

THE  
HUDSON  
RIVER  
VALLEY  
REVIEW

*A Journal of Regional Studies*

**MARIST**

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## From the Guest Editor

In honor of the sesquicentennial anniversary of the Civil War, this issue of *The Hudson River Valley Review* gives our readers a different take on the conflict than our previous edition on the same topic in the Autumn of 2005. Recognizing other aspects of the conflict than the combat experiences of various Hudson Valley regiments as the previous issue had, this issue explores the ways the Civil War was memorialized in Hudson River Valley art (Kevin J. Avery's "'Rally 'round the Flag': Frederic Edwin Church and the Civil War" and Valerie Balint's "'A Labor of Love and Patriotism': The Artistic and Historic Legacy of Albany's General Philip H. Sheridan Memorial"), thought about in letters home (Diane Shewchuk's "'All is excitement and anxiety here': A New York Family's Experience of the Civil War" and Gail Goldsmith's "Letters Home: Carrie Niles' Correspondence"), mythologized through the manufacturing of iconic regimental flags ("Christopher Morton's "With Victory Perched Upon Their Eagles: Civil War Flags from the New York State Battle Flag Collection"), and prepared for through the influence of West Point upon the Union's officer corps (Jonathan Howard Lawler's "The West Point Education of the 'Christian General': Oliver Otis Howard, 1850-1861"). In addition, this issue features thirty-two pages of gorgeous color illustrations which we hope will enhance the reading experiences of our readers and subscribers.

*Mark James Morreale, Guest Editor*

**On the Cover:** Columbia County native Sanford Gifford documented his three tours with the 7th Regiment of the New York State Militia in sketchbooks and four paintings, including our cover image.

Sanford Robinson Gifford, American (1823-1880)

*Camp of the Seventh Regiment, near Frederick, Maryland, July 1863, 1864*

Oil on canvas, 18 x 32 in. (45.7 x 81.3 cm)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Lent by New York State Military Museum (L.1989.71.3) Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art

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## Corrections

In his essay “Developing the Middle Landscape: The Shawangunk Carriage Roads,” author Peter Manning refers to the many strategically sited gazebos, or summer houses, that appear throughout the landscape. The Mohonk Mountain House always refers to these structures as “summerhouses,” of which there are currently 125.

The biographical note for Edward T. Howe, author of “Bell Founding in the Upper Hudson River Valley,” was omitted from our Spring 2010 issue, Volume 26.2. Mr. Howe holds a doctorate in Economics from the State University at Albany and is a professor of economics at Siena College in Loudonville. His work has appeared in *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, *Public Administration Review*, and *Social Sciences Quarterly*. His research interests include state and local governmental issues, and industrial economic history.

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# The Civil War and the Transformation of the Hudson River Valley

Mark James Morreale

“It is strange what a predilection we have for injuring brother man, but we learn the art of killing far easier than we do a hard problem in arithmetic.”

—Henry Matrau, Co. G, 6th Wisconsin<sup>1</sup>

In his recent anthology, *Battle: The Nature and Consequences of Civil War Combat*, Kent Gramm presents a telling illustration of the true cost of the Civil War on the American consciousness. In the book’s final chapter, entitled simply “Numbers,” he makes the following observation:

The number 10 puts the Civil War into perspective alongside September 11. The population today is roughly ten times the population of Civil War America. The 1860 Census puts the figure at 31,443,321. What this means is that to understand the magnitude of any loss of life in the 1860s, we need to multiply it by 10. A commonly agreed-upon rough figure for Civil War deaths is 650,000—or 6,500,000 in today’s terms.

If you divide that figure by the four years of the Civil War—1,460 days—you see where the Civil War fits in relative to 9/11. It was September 11, 2001, every day for four years. Only worse: instead of about 3,000 people per day, it would be 4,452.<sup>2</sup>

In other words, to understand the actual impact of the Civil War on the civilian population of the Hudson River Valley—and all throughout the United States for that matter—we need to absorb the powerful consequences of such a number.

Thousands of men from the Hudson Valley joined the ranks of the Union during the war. Many paid the ultimate price for their service, including four colonels who originally served in these regiments: Colonel George W. Pratt of the 20th New York State Militia (killed August 30, 1862, at the Second Battle of Bull Run); Colonel David S. Cowles of the 128th New York (killed May 27, 1863,

at Port Hudson); and Colonels Augustus Vanhorne Ellis of the 124th New York and George L. Willard of the 125th New York (both killed at Gettysburg, July 2, 1863). Examining the casualty figures for some twenty-five regiments recruited in the valley from Yonkers to Troy, one can see that more than 2,100 men from these regiments lost their lives on the battlefield and nearly 3,000 succumbed to disease. (As a word of caution, not all soldiers serving in these regiments were recruited in the Hudson Valley, but the vast majority were.)

All facts and figures taken from Frederick H. Dyer, *A Compendium of the War of the Rebellion* (Des Moines, 1908).

#### Fatalities of Hudson River Valley Regiments During the Civil War

Regiment	Muster Location	Killed - M/W Officers	Killed - M/W Enlisted Men	Battle Casualties	By Disease Officers	By Disease Enlisted Men	Total deaths by disease	Total Fatalities
6th Heavy Artillery*	Yonkers	5	130	135	6	275	281	416
7th Heavy Artillery	Albany	14	277	291	4	374	378	669
8th Ind. Battery	Newburgh	0	0	0	0	36	36	36
11th Ind. Battery	Albany	0	8	8	0	13	13	21
1st US Sharpshooters	Albany	10	143	153	1	128	129	282
3rd NY	Albany	1	36	37	2	83	85	122
14th NY	Albany	4	56	60	0	43	43	103
16th NY	Albany	5	106	111	1	85	86	197
18th NY	Albany	4	34	38	1	32	33	71
22nd NY	Troy	11	62	73	1	28	29	102
28th NY	Albany	2	46	48	0	50	50	98
30th NY	Troy	6	72	78	3	31	34	112
34th NY	Albany	3	90	93	1	68	69	162
40th NY	Yonkers	10	228	238	2	170	172	410
43rd NY	Albany	13	110	123	1	120	121	244
56th NY	Newburgh	1	63	64	3	213	216	280
80th NY	Kingston	8	120	128	0	157	157	285
120th NY	Kingston	11	140	151	3	179	182	333
124th NY	Goshen	11	137	148	1	92	93	241
125th NY	Troy	15	112	127	1	112	113	240
128th NY	Hudson	2	58	60	3	203	206	266
150th NY	Poughkeepsie	2	49	51	3	78	81	132
156th NY	Kingston	4	56	60	3	164	167	227
168th NY	Newburgh	0	1	1	1	36	37	38
177th NY	Albany	2	7	9	3	149	152	161
<b>Totals</b>		<b>144</b>	<b>2141</b>	<b>2285</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>2919</b>	<b>2963</b>	<b>5248</b>

\*AKA 135th NY Infantry ("Anthony Wayne Guard")

These figures do not account for the thousands of wounded, nor the impact—financially, emotionally, and socially—they must have had on the region upon their sad return.<sup>3</sup>

One of the most famous of these regiments is undoubtedly the 124th New York (AKA the "Orange Blossoms") from Orange County, whose exemplary record in the war included the awarding of five Congressional Medals of Honor. It

fought throughout the war in the Army of the Potomac, including in the Battles of Chancellorsville, Gettysburg (where they defended that peculiar piece of Civil War geography called Devil's Den), the Wilderness, and the Appomattox Campaign, among many others.<sup>4</sup> Another regiment of great renown was the 40th New York (AKA the "Mozart Regiment"), which served in the 1862 Peninsula Campaign and the Seven Days Battles (including Fair Oaks and Malvern Hill), and which went on to fight at Chantilly, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, the Wilderness, Spotsylvania Court House, and the Petersburg Campaign. It experienced especially heavy losses at the Seven Days, Chantilly, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, and Gettysburg (where it suffered greatly along with the rest of Major General Daniel Sickles' 3rd Corps defending an untenable salient in and around the Peach Orchard). Only one volunteer infantry regiment from New York State suffered more casualties.<sup>5</sup> In addition, the sister regiments from Ulster County—the 20th New York State Militia (AKA 80th New York) and the 120th New York—also served in the Army of the Potomac. The 20th's distinguished service began in earnest in 1862, during the Second Bull Run Campaign (where its first colonel was killed), in the cornfield at the Battle of Antietam a few weeks later, and then the following year at Gettysburg (where it participated all three days and helped repulse Pickett's Charge), and the Wilderness, Spotsylvania, and Petersburg campaigns in 1864, among others.<sup>6</sup> The 120th New York saw similar service, "seeing the elephant" at Fredericksburg in December 1862 and becoming seriously engaged in combat at Chancellorsville and Gettysburg the following summer (suffering severely in both battles). It, too, would eventually serve in all the major campaigns in the Eastern Theater in 1864 and 1865, being present at Lee's surrender at Appomattox Court House in April 1865.<sup>7</sup>

Heavy Artillery regiments, such as the 7th New York (AKA the "Seymour Guard") paid a particularly horrendous price for its service late in the war in the East, involved as they were in the assaults on Confederate lines at both Totopotomoy Creek (suffering over 100 casualties) and, especially, Cold Harbor, where they secured 280 Rebel prisoners despite losing over 400 of their own men in the process.<sup>8</sup> At Petersburg, the regiment again suffered very heavy losses, similar to those at Cold Harbor, while unsuccessfully assaulting an entrenched position. There were regiments in the valley who sought redemption for past performance as well, such as the 125th New York from Troy. After being humiliated at Harper's Ferry in September 1862 by being forced to surrender en masse to Stonewall Jackson's wing of the Army of Northern Virginia, the regiment fought honorably after being paroled, especially at Gettysburg, where it helped repulse Barksdale's Brigade on July 2, 1863, thereafter having regained the esteem it had

lost in the Antietam Campaign the year before.

Regiments from the Hudson Valley served with distinction in the Western Theater as well, most notably the 150th, 128th, and 156th New York Volunteer Infantry Regiments. The 150th New York (AKA the “Dutchess County Regiment”) initially languished at Camp Belger in Baltimore, losing over a third of its men to desertion and disease before seeing any real combat, which they did, finally, at Gettysburg in July 1863. Shortly after, they were shifted to the West, serving throughout the rest of the war in Sherman’s army, participating in the Atlanta Campaign, the March to the Sea, and the final battles against Joseph Johnston’s army in North Carolina. Sadly, their regiment suffered one of the last—if not the last—fatality of a Hudson Valley soldier in the war, Captain David B. Sleight of LaGrange, killed March 16, 1865, at the Battle of Averysborough.<sup>9</sup> The 128th New York certainly had its share of horrific experiences, too, enduring the siege and assaults of Port Hudson, May to July 1863, and the oppressive climate of the Deep South, reflected in their high percentage of casualties due to disease during that time. After suffering through the failure of the Red River expedition in 1864, the 128th was transferred to the Shenandoah Valley, where it fought at the Battle of Opequon and the decisive Battle of Cedar Creek; it was thereafter transferred again, this time to Savannah, where it saw General Johnston’s army surrender.<sup>10</sup> The 156th New York also served in Louisiana, the Shenandoah, and the Carolinas, paralleling the experiences of the 128th New York in many ways.<sup>11</sup>

Regiments raised in other sections of the state also provided men from the Hudson valley, including, the 5th New York, the 9th New York, and the 57th New York. Let me use the latter by way of example. After having survived the horrors of the first battle at Bull Run in July 1861, Adjutant Josiah Favill of the 57th New York Volunteer Infantry was asked to travel to Oswego to recruit replacements for his battered regiment.<sup>12</sup> He noted, with disgust, the fruitlessness of this endeavor:

With the assistance of a young man named Hamilton, native there [Oswego], I actually obtained some twenty-nine or thirty men, and was just upon the point of starting with them to New York, when they deserted in a body, and went over to one of the local organizations. Disgusted, I returned immediately, and in a few days afterwards went to Poughkeepsie, and remained there for two weeks, but succeeded in getting only about half a dozen men, mostly from Wappingers Falls.<sup>13</sup>

Favill, however, goes on to remark that H, I, and K companies of the 57th New York had their ranks filled with soldiers from Dutchess County, many having come from “from the old regular Fourth Infantry, who had been captured, and

paroled by the rebel authorities in Texas. They were a well drilled lot of soldiers, and gave the regiment the appearance of regulars from the start, and were invaluable as instructors for the new men.”<sup>14</sup> Records from the time period can often be deceptive, incomplete, misleading, and even contradictory, so it’s hard to say how many of the men actually came from Dutchess County and what, in actuality, happened to them while serving.<sup>15</sup> However, we do know that a Thomas T. Ridings—a private in Company K from Poughkeepsie recruited on September 4, 1861—was killed at the Battle of Fair Oaks, Virginia, June 1, 1862,<sup>16</sup> for Captain Favill quotes in his *Diary* a June 3, 1862, letter from Company K’s commander, Captain A. J. Le Vallée, concerning the Battle of Fair Oaks, that Private Thomas Ridings “said to the man in front of him that he had shot one of them [rebels], and immediately fell dead, shot through the head,”<sup>17</sup> a Hudson Valley fatality not listed in Figure 1 above.

I would be remiss, however, if I did not mention women and their contribution to the war effort in New York State, and, specifically, the Hudson Valley. As Elizabeth Hendee Plank points out, women actively participated in the war effort, quite apart from sending personal packages from home filled with “jellies, mittens and socks, medicines and bandages.”<sup>18</sup> Many indeed fulfilled the idealized Victorian expectation of women, becoming the “angel of the house,” but they did much more than that as well. It is true that women from Ulster County helped gather relief supplies for the United States Sanitary Commission; organized the Knickerbocker Kitchen at the 1864 Metropolitan Sanitary Fair in New York; managed the Ladies Army Relief Association in Kingston, Stone Ridge, Woodstock, and elsewhere; and served on the Ulster branch of the Christian Commission.<sup>19</sup> The same could be said of women in each of the counties making up the Hudson River Valley.

In addition, women often contributed to individual regiments’ esprit de corps, such as the “Ladies of Poughkeepsie” who presented Ulster County’s 20th New York State Militia with a battle flag that saw service at the Second Battle of Bull Run, where “six standard-bearers were among the 279 casualties suffered by the regiment.”<sup>20</sup> The same can be said of the “ladies of Columbia County” who presented the 128th New York with its colors. As the regimental historian of the 128th New York, D. H. Hanaburgh observed, “These emblems of woman’s patriotism were never dishonored by any faltering on the part of the men who carried them, and the almost dismantled staffs plainly tell of the storms through which they passed.”<sup>21</sup> Indeed, the honor and sanctity of such flags mattered in some significant ways, quite apart from their importance as instruments of unit cohesion on a noisy, smoke-filled battlefield.

Recent evidence has suggested that hundreds of women—perhaps as many as 400—also served in the ranks of the armies, doing much more therefore than merely attending sanitary fairs and the like. One famous documented case that has recently come to light concerns Lyons [or Lyon] Wakeman, who served in the 153rd New York, even experiencing combat at the Battle of Pleasant Hill in April 1864, until succumbing to chronic diarrhea on June 19, 1864. (The 153rd New York was formed just west of Albany at Fonda, with companies being recruited in counties both north and west of the capital, including Saratoga County.) Lyons' actual name was Sarah Rosetta Wakeman. She apparently had had a good deal of experience depicting herself as a man because before enlisting she had posed as a male worker on canal boats. Her letters home were discovered in an attic in 1940, but the connection between these soldier's letters and Sarah was not established for over thirty years. Her grave in Louisiana still identifies her as Lyons.<sup>22</sup> Finally, of course, women also began ministering to the wounded during the Civil War in remarkable numbers, but this task, too, had its hazards, to which nurses like Louisa May Alcott and Clara Barton could attest.<sup>23</sup> In other words, the war on the domestic side contributed significantly to a changing definition of gender and gender roles, and women in the Hudson Valley were certainly not exempt from these pressures.<sup>24</sup>

The story of the Hudson River Valley during the Civil War is the story of the nation itself. As David Blight so eloquently phrased it while taking his cue from Walt Whitman, not only did the dead, North and South, remake America:

So did thousands of surviving soldiers, liberated freedpeople enduring near starvation in contraband camps, and women on both home fronts who performed all manner of war work and tried to sustain farms, households, and the human spirit as their men were asked to die for ideas, self-defense, retribution, manly values, or some abstract notion of their community's future. In time, the war remade America itself.<sup>25</sup>

The same can certainly be said of all those men and women toiling at home during the war in the Hudson Valley, whether they were making cannons in Cold Spring; bricks and gunpowder in Saugerties; working in the various industries in and around Poughkeepsie, making such mundane items as pins and chairs; healing the sick and wounded; contributing to the world of art and the human spirit, such as the artists of the Hudson River School; and those who quietly spirited runaway slaves to safety through the Underground Railroad. All played a role, however large or small, in this transformation.

## Endnotes

1. Marcia Reid-Green, ed., *Letters Home: Henry Matrau of the Iron Brigade* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 20. Matrau has also been recorded as saying, "The paper's all say that the soldiers are aching to fight but the papers are notorious liars" (iii). It's this peculiar mixture of reluctant willingness to kill that makes up the odd psychological chemistry of the civilian soldier.
2. Kent Gramm, "Numbers," in *Battle: The Nature and Consequences of Civil War Combat* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2008), 121.
3. There were approximately 4,400 wounded soldiers from these regiments.
4. Other soldiers from the 124th New York won the Medal of Honor: Sergeant Thomas W. Bradley, Private Archibald Freeman, Private Nathan M. Hallock, Corporal George W. Thompkins and Captain Lewis S. Wisner. For information on the "Orange Blossoms," see Charles H. Weygant, *History of the 124th Regiment, N.Y.S.V.* (Celina, OH: Ironclad Publishing, 2002).
5. ACWRD, 40th New York Regimental Infantry Analysis. The 40th New York was formed in Yonkers, Westchester County, but the majority of its men initially came from New York City, with a few companies from the State of Massachusetts after New York had met its initial quota. Throughout the war, various regiments as they disbanded were consolidated into it.
6. For an account of the 20th New York State militia's service, see Theodore B. Gates, *The "Ulster Guard" [20th N. Y. State Militia] and the War of the Rebellion... 2 Vols.* (New York: Benj. H. Tyrell, Printer, 1879).
7. According to Webb and Cheryl Garrison, *The Encyclopedia of Civil War Usage: An Illustrated Compendium of the Everyday Language of Soldiers and Civilians* (Nashville, TN: Cumberland House, 2001): 68, an "elephant" designates any type of combat "regardless of its scale. To see or meet the elephant was to have been in combat for the first time, one's baptism under fire." For a concise account of the experiences of the 120th New York during the war, see C. Van Santvoord, *The One Hundred and Twentieth Regiment New York State Volunteers: A Narrative of its Services in the War for the Union* (Saugerties, NY: Hope Farm Press, 1997).
8. A "heavy" regiment designates "an artillery regiment substantially larger than normal," Garrison, *Encyclopedia*, 108. Many of these regiments initially manned the fortifications in and around the Capital before being sent into combat as strictly infantry regiments in 1864-65.
9. See S. G. Cook and Charles E. Benton, *The "Dutchess County Regiment" (150th Regiment of New York State Volunteer Infantry) in the Civil War: Its Story as Told by its Members, Based on the Writings of Rev. Edward O. Bartlett, D. D.* (Danbury, CT: Danbury Medical Printing Co., 1907): 329. Other sources for the regiment include, Richard T. Van Wyck, *A War to Petrify the Heart: The Civil War Letters of a Dutchess County, N.Y. Volunteer*, Ed. Virginia Hughes Kaminsky (Hensonville, NY: Black Dome Press, 1997) and, somewhat less useful, Charles E. Benton, *As Seen From the Ranks: A Boy in the Civil War* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1902).
10. See D. H. Hanaburgh, *History of the One Hundred and Twenty-Eighth Regiment, New York Volunteers (U. S. Infantry) in the Late Civil War* (Salem, MA: Higginson Book Co., 1998).
11. All regimental experiences are taken from the regimental histories available at the ACWRD, who use Frederick Phisterer's compilation *New York in the War of the Rebellion, 1861-1865* (Albany, NY: Weed, Parsons and Co., 1890), *The Union Army A History of Military Affairs in the Loyal States 1861-65, Records of the Regiments in the Union Army, Cyclopedia of Battles, Memoirs of Commanders and Soldiers*. 8 vols. (Madison: Federal Publishing, 1908) and the *Official Records*.
12. Josiah Marshal Favill, *Diary of a Young Army Officer: Serving with the Armies of the United States during the War of the Rebellion* (Baltimore: Butternut & Blue, 2000), 43. After the First Battle of Bull Run, Favill and a comrade named Butler "strolled down the hill side, and were soon amongst the dead and dying rebels, who up to this time had been neglected. What a horrible sight it was! Here a man, grasping his musket firmly in his hands, stone dead; several with distorted features, all of them horribly dirty. Many were wounded, some with legs shot off; others with arms gone, all of them, in fact, so badly wounded that they could not drag themselves away, many of the

- wretches slowly bleeding to death, with no one to do anything for them. We stopped many times to give some a drink and soon saw enough to satisfy us with the horrors of war..." (34-35).
13. Favill, *Diary of a Young Army Officer*, 43.
  14. Favill, *Diary of a Young Army Officer*, 46.
  15. New York [State], *A Record of the Commissioned Officers, Non-commissioned Officers, and Privates, of the Regiments which were organized in the State of New York and Called into the Service of the United States to Assist in Suppressing the Rebellion* (Albany, N.Y.: Comstock & Cassidy, Printers, 1868), 496-97. The Muster Rolls indicate 60 of 83 men were recruited from Poughkeepsie for K Company, for instance, but do not indicate if that's where they were originally from. HeritageQuest Online. Poughkeepsie Public Library District (accessed January 5, 2011).
  16. ACWRD, Service Record of Thomas Ridings.
  17. Favill, *Diary of a Young Army Officer*, 117.
  18. Elizabeth Hendee Plank, "Help from the Home Front: Women Must Work as Well as Weep," in *Banners and Bugles: A Record of Ulster County, New York, and the Mid-Hudson Region in the Civil War*, comp. Will Plank (Marlborough, NY: Centennial Press, 1972), 100.
  19. Elizabeth Hendee Plank, "Help from the Home Front," 101, 102, 104.
  20. Editors of Time-Life Books, *Echoes of Glory: Arms and Equipment of the Union* (Alexandria, VA: Time-Life Books, 1991), 248. Lest one think this homage to the flag's sanctity but a quaint 19th-century tradition, I would like to point you towards the controversy that erupted regarding a sidebar in *Blue & Gray Magazine* 21, no. 6 (Holiday 2004): 21-23, by authors Alan T. Nolan and Marc Storch, entitled, "The Strange Story of the 6th Wisconsin's Flag at Antietam," which concerns the facts behind who may have recovered the 6th Wisconsin's flag after its bearer fell in Miller's Cornfield, and whether or not it was recovered by a member of Ulster County's 20th New York State Militia. The controversy continued when Seward Osborne, a recognized scholar of the 20th New York State Militia, wrote a 5,500-word rebuttal to Nolan and Storch's sidebar commentary on the matter, which the magazine later published as a "Web Supplement" to their Holiday 2004 issue.
  21. D. H. Hanaburgh, *History of the One Hundred and Twenty-Eighth Regiment, New York Volunteers (U. S. Infantry) in the Late Civil War* (Salem, MA: Higginson Book Co., 1998), 2.
  22. Earl J. Hess, "'Tell Me What the Sensations are': The Northern Home Front Learns about Combat," in Paul A. Cimballa and Randall M. Miller, eds., *Union Soldiers and the Northern Home Front: Wartime Experiences, Postwar Adjustments* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002), 141; ACWRD, Service Record of Lyon Wakeman. The definitive account of Wakeman's Civil War experiences as a soldier may be found in Lauren Cook Burgess, ed., *An Uncommon Soldier: The Civil War Letters of Sarah Rosetta Wakeman, alias Private Lyons Wakeman, 153rd Regiment, New York State Volunteers* (Pasadena, MD: Minerva Center, 1994).
  23. For an account of Alcott's time as a nurse and her consequent ill health as a result, see Louisa May Alcott, *Hospital Sketches*, ed. Alice Fahs (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2004). As for Clara Barton, see, for example, Stephen Sears' account of her near-death experience at the Battle of Antietam in Stephen Sears, *Landscape Turned Red: The Battle of Antietam* (New Haven: Ticknor & Fields, 1983): 337-38.
  24. There have been many recent studies exploring this issue of the changing definition and roles of gender as a result of the Civil War. I will mention a few among many: See, for instance, Catherine Clinton and Nina Silber, eds., *Divided Houses: Gender and the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); DeAnne Blanton, Lauren M. Cook, et al., *They Fought Like Demons: Women Soldiers in the American Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2002); and, Nina Silber, *Daughters of the Union: Northern Women Fight the Civil War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005).
  25. David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap-Harvard University Press, 2001), 18-19.

*With Victory Perched Upon Their Eagles:*

# Civil War Flags from the New York State Battle Flag Collection

*Christopher Morton*

On April 24, 1863, two years after the start of the Civil War, the New York State Legislature, Governor Horatio Seymour, and the state's adjutant general, Brigadier General John T. Sprague, met at the Capitol in Albany for a flag presentation ceremony. At the appointed hour, General Sprague presented to the assembled politicians seven Civil War battle flags he had recently received. He thus established an annual tradition that continued until the war's end. "While our hearts are sad, as well as grateful," commented General Sprague, "we feel a spirit of exultation and pride that, though these banners have come back torn, tattered and soiled, they have never been dishonored, and have been carried by bold, patriotic and intrepid men through the fierce conflict, and have come forth with victory perched upon their eagles."<sup>1</sup>

These seven flags formed the core of the New York State Battle Flag Collection. Similar flag presentation ceremonies in 1864 and 1865 celebrated each flag's return and honored the men who served to preserve the Union. By early 1867, over 170 Civil War volunteer regiments had entrusted state authorities with 800 flags.

Since the Civil War, New York State's organized militia has continued to deposit their flags with the state. Today, the Battle Flag Collection numbers over 2,000 flags, dating from the War of 1812 through the present. This important repository is administered by the New York State Division of Military & Naval Affairs through the New York State Military Museum, located in Saratoga Springs.

For nearly 150 years, the collection's Civil War flags have been furled tightly around their staffs and, since 1887, crammed into glass-front, wood cases in the Capitol. Consequently, these flags have suffered irreparable damage and are only in fair to poor condition. The flags have been damaged by gravity, soil, poor temperature and humidity levels, and excessive light exposure.

In 2000, recognizing the collection's conservation needs, the governor and the state Legislature began funding the New York State Battle Flag Preservation Project to implement a preservation program and develop a flag archive for the Battle Flag Collection's conservation, storage, and study. Between 2000 and 2009, textile conservators from the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation inventoried all of the flags to determine their condition, type, and dimensions; conserved over twenty-five percent of the collection, including nearly fifty percent of the Civil War flags; and stored each conserved flag in a secure, stable, and clean environment. Conserved flags are currently stored at the Military Museum and State Parks' Peebles Island Resource Center in Waterford.



The New York State Battle Flag Collection on display at the New York State Capitol, ca. 1900

From 2000 to 2009, New York State invested over \$1 million dollars to preserve the historic and fragile banners from the Battle Flag Collection. During that decade, the Battle Flag Preservation Project also has benefited from private support via donations and the Flag Sponsorship Program. Still, approximately seventy-five percent of the collection—including nearly half of the Civil War flags—awaits conservation. Because state funding ended in late 2009, financial support from the private sector is critical to conserve the remaining flags.

These historically significant and fragile emblems provide a unique medium to present the Hudson River Valley's rich Civil War history as the state and nation begin to commemorate the Civil War sesquicentennial from 2011 to 2015. The following pages show several conserved Civil War battle flags carried by regiments from the valley. Additional flags attributed to units from the local area need conservation. To learn more, please contact the Military Museum at 518-581-5100 or visit the Flag Project's website: [dmna.state.ny.us/historic/btlflags/btlflagsindex.htm](http://dmna.state.ny.us/historic/btlflags/btlflagsindex.htm).

## Endnotes

1. State of New York, *Presentation of Regimental Colors to the Legislature* (Albany: s.n., 1863), pp. 14-15.



## 77TH NY VOLUNTEERS



The regimentsal color carried by the 77th New York Volunteers before (left) and after (above) conservation by textile conservators from the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. Conservation treatments for this flag included careful vacuuming, surface cleaning the painted areas, and consolidation of loose painted fragments. The “Sons of Saratoga,” citizens from Saratoga Springs living in New York City, presented this Tiffany & Co. regimentsal color to the 77th New York Volunteers on November 29, 1861, at City Hall in New York City. The flag features painted Revolutionary War battle scenes, including British General John Burgoyne’s surrender at Saratoga, or Bemis Heights, in October 1777.



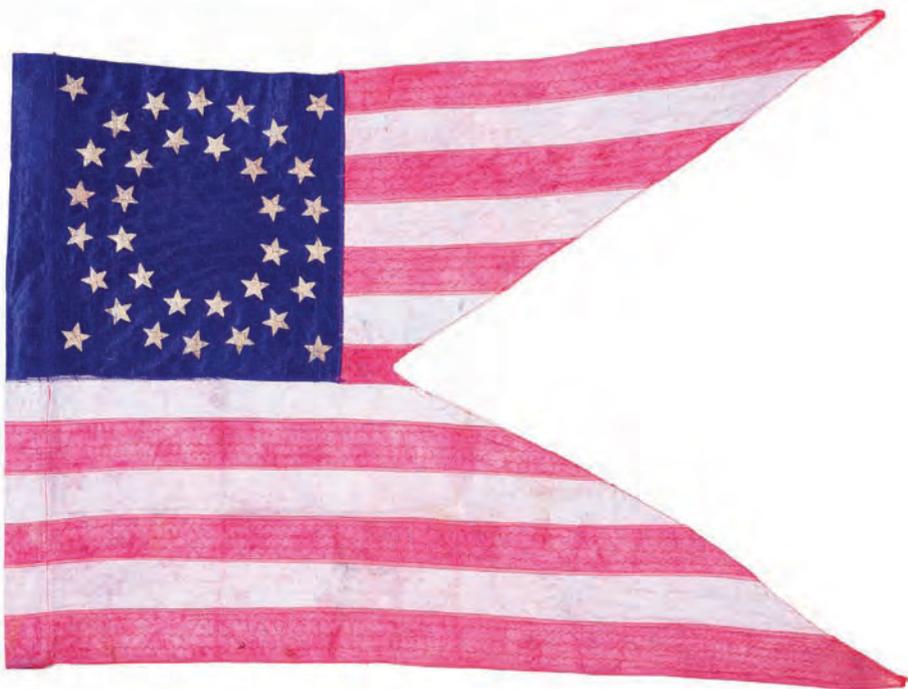
### 30TH NEW YORK VOLUNTEERS

The 30th New York Volunteers, organized in Troy from May to June 1861, were principally recruited from Albany, Rensselaer, and Saratoga counties. In June 1863, when the regiment returned home to Albany, Governor Horatio Seymour greeted the men at the State Capitol. Accompanied by Colonel Searing, the Governor proudly displayed the regiment's wool national color and proclaimed, "It [the flag] will be deposited among the treasured war trophies of the State—there to remain as a monument to the patriotism, endurance, and heroism of the Thirtieth regiment."



### 43RD NEW YORK VOLUNTEERS

Mustered into service in August and September 1861, the 43rd New York Volunteers, or “Albany Rifles,” included five companies from Albany. In July 1864, the Albany Burgess Corps (Co. R, 25th Regiment, New York National Guard) presented this blue silk flank marker to the regiment. The flag includes an appliquéd white Greek Cross, symbol of the 2nd Division, 6th Corps, Army of the Potomac, with red embroidered “43” in the center. Over 2,300 men served in the regiment by the time it mustered out in June 1865. Of these, nearly 700 were killed, wounded, or captured.



## 125TH NEW YORK VOLUNTEERS

Organized in Rensselaer County in the summer of 1862, the 125th New York Volunteers mustered into service on August 27 to 29, 1862, at Troy. This silk, swallowtail guidon in the “stars and stripes” pattern includes thirty-four gold-painted stars. Colonel Levin Crandell wrote to the Common Council of Troy on November 13, 1863, to report that Private William F. Mullin carried this flag during the battle of Gettysburg on July 1 through 3, 1863, as enemy fire pierced its folds and shattered the staff. This flag was conserved via the Flag Sponsorship Program with funding provided by the 125th New York Regimental Association.



## 25TH CAVALRY

Organized in 1864 at Saratoga Springs and Hart's Island, the 25th Cavalry included soldiers from throughout the state, including many men from Greene, Orange, Ulster, Dutchess, and Westchester counties. The blue silk standard attributed to the unit includes the Arms of the United States painted in the center, but has no regimental identification on the lower ribbon. The 25th Cavalry, or "Sickles's Cavalry" (after New York City native General Daniel Sickles), suffered its greatest losses at Newtown, Virginia, during the Shenandoah Valley Campaign from August to November, 1864.



### 128TH NEW YORK VOLUNTEERS

Colonel David S. Cowles raised the 128th New York Volunteers in Columbia and Dutchess counties; the regiment mustered into service at Hudson on September 4, 1862. The printed, wool camp color carried by the 128th New York Volunteers includes thirty-five stars and the unit's designation, "128," in dark wool appliquéd alongside the canton. The regiment suffered its greatest losses, including Colonel Cowles, during the siege of Port Hudson, Louisiana, from May 21 to July 9, 1863.



## 159TH NEW YORK VOLUNTEERS

Known as the “Second Dutchess and Columbia Regiment,” the 159th New York Volunteers included recruits from Dutchess, Columbia, and (to a lesser degree) Kings counties. The silk national color seen here features thirty-four embroidered stars in the canton and the regiment’s numeric designation painted onto the center red stripe. Numerous gold-colored painted battle honors also adorn the flag, including one for Irish Bend, Louisiana, on April 14, 1863, where the regiment suffered over 100 casualties, including Colonel Edward Molineux, who received a facial wound. This flag was conserved via the Flag Sponsorship Program with funding provided by a descendant of Colonel Molineux.



## 20TH REGIMENT NYSM

On December 15, 1862, as the 20th Regiment, or “Ulster Guard,” skirmished below Fredericksburg, Virginia, ladies from Saugerties presented the regimental color seen here to T.R. Westbrook on behalf of the regiment in a public ceremony at the Reformed Dutch Church in Saugerties. The silk flag, manufactured by Tiffany & Co. of New York City for \$200, features the Arms of the State of New York embroidered in the center, the inscription “Presented by the Ladies of Saugerties, N.Y.” embroidered along the lower edge, and several battle honors.



## 7TH BATTERY

The 7th Independent Battery originally organized in the fall of 1861 as an artillery company within the 56th New York Volunteers, or “Xth (10th) Legion,” from the state’s 10th Congressional District (Orange, Sullivan, and Ulster counties). The silk flag seen here, reportedly made by Tiffany & Co. of New York City and presented to the unit on November 7, 1861, in New York City by the “Sons of Orange and Sullivan,” includes metallic bullion fringe and painted inscriptions and crossed cannons.



## 150TH NEW YORK VOLUNTEERS

Organized in Poughkeepsie, the 150th New York Volunteers, or “Dutchess County Regiment,” mustered into service in October 1862. This blue silk regimental color includes the Arms of the United States painted in the center and the regiment’s designation on the red painted ribbon. The 150th New York Volunteers served with distinction during Brigadier General William Sherman’s Atlanta Campaign, May 3 to September 2, 1864, and subsequent Savannah Campaign (including Sherman’s “March to the Sea”), November 15 to December 10, 1864. This flag was conserved via the Flag Sponsorship Program with funding provided by the 150th New York State Volunteer Infantry Regiment Historical Association.



## 5TH NEW YORK VOLUNTEERS

The 5th New York Volunteers organized at Fort Schuyler, in New York Harbor, in April to May 1861, with nearly all the recruits drawn from New York City and Brooklyn, plus a small contingent from Poughkeepsie. The regiment received this silk, hand-sewn national color from “some admiring ladies of New York” on July 16, 1861, at Clinton Hall in New York City. The stars are inserted in the canton and arranged in a star pattern with the motto (partially lost) “ABOVE US, OR AROUND US” painted on a red ribbon.



## 124TH NEW YORK VOLUNTEERS

This silk general guide flag in the United States National pattern includes thirty-four embroidered stars and the regiment's numeric designation, "124 N.Y.S.V.," embroidered in block and script format. Known as the "Orange Blossoms" in honor of its home county, the 124th New York Volunteers mustered into service in September 1862 with the 71st Regiment, New York State Militia, as its nucleus. A month before, Miss Charlotte Coulter, representing the citizenry of Wawayanda, presented this flag to the regiment at a formal ceremony in Goshen.



## 1ST MOUNTED RIFLES

Mustered in by companies between July 1861 and September 1862, the 1st Mounted Rifles included recruits from throughout the state, including many from Columbia, Putnam, Saratoga, Orange, Ulster, Westchester, Rensselaer, and Albany counties. The 1st Mounted Rifles received this blue silk standard in October 1862. Embroidered by Tiffany & Co. of New York City, the flag features a figure of Columbia with an embroidered inscription in Latin reading “DEO DUCE, FERRO COMITANTE” (“God My Guide, My Sword, My Companion”).



## 6TH ARTILLERY

First organized in August to September 1862 by Colonel William Morris and Lieutenant Colonel James Kitching as an infantry regiment with recruits from Putnam, Rockland, and Westchester counties, the unit converted to artillery in October 1862. The flag seen here includes the regiment's numeric designation and crossed cannons, in yellow silk, pieced into the red wool field. Known as the "Anthony Wayne Guard" after the Revolutionary War hero from the battle of Stony Point, the 6th Regiment Artillery served with distinction during Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant's 1864 Virginia campaign.



### 17TH NEW YORK VOLUNTEERS

The 17th New York Volunteers, or “Westchester Chasseurs,” received the regimental color seen here on June 17, 1861, at Camp Washington, Staten Island, from patriotic ladies of Westchester County. The white silk flag includes the Arms of the State of New York painted on one side and the Arms of the United States on the other. At Second Bull Run, August 29 to 30, 1862, the regiment lost nearly fifty men killed or mortally wounded, including color bearer Corporal William Bovee.

*“All is excitement and anxiety here”:*

# A New York Family’s Experience of the Civil War

*Diane Shewchuk*

On September 2, 1862, Elihu Gifford of Hudson wrote to his daughter-in-law in Milwaukee that “all is excitement and anxiety here.”<sup>1</sup> Elihu’s son, Sanford Gifford, a Hudson River school painter who before the war had been living in New York City, had just returned home from his second tour of duty with the 7th Regiment National Guard. A younger son, Edward, was just about to leave home with his newly formed regiment, the 128th New York Volunteers. Soon, another son, James, would head south to the battlefield, although not in uniform.

Sanford Gifford’s Civil War service is remembered for several paintings of camp life that he made. They are but one source of information about the Gifford family’s experience of the war, which is enriched by the testimony of family letters, a diary, and local newspaper accounts. New York contributed more soldiers and lost more soldiers than any other state in the Union. Thousands of Columbia County men served in regiments of artillery, cavalry, engineers, infantry, and sharpshooters. Farmers and mill workers fought side by side with artists and clerks in a common cause, and they all left loved ones behind to worry and wait. The story of Sanford, Edward, and James Gifford provides a window onto the experience of all New Yorkers who participated in this bitter conflict on home soil.

Sanford, James, and Edward were three of Elihu and Eliza Robinson Starbuck Giffords’ eleven children. In 1823, the couple moved to Hudson from Greenfield, Saratoga County, with their first four children. Elihu went to work in the iron foundry business of Starbuck, Gifford and Company, which originally belonged to Eliza’s family.<sup>2</sup> After three years, Elihu was made a partner, and in 1831 he became sole owner of the firm. In 1828, Eliza and Elihu moved their family into a house situated on the southeast corner lot of Diamond (now Columbia) Street and 6th Street in Hudson. This would be the family home for the next sixty years.<sup>3</sup> The Gifford family included six sons and five daughters.<sup>4</sup> Decades later, Sanford recalled, “The children were reared in comfort and received a fine education.”<sup>5</sup>

Elihu Gifford (1796-1889) became one of Hudson's most prominent citizens. In addition to his iron and furnace businesses, he helped organize the Hudson and Berkshire Railroad. A founder of the Farmers' Bank of Hudson, he served as its first president and remained in that position for twenty-five years.<sup>6</sup> As a result, his children were economically secure enough to pursue their interests.

Eliza Robinson Starbuck (1800-1882) married Elihu Gifford in July 1817. She, too, became a leading citizen of Hudson and was an active member of the Baptist Church. She worked tirelessly for the city's Orphan and Relief Asylum, serving on its board of managers from 1847 and as First Directress in 1862. Helping those in need was a family tradition; her uncle, Nathaniel Starbuck, was president of the Troy Orphan Asylum.<sup>7</sup> She not only cared for her own large family but for those who were "poor and friendless." She was eulogized as one "who loved not only humanity in general but human beings individually."<sup>8</sup> Eliza outlived seven of her eleven children.

In the years leading up to war, the Gifford family prospered. In 1856, Elihu changed the name of his business to E. Gifford and Sons, after taking sons William Henry and James into partnership. That year in the *Hudson City Directory* they advertised their iron furnace and machine shop as "recently enlarged and improved," and "prepared to execute all orders for any quantity or description of Iron Castings, with promptitude and despatch (sic)." The accompanying illustration featured their impressive 31 Columbia Street operation and included the business next door at 33 Columbia Street, which sold "agricultural implements and seeds of all kinds" and was established by Elihu's second son,



COLLECTION OF THE COLUMBIA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Page from Wilson's *Hudson City Directory* for 1856-57,  
published in Hudson by P.S. Wynkoop, 1856.

Frederick Augustus.

The Gifford home bustled with family members of three generations moving in and out as circumstances required. The 1850 census noted fifteen people living there, including household help. Widowed daughter Elizabeth Gifford Cook and her daughter Emily had moved in to join her sisters Cornelia, Mary, and Julia. Her brother, Sanford, listed as an artist, lived at home, as did William Henry, who worked at the iron foundry. Later that year, Cornelia died of tuberculosis; in 1854 Elizabeth died. The 1860 census indicates that William Henry, who had moved out when he married, returned home with his two young daughters after his wife passed away. Brother Edward, who worked as a clerk, was there as well. This pattern of children and grandchildren moving in and out of Elihu and Eliza's home would continue through at least 1880.

While his family attended to its business interests in Hudson, Sanford Robinson Gifford (1823-1880), the third son and fourth child of the family, established himself as an artist.<sup>9</sup> In 1842, he left Hudson to join his brother, Charles (class of 1845), at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, where he remained for three semesters. After withdrawing from Brown, Sanford may have briefly returned to Hudson to study art with Henry Ary before moving to New York City in 1845. During the succeeding years, he traveled extensively through America and Europe, sketching and painting landscape after landscape.<sup>10</sup> Many of these paintings graced the walls of his parents' home, while others were exhibited at the National Academy of Design, the Boston Athenaeum, Yale College, and in his own studio in the Tenth Street Studio Building in Manhattan. Sanford would often detour to Hudson to visit his parents, siblings, and nieces and nephews. He was devoted to his family, especially to his younger sister, Mary, who occasionally accompanied him on his travels.

James (1829-1904) was the seventh child born to Elihu and Eliza Gifford. In 1840, he was sent to a boarding school in Stillwater, Saratoga County, with



COLLECTION OF THE GIFFORD FAMILY

Sanford R. Gifford (1823-1880)



**James Gifford (1829-1904)**

in 1856 to assume partnership in E. Gifford and Sons.<sup>11</sup> By 1860, his household included his wife, Almira Beadle; three sons; one Irish female servant; and a Starbuck cousin from Massachusetts.<sup>12</sup>

Little is known about Elihu and Eliza's eighth child and last son, Edward (1832-1863). He may have been educated at the Hudson Academy, a school attended by several of his brothers (and where Elihu was a trustee). In the 1860 census and in the *Hudson City Directory* of 1862-63, Edward was listed as a clerk living with his parents. In April 1861, Edward and his sisters, Mary and Julia, visited New York City to send off Sanford with his Union regiment.<sup>13</sup>

When Fort Sumter was attacked on April 12, 1861, Sanford was living in New York City. He later wrote, "On the breaking out of the Rebellion I joined the Seventh Regiment when we marched to the defence [sic] of Washington in April 1861."<sup>14</sup> Sanford joined the 1,049 men in a militia regiment that was one of the best appointed and drilled, and one of the first to leave the state. Although his reasons for joining are not known, Sanford's obituary stated that "his love of country was great, and he entered the service from purely patriotic motives."<sup>15</sup> The 7th Regiment of the New York State Militia recruited primarily affluent Protestant men who were from New York's leading families.<sup>16</sup> Colonel

his brother, William Henry. A few years later he accompanied his older brother, Charles, to Ohio, where he entered Oberlin College. In 1848, James abandoned his studies because of a head injury sustained from a severe fall. He returned to the East Coast and settled in Boston, where he worked as a clerk until 1852. In April of that year, "not being in good health," James toured Europe before returning to America in August. His health deteriorated that winter and, with his physician's encouragement, he set sail in April on a two-year tour of Australia, New Zealand, and India. In June 1855, James finally returned to Boston. At his parents' urging, he moved back to Hudson



**Edward Gifford (1832-1863)**

Marshall Lefferts was its commanding officer, and its home base was an armory on Manhattan's Tompkins Square. Sanford mustered into service in Company H for a thirty-day term. A contingent of the regiment had already left the state on April 19 to great fanfare. Traveling by ferry, train, and steamer, the men arrived in Washington, D.C., where they were quartered in the Hall of Representatives in the Capitol alongside the 6th Regiment of Massachusetts. Sanford left New York with thirty-one other privates of his company on Wednesday, April 24, and joined the rest of Company H on April 30. A few days later, he reported to his father that the "troops were paraded in the Capitol grounds and mustered into the service of the United States by the Adjutant General of the U.S.A. The troops were formed in a hollow square (about 2000) and all raising their right hands repeated aloud the oath to defend etc. The ceremony was quite imposing."<sup>17</sup> Sanford noted that "there are about 3000 troops in Washington and the city is now considered safe." He gave his father his address: "Comp. 8-7th Reg. N.Y.S.M. care of Quartermaster Winchester."

Sanford found many acquaintances among his fellow soldiers, including Theodore Winthrop, a close friend of the artist Frederic E. Church, and Henry C. Shumway, a noted miniaturist who was captain of Gifford's company. On May 2, the regiment moved to Camp Cameron in Georgetown Heights, where they stayed until May 24, when they moved to assist in building Fort Runyon, an earthwork and timber fort. They were mustered out of service on June 3, thus ending Sanford's first tour of duty.

While serving his country, Sanford sketched what he saw around him. He later used these sketches to compose several finished paintings of a soldier's life



UNION LEAGUE CLUB, NEW YORK

*Sunday Morning in the Camp of the Seventh Regiment Near Washington, D.C.*  
by Sanford R. Gifford, oil on canvas, 1861

at camp. The first may have been *Sunday Morning in the Camp of the Seventh Regiment Near Washington, D.C.*<sup>18</sup> In this painting, Sanford depicted a clearing in the camp on Meridian Hill, with a black-robed preacher standing against a flag-draped podium in the center of the scene, his back to the viewer. Members of his regiment, as well as a Zouave regiment, stand or sit a small distance from the speaker. Some of the men wear havelocks to protect their heads and necks from the sun. A similar scene appeared in the May 25, 1861, issue of *Harper's Weekly* with the caption, "Service by Rev. Dr. Weston, chaplain of the 7th Regiment at Camp Cameron on Sunday May 5, 1861."<sup>19</sup> However, this illustration shows many more participants than Gifford's painting, and gives the impression of a very crowded event.

*Bivouac of the Seventh Regiment at Arlington Heights, Virginia* was also based upon Sanford's first tour of duty.<sup>20</sup> The moonlit scene shows the temporary living quarters set up by his regiment and features a group of soldiers illuminated by a campfire. In 1862, this painting and *Sunday Morning* were exhibited at the National Academy of Design.<sup>21</sup>

While Sanford was away on his first tour of duty, the family suffered a great personal tragedy. His older brother, Charles, who had moved to Milwaukee in 1846 and suffered from years of depression, committed suicide with an overdose of chloral hydrate.<sup>22</sup> Perhaps this loss was on Sanford's mind when, in a letter to his father, he discouraged his younger brother, Edward, from enlisting: "If Ed thinks of joining a Reg, tell him not to be in a hurry about it, but wait till there is further



IMAGE © THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

*Fort Federal Hill at Sunset* (also known as *Baltimore, 1862–Twilight*), by Sanford R. Gifford, oil on canvas, by 1863. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Lent by New York State Military Museum (L.1989.71.4)



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

*Fort Federal Hill, Baltimore, Maryland by E. Sachse and Co., lithograph, 1862*

necessity. The prospect of fighting is much less imminent now than it was when I left New York. If he intends to join, all the drill he can get previously will be of use to him.”<sup>23</sup> Edward in turn wrote to Charles’ widow on June 6 to report on Sanford’s return home: “Sanford got back the day before, very much browned by exposure, but in excellent health and spirits. The regiment, he says, hold themselves in readiness whenever they are called upon.”<sup>24</sup>

The following May, when the 7th Regiment Militia (now renamed the 7th Regiment New York National Guard) mustered in for a three-month tour of duty, Sanford was again among the ranks, this time as a Corporal. During this tour, his regiment was stationed primarily in Baltimore. Sanford’s friends and family wrote him often, for which he was grateful. Writing to a group of friends on July 2, 1862, from Fort Federal Hill, Sanford detailed his experience:

I tell you it is a mighty pleasant thing for the “poor soldier” to get such a heart-rouser now and then, to feel that, while he is trying to be of some use to the cause he loves, by serving in the imminent deadly barracks, loading and firing in the dumb shows, very peaceful Columbiads and forty-two pounders,<sup>25</sup> guarding machine shops and Secesh prisoners, tramping round in Batallion drill...and standing guard and pacing the parapet in driving rain or burning sun, eating pea-soup and drinking what the commissary calls coffee, sleeping on a bare board and getting roused at sun rise by the bang of big gun and the relentless rattle of ten drums to feel that while he is serving U.S. in this brilliant and splendid way, there are a few good and

loving hearts at home, who do not forget him... is worth all the soldier sufferers and much more./ Do not think I chafe under this military subjection—I don't and with reservations, I like it. I was never heartier—haven't had a sick or weary day since I left Nestledown...<sup>26</sup>

Sanford also provided his friends with news from the front:

We have had rather lively times since the doubtful news from Richmond. The rumors of reverses to our army have again roused the Sesech Hydra. We heard the other day that an outbreak was imminent in the City. The guns of the Fort were shotted and pointed, covering Monument Square, and other noted Sesech localities, and defending the approaches to the Fort. The Regiment had their cartridge boxes filled up and got orders to sleep on their arms, and hold themselves in readiness to move at an instant's warning – this for two nights. Nothing has occurred however, to interrupt this treacherous tranquility./ If McClellan meets with any other great reverses, which God prevent! I think we will be ordered to straight to the Peninsula. The Regiment is in fine condition, though rather short on officers...<sup>27</sup>

White waiting for action, Sanford fashioned a couple of pipes from the clay found under the fort, which he sent to his friends with his letter.

At the end of July, Sanford wrote his friends, "About a week ago forty men of our Company were detailed to relieve the second Company in guarding these grimy machine shops of Mount Clare." Instead of "cramped and filthy" railroad cars where the men had stayed once before, the soldiers had "roomy, airy and cheerful quarters in a long, well-lighted lumber room, once used as an oil and paint room" by the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. There were "only six posts and five 'reliefs'" at Mount Clare Station, giving the men "plenty of liberty." Sanford and another soldier shared duty as "Sergeant of the Guard," keeping track of the soldiers' schedules and working in twenty-four-hour shifts.<sup>28</sup> Even though "a splendid iron bridge for Harper's Ferry" was being manufactured at the station, Sanford was "reduced to the contemplation of the eccentric movements of a queer locomotive that looks like a grasshopper, and is indefatigable in backing and filling and snorting and shrieking and grunting up and down the network of tracks all day and all night long."<sup>29</sup>

At this post, Sanford found time to sketch in a three-and-a-half-inch by five-inch blank book, which is now in the collection of the Albany Institute of History and Art. On the inside cover, Sanford wrote, "*8th Co. 7th Reg. N.G./July 1862*"; on a back page, he kept track of the soldiers' schedules, listing the name of the soldier filling each of six posts and the time of their shifts.<sup>30</sup> On another page,

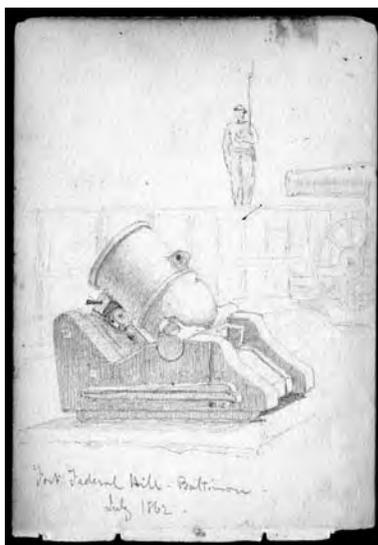
he listed the three corporals on duty from 3 p.m. July 23 to 1 a.m. July 24. In addition to these notes, Sanford drew cannons, neatly stacked cannonballs, a siege mortar, a soldier writing a letter, a soldier cleaning his rifled musket, silhouettes of soldiers, views of distant Baltimore, and unidentified portraits, all annotated with location and date.<sup>31</sup>

Apparently, Sanford drew beyond the confines of the little sketchbook. In a letter to his friends he explained, “Sometimes I amuse myself and my comrades by drawing their portraits on the white-washed walls of the Guard room. We have quite a gallery of them now—and their fame has reached far and wide—even to Federal Hill, whence we have frequent visitors to view these wonderful works of art.”<sup>32</sup>

Sanford’s sketchbook and letters describe his three-month tour of duty during the summer of 1862 as a fairly relaxed affair. He had enough free time to visit friends in the Baltimore area, and he described the biweekly dramatic entertainments in which soldiers “gave a variation of the program by gymnastic exercises, songs, fencing, boxing and fancy drumming and prestidigitation.”<sup>33</sup> When the regiment mustered out of service in early September, Sanford paid his family a visit in Hudson. A few days after his arrival, his brother, Edward, left home as a member of the 128th New York Volunteers.

Before joining his regiment for a third tour, Sanford executed a painting, *Baltimore, 1862–Twilight*, which depicts a single sentinel and artillery along a parapet above the city and incorporated elements from the sketchbook. It was exhibited in 1863 at the National Academy of Design.

On June 16, 1863, Sanford’s regiment was again mustered in for thirty days. The troops were sent back to Maryland, this time in the vicinity of Baltimore and Frederick “in the midst of the Army of the Potomac.”<sup>34</sup> Sanford reported to his father from a camp near Frederick: “The apparently endless lines of infantry and artillery and supply trains of the different corps are constantly filing past in full sight on the different roads leading to the river. The troops here suffered heavily in the late battle and many of the regiments are thin in numbers but they are all



**Fort Federal Hill—Baltimore July 1862** by Sanford R. Gifford (from sketchbook Vol. 6 inscribed “8th Co. 7th Reg. N.G./July 1862”), pencil on paper, 1862

ALBANY INSTITUTE OF HISTORY & ART, GIFT OF MARIAN GIFFORD JOHNSON SHAW (MRS. WILLIAM F. SHAW) AND MRS. GEORGE G. CUMMINGS, 1966.13.4



IMAGE © THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

*Bivouac of the Seventh Regiment—Arlington Heights, Virginia*  
by Sanford R. Gifford, oil on canvas, 1861. The Metropolitan Museum of Art,  
Lent by New York State Military Museum (L.1989.71.2)

in splendid spirits, exulting in their success and confident of putting off Lee.”<sup>35</sup> Sanford described the surrounding landscape to his father as “beautiful country,” but that “the body of a Rebel spy hangs to a tree in plain sight.”<sup>36</sup>

Sanford illustrated his third tour of duty in the painting *Camp of the Seventh Regiment, near Frederick, Maryland, in July 1863*. He recounted the details of this scene where his company “bivouacked in the mud” and created shelters by stripping “the neighboring fences of their remaining rails, and thatch them with sheaves of wheat from the next field.”<sup>37</sup> A detail of men had been quickly ordered to this location without their camp equipage and belongings. Because these were left behind at Fort Federal Hill, the soldiers had to make do on a field that was about a half mile southwest of the city. The field had been used many times before, and recent heavy rains had made it “little better than a quagmire.” Officially called “Camp near Frederick,” the site was unofficially dubbed “Camp Misery.”<sup>38</sup> Sanford’s painting is rich with scenes of everyday camp life. Soldiers talk among themselves, do laundry, care for their weapons, write letters, and rest while they await action. The Draft Riots in New York City interrupted Sanford’s tour of duty, and the 7th Regiment returned to New York. Once the insurrection subsided, the Regiment mustered out of service on July 20, and Sanford’s final term of military service came to an end.

Shortly after Sanford returned from his first tour with the 7th Regiment, his younger brother, Edward, wrote to his sister-in-law: “The rifle would be of most

use to me as I am learning to shoot and cannot tell but that I may have occasion to use it offensively toward some of the Southern traitors. I have no intention at present of joining the Army, but if I think at any time that I am needed I would like to be ready. To know something of drill, I have joined a Home Guard and occasionally try a little target shooting.”<sup>39</sup> When he came closer to the conflict, however, Edward changed his tune. According to his father, “Edward made a short trip to the war, was absent about six days, saw enough in Washington and vicinity to satisfy him, that he was not fit or equal to the exposure incident to camp life.”<sup>40</sup> Returning to Hudson in poor health, Edward worked as a draughtsman and superintendent in the family business.<sup>41</sup> By the summer of 1862, he was ready to fight for the preservation of the Union.

On July 19, 1862, Hudson attorney David C. Cowles received authority to raise a regiment. A few days later, recruiting commenced and a call asking for volunteers was issued and signed by Edward Gifford, Granville P. Hawes, and John V. Whitbeck.<sup>42</sup> A company of 100 men was raised; Edward, Hawes, and Whitbeck were commissioned as Captain, 1st Lieutenant, and 2nd Lieutenant, respectively, of Company A of the 128th Regiment of New York Volunteers. Under the command of Colonel Cowles, the regiment contained ten companies, four from Columbia County and six from Dutchess County. Colonel Cowles, his officers, and 1,021 men rendezvoused at the Hudson fairgrounds, which was renamed Camp Kelly in honor of William Kelly of Rhinebeck, “who manifested



***Camp of the Seventh Regiment, near Frederick, Maryland, in July 1863,***  
**by Sanford R. Gifford, oil on canvas, 1864. The Metropolitan Museum of Art,**  
**Lent by New York State Military Museum (L.1989.71.3)**



COLUMBIA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, GIFT OF ALBERT S. CALLAN, 1994.13.6

*Camp Millington* by E. Sachse and Co., lithograph, 1862

a deep interest in the Regiment.”<sup>43</sup> After days of celebrations and presentations of flags, the recruits left Hudson on Friday afternoon, September 5, 1862, with haversacks stuffed with “a loaf of bread, a piece of fat pork hot from the kettle, and a big onion.”<sup>44</sup> The regiment sailed downriver to New York City on the steamer *Oregon* and marched to temporary barracks in City Hall Park.<sup>45</sup> From there, the men crossed to New Jersey, where they boarded railroad cars for Philadelphia. On September 9, they arrived at their destination, a camp south of Baltimore known as Camp Millington, where the men from upstate New York drilled and trained.

Edward described his first days “with his favorite Company A” in a letter to his father, who in turn recounted the contents to his daughter-in-law: “He likes his men very much and they seem to be much attached to him. We trust his natural confidence will be continued...He has but little time to write.”<sup>46</sup> Edward and his regiment remained at Camp Millington until November 9, when they were transported to Fortress Monroe in Hampton, Virginia.

The 128th Regiment eventually joined the Army of the Gulf and General Nathaniel Banks’ expedition to gain control of the lower Mississippi River. Relying on newspaper reports for information about the regiment, Edward’s family became anxious when they realized he was “beyond reach of our supplies.”<sup>47</sup> The 128th Regiment participated in the engagement to secure Port Hudson, a Mississippi port known for shipping cotton and sugar, which was situated about twenty-five miles upriver from Baton Rouge. The siege of Port Hudson began on May 23, 1863, and lasted until the terms of surrender were negotiated on July 9, 1863. During the assault of May 27, 1863, the 128th Regiment suffered the loss of

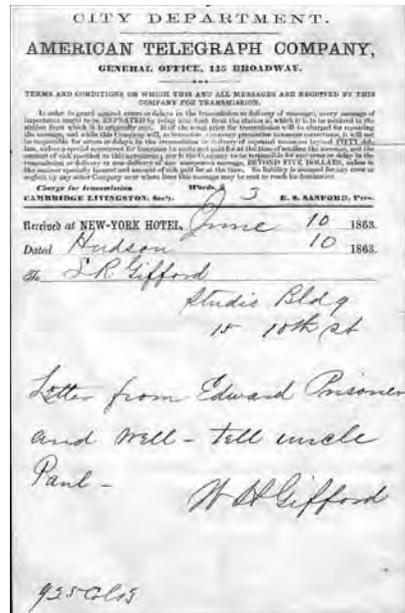
their beloved and respected Colonel Cowles, who died on the battlefield of a fatal bayonet thrust to his thigh. His bravery became legendary after it was reported time and again that his dying words were: “Tell my mother I died with my face to the enemy.” Edward went missing on the same day. The events of May 27, highlighted by the story of the colonel’s death, were recounted in every newspaper in Columbia and Dutchess counties. Speculation on the fate of Captain Edward Gifford also was noted.

Sanford Gifford relayed “the sad news we have of Edward” to his sister-in-law:

He was wounded in the assault on Port Hudson and is missing. A letter from the Major of the Regiment (who was not in the battle) gives this account of him. He had a ‘forlorn hope’ made up of volunteers.<sup>48</sup> They assaulted and occupied a building near the enemies’ works. The building was riddled by a storm of rebel shot and shell, and burned. What has become of Edward is unknown. There is a bare possibility he may be a prisoner. If he is dead, he died nobly.<sup>49</sup>

Lawrence Van Alstyne, a fellow member of the 128th Regiment from the town of North East in Dutchess County, recorded in his diary: “Captain Gifford of Company A has not returned, and we fear the Rebs got him.” On May 27, he added, “No news of Captain Gifford yet. His men have searched everywhere it is possible to go, and we think he must have been captured, just how, none of his company can imagine, for he was with them all through the squabble at the Slaughter house, and himself gave the order to fall back.” On May 29, Van Alstyne noted, “The Rebs say Captain Gifford is a prisoner in Port Hudson.”<sup>50</sup>

When the Gifford family in Hudson learned via telegram from Sanford in New York that Edward was missing, they decided to send James to Louisiana. He documented his trip in a diary.<sup>51</sup> After arriving in New Orleans, James connected with members of the 128th Regiment, many of whom he knew from home. A newspaper published a story that included a



Telegram sent by William Henry Gifford in Hudson to Sanford R. Gifford in New York, June 10, 1863

COLLECTION OF THE GIFFORD FAMILY

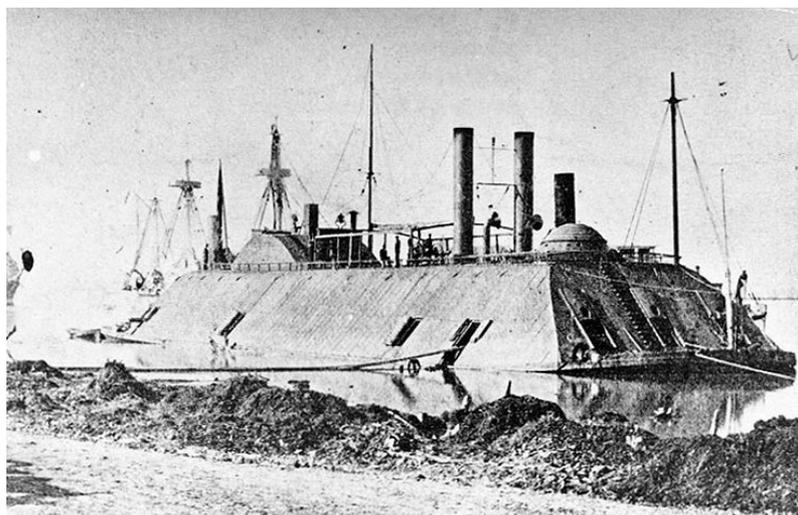
report on James and his mission, saying he “had thus far been able to gain little further intelligence of his brother, Capt. Edward Gifford, but was waiting for the next assault upon Port Hudson, which was expected immediately. If successful, he hoped to be among the first to rescue him from imprisonment.”<sup>52</sup> While James was traveling to Louisiana, brother William Henry in Hudson sent a telegram dated June 10, 1863, to Sanford with the momentous news: “Letter from Edward Prisoner/and well...”<sup>53</sup> A newspaper article confirmed the news and relayed the specifics of Edward’s capture and imprisonment, offering comfort to Edward’s friends and family: “He is receiving kind treatment through the influence of the Folger boys, (sons of N.C. Folger) and Abner Hammond, who are among the rebel forces at Port Hudson.”<sup>54</sup> In his diary, James recorded hearing the same news from Fayette Folger.<sup>55</sup>

With the help of Captain Charles B. Chittenden<sup>56</sup>, who was a friend from home, James procured a coveted pass to the battlefield. He paid a visit to St. James Hospital to visit wounded members of his brother’s regiment before leaving by steamboat to travel up the Mississippi. On June 17, 1863, James reached Baton Rouge, where he disembarked to visit the “ruins of State House, burnt when rebels were driven out.” He continued his journey to Springfield Landing, where artillery was unloaded: “We put ashore 4 ‘Union Repeating’ rifles, alias ‘coffee mills’ on wheels, which receive the balls in a hopper, and by turning a crank are made to discharge 60 per minute.” In exchange for the artillery, the cabins on the steamer were cleared for the reception of three hundred wounded, “a suffering, but uncomplaining lot,”—who were lying on a ground strewn with cotton.

When his request for permission to ride to the front in a returning ambulance was denied, James “took possession of a sickly carriage which had just brought down a wounded officer,” drove a few miles, and then walked the last five until he reached the 128th Regiment. He described his entry in to their camp:

Welcomed by Colonel, had coffee and hard tack, later strolling through the Camp receiving hearty greetings from the Hudson boys, who were glad enough to see someone from home. Was made happy by reading a letter Capt. Wilkinson had this day received from Ed stating he was well, courteously treated by both men and officers, and requesting word to that effect be sent home.<sup>57</sup>

While at camp, James quartered with the colonel and four others in a shelter made of fence rails interlaced with sugar cane, which offered protection from the blazing summer sun. As he waited for more news of his brother, James visited the battleground where Edward was taken prisoner and met with the men of the



The USS Essex at a Mississippi River area port, ca. 1862-65

159th Regiment of New York Volunteers. Like the 128th Regiment, the 159th was formed from citizens of both Columbia and Dutchess counties. Accompanied by Edward's close friend, Captain Robert F. Wilkinson<sup>58</sup>, James toured the celebrated ironclad gunboat *Essex*, which had bombarded Port Hudson. James described in detail the ship's artillery, which would have been of special interest to his family in the iron business. This tour, complete with dinner onboard, was a highlight of James's journey.

James spent the last days of June 1863 living among the 128th Regiment. He complained about the intolerable heat, slept in a rifle pit, saw active combat, conversed with "some Rebs," and "witnessed [a] splendid artillery duel this evening; shells from mortars are graceful as they rise and fall in [the] air."<sup>59</sup> By July 1, after a bout of severe diarrhea, James decided to go home. He felt it was his "duty to return to work," and because he knew Edward was safe, he felt no need to wait to see him. Accompanied by Wilkinson, he started on foot toward Springfield Landing, where he boarded a steamer for New Orleans. Despite mosquitoes interrupting his sleep and an exchange of fire with enemy guerillas, James arrived at the St. Charles Hotel on July 3, just in time to participate in New Orleans' Fourth of July celebrations. During the day, he watched military processions, and in the evening he listened to "strong abolition speeches" and watched a "torchlight procession of Negroes," which inspired the observation: "This is not the New Orleans of 1861."

While James celebrated the holiday, Edward managed to escape the Rebels, a feat that was reported in dramatic fashion by newspapers back home:

For thirty-nine days [Capt. Gifford] remained under guard at Port Hudson subsisting almost exclusively upon corn meal and molasses. On the 4th day of July, he and a fellow prisoner planned an escape. The glorious recollections of that anniversary were too inspiring to submit any longer to the bonds of imprisonment on American soil. During the night Capt. Gifford crept out of the building and found the guard asleep. The golden opportunity came unexpected to him, and fearing to return he made his way out of the rebel lines. In attempting to ford a creek, however, he was carried by the current out into the Mississippi River, and for about four hours compelled to buffet the waves in the peril of his life! He finally reached the opposite shore in an exhausted condition and was picked up by an Indiana company of artillery... Had he not been an expert swimmer, his life would have been sacrificed to his love of freedom. The terrible struggle occurred in the dark hours between midnight and \_\_ o'clock. Capt. G divested himself of his clothing in the water on finding that there was no alternative but to cross the river or be borne back by the tide to Port Hudson shore.<sup>60</sup>

Edward rejoined his regiment and told them that "the bulk of enemies forces were in front of us, here on the left."<sup>61</sup> After a forty-eight-day siege, Port Hudson surrendered. The Mississippi River was finally open to Union navigation.

On July 8, James "heard the glad tidings that Ed had escaped.... It seems too good to be true!" James had been feverish with severe pains in his head for most of the day, but he rallied upon hearing the good news. On July 10, he was reunited with his brother at the Chittenden residence in New Orleans:

Found Ed on the bed not looking or feeling very well. Laid by his side and heard a brief summary of his escape, which was executed the night of the 4th. He was actually too weak to talk much, but after resting he went down town with Wilkinson to draw pay, order clothing. He wore private's uniform, having thrown his own off while in the river. His escape from drowning was miraculous. He left the Guard house near 12, went to the bank and north to Thompson's Creek. Here he was swept by force of current into Mississippi, compelled to swim or run risk of recapture on the rebel shore. After 5½ or 6 hours in the water he landed opposite our left wing, and was cared for at once. He learned that I was in Camp of 128th. On reaching his Regiment he was completely exhausted, but on the 7th had an interview with Gen. Banks and gave him valuable information. Procuring a leave of absence for 10 days, he started for the city.

The joyful reunion of the brothers was overshadowed by the ill health of both. James's diary entry for July 11 read: "Ed had severe diarrhea all night and today is completely prostrated... he has also considerable fever. At 2 this P.M. I suddenly felt very hot and yet shivering from the cold. Although the day was hot I put on heavy coat and walked the room shaking and my teeth chattering." Edward began "singing or humming nearly all the time" and was "covered with ulcers and sores caused by confinement and bad food." It soon became apparent that Edward suffered from typhoid fever. News that he "was lying in a very critical situation" and "that there was very little hope of his surviving long" soon reached Hudson.<sup>62</sup>

The health of neither brother improved immediately, but eventually James began to recover while Edward did not. On July 17, James noted, "With assistance Ed walked into front room, where he sits all day, fever still on, food scarcely anything." The regiment's surgeon, Palmer C. Cole, visited Edward and brought him his watch, purse, sword, and pistol. James wished his brother would rally enough to journey home, where he felt his condition would improve. Instead, Edward developed a boil on his gum and continued to have no appetite. James finally accepted the seriousness of his brother's illness and wrote to his wife to inform her of Edward's "true condition." On August 2, James wrote his mother a letter "which I know will make their hearts bleed with anxious fear." Edward was treated with mercury and quinine pills, but drifted in and out of consciousness for the next few days. A week later, James knew his brother was sinking because "his breath [is] short, his toes and fingers cold." He was himself exhausted: "My own soul is weary, and I cannot lie down."

On August 11, James wrote: "Ed, my brother, is at peace. Will the Lord be his God now and forever. Am heart sick as I dwell on those last hours of distress. It pains me to write of that night, but it may be good for me to do so." He continued:

I went at 11 to lie down though sorely against my will and was summoned at 12. He was calling 'Where's James?' his arms were outstretched. Placing his left arm over my shoulder he at once dropped into that lethargic sleep, never to waken again. For nearly an hour he laid in this way, his eyes closed and he moved not. At one o'clock his gasps for breath grew faint, and I hardly knew when he gave his last at 1:13. The body was placed in the vault at the Cemetery. Services were to be officiated by Dr. Bacon at 5 P.M. Monday, but he not having arrived at 6 o'clock, Capt. Keene of the 128th read the burial service. My heart is near broken. My poor parents, brothers and sisters, your sorrow is yet to come. Today I have tried to find some lead coffins left here by Capt. Lathrop,<sup>63</sup> but was unsuccessful. Moreover, no bodies can be

sent North until after Oct. 1st, but I have resolved to see Gen. Banks in the morning. In view of difficulty of obtaining a permit, I have made arrangements with Wilkinson to ship it by express as early as possible, and passed the day in preparation of sail home tomorrow. This decision regards Ed's remains is a sad one. I could bear it better myself but for the bitter disappointment it will be to family and friends at home. I hoped to bring him with me while in life, and am forced to leave him here in death. What will they say when I come among them without him?"

Leaving New Orleans was bittersweet for James: "It was hard to leave the friends who had been so kind, Capt. and Mrs. Chittenden, Wilkinson, Dr. Butcher, Tom Hammond and the servant, William, all of whom came to see me off."<sup>64</sup> On the journey home, James suffered "a violent return of fever and chills" and arrived on August 20. On September 5, Edward's fellow officers of the 128th Regiment met and adopted resolutions in memory of their brother officer. The resolutions were sent from Baton Rouge for publication in the local newspapers, to the Gifford family, and to the Masonic Lodge in Hudson. The regiment deemed Edward one of its "most efficient and valued members" and "a faithful, gallant and patriotic officer; one who during the year of his association with us, endeared himself to us all by his uniform kindness and courtesy." Sincerest sympathies were expressed and the men committed to wearing a badge on their left arm for thirty days.<sup>65</sup> In December, the bodies of soldiers from the 128th and 159th Regiments who died in Louisiana months earlier arrived in Hudson. Edward's funeral took place on Tuesday, December 29. On the last day of 1863, the *Hudson Weekly Star* reported that a "large number of our citizens were in attendance" and published a tribute to the soldier and friend who "loved his country" "better than his home and his kindred." Almost twenty years later, Reverend James M. Bruce recalled a conversation he had with Eliza Gifford about her son's death. Through her tears, she told him, "I was willing to let him go. I gave him to his country and I do not murmur because his country's service cost his life."<sup>66</sup>

Eliza and Elihu Gifford both outlived their son, Sanford, who died in 1880. Eliza was eighty-two when she died in 1882; Elihu was ninety-two when he passed away in 1889. In his Last Will and Testament, Elihu bequeathed two framed photographs of the "Camp of the 7th Regiment," one to James and the other to the children of Charles.<sup>67</sup> That Elihu cared enough to bequeath these mementos among the many works of fine art in his possession suggests the strong emotions he attached to his sons' Civil War service. James outlived all of his brothers; he died in 1904 at the age of seventy-five. The Gifford family plot in Hudson's Cedar Park Cemetery is the final resting place for brothers Sanford, James, and Edward.

## Endnotes

The author is most grateful to the great-great nephew of Sanford, James, and Edward Gifford for sharing his collection of Gifford family materials with her. She has appreciated his encouragement and interest in the Civil War experiences of the family. She also acknowledges Bonnie Yochelson, chair of the Collections Committee at the Columbia County Historical Society for her thoughtful review of the essay, as well as Tammis Groft, Tom Nelson, and Allison Munsell of the Albany Institute of History and Art, and Michael Aikey and Christopher Morton of the New York State Military Museum.

This article has been greatly informed by Ila Wiess's groundbreaking book, *Poetic Landscape: The Art and Experience of Sanford R. Gifford* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, c.1987) and the more recent seminal work, *Hudson River School Visions: The Landscapes of Sanford R. Gifford*, edited by Kevin J. Avery and Franklin Kelly (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2003).

1. Letter from Elihu Gifford to Mary Child Gifford, September 2, 1862. Typescript provided to the author by a Gifford family descendant.
2. Peter H. Stott, *Looking for Work: Industrial Archeology in Columbia County, New York* (Kinderhook: Columbia County Historical Society, 2007), 196. Stott says that Elihu joined the iron furnace owned by his father-in-law, Nathaniel Starbuck in 1823. Nathaniel, however, was Eliza's uncle, not her father. Eliza Robinson Starbuck Gifford's father was Charles Starbuck (1763-1823) of Easton, Washington County, and later Troy. Nathaniel Starbuck (1777-1864) was Charles's brother. The brothers had operated the Hot Air Furnace in Troy and merged with Ephraim Gurley in 1821, turning C. & N. Starbuck into Starbuck and Gurley, a foundry that cast iron plates used in stove production.
3. Rev. James M. Bruce, *In Memory of Eliza Robinson Gifford, Memorial Sermon Preached in the First Baptist Church of Hudson, N.Y.* (Hudson, 1882), 4.
4. According to a copy of a handwritten chart in the "Gifford" genealogical file at the Columbia County Historical Society, the children of Elihu and Eliza Gifford were: Elizabeth Starbuck Gifford Cook (1818-1854), Charles (1819-1861), Frederick Augustus (1821-1865), Sanford Robinson (1823-1880), William Henry (1825-1898), Maria Mehitable (1827-1828), James (1829-1904), Edward (1832-1863), Cornelia (1834-1850), Mary (1836-1904) and Julia Gifford Wilkinson (1838-1938).
5. Letter from Sanford R. Gifford to O.B. Frothingham, Esq., November 6, 1874; in Gifford Papers (Archives of American Art).
6. For a brief biography and image of Elihu Gifford see opposite page 184 of Franklin Ellis' *History of Columbia County, New York*, 1878.
7. *Manual for the Use of the Legislatures of the State of New-York for the Year 1858* (Albany: Weed, Parsons and Company, 1858), 486. The manual also listed the officers of the Hudson Orphan and Relief Asylum: Elihu Gifford was a board member and his wife was Second Directress.
8. Bruce, *In Memory of Eliza Robinson Gifford*, 5. This published memorial sermon gives a detailed account of Eliza's work toward establishing legislation that required "all children to be sent to charitable institutions and forbidding them to be sent to Poorhouses."
9. Elihu Gifford named this son after his maternal grandmother, Sarah Sanford (1738-1813).
10. A detailed chronology of Sanford's life and career can be found in *Hudson River School Visions: The Landscapes of Sanford R. Gifford*, edited by Kevin J. Avery and Franklin Kelly (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2003), 243-255.
11. Typescript *Notes from Journal of James Gifford 1829-1905* provided to the author by a Gifford family descendant. James's journal includes an autobiography where he extensively detailed his trips abroad.

12. Federal census of the United States, 1860 for the City of Hudson. The two households listed before James's are his father's, followed by his brother Frederick's. The first *Hudson City Directory* was published in 1851. It listed Elihu at 337 Diamond Street, Frederick at 336 Diamond Street, and William at 332 Diamond Street. After William moved back to his father's home, James moved into 332 Diamond Street. The directories sometimes list Elihu living at 335 Diamond Street, probably because he also owned that building.
13. Letter from Sanford R. Gifford to his father, Elihu Gifford, May 1, 1861. Typescript provided to the author by a Gifford family descendant.
14. SRG to O.B. Frothingham, Esq., November 6, 1874
15. *New York Times*, August 30, 1880.
16. Gustav Person, "Answering the Call: The New York State Militia Responds to the Crisis of 1861" in *Civil War History*, May/June 2008, page 2. This regiment was founded in 1847, but had a history that extended back to the beginning of the nineteenth century.
17. SRG to EG, May 1, 1861.
18. Sanford mentioned a painting with this title in his November 6, 1874, letter to O.B. Frothingham. The painting also was mentioned in his obituary and was listed as part of his estate in the catalog that accompanied the Memorial Exhibition held after his death. It is now in the collection of the Union League Club, New York, where it is commonly called, *Sunday Morning in the Camp of the Seventh Regiment near Washington, D.C.*
19. Rev. Sullivan H. Weston (1816-1887) was connected to Trinity Parish in New York and in charge of St. John's Chapel. He accompanied the regiment when they left New York.
20. This painting also is mentioned in his obituary.
21. For further discussion of these paintings see *Hudson River School Visions: The Landscapes of Sanford R. Gifford*, edited by Kevin J. Avery and Franklin Kelly (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2003) and *Poetic Landscape: The Art and Experience of Sanford R. Gifford* by Ila Weiss (Newark: University of Delaware Press, c.1987).
22. Information provided to the author via e-mail from the great-grandson of Charles Gifford, August 13, 2010.
23. SRG to EG, May 1, 1861.
24. Letter from Edward Gifford to Mary Child Gifford, June 6, 1861. Typescript provided to the author by a Gifford family descendant
25. In dumb shows, soldiers ran through drills without ammunition. The columbiad was a large, long-range cannon, while the forty-two pounder was a cannon that fired projectiles weighing forty-two pounds.
26. Letter from Sanford Gifford to Candace Wheeler, Cannie, Tom, Jerome and Lamb, July 2, 1862. Typescript provided to the author by a Gifford family descendant. Nestledown was the Wheeler family home on Long Island. Fort Federal Hill was considered "one of the most healthy and agreeable military posts in the country" because of "its ample supply of excellent water, complete drainage, airy situation, and comfortable quarters," according to the *History of the Seventh Regiment, National Guard, State of New York, During the War of the Rebellion* by William Swinton (New York and Boston: Fields, Osgood, and Co., 1870) 248.
27. Ibid.
28. Letter from Sanford Gifford to "My dear friends at Nestledown" (the Wheelers), July 27, 1862. Typescript provided to the author by a Gifford family descendant.
29. Ibid.
30. For example, in a column, Sanford wrote, "2nd Relief/11-1pm/1 Casey/2 Coles/3 Delano/4 Hurlburt/5 Talcott/ 6 Morgan," and so on for several two-hour shifts. The page was dated "22nd July." With the exception of Delano, all of these men were members of Company H and are listed

- on the “Muster-in Roll” in *History of the Seventh Regiment, National Guard, State of New York, During the War of the Rebellion* by William Swinton (New York and Boston: Fields, Osgood, and Co., 1870).
31. Sketchbook inscribed “8th Co. 7th Reg. N.G./ July 1862,” Collection of the Albany Institute of History and Art, Volume 6, 1966.13.4. This is one of several Gifford sketchbooks in that collection.
  32. SRG to the Wheelers, July 27, 1862.
  33. Ibid.
  34. Letter from Sanford Gifford to his father, Elihu Gifford, July 9, 1863. Typescript provided to the author by a Gifford family descendant.
  35. Ibid. The Battle of Gettysburg had taken place a few days earlier.
  36. Ibid.
  37. Ibid.
  38. *History of the Seventh Regiment, National Guard, State of New York, During the War of the Rebellion* by William Swinton (New York and Boston: Fields, Osgood, and Co., 1870) 330.
  39. Edward Gifford to Mary Child Gifford, June 6, 1861.
  40. Letter from Elihu Gifford to Mary Child Gifford, December 10, 1861. Typescript provided to the author by a Gifford family descendant.
  41. *Notes from Journal of James Gifford*.
  42. *The Hudson Gazette, Columbia County at the end of the century; a historical record of its formation and settlement, its resources, its institutions, its industries, and its people*. (Hudson: The Record Printing and Publishing Company, 1900), 66.
  43. D. H. Hanaburgh, *History of the One Hundred and Twenty-Eighth Regiment, New York Volunteers (U.S. Infantry) in the Late Civil War* (Pokeepsie (sic): Enterprise Publishing Company, 1894), 2.
  44. Hanaburgh, 3.
  45. The thirty-four-star American flag that flew on the Oregon is in the collection of the Columbia County Historical Society.
  46. Letter from Elihu Gifford to Mary Child Gifford, October 10, 1862. Typescript provided to the author by a Gifford family descendant. Elihu wrote this letter over a few days, concluding it on October 14, “A letter from Edw. Saying the reg. is ordered to Harper’s Ferry. We have just sent him a box by the chaplin [sic] who leaves this eve.”
  47. Letter from Elihu Gifford to Mary Child Gifford, December 19, 1862. Typescript provided to the author by a Gifford family descendant.
  48. “Forlorn hope” was the designation often given to a band of soldiers chosen to take the leading part in a military operation.
  49. Letter from Sanford Gifford to Mary Child Gifford, June 10, 1863. Typescript provided to the author by a Gifford family descendant.
  50. Lawrence Van Alstyne, *Diary of an Enlisted Man* (New Haven: The Tuttle, Morehouse and Taylor Company, 1910), 112, 117. The regimental history of the 128th recounts the events as well and says that Edward and a detachment of men “was ordered to burn some buildings within the picket lines of the enemy” and that when Edward was discovered missing, thirty volunteers searched the burning ruins to look for him. Hanaburgh, 36-37.
  51. *Diary of James Gifford*, 1863. Typescript provided to the author by a Gifford family descendant.
  52. Uncited newspaper clipping “Return of Capt. Lathrop” in the file of newspaper clippings relating to the 159th Regiment of New York Volunteers, New York State Military Museum. The 159th Regiment was also made up of men from Columbia and Dutchess counties. James mentioned his encounter with Gideon Lathrop of Stockport in his own diary: “Met Capt. Lathrop at the

St. Charles. He came for the body of his son, killed at Irish Bend. Looks badly.” *Diary of James Gifford*.

53. American Telegraph Company telegram from W.H. Gifford, Hudson to S.R. Gifford, New York, June 10, 1863. Photocopy provided to the author by a Gifford family descendant.
54. Newspaper clipping in the file of clippings relating to the 159th Regiment of New York Volunteers, New York State Military Museum. Originally from Hudson, Nathan Cyprian Folger (1810-1878) was a successful wholesale clothing dealer in New Orleans. His brother, Frederick Fitch Folger (1812-1899), was a director of the Farmers’ Bank in Hudson and would therefore have known Elihu Gifford. Their father was born in Easton, the hometown of Eliza Gifford. Nathan’s sons, Frederick G. and Gideon L., served in the Confederate army in Fenner’s Louisiana Battery at Port Hudson. Abner Hammond (1768-1849) lived in Hudson. Hammond donated land to build the Hudson Orphan Asylum, and his daughter, Sally Maria Hammond McKinstry, was a founder of that organization and would have known Eliza Gifford. Abner died before the Civil War started, so it is not clear who is being discussed.
55. *Diary of James Gifford*. Lafayette Folger (b. 1815) was a hardware merchant in New Orleans. He was the brother of Nathan and Frederick, and had relocated from Hudson.
56. Charles was the son of George Chittenden of Stockport, where the family operated a paper mill.
57. June 17 entry in *Diary of James Gifford*.
58. Wilkinson was from Poughkeepsie. He served as Captain of Company I, 128th Regiment, and married Julia Gifford, the youngest daughter of Elihu and Eliza Gifford in 1867.
59. June 27-29, 1863 entries, *Diary of James Gifford*.
60. Uncited newspaper clipping in the file of newspaper clippings relating to the 128th Regiment of New York Volunteers, New York State Military Museum. The exact time Edward spent in the water appeared on the left side of the article. It is missing because the clipping was cut in too far.
61. Van Alstyne, 143.
62. Undated newspaper clipping from the *Hudson Star* from the file of newspaper clippings relating to the 128th Regiment of New York Volunteers, New York State Military Museum.
63. Robert Lathrop, an Adjutant in the 159th Regiment of New York Volunteers, was killed in the Battle of Irish Bend. In May 1863, his father, Gideon Lathrop of Stockport, “engaged coffins for Col Draper & my son Roby’s remains” and traveled to Louisiana. He was unable to retrieve his son’s body during his visit, so left the coffins behind. Gideon documented his trip in a diary that is in the collection of the Columbia County Historical Society.
64. Mrs. Chittenden was the former Carrie Hammond of Hudson.
65. Uncited article “Death of Major Gifford.” in the file of newspaper clippings relating to the 128th Regiment of New York Volunteers, New York State Military Museum.
66. Bruce, *In Memory of Eliza Robinson Gifford*, 9.
67. Copy of The Last Will and Testament of Elihu Gifford in the Gifford family file at the Columbia County Historical Society. The document is dated January 3, 1865, with the first codicil dated July 26, 1869, and the second codicil dated September 27, 1886.

# The West Point Education of the “Christian General”: Oliver Otis Howard, 1850-1861

*Jonathan Howard Lawler*

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**Oliver Otis Howard**

Oliver Otis Howard was an impressive military leader of the late nineteenth century. Howard’s West Point experience has been overlooked in previous works.<sup>1</sup> He attended the United States Military Academy from 1850 to 1854 and taught there from 1857 to 1861. His residence along the Hudson shaped his thinking, his beliefs, and his long life in the military. The credentials he acquired and the friends he made at the academy also greatly contributed to his successful military career.

Previous historians, such as John Carpenter and William McFeely, have focused their attention on Howard’s military service from 1861 onward. Howard’s fame came with the Civil War. He fought for the Union, leading troops at the First and Second Battles

of Bull Run, Fair Oaks, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, and throughout General William Tecumseh Sherman’s campaigns in 1864 and 1865. He lost his right arm at the Battle of Fair Oaks and, as a result, received special commendations from Congress, including the Medal of Honor. After the war he successfully organized and administered the Freedman’s Bureau, captured Chief Joseph’s Nez Perce Indians, and became superintendent of West Point. Throughout his distinguished career, Howard advocated for the rights of African Americans. Education,

he believed, would improve the lives of minorities. This belief led Howard to found Howard University in Washington, D.C. He also helped establish Lincoln Memorial University in Tennessee. Because Howard was known for his strong religious beliefs, he was dubbed the “Christian General.”<sup>2</sup>

Howard was born on November 8, 1830, in Leeds, Maine. He was the son of Eliza and Rowland Howard. The Howards were of old Anglo-Saxon heritage, tracing their ancestry to John Howard, who arrived in America from England in 1643. His lineage was a source of pride for his family because of its early roots in America.<sup>3</sup> The Howards had always been farmers and instilled in their son a work ethic that served him well throughout his life. Working the fields of south-central Maine, about ten miles from Augusta, gave Howard an appreciation for farm chores and hard work. By the age of ten, he had learned to “... harness and control a horse attached to a carriage, or to drive one or two yoke of oxen.”<sup>4</sup>

The youth began his education at the age of four in a small schoolhouse with children of other local farmers. After his early education in this one-room school, Howard moved to the small town of Wayne to begin upper-level instruction. Later in his childhood he moved into his uncle’s home. He went to school in the autumn and winter months, attending the Monmouth Academy near Leeds.<sup>5</sup> In order to prepare adequately for college, Howard transferred to North Yarmouth Academy in 1845. The next year, he was admitted to Bowdoin College and undertook a classical education, studying Latin and Greek as well as mathematics. Howard had one clearly defined purpose: as he proclaims in his *Autobiography*, he was determined to overcome any “obstacles thrown in my way.”<sup>6</sup> This perseverance would characterize his entire life. This industrious spirit would lead in other directions as well. Each winter, from his sophomore to senior years, for example, Howard taught the children of local farmers.

In 1850 Howard accepted appointment to the United States Military Academy at West Point. He had been recommended by his uncle, Congressman John Otis Howard. He was attracted to West Point because of its excellent program in mathematics, which Bowdoin did not offer. Other factors also led him to attend. These included the military traditions in his family. Howard had grown up hearing tales of his family’s exploits during the American Revolution. His grandfather, Seth Howard, served as a private in the Revolution and as a captain during Indian conflicts. Jesse Howard, his great-grandfather, fought in the Revolution as a captain. Howard’s father served in the Leeds Militia, which drilled in preparation for a border war (known in history as the Aroostook War) in the 1830s. Howard recalled his excitement when watching the drills: “On arriving we were delighted with the beautiful uniforms and bright plumes of the company and excited as boys

## U.S.M.A. CLASS OF 1854

(Derived from Cullum Files)

Name	Place of Birth	Class Rank	Age Upon Acceptance	Age and Year of Death	Highest Rank Attained (US Service)	Major Military Service	Notes
Lee, G.W. Custis	Virginia	1	17	80, 1913	1 <sup>st</sup> Lieut.	Department of Engineers, resigned 1861	Robert E. Lee's son, Served the Confederacy
Abbot, Henry	Massachusetts	2	18	96, 1927	Colonel (regulars), Bvt. Major General (volunteers)	Served the Union. Chief of Artillery during Fort Fisher campaign.	
Ruger, Thomas	New York	3	17	74, 1907	Bvt. Major General	Civil War	Helped suppress riots in NYC, 1863, Superintendent at West Point in 1870s
Howard, Oliver	Maine	4	19	78; 1909	Major General	Seminole War, Civil War, Indian Wars	Head of Freedman's Bureau
Treadwell, Thomas	New Hampshire	5	18	47; 1879	Major	Civil War	
Turnbull, Charles	District of Columbia	6	17	42; 1874	Captain	Topographical Engineers, Prof. at USMA, Civil War	
Deshler, James	Alabama	7	17	30; 1863	1 <sup>st</sup> Lieut.	Frontier duty, dropped July 15, 1861	Served the Confederacy (killed at the Battle of Chickamauga, GA)
Closson, Henry	Vermont	8	18		Colonel	Frontier duty, Civil War	
Bingham, Judson	New York	9	19		Lieut. Colonel	Expedition to Harper's Ferry, Civil War	
Pegram, John	Virginia	10	18	33; 1865	1 <sup>st</sup> Lieut.	Frontier duty	Served the Confederacy, wounded at Hatcher's Run, VA died at Petersburg
Rogers, Charles	North Carolina	11	18	57; 1888	Bvt. Second Lieut.	Frontier duty, resigned Feb. 1, 1855	Served the Confederacy
Wright, Thomas	Pennsylvania	12	17	24; 1857	1 <sup>st</sup> Lieut.	Frontier duty	Served in Kansas during the violence
Stuart, James	Virginia	13	17	31; 1864	Captain	Frontier duty, resigned May 14, 1861	Served the Confederacy achieving the rank of Major General
Gracie, Archibald	New York	14	17	32; 1864	2 <sup>nd</sup> Lieut.	Frontier duty, resigned May 31, 1855	Served the Confederacy, died at Petersburg

Name	Place of Birth	Class Rank	Age Upon Acceptance	Age and Year of Death	Highest Rank Attained (US Service)	Major Military Service	Notes
<b>Smead, John</b>	New York	15	19	32; 1862	Captain	Frontier duty, Civil War Service	Died at the 1st Battle of Manassas, VA
<b>Morgan, Michael</b>	Nova Scotia	16	17		Lieut. Colonel	Civil War	
<b>Lee, Stephen</b>	South Carolina	17	16		1 <sup>st</sup> Lieut.	Seminole War (1856-57), Bloody Kansas, resigned Feb. 20, 1861	Served the Confederacy
<b>Carr, Milton</b>	Virginia	18	17		Captain	Frontier duty, Civil War, resigned Dec. 29, 1863	Civil Engineer in VA until death
<b>Pender, William</b>	North Carolina	19	16	29; 1863	1 <sup>st</sup> Lieut.	Frontier duty, resigned Mar. 21, 1861	Served the Confederacy, died at Gettysburg
<b>Langdon, Loomis</b>	New York	20	19	79; 1910	Brigadier General	Seminole War (1854-56), Civil War	
<b>Greble, John</b>	Pennsylvania	21	16	27; 1861	1 <sup>st</sup> Lieut.	Seminole War (1854-55), Prof. at USMA, Civil War	Killed during the Battle of Big Bethel, VA
<b>Villepigue, John</b>	South Carolina	22	19	32; 1862	1 <sup>st</sup> Lieut.	Frontier duty, resigned Mar. 31, 1861	Served the Confederacy
<b>Smalley, Henry</b>	Vermont	23	16	54; 1888	Captain (regulars), Colonel (volunteers)	Civil War, resigned Mar. 8, 1865	
<b>Kinsey, Samuel</b>	Pennsylvania	24	16	21; 1855	2 <sup>nd</sup> Lieut.	Garrison duty	
<b>Smead, Abner</b>	Georgia	25	17		2 <sup>nd</sup> Lieut.	Expedition to Harper's Ferry, dropped Apr. 11, 1861	Served the Confederacy
<b>Greene, Oliver</b>	New York	26	16		Lieut. Colonel	Bloody Kansas, Civil War	
<b>Weed, Stephen</b>	New York	27	18	30; 1863	Captain (regulars) Brigadier General (volunteers)	Frontier duty, Civil War	Died July 2 during the Battle of Gettysburg
<b>Townsend, E. Franklin</b>	New York	28	17	76; 1909	Brigadier General	Frontier duty, resigned Mar 11, 1856, Civil War	
<b>Chapman, Alfred</b>	Alabama	29	20		1 <sup>st</sup> Lieut.	Seminole War (1854-55), resigned May 14, 1861	
<b>Gordon, George</b>	Virginia	30	17	45; 1878	Major	Frontier duty, Civil War	

Name	Place of Birth	Class Rank	Age Upon Acceptance	Age and Year of Death	Highest Rank Attained (US Service)	Major Military Service	Notes
Long, John	Illinois	31	17	42; 1875	1 <sup>st</sup> Lieut.	Frontier duty, resigned May 12, 1861	Served the Confederacy
Davis, Benjamin	Alabama	32	18	31; 1863	Colonel (Volunteers)	Frontier duty, Civil War	Killed June 9, 1863 at Beverly Ford, VA
Wright, James	Canada	33	20	28; 1857	2 <sup>nd</sup> Lieut.	Frontier duty	
Palmer, Waterman	Virginia	34	18	23; 1855	2 <sup>nd</sup> Lieut.	Frontier duty, resigned Oct. 11, 1854, reappointed June 7, 1855	
Hancock, David	Pennsylvania	35	16	47; 1880	Major	Frontier duty, Civil War	
Shepperd, Samuel	District of Columbia	36	19	24; 1855	2 <sup>nd</sup> Lieut.	Frontier duty	
Davant, William	South Carolina	37	18	24; 1855	2 <sup>nd</sup> Lieut.	Frontier duty	
Sawtelle, Charles	Maine	38	16		Lieut. Colonel	Frontier duty, Civil War	
Wade, Levi	Tennessee	39	17	21; 1854			Never commissioned due to feeble health
Mercer, John	Georgia	40	20	31; 1864	1 <sup>st</sup> Lieut.	Frontier duty, resigned April 26, 1861	Served the Confederacy (killed at Plymouth, NC)
Bliss, Zenas	Rhode Island	41	16	64; 1900	Major General	Frontier duty, Civil War	
O'Connor, Edgar	Ohio	42	16	29; 1862	2 <sup>nd</sup> Lieut. (regulars) Colonel (volunteers)	Frontier duty, Civil War	
Mullins, John	Tennessee	43	19		1 <sup>st</sup> Lieut.	Frontier duty, resigned April 24, 1861	Served the Confederacy
Brotherton, David	Pennsylvania	44	18	58; 1889	Lieut. Colonel	Seminole War (1856-57), Civil War	
Randal, Horace	Tennessee	45	16	31; 1864	2 <sup>nd</sup> Lieut.	Frontier duty, resigned Feb. 27, 1861	Served the Confederacy (killed in the Battle of Jenkin's Ferry, AR)
McCleary, John	Ohio	46	18	36; 1868		Frontier duty, Civil War	

always are by the music.”<sup>7</sup>

When he arrived at West Point in the late summer of 1850, he found a more regimented world than his relatively free life in Maine. The strict education at the academy far surpassed that of other institutions at the time. Instructors evaluated cadets in each subject virtually every day.<sup>8</sup> West Point pushed cadets to physical and intellectual extremes in an effort to produce fine soldiers. Subsequently, cadets from the 1850s would lead infantry, artillery, and cavalry units as officers in the Civil War.

Though Howard had basically completed a classical college education at Bowdoin, he knew that West Point would be a different and a more difficult challenge. There, he joined other cadets, varying in age from sixteen to twenty years. Though at age nineteen he was one of the older cadets, Howard was put through the same mental and physical demands as his younger classmates. The anxious Howard wrote his brother Charles: “... it seemed very hard as though I was leaving behind me everything that makes life pleasant.”<sup>9</sup> Life there was totally regimented in an effort to build character. The academy only allowed free time on Sunday afternoons. The approved activities open to cadets included joining a debating society, reading, hiking, and playing sports.<sup>10</sup> The academy forbade alcohol consumption and card playing, rules intended to cultivate character-development.<sup>11</sup> Cadets were forbidden to leave academy grounds.

Mandatory attendance at chapel each Sunday morning became a torturous requirement for most cadets. For long periods of time, they were forced to sit on uncomfortable chairs. However, Howard did not complain about this requirement. When he later became an instructor at West Point, Howard was able to add prayer meetings to the short list of approved activities.<sup>12</sup>

In May 1853, Howard wrote: “I would like to go home with you, but I do not deal much in impossibilities.”<sup>13</sup> (Cadets did not receive official leave until their third year.) In August of that same year, the stress of having no leave was evident when he wrote: “My health is now pretty good. I am a little tired of West Point...”<sup>14</sup> Yet the youthful cadet persevered. Besides surviving homesickness, Howard faced other challenges, including having to eat the unappetizing food served at the academy during the 1850s. Howard looked forward to Christmas, not only because of its religious significance, but because it was the only time a cadet was “allowed a piece of pie.”<sup>15</sup> The bland taste of day-to-day food, however, was not the worst aspect of their diet. Cadets found such objects as combs, bugs, and a nest of mice in their food.<sup>16</sup> The lack of sufficient and/or nutritious foods provided by the academy in the mess hall also led cadets to cook meals in their rooms, in violation of the rules.



Old Cadet Chapel, West Point

Accommodations at West Point were spartan. Rooms were not adequately heated in winter and were unbearably hot in the summer. Lighting was a major problem. Cadets had to pay to light their rooms by buying candles. Since rooms were regularly inspected, each article had a specific location to make it easier to spot unauthorized objects.<sup>17</sup> The academy placed rigid controls on clothing as well. Howard normally wore a tight, gray wool jacket, a tall hat, and large, heavy footwear. With all individuality stripped away, cadets found themselves just a small part of a gray sea.

Cadets risked breaking regulations to indulge in various pleasures. Smoking was one vice. Officers went to great lengths to catch cadets smoking. One lieutenant, Cadmus Marcellus Wilcox, attached rubber soles to his shoes so he could go undetected while searching for smoking cadets.<sup>18</sup> Authorities at the academy also attempted to combat drinking, which they saw as a great evil. As an abstainer, Howard was in the minority. Many cadets would drink despite Superintendent Sylvanus Thayer's prohibition, established in 1826. Cadets acquired alcohol from various taverns surrounding the academy. Benny Havens' tavern, just outside its gate, became a well-known gathering place for cadets willing to risk their standing.<sup>19</sup>

If discovered consuming alcohol, a cadet could be expelled from the academy or given demerits. The administration used demerits as the typical form of punishment. Instructors and administrators gave cadets demerits when they broke rules, such as dressing improperly, using tobacco, insubordination, and being in

possession of contraband. Punishments associated with demerits included walking guard duty or, if a cadet acquired many demerits, dismissal from the academy. Very few cadets went even a year without demerits. Howard received none his first year and was graduated with few demerits. Compared to his classmates, this was quite a feat. The average number of demerits received by Howard's classmates in his senior year, 1854, was sixty; Howard received only seven.<sup>20</sup>

To develop leadership skills, the most rigid standards were not set in the mess hall or cadets' rooms, but in the classroom. Rather than attend a lecture, cadets had to stand up and explain the material they had studied beforehand. Howard noted the apprehension this style of education caused cadets. In April 1853, Howard wrote: "Col. Lee brought them [visitors] into my recitation room just before I was ready to recite. I was very excited but got through with my demonstration very well."<sup>21</sup> In order to perform as Howard did, cadets studied by candlelight until well after midnight. Meeting these standards instilled in Howard discipline and the ability to work under pressure. This experience significantly contributed to his success as a military commander. Mathematics was the greatest obstacle to academic success at the academy. Howard, however, excelled in this area of study and became first in his class in mathematics.<sup>22</sup> He was instructed by Professor Albert Church. "whose textbooks at the time they were written were without a doubt the best in this country."<sup>23</sup> (In the late 1850s, Howard was appointed an instructor in mathematics at the academy.) Howard also placed seventh in his class in engineering and fifth in chemistry.<sup>24</sup>

Howard faced other challenges at West Point. The Maine cadet brought upon himself the wrath of most cadets by his rejection of military protocol. Going against tradition, he visited an enlisted man on base, which caused cadets to ostracize Howard for his first two years at West Point. He had gone to see Sergeant Warren Lothrop, a friend from Maine stationed at the academy. Two officers spotted Howard when he met up with Lothrop. They reported Howard's actions because this kind of fraternization was strictly forbidden. Later, after superiors denied Howard permission to see his friend, he appealed and went outside the proper chain of command. Subsequently, his commandant lectured him on military protocol. Howard never agreed with this strict separation of officers and enlisted men, but he stopped meeting with his friend. Years later, he wrote: "I have never regretted my show of friendship to him in our younger days and the incident always affected me, when considering the subject of discipline in the army, inclining me strongly against martinetism in whatever form it presented itself."<sup>25</sup> Howard gradually gained back acceptance from the cadets. By the end of his time at West Point, he had become a fully accepted member of the corps.<sup>26</sup>

Life at West Point was not isolated from the national debate over slavery. Forty-six percent of Howard's class came from slaveholding states or the District of Columbia.<sup>27</sup> One's opinions concerning slavery even became an excuse for fighting. Howard believed that extending slavery westward was unconstitutional and observed: "I very soon found that unpleasant feuds existed in the corps of cadets, and, as a rule, the subject of slavery was at the bottom of the controversy."<sup>28</sup> Though some Southern, pro-slavery, cadets ignored Howard because of his antithetical position, he nevertheless befriended a few. During his senior year, Howard's roommate was Cadet Alfred Chapman from Alabama. Howard became friends with Chapman, whom he viewed as a "gentleman, kindly, and unselfish."<sup>29</sup> Ironically, one of Howard's closest friends was J.E.B. Stuart, the famed Confederate cavalry commander. (The two would meet in battle during the Civil War.) Stuart noticed Howard after the latter fought to defend his honor against cadets who were ostracizing him.<sup>30</sup> During Howard's shunning by other cadets, Stuart and Howard became "warm friends...visiting the young ladies of the post."<sup>31</sup> At the same time, the cadet from Maine competed academically with Robert E. Lee's son, Custis. Both men were intelligent and successful in their course of study. Custis Lee vied for academic honors, causing Robert to remark in 1852 that his son must watch Cadet Howard and "press forward" to surpass him in academic standing.<sup>32</sup>

A significant number of cadets in Howard's class attained successful military careers. Some, such as J.E.B. Stuart, fought for the Confederacy, but most stayed loyal to the North. Twenty-two cadets went on to serve the Union, while fourteen served in the armies of the Confederacy. Howard's class of 1854 would see twenty-two percent of its members die during the Civil War—thirteen percent serving the Confederacy, nine percent in Union armies.<sup>33</sup> The class of 1854 also would boast seven generals as well as many other high-ranking officers.<sup>34</sup> West Point graduates attained successful civil careers in addition to their military careers. Four members of the class of 1854 became professors, including two college presidents. Three other members became lawyers, three more businessmen, while others became engineers, newspaper editors, doctors, and farmers. Thus, it is clear that the academy prepared these graduates to excel in both military and civilian occupations.

Howard's tenure as a student (and later as instructor) was largely shaped by administrators and teachers at West Point. From 1852 to 1855, the United States Military Academy was under the superintendence of Colonel Robert E. Lee. During recovery from an injury, Howard was visited in the hospital by Lee who sat by his bed and talked kindly to him.<sup>35</sup> The Lee family invited cadets from their son's class to dine with them. The superintendant's daughter, Agnes, wrote in her

journal, "We always have a no. of cadets at our house every Saturday evening."<sup>36</sup> Howard was one cadet who frequented the superintendent's residence.

After graduating fourth in his class, Howard had his choice of assignments. The antebellum army consisted of scientific, general staff, and combat branches.<sup>37</sup> The Army Corps of Engineers, Topographical Engineers, and Ordnance Corps were the most highly respected and desired by cadets. Howard later chose the Ordnance Corps. One consideration in particular pushed him to join it. Throughout his time at West Point, Howard courted a woman from Maine, Elizabeth Ann Waite. After his graduation, the two decided to wed. The provision of a house by the Ordnance Corps "was just then to me of special interest," Howard noted.<sup>38</sup> After receiving his commission as brevet second lieutenant (signed by Jefferson Davis, the United States Secretary of War), Howard reported for duty at Watervliet Arsenal in upstate New York in September 1854. As a second lieutenant, he assisted in the arsenal's management and inspected and commanded the forty enlisted men on base. He made good use of the preparation he received at West Point to accomplish these tasks effectively. Major John Symington, his commanding officer at Watervliet, also taught him leadership responsibilities.<sup>39</sup> Ironically, because of Howard's success at Watervliet, he was soon sent off to command a small arsenal in his home state at Augusta, Maine. There for the first time he exercised the duties of a commanding officer and gained valuable experience for the future.

Subsequently, Howard received a transfer to Florida. The Third Seminole War had broken out in 1855 and the United States Army needed officers. His army superiors sent Howard to Tampa to support the combat branches. Howard saw combat and drew from his many lessons learned at West Point, Watervliet, and Augusta.<sup>40</sup> Howard's commanding officer, Colonel G.L. Loomis, chose him to lead a mission to negotiate with the Seminoles; however, the Indians refused to meet with him and his mission failed.<sup>41</sup>

In Florida, Howard's strong faith was awakened. He had a born-again experience at a Methodist church. He wrote his wife that he had prayed at this small church: "My Saviour, I know thou canst save me! My dear Saviour had actually saved me at that moment, i.e. had pardoned all my transgressions..."<sup>42</sup>

After his born-again experience, Howard received orders to report back to the United States Military Academy. In late August 1857, he boarded a steamer for New York and reached West Point on September 23. The Army specifically assigned him to duty in the Department of Mathematics; he was to report for instruction to Professor Albert Church, his former teacher.<sup>43</sup>

As "Acting Assistant Professor of Mathematics," his colleagues included

many prominent Americans. Dennis Mahan led the engineering department and taught at West Point for over forty years. Godfrey Weitzel, acting assistant professor of engineering, and John M. Schofield, assistant professor of philosophy, became significant generals in the Union army during the Civil War. Edward Porter Alexander, who led Robert E. Lee's artillery at the Battle of Gettysburg, was an instructor of practical engineering. Gouverneur K. Warren, the hero of Gettysburg who helped secure Little Round Top, and John F. Reynolds, who lost his life during the same battle, were also on staff. In 1860, Warren taught alongside Howard in the mathematics department while Reynolds held the position of Commandant of Cadets. William J. Hardee, who taught tactics there, fought for the Confederacy, attaining the rank of lieutenant general.<sup>44</sup>

The twenty-six-year-old Howard, a new instructor without experience, now had to prove himself capable of teaching mathematical concepts to cadets. Under Church's mentoring, Howard became a successful teacher.<sup>45</sup> Teaching cadets three hours a day proved to be a joy for him. Howard observed, "I think I never in my life had a pleasanter duty than this school work."<sup>46</sup>

Howard became a strict, demanding instructor, the type he dreaded during his time as a cadet. Though fair, Howard expected much from his students. One of them wrote: "Indeed, I find that a recitation which would easily pass for perfect with Mr. Smith might be almost a failure before Lt. Howard..."<sup>47</sup> Another cadet, Morris Schaff, who later wrote an important memoir of life at West Point, noted that Howard and his colleagues in the mathematics department were the most feared instructors at West Point: "It was in this department that the ground was strewn, so to speak, with the bones of victims."<sup>48</sup> Despite this verdict, Cadet Schaff also noted other sides of Howard, namely the young instructor's mild manners, his mellow voice, and his boyish smile.<sup>49</sup>

These characteristics led to meaningful relationships with his students that lasted well beyond their time at the academy. Many of Howard's students went on to serve with distinction in the Civil War, including Alonzo Cushing, who gallantly commanded his battery of artillery while mortally wounded at the Battle of Gettysburg, and George Armstrong Custer, the famed Union cavalry general. Howard corresponded with his students after their graduation, including Adelbert Ames, Emory Upton, and Alfred Mordecai.<sup>50</sup> Ames, who would command the famous 20th Maine Regiment, wrote to Howard about his experiences in battle. Howard and Upton grew quite close during their time together at the academy. Their strong commitment to Christianity enabled these men to connect on a deeper level than the usual cadet-instructor relationship. Howard's friendship with Alfred Mordecai reveals both Howard's approachability as well as his progressive

nature. Mordecai, from a prominent family in the Carolinas, was one of the few Jewish cadets in early West Point history. He and Howard communicated during the war, discussing military and, more importantly, personal matters. The ability of Howard, a devout Christian, to mentor a Jewish cadet is a testament to his open-minded character. Howard connected with many other cadets by emulating what he had witnessed during Lee's West Point superintendency. Much like Lee, Howard also visited sick cadets in the hospital and talked with them, sharing his religious beliefs, particularly how Jesus Christ gave him complete calm and assurance.<sup>51</sup>

Howard believed wholeheartedly in the principles that later became West Point's motto: "Duty, Honor, Country." Duty to him was twofold: to one's country, instilled in him by the academy, and duty to the Lord. The Book of Romans was his inspiration: "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."<sup>52</sup> Directly after arriving at West Point, Howard began his work to "...open up more general religious privileges to the cadets, to the soldiers, and to the families in the neighborhood."<sup>53</sup> Howard advocated inculcating Christian truths to children. He became the superintendent of the Sunday school for children of enlisted men on base.<sup>54</sup> Next, Howard began a Bible study for enlisted men and civilians. His most profound impact on the West Point routine was instituting a cadet prayer meeting during the small amount of unscheduled time after supper.<sup>55</sup> As a former cadet, Howard realized the difficulties and temptations cadets faced at the academy. He wished to provide support to young men who were in a situation he had once experienced. Howard worked fervently to accomplish this goal by providing activities to entertain cadets in a positive way. He attempted to limit cases of cadets drinking off base, chewing tobacco, and other practices he deemed detrimental to the soul.

Through these prayer meetings, cadets had the opportunity to further their understanding of the Bible and create bonds of Christian fellowship with their peers. Though only ten to fifteen cadets regularly attended, these meetings had a profound impact on many lives. Cadet Morris Schaff, who attended what some cadets derisively called "Howard's little prayer-meeting," found that participants had a stronger sense of duty and honor than other cadets. He wrote: "Religion has worn many beautiful garbs, yet those few young men in cadet gray, who had the courage to kneel and humbly make their prayer right out of the heart, for help to meet the duties of life, in memory stand apart, encompassed with a heavenly light."<sup>56</sup> Thus, Howard helped instill the belief that, with the help of God, cadets could meet the duties required of them by West Point and in the world at large. These prayer meetings did not end when Howard left his position as a teacher at

West Point. They continued for over fifty years.<sup>57</sup>

Howard's impact on West Point during his time on staff was quite significant. He taught one of the most influential army reformers of the latter part of the nineteenth century. Cadet Emory Upton, who attended Howard's meetings, became a general in the Union Army and later commandant of cadets from 1871 to 1875.<sup>58</sup> Upton saw the benefit of character development through attendance at these meetings and encouraged them long after the war. As commandant, Upton extended their time for prayer and allocated more space for the meetings.<sup>59</sup>

Six weeks after Abraham Lincoln was elected president in November 1860, South Carolina seceded from the Union. Other Southern states soon followed. Describing the atmosphere of West Point at this time, Howard wrote: "Probably no other place existed where men grappled more quickly, more sensitively, and yet more philosophically with the troublesome problems of secession."<sup>60</sup> Howard could not tolerate secession because of his views on slavery, his sense of duty, his patriotism, and his family's long military allegiance to the Union.

War came at Fort Sumter in April 1861. Citizen soldiers began joining volunteer regiments and needed trained leaders. Because West Point alumni almost had a monopoly on military expertise, these graduates became desired candidates for positions of command.<sup>61</sup> The men of the 3rd Maine Volunteer Infantry Regiment elected Howard colonel because of his West Point credentials as well as the support of Maine's governor. After consulting with Lieutenant Colonel John F. Reynolds, the commandant of cadets, Howard accepted the command and soon went off to war.

The Civil War presented Howard with challenges he had never previously faced. From the beginning, he continually had to adapt to new commands and situations. West Point taught him how to control large numbers of men using current tactics. Howard rose quite rapidly from regimental command to corps command in the Army of the Potomac. After a short time as commander of a regiment, he assumed command of an infantry brigade, which he led from the Battle of Bull Run to Antietam. Howard's next promotion came during the Battle of Antietam, when General Sedgwick was wounded, giving Howard command of the Second Division, Second Corps. Before the Battle of Chancellorsville, Howard assumed command of the 11th Corps of the Army of the Potomac. He led the corps during the Battle of Gettysburg, after which Howard and his men were transferred to the Western Theater. Eventually, Sherman chose Howard for command of the Army of the Tennessee. With this promotion, he reached the apex of his Civil War commands.

Howard achieved many of these promotions, in part, because he was a

Republican and had the support of politicians from Maine. One of the few Republican generals in the Army of the Potomac, Howard maintained good relations with most of his fellow officers by staying out of petty arguments.<sup>62</sup> The friendships he developed during his time at West Point also helped his rise in command. Knowing such leaders as General Reynolds and having a West Point education supported politicians' arguments that Howard should be promoted.

Throughout the Civil War, he had to draw on his education to meet unique challenges. At times, Howard excelled and became a shining example of military leadership. During the Battle of Fair Oaks in June 1862, Howard led his men during hours of fierce combat. Without hesitation, he led his brigade against the Confederate lines, eventually suffering a bullet wound to the right arm. Howard did not retreat for medical aid. Instead, while "waving the fractured limb high above him [he] aroused his soldiers to still greater ardor and enthusiasm."<sup>63</sup> The brigade pushed back the Confederates. Howard's performance at Gettysburg had at best a mixed response—his 11th Corps was once again routed (as it had been weeks before at Chancellorsville) by Stonewall Jackson's Corps, and General Meade placed a junior officer, Second Corps commander Major General Winfield Scott Hancock, in command of Union forces until Meade's arrival at midnight. Nevertheless, Howard managed to secure the high ground of Cemetery Hill and selflessly helped Hancock stabilize the shaken Union lines despite probably feeling humiliated at Meade's lack of faith in his abilities. However, his later performance in the Western Theater of the war justifiably earned him high praise.<sup>64</sup> Congress later awarded him the Medal of Honor.

Howard's West Point education played a large part in his rapid advancement. In 1861, he was the colonel of a regiment; by 1865 he had risen to the rank of major general in command of the Army of the Tennessee. General William Tecumseh Sherman awarded Howard a place of honor during the grand review of the Union armies after the war. Because of his effective command in the Western Theater, Howard "rode with Sherman at the head of the column, his armless right sleeve giving evidence of his heroism in action."<sup>65</sup>

Howard's extraordinary career began at the United States Military Academy and developed because of the education he received there. He also left a legacy at West Point. Later, he returned to the academy as superintendent in the 1880s. Indeed the academy was the centerpiece of this young cadet's life journey from rural Maine. His disciplined training allowed him to take on difficult tasks after his days at West Point. The remarkable associations with students, teachers, and administrators shaped his life.

Service to country and God defined Howard's life. In 1898, a writer for the

*Central Christian Advocate* remarked: “Ever since his graduation from West Point, in 1854, he has served his country with fidelity.”<sup>66</sup> Howard later observed: “The constant call to duty, the constant pressure of mental work, and the exactions of instructors, are by no means without their rewards.”<sup>67</sup> The rewards were not limited to Howard’s personal career. They were also of great benefit to the nation.

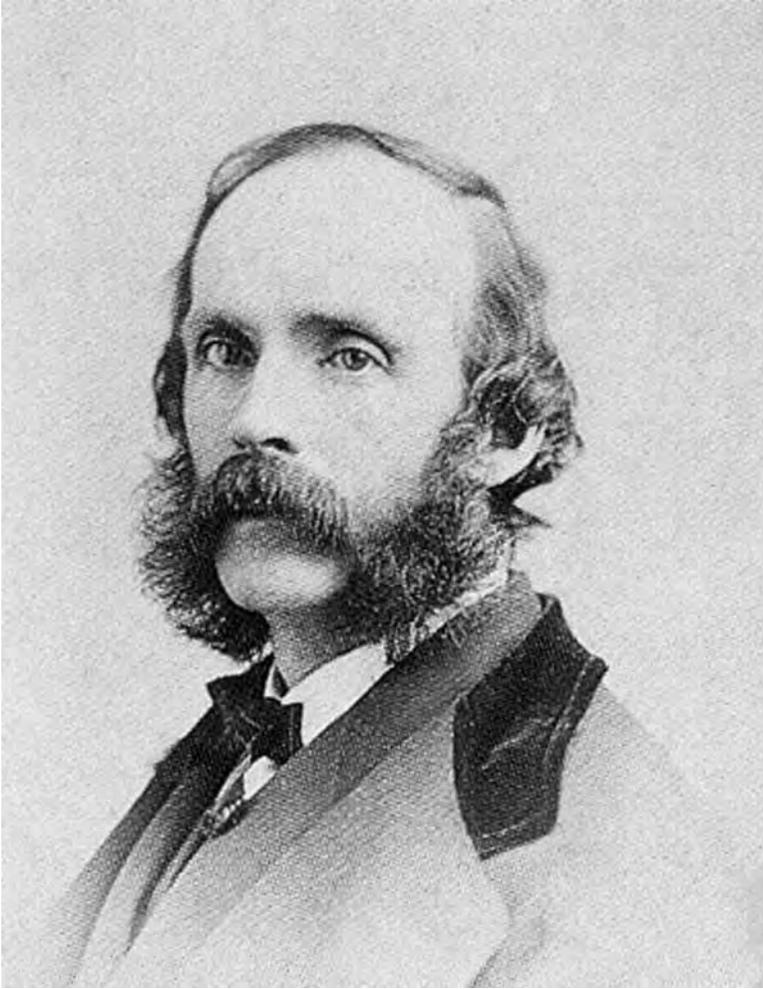
## Endnotes

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Frederic Edwin Church  
c. 1870, Saxony & Co., New York, photographer.  
Olana State Historic Site, NYSOPRHP, OL.1993.28

# “Rally ’round the Flag”: Frederic Edwin Church and the Civil War

*Kevin J. Avery*

Under the title “The North,” an art reviewer for the *New York World* on April 29, 1861, rued the sudden distraction from the premiere of Frederic Church’s latest chef d’oeuvre. The American landscape painter had on display a ten-foot-wide canvas that he had originally entitled *The Icebergs* (Dallas Museum of Art; fig. 1 shows the chromolithographic version):

At present the war excitement absorbs every other, and the picture...has been placed on view at GOUPILS [gallery] without attracting especial attention. Last year the announcement of such a work would have packed the gallery from morning till night for weeks; now so intense and eager is the interest concentrated upon the [nation’s] capital, the movements of the [Union] forces, and the pageantry wherein the town [of New York] has draped itself, that we doubt if any considerable number of our citizens are aware of its exhibition. This notice is...intended to advise the public of that fact.<sup>1</sup>

Little more than two weeks earlier, on April 12 and 13, Confederate forces had bombarded and occupied Fort Sumter, in Charleston Harbor, South Carolina, commencing America’s deadliest war, a tragedy of human loss that no one, North or South, then expected. The “pageantry” referred to was the dramatic mobilization of troops, preceded by angry, flag-waving, and chest-beating citizens demonstrating in the streets.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, just a few days before the *World’s* notice, Private Theodore Winthrop (1828–1861), perhaps Church’s dearest friend, his onetime ardent traveling companion, a published commentator on his work, and a zealous abolitionist, had marched down Broadway with his company to the pier at Cortlandt Street. From there he proceeded by ferry, train, and foot to Fort Monroe on Virginia’s southern coast, then being reinforced to avoid the fate of Fort Sumter. But less than two months after leaving New York, following an offensive from the fort, by-then Major Winthrop lay dead in the field. He was the

first Union officer killed in the first significant land engagement of the American Civil War.<sup>3</sup>

Like so many other men of his station and calling, Church (1826–1900) surely never seriously considered joining the Union armies himself. Even after a draft was imposed in 1863, he anticipated spending as much as \$700 (when others paid as little as \$300) for a substitute to fight in his stead.<sup>4</sup> Among his peers in the cultural and business spheres of New York, such a prerogative was hardly thought cowardly. The son of a prosperous Hartford businessman, Church had risen to a mastery and success in his own domain aspiring to that of the captains of manufacture and commerce who eagerly purchased his pictures during the antebellum and wartime eras. At a time, moreover, in which landscape painting dominated the fine arts, Church's canvases advertised a peculiarly national, even global agenda: with them, the artist aspired to a much wider audience than that of his colleagues.<sup>5</sup>

The first conspicuous display of his ambition—if not his prodigious talent—came with the 1857 exhibition of his *Niagara* (Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.) in a picture framer's establishment on Broadway. Prior to that event, Church had shown his paintings in the conventional way in town, among those of his colleagues at the annual exhibitions of the National Academy of Design, New York's (and the nation's) reigning art society. But for his seven-foot-wide, uncannily rendered likeness of America's most renowned natural wonder, the painter reserved a gallery of its own. He probably dramatized the driving waters by darkening the room and spotlighting the picture; finally, he charged admission to see it, making it irresistible for many. *Niagara* traveled to London and made Church an international star of the fine arts.<sup>6</sup> Two years later, following his second expedition to South America (his first was in 1853), he made an even bigger splash with a ten-foot-wide canvas he dubbed *The Heart of the Andes* (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; fig. 2 shows a preparatory oil study). For that picture's even more spectacular display, he designed a freestanding, windowlike frame festooned with green curtains. The ill-fated Winthrop, along with another Church champion, Rev. Louis LeGrand Noble, wrote elaborate programs for sale at the door of the exhibition. The three-week New York debut in April and May 1859 drew 12,000 visitors, including former President Martin Van Buren, the author Washington Irving, and the composer Louis Moreau Gottschalk, by then a friend of the artist. *The Heart of the Andes*, too, was shipped to London for showing there (as were *The Icebergs* and several more Church paintings during the Civil War years), returned for a reprise performance in Manhattan, then sent on a tour of seven American cities until, just as *The Icebergs* was being premiered at

Goupil's, it was concluding its last venue, in Brooklyn.<sup>7</sup> All of these works were reproduced as steel engravings or lithographs (see, for example, fig. 1), and their sales augmented the artist's profit from admission to the exhibitions, for which he charged twenty-five cents a head. On top of that, he typically commanded princely sums for the sale of the original. *Niagara* eventually sold to the Washington, D.C. financier William Corcoran for \$12,500; *The Heart of the Andes* and *Aurora Borealis* (1865; Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C.) to the New York varnish manufacturer William T. Blodgett, respectively for \$10,000 and as much as \$7,500; *The Icebergs* to the British railroad magnate Sir Edward William Watkin, presumably for a sum comparable to that of *The Heart of the Andes*, which it nearly equals in size; *Cotopaxi* (1862; Detroit Institute of Arts) to the real estate heir James Lenox, probably for \$6,000; *Under Niagara* (1862; location unknown) and *Rainy Season in the Tropics* (1866; Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco) to shipper Marshall O. Roberts, respectively for \$5,000 and \$7,500; and *Chimborazo* (1864; Huntington Library, Art Collection and Botanical Gardens, San Marino, California) to railroad president William Henry Osborn, for about \$6,000.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, as early as 1860, following the inaugural exhibitions of *The Heart of the Andes*, Frederic Church, like his patrons, aspired to a station commensurate with his worldly achievement. He had not only married well—to Isabel Carnes (1836–1899) of Dayton, Ohio—but also was beginning to fashion an identity as a country gentleman on the banks of the Hudson, where he had purchased farm property just across the river from the home of his late teacher Thomas Cole in Catskill. Yet despite the climbing demand for Church's pictures and his emerging wealth at that moment, his expenses overtook his cash flow. In March of the same year the pressures of his high-stakes art business prompted him, for example, to appeal to his friend Winthrop, an attorney, to intercede with New York City's municipal court to excuse him from jury duty. "There could not have been a time more unfortunate for me than the present," Church wrote to his friend. "If I am interrupted now, I shall probably be obliged to give up attempting [to start my painting] the *Icebergs* until next winter which will be a serious damage." He added to his plea for exemption the ill health of his father, Joseph (who loaned him small sums of money), and the expense of financing and maintaining his farm.<sup>9</sup>

Winthrop's intercession worked, and Church, as the reviews indicate, had readied his *Icebergs* in time for spring exhibition the following year. But even as Winthrop and the troops departed New York, the artist volunteered his own service to the Union cause—undoubtedly also a wise business accommodation. *The Icebergs* exhibition became allusively advertised as "The North," and, strapped for

cash as he was at that time, Church offered all the quarters collected from visitors to the newly founded Patriotic Fund, established to aid wives and families of the enlisted breadwinners. A single critic of the exhibition dismissed its topical appellation as “claptrap,” but it and the donation of receipts earned only plaudits from everyone else who mentioned them.<sup>10</sup>

Still, the painting’s ties to the Union cause were only nominal, charitable, and after the fact.<sup>11</sup> Nothing in its awesome iconography of ice grottoes and castles referred or even alluded to anything beyond the ideals and adventures of nineteenth-century explorers of the Arctic regions, just as *The Heart of the Andes* had paid homage to the expedition of Alexander von Humboldt (1769–1859) to the equatorial New World from 1799 to 1803. However, already the war “paganry” in New York had inspired Church to dream up something explicit and hortatory. On May 19, 1861, a newspaper reported that the artist had completed a “symbolical landscape embodying the stars and stripes.”<sup>12</sup> Actually, it was more a “skyscape” (fig. 3), a patriotic reformulation of a major painting, *Twilight in the Wilderness* (1860; Cleveland Museum of Art; fig. 4 shows a preparatory oil study), which Church had produced and exhibited just the year before. In the new picture, waving horizontal bands of clouds, reddened with dawn, open to reveal stars in the deep blue firmament, together configuring a tattered national flag. At left a worn tree trunk thrusts skyward to bear the celestial standard, and an eagle descends from above as if to perch on the “flagpole.” The immediate inspiration for the painting would not have been lost on any New Yorker. Just a week following Fort Sumter’s surrender, its bruised banner, continually “insulted” by Confederate fire during the siege, was raised aloft at a rally in Union Square.<sup>13</sup> More generally, Church’s image readily evoked—and still does—Francis Scott Key’s “Star-Spangled Banner” (itself prompted by the British assault on Baltimore’s Fort McHenry in the War of 1812), the patriotic song that eventually (in 1931) became our national anthem. Church dubbed the little painting *Our Banner in the Sky*. Goupil’s gallery quickly had it lithographed for distribution and published an accompanying pamphlet that highlighted Key’s verse.<sup>14</sup> By August the print had already generated \$1,500 in sales.<sup>15</sup>

With the anamorphic imagery of *Our Banner in the Sky*, as with the renaming of *The Icebergs* “The North,” Church took some critical heat from connoisseurs who frowned on any pandering to popular sentiment.<sup>16</sup> Only once more, for a private collector in 1864, did he indulge in this vein, with a literal reference to the Union flag (fig. 5).<sup>17</sup> Yet those pictures are simply the most explicit of a considerable body of the artist’s work that invoked landscape and, especially, celestial vocabulary to signify human events or, more often, divine immanence. Church’s

teacher, Cole, undoubtedly planted the seed of this tendency in him. Even more pious and moralistic than his Calvinist pupil, the Anglican Cole had painted popular allegories such as *The Voyage of Life* (1840; Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute, Utica, New York) and *The Cross and the World* (location unknown), serial landscapes replete with Christian iconography. Church had early reflected their influence in *To the Memory of Cole* (1848; private collection), representing a flower-wreathed marble cross at the foot of his teacher's beloved Catskill Mountains. But even after Church turned to the "scientific" South American panoramas for which he became renowned, he did not fail to include crosses—this time as Spanish American shrines—for example, in both *The Andes of Ecuador* (1855; Reynolda House Museum of American Art, Winston-Salem, North Carolina) and *The Heart of the Andes*. In the former painting, moreover, the literal cross at the base of the composition found its cosmological correspondent in the intersection of the sun and its vertical radiance with the elevated plain in the very center of the picture, binding the vast prospect. In 1860, in muted, nocturnal form, he modified this configuration in *The Star in the East* (fig. 6), a small, arch-shaped canvas, which according to family lore Church painted as a present to his wife at their first Christmas together. And to mark the births of his first two children, Herbert Edwin and Emma Francis Church, in 1862 and 1864, respectively, the artist made pendant pictures, *Sunrise (The Rising Sun)* (fig. 7) and *Moonrise (The Rising Moon)* to adorn "Cosy Cottage," the couple's first house on the farm property that would ultimately become their grand estate, Olana (fig. 8).<sup>18</sup>

In the few cases where contemporary critics acknowledged the artist's taste for symbolic apparatus in his landscapes, it was mostly to disparage it. Nonetheless, these sentimental domestic products of Church's art, along with *Our Banner in the Sky*, support informed speculation that his moral and patriotic conscience continued to be manifested in major works created throughout the Civil War.

To be sure, scattered Church correspondence suggests his regular attendance to news from the fronts. How could it have been otherwise, when he had his studio in lower Manhattan, then the heart of New York City, and when the war had such potential to affect his enterprise? Prior to Fort Sumter, John McClure, the Scotsman who then acted as Church's agent with engravers and for exhibitions both domestic and foreign, steadily sought to allay the artist's anxieties about the prospects, and then the reality, of war.<sup>19</sup> That, however, did not prevent a lively remonstrance with Church in late 1861 over Great Britain's outrage at the Union's seizure from an English mail ship of two Southern emissaries, James Mason and John Slidell, en route to London and Paris to seek diplomatic recognition of the Confederacy from Britain and France. "It will prove a dear

capture if it should result in war with the best friend [Britain] that the North has,” warned McClure, who had actually returned to Scotland before war broke out in April.<sup>20</sup> To avoid just that possibility, the Lincoln administration released the two Southerners weeks later (their mission ultimately failed), and the controversy sputtered.<sup>21</sup> By January 1862, with few significant Union victories—and some stunning defeats—even McClure longed “to hear of some progress on the part of the army so that the back of the rebellion may be broken.”<sup>22</sup> By the following August, after Confederate General Robert E. Lee’s army had driven Union General George McClellan’s back into the Virginia peninsula and the South verged on its second victory at Manassas (Bull Run, August 28–30, 1862), McClure noted that “war fever” had seized even Church’s “quiet abode” in Hudson, where the painter spent much of his summer.<sup>23</sup> The agent was undoubtedly alluding to what Church in September referred to elsewhere as the loss of “half my men in consequence of the War.”<sup>24</sup> He meant his farmhands, who evidently were volunteering simultaneously with the “wonderfully brisk” enlistments that McClure described taking place in New York City.<sup>25</sup> Church might well have lamented a “desertion” of another kind that had taken place in July: the South Carolina native Louis Rémy Mignot (1831–1870), a neighbor in the Studio Building on Tenth Street who had accompanied Church to Ecuador in 1857, abandoned the Union for England, never to return.<sup>26</sup>

These ominous military and political tides—Union defeats, international brinkmanship—and their resonance in Church’s affections and affairs—Winthrop’s death, Mignot’s departure, the artist’s presumed debate with his agent, the desertion of his farm laborers—form the worldly context of his major accomplishments of 1862, *Under Niagara* and *Cotopaxi*, two of the more sublime, even violent, images the artist ever created.<sup>27</sup> The subjects themselves were scarcely new. *Under Niagara* was the second of three major essays of the famous cataract that Church would undertake; the Ecuadorean volcano Cotopaxi, which he painted numerous times in the mid-1850s, was the most distinctive mountain subject to result from Church’s first journey to South America in 1853. Both paintings were developed from on-site sketches made years earlier, *Under Niagara* from observations on a boat excursion to the foot of the falls in September 1858, and *Cotopaxi* from sketches made from Quito and the Chillo Valley in Ecuador in June the year before. The selection of subjects from 1859 to 1862 may well reflect Church’s inclination to keep shifting geographic or elemental gears from one major painting to another, for example, from torrid to frigid zone or from Southern to Northern Hemisphere (*The Heart of the Andes* to *The Icebergs*), from earth to air (*The Heart of the Andes* to *Twilight in the Wilderness*), even from fire to water

(*Cotopaxi* to *Under Niagara*).

Though the reportedly six-foot-wide *Under Niagara* has long since vanished, a small oil sketch presumably made on board *The Maid of the Mists* in 1858 and, more so, the thirty-inch chromolithograph of the finished product, convey a vivid impression of the original (fig. 9). The voluminous cascade assaults the spectator like some dread, inescapable tsunami, and the mist spiraling away from the impact of the waters at the base of the falls befogs the pure blue of the firmament, only glimpsed in the narrow space above the brink. At upper left, Terrapin Tower prevails, steadfast, like the ark amid the Deluge. The effect conveyed in the reproduction can only have been more terrific in the original. Church reportedly executed the painting nonstop within twenty-four hours, so that the sheer speed and energy of the effort—comparable to what can be seen in the oil sketch—must have been apparent in the paint surface.

*Cotopaxi* was surely a more deliberative enterprise: conceived in late 1861, executed through 1862, interrupted in order to paint, among other things, *Under Niagara*, and not exhibited until spring 1863 (fig. 10). On his second expedition to Ecuador in 1857, Church was privileged to see the world's tallest volcano in eruption and made copious sketches of it in pencil and in oil from the capital city of Quito as well as from the Chillo Valley, twenty miles east of Quito. He also seized an opportunity to trek long and hard in difficult volcanic terrain to Sangay, farther to the south, and was fortunate enough amid bad weather to sketch that perennially angry vent. Still, with all this material to create the dramatic image that *Cotopaxi* became, five years and the daunting early tides of the Civil War transpired before the artist essayed the subject on a monumental scale.

Of course, there were other perfectly plausible reasons for the timing.<sup>28</sup> Among them was that following his second trip to South America, his overarching order of business was nothing less than to embody the earth in the torrid to frigid habitats of Ecuador, which he condensed in *The Heart of the Andes* (fig. 2), with Humboldt's favorite mountain, Chimborazo, presiding in the left background. But even the priority he assigned that grand conception of 1859 seems to inform the topical significance of *Cotopaxi* in 1862. For when the latter picture finally reached Goupil's in spring 1863, a critic more perceptive than he knew averred: "Cotopaxi" is "The Heart of the Andes," throbbing with fire and tremulous with life."<sup>29</sup> What the reviewer may well have intuited or even recognized was that formally the two paintings are siblings—each with a distant peak at left, a waterfall near the center foreground, ledges overlooking from either side—but that *Cotopaxi*, in the year of its creation, was the demonic brother to *The Heart of the Andes's* angel, the biblical Wilderness to its Eden, the Inferno to its Paradise.

Indeed, the two works, as well as *Cayambe* (New-York Historical Society, on permanent loan from the New York Public Library), an 1858 painting, owe a common debt to an elaborate drawing with Mount Chimborazo at left and the moon at right that Church executed in Ecuador in June 1857.<sup>30</sup> The moon failed to survive in either *The Heart of the Andes* or *Cotopaxi*, but in the latter, it became the sun luridly burning through the drifting volcanic pall—a contest of celestial light and Stygian gloom vomited into the air. The artist's small early conceptions in oil and in pencil, moreover, show large trees and, in the pencil drawing, the foreground waterfall nearer to the right side of the composition, recalling their location and configuration in *The Heart of the Andes*. In the final painting, both these properties have migrated to the left, and the trees dropped lower in the composition so as not to compete with the largely denuded and glowing reddish topography of ledges, ravines, hills, buttes, and basin in *Cotopaxi*. This terrain roughly approximates that of *The Heart of the Andes*—if we ignore the huge brown ridge dominating the middle distance of the earlier work or replace it conceptually with the brown cloud in *Cotopaxi*—but is virtually devoid of its verdure.

In stressing *Cotopaxi*'s resonance with current national events, one shouldn't fail to mention that the essential aspect of the smoking cone reflected in the painting was originally observed from a hill in the middle of Quito, Ecuador, with the outskirts of the city tapering off from the base of the lookout southeast toward the Chillo Valley. That is, the foreground and middle distance of the final painting are arguably more contrived than those of *The Heart of the Andes*.<sup>31</sup> *Cotopaxi* is truly the product of a more fevered imagination, albeit one that had earlier perceived Heaven on Earth (in *The Heart of the Andes*) before conjuring Hell.

Finally, it must be noted that in the landscape subjects of Church's New York colleagues, the tenor of *Cotopaxi* would have found both figurative and literal context: months before it was conceived, in spring 1861, New York Seventh Regiment enlistee Sanford Gifford (1823–1880) exhibited his *Twilight in the Catskills* (private collection), a painting that would have made Church smile with its expressive bow to his *Twilight in the Wilderness* (see fig. 4 for a preparatory oil study) of the year before. However, it was executed amid the stampede of Southern secession and the growing threat of war in late 1860 and early 1861, and the Kaaterskill Clove and surrounding woods depicted in it appear stark, even charred, in the red-orange glow of sundown—hardly the dreamy vale that Gifford and other artists made of the locale in other paintings of the subject.<sup>32</sup> As work proceeded on *Cotopaxi* in the Tenth Street Studio Building through 1862, Gifford in another chamber there repeated the twilight effect of his 1861 picture in *Fort Federal*

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Figure 1. Charles Risdon, engraver, after Frederic Edwin Church, *The Icebergs*, (1861), oil over chromolithograph, 1864, 20<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 35<sup>7</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in. Published by Charles Day and Son, London. Olana State Historic Site, NYSOPRHP, OL-1988.744



Fig. 2. Frederic Edwin Church, Study for *The Heart of the Andes*, 1858, oil on canvas, 10¼ x 18¼ in.  
Olana State Historic Site, NYSOPRHP, OL.1981.47



Fig. 3. Unknown engraver, after Frederic Edwin Church, *Our Banner in the Sky*, (1861), oil over chromolithograph, 1861, 7  $\frac{1}{16}$  x 11  $\frac{3}{8}$  in. Published by Goupil & Co., New York. Olana State Historic Site, NYSOPRHP, OL.1976.29



Fig. 4. Frederic Edwin Church, *Twilight, a Sketch*, 1858, oil on canvas, 8¼ x 12¼ in.  
Olana State Historic Site, NYSOPRHP, OL.1981.8



Fig. 5. Frederic Edwin Church, *Our Flag*, 1864, oil on canvas, 21½ x 13½ in. Indianapolis Museum of Art, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Eugene C. Pulliam, 71.206



Fig. 6. Frederic Edwin Church, *The Star in the East*, 1860-61, oil on canvas, 19¼ x 14¼ in. Olana State Historic Site, NYSOPRHP, OL.1981.38



Fig. 7. Frederic Edwin Church, *Sunrise (The Rising Sun)*, October–December 1862, oil on canvas, 10½ x 17<sup>15</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in.  
Olana State Historic Site, NYSOPRHP, OL.1981.12



Fig. 8. Frederic Edwin Church, *Cosy Cottage*, c. 1870-72, oil on heavy academy board, 11<sup>9</sup>/<sub>16</sub> x 17<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in.  
Olana State Historic Site, NYSOPRHP, OL-1977-315



Fig. 9. Charles Risdon, engraver, after Frederic Edwin Church, *Under Niagara*, (1862), oil over chromolithograph, 1862-63, 17¼ x 30¾ in. Published by Charles Day and Son, London. Olana State Historic Site, NYSOPRHP, OL-1980.1257



Fig. 10. Frederic Edwin Church, *Cotopaxi*, 1862, oil on canvas, 48 x 85 in.  
The Detroit Institute of Arts, Founders Society Purchase, Robert H. Tannahill Foundation Fund, Gibbs-Williams Fund,  
Dexter M. Ferry, Jr., Fund, Merrill Fund, Beatrice W. Rogers Fund, and Richard A. Manoogian Fund.



Fig. 11. Frederic Edwin Church, *Chimborazo*, 1864, oil on canvas, 48 x 84 in.  
Courtesy of The Huntington Art Collections, San Marino, California, Virginia Steel Scott Collection



Fig. 12. Frederic Edwin Church, *Rainy Season in the Tropics*, 1866, oil on canvas, 56¼ x 84¼ in.  
Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Museum Purchase, Mildred Anna Williams Collection, 1970.9



Fig. 13. Frederic Edwin Church, *Aurora Borealis*, 1865, oil on canvas, 56¼ x 83½ in. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C., Gift of Eleanor Blodgett



Fig. 14. Isaac Hayes, *Church's Peak, Arctic Regions*, 1860, watercolor on paper, 7 1/8 x 11 1/8 in.  
Olana State Historic Site, NYSOPRHP, OL.1980.1894



Fig. 15. Frederic Edwin Church, *Aurora Borealis*, c. 1865–66, oil on canvas, 9 $\frac{1}{16}$  x 14 $\frac{5}{8}$  in.  
Olana State Historic Site, NYSOPRHP, OL.1980.1879



Fig. 16. John S. Jameson, *Landscape*, c. 1860, oil on canvas, 15 x 19½ in.  
Olana State Historic Site, NYSOPRHP, OL-1980.1920.



Fig. 17. Carri Manchester, *South Facade of Olana*, photograph, 2007



PHOTOGRAPH, 1997 © KURT DOLNIER

Fig. 18. Kurt Dolnier, *Sitting Room at Olana*, with *El Khasné, Petra* over the Fireplace

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Hill, Baltimore, 1862 (New York State Military Museum and Veterans Research Center, Saratoga Springs, New York), in which a lone sentry on a rampart facing the city skyline in the background is silhouetted by the warm, dying light. And in the same year, Church's former student Jervis McEntee (1828–1891), briefly a New York Twentieth Regiment enlistee, produced the now lost *Virginia in 1862*, described as a fallow farm field with a burned-out homestead in the foreground.<sup>33</sup> What the *New York Tribune* critic said of both artists and their works might well be applied, with just a little modification, to Church and his contemporaneous picture:

Mr. Gifford's 'Baltimore' and Mr. McEntee's 'Virginia' are embodiments of the times.... They could only have been painted by artists who had been part of the scenes they depicted.... There is little to show that [*Virginia in 1862*] is a battlefield; the carnage of warfare is nowhere visible; nothing revolting meets the eye.... and while it leaves much to the imagination, it is so wonderfully suggestive in its character that the 'filling in' comes readily and naturally.<sup>34</sup>

Yet no known critic who visited Goupil's weeks later perceived any "embodiment of the times" in *Cotopaxi*, nor, evidently, did the artist promote the idea. Noble, with Winthrop an official spokesman of *The Heart of the Andes* in 1859, once compared the smoking cone in *Cotopaxi* to "the mighty tent that God pitches on this great battle-field of nature's forces."<sup>35</sup> Indeed, the regular form of the Ecuadorean volcano echoes the conical tents of the Union armies seen in Winslow Homer's paintings and countless Civil War photographs. But Noble neglected to develop the metaphor topically and never published his elaborate remarks on the picture. In singing the painting's praises, he would not have risked distracting attention from its overarching geological theme—that of a planet at once defacing and renewing itself through subterranean forces—springing ultimately from Humboldt's *Cosmos* and other of the naturalist's revered texts.

From late 1862 through the remainder of the war, Church produced major paintings of a decidedly ethereal or radiant character compared with *Cotopaxi*, consciously or not resonating with the turning tide that began approximately with the cataclysmic Union victory at Gettysburg in early July 1863. The earliest conceived of those, *Chimborazo* (fig. 11)—thanks to a deadbeat patron, labored on fitfully until early 1864—was planned as a thematic pendant to *The Heart of the Andes* and *Cotopaxi*.<sup>36</sup> In it the artist suspended the relatively squat summit portrayed in the earlier picture high in the composition, lending it no more

substance than the clouds delicately wreathed around it. On the one hand, the aspect belies the difficulties the artist encountered in collecting payment from his patron and the ongoing requests for loans from his father to help mitigate the resulting financial strain.<sup>37</sup> On the other hand, he and Isabel managed to vacation on Mount Desert Island in Maine with Noble and his wife in the summer of 1862, and then as a couple in Vermont in 1863, and the long gestation of *Chimborazo* nearly spanned the births of the Church's first two children, in October 1862 and 1864, respectively. To be sure, the artist had secured for himself and his family a measure of insulation from the times; the lofty summit in *Chimborazo* would accord with such circumstances. Moreover, as Gerald Carr has suggested, contemporary American commentary on Church's signature subject matter—the Ecuadorean Andes—could allude to the troubled national climate expressly as a point of contrast.<sup>38</sup> The Andean geographer and Church admirer William Giles Dix (1837–1898), publishing even as the artist was completing *Chimborazo* in early 1864, claimed of the actual summit:

That radiant peak is sacred from bold endeavor and the assaults of battle.  
War's gory feet never climbed so far. War's flaming torch never stained  
that pure and snowy light. Swords never flashed among those white defiles.  
Angels of peace guard the tops of the Andes. There is truce to all the rage of  
earth. ... from the birth of time to the final consummation, on these snowy  
summits of the Andes shines in pure white the Holy Truce of God.<sup>39</sup>

*Chimborazo's* completion coincided more exactly with one of the most impressive representations of Church's art at any venue prior to the retrospective at the Metropolitan Museum of Art that attended his death in 1900. In April 1864 a commission co-chaired by the artist's colleague John Frederick Kensett (1816–1872) mounted an international array of paintings and sculpture in a large gallery of the Metropolitan Fair, set up in Union Square. For that event, one of several organized by the U.S. Sanitary Commission to aid wounded Union servicemen, no fewer than five Church landscapes, including *The Andes of Ecuador*, *Niagara*, and *The Heart of the Andes*, adorned the great chamber's crowded walls.<sup>40</sup> The last work, still housed in its curtained, windowlike walnut frame, stood opposite Albert Bierstadt's more recently painted *Rocky Mountains, Lander's Peak* (1863; Metropolitan Museum of Art), an even larger painting than Church's. Both anchored the centers of their respective long walls, flanking a short wall bearing Emmanuel Leutze's enormous *Washington Crossing the Delaware* (1851; Metropolitan Museum of Art). The nationalism of that icon spoke for itself but, of the two monumental landscapes, only *The Heart of the Andes* was accorded an

explicit measure of patriotic cachet, surmounted as it was by Federal-era portraits of the first three presidents of the United States.<sup>41</sup>

Even as *Chimborazo* slowly advanced to completion, in early 1863 Church conceived, for the shipping executive Marshall Roberts, what became one of his most spectacular and iconic—and, for those reasons, one of his most synthetic—compositions of South American scenery, *Rainy Season in the Tropics* (fig. 12).<sup>42</sup> Floating (as well as towering) Andean peaks still preoccupied his imagination, but this time all were magically framed by a translucent double rainbow that soared through the upper register from one end of the canvas to the other. Church had worked such witchery of prismatic effect before, as a miraculous garnish to his 1857 *Niagara*, but here the iris became the very subject of the picture. Yet that picture, for its own reasons, languished on his easel for three full years. Meanwhile, the artist conjured and executed as the war closed out in late 1864 and early 1865 the second and last major arctic subject he would ever essay: *Aurora Borealis* (fig. 13), commissioned by William Blodgett, who already owned *The Heart of the Andes*. With its unearthly green and red display arcing across the nocturnal sky and glimmering eerily on the frozen, lunarlike terrain, *Aurora Borealis*, identical in size to *Rainy Season in the Tropics*, was undoubtedly planned with that unfinished painting in mind. Anticipating war's end, the pair constituted companion “halo” pictures of torrid diurnal south and frigid nocturnal north, even more purposefully than, in the years leading up to war, *The Heart of the Andes* had premised *The Icebergs (The North)*.

Moreover, probably none of Church's other “naturalistic” landscapes is as suggestively resonant of current events as is *Aurora Borealis*—even as its genesis was as scientific as anything, equatorial or arctic, he ever painted. Church never visited the scene depicted, though he was instrumental in its recording. In the late 1850s he had befriended Dr. Isaac I. Hayes (1832–1881), a naval surgeon who had searched for the chimerical Open Polar Sea with Elisha Kent Kane from 1853 to 1855 and, following Kane's death, led his own expedition along the Labrador coast in 1860 and 1861. Probably sometime shortly after he delivered lectures on the Kane expedition at the American Geographical Society, New York, in 1857 and 1858, Hayes took drawing lessons from Church. The tutorial enabled him to portray, among other places, the northernmost point of his 1860–61 expedition, a cape of land in Kennedy Channel that included a weirdly pyramidal summit, which he named, for the artist, *Church's Peak* (fig. 14).<sup>43</sup> He gave his sketch to Church, who as early as May 1862 spoke of composing a small picture including the landmark to give to the explorer as well as to have engraved. That idea evidently was not realized, but by December 1864 the artist had much aggrandized it:

he informed Hayes that he was “painting a large picture of The North—Aurora Borealis—with Church’s Peak and your vessel.”<sup>44</sup> The “vessel” was Hayes’s schooner, *United States*, in the painting an ice-locked but cozy-looking haven to the dogsledder returning from a sortie in search of the Open Polar Sea. But what seems most telling in the painter’s reference is his invocation of the title that he had patriotically assigned to *The Icebergs* after the fall of Fort Sumter in 1861.

Not that Church would ever again risk using that title in a public exhibition (in any case, *Aurora Borealis* was first shown in London), but he invoked it in association with uncannily rendered imagery of a phenomenon that fairly glowed (as it were) with topical significance before and throughout the war. Once again, the imagery was firmly grounded in fact, this time recorded by the artist himself. Church sketched the northern lights in oil at least twice. The aerial display seen in the painting originated in pencil drawings and an oil sketch of an aurora he witnessed from Mount Desert Island in September 1860 (these are all in the collection of the Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, New York, Smithsonian Institution).<sup>45</sup> He is thought to have made the second oil sketch several years later (fig. 15). The northern lights occurrences of 1860 alone, some of which reportedly accompanied appearances of a great meteor that summer (which Church also painted; ca. 1861, private collection), may have inspired “the gorgeous spectacle of the aurora borealis,” presented as part of a moving panorama of the Arctic regions at Hope Chapel on Broadway in December.<sup>46</sup> What Church captured was just one of several auroras reported in the continental United States from 1858 to 1862.<sup>47</sup> In the latter year, one was seen as far south as Fredericksburg, Virginia. There, a nocturnal display appearing amid the great four-day battle waged in December 1862 portended victory, at least to the Confederate armies, which prevailed.<sup>48</sup> In *Harper’s Weekly* the previous year, a poet divined, in an aurora that “crimsoned the streets of Baltimore,” the ultimate triumph of the Union flag despite the North’s early defeats:

Men of the North! fresh courage take;  
Fear not to meet a little loss;  
Ere long our Northern Lights shall break  
The clouds around the Southern Cross.  
Our banner floats above us yet,  
And treason e’er in darkness fights;  
Not yet our star of hope is set,  
Not yet are quenched our Northern Lights.<sup>49</sup>

At war's conclusion, Herman Melville, in his *Battle Pieces* (1866), invoked the aurora's "million blades that glowed" before fading at dawn to image "the Dissolution of the Armies of the Peace."<sup>50</sup>

It cannot be more than mere coincidence that even as Church depicted Hayes's *United States* in its northern harbor, the steamship *Northern Light* was reported bearing from Charleston to Annapolis eight hundred Federal prisoners liberated by General William Tecumseh Sherman in his renowned—and notorious—march from Atlanta to the sea.<sup>51</sup> Indeed, by the time *Aurora Borealis* was begun, virtually all the news from the front was encouraging. It is fair to add that Frederic Church's two landscapes-in-progress—*Rainy Season in the Tropics*, in 1863–66, and *Aurora Borealis*, in 1863–65—exemplified Union optimism, although tempered by four years of carnage. And as with *Cotopaxi* earlier in the war, so with these later pictures, Church was not alone in manifesting the national outlook in landscape. George Inness (1825–1894), whose vaguer, French-influenced landscape aesthetic would one day prevail over that of Church and his Hudson River school colleagues, toward war's conclusion fashioned large pastoral scenes with titles such as *The Sign of Promise* (location unknown) and *Peace and Plenty* (1865; Metropolitan Museum of Art), and he exhibited the former in New York as a one-picture attraction in the manner of Church.<sup>52</sup> Ironically, in 1865 American critics missed any opportunity to evaluate Church's major recent works on any grounds, artistic, scientific, or symbolic, for *Chimborazo* and *Aurora Borealis*—mounted alongside *Cotopaxi*—premiered that summer at McLean's Gallery in London.<sup>53</sup>

For all the sense of vindication—national, personal, and professional—that Church must have enjoyed as the war waned in early 1865, the year was to prove as sacrificial to him as to any of the thousands of Americans, north or south, who lost kinsmen, or to the Union that lost its leader when President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated on April 14 (just days after the Confederate surrender at Appomattox, Virginia). That tragedy could only have sharpened the devastating blow dealt Frederic and Isabel by the deaths of their two children from diphtheria, little more than a week apart, in late March. Herbert died in New York and Emma in Hartford, where the Churches had gone to bury their son.<sup>54</sup> "Poor man he is very much crushed," lamented his fellow Tenth Street Studio tenant Horace Wolcott Robbins (1842–1904) in early April. "His two children taken away in so short a time. The poor mother [Isabel] feels dreadfully.... He is a changed man—once so full of fun & happy—he is now so sad & seems to feel so wretchedly."<sup>55</sup> Less than a week later Robbins, noting that "Mrs. Church needs a complete change of scene & climate," planned to accompany the couple to Jamaica.<sup>56</sup> They

departed just ten days after the president's murder and remained until August, seeking relief from their "affliction"<sup>57</sup>—for the artist, in intense field sketching with Robbins; for Isabel, in equally manic fern collecting.<sup>58</sup> The artistic fruits of that retreat enabled Church to finally complete in the following year *Rainy Season in the Tropics*, the prophet of its portentous sibling, *Aurora Borealis*. For husband and wife, the greater accomplishment of 1866 must have been the launch of their new family, with the birth of Frederic Joseph Church in September.

Yet the artist suffered a further loss even that year, with the reinterment in Hartford of the remains of an acolyte, John S. Jameson (1842–1864). According to Church, Jameson was among the most talented young artists ever introduced to him. Jameson's hand for drawing came to Church's attention about 1855; in 1858 or 1859, the aspiring young artist (and musician) reportedly visited the master as he was working on *The Heart of the Andes*. By 1861, Jameson had become Church's neighbor in the Studio Building on Tenth Street, showing several landscapes in the 1861 and 1862 annual exhibitions of the National Academy of Design. Yet despite his artistic promise, at war's outset, only Jameson's delicate health and the advice of friends discouraged him from following in Winthrop's fateful path. In January 1864 Jameson put aside their qualms, enlisted, and, with the First Connecticut Cavalry, headed for Virginia, where he eventually was promoted to sergeant. Captured on June 22, 1864, in a raid near Reams Station, near Petersburg, Jameson was transferred to Andersonville, Georgia, site of the notorious Confederate prison camp, where his plummeting health by then sent him to the post hospital. His life ended there on the last of August, adding him to the roll of nearly 13,000 Union inmates who died in Andersonville of malnutrition and disease. Notification of death for most of these men did not come until after war's end.<sup>59</sup> Jameson's arrived in May 1865, by which time the Churches had gone to Jamaica. If it is not clear just when the painter learned of Jameson's capture (or disappearance) and death, his sorrow over it mixed esteem with a bent for retribution. "When I think how such a pure, high-minded and talented youth was sacrificed to the rage of the wicked," Church wrote to Jameson's mother in April 1867, "I almost feel tempted to rejoice that the direct calamity has visited those regions of inhumanity."<sup>60</sup> He undoubtedly alluded to the pillage and destruction wrought by Sherman's army on Atlanta and rural Georgia in 1864 and 1865. Still, he was grateful to Mrs. Jameson for a remembrance: "I thank you for your thoughtful kindness in sending me the sketch which will be one of those few things I expect always to have as fixtures in my home."<sup>61</sup> The small landscape by her son that the mother sent Church (fig. 16) presumably earned its place on the walls of Cosy Cottage or Church's Tenth Street studio; archival photographs verify that

the artist eventually hung it in his new home, the domestic citadel that he built from 1870 to 1872 on the highest hill of Olana, his expanded farm property in Hudson (fig. 17).

Church's Persian-inspired house, and his last great trip abroad that informed its creation, marks a dividing line of sorts between the artist's timeliest accomplishments and a kind of ossification, then decay, of his stature that ensued in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Age, ill health, inventive exhaustion, civic service, ongoing improvements to his house and landscape, the changing taste of the times, and shrinking patronage all contributed. And the artist was scarcely alone in his decline: the ascendant claims of figure painting and the artistic discovery of urban and suburban bourgeois life as the nation struggled to mend itself, leading up to the Centennial in 1876 and beyond, also affected his landscape-painting colleagues, now pejoratively labeled the "Hudson River school."<sup>62</sup> The Civil War era created trying circumstances for the artist, to be sure, but it nearly spanned and surely informed the freshest and richest phase of his output—perceptual, creative, and significant. In 1867—following the death of another loved one, his sister Charlotte—he finally shed the armor of his "New World painter" identity and sojourned with his family in the Old World. This time his agenda was no longer scientific but, in prospect of building his "castle," architectural, as well as religious.<sup>63</sup> He, Isabel, young Frederic, and his mother-in-law started their tour in the Holy Land. Church recorded and later painted, among other monuments of civilization, El Khasné, the rock temple at Petra, Jordan, and later, as a gift to his wife, installed the image prominently in his great stone house, where it has remained (fig. 18). And at stops such as the Mount of Olives overlooking Jerusalem (which he also painted), Frederic and Isabel read Scripture in the footsteps of Jesus, no doubt continuing to resolve their loss and to seek God's providence in rebuilding their family. In that they succeeded, too, and the artist insured that the war, the cause and its costs, would be embodied not merely in his art but also in his life: not long after leaving the Holy Land for Asia Minor and Eastern Europe, in June 1868, the couple conceived young Frederic's brother, born in Rome the next year—Theodore Winthrop Church, namesake of the painter's fallen friend.

*This essay coincides with the exhibition Rally 'round the Flag: Frederic Edwin Church and the Civil War, on view in the Evelyn and Maurice Sharp Gallery at Olana, Thursday, May 26, through Sunday, October 30, 2011. This year marks the sesquicentennial of the fall of Fort Sumter and the start of the Civil War. Rally 'round the Flag examines Church's reaction to the conflict as an artist and how events involving his friends and colleagues affected him personally. With this exhibition, Olana*

will participate in a multiyear commemoration of the war, with related regional and national exhibitions, events, and programs being planned by many institutions.

Evelyn Trebilcock, Olana Curator, and Valerie Balint, Olana Associate Curator, serve as the exhibition curators. A foldout pamphlet with a condensed version of Dr. Avery's essay will be available in the gallery. The exhibition includes several oil and pencil sketches by Church; chromolithographs after Church's paintings *The Icebergs* and *Our Banner in the Sky*; and works by the artist's friends Isaac Hayes and John Jameson. The exhibition is funded by The Olana Partnership, the not-for-profit support arm of Olana State Historic Site. Olana, the Churches' Persian inspired home and 250 acres estate, is owned and operated by New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. See [www.olana.org](http://www.olana.org) for details.

## Endnotes

The author gratefully acknowledges Evelyn Trebilcock and Valerie Balint, Curator and Associate Curator, and Ida Brier, Archivist/Librarian, of the Olana State Historic Site, for their kind assistance in preparing this essay, especially for supplying copies of correspondence of Frederic Church and others, as well as copies of reviews of Church's paintings, quoted and cited throughout the text. He would also like to thank Lory Frankel for her patient, careful, and sympathetic editing of the manuscript.

1. "The North," *New York World*, April 29, 1861, clipping in Frederic Edwin Church's scrapbook with reviews of exhibitions of his paintings, David C. Huntington Archive and Olana Research Collection, Olana State Historic Site, Hudson, N.Y. (hereafter Church scrapbook of reviews).
2. Doreen Bolger Burke, "Frederic Edwin Church and the Banner of Dawn," *American Art Journal* 14, no. 2 (Spring 1982): p. 43; and Gerald L. Carr, *Frederic Edwin Church: Catalogue Raisonné of Works of Art at Olana State Historic Site*, 2 vols. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), vol. 1, p. 275.
3. For Winthrop, see Stewart Sifakis, *Who Was Who in the Union* (New York: Facts on File, 1988), p. 461; Elbridge Colby, *Theodore Winthrop* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1965); and [George P. Curtis], "Theodore Winthrop," *Atlantic Monthly* 8 (August 1861): pp. 242–51. Winthrop accompanied Church on a backwoods journey to Maine's Mount Katahdin in July–August 1856 and described it in the posthumously published *Life in the Open Air* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1863). That volume also reprints his elaborate descriptive program penned for the premiere of Church's most renowned painting in spring 1859, *A Companion to "The Heart of the Andes"* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1859).
4. Horace Wolcott Robbins to his father, Horace Wolcott Robbins Sr., New York, August 1, 1864, private collection, transcript in the Olana Research Collection: "as the time for the draft draws near subs-[titutes] are neither to be cheaper or more plentiful. I saw Mr. Church this morning and he expects to give from 6 to 700 [dollars] for one."

See also John Gaul (Church's Hudson's attorney) to Frederic Edwin Church, January 17, 1865: "You are Enrolled as liable to draft in Greenport, The People of the Town are as usual desirous to free their Quota and have made arrangements for that purpose. Those liable to draft who furnish substitutes are Entitled as I am informed of \$500 from the Town Committee towards the Expense

incurred in obtaining same. There is a great hurry in filling the Quota of the 'Town' and under this last judicial Construction of Gen<sup>l</sup> Fry the number required will be Comparatively small. I wrote you a hasty line last Evening stating that you had better attend to the matter at Once, and upon providing and furnishing the necessary proof you would get the \$500 allowed Principals who furnish substitutes in such cases."

5. Since 1960, the growing literature on Frederic Church has become very nearly a flood. A selection of sources on his life and work follows: David C. Huntington, "Frederic Edwin Church, 1826–1900: Painter of the New World Adamic Myth" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1960); idem, *The Landscapes of Frederic Edwin Church: Vision of an American Era* (New York: Braziller, 1966); Franklin Kelly, *Frederic Edwin Church*, exh. cat. (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1989); Carr, *Frederic Edwin Church: Catalogue Raisonné*; Gerald L. Carr, *Frederic Edwin Church: In Search of the Promised Land*, exh. cat. (New York: Berry-Hill Galleries, 2000); and John K. Howat, *Frederic Church* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).
6. Jeremy Adamson, *Niagara: Two Centuries of Changing Attitudes, 1697–1901*, exh. cat. (Washington, D.C.: Corcoran Gallery of Art, 1985), pp. 62–69; Carr, *Frederic Edwin Church: Catalogue Raisonné*, pp. 230–33; and Howat, *Frederic Church*, pp. 69–74.
7. For *The Heart of the Andes*, see Gerald L. Carr, "American Art in Great Britain: The National Gallery Watercolor of 'The Heart of the Andes,'" *Studies in the History of Art* 12 (1982): pp. 81–100; Kevin J. Avery, *Church's Great Picture, The Heart of the Andes*, exh. cat. (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1993); and Howat, *Frederic Church*, pp. 83–90.
8. For Niagara, see Carr, *Frederic Edwin Church: Catalogue Raisonné*, p. 505; for *The Heart of the Andes*, see the contract between Frederic Church and William T. Blodgett, June 6, 1859, Olana State Historic Site (hereafter Olana), OL.2000.274; for *The Icebergs*, see Gerald L. Carr, *Frederic Edwin Church: The Icebergs* (Dallas: Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, 1980), pp. 84, 88, 97 n. 14; for *Cotopaxi*, *Chimborazo*, and *Rainy Season in the Tropics*, see F. E. Church to his father, Joseph Church, New York, January 30, 1863, Olana, OL.1984.422.A: "I am within a month of finishing a \$6000, picture [Cotopaxi] ... and shall commence in a day or two a \$7500, picture [Rainy Season in the Tropics]"; and F. E. Church to Marshall O. Roberts, New York, January 22, 1863 (Olana, OL.1984.421.A), in which the artist justifies the \$7,500 pricing of *Rainy Season in the Tropics* based on its size, larger than *Cotopaxi* and *Chimborazo*; for *Under Niagara*, see Carr, *Frederic Edwin Church: Catalogue Raisonné*, vol. 1, p. 273; see also William H. Osborn to F. E. Church, Chicago, November 5, 1862, Olana, OL.1998.1.110.1: "What a run you have with your pictures three [including *Cotopaxi* and *Chimborazo*] at 6000. each, and the sale [of *Under Niagara*] to [M. O.] Roberts—is rather fine for a days work."
9. F. E. Church to Theodore Winthrop, New York, March 16, 1860, Frederic Church papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, New York Public Library. The summons of the New York Circuit Supreme Court is included with the letter among the Church papers.
10. For Church's belated renaming of the picture and his donation of receipts, see Carr, *The Icebergs*, p. 80; Eleanor Jones Harvey, *The Voyage of the Icebergs*, exh. cat., Dallas Museum of Art (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), p. 61; Howat, *Frederic Church*, pp. 106, 108; receipt for \$150 from Isaac Bell, trustee of the Patriotic Fund, Department of Public Charities and Correction, Olana, OL.1998.1.81.2; "The North"; Proteus [Eugene Benson], "There Is a North," clipping from an unidentified newspaper [New York Commercial Advertiser?], Olana, OL.2000.387; "Church's New Picture, 'The North,'" clipping from an unidentified newspaper, hand-dated May 7, 1861; and "Mr. Church's Picture," clipping from an unidentified newspaper, hand-dated New York, April 27, 1861 (all unattributed reviews are in the Church scrapbook of reviews).
11. Since its rediscovery, auction, and donation to the Dallas Museum of Art in 1979–80, *The Icebergs*, its creation, exhibition, reproduction, and long absence in England have been extensively documented. See Carr, *The Icebergs*; Harvey, *The Voyage of the Icebergs*; and Howat, *Frederic Church*, pp. 91–96, 105–7.
12. *New York Tribune*, May 19, 1861, quoted in Carr, *Frederic Edwin Church: Catalogue Raisonné*, vol.

- 1, p. 276. For extensive background on Church's *Our Banner in the Sky*, discussed below in the text, see Burke, "Banner of Dawn," 1982, pp. 275–78; and Carr, *Frederic Edwin Church: Catalogue Raisonné*, vol. 1, pp. 275–78.
13. Burke, "Banner of Dawn," 1982, pp. 42–43; and Carr, *Frederic Edwin Church: Catalogue Raisonné*, vol. 1, p. 275.
  14. *Our Banner in the Sky* (New York: Goupil & Co., M. Knoedler, Successor, 1861), Olana, OL.1985.247.
  15. "Art Items," *New York Tribune*, August 18, 1861, cited in Carr, *Frederic Edwin Church: Catalogue Raisonné*, vol. 1, p. 276.
  16. *Ibid.*
  17. For *Our Flag* (fig.5), painted for the New York industrialist Robert Hoe II, see Carr, *In Search of the Promised Land*, p. 59.
  18. *The Star in the East*, *Sunrise (The Rising Sun)*, and *Moonrise (The Rising Moon)* are all discussed in Carr, *Frederic Edwin Church: Catalogue Raisonné*, vol. 1, pp. 265–70, 281–83, 289–90; and Carr, *In Search of the Promised Land*, pp. 55–56.
  19. See, for example, John McClure to F. E. Church, Cincinnati, January 2, 1861, Olana, OL.1998.1.64.1.A.B: "I think matters in the country begin to look much more promising, business improves everywhere except in South Carolina [which had recently seceded from the Union]"; McClure to Church, Chicago, January 19, 1861, Olana, OL.1998.1.65.1.A.B: "From present indications there is every appearance of a lively spring trade in New York, whether the bottom [Southern] states stay out or not"; McClure to Church, Chicago, February 19, 1861, Olana, OL.1998.1.79.1.A.B: "That the dark clouds which now overhang the country will soon pass away I fervently believe...we shall have good times whatever the southern chivalry may do"; McClure to Church, Saint Louis, March 5, 1861, Olana, OL.1998.1.73.1: "In this spirit [of generosity reflected in President Abraham Lincoln's inaugural address] I have not the smallest doubt and depend upon it we shall witness a very rapid revival in general confidence—and in the material prosperity of the country"; McClure to Church, Glasgow, August 1, 1861, Olana, OL.1998.1.82.1: "I hope next mail will bring news of a great victory over the southerners, for I shall then feel assured that the back of this infamous rebellion will soon be broken."
  20. John McClure to F. E. Church, Glasgow, December 5, 1861, Olana, OL.1998.1.85.1.A – .C.
  21. The seizure of Mason and Slidell, also known as the Trent affair (after the name of the British mail ship from which they were taken), has been widely discussed, including in Norman B. Ferris, *The Trent Affair: A Diplomatic Crisis* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1977).
  22. John McClure to F. E. Church, Glasgow, January 31, 1862, Olana, OL.1998.1.86.1.A.B.
  23. John McClure to F. E. Church, New York, August 13, 1862, Olana, OL.1998.1.99.1: "I am quite surprised to hear the war fever has seized your quiet abode."
  24. F. E. Church to Ramon Paez, Hudson, N.Y., September 2, 1862, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., reel 3470: "I have been ... so much engaged on my farm, having lost half my men in consequence of the War."
  25. McClure to Church, August 13, 1862: "Volunteering is wonderfully brisk, and the excitement increases daily, while people generally seem to be recovering their spirits."
  26. Katherine E. Manthorne with John W. Coffey, *The Landscapes of Louis Rémy Mignot*, exh. cat., the North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1996), pp. 1, 137–38.
  27. For *Under Niagara*, see Adamson, *Niagara*, pp. 69–70; Carr, *Frederic Edwin Church: Catalogue Raisonné*, vol. 1, pp. 222, 249–51, 502; and Carr, *In Search of the Promised Land*, pp. 58–59. The most thorough account of *Cotopaxi* is Katherine Manthorne, *Creation and Renewal: Views of Cotopaxi by Frederic Edwin Church*, exh. cat. (Washington, D.C.: National Museum of American Art., 1985), esp. pp. 13–31, and pp. 48–50 for its discussion of *Cotopaxi's* Civil War context. See

- also Carr, *Frederic Edwin Church: Catalogue Raisonné*, vol. 1, pp. 239–41; and Howat, *Frederic Church*, pp. 77–79, 109–12.
28. See Manthorne, *Creation and Renewal*, pp. 26–27; and Howat, *Frederic Church*, p. 109. James Lenox, who commissioned *Cotopaxi*, may have contributed to Church's motivations for painting the erupting volcano at this moment. By 1862 Lenox already owned two sublime landscapes by Joseph M. W. Turner, the first paintings by the recently deceased English master imported into the United States. In the conception and execution of *Cotopaxi*'s smoky pall and effervescent mists, Church may well have found a stimulus via direct contact with those Turner originals.
  29. "Church's Cotopaxi," *New York Times*, March 17, 1863, p. 4.
  30. Avery, *The Heart of the Andes*, p. 31; and Carr, *Frederic Edwin Church: Catalogue Raisonné*, vol. 1, pp. 238–39.
  31. For the close reliance of *The Heart of the Andes* on Church's drawings and oil sketches done in Ecuador in 1857, see Avery, *The Heart of the Andes*, pp. 22–31.
  32. For Gifford's *A Twilight in the Catskills*, see Kevin J. Avery and Franklin Kelly, *Hudson River School Visions: The Landscapes of Sanford R. Gifford*, exh. cat., the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, and the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), pp. 13, 36–37.
  33. Gifford's *Baltimore, 1862—Twilight (Fort Federal Hill, Baltimore, 1862)* and McEntee's *Virginia in 1862* are discussed in *ibid.*, pp. 37, 43–44.
  34. "Reception at the Studios in Tenth Street," *New York Tribune*, February 4, 1863, p. 8, quoted in J. Gray Sweeney, *McEntee & Company*, exh. cat. (New York: Beacon Hill Fine Art, 1997), p. 8. It is worth adding here that the landscape painter Jasper Cropsey in 1866 painted and exhibited at least one large composition of the battlefield of Gettysburg and exhibited a painting titled *Gettysburg* at the National Academy of Design in spring of that year. One of several possible pictures of the subject had been hung in the Union League Club in New York but reportedly was destroyed by fire. The painting(s) are discussed in William S. Talbot, *Jasper F. Cropsey, 1823–1900* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1977), pp. 172–73.
  35. Rev. Louis L. Noble, "Cotopaxi, a Picture by Frederic E. Church, Painted from Studies Made in the Summer of 1857," ms., Olana Archives, OL.1986.143.1–5, reprinted in Manthorne, *Creation and Renewal*, p. 63. As far as is known, only one journal critic referred to war, if not the current war, in association with the exhibition of *Cotopaxi*. Regarding "the dense volumes of smoke that hang luridly over the horizon" in the picture, the critic invoked lines from the English poet Thomas Campbell's "Hohenlinden" (1803): "tis morn; and scarce yon level sun/ Can pierce the war-clouds rolling dun." See "Fine Arts: Mr. Church's Cotopaxi," clipping of a review in an unidentified journal, included in a folder of reviews of *Cotopaxi* in the New York Public Library, copy in the archives of the American Wing, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
  36. Carr, *Frederic Edwin Church: Catalogue Raisonné*, vol. 1, pp. 273–274, 298–299.
  37. Carr, *Frederic Edwin Church: Catalogue Raisonné*, vol. 1, p. 273; Howat, *Frederic Church*, pp. 115–17; Samuel Hallett to F. E. Church, August 4, 1862, Olana, OL.1998.1.97.1: "I want the picture [*Chimborazo*]*—the large one—but I am frank to tell you now, it is not convenient for me to pay for it.*" See also Church to his father, Joseph Church, New York, March 1, 1862, private collection; New York, February 2, 1863, Olana, OL.1984.423; New York, March 24, 1863, Olana, OL.1998.1.2.1; and New York, April 6, 1863, Olana, OL.1998.1.3.1.
  38. Carr, *In Search of the Promised Land*, pp. 67–68.
  39. "The Andes," *Continental Monthly* 5, no. 2 (February 1864): p. 235. The quotation revises an earlier version of similar remarks, included in "The Andes of the Equator," *New York World*, March 23, 1861, p. 6, quoted in Carr, *In Search of the Promised Land*, p. 68.
  40. The other two Church paintings at the Sanitary Fair were *The Setting Sun* and *Evening*, both donated by the artist for sale. See *Catalogue of the Art Exhibition at the Metropolitan Fair, in Aid of the U.S. Sanitary Commission* (New York, 1864), nos. 14 (*Niagara*), 89 (*The Andes of Ecuador*),

111 (*The Heart of the Andes*), 165 (*The Setting Sun*), 533 (*Evening*).

41. Avery, *The Heart of the Andes*, pp. 32 (fig. 20), 50–51, 63 nn. 175–79. The portraits cited, of George Washington flanked by those of John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, were painted, respectively, by Gilbert Stuart, Bass Otis (after Stuart), and Rembrandt Peale. They are all presently in the collection of the New-York Historical Society.
42. Carr, *Frederic Edwin Church: Catalogue Raisonné*, vol. 1, p. 274, 285–87; Howat, *Frederic Church*, p. 128; and Church to Roberts, January 22, 1863, OL.1984.421.A.
43. William Truettner, “The Genesis of Frederic Church’s ‘Aurora Borealis,’” *Art Quarterly* 31 (Autumn 1968): pp. 272–73; Howat, *Frederic Church*, pp. 119–21; and F. E. Church to Dr. Isaac I. Hayes, New York, June 6, 1860, and New York, May 3, 1862, both in the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., Manuscript Division, transcripts in the Olana Research Collection.
44. F. E. Church to Dr. Isaac I. Hayes, New York, December 16, 1864, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., Manuscript Division, transcript in the Olana Research Collection.
45. Truettner, “Church’s ‘Aurora Borealis,’” pp. 276 (fig. 5), 278 (fig. 10) illustrates the oil sketch and three drawings (all Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, New York, Smithsonian Institution) of the aurora that Church observed on Mount Desert Island. See also Kelly, *Frederic Edwin Church*, pp. 62–64; and Carr, *Frederic Edwin Church: Catalogue Raisonné*, vol. 1, pp. 274, 300–301.
46. “The Gorgeous Spectacle of the Aurora Borealis Every Evening at Hope Chapel, Broadway,” advertisement, *New York Times*, December 6, 1860, p. 7. This presentation was undoubtedly part of “Wolfstenberger’s Great Mirror of the Arctic Regions,” a moving panorama illustrating Kane’s and subsequent arctic expeditions, presented at Hope Chapel and advertised in the *New York Herald* from December 4 to 6, 1860. The aurora Church sketched at Mount Desert Island in 1860 may be the one vividly recalled years later by an Illinois native, Thomas F. Campbell, “An Aurora Borealis in 1860,” *New York Times*, March 14, 1918, p. 12. For reports of auroras in conjunction with meteoric displays, see “The Meteor at the South,” *New York Times*, August 9, 1860, p. 5; and “The Meteoric Displays,” *New York Times*, August 14, 1860, p. 6. The meteor Church observed and painted appeared on July 20, 1860, and is discussed, along with Church’s painting of it (private collection), in Carr, *In Search of the Promised Land*, p. 56; and in Donald W. Olson, Marilyn S. Olson, Russell L. Doescher, and Ava G. Pope, “Walt Whitman’s Years of Meteors,” *Sky and Telescope* 121 (July 2010): pp. 32–33.
47. Besides the 1860 aurora seen by Church at Mount Desert Island and those of the same year noted above in the text and n. 46 above, see the report in the *New York Herald*, January 15, 1858, p. 5. Perhaps the most brilliant displays of northern lights in those years occurred in September 1859 and were widely reported, for example, in *Harper’s Weekly*, October 1, 1859, p. 626; for other references, see the notes and bibliography to Carol Quinn, “Dickinson, Telegraphy, and the Aurora Borealis,” *Emily Dickinson Journal* 13, no. 2 (Fall 2004): pp. 58–79, esp. p. 79.
48. Francis Augustin O’Reilly, *The Fredericksburg Campaign: Winter War on the Rappahannock* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2003), p. 441; and “The Battle of Fredericksburg: From the Times Special Correspondent; Headquarters of General Lee, Near Fredericksburg, Dec. 8,” *Argus* (Melbourne, Australia), March 23, 1863, <http://newspapers.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/6484373?searchTerm=Battle+of+Fredericksburg>, cols. 3–4.
49. S. J. A., “The Northern Lights,” *Harper’s Weekly*, November 23, 1861, p. 750.
50. Herman Melville, “Aurora Borealis: Commemorative of the Dissolution of the Armies of the Peace (May, 1865),” in *Battle-Pieces and Aspects of the War* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1866; reprint, Gainesville, Fla.: Scholar’s Facsimiles and Reprints, 1960), pp. 148–49.
51. “From Charleston Harbor: Highly Encouraging News—Admiral Dahlgren’s Fleet Dressed in Colors in Token of Success—Savannah Sure to Fall,” *New York Times*, December 18, 1864, p. 1.
52. Nicolai Cikovsky Jr., *George Inness* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1993), pp. 49–50. The author quotes a critic of the exhibition of *The Sign of Promise* (which, interestingly, included a rainbow)

- who asserted with discreet allusion to the national climate: "It expresses hopefulness, the promise of good; it implies a divine purpose, in the fertilizing shower, the genial sunshine, the beautiful and fruitful valley, and in the combination of these in a grand union that is surely not unmeaning"
53. Carr, *Frederic Edwin Church: Catalogue Raisonné*, vol. 1, p. 274; W. P. B[ayley], "Mr. Church's Pictures: 'Cotopaxi,' 'Chimborazo,' and 'The Aurora Borealis'; Considered Also with References to English Art," *Art-Journal* (London) 4 (September 1, 1865): pp. 265–67.
  54. Horace Wolcott Robbins to his mother, Mary Eldredge Hyde Robbins, March 21, 1865; and Robbins to his father, Horace Wolcott Robbins Sr., April 1, 1865, private collection, transcripts in the Olana Research Collection: "The little girl [Emma Church] died in Hfd [Hartford]."
  55. Robbins to his father, April 1, 1865.
  56. Horace Wolcott Robbins to his father, Horace Wolcott Robbins Sr., April 5, 1865, private collection, transcript in the Olana Research Collection.
  57. F. E. Church to [probably Cyrus] Field, April 22, 1865, Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino, Calif., transcript in the Olana Research Collection.
  58. Kevin J. Avery, *Treasures from Olana: Landscapes by Frederic Edwin Church*, exh. cat., the Olana Partnership and Olana State Historic Site (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2005), pp. 44–47; and Elizabeth Mankin Kornhauser and Katherine E. Manthorne, *Fern Hunting among These Picturesque Mountains: Frederic Edwin Church in Jamaica*, exh. cat., the Olana Partnership and Olana State Historic Site (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2010), pp. 21–27, 31–37.
  59. Patricia R. Everett, "John S. Jameson (1842–1864)," *American Art Journal* 15, no. 2 (Spring 1983): pp. 53–59; and Theodore W. Holmes, *A Memorial of John S. Jameson, Sergeant in the 1st Conn. Cavalry, Who Died at Andersonville, Ga.* (privately published, [1867]), esp. pp. 2–12, 20–26, Olana, OL.1984.116.
  60. F. E. Church to Mrs. Jameson, mother of John S. Jameson, Hudson, N.Y., April 24, 1867, quoted in Holmes, *A Memorial of John S. Jameson*, p. 5.
  61. *Ibid.*
  62. For the earliest known reference to the "Hudson River school," appearing in 1876, see Carr, *In Search of the Promised Land*, p. 104 n. 2. The decline of the Hudson River school is described in Kevin J. Avery, "A Historiography of the Hudson River School," and Doreen Bolger Burke and Catherine Hoover Voorsanger, "The Hudson River School in Eclipse," in *American Paradise: The World of the Hudson River School*, by John K. Howat et al., exh. cat. (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1987), pp. 3–20, 71–90.
  63. Carr, *Frederic Edwin Church: Catalogue Raisonné*, vol. 1, p. 303; Carr, *In Search of the Promised Land*, pp. 86–99; and Howat, *Frederic Church*, pp. 133–56. For Church in the Holy Land, see esp. John Davis, *The Landscape of Belief: Encountering the Holy Land in Nineteenth-Century American Art and Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 168–207.



People's Ellsworth, 44th Regt. N. Y. S. A.  
COL. S. W. STRYKER, Commanding.

Camp Bullerfield Dec, 19<sup>th</sup> 1861  
Miss Carrie C. Niles,  
Dear Friends,

I have a few moments to spare,  
and I thought I would devote  
them in the most common  
way among the soldiers, (write  
to a friend,) and let you know  
how I am.

I am quite well at present,  
and enjoy myself as well  
as can be expected under  
the circumstances

Letter from John W. Griswold (of Austerlitz, NY) as a private in Company G,  
44th Infantry Regiment (Ellsworth's Avengers) to Carrie Niles, December 19, 1861.

*Letters Home:*

# Carrie Niles' Correspondence with New York's Volunteers

*Gail Goldsmith*

PRIVATE COLLECTION, COURTESY OF THE COLUMBIA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Caroline E. Niles

*To commemorate the Sesquicentennial, the Columbia County Historical Society is offering "A Visit from Ms. Carrie Niles, of Spencertown, NY" as part of its educational programming. In a session adaptable to grades three through twelve, as well as to assemblies, an educator in period costume will read selections from the letters and describe life on the home front.*

Carrie Niles's collected correspondence also can be viewed by researchers at the Columbia County Museum. It is not yet digitized.

Caroline E. Niles, known as Carrie, was born to Thomas Phelps Niles and Catharine Niles in 1844 and grew up in Spencertown, Columbia County. She later married Aaron Bishop.

Letters that Carrie Niles contributed to the correspondence are lost. In the letters written to her, the men express the sorrows of soldiering, nostalgia for familiar society, and the joy of writing to a young lady far removed from the battlefields' carnage. They also relate their experiences, which ranged from the mundane to the macabre. It is unclear whether she met the men she corresponded with at Spencertown Academy, knew them from living in the same area, or if they had mutual friends.

SOME HIGHLIGHTS OF THE COLLECTION INCLUDE  
THE FOLLOWING:

*Writing from the Butterfield Camp in Louisiana on December 19th, 1861,  
J.W. Grosword notes:*

“There is but little news to write about, as there is not much going on about here, and all news from other parts than these, you get before we do,”—an odd sentiment in wartime—and enclosed “a pod of seeds from a vine called “Passion Flowers.”

*Augustine C. Belmont, stationed in New York, wrote Carrie on January 13, 1861. He contrasts his “dull business,” evaluation of political strife, and despairing sense of foreboding with a wish that she is enjoying herself:*

Dear Carrie,

I received yours some time since, & should have answered before but I have had no means to communicate & nothing of interest to write. I suppose you are Enjoying yourself as much as possible & improving the time a sleigh to riding, attending parties, balls & c. While I am not privileged to amuse myself in any of the above ways. Business is very dull in New York, Everyone seems to be waiting anxiously in hope that the country will yet be saved from Civil War & inevitable ruin, but nearly all now despair as the clouds darken & the storm approaches: It is indeed a solemn time & he that stands with folded hands, silent & motionless will realize when it is too late the Causes & effects of anarchy & bloodshed. When the thunder of the Cannons & the clash of arms is heard at our own door, then will we all Enquire what has brought upon us, a Nation once so prosperous & happy, Enjoying Civil & religious liberty each a sudden change. Men who have breasted the shock & checked the storm before, now are about to leave the ship of state to float in seas of blood. The cause is too plain to deny Contradiction. The North have forced upon the south, a President whose principles they fear: the south has had no voice in the election. I told you before election the result that would follow if your Republicans were determined to force Lincoln upon the South. When wool is worth only 20 in Columbia & property almost without value then the Farmers will feel sensibly that they must suffer by their own actions. Four states already out of the Union & before the 4th of March thirteen stars will be blotted from the flag that was a Nations pride & Honor. Ten millions of true men cannot be conquered easily, Coercion is very pretty to talk about but the chain can never be Kept together by constant pounding. The only hope is in Congress & if they fail God only Knows where it will End.

What is the news in Spencertown? Have you heard from C--- lately. I fear she will be obliged to succeed—I have not heard from her in a long time. Does Lucy say anything to you about our affairs? C--- & I have dissolved & the flag of our union no longer waves in the zephyr of peace. Is there any sleighing in Spencertown? Write me & tell me all the news for this is no one cares enough for me to waste time but you. I feel that My friends in Spencertown are like Angels, “visits” few & far between” but I hope to find friends among strangers.

Direct Care Box 2212 P.O. New York.

Write!! Write!! Write!!

Augustine C. Belmont

*On June 20, 1862, Henry S. Sill, stationed in Buffalo, describes a military funeral:*

Speaking of the killed it reminds of a funeral here the other night I never witnessed such a Solemn scene in my life. it was Lieut. John Wilkeson he was killed in the Battles of Fair Oaks his body arrived here about eleven o'clock in the night. There were two companies that turned out to received it together with the friends of the deceased they formed the procession in front of the Depot. and then proceeded to the burying ground the hearse was trimmed with the Stars and Stripes and the Band played the most mournful tunes that I have ever heard. The bystanders could not refrain from shedding a tear. what made it so mournful it was right in the dead of night when you could hear nothing but the Band playing.

*Some of Carrie Niles's correspondents were very concerned about the propriety of writing to her. Abner A. New, writing on January 22, 1863, from “Camp Near Fallmoth VA,” is rather apprehensive, afraid to overstep etiquette in his loneliness:*

Miss Niles,

I apprehend more than I comprehend youre pretty indignation upon the reception of this Letter and Youre first impulse no-doubt will be to throw the impudent fellows note in—to the fire without Even looking at the signature but please for a moment I am a soldier and surely you can pardon my want of country oh—a soldier is he to think I hear you say I will just read it and see what the poor fellow has to say but my Dear Young Lady allow me to call you that at least I am not poor at all unless you refer to my pocket! Then indeed I should have to sum up hit as my Dear uncle Sam hasn't given me my usual allowance in over six months neither does he seem to feel disposed to do so in six months longer except by The way of powder and ball that

he Lavishes upon me with all moart unheard of generosity still I can-not say as I appreciate the joke -and now as I am a soldier far away from home and friends and unused to the ways of Civalized Society please pardon my presumption in writing to you a Lady with Whoom I am not acquainted had I to wait until until I could have the pleasure of going through and the \_\_\_ formalities of an introduction the supposition is that you would never have heard of me-Immagin what you would of sort-you no doubt will wonder how I came to write to you. I have heard you Spoken of as a pretty Educated and accomplished young Lady and true to union. So I wrote -active-Should you answer Direct to Co. M 6th (Abner A. New N.Y.V.C.V. Via Washington DC Care Capt. Van Buren

*Similarly preoccupied with proper etiquette was Henry D. Tyler, writing from Ship Point, Virginia, in a letter dated April 22, 1862:*

My Dear Friend:

Miss Niles:

A long time ago I received a letter from you dated 15th February. The letter was delayed in the S.S. Camp. Henry at the time, said he would mention in his next to you, that I got it. I expected to have seen Henry before he left for home, and to have acknowledged your favor to his care. Also I was awaiting your letter which should contain what you promised me. You will no doubt pardon my neglect. Since I saw Henry I have connected myself with the Commissary of Subsistence Dept. Have been stationed at Fort Monroe We are now here within 6 miles of Yorktown. Expect to be there soon & c. As soon as our troops get possession of it. I have a better position to serve the Country in, than if with the S.S. For my business is to feed the army. I learned from an officer of the S.S Reg'mt that friend Niles had gone home. My kind regards to him, ask Him, please, if he will write me. Of course you will if you choose and Tell one if the promise is to be fulfilled.

Yesterday this Dept. issued over 500 Rations. Quite a little stock of goods. I trust you have not quite forgotten me Miss Carrie, for surely I have not you. I remember with grateful pleasure the many little acts of kindness received while at your parents home Kind regards to them & a kiss to the little daughter that would not kiss me.

I would like to write you war news but my duty as a descreet man must be to aid the Govm't by secrecy & not by imprudently informing.

O! How I long to see this unnatural & cruel war over. I trust we begin to see the beginning of the end.

It is very lonesome here I assure you, away from home and friends can but seldom hear from them. Do you think there is any harm in your writing me a nice long letter. if you are in doubts about it ask your good mother, I think She will decide in my favor. like A sensible woman which she is.

Please address me:

Care Capt. AP Porter

Commy of Sub. US Army

Fortress Monroe,

Old Point Comfort Va

Then enclose the addressed envelope in another addressed direct to Capt.

A.P. Porter. Commy of Sub. U.S.A

Fortress Monroe, Old Point Comfort

It being the nearest point which we get our letters. Now good bye be a good little girl & greatly please yourself as well as,

Your ob't friend

Henry D. Tyler

*From Annapolis, Maryland, on July 2d, 1862, Charley B. writes of his recovery from typhoid fever, a common illness. Symptoms include loss of appetite, dry mouth, depression, and a continually rising fever.*

My Dear Carrie,

I suppose you have almost if not entirely forgotten me ere This but my dear I have had a pretty hard time since I wrote you last. have been confined for two months in the Hospital at Annapolis with the typhoid fever and am just getting so I can be up and around and will soon be as well and strong as ever.

I have thought of you a great deal during my sickness and should have written long before if I had the strength to do so. however I hope you will write and let me know whether you are yet alive and how all the folks are getting along

I have not received an answer. to the last letter I wrote you. but thought perhaps you might have written and directed it to the Regiment which of course I did not receive as I was taken sick and sent here a few days after I wrote last. I have had quite a misfortune on my way from the army of the Potomac to the Hospital here my coat was stolen containing many valuable things among which was your pictures which I had in my pocket I should not of cared much about it if I had not lost the pictures which I thought all the world of. Some time when you can conveniently I wish you would send me one like the one Bish use to carry as I feel very lonely without one. I have just received Henrys picture he is looking very gay he is having nice times in

Buffalo & wishes very much that I were there I wish I were but I am afraid it will be a long time before I will be able to be in any place in New York.

I shall have to close so good bye my dear Coz & do not forget to write be sure & direct as follows

Chas B Sill

General Hospital

Ward 11 Annapolis M.D

Yours very Affectionately

Charley B.

P. S. give my respects to all my friends

*Bob, writing from Senallytown, D.C., on July 22nd, 1862:*

Dear Friend Carrie,

Your anxiously awaited letter reached me last Sunday. I had about concluded that you had altogether forgotten your humble servant. I am very happy to see that you have not. What was my surprise upon opening the letter to see the enclosed photograph! I assure you, it is an excellent one; and I shall value it highly. I was also much surprised to learn that you had been visiting in N.Y. I wish very much that I had been there. I know well that I should have enjoyed myself; and I think Perhaps I might have made your visit a little more pleasant. However it is not too late yet, How did it happen that you forsook the idea of visiting Washington? I wish you had come. You ask, if I would not have been surprised to see you. I most certainly should have been much surprised; and I assure you no less delighted. A visit by a friend out here would be a perfect God send. I have hardly seen a pretty, pleasant female face since I left home. Indeed I have not until last Sunday; when I went to church about two miles from camp. It was really a treat to sit on a comfortable seat; and listen to the serman I never (I am sorry to say) was very fond of sermonizing before.

When I was at S. You spoke of going away this fall, to some place near Albany. Do you still intend to go? If so, at what time? I hope you will have another opportunity to visit N.Y when I return. If not, I may possibly happen up near Albany myself.

We have lately had a man in camp, who has been taking photographs for us. I have been thinking of having mine taken. But there are two difficulties in the way. One is, that my hair is very short at present; the other that, that the operator left camp yesterday.

We are living pretty well here at present. To use a slang phrase; "We live

like fighting cocks." But we have only ourselves to thank for what delicacies we may have. I fear there is not a vegetable garden within four or five miles of camp that has not suffered more or less. It is surprising how little scruple a soldier has. When we take anything here; we call it wining Or if you are asked, where you got your apples. You answer, that you detailed them, from some neighboring orchard.

But I will close my uninteresting story. It shall be continued in our next. I shall hope for a long letter soon. Please accept my most sincere thanks for the picture; as well as my

Kindest regards for yourself.

Very truly yours,

Bob

*From the U.S.A. General Hospital in Chester, Pennsylvania, Henry, evidently working in at least an administrative capacity, wrote to Carrie on August 16, 1862. His letter, the most lurid in the collection, offers a firsthand description of battlefield carnage:*

Dear Carrie

I have just received your two letters of July 20th & 24th. They not being directed to me in care of the Hospital have remained until now in the Post Office. I have been hard at work the last ten days we have been receiving the sick and wounded. Yesterday took in about five hundred from the Steamer *Elm City* and *St. Mark*. Nearly all here now have been prisoners and are not yet exchanged. Probably two thirds are wounded, some with an arm off or leg. Others shot through the side, and many other places. I took the names and Regiment of all as they were brought in. I noticed one poor fellow who was hit with a musket ball in the mouth, the ball passing out of the Ear, There are four here from the 44th New York, One from the same company that Pete Van Allstyn was in. He told me that Peter was killed: that he was near him when he fell, that Milt Ford was sick the last he knew of him. It is remarkable how the men keep their spirits up and appear so cheerful many of them. Three have been shot through the lungs, the Doctors think they will recover, it hardly seems possible. Hundreds were here yesterday looking after friends among the wounded. One young Lady, a beautiful girl came to me to inquire if her brother was here. I looked over the Register and missed his name. – As she was going out the door her brother came by accidentally – she at once recognized him, & put her arms around Him & burst out crying – she was all excitement, & when she recovered partially, she discovered that one arm was off. Then there was a time I assure you. At a funeral I

never witnessed more sympathy manifested. Many other similar cases with Mothers, I have noticed.

Additions are now being constructed to the five buildings each two hundred feet making the length of each one 450 feet, quite a walk to go through the wards. These will be completed in about ten days. I received a letter from Smith a few days since he seems to feel pretty well.

I suppose you are enjoying yourself well. Are you not? Is Nealthia and C—now in Spencertown, I wrote C—about two weeks since but have not received an answer. Is there any excitement in Columbia County in regard to the draft? How many men will Austerlitz have to furnish? Your next letter direct in care of the Hospital, I will then get it at once. Have you decided to go to Lansingburg?

Is there any news in Spencertown? Love to all. Write on receipt.

Affect'y,

Henry

*Harry, writing from Harrison's Bar in Virginia on August 1, 1862, describes a picaresque errand to the White House, Virginia, a supply depot on the Peninsula, in which he is nearly captured, and witnesses "the Rebs" opening fire.*

Friend Carrie:

You will no doubt be quite surprised at this letter coming to you at so late a period.—Well I owe you an apology. Having been quite ill since the white House Skeedaddle I had overlooked quite my little friend on the Hudson as far as answering her letter was concerned.—The day after yours of June 18 came to hand, I was ordered up to Savage Station on important official business.—Left the Station the next morning, on the down train for White House & narrowly escaped being captured. I am sorry to say to you that your wish that "I might be comfortably quartered in Richmond has not yet been realized. Last night I had quite a touch of Shelling. The Rebs opposite opened on the Shipping,—one shell struck my boat on the upper deck passed through a yawl boat on the deck, killed a rate & passed out to the bunk.

Almost every night I take my horse & ride up to the front everything seem secure here. Your philosophy is quite incomprehensible if you say you write of what come into your head.—Perhaps your understanding is like Chas Lumbs Lady to whom he extemporised — viz.. The lady hath said in her own house she cares not for me 3 skips of a louse I forgive the Dear Creature for what she hath said Since a woman will talk of what runs in her head—In view of your case you must read "Combe on the understanding"

I now have the pleasure of enclosing you this time sure, a relic of the once  
White House

Item. 1st 1 piece of silk spool

2nd 1 piece of False Hair worn by Mr. Reb Genl Lee.

So look with 'all your eyes' this time I have been looking for a long time with  
all mine eyes for a certain something, which a certain Damsel once promised  
me.—But “phancy my phelinks” You can picture my condition, as it seems  
not that I am to be left without it \_\_\_-pendently poor.

When you write a poor fellow:

Direct care Lieut. Col. Ingalls

2 M Dept

Harrisons Bar Va

via Fortress Monroe

Yours quite friendly,

Harry

*Shortly before departing for Washington, Bob wrote Carrie on May 27, 1862,  
to reminisce about a visit and express his pride in—and anxiety about—fighting.  
He quotes part of the Canto Third—The Gathering Part II from The Lady of the  
Lake by Sir Walter Scott.*

Friend Carrie.

I send you this, without waiting for a reply to my last. This evening at six  
o'clock, I leave for Washington; in the Seventy-first regiment. N.Y. State  
Militia.

I shall leave word with my folks, that in case a letter should come for me; to  
send it to me. I cannot tell you, how much pleasure It will afford me to hear  
from you.

I cannot tell at present just where our regiment will be ordered. But you  
shall hear from me, as soon as we are at all settled. I feel, all excitement,  
this morning. It is the happiest; and yet the sorriest day of my life. Happiest,  
because I am about to engage in the glorious cause of freedom; going to fight,  
for the Union, and the Constitution.

Sorriest, because I am about to leave the friends I love most; with no cer-  
tainty of ever seeing them again.

Did I say it was the happiest day of my life? I correct myself. It cannot be:  
for I think the five happiest days of my life; were those spent with you, a few  
weeks since. I can never sufficiently thank you, for the kindness, and indul-  
gence, shown me while there. And wherever I may be; I shall ever remember

with pleasure my visit to S. (Spencertown) and the friends I found there.  
But I must close my letter. Please overlook blunders, for I have but little time,  
and am writing in much haste.  
I have much to do, and but little time to do it in, before leaving.  
“The heath this night, must be my bed.  
The bracken curtain for my head  
My lullaby, the warders tread.  
Far, far from love and thee Mary.  
Tomorrow night, more stilly laid.  
My couch may be my bloody plaid  
My vesper song, thy wail sweet maid.  
It will not waken me Mary.”  
“A time may come, with feeling fraught,  
for if I fall, in battle fought  
  
“Thy hapless lover’s, dying thought.  
Shall be a thought on thee, Mary.  
But if returned from conquered foes.  
How blithely, shall the evening close  
How sweet the linnet sing repose.  
To my young bride and me Mary.”  
You see I have not recovered from my old complaint of quoting poetry.  
Please present my warmest regards to your father,  
mother, and Miss Kittie; and remember me as,  
Very Truly Yours,  
Bob

*Letters after the spring of 1862 are not included in the collection. Carrie did not live to receive a letter from a soldier celebrating the end of the war. According to cemetery records, Carrie Niles Bishop died, at the age of twenty, with her infant son on December 12, 1864.*



The Columbia County Historical Society hosts many other collections at four unique sites, all of which showcase and interpret New York history in a variety of ways.

The **Museum**, formerly a Masonic temple, houses the society's offices, research library, collections storage, and exhibits.

The **research library's** extensive collection of Columbia County and New York State primary and secondary source historical resources features manuscripts, documents, account books, photographs, business records, pamphlets, and diaries. The library's genealogical materials include cemetery and church records, over 1,500 surname files, and an index of 37, 200 names mentioned in county newspapers in announcements for births, deaths, and marriages. The genealogical collection also contains more than 200 family genealogies and local reference books, including Palatine and Dutch families, county wills, ship manifests and passenger lists, directories, federal census indices, and lists of Revolutionary War, Civil War, and World War veterans.

The shelved library and genealogical materials are non-circulating, but are open to the public during regular hours. Visitors, researchers, and scholars must make an appointment to view the historic manuscript and photograph collections. There is a \$5 admissions use fee charged for non-members; the fee is waived for students.

The society's **Luykas Van Alen House** is a hallmark of Hudson Valley architecture and a National Historic Landmark since 1968. Both inside and out, it showcases eighteenth-century Dutch architecture. Adjacent to the house is the **Ichabod Crane School House**, a nineteenth-century one-room school that hosted classes until 1940. The building is named after the protagonist of Washington Irving's story "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," who the author modeled after local teacher Jesse Merwin. Moved to its current location and recently restored to its 1920 appearance, the school and Van Alen House often are paired on field trips offered to kindergarten through twelfth graders.

The **James Vanderpoel House**, also known as the House of History, will be hosting exhibits and programming in commemoration of the Civil War sesquicentennial. Originally the home of a prominent lawyer and politician, the elegant interiors of the Federal-style house offer a look at elegant living in the nineteenth century .

Columbia County's educational experiences range from field trips to the classroom. Learn old school-style in the Ichabod Crane School House, go Dutch at the Luykas Van Alen House, and show civilians the Civil War at the House of History. The Luykas Van Alen House and the Ichabod Crane School House

are easily paired together, as are the House of History and the Columbia County Museum, for thematic and logistical ease. In-school programs, facilitated by Columbia County Historical Society Staff members, offer a look at local life throughout American history by giving students the opportunity to learn how to make a print, play historical games, or sew a sampler, while learning the historical context of these activities.

*Columbia County Historical Society Museum & Library is located at 5 Albany Avenue, Kinderhook, NY and is open Monday, Thursday, Friday, & Saturday, from 10:00am–4:00pm. Research appointments may be made for Sunday.*

*The Vanderpoel House of History at 16 Broad Street in Kinderhook, NY and the Luykas Van Alen House are open on weekends from June to October; Friday–Sunday, noon–5:00pm.*

*Admission to the Columbia County Historical Society's properties is \$7. One ticket includes admission to the Museum & Library, The Vanderpoel House of History, the Luykas Van Alen House, and the Ichabod Crane Schoolhouse. A \$5 library research only pass is also available. CCHS admits members, seniors, and children under the age of 12 for free, at all locations. Call CCHS at 518-758-9265.*



Fig. 1. *Philip H. Sheridan Memorial* in front of the State Capitol Building, Albany, c. October 1916, reproduced from the official report of the State of New York Sheridan Monument Commission

*“A Labor of Love and Patriotism”:*

# The Artistic and Historic Legacy of Albany’s General Philip H. Sheridan Memorial

*Valerie A. Balint*

“Every statue is visual evidence of a city’s or state’s regard. It stands as an example, and inspiration to the youth of the land.... Each teaches its own lesson.” *Albany Times Union*, October 11, 1916<sup>1</sup>

The grand old boulevard of Albany’s lower State Street runs uphill from the Hudson River to the New York State Capitol. A bronze man on a horse stands sentinel before the building’s imposing western stair, as if guarding the entrance (fig. 1). Today, few may stop to ponder what manner of heroic personage warranted such a monumental gesture of commemoration, but when the drapery first fell away to reveal the statue on an October afternoon in 1916, throngs of people

marveled at this impressive depiction of one of the most celebrated and colorful Union generals of the Civil War, Philip H. Sheridan (1831–1888), his fame on a par with Ulysses S. Grant and William Tecumseh Sherman.<sup>2</sup> As the *Albany Times Union* reported:

By noon the streets began to fill up and within the hour thousands of people were gathered all along the route of march and at the Capital and when the dedication ceremonies began the crowd around the monument stretched from State Street to Washington Avenue, from house line to curb, into the streets and all over the park. From every conceivable vantage point could be seen men or women, boys or girls, house tops and window, porches full of spectators....”<sup>3</sup>

Most of those in attendance did not know that the statue had traveled a long road to reach the state capital, in a journey that took more than twenty years. The particular circumstances involved in its creation are unique. In terms of artistic birthright, it is, for lack of a better term, “betwixt and between.” The work is linked to two of the most illustrious figurative sculptors in the United States, but it cannot be exclusively claimed by either within their oeuvre. This equestrian is essentially an enlarged and slightly altered work executed by Daniel Chester French (1850–1932) (fig. 2) from an original plaster model by his late teacher, John



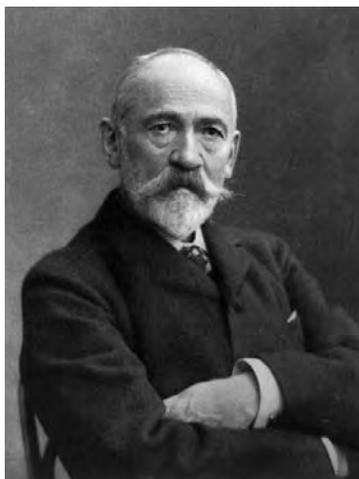
AUTOCROME PHOTO DETAIL BY THOMAS SHELDON CLARKE. COURTESY OF THE CHARPIN LIBRARY, WILLIAMS COLLEGE. GIFT OF THE NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION/ CHESTERWOOD, A NATIONAL TRUST HISTORIC SITE, STOCKBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

**Fig. 2.** Daniel Chester French (left) and his lifelong friend, ornithologist William Brewster, in the studio garden at Chesterwood, the sculptor’s summer home in Stockbridge Massachusetts, 1915

Quincy Adams Ward (1830–1910) (fig.3).<sup>4</sup> This model had been rejected for another site in Washington, D.C., during Ward’s lifetime. The dispute that swirled around the original Washington contract, dating back to 1892, was well known in certain artistic circles, and its effects lingered for decades.<sup>5</sup> Ward had died before it could be resolved, and it was French’s longtime wish to see his mentor’s desires fulfilled by finding an appropriate site for the work.<sup>6</sup>

Americans had started memorializing the Civil War in some fashion almost as soon as it was over. *A Complete History of the Great Rebellion of the Civil War* was published in 1867, with specific biographical sketches dedicated to the great heroes, including West Point graduate Sheridan.<sup>7</sup> The general himself had been commemorated at a special ceremony in Albany, which claimed him as a native son, held at the New York State Legislature in 1889 shortly after he died.<sup>8</sup> At the time of the Albany commission for a memorial statue in 1914, Sheridan had already been made the subject of equestrian monuments in Washington, D.C. (Gutzon Borglum; 1908), and in Somerset, Ohio (Carl Heber; 1905), the other city that claimed his birthright. By midcentury, sculptures would also be erected in New York City (Joseph Pollia; 1936) and Chicago (Borglum; 1923). Art historian Richard Guy Wilson has identified Civil War monuments as particularly linked to the emerging sense of nationhood in antebellum America, the war itself having been a battle for the definition of the nation. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a “modern consciousness of an allegiance to a nation-state emerged as powerful factors in art as well as politics,” and monuments such as the Sheridan statue sought to attempt a seamless blending of the two.<sup>9</sup>

Once granted the opportunity to fulfill Ward’s design through the Albany commission, French was faced with the long and complex process of model preparation, completion, and enlargement required to bring the statue to a finished state. That French agreed to do the work pro bono at the apex of his own career speaks to his admiration and affection. The local newspaper recognized the sculptor’s altruistic motives regarding *The Philip H. Sheridan*: “French, believing that a work such as Ward left should be completed and stand for all time, offered to erect



COURTESY OF NEW YORK STATE LIBRARY

**Fig. 3. John Quincy Adams Ward, c. 1900, reproduced from the official report of the State of New York Sheridan Monument Commission**



**Fig. 4. Daniel Chester French, *The Minute Man*, 1876, bronze, North Bridge, Concord, Massachusetts**

a heroic statue from the model, devoting his personal time and attention to the task.... Making it a labor of love.”<sup>10</sup>

The long friendship between the two artists began early in French’s career, when the twenty-year-old spent several months studying with the more established Ward in his New York City studio in the spring of 1870. Only five years later, partially through prestigious family connections, French obtained his first major commission, *The Minute Man* (1876) (fig. 4), for his boyhood home of Concord, Massachusetts. The instant success of this initial work set French on a path that led to six decades of acclaimed artistic production and prominent positions on some of the most influential arts organizations and commissions of the era. Ward, who enjoyed an equally illustrious career, was recognized by his fellow artists as a major contributor to the advancement of naturalistic sculptural form in the United States, in particular as the master of the equestrian monument.

His early work *The Indian Hunter*, in New York’s Central Park (1860), earned him the distinction as creator of the very first statue by an American sculptor to grace the park.<sup>11</sup>

A series of widely successful works related to heroic subjects of the Civil War contributed to placing Ward in the pantheon of American sculpture. A precursor to those monuments was the critically acclaimed *The Freedman* (1863), begun shortly after Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation was issued the previous fall.<sup>12</sup> The work depicts a seated African American man, his hands free of the shackles that previously bound him. Discussing the statue in a letter to a patron, the sculptor conveyed his Abolitionist tendencies: “I intended to express not one set free by any proclamation so much as by his own hour of freedom.”<sup>13</sup> At the war’s end, Ward executed one of the first public monuments to the Civil War dead, *The Lone Sentry* (1869), commissioned by the Seventh Regiment, National Guard and erected in New York’s Central Park in 1879 (fig. 5). This composition became the prototypical Civil War monument. Replicated ad infinitum in granite, marble, bronze, and zinc, it remains ubiquitous in small-town squares and cemeteries throughout the nation.<sup>14</sup>

The artist also gained praise for his sensitive portrait of Major General John Fulton Reynolds (1872; Gettysburg), who had died on the first day of the great battle in Pennsylvania, and for his memorial to the recently assassinated president (and Civil War veteran) James A. Garfield (1887; Washington, D.C.), the second of several commissions to come to him through the Society of the Army of the Cumberland. Unquestionably, however, Ward's artistic tour de force was his first commission through the society, his equestrian *Major General George H. Thomas* (Washington, D.C.) (fig. 6).<sup>15</sup> For its dedication on November 19, 1879, the federal government closed for the day. Members of the press across the nation and trainloads of veterans alike made a pilgrimage to the city to participate in the highly ritualistic event, which would subsequently play out over and over again in dedications of later Civil War monuments such as the Sheridan statue. The *New York Times* claimed the day drew the largest crowds since the Grand Review of the Armies in May 1865, celebrating the end of the Civil War, and an illustration in *Harper's Weekly* provided visual proof that such claims were not hyperbole (fig. 7).<sup>16</sup> Besides occasioning a public "happening," the work marked a watershed moment in the development of the naturalistic equestrian monument. With this work Ward turned away from the accepted classical and Renaissance antecedents that had previously dominated this genre of sculpture. French himself credited Ward with tremendous influence, both on himself and on his fellow sculptors: "It is difficult for us to imagine today, accustomed as we have become to the realistic representation of the horse, to appreciate



Fig. 5. John Quincy Adams Ward, *The Lone Sentry* (Seventh Regiment of the National Guard), 1869, bronze, West Drive, opposite Sixty-seventh Street, Central Park, New York



Fig. 6. John Quincy Adams Ward, *Major General George H. Thomas*, 1879, bronze, Thomas Circle, Massachusetts Avenue and Fourteenth Street, NW, Washington, D.C.



**Fig. 7. The unveiling of the Thomas Monument, November 19, 1879 as illustrated in *Harper's Weekly*, December 6, 1879**

Garfield monuments. They shared the experience of growing up in Ohio, and it was recalled that Sheridan had often urged the sculptor to create a portrait monument of him. An honorary member of the society by this time, Ward, sixty-two, was awarded the commission officially in 1892, with the acceptance of his small presentation model and the understanding that the statue would be completed by 1898.<sup>18</sup> Of the several initial maquettes Ward is known to have executed early in the commission, only one version is extant, given by his daughter-in-law to the Albany Institute of History and Art (fig. 8).<sup>19</sup> Unfortunately, in the years immediately following the award, Ward made almost no progress on the work. Three years later he had not even completed the working model, although he clearly understood the magnitude of the commission: "This is the last of a series of important works that the Society of the Army of the Cumberland has honored me with, and my ambition is to make it the best work of my life."<sup>20</sup> As

what an innovation this spirited stallion of General Thomas was...."<sup>17</sup> Sculptors continued to view this piece as a benchmark for their own equestrian work, and Ward himself sought to replicate the success of the particular combination of timeless and stately rider atop an energetic and realistic horse in his most contested commission: the General Sheridan monument for Washington, D.C.

The commission came to him through an invitation from the Society of the Army of the Cumberland shortly after the general's death in 1888. Ward and Sheridan had become friends through the work Ward had previously done for the society on the Thomas and



ALBANY INSTITUTE OF HISTORY AND ART, GIFT OF MRS. R. OSTRANDER SMITH

**Fig. 8. John Quincy Adams Ward, maquette for *Equestrian Statue of Philip Henry Sheridan*, 1892, plaster, 13½ in.**

the initial completion date came and went, Ward's comments—stating that he had only recently destroyed a large model and started from scratch, creating new small sketches for the composition design—revealed a certain artistic paralysis.<sup>21</sup> Finally, as late as 1903, the sculptor produced a large clay model of the general astride his beloved mount, Rienzi, as well as a life-size study of Sheridan's head. He seemed poised to move forward with the project.<sup>22</sup>

In addition to Ward's artistic difficulties, the project faced other obstacles. Most troublesome was his rapidly deteriorating relationship with Sheridan's widow, Irene, and other members of the family. In addition to resentfulness over the admittedly trying delays, Mrs. Sheridan disagreed with Ward over how the general should be portrayed; the widow favored a youthful depiction of a specific heroic deed, whereas Ward resolutely insisted on a dignified portrayal of the older soldier, reminiscent of his approach in the Thomas monument.<sup>23</sup> At this advanced point in his career, the sculptor refused to compromise his artistic integrity and bow to her wishes; as he pointed out, his patronage and contract lay with the Society of the Army of the Cumberland and not with the family. At the annual meeting of the society in 1905, a resolution passed to end Ward's contract for the monument, but Ward continued to work on the model. In an attempt to win Mrs. Sheridan over to his side, he invited her to see the work in progress on two separate occasions—the winter of 1905 and, in a last effort, May 1906—but she summarily rejected the work both times, essentially blocking it. So contentious was the affair on both sides that a special review committee representing the Congressional committee's interest in the project (federal money had been appropriated) was brought in; it sided with Mrs. Sheridan.<sup>24</sup> In March 1907, the contract with Ward was officially terminated, and the artist brought suit against the Society, citing breach of contract, but these legal matters remained unresolved.<sup>25</sup>

In June 1907, as the battle in Washington continued, French was contacted by the executive and distributing officer of the Sheridan Statue Commission to submit a small model for the statue and suggest names of other artists who might have an interest in the project. In an act of solidarity, French wrote back respectfully declining, but his refusal did not save the commission for Ward.<sup>26</sup> In 1908, as the legal saga raged on, it was reported that Ward was ill.<sup>27</sup> Late in the year, French, attempting to ease the concerns of a man facing his impending mortality with unfinished business, wrote to Ward, urging him to “rest assured” that the statue would at some point be “well placed and according to his request.”<sup>28</sup> The commission then went to sculptor Gutzon Borglum (sculptor of the monument at Mount Rushmore, South Dakota; 1941), who presented an image of a young Sheridan at the moment the general rallied the troops to redirect their attack



**Fig. 9. Gutzon Borglum, *General Philip H. Sheridan*, 1908, bronze, Sheridan Circle, Massachusetts Avenue and Twenty-third Street NW, Washington, D.C.**

at Cedar Creek on October 19, 1864—no doubt a depiction more attractive to the influential Mrs. Sheridan. Borglum’s dynamic statue of General Sheridan emphasized narrative—a moment of Sheridan’s famous twenty-mile ride from Winchester forever fixed in time—in sharp aesthetic contrast to the referential subtlety characteristic of Ward’s work (fig. 9). The monument in Washington was dedicated on November 5, 1908. Ward died on May 1, 1910; his obituary in the *New York Times* named him the “Dean

of American Sculptors,” a designation that in coming decades would be passed on to French.<sup>29</sup> In addition to the illustrious title and list of accomplishments, however, the obituary also outlined the recent scandal involving the Sheridan commission—a singular but highly visible blemish on a distinguished career. More than two decades later, he and French were hailed as “men who have most definitely guided its [American sculpture’s] destinies through the past forty years...”<sup>30</sup>

By autumn 1912, French’s first monument to President Abraham Lincoln had been unveiled in Lincoln, Nebraska, amid much fanfare (fig. 10). The standing portrait bronze, deeply emotive, with bowed head and hands clasped in anticipation of reading the Gettysburg Address, had elicited praise while still only a clay model in French’s summer studio at Chesterwood (fig. 11), in Stockbridge, Massachusetts. As French remarked: “Everybody seems to think this is my high-water mark.”<sup>31</sup>



IMAGE © BERNIE CLEFF, PHOTOGRAPHER, 1976

**Fig. 10. Daniel Chester French, *Abraham Lincoln*, 1912, bronze, State House, Lincoln, Nebraska**



**Fig. 11.** The studio at Chesterwood, Daniel Chester French’s summer estate in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, where the sculptor spent six months a year. Here the sculptor produced the models for many of his greatest works of art, including *Abraham Lincoln* for the Lincoln Memorial, Washington, D.C.

Earlier that year, French wrote to his brother, William Merchant Richardson French, long-standing director of the Art Institute of Chicago, about Ward’s abandoned model for the Sheridan statue. He expressed regret of “speaking rather lightly” of the piece and explained that he and fellow sculptor Herbert Adams were now “going to see the model with a view to deciding whether we think, in justice to Mr. Ward, it should be enlarged and put into bronze.”<sup>32</sup> Evidently, the two artists were not altogether convinced, as French asked Will to discreetly keep “the matter in abeyance” until he and Adams had reached their verdict. Shortly after, French began a correspondence with Ward’s widow (Ward’s third wife, whom he had married in 1906, née Rachel M. Ostrander), discussing

the best manner in which to create interest for the work and where it should be moved so that “it can be put in a favorable light, and where it can be inspected under the best possible conditions.”<sup>33</sup>

Later, the sculptor informed his brother that the work was indeed worthy and should be completed, adding, “I hope something will come of this.”<sup>34</sup> He soon afterward had the plaster model moved to his own studio at 12 West Eighth Street in New York City, with the goal of attracting a patron or institution. He wrote, “It would be a great pity not to have this statue enlarged and put into bronze and set up somewhere. . . . It really would make a very handsome and impressive statue.”<sup>35</sup> Perhaps thinking his brother’s eminent position in Chicago might ease the path, French approached Charles Hutchinson, bank magnate of that city, about the project. Hutchinson declined to become involved. Through the remainder of the year, progress seemed at a standstill, which disheartened French, who reported being “sorry there does not seem to be any interest right now.”<sup>36</sup> Serendipitously, within a few more months, the project in Albany made its way to him.

The impetus for the erection of a statue to General Philip Sheridan in Albany can be traced to a speech about Abraham Lincoln that New York State Governor Martin H. Glynn gave to the Philip H. Sheridan Camp, No. 200, Sons of Veterans, on February 11, 1914.<sup>37</sup> Discussing the military heroes of the Civil War, Glynn ultimately fixed on Albany's local son, General Sheridan. He called for the erection of a memorial in Sheridan's alleged native city and gained immediate support for the effort. Glynn promised to push through legislation for the bulk of the money needed for the monument if those present would pledge to raise additional funds. An initial group of veteran supporters was formed that evening, which was soon supplemented by a parallel committee of local citizens.<sup>38</sup> Later that month, on February 22, the epic poem *Sheridan's Ride*—penned by painter and poet Thomas Buchanan Read in 1864, only days after the general's successful campaign at Cedar Creek, Virginia—was published in the *Knickerbocker Press* with no explanation. Four days later, an article summarized the status of a major push for the monument by many area leaders. It stated that several large subscriptions were in place and that an advisory board of citizens had been formed. Committee member Edward B. Cantine remarked that the now joint veteran and citizens committees would be meeting that evening to “devise ways and means properly to honor its famous son of Albany.”<sup>39</sup>

By early March, those appointed to an influential subcommittee had become aware of the existing plaster model by John Quincy Adams Ward, and several key members arranged to see it in French's studio in New York City. While there are several differing accounts, it is most likely that citizens' committee member Judge Franklin Dalaner had told his more empowered colleagues on the subcommittee about the work.<sup>40</sup> Judge Dalaner was the brother-in-law of noted painter William Low, who was at that moment involved in a commission at the New York State Education Building in Albany. Low was a friend of French and had known Ward. He was likely aware of French's desire to place this work. He would have also realized that using an existing model would provide a less expensive alternative to hiring a sculptor to create an utterly new design. The appointed subcommittee, which included several members among the delegation to see the model, submitted a final report of recommendations. The report included findings about the relative cost of equestrian works; the existence of Ward's model; and French's willingness to complete it without charge, asking only a small stipend for Ward's widow. The report was supplemented by a letter, dated March 12, extolling the virtues of Ward's model: “The Equestrian statue of Sheridan is the latest work of his full maturity and in truth of portraiture and spirit of its conception would make a notable monument for the birth city of the great general.” The letter was signed by

notable artists: painters Kenyon Cox, Edwin H. Blashfield, William Low, and Walter Launt Palmer; sculptors Herbert Adams, Herman Atkins Mac Niel, and A.A. Weinman; and architect Alfred Brunner, (who was also the designated planner for the City of Albany); all of them were, of course, also friends and longtime professional colleagues of French.

On March 13, French reported to Ward's widow that gentlemen representing the possible project had seen the model the previous week and, further, "They were immensely pleased with it and intend to do everything possible to bring about its reproduction in bronze and its erection in Albany in front of the State Capitol!

That would be a splendid thing indeed for Mr. Ward's memory."<sup>41</sup> French then had the model professionally photographed, so that Dalaner might show the work to other members of the larger committee (fig. 12). French told Mrs. Ward that a bill to contribute to the statue's realization was currently pending in the New York State legislature, and that interested parties were working to raise private funds. He had persuaded the committee to award Mrs. Ward \$5,000, giving the assurance that he would personally take responsibility for this work if they proceeded.

Then French had to wait until December before being asked to submit an official proposal for the work. In the interim, the governor, with the backing of men of power and influence on the now jointly governed Sons of Veterans and Citizens' Advisory committees, had managed to push through an unprecedented bill appropriating \$20,000 for the erection of a statue.<sup>42</sup> Money had never before been allocated by New York State to commemorate an individual.<sup>43</sup> Relatively few cities beyond the great artistic and political centers of Washington, New York, Boston, and Philadelphia could afford equestrian works of this magnitude; without state funds, Albany may have been unable to proceed with the project. An official Sheridan Monument Commission was appointed, made up of several government officials and Edward Cantine, Charles Winchester, and John Farnsworth, representing the Sons of Veterans. In late April, Albany Mayor



PETER A. JULIE & SON COLLECTION, SMITHSONIAN AMERICAN ART MUSEUM, J0006027

**Fig. 12.** Large plaster model by John Quincy Adams Ward (c. 1907) of *General Philip H. Sheridan*, photography ordered by Daniel Chester French from A. B. Bogart Studios, New York, c. March 1914

Joseph W. Stevens, who had himself served under Sheridan in several campaigns during the war, issued an appeal through a local paper for the city's citizens to raise \$10,000. He stated that a group of 200 notable Albanians—both members of the various committees and other citizens at large—had already pledged their support. The mayor also directly credited the initial committee formed through the Sons of Veterans with helping to push the legislative bill through. An image of Ward's plaster model provided by French dominated the page.<sup>44</sup> Public response to the proposed project was positive, and several large-scale fund-raising events were held to raise the necessary money. The most ambitious of these events attracted 1,500 people; the impressive evening began with a parade review of area regiments by Governor Glynn and ended with a concert by the Tenth Infantry Band and a formal dance. The newspaper reported that the night had netted \$500 toward the Sheridan monument, to be added to the almost \$1,000 that had already been raised through larger private subscriptions.<sup>45</sup>

In early June, French suffered a devastating personal blow, with the unexpected death of his brother after a sudden illness. Later that month, French was further reminded of loss: On the anniversary of Ward's eighty-fourth birthday, his widow dedicated a replica of her husband's famous statue, *The Indian Hunter*, at his gravesite at Oakdale Cemetery in his birthplace of Urbana, Ohio. While French did not attend, for the occasion he wrote wonderful and poignant words about his mentor and his place in the development of an important American sculptural tradition:

What he taught me at that time and what he was, have influenced my whole life to a marked degree, and his close friendship until his death, I regard as one of my most valuable privileges.... Mr. Ward's influence upon the Art of sculpture in this country, and the example that he set to his contemporaries, in high ideals and thoroughness and conscientiousness can hardly be overestimated, and when the history of American Sculpture is written the name of John Quincy Adams Ward will cut out clearly all other sculptors as a unique personality, standing alone a dominant figure in the development of art in this country.<sup>46</sup>

Undoubtedly, both these events steeled French's resolve to carry out Ward's last wishes in regard to the Sheridan monument. And French would need both staunch commitment and his natural diplomatic skills to bring that desire to full fruition.

For despite all outward signs of progress, behind-the-scenes trepidation about the use of Ward's model was expressed at very high levels of the Sheridan

Monument Commission. In late July, Governor Glynn met French for the first time at the unveiling of the artist's most recent commission, *The Spencer Trask Memorial* (fig. 13), in Saratoga Springs, where the governor had delivered one of the dedication addresses.<sup>47</sup> Considering his own intimate tie to the monument's commission, it is not surprising that Glynn took the opportunity to speak with French about the Sheridan statue, nor that the artist earnestly "tried to make him understand the advantage of following Mr. Ward's design for the sculpture."<sup>48</sup> Afterward, he wrote to fellow sculptor



COURTESY OF THE CHAPIN LIBRARY, WILLIAMS COLLEGE. GIFT OF THE NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION/CHESTERWOOD, A NATIONAL TRUST HISTORIC SITE, STOCKBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

**Fig. 13. Daniel Chester French at work outdoors at Chesterwood on the plaster model of the "Spirit of Life," statue for the *Spencer Trask Memorial* (Saratoga Springs, New York, 1914)**

Charles Heber, "In regard to the statue of the Sheridan, it is by no means certain that Mr. Ward's model will be accepted. They are discussing it in Albany at the present time."<sup>49</sup> He was prepared to send a follow-up letter to Glynn to press his case, but on the advice of Franklin Dalaner, he did not do so. While not a member of the Sheridan Monument Commission, Dalaner was on the Joint Citizens and Veterans Committee. Dalaner discreetly served as French's "kitchen cabinet" throughout the project. The artist relied on the judge to confidentially guide him through the complex relationships and, at times, conflicting desires of the various stakeholders involved.<sup>50</sup>

Indeed, the various committees involved with the memorial's planning experienced sharp disagreement. Whereas some factions supported the Ward model, others proposed approaching Gutzon Borglum to create a replica of his portrait of Sheridan that been erected in Washington several years earlier. In a meeting that French attended in Albany that autumn, the Ward statue seemed to have emerged victorious.<sup>51</sup> Months later, sculptor Edward Potter accused painter William Low

of inappropriately using influence to swing the vote in favor of Ward's model.<sup>52</sup> French retorted that Low had only made Dalaner aware of the existing model, but Potter's claim probably held some merit. By the close of the year, any infighting among various factions appeared to have been resolved, and French submitted his written proposal on December 17 for enlarging Ward's composition and having it cast in bronze. The artist would have a budget of \$25,000 for, in his own words, "copying said model carefully and carrying out, to the best of my ability, the intentions of the designer."<sup>53</sup> The contracts were signed by January 24, 1915, and French began the subcontracting that was necessary to complete any monument of this scale.<sup>54</sup> In the same month, the newly elected Republican Governor, Charles S. Whitman, took office, adding a new player to the complex structure of patronage that French had to work with in the process of realizing the sculpture.

Within his first few months in office, Whitman encountered firsthand the contentious emotions that monument making often aroused. Sheridan's widow had gotten wind of the plan to erect Ward's statue. The passing years had not increased her appreciation for the work. Attempting to block the project, she wrote directly to the governor, once again claiming that it was not a suitable likeness of her husband. As the representative for the Sheridan Monument Commission, Edward Cantine responded that "the statue had been selected by a committee of artists and had been pronounced an excellent likeness of General Sheridan," no doubt referencing the early letter signed by Low, McNeil, Brunner, and the others.<sup>55</sup> Cantine punctuated his statement by saying, "The art of Mr. Ward's statue is beyond criticism."<sup>56</sup> This most recent debate over the statue and its aesthetics played out in the pages of the *New York Times*. In 1902, the newspaper had spoken out against the "random way in which we go about commemorating our famous men," severely criticizing how public officials, family members, and veterans had become "arbiters of taste."<sup>57</sup> It was clear that in this case final judgment had been placed in the hands of the artists.<sup>58</sup>

In April 1915, French embarked for San Francisco to attend the large exposition taking place in that city, where several of his own works were on exhibition. He left the five-foot-high plaster model in the hands of Francis Herman Packer (1873–1957) to enlarge to the requisite thirteen and a half feet, which French had determined was appropriate. In his absence, Packer worked on the piece in French's studio on Eighth Street in New York City.<sup>59</sup> French always worked in collaboration with another sculptor on his equestrian monuments, relegating the modeling of the horse to a colleague. He and Packer had most recently worked together on the General William Franklin Draper monument (1912; Milford, Massachusetts) (fig. 14). When it came to carrying out the largely mechanical

enlarging processes inherent in monument making, French and other sculptors always used assistants, focusing their own efforts instead on the creative aspects, such as composition and expression. The less established Packer, who had often served as one of French's studio assistants on his major commissions, and as the equine modeler on the artist's most recent equestrian, was a logical choice to work on this project.

That summer, back at Chesterwood with his wife Mary and daughter Margaret, French began the initiatives necessary for all public monuments: collecting bids for the bronze casting and the granite pedestal. French had persuaded

his longtime collaborator and friend, architect Henry Bacon, to assist on the project for free.<sup>60</sup> It was Bacon who would secure the bids for the pedestal, based on the size and design he and French thought suitable.<sup>61</sup> The pair ultimately chose the firm of Norcross Brothers, which came in with the lowest bid, at just under \$6,000.<sup>62</sup> French and Bacon had both worked with this firm for decades and felt confident that the resulting work, despite the low price, would be well executed.<sup>63</sup>

Packer had by this time completed the enlarged model sufficiently to make it available for inspection by foundries wishing to bid on the project. French sought bids from three firms and was concerned that current strife overseas had affected the prices of copper and tin, which were necessary to make the bronze alloy.<sup>64</sup> He had budgeted his expenses very carefully in order to ensure that he would obtain the most money for Mrs. Ward and that he would incur no expenses out of his own pocket. French was relieved to find the casting estimates coming in under budget; he awarded J.N.O. Williams the contract for \$5,773.00.<sup>65</sup>

In July 1915, French and Bacon made several trips to Albany to deal with



Fig. 14. Daniel Chester French, model for the *General William Franklin Draper* (1912) in the Chesterwood studio. The modeling of the horse had been executed by Francis Packer, who would later assist French with the Sheridan statue.

COURTESY OF THE CHAPIN LIBRARY, WILLIAMS COLLEGE. GIFT OF THE NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION/  
CHESTERWOOD, A NATIONAL TRUST HISTORIC SITE, STOCKBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS.

yet another potentially contentious issue involving the proposed Sheridan monument: where it should be placed in the cityscape of the Capitol grounds. Proper siting of a work was extremely important to French, who always had clear opinions about the relation between a statue and its setting. He felt strongly that “Too much emphasis can not be put upon the right placing of a monument.”<sup>66</sup> In early July, French wrote to Dalaner that he and Bacon wanted to come to Albany to review possible sites for the statue.<sup>67</sup> Dalaner promptly responded that the committee had already selected a site, and if he and Bacon wished to change it, they had better convince the committee quickly.<sup>68</sup> French and Bacon arranged to meet in Albany with Dalaner privately and quietly reviewed the site options in the area around the Capitol. Bacon executed a blueprint, drafting in the site he and French favored. The pair then arranged to meet with the committee in Albany to plead their case, couching the occasion as “getting a consensus of opinions.”<sup>69</sup> Within a matter of weeks, using the type of polite but firm negotiations French was famous for, the artist had achieved his goal. He wrote to Mrs. Ward triumphantly, “It really is a splendid location. I am quite enthusiastic about it.”<sup>70</sup>

Before the year’s end, the artist had one more hurdle to overcome regarding the project’s progression. The sculptor had to gain the Sheridan Monument Commission’s approval of the final clay model before receiving another disbursement on his contract. This money would be used to pay all the fabrication bills that would be incurred over the winter and spring to ensure that the monument was completed by that following summer. On the afternoon of Friday, October 29, a large and illustrious contingent from Albany arrived at French’s New York studio to pass judgment on French and Packer’s efforts. The group included Governor Whitman, Mayor Stevens of Albany, and members of the Sheridan Monument Commission. Also present were a number of other gentlemen, whom French later described as “various generals and admirals.”<sup>71</sup> The experienced and astute French sensed that the vote of confidence was by no means assured. He had shrewdly invited Mrs. Ward to attend, hoping that it would prove more difficult to criticize the vision of a deceased artist in front of his financially struggling widow. Among those in the group, General Porter informed French that he had come to the meeting with extreme prejudice. A member of the original committee that rejected Ward’s model for Washington, he had been among those sued personally by an indignant Ward.<sup>72</sup> Governor Whitman also told French that, given things he had heard, he had been predisposed to not like the work.<sup>73</sup> No doubt the enraged letter from Sheridan’s widow counted among those “things” to which he referred.

Ultimately, in a testament to French’s diplomatic skills, his and Packer’s artis-

tic talents, and the intrinsic merit of Ward's original conception, all those who came to judge the statue were won over. They were in fact more than convinced. In several letters written over the days following the meeting, French used the phrase "those that came to (sic) scoff, remained to pray."<sup>74</sup> Viewing the heroic-size embodiment in clay of the man many had known personally, the members of the delegation had a highly emotional reaction, responding en masse to the very values that monumental sculpture was meant to convey and evoke, thinking perhaps of Sheridan specifically or perhaps of their own experiences in the Civil War. French expressed his relief as well as a sincere appreciation for those who had overcome their doubts to perceive the real value in Ward's vision for the piece: "We achieved a victory considering the opposition there was to the design in certain quarters."<sup>75</sup>

In the winter and spring that followed this meeting, the monument was completed with little controversy and few problems. Dalaner, who had seen the work in French's studio days before the dignitaries arrived, had expressed some concerns about the placement of the sword in the composition.<sup>76</sup> French turned his attention to ensuring that all the details of the costume and overall expression were to his satisfaction. He took care in the statue's review, making small but important changes, such as the placement of the reins and the representation of the sword.<sup>77</sup> The completed clay model then went off to Herman Waltheusen, one of the plaster men French often employed. Once Waltheusen made the final full-size plaster model, a mold was created from it, and the work was ready to be cast into its final bronze over the winter.<sup>78</sup> There were some delays in this fabrication, since the foundry had some problems executing the plinth, but those involved with the commission did not evince concern that the unveiling might not take place in July as originally planned.<sup>79</sup> French was happy to receive this news, as he believed bronze casting to be the critical stage in any project; many things could and often did go awry at the foundry during this process. He did not like to rush it and appreciated the commission's flexibility about the dedication date.<sup>80</sup>

Professionally, French had become increasingly absorbed by the biggest commission of his career, the statue of Lincoln for the memorial in Washington, D.C. (dedicated 1922) (fig. 15). Just as Ward had viewed the original Sheridan commission as potentially his crowning achievement, French knew the Lincoln Memorial to be the most important assignment of his life, clearly aware of both the tremendous opportunity and "terrible responsibility" to create something lasting and extraordinary.<sup>81</sup> The previous summer, to avoid a conflict of interest, French had resigned from his position as chairman of the National Commission of Fine Arts, which oversaw all artistic public works projects on federal land or using



Fig. 15. Daniel Chester French, *Abraham Lincoln*, (1922), marble, Lincoln Memorial, Washington, D.C.

federal money.<sup>82</sup> Thanking him for his service, President Woodrow Wilson had assured French that his “recommendations have resulted in a marked improvement in the beauty and artistic character of monuments and public buildings erected and planned for Washington since 1910.”<sup>83</sup> His colleagues found his departure no small loss for the commission. With his gentle manner and talents as a political arbitrator, combined with the convivial bonds he shared with his fellow artists, French had been uniquely suited to the role. Architect Thomas Hastings summarized their sentiment the following year: “My Dearly

Beloved, Gee we miss you on the Art Commission!”<sup>84</sup>

In late June 1916, French was notified by Farnsworth that the Sheridan Monument Commission would be meeting to discuss the final stages of the fabrication and erection, as well as plans for the unveiling in the fall.<sup>85</sup> French conveyed his wish that there would be no new issues with the site, as mutterings over changing it had come to his attention throughout the winter. French wrote to Mrs. Ward: “Mr. Bacon and I were summoned to Albany last Thursday to convert the Governor to the site we wish the statue to occupy in front of the Capitol. We succeeded in our endeavors and it is now certain that the statue will occupy this splendid site.”<sup>86</sup> Privately, he and Bacon shared a sigh of relief that their artistic expertise in regard to this issue had prevailed over the governor’s personal wishes.<sup>87</sup> Within weeks of the unveiling, French reiterated his pleasure about how well the work was ultimately situated: “It fits the place exactly as if it had been made for it.... And it has had a tremendous effect in decorating the whole environment.”<sup>88</sup>

The rest of the contract proceeded smoothly, with the exception of the bronze plaque, which underwent redesign and recasting several times. Those involved in the commission debated at length the wording and who should

get top billing in the list of names. Although it was chronologically incorrect, Governor Whitman's name was ultimately placed above that of former Governor Glynn's. Such political jockeying in even these small details went on for close to two months.<sup>89</sup> Finally, French gracefully but firmly stated that there would be no plaque completed at all by the dedication should a final accord not be reached immediately.<sup>90</sup> By September 11, French had gone to New York to inspect the finished bronze horse and rider at the foundry. The following week the statue was placed on a barge in one piece to make the three-day journey up the Hudson River.<sup>91</sup> The foundations for the pedestal had been completed, executed through a separate state contract. Farnsworth had reported that the pedestal had arrived in town, and French expressed hope that the monument would be complete before the end of the month, allowing a week or two before the dedication on October 7.<sup>92</sup> During the next few weeks French would provide the same careful oversight of the monument's final erection that he gave all of his own statues.

On September 21, after French arrived in Albany to check on the progress of the pedestal work,<sup>93</sup> Farnsworth expressed concerns about the logistics of draping the statue for the unveiling. Albany had actually never dedicated a piece this substantial, nor one entailing this much pomp and ceremony. Ever patient, French assured Farnsworth that he and Bacon would meet with him the following week about "this small matter."<sup>94</sup> By September 25, French reported to William Donald Mitchell at the Williams foundry that the statue had safely arrived in the city and that the foundry's representative, Mr. Glaeser, was in town and would remain while the statue was being set up.<sup>95</sup> Glaeser had been giving instructions to the contractors charged with carrying out this operation, and French had instructed Glaeser that the statue must remain covered in heavy muslin throughout the process. The following day French notified Mitchell that the statue was near the site destination and confirmed that Bacon would soon reach Albany to inspect the pedestal work. Three days later, French asked Farnsworth to let him know when the bronze had successfully been set on its base. "It will be a relief to my mind to know that the statue is in place."<sup>96</sup>

On October 4, 1916, the *Albany Evening Journal* reported that Edward Cantine, Charles Winchester, and John Farnsworth (all members of the Sheridan Monument Commission) had inspected the site and held a meeting of the entire Statue Commission. "Messrs. French and Bacon went over the monument carefully with the members of the committee and were satisfied with the completed work."<sup>97</sup> The monument had been finished none too soon; the unveiling was only days away.

By all accounts, the unveiling was a momentous occasion in Albany. The

pageantry of the event had been planned on a grand scale, and the public's appetite had been whetted for weeks leading up to the ceremony. Papers advertised that the unveiling "promises to be one of the most impressive demonstrations in the history of the city."<sup>98</sup> Stories in all four city newspapers focused on different aspects of the planned festivities and provided schedules of events: the speakers who would present; the infantries that would march; the arrival of Mrs. Sheridan and her daughter in town. Other stories traced the biography of Sheridan's military career and his supposed boyhood tie to Albany. On October 2, the *Knickerbocker Press* announced that Mayor Stevens had issued a proclamation for a holiday on Saturday in honor of "the soldier son of Albany," and all businesses were advised to close—echoes of the same honor designated for the unveiling of Ward's *Major General George H. Thomas* in Washington almost three decades earlier. Businesses and general citizenry alike were urged to decorate their shops and homes in the national colors: every citizen should "display at least one American flag, the emblem of the union of states for which Sheridan fought."<sup>99</sup>

The day of the unveiling began with a full Mass at Albany's majestic cathedral, the Church of the Immaculate Conception. All veterans, of any persuasion, were welcome to attend. The general's hat and sword were placed on the cathedral's main altar, introducing to the laudatory mood a note of loss, which pervaded the day. Despite its celebratory nature, the ritual of the unveiling ceremony contained aspects of bereavement. The huge military parade that passed the statue, representing the fallen body, and the multicannon salute evoked rites at a funeral.<sup>100</sup> Two thousand soldiers marched in the parade that culminated at the unveiling site, some of them only recently returned from the Mexican border, where a large national military presence had been amassed to protect Americans against raids from Mexico.<sup>101</sup> This ensemble of military might contained regular army troops and visiting militiamen from all over the nation.<sup>102</sup> The third regiment column was made up entirely of veterans, including many from the more recent Spanish-American conflict and surviving soldiers from the Civil War, both Confederate and Union, more than fifty of whom had served directly under Sheridan.

It was reported that every civic building was dripping with red, white, and blue bunting and that most businesses and private citizens had followed this example. The throngs who attended the ceremonies were estimated at fifty thousand, and photographs in the paper show both the sidewalks and unveiling site crowded with masses of people (fig. 16). A thousand local schoolchildren in red, white, and blue hats, who sang throughout the program, covered the steps of the Capitol (fig. 17). This chorus dramatically parted to create a center aisle for members of the

*Throng of 50,000 Sees Dedication of Noble Monument to Sheridan;  
Veterans of Cedar Creek Parade and Salute "Little Phil" in Bronze*



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Inspiring Ceremony in Capitol Park, Marking Formal Unveiling of Statue, Brings Together Noted Personages of State and Nation.

**SURVIVORS OF '61, OF '98, AND TROOPS JUST BACK FROM MEXICO IN PARADE**

Fifty thousand men, women and children thronged the park yesterday afternoon to witness the unveiling of the equestrian statue for the state of New York and the city of Albany in honor of General Philip H. Sheridan, first major Union general to capture an Ashmunville farm.

All ranks of the state's volunteer, high public officials, military men known the country over, members of the state and federal legislatures, and a great throng of the city and state's citizens, had sought dinner "tables" to face the ceremony.

*Scene showing great crowd in Capitol park at unveiling of Sheridan statue, and close-up view of monument.*

Fig. 16. "Throng of 50,000 Sees Dedication of Noble Monument to Sheridan," Knickerbocker Press, October 8, 1916, Front page headlines



Fig. 17. Chorus of 1,000 local school children on the steps of the State Capitol, at the unveiling ceremony of the Philip H. Sheridan monument, October 8, 1916, reproduced from the official report of the State of New York Sheridan Monument Commission



Fig. 18. The unveiling exercises in Capitol Park, looking down from the stairs of the Capitol, October 8, 1916, reproduced from the official report of the State of New York Sheridan Monument Commission

commission to take their prominent places on the platform—French, Bacon, and Mrs. Ward among them.

As the parade concluded, William Loucks, representing the Grand Army of the Republic (an organization of Civil War veterans of the Union army) and the Sons of Veterans, stepped forward to present the monument: “It is the privilege of Albany to honor ourselves, honoring this distinguished general...this statue placed on high, under the dome of the Union sky, this splendid monument in granite and bronze to the memory of the hero of Shenandoah.”<sup>103</sup> At the first sound of the general’s name, veterans were reported to have stamped their feet and canes, their old hands too weak for their applause to make an impact among the great crowd. The artillery guns shot off in salute to Sheridan’s rank, and after a long pause, the covered statue was revealed, accompanied by the spontaneous cacophony of automobile horns.<sup>104</sup> This tremendous pomp and circumstance mirrored the codified protocols of unveilings held in the nation’s capital, right down to the statue being draped by American flags (fig. 18).<sup>105</sup>

The main speakers included former Governor Glynn, current Governor Whitman, and Mayor Stevens, who had himself taken part in seven engage-

ments under Sheridan's command. Their words and the rituals that accompanied them that day resonated with complex layers of meaning, all of which public monuments were seen as capable of conveying at this time in the United States. Through sculpture, values were thought to be made concrete and visible and experienced collectively, thereby inciting emotion. Ideas, values, and memory would all reverberate long after the actual dedication day, in what historians Victoria Gallagher and Margaret La Ware describe as a "cultural projection."<sup>106</sup> This was clearly happening at the unveiling of the Sheridan monument. The intense ritual of the day created a distinctive memory for all those present to recollect later, evoked by walking past the memorial. The dedication itself aimed to cast events of the past in a very particular light, reinforced by the veterans who attended and the speeches given.

On that day, former Governor Glynn declared at the unveiling, "This statue is a tribute to every man who fought to save a single star from falling out of this old flag of ours, and none would have it more so than Phil Sheridan himself who called the privates in the ranks the heroes of the war and to them gave credit for his honor and his fame."<sup>107</sup> The primary function of the work remained commemorative. Those politicians and citizens who paid for its creation wished not only to pay homage to a deceased heroic general but also to honor all Civil War veterans, dead or alive. As has been pointed out by art historians Elizabeth Broun and Alan Fern, the shift toward "monument making" that recalled events of more recent past was only a few decades old. "The 1876 Centennial celebrations in Philadelphia had already canonized America's Founding Fathers, great men whose vision had brought a nation into being. By 1893, the truly modern industrialist, art patron, or politician drew inspiration from "larger than life figures sweeping majestically across history's pages."<sup>108</sup> Interestingly, the instigator of the movement for the Sheridan monument, Martin Glynn, embodied all three components of the potential modern-day artistic power broker, and he selected an iconic hero who could serve many commemorative purposes.<sup>109</sup>

While American cities and towns erected many monuments in the years directly following the close of the Civil War, the first decade of the twentieth century saw a resurgence of interest in this type of work, as indicated by projects such as the Sheridan monument. More recent military conflicts, such as the Spanish-American War (1898), made it possible to start to historicize the events of the previous war. As the nation faced the half-century benchmark anniversary of the earlier conflict, a definite desire emerged to mark it in some meaningful way, paying homage to those myriad men in every town who had given their lives—often in the form of sculptural memorials.<sup>110</sup>

These later statutory commissions were motivated in part by the aging of the surviving Civil War veterans. There was a clear wish to establish a tangible legacy for them while they were still alive and to fix their place and contributions within a larger national historical framework. Governor Whitman expressed these sentiments at the unveiling of the Sheridan monument: “Faster and faster they are going from us—these veterans in the uniform of the Grand Army of the Republic. Few and fewer remain on earth to tell the children and the children’s children of the tremendous events.... Every succeeding Memorial Day witnesses ever thinning lines.... We cannot too resolutely address ourselves to the task of erecting monuments and memorials, patriotic altars that may serve to keep holy the glories of the ideals to which their lives were dedicated.”<sup>111</sup>

The ceremony, the sculpture, and the veterans, all with their specific reference to past heroic deeds, also were meant to inspire future patriotism. As he welcomed visitors that Saturday afternoon on behalf of the Sheridan Monument Commission, Edward Cantine sounded the idea that the statue, not merely a monument to a dead general, would function as an educational tool and symbol of patriotism: “To the youth of the day and future generations it will stand as an inspiration.... The school boy trudging up the hill will find the fever of patriotism in his flesh at the sight of this statue of the little Albany boy.... May we learn by Sheridan’s life the lessons of duty, patriotism and loyalty.”<sup>112</sup> The statue, serving as a touchstone for the recollection of that life, would then inspire others. At the dinner following the unveiling, former Governor Benjamin B. Odell summed up the predominant feeling about what monuments should do: “Memorials, such as we dedicated today, would fail of their purpose were the object... mere pandering to personal vanity rather than that should always be something to command the attention of the young, that will serve to awaken within their minds a desire for not alone knowledge, but also to inspire emulation.”<sup>113</sup> The formality of the parade and the known military exploits of Sheridan would have reinforced the idea of the continued military prowess of a now unified nation, but this was secondary to the general’s personal attributes of courage, loyalty, and tenaciousness in the face of adversity that were also being championed that day—characteristics considered intrinsic to the patriotic American.

As Cantine read out the roll call of Civil War survivors and each man stood up from the audience amid thunderous applause, it would have been natural for the audience to make an association with new recruits who were “reporting for duty.”<sup>114</sup> Would the young men present answer the call the way their heroic predecessors had? At the ceremony, the Civil War-era song “Rally ’round the Flag” was played, but its message would have applied equally to current citizens

facing war. Also among those present that day were men who had fought for the Confederacy, against Sheridan, now able to express their respect for him as a soldier.<sup>115</sup> This reconciliation or “collective amnesia” indicated the strength of nationalist sentiment as the country marked the fiftieth anniversary of the “Great War,” while it simultaneously stood poised on the verge of another major conflict, this time on foreign soil, which also came to be known as the Great War.<sup>116</sup>

In the summer of 1914, as efforts to carry out the Sheridan monument commission were just ramping up, President Wilson had spoken at the dedication of the Confederate Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery.<sup>117</sup> The commander of the Grand Army of the Republic spoke that day of a reunited brotherhood who would “fight shoulder to shoulder against all the world, for the country’s sake.”<sup>118</sup> This notion was echoed in the speech given two years later in Albany by Governor Whitman: “Again, as in the days of Washington, as in the days of Sheridan, we are faced by conditions that make demands upon all that is true and unselfish in our national life.”<sup>119</sup> As the country began to historicize the Civil War through monuments to its dead, memorial works could be seen as larger indicators of the sacrifices made to secure the future for those who remained.<sup>120</sup>

When the General Sherman monument (by Carl Rohl-Smith) was dedicated in Washington, D.C., in 1903, the connection between monuments, art, history, and education was well established. As General David Henderson noted in his unveiling address for the Sherman sculpture, “The statues of the world are silent historians.”<sup>121</sup> The unveiling of the Sheridan monument fulfilled an agenda set out by the committees two years before, as expressed by Glynn: “Let us not leave it to the bookworms to contemplate in darkened libraries the valor of this man! Let’s write his glory and his valor in a gallant figure of bronze.”<sup>122</sup> The statue was meant to “write” more than an account of Sheridan’s individual valor. Like so many other public monuments, it was meant to instruct everyone about what it meant to be a good American, apart from military service. Ideas of civic virtue could be conveyed to the massive immigrant populations crowding the nation’s cities, including Albany, instilling in them what was expected of them as they became citizens.<sup>123</sup> Admittedly, this ideal was determined by a relatively small group of individuals who had the power and the means to erect these monuments as a reflection of their value systems.<sup>124</sup>

For more progressive politicians like Democratic Governor Glynn, a sculpture to someone like General Sheridan could aptly illustrate the realization of American opportunity for personal empowerment and achievement. As much as a military hero and a “local son,” Sheridan was also presented to Albany as a self-made man. He represented the “local boy who makes good.” Unlike fellow

Civil War officer and Massachusetts native Major General Joseph Hooker, whose fine pedigree was highlighted in the commission report for that commemorative statue completed by French and Edward Potter for Boston in 1903, Sheridan had come from humble beginnings, as in fact had former Governor Glynn.<sup>125</sup> The erection of a memorial to Sheridan in his birthplace brought home certain assertions: while it mattered where you began, it did not determine where you might end up—at least not in this country. The message was clear: anyone who works hard and embodies the ideals of a good citizen can become a successful someone in the United States. Many speeches given the day of the unveiling conveyed this message again and again to the thousands of Albany citizens in attendance, of different ages, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. It was Glynn, though, who expressed it most succinctly: “This statue is an illustration of American opportunity. In no other country under the sun would the road for advancement have been open from the humble cottage on Canal Street to this magnificent statue of bronze with its laurel of reward.”<sup>126</sup>

Regardless of which educational aspects of the Sheridan monument were considered most important, it was clear that this memorial to a dead war hero was meant to be inextricably linked to future generations of Albanians. The thousand schoolchildren who sang on the steps of the Capitol during the unveiling ceremonies implicitly delivered the message that the statue was erected for them as much as for the many veterans who came to pay homage to the man it commemorated.

In his own closing remarks at the unveiling, former Governor Glynn had exclaimed, “Little Phil with the Capitol of his native state behind him, the city of his birth before him, on this bronze horse . . . will ride down the centuries.”<sup>127</sup> Those involved in the campaign to erect the Sheridan monument clearly desired to use the commemoration of the national hero to enhance local pride. Albany’s importance on the national stage as the birthplace of this great general was clear from the inception of the movement. Glynn had proclaimed in his speech at the Sons of Veterans dinner, “Grant has a mausoleum in New York, Sherman has a statue at the entrance to Central Park. Let’s erect a statue to Sheridan here in the city of his birth!”<sup>128</sup> By claiming Sheridan, Albany continued to assert its relevance to national historic events.

This intensely localized memorializing, while not a singular example, was fairly uncommon during the period. In the nation’s capital, as in the economic locus of New York City, and notably in the South, as in Richmond, Virginia, many statues had been erected to heroes of both the Revolutionary and Civil Wars, regardless of where they had been born or died. Other monuments extolled the virtues of important statesmen like Henry Ward Beecher and Abraham Lincoln,

who had no specific affiliation to the locales in which they were erected.<sup>129</sup> Still others served to illustrate the cultural achievements of great poets and writers, regardless of their country of origin. When other cities chose to memorialize great generals, the focus was typically on their connection to the state as a whole, as was the case with French's Major General Hooker equestrian statue.<sup>130</sup> Both the Hooker and the Sheridan monuments were accomplished through the appropriation of state funds, with official involvement of state politicians throughout the commission process. In the case of the Sheridan monument, the state's role was primarily subsumed to the importance of Albany as the champion of this monument. These sentiments were echoed in the city papers' headlines in the days surrounding the dedication: "All Albany Dedicates Monument to Hero Son"; "Sheridan, Native of Albany, One of World's Greatest Soldiers"; and "Albany Today Pays Homage to Gen. Sheridan."<sup>131</sup>

After a day full of congratulatory splendor for officials and general public alike, the festivities were capped off with a more exclusive formal dinner hosted by the Sons of Veterans at the Ten Eyck Hotel. Mrs. Sheridan, apparently having finally made her peace with the statue, was in attendance at all the glorious events throughout the day and evening; her son, stationed on the Mexican border, was unable to attend.<sup>132</sup> General Guy Warren Keifer of Ohio, who had been on Sheridan's staff, related gallant tales of service life during the war. He concluded by raising a toast to the general, pointing his glass in the direction of the mezzanine gallery, where Mrs. Sheridan was seated with the other ladies.<sup>133</sup> All gentlemen rose to their feet, and in the moment of silence that ensued, the widow was overcome with emotion, betraying no trace of ill will in regard to the twenty-year conflict over Ward's artistic expression of a memorial to his friend. French could be proud of his accomplishment in this regard; through his efforts, he managed to mitigate the long-standing stigma of this unfortunate incident in his mentor's career.

Overall, French was immensely pleased. He had finished the work on time and on budget, and he had managed to secure slightly more money for Mrs. Ward than the \$5,000 originally set aside for her.<sup>134</sup> Surely, he was most gratified that the impressive late work by the deceased mentor of his youth had finally found a home. He wrote to Mrs. Ward, "I think of what a splendid position this work of Mr. Ward's occupies, far finer than the position it would have held in Washington if the original program had been carried out. I am glad to have been associated so closely with it and to have saved this splendid work of Mr. Ward's from oblivion."<sup>135</sup>

The historian Pierre Nora has written extensively about public sculpture as

a “lieu de mémoire,” or place of memory.<sup>136</sup> Statues take on new meanings over time and/or serve as physical settings for new events, sometimes years after they are erected. The new definitions ascribed to the work often hold at least some tentative link to the ideals the sculpture was originally thought to illustrate. The Lincoln Memorial, with its tradition as a setting for human rights–based assemblies and marches, exemplifies this process. On a smaller scale, Nora’s theory holds true for the Sheridan monument. The power of the work as an instrument of military messaging remained, even as it was adapted for more current needs. Only a year after the dedication, rallies were held in Albany to recruit more troops for the World War. By far the biggest of these was held in front of the Sheridan statue, with the address given by none other than former Governor Martin Glynn.<sup>137</sup> Through this gesture, citizens were imprinting a new association onto the monument, one relevant to them, and to their time.

Figurative monuments to singular military heroes may have lost some of their communicative potency in the ensuing century, but artistic memorials as a means for collective commemoration and assertion of ideals have not. The vast crowds that assemble at French’s own quintessential heroic statue, the Lincoln Memorial, are a testament to the powerful reach monuments can have even today. As the nation—including New York’s Hudson Valley—commemorates the sesquicentennial of a conflict that claimed more lives on its soil than any other in its history, the City of New York continues to work on a monument to those who perished in the most recent visible tragedy of our own time, September 11, 2001. While this endeavor bears no artistic resemblance to the type of memorial French would have championed as an enduring legacy, its purpose would likely have resonated with him on some level: in his own words, it is through public monuments that “we can make our lives divine.”<sup>138</sup> This is the promise that the Sheridan monument and other public statuary still offer to all those who take a moment to commune with them.

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This essay is deeply informed by the seminal work by Lewis I. Sharp on John Quincy Adams Ward and by Thayer Tolles's commentary on both Ward and French, as well as Michael Richman's initial research and writings on Daniel Chester French; these are all cited below.

## Endnotes

1. Dudley Olcott, president of Mechanics and Farmers Bank in Albany, quoted in "Albany Is Not Running with Statues," *Albany Times Union*, October 7, 1916, p. 1.
2. For biographical information on Sheridan and a comprehensive critique on his military career, see Eric J. Wittenberg, *Little Phil: A Reassessment of the Civil War Leadership of Gen. Philip H. Sheridan* (Dulles, Virginia: Brassey's Inc., 2002).
3. "All Albany Dedicates Monument to Hero Son," *Albany Times Union*, October 7, 1916, p. 1.
4. For biographical information and French's artistic career, see Michael Richman, *Daniel Chester French: An American Sculptor* (Washington D.C: Preservation Press, 1976); and Laurreta Dimmick, Donna Hassler, and Thayer Tolles, *American Sculpture in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, vol. 1, *A Catalogue of Works by Artists Born before 1865* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1999), pp. 326–41. See also [www.chesterwood.org](http://www.chesterwood.org), the former home and studio of French in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, now a museum.

Prior to the *Sheridan* commission, French had completed equestrian works of President George Washington, General Ulysses S. Grant, Major General Joseph Hooker, General Charles Devens, and General William Franklin Draper, using Edward Potter as the sculptor for the horses for all but the Draper memorial.

5. For a detailed discussion of the original commission, see Lewis I. Sharp, *John Quincy Adams Ward: Dean of American Sculpture* (Newark, New Jersey: University of Delaware Press, 1985), pp. 84–89, 266–70; and Kathryn Allamong Jacob, *Testament to Union: Civil War Monuments in Washington, D.C.* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), pp. 134–38. For biographical information and Ward's artistic career, see Sharp; and Dimmick, Hassler, and Tolles, *A Catalogue of Works*, pp. 136–54.

The *Sheridan* commission history is singular in American sculpture from this period. The closest example found to date is that of Ward's own teacher, Henry Kirke Bush-Brown's statue of the Civil War hero General Philip Kearny (1873), which was originally intended for placement in the United States Capitol Statuary Hall. At some point during this commission it was determined that submissions must be limited to Colonial heroes or statesmen, and the work was rejected on this technicality. The final work had already been executed in bronze and went into storage. Seven years later a memorial group oversaw the statue's erection in Military Park, Newark, New Jersey. Like the Albany work, it depicts a Civil War hero, and native son of national importance, although it is not an equestrian monument. It greatly differs from the *Sheridan* monument in that: it was intended for indoor display; it was not rejected because of its artistic rendering; it was fully executed and then merely placed in an alternative location, and under the supervision of the still-living artist. See Meredith Arms Bzdak, *Public Sculpture in New Jersey: Monuments in Collective Identity* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1999), p. 21.

6. While Ward was still alive but ailing, French wrote to assure him that he would seek to place the statue. Daniel Chester French to John Quincy Adams Ward, November 30, 1908, French Family Papers, Library of Congress. All quotations from letters by French cited in this essay come from photocopies or transcripts viewed at Chesterwood, the home and studio of Daniel Chester French. The original handwritten letters and typescript copies, made by French's personal secretary as he wrote them, are in the French Family Papers.

French would also oversee the completion and final placement of Ward's equestrian monument to General Winfield Scott Hancock in Fairmont Park, Philadelphia (1910); and a posthumous

replica casting of Ward's Central Park statue *Henry Ward Beecher* for Amherst College (1915). All of this prepared him to oversee the completion of the Sheridan statue in Albany.

7. Dr. James Moore, *A Complete History of the Great War of Rebellion, or The Civil War in the United States, 1861–1865* (Philadelphia: Quaker City Publishing House, 1867), pp. 518–22.
8. Wagner Swayne, "An Address Commemorative of General Philip H. Sheridan: Delivered Before the Legislature of New York, At the City of Albany, April 8, 1889 (published pamphlet). The publisher is undocumented but a copy is available through Bancroft Libraries, University of California, Berkeley, GLAD-84147016. The assertion of Sheridan as Albany's local son had long been contested and was the subject of debate even as the commission's work was underway. Recent scholarship by Wittenberg, *Little Phil*, has linked his birthplace to Ireland, but in the early twentieth century his boyhood home of Somerset, Ohio, also claimed the birthright, alongside Albany. Fellow veterans and Sheridan's family claimed that the general had always cited Albany as his native city, and the newspapers took great pains to establish legitimacy through many published accounts. Champions of the monument sought to establish antiquarian ties: a historian carefully traced genealogy back through possible local family members. A photograph was circulated showing the supposed house of birth, which had been razed as recently as 1913, and an aide-de-camp under Sheridan declared that Sheridan had always claimed Albany as his birthplace. The "crowning" evidence was a note from Sheridan's widow thanking the citizens of Albany for a photograph of this same house, stating that she knew Sheridan was proud of his birthplace ("Sheridan Family in Albany Today," *Knickerbocker Press*, October 6, 1916, p. 1). By contrast, other contemporaneous sources stated that he was born in Ireland, and an early publication on Civil War history actually listed Sheridan as born in Ohio (Moore, *A Complete History of the Great War*).
9. Richard Guy Wilson, *The American Renaissance: 1876–1917* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), pp. 41–43. See also Wayne Craven, *The Sculptures at Gettysburg* (Eastern National Park & Monument Association: Eastern Acorn Press, 1982), pp. 6–18; and Jacob, *Testament to Union*, pp. 3–17, for discussions on the role Civil War statuary played in the formation of national identity during the late nineteenth and first quarter of the twentieth century.
10. "Providing Sheridan Statue a Labor of Love and Patriotism," *Knickerbocker Press Illustrated Magazine*, October 8, 1916, p. 3.
11. See Dimmick, Hassler and Tolles, *American Sculpture in the Metropolitan Museum*, p. 139.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 140.
13. John Quincy Adams Ward to James Reid Lambdin, April 2, 1863, Albert Rosenthal Papers, Archives of American Art (AAA), Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., quoted in Dimmick, Hassler, and Tolles, *A Catalogue of Works*, p. 142.
14. Donald Martin Reynolds, *Monuments and Masterpieces: Histories and Views of Public Sculpture in New York City* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1988), pp. 241–42.
15. See Sharp, *John Quincy Adams Ward*, pp. 193–95; Jacob, *Testament to Union*, pp. 85–88; Records Group 66, Records of the Commission of Fine Arts, entry 4, John A. Logan, National Archives, Washington, D.C.; and Wayne Craven, *Sculpture in America* (Newark: University of Delaware, 1984), pp. 245–53. For this work and his other equestrians, including the models for the Sheridan statue, Ward, an accomplished rider, used live horses as models, often bringing them to the studio. He also used photographs to help him pinpoint the accurate movements of horses in motion. These methods were fairly unique and accounted for Ward's singular ability to capture the realistic movement and characteristics of horses in his sculptures.
16. *New York Times*, November 20, 1879; and *Harper's Weekly*, December 6, 1879, quoted in Jacob, *Testament to Union*, p. 85. See also Sharp, *John Quincy Adams Ward*, pp. 193–95.
17. Eulogy by Daniel Chester French, read by Herman Atkins MacNeil, for the opening of the "Memorial Exhibition of Works by the Late John Quincy Adams Ward, N.A.," at the New-York Historical Society, March 16, 1911, quoted in Sharp, *John Quincy Adams Ward*, pp. 195–96.

18. Notes of the meeting of the Society of the Army of the Cumberland, 1892, p. 42, as cited in Sharp, *John Quincy Adams Ward*, p. 266.
19. Two other known maquettes, one given to New York University in 1922 and one to the American Academy in 1933, are unlocated. See Sharp, *John Quincy Adams Ward*, pp. 270–71.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 266.
21. John Quincy Adams Ward to General H. C. Corbin, November 16, 1898, Albany Institute of History and Art, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 266. Technically this is not a strict portrait of the general's equally famous horse, Rienzi who had died in 1878. As with his other works, Ward had used a live horse for a model. This one had been selected by the general's brother General Michael V. Sheridan.
22. John Quincy Adams Ward to M. O. Chance, June 5, 1903, Sheridan Statue, Records Group 42, Public Buildings and Grounds, National Archives, Washington, D.C., cited in Sharp, *John Quincy Adams Ward*, p. 267.
23. See Sharp, *John Quincy Adams Ward*, pp. 267–68, for a detailed description of the dispute, time line, and Ward's account of events relating to this commission.
24. This rejection would have proved especially difficult for Ward, as the committee included artist colleagues, who in siding with Mrs. Sheridan most likely bowed to political pressure. See *ibid.*, p. 267.
25. When French began the Sheridan commission for Albany on Mrs. Ward's behalf, John A. Dutton, one of the lawyers involved in Ward's lawsuits, hearing of the project, came forward demanding a percentage of the profits. French advised Mrs. Ward through a series of letters over six months, and an agreement was ultimately reached that awarded Dutton 10 percent of any profit seen by Mrs. Ward. See, for example, Daniel Chester French to Mrs. Ward, March 6, 1914, April 29, 1914, and December 26, 1914.
26. Mr. Charles G. Bromwell to Daniel Chester French, June 5, 1907, Sheridan State, Records Group 42, National Archives; French to Bromwell, June 7, 1907, Sheridan Statue, Records Group, 42, National Archives. Bromwell's letter addresses the fact that the Ward statue has now been rejected, and that a new commission is being offered for \$50,000. While Bromwell understands French does not enter competitions the committee hopes the artist could make a model which a delegation could come review in his studio. With characteristic diplomacy French responds: "I fear you will think me a very difficult person indeed when I tell you I shall not be able to make a small design for the Statue. There are considerations which I need not go into that would make it impractical for me to accept this commission under any circumstances."
27. "Ward the Sculptor is Critically Ill: Dean of the Craft in America Stricken at his Washington Height Home," *New York Times*, November 30, 1908. In the article Ward is cited as blaming Mrs. Sheridan directly for the rejection of his work for the Sheridan monument. He records that he spent most of the last fifteen years working on the piece, made six models in total, and had been satisfied with his final plaster. The article also mentions that Ward filed a suit for \$32,000 the previous year. See also his obituary, *New York Times*, May 2, 1910, which references the illness and the initial report of it.
28. Daniel Chester French to John Quincy Adams Ward, November 30, 1908. French quotes parts of Ward's request stating that the work should be "seen all around" and that it is presented so that the "right side" presents the main view. Ward's illness is referenced and French refers to himself in his closing "with sincere affection and regard. Your old pupil, Dan French."
29. "J.Q.A. Ward Dead at the Age of 80: Dean of the American Sculptors Passes Away at His Home Here," *New York Times*, May 2, 1910.
30. Adeline Adams, "Of Three Leaders in Art," in *The Spirit of American Sculpture* (New York: National Sculpture Society, 1923), p. 37. The third sculptor listed was Augustus St.-Gaudens, who died a number of years before Ward.
31. Daniel Chester French to Evelyn Beatrice Longman, September 23, 1911; Daniel Chester French

- to William Merchant Richardson French, September 17, 1911.
32. Daniel Chester French to William French, January 14, 1913.
  33. Daniel Chester French to Mrs. John Quincy Adams Ward, January 13, 1913; French to Mrs. Ward, January 15, 1913; French to Mrs. Ward, January 31, 1913.
  34. French to Mrs. Ward, January 13, 1913.
  35. Daniel Chester French to Charles Hutchinson, March 3, 1913.
  36. Daniel Chester French to William French, January 6 and June 1, 1913; French to Mrs. Ward, January 13, January 15, January 31, and March 8, 1913; French to Hutchinson, March 3 and March 8, 1913.
  37. *Unveiling of the Equestrian Statue of General Philip H. Sheridan: Capital Park, Albany, New York, October 7, 1916* (Albany: State of New York Sheridan Monument Commission, with J. B. Lyon & Co. Press, 1916), pp. 26–29. Illustrated figures 1, 2, 18, and 19 are all reproduced from this volume.
  38. “Fraternal Organizations: Sons of Veterans,” *Knickerbocker Press*, February 15, 1914, p. 6.
  39. “Push Project for Sheridan Memorial: After Meeting of Veterans’ Sons,” *Knickerbocker Press*, February 24, 1916, p. 1. The committee met again on March 3.
  40. A local newspaper reported that James A. Taylor, a member of the Sheridan Camp, had met Mrs. Ward on a cruise and became aware of the model; “Providing Sheridan Statue a Labor of Love and Patriotism,” *Knickerbocker Press Illustrated Magazine*, October 8, 1916, p. 2. By contrast, French credited local judge Franklin Dalaner, who was related to painter William Low.
  41. Daniel Chester French to Mrs. Ward, March 13, 1914.
  42. Authorized by Laws for 1914, Chapter 100. With the enactment of this law, the governor was obligated to form an official Sheridan Statue Commission, which was fiscally responsible for the project.
  43. In 1887 New York State legislation had passed allocating \$200,000 for monuments at Gettysburg, with \$50,000 allocated for a state monument to honor all New York State men who had died in the battle. None of this money was earmarked for memorials to individuals, but only to whole regiments. See Craven, *The Sculptures at Gettysburg*, p. 7.
  44. “Mayor Issues Appeal for \$10,000 for Sheridan Monument,” *Albany Evening Journal*, April 28, 1914, p. 2.
  45. “Big Attendance at Sheridan Review: Substantial Sum Was Netted for the Monument Fund at the State Armory,” *Albany Evening Review*, May 27, 1914, p. 8. See also, in the same newspaper, “Postponement of Ball and Review,” May 22, 1914, p. 1; and “Sheridan Review Monday Night,” May 21, 1914, p. 13 “Church Collection for Sheridan Monument Fund,” *Albany Evening Journal*, May 20, 1914, p. 1. Presumably, there with other, similar events.
- The close to \$1,000 net proceeds raised at the largest fundraiser were particularly impressive given that they were achieved through the sale of individual tickets of 50 cents apiece.
46. French to Mrs. Ward, June 22, 1914, quoted in Sharp, *John Quincy Adams Ward*, p. 92.
  47. Daniel Chester French to Henry Bacon, July 16, 1914.
  48. Daniel Chester French to Franklin Dalaner, July 16, 1914.
  49. Daniel Chester French to Charles Heber, July 16, 1914.
  50. See for example, French to Dalaner, July 16, 1914.
  51. Daniel Chester French to Edward C. Potter, March 22, 1915.
  52. *Ibid.* It is conceivable that Dalaner had directly asked Low and other artists of influence and national renown to help sway the commission in favor of Ward’s model over anyone else as potential candidate, by having Low and other artists submit a letter of support for Ward’s model only weeks before.

53. French to Dalaner, December 14, 1914. The artist mailed his proposal, dated December 17, directly to Dalaner, who then passed it on to members of the Statue Commission.
54. A series of letters traces the evolution of the final contract: French to Dalaner, December 14, 1914; French to Mrs. Ward, December 26, 1914; French to Dalaner, December 26, 1914; French to the Attorney General's Office, December 26, 1914; French to Mrs. Ward, January 4, 1915; Daniel Chester French to John Farnsworth, January 15, 1915; and French to Farnsworth, January 24, 1915.
55. "Mrs. Sheridan Protests: Appeals to Governor over Albany Memorial to Husband," *New York Times*, April 8, 1915.
56. *Ibid.*
57. *New York Times*, 1902, quoted in Jacob, *Testament to Union*, p. 13.
58. For a discussion of the politics surrounding matters of aesthetics in the erection of public monuments, see Michele H. Bogart, *The Politics of Urban Beauty: New York and Its Art Commission* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2006), in particular pp. 39–91. For local political context surrounding this commission and other monuments near the Albany State Capitol grounds see Glenn Lowry and Dennis Anderson, *The Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller Empire State Art Collection and Plaza Memorials* (New York: Rizzoli, 2002).
59. French to Mrs. Ward, January 4, 1915. Packer was currently at work on his first solo equestrian commission, the Nathaniel Greene, for the Guilford Courthouse National Military Park in Greensboro, North Carolina. This was a project through the National Fine Arts Commission, and as its Chairman, French would have supported Packer for the job. French later would provide a recommendation for Packer to become a sculpture instructor at one the major foundries. The older and more influential sculptor clearly respected Packer's abilities and sought to foster his burgeoning career.
60. While Bacon offered to work for free, French ultimately paid him \$500. He told Bacon he wished it could be more, but that he sought to keep as much money as possible for Mrs. Ward. French to Bacon, November 1, 1916.
61. In an example of the politics of patronage, French had been asked to invite Flint Granite Company to submit a bid even though French had never worked with this firm. He had been told that members of the committee had an economic "interest" in the company. He instructed Bacon to extend the invitation but not to feel pressure to grant the company the project, only to show a good faith effort in asking them to submit. French to Bacon, August 4, 1915.
62. Daniel Chester French, Commission Account Book, p. 159, Chapin Library, Williams College, Williamstown, Massachusetts. All accounting references cited for the commission are taken from this book, in which French kept meticulous records of payments and expenses for all his works.
63. French to Bacon, September 20, 21, and 22, 1915. The firm of Norcross Brothers also had a tie to Albany, as it had completed stonework for the City Hall, just across from the Capitol.
64. French to Mrs. Ward, July 19, 1915.
65. Daniel Chester French to Gorham Manufacturing Co.; Tiffany & Co.; J.N.O. Williams & Co., all July 1, 1915.
66. Daniel Chester French to E. R. Harlan, October 3, 1914. The artist goes on to say: "The important thing is not to find a site for a statue, but a statue for a site."
67. French to Dalaner, July 28, 1915.
68. French to Dalaner, August 4, 1915.
69. French to Dalaner, August 6, 1915.
70. French to Mrs. Ward, September 24, 1915.
71. Daniel Chester French to Newton Mackintosh, November 1, 1915. See also French to Dalaner,

- November 1, 1915; French to Mrs. Ward, November 5, 1915; French to Low, November 8, 1915; and French to Edward Cantine, November 15, 1915.
72. French to Mackintosh, November 1, 1915.
  73. Ibid.
  74. Ibid.
  75. French to Dalaner, November 1, 1915.
  76. French to Dalaner, November 1 and November 5, 1915.
  77. French to Packer, October 25, 1915; French to Dalaner, November 5, 1915.
  78. French to Herman Waltheusen, October 28, 1915; French to Mrs. Ward, November 5, 1915.
  79. French to Farnsworth, March 31, 1916.
  80. French to Farnsworth, April 15, 1916.
  81. Daniel Chester French to Katrina Trask, May 2, 1916. French wrote of the importance of this commission on numerous occasions. For example, "That [the Lincoln] has got to be the best thing I ever did, whether I can bring it about or not," Daniel Chester French to Honorable Henry H. Hollis, September 17, 1915.
  82. See Richman, *Daniel Chester French*, pp. 171–86, on the Lincoln commission. See Michele Bogart, *The Politics of Urban Beauty*, for a general discussion of arts commissions, pp. 1–38 and p. 281 n. 4.
  83. Woodrow Wilson to Daniel Chester French, April 14, 1915, Woodrow Wilson Papers, National Archives. French was an original member of the commission and had served as chairman since architect Daniel Burnham's death in 1912.
  84. Thomas Hastings to Daniel Chester French, December 1, 1916, French Family Papers.
  85. French to John Farnsworth, June 27, 1916.
  86. French to Bacon, June 30, 1916; French to Mrs. Ward, July 10, 1916.
  87. French to Mrs. Ward, July 10, 1916.
  88. French to Dalaner, November 1, 1916.
  89. Daniel Chester French to Mr. Burdick, September 7, 1916. This is one in a series of letters to Burdick, who was the artisan working on the plaque. Other letters in September to John Farnsworth and Henry Bacon reveal French's frustration as he attempted to convince Farnsworth that the inscription should be less complicated—to no avail. Henry Bacon's final blueprint for this plaque is still extant, NT.69.38.1546 and is in the Chesterwood archival gift at the Chapin Library, Williams College.
  90. French to Farnsworth, 9, 1916.
  91. French to Bacon, September 11, 1916.
  92. Ibid.
  93. Daniel Chester French to Pullman's Office, New York Central Railroad, Albany, New York, September 19, 1916.
  94. French to Farnsworth, September 20, 1916.
  95. Daniel Chester French to Williams Donald Mitchell, September 25, 1916.
  96. French to Farnsworth, September 29, 1916.
  97. "Met about Statue at Noon Today," *Albany Evening Journal*, October 4, 1916, p. 5. The front page is full of stories about the war in Europe, including "Four Days' Battle Wins French Town for the British," typical of headlines in all four local newspapers at this time.
  98. "Plattsburgh Men in Sheridan Line," *Knickerbocker Press*, October 3, 1916, p. 4.
  99. "Holiday in Albany to Honor Sheridan," *Knickerbocker Press*, October 2, 1916, p. 4. One paper

- featured an ad from a local store which read “Celebrate Sheridan Day with a new suit or overcoat,” *The Argus*, October 7, 1916, p. 10.
100. One newspaper even referred to the statue as a bronze “effigy” of the hero: “Albany’s Tribute to Sheridan Today,” *Knickerbocker Press*, October 7, 1916, p. 4.
  101. “Troy Guardsmen Return,” *Knickerbocker Press*, September 28, 1916, p. 1; “Schenectady Guard Second Battalion of Second Infantry Due to Arrive at Noon,” *Knickerbocker Press*, September 29, 1916, p. 1; “Trainees to Attend,” *Knickerbocker Press*, September 29, 1916, p. 1.
  102. “All-Day Celebration of Albanians Do Honor to Gen. Phil Sheridan,” *Argus*, October 9, 1916, p. 1 and p. 2.
  103. “All Albany Dedicates Monument to Hero Son,” *Times Union*, October 6, 1916, p. 1.
  104. “Inspiring Ceremony in Capitol Park, Marking Formal Unveiling of Statue, Brings Together Noted Personages of State and Nation,” *Knickerbocker Press*, October 8, 1916, p. 1.
  105. See Jacob, *Testament to Union*, p. 15, for a detailed discussion of these dedication rituals. “Children Who Will Bare Flag-Shrouded Statue of Sheridan,” *Knickerbocker Press*, October 7, 1916, p. 1. This article was illustrated with photographs of Oliva Whitman and Sally Davis, who unveiled the Sheridan statue.
  106. Victoria Gallagher and Margaret La Ware, “Sparring with Public Memory,” in *Places of Public Memory: The Rhetoric of Museums and Memorials*, ed. Greg Dickinson, Carole Blair, and Brian L. Ott (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010), p. 91. The authors use the example of the statue *The Fist* in Detroit to make their point.
  107. Martin Glynn, quoted in “Thousands Do Honor to Memory of Gen. Sheridan,” *Albany Evening Journal*, October 7, 1916, p. 1.
  108. Elizabeth Broun and Alan Fern, introduction to *Revisiting the White City: American Art at the 1893 World’s Fair*, by Carolyn Kinder Carr and Robert W. Rydell et al. (Washington, D.C.: National Museum of American Art and National Portrait Gallery, 1993), p. 14.
  109. In addition to his political life, Glynn was owner and chief editor of the newspaper *Albany Times Union* and a longtime patron of the arts. For biographical information on Glynn, see Dominick C. Lizzi, *Governor Martin H. Glynn: Forgotten Hero* (Privately published, 2007).
  110. For example, on July 4, 1916 a monument was erected in Hillsdale, New York in memory of those men from the town who had fought in the war. The funds were provided through the will of Hillsdale native, Civil War veteran, John K. Cullin who had recently died. See Florence Mossman, “Civil War veterans not forgotten in Columbia,” *Register-Star*, June 28, 1992. Soldiers and Sailors Monuments had also been erected fairly recently in Albany’s Washington Park (October 5, 1912), and in downtown Syracuse (June 21, 1910).
  111. “All-Day Celebration of Albanians Do Honor to Gen. Philip Sheridan,” *Argus*, October, 8, 1916, p. 2, Sunday morning edition.
  112. Edward Cantine, quoted in “All Albany Dedicates Monument to Hero Son: Capital City Pays Compliment to General Philip Sheridan, Civil War Hero,” *Times Union*, October 7, 1916, p. 1.
  113. Honorable Benjamin B. Odell, remarks at the dinner at the Ten Eyck, quoted in *The Unveiling of the Equestrian Statue of General Philip H. Sheridan*, p. 106.
  114. “Inspiring Ceremony in Capital Park, Marking Formal Unveiling of Statue Brings Together Noted Personages of State and Nation,” *Knickerbocker Press*, October 8, 1916, pp. 1–7.
  115. “All Ready Now for Unveiling,” *Albany Evening Journal*, October 5, 1916, p. 2.
  116. Jacob, *Testament to Union*, p. 4, discusses the “collective amnesia” or “love fest” that had become commonplace by this time. For example, in 1913 Confederate and Union soldiers had assembled for the fiftieth anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg and had walked across the fields in front of press photographers clasp hands with each other.
  117. The local newspaper reported the event, “Confederate Monument Unveiling at Atlanta,” *Albany*

- Evening Journal*, June 4, 1914, p. 11.
118. Commander of the Grand Army of the Republic, quoted in Jacob, *Testament to Union*, p. 4.
119. "Governor Whitman Tells of Heroism of General Sheridan," *Times Union*, October 7, 1916, p. 1.
120. Jacob, *Testament to Union*, p. 42.
121. Jacob, *Testament to Union*, p. 7.
122. Martin Glynn, speech at the Sons of Veterans, in *The Unveiling of the Equestrian Statue of General Philip H. Sheridan*, p. 29.
123. For discussion of sculpture as mode for civic instruction, see Michele Bogart, *Public Sculpture and the Civic Ideal in New York City, 1890–1930* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1989), pp. 1–47; and Bogart, *The Politics of Urban Beauty*, pp. 39–91.
124. For the role of artists in establishing standards and issues surrounding the politics of patronage, see Bogart, *Public Sculpture and the Civic Ideal*, pp. 1–73.
125. *The Equestrian Statue of Major General Joseph Hooker: Erected and Dedicated by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts* (Boston: Wright and Potter Printing Company, 1903), p. 53.
126. Martin Glynn, quoted in "Thousands Do Honor to Memory of Gen. Sheridan," *Albany Evening Journal*, October 7, 1916, p. 1.
127. *Ibid.*
128. *Ibid.*
129. See Bogart, *The Politics of Urban Beauty*, pp. 12–28; Jacob, *Testament to Union*, pp. 9–14; and French to Cantine, November 15, 1916.
130. *The Equestrian Statue of Major General Joseph Hooker*, pp. 15 and 54 specifically.
131. "Governor Whitman Tells of Heroism of Gen. Sheridan," *Times Union*, October 7, 1916, p. 1; and "Sheridan, Native of Albany, One of World's Greatest Soldiers," *Knickerbocker Press*, October 5, 1916, p. 1 and p. 2. This story outlines the entire military career of Sheridan and cites Grant, "I rank him with Napoleon and Frederick, and the great commanders of history." Other stories in the area papers featured numerous local "Albany" boys who had gallantly served under the general during the war: "Albany Veteran Carried Message to Sheridan," *Knickerbocker Press*, October 7, 1916, p. 9; and "Some of Sheridan's Boys among Leading Albanians," *Knickerbocker Press*, October 7, 1916, p. 4. All these biographies and personal accounts served at once to legitimize Sheridan as a great hero and to assert that Albany produced virtuous men, celebrity and common soldier alike—an important aspect of the city's self-identification.
132. "Graceful Tribute to Mrs. Sheridan Marks Big Dinner," *Knickerbocker Press*, October 8, 1916, p. 1. She was reported to have become overcome with emotion at the dinner's moment of silence in honor of her husband, in the hall described as a "sea of flags."
133. *Ibid.* The dinner was a very impressive affair. It had been reported days earlier that "more generals will be at the dinner than have gathered any place in many years"; "Parade Will Mark Statue Unveiling," *Knickerbocker Press*, October 2, 1916, p. 2.
134. French to Mrs. Ward, November 15, 1916.
135. *Ibid.*
136. Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire," *Representations*, no. 26 (Spring 1989), p. 224.
137. "Seeking Men for the Guard—Big Men on the Stump," *Albany Sunday Telegram*, undated clipping (1917), Scrapbook, Martin Glynn Papers, Box 1, New York State Archives, Albany, New York.
138. French to Harlan, October 3, 1914. This letter discusses in depth French's views about the roles that various types of sculpture can serve in public life. Harlan, a curator, asked French for his opinions in a letter of September 3, 1914, that French referenced.

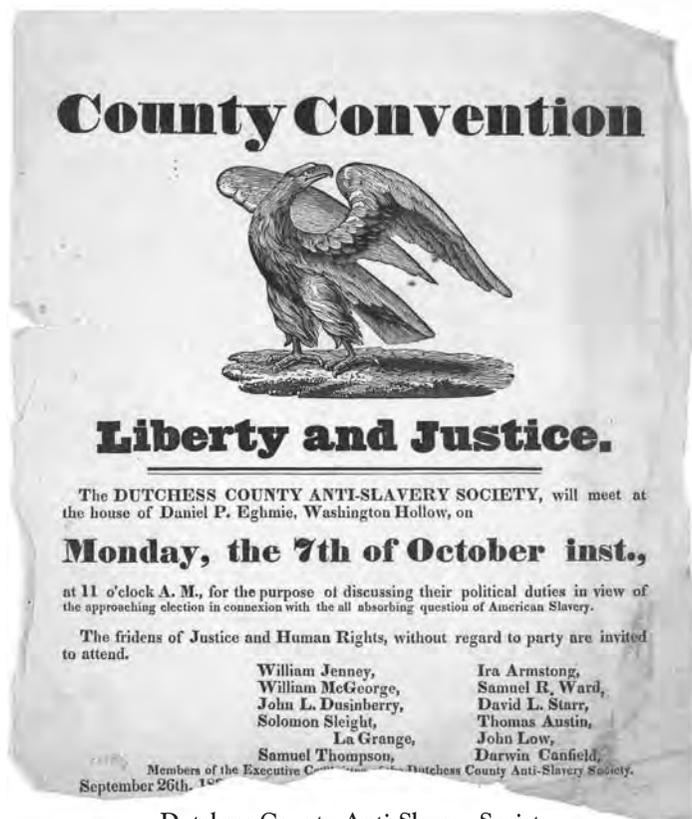


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Dutchess County Anti-Slavery Society

## The Mid-Hudson Antislavery History Project

*Amy Jacaruso, Marist '12*

As the United States commemorates the 150th anniversary of the Civil War, it might be easy to forget that the Hudson River Valley had a long history of slavery, proliferated by the region's role as an important agricultural center. In 1790, when slavery was at its peak, there were over 21,000 enslaved people in New York, with almost 10 percent of that number living in Dutchess County.<sup>1</sup> The area was not safe for escaped slaves seeking freedom, as there was an interest in capturing and returning fugitives. Emancipation was a slow process in New York: the state banned further importation of slaves in 1785, and after 1788 allowed manumission (the freeing of slaves from their bondage). A law was passed in 1799 that began the process of gradual abolition, decreeing that all children born into slavery after July

4 of that year would be freed after they had reached a certain age: 28 for men and 25 for women. The final blow to slavery in New York was delivered by an 1817 law declaring that all slaves born before July 4, 1799, would be freed on July 4, 1827.<sup>2</sup>

The region also has strong ties to abolitionist and women's rights advocate Sojourner Truth, who was born into slavery c. 1797 as Isabella Baumfree in the hamlet of Swartekill (now known as Rifton), Ulster County. In 1810 she was sold to John Dumont of New Paltz after three previous owners, and it was from here that she would escape to freedom in 1826 with her youngest daughter, Sophia. She was then employed by the Van Wagenens in Wagondale, after they paid Dumont twenty-five dollars in exchange for Isabella and her daughter. From 1827 to 1828, Isabella successfully fought at the Ulster County Courthouse for the freedom and recovery of her son, Peter, who had been illegally sold into slavery in Alabama. The lawsuit was the first ever won by a black parent. Although five-year-old Peter had been badly beaten, Isabella was granted custody of her son. After moving to New York City, and then Massachusetts, Isabella changed her name to Sojourner Truth in 1843. Truth died in Battle Creek, Michigan, in 1883, a tireless supporter of equality to the very end of her life.<sup>3</sup>

For all of its involvement in the support of slavery, the Hudson River Valley also was home to individuals and groups that played a significant role in the Underground Railroad, which was run by local Quakers and abolitionists. The railroad originally began as a way for local slaves to make their way to freedom, in response to efforts in the area to groups like the Society for the Apprehending of Slaves, formed in 1796 in the town of Shawangunk, Ulster County.<sup>4</sup>

The Mid-Hudson Antislavery History Project (MHAHP) was formed to keep alive the history of antislavery efforts in the area through research, publications, and events. Formed in 2006, the MHAHP is a non-profit group comprised of a network of over 60 researchers, educators, civic leaders, and community members. Its goals are to:

- conduct and synthesize research on the history of antislavery in the Mid-Hudson Valley, with special emphasis on the Underground Railroad;
- interpret this history and share these interpretations with a wide array of residents and visitors in our area, with particular attention to students and youth; and
- place this local history in the broader contexts of racial slavery in the New World, the African-American experience, and antislavery legacies today, including the impact of this historic grassroots movement on subsequent struggles for racial and social justice.<sup>5</sup>



The replica *Amistad*

The MHAHP's first public event brought a replica of the schooner *Amistad* to Poughkeepsie in October 2006. The original Cuban ship was the scene of a slave rebellion in 1839. It was captured by the United States off the coast of Long Island. The court case to determine the status of the slaves was taken up as a cause by abolitionists. The U.S. Supreme Court eventually ordered the slaves to be freed.

The arrival of the *Amistad* replica brought together musicians, students, historical reenactors, and researchers, all of whom commemorated this important step forward in the antislavery movement. The MHAHP's other events have included

a March 2008 reenactment at the First Congregational Church of Poughkeepsie of a sermon, titled "Our Solace and Our Duty in this Crisis," originally given there on the eve of Abraham Lincoln's inauguration. Also affiliated with the MHAHP are the Dutchess County Antislavery Singers, who research and perform, in period attire, abolitionist music that would have been performed at rallies and conventions. The group's website also contains a list of classroom resources for teachers, including primary documents concerning local abolitionist efforts from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as well as outgoing links to other websites with information, resources, and lesson plans concerning slavery and antislavery in the Hudson River Valley.

The MHAHP's research has culminated in its first publication: *Slavery, Antislavery and the Underground Railroad*. The book provides a history of both slavery and antislavery in the Mid-Hudson Valley, as well as a guided tour of fifteen sites—fourteen with connections to antislavery efforts or the Underground Railroad and one that was the home of a known slave owner and secessionist. Four of the locations listed in the guide are active churches, two are cemeteries, three are Quaker meeting houses, two are historic sites with regular hours, and four no longer stand.



*Slavery, Antislavery and the Underground Railroad* places these sites on two different Underground Railroad trails. The first is the Quaker Trail to Freedom, which ran through the eastern part of Dutchess County and includes a slave

cemetery and multiple Quaker meeting houses. The second trail is the River Trail to Freedom, which ran from Beacon to Rhinebeck and often transported slaves by disguising them as workers on barges or steamboats to help them move northward. Although no boats with known connections to the River Trail to Freedom survive today, in 2004 the Underground Railroad History Project of the Capital Region, based in Albany, purchased the home of Stephen and Harry Myers, black abolitionists who helped many slaves who used the Hudson River as a means to freedom.

The MHAHP hopes to expand this project by investigating more potential sites, as well as designing tours for visitors based on the sites described in *Slavery, Antislavery and the Underground Railroad*. The tours would include guides and the involvement of Dutchess County Tourism and tour bus companies.

The MHAHP's preservation of abolitionism in the region makes sure that that this crucial time in American history is never forgotten. Driven by Europe's demand for sugar, transatlantic slavery's 350-year history links ports on four different continents in almost 3,500 slave voyages. Slavery connects the Hudson River Valley to this entire system, and ties the region to Africa, the Caribbean, and Brazil in a system that transported over 10 million Africans from the sixteenth century to the nineteenth century.<sup>6</sup> The antislavery efforts in the Mid-Hudson links multiple local groups—Quakers, white and black abolitionists—to the much larger efforts of the entire Underground Railroad. Although it might be easy to forget that the Hudson River Valley was a place where slavery once thrived, it should not be forgotten that it was also a place where men and women risked their lives to help their fellow humans. The MHAHP exists to preserve that legacy.

More information on the Mid-Hudson Antislavery History project can be found by visiting [www.mhantislaveryhistoryproject.org](http://www.mhantislaveryhistoryproject.org), or by emailing [MHAHP.inquiries@gmail.com](mailto:MHAHP.inquiries@gmail.com).

## Endnotes

1. Mid-Hudson Antislavery Project, *Slavery, Antislavery and the Underground Railroad: A Dutchess County Guide*. (Poughkeepsie: Netpublications, Inc.), 1.
2. *Ibid.*, 2-3.
3. Nyquist, Corinne. "On the Trail of Sojourner Truth in Ulster County, New York." [http://www.newpaltz.edu/sojourner\\_truth/](http://www.newpaltz.edu/sojourner_truth/)
4. Mid-Hudson Antislavery Project, *Slavery, Antislavery and the Underground Railroad: A Dutchess County Guide*. (Poughkeepsie: Netpublications, Inc.), 3.
5. Mid-Hudson Antislavery History Project, "Mid-Hudson Antislavery History Project." <http://www.mhantislaveryhistoryproject.org/>.
6. Emory University, "The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database Voyages." <http://www.slavevoyages.org/tast/index.faces>

# Through the Window of the Valley Medical Building in January

Days of cold green rooms, old  
magazines, terse instructions,  
the winter sky through slatted  
windows.

As you wait, shifting positions  
on crackling white paper,  
seagulls standing in pooled water  
in parking lots  
are so much better to gaze at  
than bright posters  
of pink and lurid body parts  
tacked up with good intent.

Take a deep breath and hold it.

Outside of sealed windows  
trees bristle on the January mountain,  
crows caw soundlessly  
where Fenimore Cooper once sent  
his trackers with leather leggings,  
Indian scouts, trotting down  
these steep slopes  
exhaling fine and frosty breath  
like smoke—their eyes  
hungry, wary.

There is no cure for this life.  
Look at the seagulls, their patient huddle,  
wait-it-out attitude  
while the faraway ocean  
tumbles over itself  
and the mountain retires into  
the dovecote of clouds.

When did evening come  
without you noticing—its cool  
hand on your shoulder  
making some necessary adjustment?

—Raphael Kosek

# Book Reviews



**Letting Go, Raphael Kosek.**

Georgetown, Kentucky: Finishing Line Press, 2009.  
(29 pp.)

This chapbook collection of poems by Raphael Kosek, a native of the Hudson River Valley, speaks with particular eloquence to a regional audience. Kosek finds much of her inspiration in the weather and landscape, the flora and fauna, of her immediate environment. Seasonal cycles are an intimate part of her world, a sometimes subtle but foundational aspect of setting and theme in

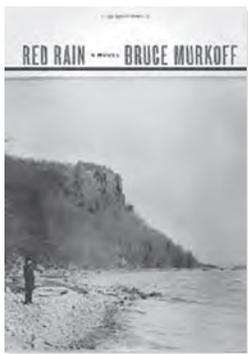
her poetry. Long experience with the Mid-Hudson Valley climate has created in her an awareness of continual process, a mindset emphasizing anticipation and preparation. In early spring, for example, she does not cast winter's cold recklessly behind her and plunge unthinkingly into enjoyment of sunshine and flowers. She recognizes in April, rather, the inevitability of another December: a son chops wood "that will weather for next winter," and "the dull thunk" of his axe merges in "comforting" fashion with the delicate emergence of new life, "the dogwood on the verge / of blossoming" ("April's Kitchen"). Kosek insists that every beginning contains its own ending. Once "November clears the deck," our world readies itself to begin again ("Before Thanksgiving"). "Plans dark and deep" are brewing beneath the frozen ground of winter, preparing the way months in advance for germination and "burgeoning blooms." More ominously, the poet points to a "murderous beauty" in the "bright things" of summer, for these herald the barrenness to be even as they celebrate the vitality that is ("April's Kitchen").

Kosek's poems call easy attention to local wildlife—wild turkey, earthworms, rabbits. She compares a heron's graceful flight to the ungraspable, ever receding quality of artistic inspiration, "disappearing above the trees / into the easy volubility of silence" ("How It Comes"). She admires the incessant, "frenetic" energy of the ruby-throated hummingbirds that congregate at her feeder, "working the air like a fierce battalion" ("Hummingbird"). Executing "stunning maneuvers," the birds are a living incarnation of color and motion, "resourceful ruby," an argument for living with urgent awareness: "the unsparing clench / of... wakefulness" ("Hummingbird"). Repeatedly, Kosek finds in ordinary fellow-creatures spiritually and aesthetically profound hints, natural revelations that she passes on to her

readers: “the bare truth / floats like a white bird on water” (“The Attributes of St. Lucy”).

Inconspicuously grounded in regional awareness, the poems in *Letting Go* move beyond local concerns. Kosek draws a host of figures, literary and historical, into her musings. Meriwether Lewis, Anna Karenina, Sylvia Plath, Mary Todd Lincoln, Michelangelo, Madame Bovary, and Indira Gandhi claim her notice, as do Rimbaud, Rubens, and Renoir. Most memorably, the book includes three wonderful poems inspired by the work of Georgia O’Keeffe; indeed, the volume is anchored by these poems, which have been assigned the positions of first, last, and center. In these finely wrought ekphrastic poems, Kosek takes readers directly into O’Keeffe’s paintings. Along with color and shape, she conveys a dizzying sense of motion, penetrating to the core of the painter’s theme: “all of us unfurl from the center . . . until we spin / out and out” (“*Abstraction—White Rose No. 2, 1927*”). This process of *unfurling*, so beautifully captured on canvas, reinforces elemental truths instilled in the poet by the landscape and climate of her own origins: “we spin / out and out from beginning / to end / and our ending looks / like our beginning.”

Judith Saunders



**Red Rain, Bruce Murkoff.**

New York: Knopf, 2009 (329 pp.)

In writing historical fiction, there seems to be a precarious balance: first, the novel must paint an utterly realistic portrait of the place and time, and second, it should also create a compelling narrative that fits seamlessly within that historical backdrop. Most novels in the genre are decidedly plot-driven, and for good reason, since the characters get caught up in a story much bigger than themselves, like the storming of the Bastille or the Battle of Bull Run. Most readers have an expectation that the characters will fit within the framework of recorded history, so rarely do we see truly character-driven narratives in the genre.

In the novel *Red Rain* (Knopf 2010), Bruce Murkoff creates a vivid and painstakingly accurate picture of the Hudson River Valley around Kingston during the summer of 1864. That achievement alone is commendable, and should entice any readers interested in Hudson Valley history. But more importantly, the author also somehow manages to create a character-driven story. *Stories* may be a better description, since the structure of the book may best be described as a quilt or

collage, scraps of narrative threaded together to form a whole. The novel is structured not so much in chapters but in brief episodes, where the focus shifts constantly from character to character. Indeed, one could argue the most prominent character is the Hudson Valley itself, for Murkoff goes into great detail evoking the sights, smells, and sounds of the region. Consider this passage describing one character's voyage up the Hudson from New York City:

Will was standing at the bow of the *Ella May* when morning broke over the Hudson. He drank from another bottle of Lowe's medicine, no longer wincing with each sip, thankful for the burn of it as a stiff breeze rolled off the Catskills . . . Will slept only a few hours, not deeply, aware of the sloop passing beneath the great expanse of the Palisades, which seemed to stretch forever along the western shore.

For the last hour he'd been standing at the rail as the river began to straighten and widen, lying before him like some colossal snake, its surface made scaly by the wind. As the sloop passed the Morse estate just south of Poughkeepsie, the landscape began to look slightly familiar, like a memory just out of reach, and near the Rondout lighthouse this thought became so discomforting that he averted his gaze from what was at once recognizable and strange. (14-15)

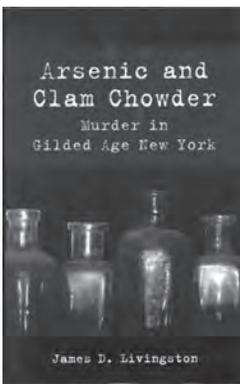
If there is a main protagonist among the five or six principal characters drawn here, it is young Will Harp, a doctor returning to Kingston after years of experiencing the horrors of war firsthand. Will returns to his childhood home in hopes of returning to some modicum of normalcy after several years spent either in the saddle or on the battlefield. Will's haunted dreams and childhood memories serve to deepen the story, showing us a history of Kingston without the author having to resort to extended passages of detached narration. Will's story also includes the longest thread in the narrative quilt, the discovery of an ancient fossil; with help from other characters he pieces together the skeleton bit by bit, an act of community that becomes a metaphor for the progression of the book itself. Kingston of the 1860s is depicted as a hardscrabble place, one defined as much by the noisy commerce of the coming Industrial Revolution as the expansive wilderness of the Catskills that surrounds it. Each day a tangle of souls steps onto the Rondout pier from New York City: Irish and German immigrants, hucksters, war veterans, workers, runaways, and rubes. Some characters fall into stereotypes that readers may find too familiar—the hard-drinking, pugnacious Irish boy, for example, or the slippery snake-oil salesman that seems to inhabit any story set in the 1800s—but most characters do manage to surprise and engage us with their choices,

making the point of reading less of *what* happens next and more of *who* happens. That's a refreshing change from most entries in the genre, where the stories seem recycled from older works time and again.

Although the book is set during the summer months of 1864, the Civil War is a faint echo here. The focus remains on Kingston and the surrounding wilderness for most of its 329 pages. We are reminded most of the great conflict by those left behind who wait desperately for their soldiers' return. And there is the veteran Will Harp, but the reader gets the sense that he is not ready to divulge the horrors he has seen, even in his dreams.

In *Red Rain*, his second novel, Bruce Murkoff creates a stunning and detailed landscape of what life must have been like in the Hudson Valley during the Civil War, although that landscape is admittedly Impressionist. Anyone who enjoyed Murkoff's 2004 debut, *Waterborne*, will see the same fragmented structure at work here. As with *Waterborne*, another historical novel, based in Nevada during the Great Depression, new readers expecting a sweeping war epic along the lines of Margaret Mitchell or Clive Cussler will be disappointed. Here, the author is interested in something different, and he shows extraordinary craftsmanship and care in piecing together a vibrant portrayal of the history of the lower Hudson Valley.

Tommy Zurhellen



***Arsenic and Clam Chowder: Murder in Gilded Age New York*, James D. Livingston. Albany, New York: SUNY Press Excelsior Editions, 2010. (205 pp.)**

Mary Alice Almont Livingston was accused of murdering her mother with poisoned clam chowder in 1895. From her assumed name of "Mrs. Fleming," which she borrowed from the father of her first child, to her jailhouse delivery of her fourth illegitimate child, Fleming is an excellent case study of a woman who defied social norms of femininity and yet used those very expectations to support her claims of innocence. Author James D. Livingston, a research physicist and distant cousin of Mary Alice, has written a clear and engaging historical narrative that reflects years of painstaking research into these events and the records created as they unfolded in the press and were remembered in private family documents.

Fleming's tale and Livingston's retelling of it intersect with numerous social and cultural developments in the Gilded Age. In particular, Fleming's story

reflects the complexities of societal expectations of gender and class, as Fleming was accused of murdering her mother to gain access to her Livingston inheritance in part because she needed the money to care for her children. If convicted, Fleming was set to be the first woman executed in New York's new electric chair; intriguing debates about the death penalty and its application to women pervade the trial and thus the book. Jury selection took weeks, in part due to the reluctance of many jurors to vote for the death penalty for a woman, and gender politics weighed heavily throughout the rest of the trial. The intricacies and political dimensions of the judicial system are also well described and intriguing, as are Livingston's detailed discussions of evidentiary procedures, trial testimony, and argumentation; Livingston makes good use of the wealth of information on the trial recorded in newspapers of the time. Indeed, the trial provided Hearst, Pulitzer, and other editors with ample material for their circulation battles, and yet Fleming used the papers to manipulate her public image as much as they used her story to sell papers. A fallen socialite made for guaranteed salacious news, and Fleming's indiscretions and personal turmoil still make for intriguing reading over 100 years later.

In addition to grounding Fleming's trial within broader developments of the legal system, the sensationalist press, and the changing views of women at the time, Livingston provides a backdrop of numerous other contexts which directly or indirectly relate to the Fleming trial, including discussions of electricity, architecture, music and theater, New York socialites and millionaires, and famous female murderers who used poison. While those interesting diversions into historical and social context are sometimes abruptly interspersed into the narrative, the vibrancy of Gilded Age New York is reflected throughout; in general, the discussions which had clear connections to the trial, such as those regarding arsenic and the electric chair, are more successfully incorporated, and in places these transitions are handled quite artfully, such as the choice to connect Fleming's tale with the history of lower Manhattan through her views on the way to and from the Tombs.

Livingston's work, while meticulously researched, does present problems for future researchers who might wish to further pursue these events due to the author's choice to frame the story as an historical narrative and the citation style he used. Suppositions about mood, intent, and context help to enliven the tale, but broad chapter-by-chapter discussions of source materials prevent scholars from drawing distinctions between elements that are supported by the historical record and those that are added for narrative effect. A lack of pagination in references and direct citation, while common in narrative history, nevertheless will be challenging for anyone who wishes to follow up on Livingston's clearly extensive

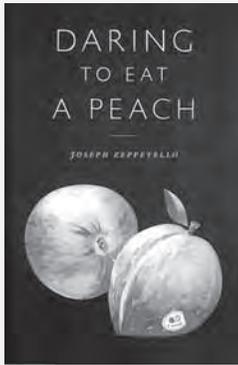
foray into historical documents. Through his research and the book, however, Livingston has located and made public some intriguing unpublished primary sources, most notably the writings of Henry E. Bliss, Fleming's half-brother, and Livingston's access to these private family materials greatly enhances the story and our understanding of the events.

Thus, Livingston's choice to structure the book as a narrative rather than an analytical treatment of Fleming's life and the complicated cultural history with which it intertwines makes for a fascinating read, but these events also remain ripe for analysis within broader historical scholarship. The court case shows how multiple layers of Gilded Age society collided; Livingston's book is a compelling retelling of how societal expectations of femininity and propriety were defied and manipulated by Fleming, the judicial system, and the press throughout her life and trial—to ends which I will let Livingston's book reveal to readers.

*Eileen Curley*

# New & Noteworthy Books Received

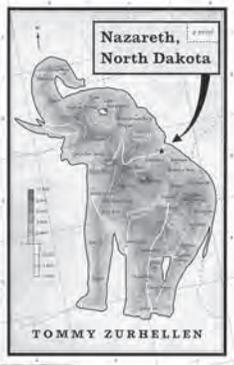
## Hudson River Valley Authors



### **Daring to Eat a Peach**

By Joseph Zeppetello  
(Kensington, MD: Atticus Books LLC, 2010)  
240 pp. \$14.95 (paperback). <http://atticusbooksonline.com>

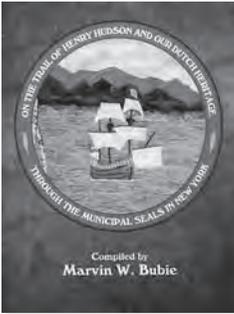
Hudson River Valley author Zeppetello's debut novel follows everyman Denton Pike and a group of characters as they weave in and out of each other's lives and struggle to make the right choices in a world of loss and expectations. Zeppetello's clear understanding of human emotion and the fractured milieu of suburbia gives each of these characters life and creates stories that any reader can relate to in some fashion.



### **Nazareth, North Dakota**

By Tommy Zurhellen  
(Kensington, MD: Atticus Books LLC, 2011)  
222 pp. \$14.95 (paperback). <http://atticusbooksonline.com>

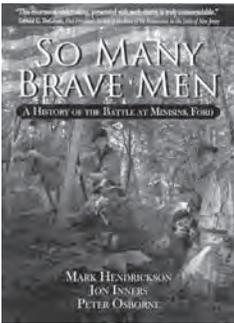
The first novel by Hudson River Valley resident and writer Zurhellen seamlessly intertwines life in the Midwest with mythical storytelling to present familiar stories in a new and creative way. While it is not your grandma's *Greatest Story Ever Told*, the author playfully combines the stuff of everyday life and legend to create a fun and compelling book full of characters that readers will recognize.



**On the Trail of Henry Hudson and Our Dutch Heritage Through the Municipal Seals in New York**

Compiled by Marvin W. Bubie (Averill Park, NY, 2009). 70 pp. \$24.95 (paperback). [www.thetroybookmakers.com](http://www.thetroybookmakers.com)

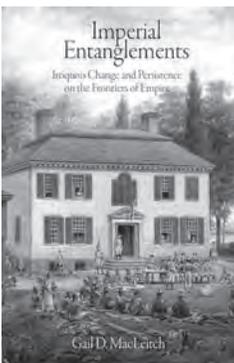
The Hudson River Valley is a region full of Dutch history. Bubie's collection of town, city, and county seals illustrates much of this heritage, including Henry Hudson's *Half Moon*, early industry, and the legend of Rip Van Winkle. Each entry, complete with an image of a seal and a written description, presents a combination of unique place-based heritage and a unity of Dutch culture throughout the region.



**So Many Brave Men:  
A History of the Battle at Minisink Ford**

By Mark Hendrickson, Jon Inners, and Peter Osborne (Easton, PA: The Pienpack Company). 828 pp. \$42.99 (softcover). [www.pienpack.com](http://www.pienpack.com)

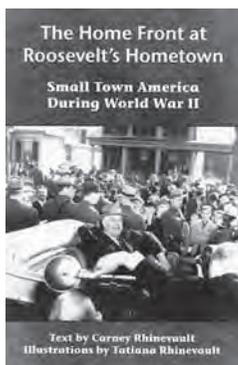
The Battle at Minisink Ford was among the bloodiest of the American Revolution. In *So Many Brave Men* the authors document this disastrous battle, which took place along the Delaware River in Orange County. Using maps, illustrations, and pension records from participants, the story of how the American militia lost more than one-third of its soldiers is told in great detail. The large amount of primary documentation included allows the reader to get a real sense of how the Revolutionary War affected residents of the Hudson River Valley.



**Imperial Entanglements: Iroquois Change and Persistence on the Frontiers of Empire**

By Gail D. MacLeitch (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011). 352 pp. \$45.00 (hardcover). [www.upenn.edu/pennpress](http://www.upenn.edu/pennpress)

MacLeitch documents the history of the Haudenosaunee Iroquois from an economic and cultural perspective, focusing on the Iroquois contribution to trading, labor, and land ownership across New York in the eighteenth century. She also examines the challenges faced by evolving gender roles and the negative impact that increasingly powerful British imperialism had on Iroquois culture and sovereignty.



### **The Home Front at Roosevelt's Hometown: Small Town America During World War II**

By Carney Rhinevault, Illustrations by Tatiana Rhinevault  
(Hyde Park, NY: Roosevelt Press, 2010)  
314 pp. \$22.95 (softcover). [www.thetroybookmakers.com](http://www.thetroybookmakers.com)

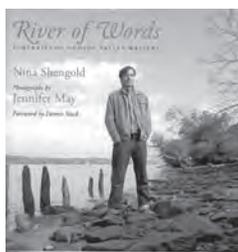
During World War II, the town of Hyde Park was both typical of small town America and completely unique. As the hometown of President Franklin Roosevelt, Hyde Park participated even more fervently in all of the patriotism and volunteerism supporting the war effort that was present throughout the nation. Rhinevault's writing is supplemented by firsthand accounts borrowed from a recently rediscovered manuscript of former Hyde Park resident Helen Myers. A section of photos, as well as illustrations by Tatiana Rhinevault, provide even more clarity and detail to the story.



### **A Place in History: Albany in the Age of Revolution, 1775-1825**

By Warren Roberts  
(Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2010).  
335 pp. \$29.95 (hardcover). [www.sunypress.edu](http://www.sunypress.edu)

As the capital of New York, the city of Albany has a rich past. In *A Place in History*, Warren Roberts elaborates on that history during three key periods: the American Revolution, the French Revolution, and the building of the Erie Canal. Complete with historical images and an array of modern-day photographs, Roberts recounts Albany's important people and events from the founding of a new nation to the establishing of the United States as a major player in the global economy, and all points in between.



### **River of Words: Portraits of Hudson Valley Writers**

By Nina Shengold, Photographs by Jennifer May  
(Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2010).  
269 pp. \$29.95 (hardcover). [www.sunypress.edu](http://www.sunypress.edu)

The Hudson River has provided inspiration for countless writers from all styles and genres. This collection of prose and photographs profiles over seventy novelists, poets, journalists, and screenwriters who draw their inspiration from the Hudson River Valley. Though their styles and subject matter reach across a broad spectrum of topics, the authors featured find a common link in the landscape of the region and the words it inspires.



**Kiliaen van Rensselaer (1586-1643):  
Designing a New World**

By Janny Venema (Hilversum, The Netherlands: State University of New York Press, 2011). 352 pp. \$34.95 (paperback). [www.sunypress.edu](http://www.sunypress.edu)

A biography of the namesake of both a city and county in the Hudson River Valley, as well as an important player in the Dutch founding of New Netherland. *Designing a New World* documents van Rensselaer's early life growing up in the Netherlands as well as his importance to the early development of the New World. Extensive citations combined with plentiful images throughout, including two color sections, serve to give the reader a clear understanding of life in and around Amsterdam in the first half of the seventeenth century.



**Stealing Secrets: How a Few Daring Women  
Deceived Generals, Impacted Battles and Altered  
the Course of the Civil War**

By H. Donald Winkler (New York, NY: Sourcebooks, Inc., 2010). 336 pp. \$18.99 (trade paperback). [www.sourcebooks.com](http://www.sourcebooks.com)

*Stealing Secrets* profiles over thirty women who worked as spies during the Civil War. Often using their attractiveness and always their cleverness, these women risked punishment and possible death to fulfill their mission of acquiring information at any cost. Winkler does an admirable job of separating fact from fiction, and includes numerous excerpts from firsthand accounts to provide the reader with a direct connection to the women being featured.

*Andrew Villani*

# Civil War Fiction: A Select Annotated Bibliography

*Mark James Morreale*

## **I. Post-Bellum Fiction 1865-1900 (Reconciliation and the Solidification of Lost Cause Ideology)**

De Forest, John W. *Miss Ravenel's Conversion from Secession to Loyalty* (1867)

Probably the best Civil War novel written in the nineteenth century, which overcomes its somewhat clumsy reconciliationist plot concerning the two marriages of Southerner Miss Lily Ravenel (first to Colonel Carter and then, after his death in battle to the novel's protagonist, Captain Edward Colburne) by providing very gritty and realistic scenes of Civil War combat and army life. A novelist before the war, De Forest served as a captain in the 12th Connecticut and is also known for his vivid memoirs of the war.

**Bierce, Ambrose. *In the Midst of Life: Tales of Soldiers and Civilians* (1891)**

A short story collection, often visceral, ironic, and stunning in its impact, written by a veteran who experienced the horrors of combat at both Shiloh and Chickamauga. Insisting that no story about war is moral, Bierce illustrates this point in such stories as "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge," "Chickamauga," "Killed at Resaca," and "The Coup de Grace." Highly recommended.

**Crane, Stephen. *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895)**

Probably the most widely recognized novel of the Civil War, Crane's account of naïve Henry Fleming's experiences of battle was influenced by his exposure to three important sources: veterans of the war, most likely the aging survivors of the 124th New York; the writings of Leo Tolstoy (especially the *Sevastopol Sketches* and *War and Peace*); and the *Century Magazine's* massive series of articles on the conflict that resulted in the volumes today entitled *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*. Not the best novel of the Civil War but certainly recommended and for good reason.

## II. Early Twentieth Century Civil War Fiction 1901–1945 (Lost Cause versus Modernism)

### Glasgow, Ellen. *The Battle-Ground* (1902)

Written by an avowed Darwinist, this compelling novel of social history—the first in a series of seven—concerns the Lightfoot and Ambler families of Virginia while examining the shifting power relations between the old order of Virginia (and therefore the South), represented by the patriarchal Major Lightfoot, and the new, represented by young, energetic Betty Ambler, his neighbor's daughter. At times, Glasgow's characterization is reminiscent of Tolstoy's.

### Dixon, Thomas. *The Clansman* (1905)

Written by a Lost Cause apologist, this notoriously racist novel (upon which the equally racist film *Birth of a Nation* was based) praises the Ku Klux Klan for saving the “white” South. Interestingly, it was a novel much admired by *Gone with the Wind* author Margaret Mitchell (see below).

### Scott, Evelyn. *The Wave* (1929)

The first truly modernist work of Civil War fiction, highly regarded by critics. The late critic Peggy Bach called it the “ideal Civil War novel.” Reminiscent in style of John Dos Passos's *USA Trilogy*, this, at times, difficult and occasionally brutal novel unfolds over the course of some twenty subdivided chapters. Instead of following the lives of individual characters over the course of its nearly 700 pages, the novel depicts a series of vignettes or snapshots of ordinary—and not so ordinary—people overwhelmed by the events of the war. Key scenes include the Baltimore riots of 1861, the Richmond Bread Riots of April 1863, the New York City Draft riots, the Battles of First Bull Run and Gettysburg, the tragedy of the slaves following Sherman's March, and much more. Recommended but certainly not to everyone's taste.

### Kantor, MacKinley. *Long Remember* (1934)

A fine and at times powerful narrative of the Battle of Gettysburg told from the perspective of a Midwesterner, formerly from Gettysburg, so caught up in the events of the epic struggle that he eventually enlists in the Union cause. It provides compelling scenes of the battle's impact upon the town's civilians.

### Mitchell, Margaret. *Gone With the Wind* (1936)

Inspired by the writings of Thomas Dixon (see above) and intent on countering the abolitionist ideology of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the author focuses on the life and loves of the petulant, feisty, and spoiled Scarlett O'Hara through the turmoil of Georgia during the Civil War and Reconstruction. Filled with memorable scenes

and characters, such as Rhett Butler and Melanie Wilkes, but I would caution today's readers about the racist proclivities and commentary of the omniscient narrator, who often utters the stale canards of Lost Cause ideology—concerning the threat of ex-slaves towards white women and the need to repress the “Yankee white trash” and his influences in the post-bellum South, let alone referring to African-Americans in animalistic terms.

**Faulkner, William. *Absalom! Absalom!* (1936)**

One of Faulkner's most complex and experimental novels, rivaling its sister novel *The Sound and the Fury* in that regard, *Absalom! Absalom!* concerns the nature of remembrance, both personal and historical, as well as the nature of narrative itself. Told through a variety of narrators—Quentin Compson, Quentin's father, and Quentin's college roommate Shreve—the novel explores the past's mysteries through an examination of the ambitions of one Colonel Sutpen and the past of the now elderly Miss Rosa. It presents a complex, unsentimental and unvarnished view of racial tension, the collapse of the old order of the South, and the dangers to the South of its Lost Cause ideology. Memorable but difficult.

**Tate, Allan. *The Fathers* (1938)**

Agrarian Poet Allen Tate's only novel. A very well-written exploration of life in Alexandria and Northern Virginia through the First Battle of Bull Run, told through the eyes of aging protagonist Lacy Buchan, who looks back on traumatic events that occurred in his family when he was a teenager, complicated by his adoration of his often-brutal and seldom gentlemanly brother-in-law, George Posey. An exploration of the complexities of history and remembrance, and also a surprising exploration of race and racial attitudes, reminiscent of the psychological depths plumbed by Faulkner, Welty, and other Southern writers of consequence. Highly recommended.

**Pennell, Joseph Stanley. *The History of Rome Hanks and Kindred Matters* (1944)**

This gritty, experimentally complex but compelling novel concerns the protagonist Lee Harrington's attempt to reconstruct the lives of his ancestors, who fought on both sides of the Civil War. Often unfolding as a web of occasionally contradictory, stream-of-consciousness accounts of men Lee contacts to try to reconstruct his past—Thomas Wagnal and his Uncle Pinckney—this novel will remind readers of the experimental novels of the modernist era, such as those by Joyce and Faulkner. Cited by both Lively in *Fiction Fights the Civil War* and Madden and Bach in their *Classics of Civil War Fiction* as one of the best novels of the Civil War.

### III. Latter Half of the Twentieth Century (1946-2000)

#### Lockridge Jr., Ross. *Raintree County* (1948)

Told in a series of flashbacks, this massive 1,000-plus page novel celebrates the life of an Indiana man looking back on the time of the Civil War from the perspective of the Fourth of July celebration of 1892. Unfolding as a kind of “spiritual autobiography” of the protagonist, Johnny Wickliff Shawnessey, the novel’s style and tone has been compared to Whitman’s “Song of Myself.” Tragically, the week the novel became a best-seller Lockridge committed suicide at the age of thirty-four.

#### Kantor, MacKinley. *Andersonville* (1955)

This Pulitzer Prize-winning novel about the infamous prison in Georgia has been declared by historians Bruce Catton and Henry Steele Commager as “the greatest Civil War novel of all time.” That may be overstating the case, but it’s certainly a memorable addition to Civil War literature.

#### Warren, Robert Penn. *Wilderness* (1961)

Written by a significant poet and critic, this philosophical novel concerns the story of a Jewish poet who immigrates to America with the intent of joining the Union Army, finds himself embroiled in the Draft Riots in New York City in the summer of 1863, and eventually witnesses the Battle of the Wilderness as a civilian the following spring.

#### Shaara, Michael. *The Killer Angels* (1974)

Considered by many the best Civil War novel of its generation, it provides—through an oscillating perspective—compelling interior portraits of several key officers on both sides of the conflict involved in the epic struggle of the Battle of Gettysburg. Both Union cavalryman John Buford and Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, Colonel of the 20th Maine, shine here, as does Confederate General James Longstreet and his commander, Robert E. Lee. The basis for the popular film, *Gettysburg*.

#### Frazer, Charles. *Cold Mountain* (1998)

A fabulous, literary retelling of Homer’s *Odyssey*, told through the ordeal of Confederate soldier Inman’s traumatic trek to return to his home and lover, Ada Munro. It includes many fine characterizations, including that of Ruby and her father Stobrod. Highly recommended.

#### Bahr, Howard. *The Black Flower* (1997)

A remarkable and uniquely lyrical novel by the former curator of Rowan Oak—William Faulkner’s Oxford, Mississippi, home—and the first of three novels

Bahr has written about the Civil War. Often told through vivid flashbacks, the novel covers the tragedy of the 1864 Battle of Franklin from the perspective of several members of the 21st Mississippi. Gritty battlefield realism contrasts with well-rounded characters, such as the tormented protagonist Bushrod Johnson, his “pard” Virgil C,” mentally challenged Nebo Gloster, shirker Simon Rope, and the tragic love affair between Bushrod and Anna McGavock. Highly recommended.

#### **IV. Some Recent Developments (2001-present)**

##### **Brooks, Geraldine. *March* (2005)**

A memorable, well-researched, extension of Louisa May Alcott’s iconic *Little Women* from a fine novelist but initially told through the perspective of the March family’s father and then, later, through the mother, Marmee herself. At times gritty, and often surprising, it’s also a profound examination of slavery, gender relations, and the complexities of abolition and Transcendentalism. Memorable scenes and characters abound, including a truly remarkable rendering of the slave Grace and portraits of John Brown, Emerson, and Thoreau.

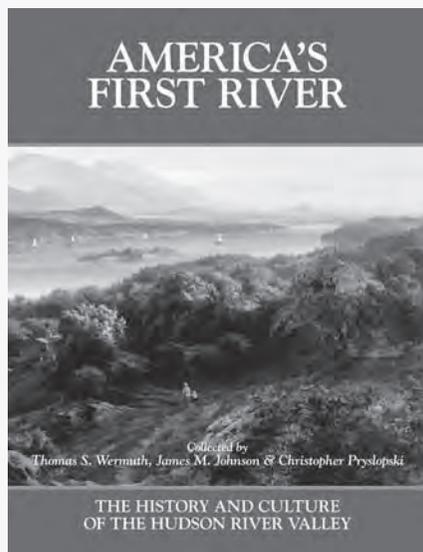
##### **Doctorow, E. L. *The March* (2005)**

A fascinating novel about Sherman’s March to the Sea through Georgia in 1864. Covers participants both black and white, Confederate and Yankee, slave and free, such as the freedwoman named Pearl, and Union soldiers such as the Laurel-and-Hardy-like clowns Arly and Will, and even Sherman himself. A typically competent effort by Doctorow.

##### **Hough, John Jr. *Seen the Glory: A Novel of the Battle of Gettysburg* (2009)**

The memorable story of the abolitionist brothers Luke and Thomas Chandler’s experiences both at home on Martha’s Vineyard and with the 20th Massachusetts at the Battle of Gettysburg. An important element of this novel concerns the issue of race relations epitomized by Rose, the Chandler’s cook and housekeeper on the Vineyard, and the story of a few freedman living in Gettysburg at the time of Lee’s invasion of Pennsylvania. Enthusiastically recommended.

from the  
HUDSON RIVER VALLEY INSTITUTE



**AMERICA'S FIRST RIVER**  
*The History and Culture of the Hudson River Valley*

Collected and with an introduction by Thomas S. Wermuth,  
James M. Johnson, and Christopher Pryslopski

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## Contributors

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**Valerie A. Balint** is associate curator of Olana, the historic home and studio of nineteenth-century landscape painter Frederic Edwin Church. Prior to Olana, Ms. Balint worked at Chesterwood, the home of the sculptor Daniel Chester French, and the Frelinghuysen-Morris Foundation, the home of abstract painters Suzy Frelinghuysen and George L. K. Morris. From 1992-1995, she was the New York State Coordinator for Save Outdoor Sculpture, a national project spearheaded by the National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, to document all public sculpture in the United States. She has previously served on Chesterwood’s Advisory Board, and currently serves as co-vice chairman of the Hudson Opera House and on the editorial board of *Columbia Heritage Magazine*.

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Soli Deo Gloria.

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The Hudson River Valley Institute at Marist College is the academic arm of the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area. Its mission is to study and to promote the Hudson River Valley and to provide educational resources for heritage tourists, scholars, elementary school educators, environmental organizations, the business community, and the general public. Its many projects include publication of the *Hudson River Valley Review* and the management of a dynamic digital library and leading regional portal site.

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