of the 12th Cavalry and Adjutant Lyman of the 147th. His "tour" of southern prison camps had also included Danville, Va., Savannah, Ga., and Charleston, S. C. He had managed to supplement his meager food allotments by exchanging his boots, a scarce item in the South, for shoes, and his hat for a cap. He also sold his coat for $130 in inflated Confederate currency. He had finally been exchanged by way of Charleston Harbor and Annapolis. Oswego turned out to present him with a sword during a brief furlough prior to his return to duty.

On March 29 the regiment again moved with the brigade to flank Richmond. They fought at Five Forks, and were on the picket line when the white flag went down the line at Appomattox.

After a well deserved rest, they marched to Washington and participated in the Grand Review there in May. They were mustered out of the United States' service at Bailey's Cross Roads, Va., on June 7, and from the state's service at Syracuse on July 7. Later the same day 147 of the original 837 enlisted men, who had set out three years before, returned to their homes.

# Footnotes

( 1) Crisfield Johnson, HISTORY OF OSWEGO COUNTY (Philadelphia, 1877), 83.

( 2) OSWEGO TIMES, September 25, 1862.

( 3) IBID., September 24, 1862.

( 4) IBID., October 6, 7, 8, 21, 1862.

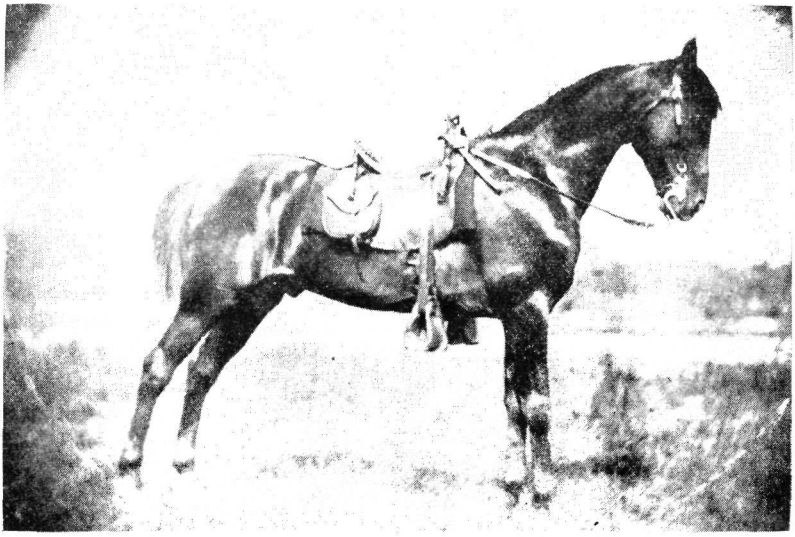
( 5) Lansing Bristol MSS., November 2, 1862.

( 6) Francis Pease, Diary, November 11, 1862.
( 7) Bristol MSS.
( 8) Bristol MSS., October 13, 1862.
( 9) OSWEGO TIMES, December 13, 1862, from a letter by Dudley Farling.
(10) Pease Diary, December 3, 1862.
(11) IBID., December 25, 1862.
(12) G. D. Mace to Abram Moss, Oswego Co. Hist. Soc. MSS., Jan. 28, 1863.
(13) Bristol MSS., December 31, 1862.
(14) OSWEGO TIMES, May 22, 1863.
(15) Bristol MSS., June 22, 1863.
(16) Bristol MSS., June 29, 1863.
(17) NEW YORK AT GETTYSBURG (Albany, 1900), III, 990-993.
(18) IBID., III, 1001-1003.
(19) Oswego Co. Hist. Soc., MSS.
(20) OSWEGO DAILY PALLADIUM, March 9, 1864.
(21) OSWEGO TIMES, April 14, 1864.
(22) IBID., April 18, 20, 1864.
(23) Bristol MSS., October 8, 1863.
(24) Bristol MSS., July 1, 1864.
(25) Bristol MSS., September 12, 1864.
(26) Bristol MSS., February 14, 1865.

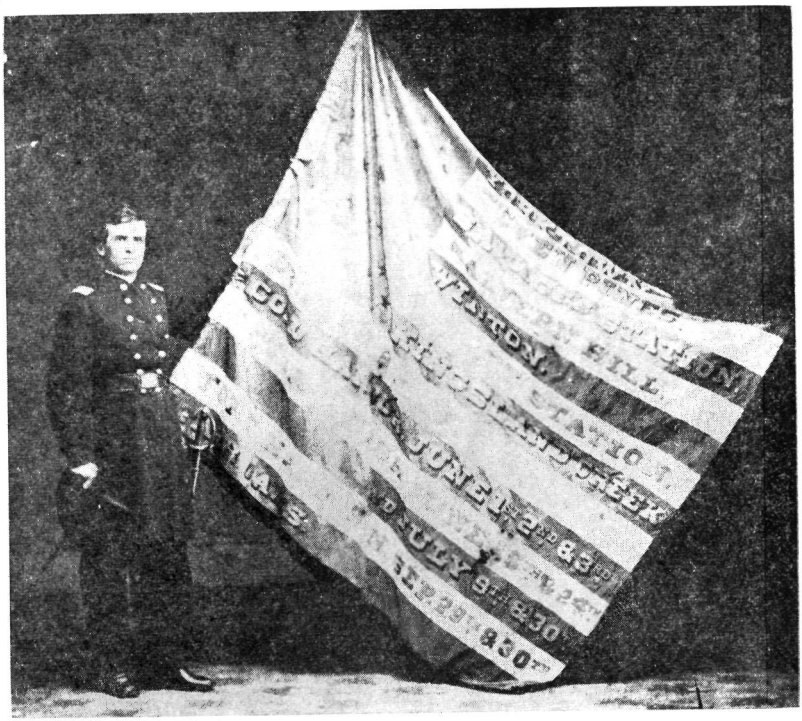
**Dr. Mary E. Walker, Oswego's eccentric Ass't Surgeon and Congressional Medal of Honor winner in the Civil War. Both achievements were unique for a woman in the war. She appeared at the Paris Exposition in 1867 in this costume.**

**Elmina Spencer, Oswego's practical nurse, and a field worker for the Agency for the Relief of the Sick and Disabled Soldiers, as she appeared in the Civil War.**

Lt. Col. Robert Oliver, Jr., of the 24th Infantry.



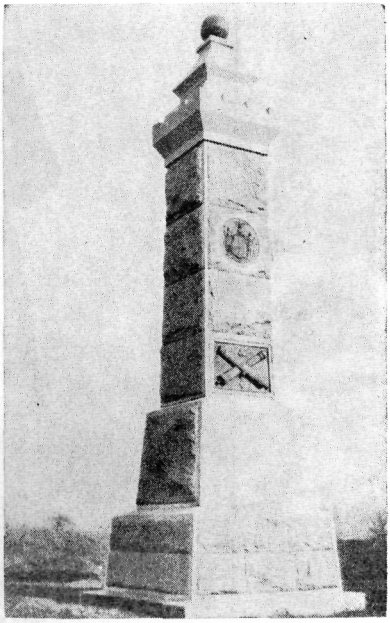
"Dick" survived two years of war to return to Oswego to lead countless parades in the post-war era. He died at the age of 32. The Oswego County Historical Society has a hoof, saddle, and banners.



**Adjutant Edward A. Cook of the 81st Infantry proudly displays the colors of the regiment. Cooke was an active figure in the local Grand Army of the Republic for many years.**

**THIRD WARD RECRUITING STATION stood at the southwest corner of West First and Bridge streets (Marine Midland Bank). For many years it was used as a tool shed on the Kingsford farm on West Fifth Street Road. Photograph taken in 1958 before the record-breaking snowfall of that year crushed it.**

**Lt. Col. William C. Raulston of 81st Inf. and 24th Cavalry. One of four brothers from Southwest Oswego to hold a commission; killed in an attempted prison-break at Danville, Virginia.**



**OSWEGO COUNTY MONUMENTS AT GETTYSBURG**

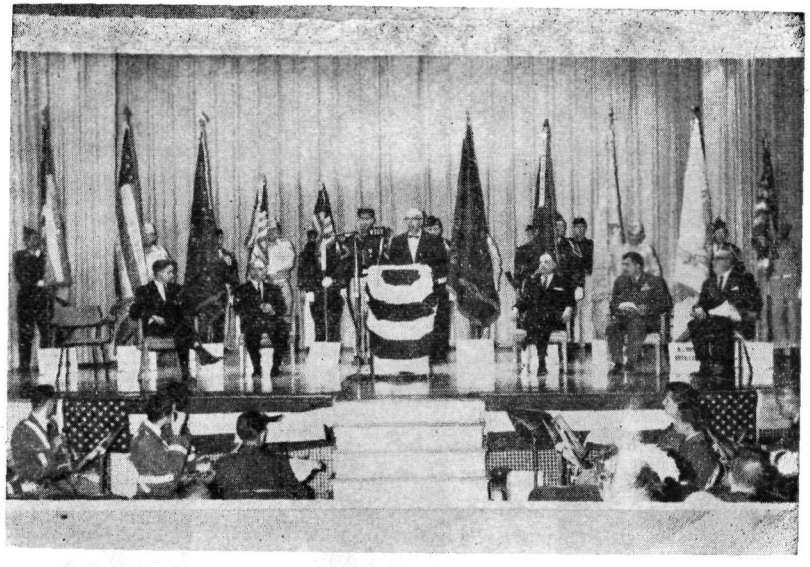
**Left: 147th Infantry. Monument on site of first day's fighting, just north of Chambersburg Pike and the Seminary buildings.**

**Right: Battery G, 1st New York Light Artillery. Monument on site of second day's fighting in Peach Orchard, a salient in front of the Union line on Cemetery Ridge.**

M. S. MYERS A. J. POTTER ROBERT ARMSTRONG

Syracuse, N. Y., June 21, 1910—Three comrades from Orwell, Oswego County, here in the G.A.R. encampment are M. S. Myers, A. J. Potter and Robert Armstrong, life-long friends and members of Post No. 387. Comrades Myers and Armstrong are brothers-in-law and both were wounded in the battle of Gettysburg. The former lost his right leg and the latter his left leg. They are neighbors and wear shoes of the same size. Now, when their footwear gives out, they buy one pair of shoes between them and Mr. Myers wears the right and Mr. Armstrong the left. A Post-Standard camera man discovered the three men together yesterday and they posed for a picture.

—Syracuse Post-Standard



**Display of Civil War Colors at Centennial Assembly, Robinson Auditorium, Oswego, October 5, 1962.**

**Colors (left to right) 24th Inf., 81st Inf., 110th Inf., guide-on flags of 147th Inf., 184th Inf., 189th Inf., 1st Light Artillery, Co. G., 9th Artillery, 24th Cavalry.**

**Participants: Dr. C. M. Snyder speaking; left to right seated: Wallace Workmaster, Anthony Slosek, Francis T. Riley, Chairman, Co. M. C. Maione, representing Maj. Gen'l. Lewis A. Curtis, Joseph C. Farrell.**

# Chapter VII

## The One Hundred Eighty-Fourth Infantry;

## At The End Of Sheridan's Ride

General Grant had launched his grand offensive against Richmond early in May of 1864 when he crossed the Rapidan. But had advanced only a few miles when he was confronted by General Lee in the Wilderness. He pressed forward despite heavy losses, and in an oft-quoted resolve, declared that he would fight it out on that line if it took all summer. But no army could continue to absorb the frightful losses in the Wilderness, at Spotsylvania, and Cold Harbor. There was no alternative: Either the nation would have to dip again into its shrinking reserve of manpower, or Grant would have to turn back.

On July 18 President Lincoln responded with a call for 500,000 more troops. The draft had already been imposed in Oswego County, but if enlistments were not forthcoming the unpopular measure would be invoked anew with consequences no one could foretell. Enlistments were preferred, whatever the cost in bounties, and recruitment campaigns were soon being launched amidst furious efforts to provide local bounties to add to those already offered by the Federal and State governments. The deadline was September 5. Districts which had not met their quotas would then resort to conscription.

Despite the OSWEGO PALLADIUM'S morbid reference to Lincoln's "draft upon the life-blood of the nation," the county responded with a will. If the enthusiasm characteristic of the early recruitment drives was missing, it was offset by a determination "to work, work, work ! ! ! Nothing else can save you from the draft on September 5." (1) Wardwell G. Robinson, an Oswego lawyer, was chosen as the colonel of the new regiment, and he joined the County War Committee in initiating the drive for volunteers.

A war meeting at Oswego on August 13 launched the campaign. William Lewis presided, and Cheney Ames, and former Mayors, Daniel Fort and Lucius Crocker, County Chairman Elias Root, and H. C. Benedict took turns exhorting the crowd. And while the torchlights flared in Oswego, Colonel Robinson was across the county at Constantia leading a rally there. Since quotas were apportioned by towns, leaders in almost every section went into action. Pressure was placed on town and city officials to provide bounties, and they were soon forthcoming. The city of Oswego, for example, agreed to bond itself up to $300 for each recruit and the War Comittee was able to advertise:

1000 VOLUNTEERS WANTED

OSWEGO COUNTY MUST AVOID THE DRAFT

$700 Bounty for one Year

Pay: $16 per month with rations & clothing

VOLUNTEERS

will be received at any of the recruiting offices in the County, and will be paid bounty on being accepted by the Provost Marshal.

Hon. Elias Root
Chairman, War Committee
Oswego County

Sylvester Town and Joel H. Warn of Mexico opened a recruiting office on a vacant lot next door to the TIMES office on West First Street, Oswego, and soon had the nucleus for a company.

A rally in Fulton on August 22 unexpectedly became snarled in a political issue, when a speaker, said to have come from Illinois, mounted the platform and delivered a Philippic against Governor Seymour. He was interrupted by hisses and calls to sit down. The Chairman finally stepped forward, and called for three cheers for Seymour, and the crowd responded vigorously. Some one called for three more, and they were repeated with resounding force. Amidst the shouting the uninvited spokesman disappeared. The Democratic PALLADIUM emphasized that Democrats and Republicans were working shoulder to shoulder. It might be noted, however, that Seymour's appointment of Robinson, a prominent Democrat, as colonel, appears to have stimulated the PALLADium's interested in the rigiment, and Democrats seem to have assumed a greater share of the leadership than they had taken heretofore. Perhaps they were especially anxious to avoid a draft just prior to the gubernatorial election in November.

On August 22 Volney reported the completion of the first company (A), and several others were added during the following week. On August 30 the TIMES heralded the city's reprieve from conscription by meeting its quota through enlistment. In another column it detailed enlistments, and credits and debits, in the towns, and reminded the tardy ones that the draft was imminent.

Meanwhile, the PALLADIUM reported that the city was infested with "substitute thieves" or scalpers, that is, recruiters from points beyond the county seeking to enroll substitutes by offering fat purses. An unidentified correspondent from Madison County defended such recruitments in Oswego County. Canadians were arriving daily at the harbor, he alleged, and were being recruited for the county. Madison had no such opportunity.

Recruitments reached their peak in the forty-eight hours before September 5 as companies were filled in Hannibal, Hastings, Mexico, Pulaski and Constantia.

Oliver B. Mowry of Pulaski recalled many years later that he had enlisted at sixteen, and that when the company was filled they were loaded upon double-wagons drawn by four horses, with hayracks, and boards placed crosswise for seats, and taken to Fort Ontario at Oswego to be sworn in. When the completion of the regiment was assured, the companies were dispatched to Elmira.

Private Walter Stewart, later an Oswego florist, recorded the details of his trip to Elmira. They changed cars in Syracuse, and entrained for Binghamton. Unexplained delays kept them in the cars all night, and when the train stopped a guard was posted to prevent desertions. Despite the crowded conditions they spent the night singing, laughing and shouting. At dawn they were in Binghamton. Here they were marched into town to an empty hall, where they received cakes and coffee. They whiled away the time playing a piano and singing, and doing impromptu acts on the stage. Some-one uncovered a pair of boxing gloves, and a series of sparring matches helped to enliven the crowd.

Early in the afternoon they returned to the cars, and proceeded to Elmira. Here they were assigned to new barracks with only boards for beds. The huge encampment and Confederate prison left the recruits wide-eyed. During the first night three attempts were made by would-be deserters to escape from the camp. Each attempt was accompanied by gunfire from the pickets. There was little sleep. (2)

The first four companies to reach Elmira had scarcely unpacked their bags when they were moved to the Shenandoah Valley in Virginia by way of Harrisburg,

Baltimore and Washington. With General Grant investing Richmond and Washington virtually undefended, General Jubal Early had swept down the Shenandoah Valley, across the Potomac and into Maryland. President Lincoln apprised Grant of the emergency, and reminded him that only "hundred day-men and invalids" were defending the city. He urged him to come in person to avert disaster. Grant pulled two divisions of the Sixth Corps from the lines at Petersburg, and added the Nineteenth Corps, which had just arrived from Louisiana. He placed the dynamic and colorful cavalry leader, General Philip Sheridan, in command. Before this help arrived Early defeated a hastily assembled Federal force at Monocacy and advanced to the forts guarding Washington. However, he made no attempt to enter the city, and retired to the Valley.

By the time the battalion of the 184th consisting of companies A, B, D, and F, arrived in the Valley, Sheridan had gained victories at Winchester (Opequon Creed) and Fisher's Hill, and had compelled Early to withdraw up the Valley. The battalion was assigned to the Sixth Corps, Third Division and First Brigade. Command of the detachment was entrusted to Major William D. Ferguson of Sandy Creek.

From the moment of their arrival they were on the move, guarding supply trains for the army. In five days they covered 123 miles, then changed directions, and in five more days were back at Martinsburg, where they had started. They were seldom out of sight of smoking ruins, grim evidence of Sheridan's scorched earth policy, a policy which left the entire Valley, one of the most fertile in the South, a desolate waste.

It turned out that they had rejoined the army just in time to participate in what was soon to be one of the best remembered engagements of the war at Cedar Creek. On October 19, 1864, just before a cold, misty dawn, as the soldiers were rolling out of their blankets, General Early struck the unsuspecting Union army encamped several miles north of Strasburg. The attack was so sudden that many of the soldiers could do little more than grab their clothes and scramble to get out of the way. Crooks Corps and the Nineteenth Corps on the left flank were scattered, while the Sixth Corps on the right, with a little more warning, retreated through Middletown. The almost impoverished Confederate soldiers plundered the deserted Union camp, and took 1300 prisoners, but the time consumed gave the hard-pressed Union forces time to reform. Nevertheless, the retreat continued through the morning and into the afternoon.

General Sheridan, meanwhile, was enroute from Washington to the Valley, and had spent the night in Winchester, twenty miles north of the scene of the battle. As he rode up the turnpike he heard the sounds of guns. Spurring his horse, he hastened toward the sound. The road was soon blocked with wagons and wounded men, and he was forced to drive through adjoining fields. Reaching the scattered detachments of his army, he rallied them, and ordered a counterattack. "The electric message from General Sheridan," one of the division commanders wrote, "put every man on his feet," and some were soon double-quicking to the front. (3)

Thirty-four years later Hiram Dutcher of the 184th recalled:

"We had retreated about six miles and the thousands of men were scattered in all directions, when suddenly there was a shout that Sheridan was coming. I was in the field about a quarter of a mile from the turnpike. As Sheridan saw the group of stragglers he turned his horse from the road, jumped a low rail-fence and came up to where we were standing. He rode a black horse with a white hind foot. I was tying a handkerchief around the fingers of a Pennsylvania soldier when Sheridan came along. He heard one of the boys call me 'Dutch,' and called out, 'Come along

Dutch, help me rally these men, and we'll be sleeping on our old camp-ground tonight.' He was good as his word. At eleven o'-clock that night we had regained our position, taken 900 prisoners , and captured 42 pieces of artillery. In my judgment that ride was the most stirring war incident ever chronicled in any country at any time." (4)

Dutcher's tribute to the dashing General pretty well sums up the action.

Tales of Sheridan and his black charger, Rienzi, were soon being repeated in song and verse. How many readers remember —

. . . . .

But there is a road from Winchester town,
A good broad highway leading down;
and there, through the flush of the morning light,
A steed as black as the steeds of night.
Was seen to pass, as with eagle flight,
As if he knew the terrible need,
He stretched away with his utmost speed;
Hills rose and fell; but his heart was gay,
With Sheridan fifteen miles away."

And then some verses later —

Hurrah! hurrah for Sheridan!
Hurrah! hurrah for horse and man!
And when their statues are placed on high,
Under the dome of the Union sky,
And American soldiers' Temple of Fame,
There with the glorious general's name,
Be it said, in letters both bold and bright,
'Here is the steed that saved the day,
By carrying Sheridan into the fight,
From Winchester, twenty miles away!' (5)

Of interest to the writer is another poem written by a wounded soldier (C. A. Savage, Co. H, 8th Indiana) in a Frederick, Md., hospital a few weeks after the battle. It was copied by Walter Stewart while occupying another bed in the ward.

A sampling of the stanzas must suffice here:

. . .

Old Early camped at Fisher's Hill,
Resolved some Yankee blood to spill.
He chose his time when Phil was gone,
The Yankee camp to fall upon.

At night, like thief, of sense bereft,
He marched his troops around our left.
With orders strict upon his boys
To nothing take t' would make a noise.

Get out of the way says General Early
I've come to drive you from the Valley.

. . .

Now when the day was almost lost,
God sends a reinforcing host.
The host he sends is but a man,
But that's the noble Sheridan.

On he comes with lightning speed,
Crying, who hath done this awful deed.
He'd better fare 'neath southern skies
Who dares my sleeping camp-surprise.

Get out of the way says Phil to Early
You've come too late to get the Valley.

. . .

The Johnnies thought the victory won,
And their usual pillaging begun;
Robbing the dead and wounded too,
As none but southern bloods can do.

. . .

The orders flew from left to right
And glorious was the evening sight.
The rebels fled 'mid cannon's roar,
Losing all they'd gained and

thousands more.

. . .

Three cheers for Emory, Crook and Wright,
Torbert, Merritt and Gen'l Dwight.
Three for Custer and his command,
Our Union and General Sheridan.

God bless our Nation and her sons,
And may this bloody war be done,
May North and South united stand,
As once they were a happy band. (6)

A local poet, Private Jerome H. Coe, a native of Oswego Town, and later a Syracuse physician, added his verses to the swelling volume. They were first read at a reunion of the 184th held at the Oswego Falls fair grounds.

. . .

"Four companies were ordered up
The Shenandoah's stream,
That trampling ground of armed men
Beheld their rifles gleam.

But though their guns were shining new,
And all unsoiled by fighting,
Their music made the Johnnies dance,
And helped send Early kiting.

Six companies upon the James
Were proud of those brave men.
And wished they too at Cedar Creek
Had fought with Sheridan." (7)

. . .

Casualties among the 184th in the battle aggregated 55: three killed in action; eight, who died from wounds; thirty-four , who subsequently recovered; ten missing. Most of the losses occurred in Company B. Among the dead was Captain Augustus Phillips of Company D, a veteran of the 24th Infantry, who had reinlisted. It had been an ordeal for seasoned troops, and its impact upon raw recruits, scarcely a month in uniform, can hardly be exaggerated. But such was the experience of this battalion.

Following the battle they remained in camp near Middletown for several weeks performng picket duty. The weather was now cold, especially the nights, and the men slept on boughs close to the camp fires, having not yet received tents or blankets. Wagon trains supplied them with food every four days. Not to hear one's name, when the ration muster was called, was to flirt with starvation. Worse, wagon trains were sometimes as much as two days late. (8)

In November they renewed their travels, again as guards for wagon trains. Incidentally, Stewart's accounts of the battalion were interrupted at this point, when he was stricken with typhoid fever, and sent to the camp hospital. Later, when the Sixth Corp was transferred from the Valley to the Richmond front, he was removed to Frederick, Md., to a United States hospital, where he convalesced.

Having followed the four companies of the 184th through their expedition into the Shenandoah let us return to the other six in Elmira. They moved south late in September to Baltimore, where they stopped over-night in a public square, and slept on the ground, or perhaps as Oliver Mowry of Co. G preferred, on church steps with a knapsack for a pillow. They were transported down the Chesapeake Bay to Fortress Monroe at Hampton Roads, and thence up the James River to Bermuda Hundred, and later to Harrison's Landing. Here they erected barracks and engaged in picket duty. From a "crow's nest" atop Telegraph Hill, nearby, with the aid of a telescope, they could see the spires of Richmond. However, they were not a part of the siege line; their principal responsibility being to guard against the threat of guerrillas or raiding parties against Northern communications.

An incident on February 4, 1865 would serve to illustrate the kind of action in which they were oc-

casionally involved. About 8 a. m. a small band of Confederates or guerrillas attacked the pickets at a rather isolated point beyond "The Wade" (a swamp), and captured four members of Company C. Major Ferguson commanding 25 cavalrymen was sent in pursuit. About 4 p. m. the expedition returned to the post, having recaptured the men (Otis Kipp, Stephen Frent, William Galloway and Charles Lester). They also brought back a prisoner, a mule, and three spencer repeating rifles, and reported that they had killed one rebel, "A good day's work." (9)

In addition to such alarms and short probing operatons into the interior, there were foraging expeditions for cattle, hogs, and other provisions.

The campsite was on the Harrison plantation, or Berkeley, the birthplace of the former President, and war hero, William Henry Harrison. The occupants had deserted the plantation house, and it was now used as a hospital. The men were intrigued with the elegance of the old brick mansion, "in good shape except for a few shell and ball holes," (10) the fireplaces, panelling, moldings, and wood carving. In the attic they found letters "dated a hundred years ago," a few of which seem to have eventually reached Oswego. It might be added here that the loss of historic documents was one of the tragedies of the war. From Harrison's Landing the men also took opportunities to visit other historic plantations, including Westover, the home of the distinguished Byrd family, and Shirley or Carter's the traditional home of the Lees.

Colonel Robinson and other regimental officers who had duties at Elmira and Albany did not join their troops until a few weeks after their arrival in Virginia. The "veterans" watched company, right wheel." But the maneuver was well executed, and the ice broken, and "he seemed as much at home in giving orders as talking to a jury." (11)

Oliver Mowry recalled one rather amusing incident at Harrison's Landing. A member of his company was not particularly cleanly, and no one would tent with him. He was ordered to the river to clean up, and to boil his clothes. But it did not last, and the orderly sergeant strapped a board on his back with the inscription, "I am a dirty man," and ordered him to pace up and down the street in full view of the regiment. Whether the soldier changed his ways is not recorded. But at the close of the war, just after the men were mustered out, the man who had borne the board walked up to the orderly sergeant and knocked him down, and added for good measure, "I am a dirty cuss, am I." (12)

From the day companies A, B, D and F were separated from the others, efforts were made to reunite the regiment. Early in December news reached Harrison's Landing that the Sixth Corps was being transferred to the Richmond theatre, and prospects brightened. On December 5 a transport steamed up the river toward City Point, and from the commotion and cheering as it passed, it was believed that the four companies were aboard. The men in camp answered with cheer following cheer for the 184th New York and old Oswego. Lt. Col. McKinley was at once despatched to City Point to appeal to General Grant, if necessary, to have them rejoin their comrades. That evening eyes were turned up stream, and a steamer was finally seen at the bend. As the ship approached, doubts were resolved, and at 8:00 the "lost" battalion stepped ashore. For the first time the regiment was a unit. Colonel Robinson recalled that the great-

During the first weeks at Harrison's Landing the regiment lacked a chaplain, and religious services, when held, were conducted by a Private, Elisha Robbins of Co. I. Feeling the need for a chaplain, the men held an election, and chose the Rev. Jacob Post, pastor of the St. Paul's German Lutheran Church in Oswego. Mr. Post accepted, and reported at camp, and was mustered in on December 31. He remained with the regiment until May.

The camp was along a main transportation line, and visitors were not unusual. Mr. and Mrs. R. H. (Elmina) Spencer of Oswego, representing the New York branch of the United States Sanitary Commission made at least three calls. Also, Elias Root, Chairman of the county war committee, and his wife, and Daniel O'Brian, formerly Captain of Co. A, 24th Regiment, who had lost a leg at Antietam, paid their respects. And when General Sheridan galloped into camp, he was given a hero's reception.

The flow of communications through the camp kept the regiment abreast of developments at the front, though the spasmodic artillery action told them much of the story. Word was received on the afternoon of April 3 that Richmond had fallen that morning. It was received with spontaneous cheers. On April 10 news of Lee's surrender was brought in. "Praise God from whom all blessings flow," Colonel Robinson recorded in his diary. Six days later he noted the assassination of President Lincoln: "About 12 n. heard of the murder of President Lincoln, and the attempted assassination of Mr. Seward, Secretary of State. The news created a profound sensation, and has infused a deep spirit of revenge in the breasts of the soldiers. God alone knows how this murder is to complicate our national troubles."

On May 22 the regiment was removed to City Point in preparation for its return. Their campsite there proved to be unhealthy, and the men were daily more impatient over their detention there. At last on June 29 they were relieved by the 96th New York Infantry. They boarded transports for Baltimore, and continued their journey by train to Elmira. Two men died on the cars during this last lap of their tour of duty. They reached Syracuse on the evening of July 3, and marched to the fair grounds south of the city. With only their final pay to hold them, the majority fled the camp that night to board a special train for Oswego, which had been arranged by their friends. The desire to get home and celebrate the holiday there had been overpowering.

Meanwhile, the officers with an impatience easy to understand awaited the return of the men for the final muster. Eight companies were finally rounded up on July 12, and the last two on July 14, "and the One Hundred Eighty-fourth Regiment no longer exisited in fact, but nevertheless remained as a memory." (14)

"Oft we recall the long gone days
And once familiar names;
Westovers, Carters, Harrisons
And Berkeley on the James.

The Wade and Widow Rowland's Mill
The church, Charles City Road,
Bermuda Hundred, City Point
And Appomattox broad.

Sometimes in memory we hear
The long roll sound again
Spring to our arms and line the works
With twice five hundred men.

Comrades, no more for us shall beat
The cheerful reveille
No more our colors proudly borne
Before us we shall see.

But while we live our hearts are true
As in the days of yore
To our beloved regiment
One Hundred Eighty Four." (15)

# Footnotes

( 1) O S W E G O PALLADIUM, July 19 and August 13, 1864.
( 2) Walter D. Stewart MSS. D. M. Russell, Jr., Oswego, N. Y.)
( 3) BATTLES AND LEADERS OF THE CIVIL WAR (New York, 1956), IV, 519.
( 4) O S W E G O PALLADIUM, April 8, 1898.
( 5) Thomas Buchanan Read, SHERIDAN'S RIDE.
( 6) Stewart MSS.
( 7) Oswego Co. Hist. Soc., MSS.
( 8) Stewart MSS.
( 9) Wardell G. Robinson, HISTORY OF THE 184TH REGIMENT NEW YORK STATE VOLUNTEERS (Oswego, N. Y., 1895), 31-32.
(10) OSWEGO TIMES, November 2, 1864.
(11) FULTON PATRIOT AND GAZETTE, November 10, 1864.
(12) Oliver B. Mowry's "Memoirs" appeared in MEXICO INDEPENDENT. Clippings in scrap-book compiled by M i s s Elizabeth Simpson, Mexico, N. Y.
(13) Robinson, HISTORY OF 184TH REGIMENT, 28-29.
(14) IBID., 43.
(15) J. H. Coe, "The Old 184th," from a clipping in the Oswego. Soc. MSS.

# Chapter VIII

## The Twelfth Cavalry And Their Wives); Beach-Heads In North Carolina

The 12th Regiment of Cavalry in New York State was organized in New York City between November, 1862, and September, 1863, to serve for a term of three years. In addition to the metropolitan area, recruitment was undertaken in the Albany district, in northern New York in Clinton and Franklin counties, in Buffalo, and in Onondaga and Oswego counties in the central region. Colonel James W. Savage, formerly on the staff of General McClellan, was named as the commanding officer.

Recruitment in Oswego County was carried on actively in Volney and adjacent towns, and two companies, A. and B, were soon enrolled. Among the personnel were Cyrus and Simeon Church, twin brothers, from Volney. Cyrus enlisted as a second lieutenant in Co. A, and later became its Captain; Simeon was mustered as a private in Co. B, but ultimately advanced to be a Captain, also. In Oswego, Alonzo Cooper enrolled as a private in Co. B. He too won a rapid advancement, and in a few months was a lieutenant in Co. I. Cooper's account of his experience in his letters and in IN AND OUT OF REBEL PRISONS, and letters written by Gleason Wellington, provide firsthand recitals of the varied experiences of Oswego County's soldiers in this regiment.

Camp Washington in the Richmond section of Staten Island was designated as the rendezvous center, and Oswego's companies were among the first to arrive. Training was both strenuous and time consuming. Gleason Wellington, an orderly, described the routine in early December, 1862, as follows:

> "We get up in the morning at 6, call roll at 6:45, breakfast at 7, drill at 8 till nearly 11, dinner at 12, drill at two till nearly 4, roll call at 4, supper at 4:30, then it is dark, and when I am not on duty at drill I am generally picking up stragglers or out shutting up rum holes." (1)

Infraction of the rules sometimes prompted severe measures. When two recruits from Buffalo left the post and refused to return, they were overpowered and "spread eagled." Their hands were tied above their heads, "and spread out so as to let their feet touch, and then tying their feet (apart). There they stood till they were glad to cry out to be let down." (2)

But there were lighter moments too. "I must tell you of a circumstance that happened last night after we got through drilling," Wellington observed. "The Captain marched us up to a wood pile that lay near the railroad (We were drilling in a lot across the track from camp), and countermarched us up to the pile so each man 'took a stick' on his shoulders, and then all marched to camp — one of the most comical sites I ever saw. There were nearly 200 men in line all with a large stick of wood on their shoulders, and when they all got in line we struck up 'John Brown' and sang it all along the line while we

marched up to the hospital, and deposited it on one pile; and there was nearly a cord of it. Every once in awhile the command 'order arms' (was given), when down would go every stick; then 'shoulder arms' and our march resumed. It was on the whole quite a laughable affair." (3)

Most demoralizing for the horseless cavalrymen as month followed month was the monotony of camp life. For a time deserters seem to have been almost as numerous as recruits. Eight companies were consolidated into four, stripping the officers of the defunct companies of their commissions. Such was the fate of Lt. Cooper. But he refused to have his military career terminated, and returned to Oswego and set up a recruitment headquarters in a vacant lot. He soon had enough enlistees to win a second lieutenant's bars in Co. F. (4)

Wellington doubtless expressed the sentiment of the men in March, when he noted, "It is one of those lovely spring days, muddy under-foot, but beautiful overhead. We are doing nothing but laying (SIC.) around all day (presumably a Sunday) - sleeping or anything else we can find to do to pass away the time. I was lazy at home, but I am getting worse here, so much so that 'grub don't taste good,' as Uncle used to say when I was at the farm." Rumors circulated in April that they might be sent to any number of places from Brooklyn to Buffalo to maintain order during the draft. But they proved to be unfounded. A brass band organized by the officers, however, "drove off the blues," but not for long. "I want to get away from here," Wellington complained, "if I am going to be a soldier I want to smell powder . . . . if we are to be kept here in this style, why not discharge us and let us go home, instead of keeping us here drawing wages which we never have received or expect." Many of the soldiers were receiving "heartrendering" letters from home, he added. Their families were in need, and they were powerless to provide for them.

"I am sure you would (understand) if you were to stand as I have done and deliver the men welcome letters, and see as the receiver reads them the tear run down his cheek, and when you ask him what is the news at home to hear him tell you how his wife has had to sell a part of the bed-clothes to keep her children from starving. It is nothing but a high sense of honor that keeps such men from desertion. They think too much of that fatal oath that bound them to bear such grievances, but I guess I am getting too warm on this subject." (5)

Wellington was not exaggerating; the men were dispirited. In fact an unsavory reputation was to cling to the regiment long after its ultimate departure from Staten Island. On several occasions brigade or division commanders, commenting upon the men and supplies at their disposal, complained that they expected little from such a regiment as the 12th Cavalry.

At last, in June, some ten months after most of the Oswego men had enlisted, the regiment embarked for North Carolina to become a part of the 18th Corps, Department of North Carolina.

Before relating the experiences of the 12th Cavalry in North Carolina, a brief account of the military operations there to June, 1862, would be appropriate. As a part of the over-all strategy to blockade the southern coasts and to press the Confederacy on many fronts, President Lincoln and his strategists had prepared an amphibious assault upon the fortified positions on Roanoke Island and the sand spits separating the Atlantic Ocean from the Albemarle and Pamlico sounds. The expedition involving some seventy vessels set out from Hampton Roads, Virginia, on January 11, 1862; entered Pamlico Sound at Fort Hatteras, and converged upon Fort Bartow on Roanoke Island. The fort was taken on February 7, permitting the Union occupation of key ports on the mainland

shortly thereafter: Elizabeth City at the southern terminal of the Dismal Swamp Canal, New Bern, Edenton, Washington, Winton, Plymouth and Beaufort were taken and fortified. And only Wilmington near the South Carolina border remained in Confederate hands. The operation was brought to a halt in July after McClellan's abortive campaign against Richmond from the Peninsula. Some of the troops were removed to Virginia, and only the more strategic points were retained.

A stalemate followed. Provisioned by water from Fortress Monroe and the adjacent islands, the Union troops faced a vast hinterland with its network of rivers, interspersed with swamps, woodlands and clearings. Inland at strategic points; crossroads, railroads and bridges, Confederate forces stood guard. Weeks of inactivity were occasionally interrupted by foraging expeditions, raids, or accidental collisions of enemy patrols.

The arrival of Yankee troops on the Carolina Coast was a signal for the departure of many of the residents. But other remained, to be joined in the course of time by contrabands from neighboring plantations and villages, and Confederate deserters. Empty homes were available for officers, who preferred to live off the bases, and there were laborers aplenty to cook and clean, feed and bed the horses, and do an endless variety of chores. The men in the ranks were soon employing freedmen, also, as valets to clean their clothes and keep their accouterments polished.

The above routine was already established when the 12th Cavalry made its appearance on the North Carolina scene. The regiment was at once divided into detachments and assigned to various stations. Seven companies, E. G., were ordered to the defenses of New Bern, Company E to Plymouth on the Roanoke River, C to Washington on the Pamlico, and D to Beaufort at the southern tip of the island chain.

The men were soon adjusting to their sub-tropical surroundings: sunshine interspersed with heavy thunder storms; brackish water, which was blamed for a variety of complaints, including dysentery fever and ague. They enjoyed the produce of the North Carolina farms; apples, peaches, figs and watermelons; and were pleased to avail themselves of horses native to the area.

They accepted the services of the contrabands who flocked into camp. But their initial friendliness and tolerance often receded as the novelty wore off. Wellington's experience was probably typical. "My Negro boy does the cooking, and right smart he is about it," he observed. (6) But a few weeks later he noted that he had discharged the contraband. "Confound the Niggers; they are so lazy that vitals (SIC.) don't taste good to them, and if you get one to do anything for you, ten to one if he don't (SIC.) do it the opposite way from what you want him to do it. I don't wonder that their masters whip them, for it would require the patience of Job to try to get any work out of them. New Bern is full of them, and they k e e p coming in every day. There are few around our camp; our boys won't have them about." (7) There were exceptions, however. Lt. Alonzo Cooper returned to Oswego at the war's end with his personal servant, and he provided for him until he was able to earn a living.

There were also a variety of contacts with the whites of the area. At one extreme were the "Secesh," who either abandoned their homes and moved out rather than accept Yankee rule, or remained behind but avoided the invaders. At the other were the collaborators or Union southerners, some of whom acted as guides for cavalry. That social contacts between conqueror and conquered be pleasant is suggested by an experience of Lt. Cooper.

One November evening he and a Lt. Bruce accepted an invitation to call at the home of a North Carolina family. They were received by their host and hostess, and two sisters of the former. After the usual formalities had been observed, Cooper asked the

ladies to play the piano and sing. They replied that they knew only southern songs, but that if it would not be offensive, they would sing some of them. Cooper agreed, but declared that he would not promise to endorse their sentiment. When the ladies had finished Cooper and Bruce responded with the STAR SPANGLED BANNER, which, to their surprise, was unfamiliar to them. They followed with RED, WHITE AND BLUE, THE LINCOLN GUN BOATS, and W H E N THIS CRUEL WAR IS OVER. Their hosts seemed to enjoy the selections, and exacted a promise from Cooper to write the lyrics of RED, WHITE AND BLUE, and WHEN THIS CRUEL WAR IS OVER. Later, the visitors learned that an old "Secesh" lady, who was in another part of the house, was extremely annoyed at the Union songs. (8)

Occasionally, the presence of "top brass" gave zest to the routine. Possibly the highest ranking officer to inspect the North Carolina troops was General Benjamin F. Butler, Commander of the Department of Virginia and North Carolina. His tour of Plymouth was recorded by Lt. Cooper in a letter to his wife. The general and his staff arrived at Plymouth on November 22, 1863. In his party were Admiral Samuel P. Lee, General John J. Peck, Commander of the forces in North Carolina, and retinue of lesser officers. Added attractions were wives and daughters of the dignitaries, including G e n e r a l Butler's wife and daughter. Cooper gave far more attention to the distaff members of the visitation than their male counterparts, but he did not overlook Butler: "I will only say that he is a very jovial appearing old fellow (he was 45), and has a little hesitancy in speaking, in fact he stutters a little." It was no exaggeration, for the squat general, formerly a Massachusetts politician, created a most unmilitary-like appearance. (9)

The party toured the base in carriages, and inspected the forts adjacent to the village. They then boarded a steamer, and went up the river a few miles to view a point where, rumor had it, a Confederate ram under construction in the interior would come into the river. General Butler ordered piles to be sunk to prevent its descent upon the base. Returning to the village, the inspection party departed for Roanoke Island.

Foraging offered another diversion for the regiment, with just enough risk to be exciting. Despite official orders against the seizure and confiscation of southern property, the line between foraging and a more legitimate raiding or reconnaissance was difficult to enforce. "(We) went down the road to a crossroad on a foraging expedition," Wellington recalled, "and you can well imagine we had some tall riding. We came to a house of a reb's that was away in the army, and how we did get into it was a caution. I went out into the field with a few men, and drove up some two dozen head of cattle besides some horses, colts and mules. It was just dark, and the way I went over fences and ditches made my hair stand on end (my hair is cut short to my head, shaved), when I came back and looked over the ground. By the time I got in, the boys had all the chickens, ducks, geese, pigs, corn and everything they could lay their hands on. . . . We were in the saddle from nine p. m. Sunday night until 10 p. m. Tuesday night. Our horses were very much fatigued, but our men were ready to jump at a chance to go again." (10)

There were also infrequent raids into enemy-held country. Such a mission to Tarboro, some eighty miles north of New Bern, involved the regiment in its first military action. They set out from New Bern in July, 1863. Horses and men were ferried across the Neuse River on flat-boats. They proceeded toward Tarboro and reached it on the third day without serious resistance. They tore up the track of the Weldon Railroad, destroyed an arsenal, and captured a train with supplies for the Confederate Army. While the despoliation went on a battalion of cavalry, including companies

A and B, crossed the Tar River beyond the town to reconnoiter enemy strength there. They had ridden about two miles when they encountered a volley from the bush. The horsemen charged three times against the hidden foe, only to be repulsed and driven back toward Tarboro. Captain Cyrus Church of Co. A, leading the charge was shot down, and killed instantly; eleven bullets entering his body. Lieutenants Henry A. Hubbard and Ephraim Mosier were wounded and taken prisoners. In all, companies A and B lost twenty men. Some of the others who survived the bullets and the grueling march were fit only for the hospital on their return. Among them was Gleason Wellington, who spent the next three months in the post hospital at New Bern, and another two months at his home in Oswego convalescing. But he subsequently returned to North Carolina, and to an eventual death in Andersonville Prison.

Despite risks of Southern offensives upon the Northern military bases, the day to day calm encouraged officers to bring their wives to North Carolina. Just who "broke the ice" to prove the feasibility of the plan remains uncertain, but it appars to have been wives of the highest ranking officers. However, a laundress from Oswego accompanied the troops to New Bern, and returned after a short stay; reasons unexplained.

Whatever its origin, wives were arriving in the fall of 1863, despite the many miles between New York and North Carolina, and additional obstacles posed by the war. A passage might be arranged at New York City or Baltimore for Norfolk, and from the latter to Beaufort or possibly New Bern. If the destination were to be a smaller port additional arrangements would be required, when local transportation was available. Travel time from Central New York might be as short as three or four days, or considerable longer if delays in transit upset the schedule.

Before boarding a steamer, however, the soldier's wife would have to obtain a pass from the Commander of the Department of Virginia and North Carolina. In 1863-1864 this official was General Benjamin F. Butler, mentioned above, remembered for his famous order at New Orleans dealing with obstruction tactics of southern womanhood. The "red tape" involved was rather formidable. But far more difficult than applications and tickets was the decision itself. The venture was not to be taken lightly. Women seldom traveled alone on land or sea. The ocean voyage passed Cape Hatteras, "the grave yard of the Atlantic." And there was always the possibility of a chance encounter with a Confederate blockade runner. Once in North Carolina, unexpected troop movements might separate a husband and wife, and leave the latter without assurances when and if her soldier-husband would return to the camp site. Worse yet, enemy raids might descend upon the region without warning, and expose the camp dwellers to the horrors of war. Food and shelter, and the endless details of housekeeping in a distant land amidst a hostile populace, added to the problem.

And not to be overlooked was the leaving of loved ones, including small children, at home. It is doubtful whether wives received the encouragement of their families or ever started without serious misgivings. But the fact remains that love, the sprit of adventure, or a combination of the two, overcame the doubts, and the ladies were on their way.

Take the case of Mary Cooper, wife of Lt. Alonzo Cooper. As late as November, 1863, the thought of joining her husband in North Carolina had not occurred to her. She was considering a visit with friends that winter in New York State. Alonzo urged her to do as she wished, but to be sure to pay for the hospitality. The arrival of the first wife at Plymouth, North Carolina, the camp site of Cooper's company, changed the picture over-night. It is known that at least two were there by November: the wife of a Surgeon Frick of the 103rd Pennsylvania Infantry, and Mrs. George H. Hastings,

whose husband was a lieutenant in the 24th New York Independent Battery. Their presence was like yeast in a batch of dough. "Why not my wife," flashed through the minds of a host of officers. Cooper hastily acquainted himself with the details of the passage and the costs involved, and resolved that Mary should come.

But she needed convincing, and Alonzo left no stone unturned in his bid for a favorable response. He minimized the costs, planned and replanned each step on the journey, and dwelt at length upon the alternatives available to the traveler. A well planned itenerary would shorten the time and avoid dependence upon strangers. She could entrust herself to the captains of the transports if last minute modifications were required. The Dismal Swamp Canal route from Norfolk to Elizabeth City would avoid the perils of the Atlantic. Just three days of travel time was separating them. He ended one of his most fervent appeals:

"Now don't for God's sake stay there for any reason . . . Come, come, come, come, come. WILL YOU COME. And Oh! I shall be so happy if you will, and so will you." (11)

When the above inducements were insufficient, Alonzo tried a more subtle approach. The trip, he reminded her, would provide opportunities to see the southern country, and such famous cities as Philadelphia and Baltimore; the chance might not come again in her lifetime. He had found a pony just suited for her, a side saddle, and there was a possibility of a piano. She would not fail to pack a riding outfit, including a jockey hat and feather.

Finding that generalizations were not decisive, he got down to cases. "I saw Mrs. Lt. Hastings this afternoon. She was out horse-back riding. She wore a blue riding habit, black hat with red feather and had on a 2nd Lt. shoulder strap (red), and looked really gay." Again, "I was out horseback riding with Mrs. Hock (wife of Captain Robert B. Hock of the 12th Cavalry from New York City) yesterday, and she rode your cout. It was the first time she had ever been on a horse, the first time any lady was on your pony. But we went first rate, and before we got back she could ride him at a gallop. Mrs. Dr. Palmer was with us, also a Captain of the 85th (New York Infantry). Hock has gone to New Bern, and left me in command of F troop, and I suppose she (Mrs. Hock) is included; though he did not say anything about it."

If more persuasion were required, he was prepared to exert it:

"Mrs. Hock said she would have come if she had been obliged to walk all the way. That's the kind of spunk. If you had half her spunk you would have been down here long ago. Mrs. Lt. Meyers went on board a transport, and told the Captain she would come away, (but instead) locked herself in a stateroom for thirty-six hours until the boat was out to sea. When there's a will there's a way you know." (12)

Mary was at last convinced, and the happy couple was reunited at Plymouth on February 7, 1864. Two wonderful months followed; then an unexpected termination; as will be seen.

A second local married woman to undertake a residence with her husband in North Carolina was Mary Poland, wife of Lt. Edwin A. Poland of Oswego, and the mother of a small girl. Mary left Syracuse on December 1, 1864 for New York. She failed to obtain a formal permission to enter the military zone from General John Dix, but decided to go ahead without it. In company with the wife of another Oswego soldier, Mrs. William B. Dean, she obtained passage on the ELLEN S. TERRY, a steam-powered transport which ran regularly between New York and Hampton Roads, and three days later was on her way. The water was rough off the Jersey Coast, and she reported with obvious pride that she was the only woman to frequent the dining room. The ship entered Chesapeake Bay, and anchored off Fortress Monroe. Several days later it proceeded past Cape Hat-

teras, entered Pamlico Sound, and docked at New Bern.

—She was apprehensive and disappointed not to find her husband waiting for her. But several hours later, amid rumors that the cavalry was poised to leave on a raid, he appeared with an ambulance wagon and two horses, and drove the two women to their lodgings after a rough ride of four miles.

Lt. Poland's forsight was obvious: an attractive little cottage which he had built for his wife awaited them. It had a piazza in front, trimmed with lattice work and a balustrade. Inside there was a fireplace, and tables and chairs, also fashioned by the builder, and the rstic setting was accentuated by fringes of moss hanging from the bare rafters.

The quaint little cottage was only the first of many surprises for the impressionable Mrs. Poland. Knowing the concern of her mother and father for her health, and their misgivings over the costs, she reassured them that she was perfectly well, and that her lungs felt stout and strong. She anticipated savings, which would permit her to live with Edwin at a small additional expense. Fare and board on the Ellen S. Terry had cost but $15, and the entire trip had totaled only $25, to date. By eating at home, Edwin would not spend the $7 per week, which he ordinarily paid. She planned to launder and mend his clothes, which were sadly in need of a woman's care. (13)

But a week after her arrival Edwin in company with a detachment of men was sent to Plymouth, N.C. To further complicate matters, General John J. Peck ordered the women from the base, and Mary and Mrs. Dean scrambled to find accomodations on the outside. Lt. Dean found temporary quarters for them in the home of a family of free Negroes, and obtained a hospital wagon to transport them. The women accepted the removal in good spirits, though Mary had some reservations about General Peck.

They found their accomodations comfortable, and were intrigued with the southern cooking prepared in a little shanty in the back yard, and the dialect and mannerisms of their hosts. In the evening they sat by the fireplace and listened to songs, and to instrumental music played by their host on a banjo. (14)

The following day the two young ladies found more convenient quarters in New Bern in the home of a widow. They boarded the landlady, a Mrs. Scott, in return for their lodgings. The arrangement was pleasing to both parties, though the guests carefully avoided controversial issues. The costs were low, and Mary anticipated that she would have something left from Edwin's pay to send home. (15)

Their new location placed them near the center of the town, where they could watch southern life in action. They were intrigued with the antics of the Negro children and the gaudy colors worn by their mothers, also southern accents and colloqualisms. Though favorably impressed by the interiors of southern homes, they were critical of their eteriors, their antiquity and obvious need for paint and repairs. Mary noted that their house, though cozy, reminded her of an expression of her father: "It is no better than a lane with a high fence." Across the street she could see a church building, now used as a school for white children; a house near by had been converted into a hospital, and another was occupied by the provostmarshal. The bank building served as the headquarters of General Palmer.

On a Sunday the ladies attended services in the Presbyterian and Episcopal churches. The sermon at the latter was delivered by the army chaplain, and the congregation was mostly northerners and soldiers. Mary observed that their landlady did not attend church now, preferring not to consort with Yankees. (16)

After several weeks Mary's future at New Bern was jeopardized by Edwin's indefinite transfer to Plymouth, and she waited impatiently to learn her fate. It developed, however, that she might accompany him, and on January 3, 1865, they embarked on the

ELLEN GETTY. It was a voyage of about 200 miles by water to avoid some eighty miles of swamps and hostile country

Undaunted by this sudden change in plans, Edwin and Mary set up light housekeeping again, and by adding boarders to the family circle, Mary was soon able to report a profit. A woman here, particularly a young and attractive one, was an asset to any social affair, and the Polands were soon caught up in a round of invitations; for dinner aboard the vessels in the harbor, and for sailing and horseback riding. Mary was thrilled by the attention and flattery. They remained at Plymouth until late in March, and then returned to New Bern. Mary remained there through the closing weeks of the war.

For many of the 12th Cavalry in the scattered detachments the war remained little more than the monotony of "waiting it out," the tedium relieved only in the closing weeks when they pushed into the interior of the state to intercept Lee's withdrawal from Richmond and Joseph E. Johnston's rereat northward before Sherman. Such was not the case, however, for companes A and F at Plymouth. Rumors of an ironclad up the river were not unfounded, and on April 17, 1864 the ALBEMARLE in combination with a land force struck the village with devastating fury.

The story of the ALBEMARLE is one of the most fascinating among Civil War naval annals, overshadowed only by the duel between the MONITOR and MERRIMAC and the exploits of the ALABAMA. The vessel was 122 feet from stem to stearn, had a beam of 40 feet and a draft of 8 feet. It was covered by a sheet-iron shield, which sloped at an angle of 45 degrees to the water's edge. Inside the superstructure were two pivot guns. However, its most lethal weapon was its bow, constructed as a ram.

On the day the last seam was closed, April 18, 1864, the cumbersome craft began its descent of the Roanoke River from Hamilton, some forty miles above Plymouth. The time was propitious. Its arrival at Plymouth was coordinated with a landside assault by General Robert F. Hoke; furthermore the river was high — high enough to carry it over shoals which would have barred its passage in dryer seasons. Captain T. W. Cooke, its commander, edged it down stream, stern foremost, its heavy chains dragging from the bow to slow its movement. It surged over the obstruction which Union forces had built a few miles above Plymouth, then anchored to await Hoke's advance.

Meanwhile, all was astir in the beleaguered port. Plymouth had a population of a few hundred when occupied by Yankee troops. As residents departed, some fired their homes, leaving behind a scene of desolation. But the 3000 troops stationed there initiated a hasty revival. General H. W. Wessels, in command of the post, threw up breatworks and redoubts on three sides of the village, and Commander C. W. Flusser deployed a small fleet to control the river front. In emergency aid might be obtained from Roanoke Island across Albemarle Sound.

The detachment of the 12th Cavalry in Plymouth numbered about 120 men, most of them from Oswego County. Their major responsibility was to picket the approaches for distances of ten to fifteen miles.

On Sunday afternoon, April 17, about 4.00, pickets galloped into the village shouting that the Rebs were coming. BOOTS AND SADDLES was sounded, and the cavalry set out to make a reconnaissance. They returned to report the presence of a substantial Confederate force. It was learned later that it consisted of Hoke's, Kemper's and Ransom's brigades totaling some 8,000 North Carolina and Virginia troops, General Hoke commanding. The Confederates were content to await the dawn of the following day before pressing their assault. The delay permitted Wessels to evacuate women, children, contrabands, and other non-combatants, the transport MASSASOIT making

two trips to Roanoke Island for this purpose. Among the thirteen northern women was Mary Cooper. Her visit, begun with so many misgivings, had lasted exactly seventy days. Thrugh the following day the attackers hurled a heavy artillery barrage upon the camp, but except for one outpost detached from the inner line, they failed to dent the defenses. Theturning point came just after dawn the following morning, when the much feared ram made its appearance.

Anticipating its arrival Flusser lashed his flagship MIAMI to the SOUTHFIELD, an old New Yrk ferry boat, with long spars and chains, leaving space between, hoping that the Albermarle might drift into the trap and be snubbed there. But at the last moment the ram swung about, and ripped into the Southfield, sinking it almost instantly. As it sank, however, the Albemarle's plates caught in the superstructure of its victim, and as the latter sank it dragged the former's bow under water. It was on the verge of going down with the SMITHFIELD, when the old ferry boat hit bottom, and permitted the Albemarle to be disengaged. Unable to face the ram single-handedly, the MIAMI retreated into the Sound. In the action Commander Flusser was killed on the deck of his flag ship.

The guns of the Albemarle were now turned upon the rear of the fortifications as General Hoke renewed his frontal attack. The defenders held on through the third day, succumbed on the fourth, April 20, when the attackers poured over the undermanned redoubts. Recognizing that the situation was hopless, North Carolina soldiers, some of them deserters from the Confederate army, were permitted to leave their posts to seek escape in row boats and canoes. Through the long ordeal the 12th Cavalry had fought unmounted alongside the infantry. (17)

The victory was a tonic for Southern morale. General Hoke and Commander Cooke received official commendations from the Confederate Congress. The Union could only add up the losses; official records reported it as 127 officers and 2,707 men, killed, wounded or missing. Most fell into the third category as prisoners of war. Among the casualties were 3 officers and 118 men of the 12th Cavalry.

While the battle raged the little cluster of wives awaited the outcome on Roanoke Island. A flood of rumors kept pouring in. Early reports were favorable, but they took a turn for the worse when word of the Albemarle's assault arrived. On the night of the 20th of April, still unaware of the surrender, they were evacuated, first, to Beaufort, and then to New Bern, as it was feared Roanoke Island might be the Albemarle's next objective. At New Bern a few days later they learned the outcome. At best their husbands were prisoners of war. The women had no alternative but to return to the North. Weeks passed before Mary Cooper learned that Alonzo was alive and uninjured. (18)

Incidentally, Cooper's subsequent experiences in the South read like fiction. He accepted prison life with fortitude, and even set up a profitable business buying from suppliers and selling to prisoners who arrived from time to time with money in their pockets. He participated in a prison break, and maintained himself off the land. He hiked several hundred miles northward seeking freedom, and was finally recaptured just short of the Union lines. He then discovered that he had been listed for an exchange, but had forfeited it by his absence. But he was eventually exchanged, and rejoined his regiment just a week before Appomattox.

It might be added that Cooper was one of a fortunate few; for as an officer he was spared the miseries of Andersonville. The horror of the Civil War generation at the mention of Andersonville is suggested by merely observing that of the just over one hundred prisoners among the 12th Cavalry eighty-five died in that notorious hell-hole. Among

the victims was Gleason Wellington, who, after a long sickness and furlough in Oswego, had returned to Plymouth in February, just two months before the battle.

A final observation regarding the Albemarle: On the night of October 27, 1864, while the ram was tied up at a dock in Plymouth, William Barker Cushing, of Fredonia, N. Y., in what has been described as "the bravest deed of the Civil War." destroyed the ram with a blast from a torpedo tied to a spar, after reaching his objective in a tiny steam launch.

As mentioned above, other detachments were spared the fate of companies A and F at Plymouth, and saw little action until the last weeks of the conflict. After the surrenders of Lee and Johnston the detachments of the regiment rendezvoused at Tarboro and Raleigh. At the latter they turned over their horses and were mustered out of the service. A march to Petersburg and City Point, and a steam boat ride to New York, completed their prolonged itinerary. Their regimental flag, bearing the familiar red, white and blue, may be seen with other New York battle flags in the State Museum at Albany.

## Footnotes

( 1) Gleason Wellington MSS., Oswego Co. Hist. Society, Dec. 5, 1862.

( 2) Wellington MSS., Dec. 5, 1862.

( 3) Wellington MSS., Dec. 5, 1862.

( 4) See account of this recruitment headquarters building in Chapter I.

( 5) Wellington MSS., April 13, 1863.

( 6) Wellington MSS., June 28, 1863.

( 7) Wellington MSS., July 10, 1863.

( 8) Alonzo Cooper to Mary Cooper, Ina Kirk Cooper Lane MSS., November 22, 1863.

( 9) IBID.

(10) Wellington MSS., July 9, 1863.

(11) Alonzo Cooper to Mary Cooper, Lane MSS., Jan. 19, 1864.

(12) IBID., Jan. 17, 1864.

(13) Mrs. Frederick L. Stone MSS., Dec. 10, 1864.

(14) IBID., Dec. 23, 1864.

(15) IBID.

(16) IBID., Jan. 1, 1865.

(17) For accounts of the battle see Alonzo Cooper, IN AND OUT OF REBEL PRISONS (Oswego, 1888); OFFICIAL RECORDS OF THE UNION AND CONFEDERATE ARMIES, Series I, XXXIII, 277-301; Clarence E. Macartney, MR. LINCOLN'S ADMIRALS (New York, 1956), 208-213. Richard S. West, Jr., MR. LINCOLN'S NAVY (New York, 1957), 294-295.

(18) Mrs. Alonzo Cooper to sister, Lane MSS., April 19, 1864.

# Chapter IX

## The Twenty-Fourth Cavalry;

## Horsemen Without Horses

The twenty-fourth New York Cavalry was organized during the winter of 1863-1864. A new army was in the making for General U. S. Grant, who was to be entrusted with the responsibility of taking Richmond after so many months and so many failures. But enlistments lagged, and the draft was extremely unpopular. Bounties, though costly, seemed far more palatable than conscription, and sums, undreamed of a few months earlier, were dangled before the erstwhile adolescents, and even larger ones were held out to the veterans who would sign up for a second hitch.

One resource, now available, which had been woefully lacking during the early days, was an abundance of seasoned leaders to head the new regiments. The politician soldier had been weeded out, and the officers, by and large, were veterans who had smelled powder, and were willing to resume military careers. For example, almost every commissioned officer in the 24th was a veteran. Some had been officers and were coming back with higher rank; others had begun as privates in the ranks, earned petty officers' ratings, and were now returning for coveted commissions. For these officers, bounties can not be overlooked as motivation, but they appear to have been ancillary, not primary, incentives.

A brief mention of two of the regimental officers would serve to illustrate the quality of the leadership. The commanding officer was Colonel William C. Raulston of Southwest Oswego. The Raulstons operated a tavern in peace time, but four sons, all under thirty, left the business to their father during the war. One was killed at Antietam, a second rose to the rank of Lt. Colonel in the 81st Infantry, and a third became a Captain of the 24th Cavalry. The fourth, William C., won a commission in the 81st Infantry, and served with it until the summer of 1863. He then initiated the organization of the 24th Cavalry. He was a dashing figure: gay, debonair, and seemingly, with nerves of steel. His portrait at the Oswego County's Historical Museum is the face of a young man suited to a hero's role in the Student Prince: a florid complexion and sparkling blue eyes; dark hair and a handsome well-clipped beard. The whole suggests verve and a devil-may-care spirit.

The major of the regiment was Melzar Richards of Parish, Oswego County. In his youth Richards had joined the gold rush to California, and now at forty-two, with a two-year enlistment in the 24th Infantry behind him, he was ready to return to the fray. "Old Melz," as his soldiers affectionately referred to him, was a soldier's soldier. Rugged and energetic, he fought at the head of his troops, and was a source of inspiration on every battlefield. Such was the leadership of the 24th Cavalry.

Active recruitment was begun in December. Local committees

staged the usual rallies, and officers, or potential ones, manned enlistment centers. Handbills and advertisements in the local presses headlined the bounties: as much as $852 for the veteran, and $477 for the recruit, with an initial payment on the barrel-head. The sums came to many months of service pay, and were not to be dismissed lightly, especially by the likely draftees. Fulton, Volney and Schroeppel quickly organized Company A, with Captain Albert Taylor of the 24th infantry taking the initiative. Oswego, Scriba, Hastings, Hannibal, Orwell and Parish combined to fill Company E, Captain Joe Shalkenback was its principal recruiter. Orwell, Sandy Creek, Amboy, New Haven, Lorraine in Jefferson County, and Oswego joined to create Company G, with Captain Calvin P. Burch in charge; and Parish, Hastings, Palermo, Fulton and Oswego supplied the men for Company I, headed by Captain George W. Simons of Parish. Oswego County men were also sprinkled among the other companies, particularly C, F and K.

In all, Oswego County furnished about two-fifths of the men and officers, the others being widely scattered across Central and Western New York from Buffalo to Utica, and Elmira, Mt. Morris and Canandaigua to Auburn, Syracuse, Rome and Ogdensburg. Auburn was named as the rendezvous point, and the companies assembled there in January and February, 1864.

The regiment departed from Auburn on February 23, and traveled by rail to Washington by way of Elmira, Harrisburg and Baltimore. They encamped on the Virginia side of the Potomac at Camp Stoneman, between Washington and Alexandria, and settled into a routine of drill: A typical day was interspersed with sabre and carbine exercises, and basic evolutions common to army units. They were issued Starr carbines, manufactured at Yonkers, N. Y. They were breach-loading, and deadly at shorter ranges. Just one thing was missing — horses. Except for the officers, who found their own or sometimes received mounts and accoutrements from civic groups or non-commissioned officers, the men remained on the ground. Nevertheless, morale appears to have been high; officers were well liked, and the health of the outfit was reasonably good.

Colonel Raulston commended the men for their good conduct enroute to Washington and their exemplary behavior in camp. But he cautioned them against desertion, calling it the blackest blot on a soldier's record. It left a stain, which could not be removed, and even degraded the soldier's wife, his children and his entire kindred. (1)

In April Raulston was back in Oswego seeking recruits to bring the regiment up to full strength.

It turned out that the regiment had little time to perfect its tactics. On May 4 the army moved from its base toward Richmond. Among this great host was the 24th Cavalry attached to Marshall's Provisional Brigade as infantry. This brigade, in turn, was a unit of Burnside's 9th corps. As mentioned elsewhere, Grant's strategy was to move quickly through the wilderness into open country, but Lee moved too quickly for him. The Union army poured thousands of rounds of ammunition against an enemy they could not see, and Grant eventually moved off to the left, only to encounter the Confederate defenders a few days later at Spotsylvania. Grant again edged away, but renewed his assault at Cold Harbor, a term which sent chills down the backs of the Civil War generation. For the third time in less than a month he attacked the enemy well protected by the broken terrain, and embankments and fallen trees. It was the worst slaughter in the three years of war Grant was eventually compelled to call off the advance, and acknowledge it to be a complete failure.

How did the 24th Cavalry fare in all this?

In the Wilderness they remained in the rear and served

only on the picket line. They participated in the action at Spotsylvania, but again were spared the heavy casualties suffered by other groups. On the day before Cold Harbor, however, their brigade went to the support of the 14th New York Heavy Artillery, only to be hurled back by a massive Confederate thrust. Nine were killed, thirty-five wounded, and forty missing. Among the latter were some thirty of Company E, who were captured and taken to Andersonville. All were Oswego County boys, most of them from the eastern towns of the county. Badly battered, the regiment was kept at the rear the following day, and thereby escaped the carnage at Cold Harbor.

If Cold Harbor served any purpose, it demonstrated, once and for all time, that massed infantry could not storm a fortified position supported by artillery. Grant paid a staggering price to learn it, and he never forgot it.

Stopped in his tracks by Lee's skillful defense, Grant now decided to by-pass Richmond on the est side, and strike from the south where its life-line of railroads connected it with the interior. Its success depended upon a crossing of the James River before Confederate lines could be formed. On this occasion Grant's move was not forseen by Lee, and in five days the first units of the Union army were across the river and pushing ahead toward Petersburg, the key to Richmond's defenses. It was a tremendous achievement. Now Grant's objective was to seize Petersburg before Lee could defend it; and he hustled Burnside's Ninth Corps forward to accomplish it. Unfortunately, General Butler, already south of the James at Bermuda Hundred, failed to press an attack, and Lee with shorter lines got there first. On June 17 and 18 the Ninth Corps charged the Confederate works. Hours earlier they had been virtually unmanned, and might have been easily taken, but now they were reinforced, and the Union forces could not break through. The 24th Cavalry, still serving as foot-soldiers were in the van of these assaults, and their losses were high. Killed at the front of his troops was Captain Calvin P. Burch of Company G, and gravely wounded were Captain Albert Taylor and Captain Charles E. Martin, and the gallant Major Richards. Colonel Raulston was wounded less seriously. In all 59 lay dead on the field, 135 were wounded, and 3 missing. From a hospital in Washington a few days later, Colonel Raulston reported that the regiment had lost 16 officers and 300 men since the beginning of the campaign in May.

Having lost the opportunity to sever Petersburg from Richmond, Grant settled down to a siege, which would continue into the next year. On July 30 the 24th Cavalry supported the divisions which poured into the crater at Petersburg, the spectacular but abortive, explosion in the tunnel under the Confederate works. They were fortunate to be at the rear, since the Union troops which jammed into the crevice were trapped and annihilated there. In August a plaintive letter from a member of the 24th indicates their disillusionment. A STARR, breach-loading carbine might be the last work in a cavalryman's weapons, but siege duty was scarcely the place for it. On three occasions, he reported, they had charged with carbines, neck and neck with infantry armed with rifles and bayonets. They had done their duty like veterans. The promise of cavalry duty had been used to obtain their reinlistments, but they had no horses after all these months. "Where is that influential Representative of Oswego (D. C. Littlejohn), who sways legislative councils at his will . . . Can he not take care of what is left of the 24th N. Y. Cavalry? If the Political Sampson of Oswego is shorn of his locks and military command, and influence among military men is not his forte, then where is your war committee." (2)

Despite this and other appeals the regiment continued to serve with the infantry through August

and September. At Popler Spring Church between September 30 anl October 2 they again faced the enemy at short range, and left 5 dead and 11 wounded on the battlefield. More than 40, also, were captured. Among them was Colonel Raulston, who was taken to a prison at Danville, Virginia. It eventually turned out that 9 of the prisoners died at Salisbury Prison, 15 were exchanged, and 7 were "galvinized," that is, "to get more bread and save their lives" they were persuaded to enlist in the Confederate army. Incidentally, none of the 7 came from Oswego County. (3)

Finally, on October 20 the regiment became cavalry in fact as well as in name. Horses were issued, and they were attached to the First Brigade, Second Division of the Cavalry Corps of the Army of the Potomac, commanded by General Henry E. Davies of New York City. It had been a long wait, and the pleasure of the men needs no documentation.

During the months which followed they drilled, scouted, and performed picket duty to the south of Petersburg. Like all Cavalry units, they spent many hours attending their mounts. None appear to have sought transfer back to infantry. Action was limited to skirmishing — on several occasions with guerrillas. These engagements included the Hicksford raid on December 6-12, Bellefield and Three Creeks, December 9, and Halifax raid, December 10-11. More sustained action awaited the coming of spring.

Meanwhile in late December, the regiment received the shocking news of Colonel Raulston's death in a furtive prison-break. Raulston, with several hundred others, had been confined in a tobacco warehouse in Danville, which had been converted into a prison. The "guests" lived on the second and third floors of the building, and the guard occupied the street level. The only exit was guarded by sentries and a stout oak door. Prisoners were not allowed to speak to the sentries or approach within six feet of them. But these regulations were not strictly enforced.

As in other prisons escape was the all-absorbing topic of conversation, competing only with the question of prison-exchange in popularity. The arrival of a fellow-townsman of Raulston, Lt. Alonzo Cooper, an officer in the 12th Cavalry, who had earlier escaped from a southern prison, stimulated the discussion. The men organized into companies, and chose Raulston to command the break.

After a few days they had a plan. Each morning a bucket-brigade was permitted to leave the building to pick up water, wood, and coal for the supply of the prison. On the morning of the break the men planned to approach the sentry with their buckets, and ask him to call the sergeant of the guard stationed just outside the door to open for them. As soon as he had shouted the request, they expected to seize and subdue him along with several other sentries, and when the sergeant opened the door they would rush through it, using the weapons taken from the sentries if necessary, and then scatter and seek freedom, possibly by reaching the Shenandoah Valley to the west.

On December 10 their plan was set in motion. They engaged the sentry in conversation, and asked him to call the sergeant. When he complied, they overpowered him and the other sentries, and seized their arms. But the sergeant apparently heard the scuffle, for after opening the door a crack, slammed it, and sounded the alarm. The prisoners tried to club their way through the door, but when the guard arrived, they gave up any hope of escape and rushed up the stairs toward their quarters.

Cooper's version of what happened next was as follows:

"Colonel Raulston and myself were the last to go up, and I had just reached the landing, the Colonel who was three or four steps behind me, had stopped to look out of the window, when the report of a gun rang out

from below, and he started suddenly, and hurrying past me, went up the next flight, to the place he occupied on the floor above.

Although shot through the bowels, and at so short a range, strange as it may seem, he did not fall or make any outcry; and it was not until some time after, that I learned that he was wounded.

I subsequently learned by some of my comrades, that he went to the place where he slept, took off his overcoat, opened his clothing and examined the wound, saying as he lay down, 'Boys, I guess my goose is cooked' . . . .

Guards were at once stationed about the rooms, and Colonel Smith (Confederate officer in command of the prison) proceeded up stairs where Raulston lay bleeding, and questioned him in regard to the affair.

This brave, unselfish officer, at once said, Colonel I am wholly responsible for all that has occurred; I am the instigator of the whole plot, and no one but me is to blame for what was attempted to be done, and I alone if any one, deserve the punishment for this attempted outbreak.

He was immediately removed to the hospital, where all that skillful surgery could accomplish was done to save his life, but the wound was of such a nature, that neither skillful surgery, nor tender nursing was of any avail, and on the 15th of December, he passed away — was mustered out. The shot that terminated his life, was fired by the guard he had disarmed, and the gun used was the same one Raulston had taken from him, and had returned after the failure of the attempted outbreak.

We all felt deeply mortified at the failure of our plot but our greatest sorrow was occasioned by the loss of so gallant and beloved an officer and comrade." (4)

The 24th Cavalry and the people of Oswego Town would have echoed Cooper's fine eulogy.

A day in March of 1865 held unusual interest for the 24th, in that it marked the return of Major (now Lt. Colonel) Melzar Richards to the regiment after a convalescence of more than six months. An unnamed correspondent reported his arrival in camp, mounted on his favorite "nag," and accompanied by Assemblyman Harvey Palmer, and George Benson of Parish. When word got around that "fighting Melz" was back the men assembled in front of headquarters, and "called him out with a three times three that must have echoed through the very streets of Petersburg." After the popular leader had responded, Colonel Newbury, who had replaced Raulston, stepped in front and called for three cheers for the old war horse of the 18th of June (the day he had been wounded at Petersburg). Assemblyman Palmer then addressed the regiment, and the impromptu ceremony was closed with "three hearty cheers for our brave and popular Col. Newburg, who has stood by us in every trial." (5)

It need not be added that the above report also noted that morale was high!

A few weeks after Richards' return the 24th joined Grant's final thrust against Richmond in what was later identified as the Appomattox campaign. The regiment joined in the flanking movement, which forced Lee to evacuate Richmond on April 2, and which brought the remnants of his once splendid army to a halt at Appomattox; their two principal engagements occurring on April 4-5 at Paines Cross Road and April 6 at Sailor's Creek. In the former, the regiment on a reconnaissance with the 10th New York Cavalry, surprised a long baggage train. They destroyed it and gave chase. In the action Lt. Colonel Richards fell mortally wounded. He died eight days later at a hospital at City Point.

Several hours after Richards' fall, Colonel Newbury was severely wounded.

The under-staffed regiment was

skirmishing with Confederate cavalry on the day of Lee's surrender, and eleven men, who had been captured, were immediately restored. It is of interest to note that Captain Lynden J. Cole of Company G witnessed the formal surrender from a vantage point near the McClean House.

On April 23 Parish turned out to honor and bury its hero. The church held only a small portion of the throng. At the conclusion of the service Richards was buried with Masonic and military honors.

After Appomattox the 24th moved back to Petersburg, and after General Johnston's surrender to Sherman, bivowacked Richmond, and then in Washington. Here they were consolidated with the New York 10th Cavalry to form the First Provisional New York Cavalry. They participated in the Grand Review in Washington, and were finally mustered out in Syracuse on July 19, 1865.

A summary of their vital statistics reads:

Total killed — 119
wounded — 288
missing — 128
Grand Total — 536

Among the missing were 30 enlisted men and one officer, who died in the hands of the enemy. After the war Lt. William W. Cook of Company A, who had enlisted at Rochester, joined the regular army as General Custer's Adjutant. He was killed by the Sioux in Custer's "Last Stand" at Little Bighorn, Montana.

## Footnotes

REFERENCES:


(1) OSWEGO TIMES, March 21, 1864.
(2) OSWEGO PALLADIUM, August 12, 1864.
(3) MEXICO INDEPENDENT, APRIL 27, 1865.
(4) Alonzo Cooper, IN AND OUT OF REBEL PRISONS (Oswego, 1888), 224-226.
(5) MEXICO INDEPENDENT, MARCH 23, 1865.

# Chapter X

## The First Light Artillery, Battery G; Four Years With The Army Of The Potomac

During the weeks immediately following the northern rout at Bull Run, the State's First Regiment of Light Artillery, or "flying artillery" (suggesting speed not elevation) was organized. Recruitment ranged from Jefferson, St. Lawrence, and Lewis counties in the North Country to Chemung and Steuben counties on the southern tier, and Niagara and Erie in the west to Oneida and Herkimer in the east. In Oswego County activity centered in the Town of Mexico and spilled over into Parish, Hastings and West Amboy.

The leadership was furnished by Nelson Ames and Marshall Rundell of Mexico, who appropriately went out as the company's first lieutenant and second lieutenant, respectively.

On September 20, 1861, with the fledgling battery totaling just over fifty, they boarded haying wagons drawn by teams of four horses, and departed for Oswego. A crowd of well-wishers saw them off, and provided them with Bibles, blankets and needles and thread. Also, "Aunt" Eunice Duell found time to fashion a flag for them. One of the least conspicuous (or at least he tried to be) of the volunteers was Cephas Frary of Colosse, just fifteen. He managed to stay on with the regiment, despite an observation by the MEXICO INDEPENDENT that he was obviously too young to fight. In fact he later won promotions to sergeant, and participated in thirty-three engagements. (1)

After a few weeks in Oswego, they proceeded to Elmira to prepare for their departure from the state. They were mustered into the service of the United States here for three years.

On October 31 eight companies, including Battery G, the designation given to the Mexico contingent, entrained for Washington. The regiment was commanded by Colonel Guilford D. Bailey, who had previously served as a captain in the United States Army. Captain J. D. Frank, who enrolled in Elmira, headed Battery G. They went into camp on Capitol Hill just east of the Capitol, and while encamped there one section of Busteed's Battery, Chicago Light Artillery, was assigned to Company G, making it a full 6-gun battery. At Washington they also drew six 10-pound Parrott guns, caissons, and implements, including ammunition and horses. They were assigned to Major General Sumner's command: Richardson's Division (1st); Second Corps, Army of the Potomac, and moved to Camp California, near Alexandria on the Alexandria and Orange Turn-

pike. They settled down to a routine of training, and mastered the manual for light artillery.

In the early spring of 1862 they advanced toward the Rappahannock River; then retraced their steps to Alexandria. On April 9, they boarded transports for General McClellan's Peninsular campaign, and disembarked at Fortress Monroe. They joined the Union push against Yorktown, and took part in the seige and capture of that place. At Yorktown they were again strengthened by transfers; receiving one section of Hogan's Battery A, Second Battalion, New York Light Artillery.

They moved up the Peninsula to Williamsburg, where some of the units of the regiment sustained their first casualties. The initial action for Battery G. however, occurred at Fair Oaks on May 31, when McClellan made his first major thrust against Richmond's defenses, and was met by a devastating counter attack by General Joseph E. Johnston. Fortunately, Battery G was spared the fate of Oswego's 81st Infantry, which lay in the path of the Confederate assault.

Captain Nelson Ames later recalled: "Just as the battery came into camp from Sunday inspection, we received orders to march and cross the Chickahominy River at Grapevine Bridge. The river had overflowed its banks and much of the way was nearly a mile wide, and no roads. We were from 1 p. m. Sunday, until 7 a. m., the next morning, making eight miles. All night long we were wallowing and floundering through the mud and water. Much of the way we were obliged to unhitch the horses, although we had ten on each gun, and drag the guns by hand, one at a time with drag ropes. In many places water and mud were from one to three feet deep, and when we crossed the river, we were obliged to hold the bridge in position, it being all afloat, and soon after our crossing it was swept away.

Arriving at the front, we were soon in position, supported by the Irish Brigade commanded by General Meagher. At times during the day the fighting was heavy, the enemy repeatedly charging our lines; but each time he was driven back with heavy losses." (2)

Captain Ames did not indicate whether their manuels had prepared them for this kind of action!

They subesquently engaged in the Seven Days' Battle of June 25-July 2 including Second Fair Oaks, Savage Station and Glendale, but remained at the rear. However, at Malvern Hill on July 1, they were heavily engaged, "the enemy charging our battery three times, massed in several lines of battle, and charged nearly up to the muzzle of our pieces, but was each time driven back and finally gave up the attempt to take our guns. In this engagement, in order to save our guns, we were obliged to over-load them, and so much so, that we ruined them." (3)

They then joined in McClellan's retreat to Harrison's Landing on the James River, and remained on the Peninsula after McClellan's withdrawal. They drew a new battery of light 12-pound guns here to replace the others.

Late in the summer they were ordered to Alexandria, where they arrived on September 2. They disembarked in time to pick up General Lee's trail into Maryland, and were one of the four companies of the First Artillery to be engaged at Antietam on September 17. In this bloody contest Battery G, as a unit of Sumner's Corps supported the advance at the center of the line, which culminated in the slaughter at the Sunken Lane. The batteries covered the flanks of General French's Division, and thwarted Confederate attempts to turn them.

They followed Lee's retreat into Virginia and exchanged salvos at Leesburg and Halltown. In December they were with Burnside at Fredericksburg. They crossed the Rappahannock River on pon-

toon bridges, losing two men in the crossing. They advanced and were heavily engaged in front of the town until they expended their ammunition. They retired, recrossed the river, and covered the infantry's retreat.

They wintered near Falmouth on the north bank of the Rappahannock, and in late April accompanied General Hooker into the Wilderness beyond the Rapidan. Here the First Artillery sustained its most serious casualities to date: 68 killed, wounded and missing. Battery G was stationed at the right of Chancellorsville House, and while in this position was almost over-run by the panic struck Eleventh Corps, which "Stonewall" Jackson had routed. But they held their ground and helped force the enemy to do an about-face by a well-directed fire.

A few weeks later they were on the march toward Pennsylvania, again in search of Lee. Arriving in Gettysburg, they were assigned to General Sickles, and hurriedly moved to a salient in the line at the Peach Orchard, a few hundred yards down the slope from Little Round Top. Here they fought off Longstreet's advance through the second day of the battle. During the night they edged back to Cemetery Ridge, and were in position on July 3 to participate in the thunderous artillery duel, and to train their guns on Pickett's gallant Virginians as they swept up the slopes of the hill.

Miss Elizabeth Simpson in her splendid MEXICO, MOTHER OF TOWNS, records several incidents handed down from the battle in the town:

"The Battery saw service at Gettysburg with their guns facing Pickett's charge. When Sergeant Jesse Burdick had his gun aimed to his satisfaction and was ordered by the Lieutenant to change the elevation he had the satisfaction of telling his superior officer to "go to hell!" After Gettysburg, N. W. Parsons wrote to his father, John Parsons, on July 9th, '63: "Dear Father: You have probably heard of the Battle of Gettysburg. I tell you it was the hottest place I ever saw. The rebels opened upon us with 74 guns at once. We had 9 men wounded and several horses killed. George Barse is all right so is the Captain (Ames) and all the rest of the Mexico boys. I had one of my horses wounded three times so that I had to leave him on the field. We expect to leave to-day, again. Our horses are about worn out. We are going to draw 27 more today." (4)

The First Artillery at Gettysburg suffered 80 casualties, its most serious loss in the war. A Monument commemorates Battery G's valor there. It stands in the Peach Orchard where they battled General Longstreet. Its inscription reads:

(Front)
BATTERY G
(AMES)
1st N. Y. Light Artillery

---

Engaged here with 3rd CORPS
3 P. M. to 5:30 P. M., July 2, 1863.
July 3, on CEMETERY RIDGE
with 1st Div. 2d CORPS

---

Casualties, 7 wounded

(Reverse)
MUSTERED IN SEPTEMBER
22, 1861
PRINCIPAL ENGAGEMENTS
FAIR OAKS
PEACH ORCHARD
SAVAGE STATION
WHITE OAK SWAMP
MALVERN HILL
ANTIETAM
FREDERICKSBURG
CHANCELLORSVILLE
GETTYSBURG
AUBURN HILL
BRISTOE STATION
ROBERTSON'S TAVERN
WILDERNESS
PO RIVER
SPOTSYLVANIA
NORTH ANNA
TOTOPOTOMOY
COLD HARBOR
PETERSBURG JUNE 16, 1864,
to APRIL 8, 1865
MUSTERED OUT JUNE 19, 1865
Battery G participated in

Meade's inconsequential operations in Virginia in the fall of 1863, and wintered near Brandy Station.

In September the unit was again strengthened by the transfer of troops to it; in this instance the members of the second section of the 14th Battery, Light Artillery, New York Volunteers. It should be noted, also, that the resignation of Captain Frank resulted in Captain Ames' appointment to the command.

In the spring of 1864 they moved with General Grant against Richmond. They engaged in the battles of the Wilderness, Spotsylvania Court House, North Anna, Totopotomoy, and Cold Harbor. Captain Ames has succinctly summarized the action at Spotsylvania Court House on May 12:

"May 12th, at 3 a. m., we marched to the left about five miles, and at break of day advanced with Barlow's, Gibbons', Mott's and Birney's Divisions, as they charged the enemy's works at the Bloody Angle at Spotsylvania Court House, and at once became hotly engaged with the enemy at close canister range. In a few moments, fearing in the smoke and fog we might injure our own men, I asked permission of General Hancock to advance the battery to the extreme front, which was granted. Reaching that position, we at once engaged the enemy, much of the time not fifty rods away. Some of the artillery of the corps not having r e p o r t e d, General Hancock sent a staff officer to me, asking if I could work some of the twenty-two guns we had captured from the enemy. I informed him I could if he would give me some infantry to take the place of the drivers and aid in bringing up ammunition. He readily gave us all the men we wanted, and from then on we fought not only our own six guns, but also nine of the enemy's, using the enemy's ammunition. It seemed to madden the enemy to desperation to be thus slaughtered by their own guns and ammunition. Charge after charge was made by the Confederates to retake the position and guns they had lost, but our men stood firm as a rock, determined to hold the position or die in the attempt. Thus the battle was fought from 4 o'clock, a. m., May 12th, to 3 o'clock, a. m., May 13th, when the enemy relinquished the attempt to retake the position and fell back to a new line in their rear.

But what a sight met our eyes! The dead lay in piles. Trees sixteen inches in diameter were cut off by musket balls and canister. Of the infantry that helped work the guns, several were killed and wounded. . . .We brought off from the field our own guns as well as nine captured from the enemy." (5)

The battery crossed the James River in time to join in the assault against Petersburg on June 15-19, and to become a part of the siege line.

On September 27 twenty-seven of the battery were discharged from the service as their three year terms had expired. Captain Ames, who had been wounded earlier, was also discharged, and First Lt. S. A. McClellan assumed command. Captain Ames moved to Iowa after the war, and published there the most comprehensive history of the battery. While on the siege line at Petersburg, Lieutenant Albert Ames of Oswego was killed by a sharpshooter. Mexico's second officer in the battery, Lieutenant Marshall Rundell, had died in a Brooklyn hospital from a fever contracted in the Peninsular campaign. Thus the careers of the three local officers were closed.

The battery remained at the fortifications through the winter and early spring, and was still on the firing line when Lee evacuated Richmond and surrendered at Appomattox.

They broke camp on May 5, and passed through Richmond and Fredericksburg enroute to

Washington. After the Grand Review at the capital they turned their guns and horses in, and proceeded to Elmira, where they were mustered out of the service on June 19, 1865. During its service the battery had eleven officers and men killed in action; fifteen more died from disease; thirty-one were wounded and recovered.

The battle experience of this fine company reads like a tour of the eastern theatre of the war between the spring of 1862 and close of the conflict.

## Footnotes

REFERENCES:


(1) Nelson Ames, BATTERY G, FIRST NEW YORK LIGHT ARTILLERY, (Marshalltown, Iowa, 1900); recollections of Jesse J. Burdick as told to his grandson, Walter J. Burdick of Mexico Town; Elizabeth M. Simpson, Mexico Mother of Towns (Buffalo, N. Y., 1949), 375.

(2) NEW YORK AT GETTYSBURG (Albany, 1900), III, 1237.

(3) IBID., III, 1237.

(4) Elizabeth Simpson, OP. CIT., 376.

(5) NEW YORK AT GETTYSBURG, III, 1239-1240.

# Chapter XI

## The Twenty-First Independent Battery;

## Action At Port Hudson

The origins of the Twenty-First Independent Battery parallel the recruiting of the 110th Infantry in Oswego County. President Lincoln's appeal for 300,000 troops after McClellan's failure on the Peninsula was followed by intensive recruiting across the County. The response was so generous, that the 110th could not hold all of the companies offered, and those in surplus became the initial units of the 147th Infantry. The Schroeppel-Hastings region, however, deviated somewhat from the pattern, as will be seen.

War meetings here, as elsewhere, elicited record-breaking enlistments. The OSWEGO TIMES reported that the war spirit in Phoenix in the Town of Schroeppel raged at fever heat, and that over-flow crowds attended "rousing" rallies in Phoenix, Hastings and Hinmansville. (1) It did not exaggerate, for one hundred two enlistments were obtained in Schroeppel in the month of August, the highest monthly figure during the war. But James Barnes, the principal local recruiter in Phoenix, decided to sponsor an independent company of artillery rather than a company of infantry of the 110th or 147th infantries. He succeeded.

This company, designated as the Twenty-first Independent Battery of Light Artillery, rendezvoused at Oswego, and proceeded to New York City in November, where they were mustered into the service of the United States for three years on December 12, 1862.

In addition to James Barnes, who was named Captain, the initial staff included Henry H. Cozzens, an Oswego attorney, as First Lieutenant, and George Potts of Fulton, as Second Lieutenant. Potts had initially received a commission in the Twelfth Cavalry, but the consolidation of regiments made him a supernumerary.

The Battery sailed for Louisiana on December 12 to become attached to the Department of the Gulf, commanded by General Nathaniel Banks. They stopped at Fortress Monroe, where they picked up their horses, and then joined a convoy for New Orleans.

In Louisiana they were armed with four 3-inch steel rifled guns, and began an intensive training routine at Bonnet Carre near New Orleans.

Like the men of the 110th Infantry, whom they saw occasionally, the members of the battery were stimulated by the strange countryside. They noted the mild climate, even in winter, the "oppressive fragrance" of the air, and the tropical fruits, such as oranges, lemons and figs, and bushes "perfectly loaded with black-berries." They were also impressed by the contrasts: the lush vegetation and the neglect of cultivation; the stately plantation houses of the aristocracy, and the hovels of the poor. Private Francis Barnes, brother of

Captain Barnes, was fascinated by the flowering plants:

"The houses in most cases stand back from the road a considerable distance, and the grounds in front and about them are perfect wilderness of trees, bushes and shrubs of all kinds. They have a great many flowers, which together with the roses are in full bloom; and as you pass, especially in the evening, the air is perfectly loaded with fragrance." (2)

The battery moved with the Army of the Gulf against Port Hudson situated above Baton Rouge on the east bank of the Mississippi in May, 1863. At the assault on May 21, they were stationed on an open plain, some 800 yards from the enemy earthworks. Wondering how they would perform under fire, they awaited the dawn. They opened fire, and were immediately answered by Confederate artillery. Although many shells exploded in the area, they were almost unscathed. At the second attack on June 14, they were protected by a breastwork, and again sustained light casualties.

After the surrender of the fortification on July 8 they remained on duty there until the spring of 1864. The glamor of the South had worn off now, and life was increasingly monotonous. However, the battery remained well disciplined, and enjoyed a good reputation. Unlike the 110th Infantry, the health of the personnel was good.

In April, 1864, one gun under Lt. Potts was dispatched to Baton Rouge with a company of cavalry to restore telegraph lines cut by the enemy. Enroute, they were attacked by a force of guerrillas. In the ensuing melee the cavalry escaped, but Corporals Charles Barnard of Oswego and James Campbell of Phoenix, and privates Charles Dexter of Schroeppel, John Walker of Oswego, Moses Potter and David M. Roberts of Hastings, and Alonzo Dunham of Lenox, Madison County, were captured. They were subsequently confined in Andersonville prison.

Late in 1864 they moved to Morganza Bend just below the confluence of the Red River with the Mississippi. Here they exchanged two of the steel guns for four 12-pound Napoleons. They also accompanied several raids into the Atchafalaya River county west of Baton Rouge in quest of Confederate General Richard Taylor's forces, but they saw little action. In February, 1865, two privates Dail McSweeney and John S. Cozzens, were captured by guerrillas, and sent to Andersonville, where Cozzens died.

Meanwhile, the battery was readied for an expedition against Mobile, one of the last Confederate strongholds on the Gulf of Mexico. They sailed on March 27, and were landed near the "Spanish Fort," where they participated in the assault. In the action they lost two men: cannonier John Daly, and driver John Wilson, their only fatalities on the field of battle.

They remained at Mobile until July, and then returned to New Orleans, by way of Galveston. They were mustered out at Syracuse on September 8, 1865, three years and six days after being accepted in the service of the State. Of the 212 who joined the company, 149 were mustered out. Eleven had been transferred to the 26th Independent Battery; four had deserted, and three had died of disease.

## Footnotes

(1) OSWEGO TIMES, August 2, 6, 29, 1862.

(2) John Demos, "This is God's War (an Account of Private Francis Barnes of 21st Battery Based on Letters of Barnes)," copy in Oswego Co. Hist. Soc. MSS., 2-20, 21, 22.

(3) Crisfield Johnson, HISTORY OF OSWEGO COUNTY, N. Y. (Philadelphia, 1877) 114.

(4) OSWEGO TIMES, April 25, 1864.

**Lt. Alonzo Cooper of the 12th Cavalry and his wife Mary, who dared to join her husband in North Carolina, and who narrowly escaped capture in the battle of Plymouth.**

**Major H. H. Lyman**

**Lyman enlisted in Pulaski in the 147th Infantry. He later served as Adjutant. After the war he was active in veteran affairs, and collected and preserved documents relating to the regiment. He was also a favorite orator at veterans' conventions.**

# Chapter XII

## They Also Fought

The larger detachments of local troops, followed through the previous chapters, account for the majority of the soldiers furnished by Oswego County in the Civil War, but there were in total several thousand others, who, as individuals, or in small groups, and in several instances in entire companies, joined regiments organized beyond the county. Turn-in the pages of the old muster books uncovers an almost endless number of these enlistments, some in states as far distant as Illinois and Wisconsin. Young men, growing up near the Oswego water-front, also, were attracted to the United States Navy, and Oswego County sailors were among the personnel of dozens of war craft, including the KEARSARGE, which sent the famous Confederate raider, the ALABAMA, to a watery grave.

The Town of Orwell, for example, in addition to supplying volunteers for the local regiments, sent thirty-two of its sons to the 189th New York Infantry, ten to the 20th New York Cavalry, six to the 7th New York Cavalry, and one or more to the 16th, 20th, 59th, 94th, 152d, 164th, 186th and 193d New York infantries, and to the 13th Cavalry, and the United States Navy, as well. Many of these enlistees crossed the county line to join up in Jefferson County, as did young men from Redfield, Boylston and Sandy Creek. The situation was similar in Hannibal, where Auburn was a convenient center. Rome attracted enlistees from Constantia, Amboy and Williamstown, and Syracuse drew recruits from Hastings, West Monroe, Schroeppel and Granby. There were Oswego County men, also, in the 15th Regiment of Engineers, who engaged in the construction of fortifications and pintoon bridges, and about one-hundred who served in the regular United States Army.

Just one of these many "miscellaneous" enlistments will be cited to illustrate how "personal" they were: The case of Philander Matteson of Orwell.

He enlisted on August 19, 1864, at Adams, New York, in Company C of the 186th Infantry. During the last week of the war near Petersburg, Virginia, he was wounded in the head, back and left ankle. He lay on the battlefield through the day, and was later discovered by Confederate soldiers. They carried him to one of their tents, wrapped him in a blanket, and left him to die. The following day the battlefield came into Union hands, and Matteson was found - still breathing. He was taken to a field hospital, and later hospitalized at Alexandria, Virginia, where his leg was amputated. He returned home in July, 1865, and died twenty-five years later at West Amboy. (1)

It is difficult to conclude this short history of the war with so much unsaid, but Private Matteson's experience; his grievous wounds; his suffering, but eventual recovery, will serve about as well for a conclusion as any other.

He survived the great conflict to live through a post-war generation of reconstruction and restoration. Like some 11,000 other Oswegonians in the uniform of their country, and thousands of others who kept the home-fires burning, he helped to keep the nation one.



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