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Rochester
In the Civil War

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Editor's Introduction

By BLAKE MCKELVEY

In this year of decision, when so much depends upon the success of our war effort, we may help to renew our determination by recalling the measure of courage, energy, and skill with which Rochesterians faced the trials of the Civil War. Never has the community paid a heavier price in blood and tears than during those four dark years. An understanding of the means and spirit which achieved victory in that conflict will strengthen our fortitude during the months ahead.

The actual number of men enrolled from Rochester has never been determined. W. H. McIntosh in his *History of Monroe County* (1877) identified nearly 2,000 from Rochester and 4,400 from the county as a whole, yet these are but partial rosters. William F. Peck, in the *Semi-Centennial History of Rochester* (1884) and in the *Landmarks of Monroe County* (1895), credits the city (population 50,000) with approximately 5,000 enlistments and the entire county (population 104,000) with double that number. Miss Ruth Marsh, who has made a painstaking search of available records, finds it impossible to reach any sure conclusion as to the number of Rochesterians who shouldered arms during the Civil War. Yet the State of New York claimed a total of 485,568 enlistments (some for brief terms, some re-enlistments), and a recent careful weighing of these figures has accredited the state with the equivalent of 395,369 men on three-year terms.[1] This represents 20.69 per cent of the state's male population, and if we assume the same ratio for Rochester and Monroe County the figures given by Peck above are confirmed.

The number of Rochester casualties is likewise unknown. The state as a whole lost 53,114 killed, fatally wounded, or

[1]Alexander C. Flick, ed., *History of the State of New York VII* (New York, 1935), pp. 125-126.

victims of disease—more than 13 per cent of the men engaged! Many Rochester regiments suffered more frightful losses, but if we assume the state's proportion, the city's loss reached 650 men, a much longer honor roll than that of Rochester in the First World War, although the city had by the latter date increased four-fold in population. It is too early to measure the effort and sacrifice the present great struggle may require, but the proportion of inductions does not as yet rival that of the Civil War, and we can soberly hope that the tragic price paid by Rochester in the 1860's will not again be demanded of us.

Of course no statistical summary can begin to measure a community's war effort. Miss Ruth Marsh's study, printed below, of press reports and editorial opinion supplies much information concerning Rochester's varied contributions to the Union cause. But insight into the character of the men and their reactions to battle and camp life must be sought in the letters and diaries of the men themselves. Five such collections afford rich material for use here.

The freedom from censorship enjoyed by letter writers during the Civil War will astound the modern reader. Plans for impending battles were freely discussed with the home folk or any interceptor, and the writers themselves were fully conscious of the latter's activities. Criticism of the "powers that be" was readily indulged. As it happens, two of our correspondents, George Breck and Francis Edwin Pierce, were or became confirmed Democrats, which may explain the fervor of their indictments of the Republican administration, while the available letters of Samuel S. Partridge, a staunch Republican, stopped before the political issues rose to the fore. Yet Partridge's letters, of which only a few are reproduced here, were full of criticism of another sort; indeed the temper of a citizen army is quite apparent in the correspondence of these able officers.

Students of the Civil War will be interested to consult additional local materials too voluminous for inclusion in this volume. Among other unpublished Civil War letters in the Society's archives is a lengthy series written by Daniel W. Pulis of Clarendon, just over the border from Monroe County, a private in Co. D. of the 8th New York Volunteer

Cavalry, comprised largely of Rochester men. A sketch of the history of that unit, prepared by Henry C. Munn and published in a Rochester paper in 1895, is likewise available. In addition to the general accounts in the books of Peck and McIntosh mentioned above, reminiscent articles by outstanding veterans appeared occasionally during the years. Col. Samuel C. Pierce, cousin of our correspondent, read a paper of this sort before the Society in 1917, and copies of others are scattered through several scrapbooks. Porter Farley's excellent "Reminiscences of the 140th New York Volunteers," reproduced in part below, is more than it claims to be, for a careful checking of reports and other sources went into its preparation. The still more extended account of the 108th New York Volunteers by George H. Washburn was published in 1894. That fat volume, profusely illustrated with the portraits of many officers and men, contains among other first-hand records a revealing diary of Captain Andrew H. Boyd. Corporal W. H. Merrell's *Five Months in Rebeldom or Notes from a Diary of a Bull Run Prisoner at Richmond*, published at Rochester in 1862, and J. Clayton Youker's edition of *The Military Memoirs of Captain Henry Cribbe*, printed in 1911, deserve notice. One company of Rochester men served with the 33rd New York State Volunteers, whose *Story*, as written by David W. Judd, was published at Rochester in 1864. Other references will be found in the footnotes of Miss Marsh's article, but many gaps in our sources remain which can only be filled as new diaries or letter collectons are brought to light and placed in appropriate libraries.

A History of Rochester's Part in the Civil War

By Ruth Marsh

RESOLVED, That we, the citizens of Rochester, irrespective of party, have heard with deep regret, of the commencement of the hostilities by the traitors of South Carolina, and of their attack upon a small body of the regular troops of the United States; and recognizing, as we do, the declaration of war by the Confederate forces of the Seceeded States against the government in this act, as the beginning of a causeless and aggressive civil war on their part, we hereby pledge ourselves to the support of the rightfully constituted authorities of the land, and to uphold and maintain, at every cost, the dignity, honor and greatness of these United States.

On the evening of April 18, 1861, Rochester thus declared itself at war. The public meeting called to express the city's vociferous unity in the face of the rebel attack on Fort Sumter overflowed the usual rendezvous in the city hall, packing the county courtroom and thronging the streets nearby. Mayor Nash and Judge Chumasero led off in pronouncing partisanship dead. A committee appointed for the purpose brought in a long list of resolutions, promising complete support to the administration against the arrogant Southern traitors and singling out only the Border States, then wavering between South and North, for sympathetic comment. Speaker followed speaker, with music as well—the "Star-Spangled Banner" and "Yankee Doodle" arousing special enthusiasm. Out of the flood of rhetoric emerged two practical measures. Arrangements were made to raise by subscription a fund for the relief of families who might be left in want because their "natural protectors" answered the appeal to arms. Later in the evening a list was read of thirty-nine men already enlisted in the Volunteer Rangers, soon to become Tulley's company in the first Rochester regiment.

Throughout the indignant emotional utterances of that long evening it was clear that local public opinion, by and large, supported Samuel J. Crooks' statement: "It is not a war about slavery or political opinion, but for the existence of a republican government." The resolutions of the overflow meeting in the courtroom were reminiscent of an earlier reluctance to face the imminence of actual war:

RESOLVED, That we have desired peace, if we could have it on honorable terms, but that is not an open question now, the only question remaining—Have we a Government?

RESOLVED, That we have a Government, and will maintain it, preferring civil war (terrible as it is) to the worse alternative of Anarchy.[1]

Before Fort Sumter

In the election of November, 1860, a clear majority in Rochester had supported Abraham Lincoln. The opposition had put up a weak fight. The local Democratic organ, the *Union and Advertiser*, took the feeble position of supporting a party rather than a candidate, for, some years earlier, it had put itself on record against Stephen A. Douglas' favorite project, the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, not from any objection to the principle of popular sovereignty *per se* but because the measure constituted "the unsettling of an old settlement," which seemed "sure to convulse, and threatened to prove fatal to the Union."[2] But in 1860 the man whom the *Union* had then dubbed demagogue and opportunist seemed clearly to be the people's choice, so far as the Democratic party was concerned—the one man who might carry the nation in opposition to the sectionalist Republic party. The Democrats had already repudiated the followers of Breckinridge, lock, stock, and barrel, with a sigh of relief; they could not afford further factionalism. Not only the party but the nation itself might be at stake—for the *Union*, at any rate, sensed the oncoming of the long and bloody conflict with a clarity by no means universal in the blustering North. So the editors loyally tacked the name of Stephen A. Douglas to their

[1] *Rochester Daily Democrat and American*, April 19, 1861.
[2] *Rochester Daily Union and Advertiser*, June 1, 1860.

masthead, openly announcing a change of heart. They even swallowed the bitter pill of co-operation with the New York State partisans of Bell, trying to do so without sharing the stigma of their Know-Nothing past. But such campaigns are not brilliant. Abraham Lincoln won the election, in Rochester as in the nation. The opposition, in a chastened post-election mood and still apprehensive for the future of the nation, admitted that he might prove a satisfactorily innocuous president. The South was mistaken and misled in believing him capable of dealing any heavy blows against the slave system; the Senate blocked the way.

Many Rochesterians, in true American fashion, failed to realize the full seriousness of the situation. The *Democrat and American*—confusingly enough the city's leading Republican organ—seemed to think the Southerners, sulking in unsportsman-like fashion over the loss of pre-eminent political power, were playing a game of bluff. The *Democrat* could reply in kind. What had the North, with its huge, energetic population, its vast resources, its well-developed industries, to fear from the decadent slave-holding aristocracy of the South, whether within the Union or without? Why should it yield to the threat of force what it had so properly gained at the ballot box? Why talk of compromise, when only the North was called upon to make concessions? Surely the South was not in earnest. The *Union*, however, knew that the South was in dead earnest. Therefore it was ready to support any plan of compromise acceptable to both sides. None of the Rochester papers wanted to see the extension of slavery; none saw fit to champion abolition in the Southern states themselves. But the *Union* was willing enough to placate the South with renewed assurances, whereas the *Democrat* considered such measures cowardly and unnecessary. The *Evening Express*, a new Republican daily founded in 1859 and expanded in 1860, which boasted that its circulation equalled that of either of the two older morning papers, seemed to consider war almost inevitable.

Many of the Republicans of the community were willing to follow Senator Seward's lead in offering to restore and extend the Missouri Compromise line and "to place the Federal Government under further constitutional restraints

against interference in the domestic affairs of States."[3] This faction, gaining control of a Republican public meeting called in February to consider the crisis, carried appropriate resolutions over the protest of less moderate men. Some days earlier a number of them had joined with local Democrats in a memorial to Congress endorsing the Crittenden compromise resolutions (minus two offensive phrases referring to territory "now held or hereafter to be acquired" and slaves "as property.") The list of signers included, among many others, Nehemiah F. Bradstreet, James Brackett, and D. D. T. Moore, the three men who were to head the city government in 1863, 1864, and 1865; President Anderson and Professor Cutting of the University of Rochester, both of whom became prominent exponents of the community's war aims; and Isaac Butts and D. M. Dewey, who as Democratic editor and leader of the ultra-Republican Union League were later to fight one another tooth and nail.[4] At the same time, late in January, a workingmen's meeting called by the Rochester trades assembly at the end of January not only proffered any concession "which is not in itself a direct violation of the Constitution" but specifically recommended the repeal of "all State laws that conflict with or infringe on the rights or privileges of the citizens of other States."[5] Politicians at this meeting started cheers first for Seward and then for Douglas; the Republican idol seems to have won the noisier acclamation.

All Rochester, as represented in its three daily papers, was glad to see Buchanan leave office in March. The *Democrat* and the *Express*, of course, supported Lincoln from the outset. The *Union* was not ready to pass judgment with finality. The new president did not seem strikingly able, but he might take good advice and pay more heed to the welfare of the nation than to the unattainable Chicago platform of his party. The *Union* expected war; before the news of the firing at Fort Sumter startled all Rochester awake it had put its stand on record:

[3]*Rochester Evening Express*, February 2, 1861.

[4]*Union*, Jan. 31, 1861.

[5]*Express*, Jan. 31, 1861.

For our own part, we deem it our duty to support the Government in respect to all measures which fall within the sphere of its constitutional discretion . . . Moreover we believe that a *decided policy*, whether of War or of Capitulation, offers the shortest road to Peace upon some well-defined basis.[6]

It was the *Democrat* which was caught off base by the news of Fort Sumter. The front page of April 13 proclaimed the outbreak of war, but an editorial on an inside page, written and printed earlier, declared optimistically:

The Administration policy does not mean war—it does not contemplate the firing of a gun or the unsheathing of a sword, unless its authority is resisted by traitors; but it does unquestionably mean that henceforth rebels cannot seize Forts and Arsenals with impunity, nor determine whether starving garrisons shall be supplied with provisions. We predict that the rebels will succumb so far as to allow the Government to fulfil its duty in these respects without serious molestation.[7]

A United Community

The rebels, of course, did not. Rochester accepted the fact of civil war. Republican and Democrat alike pledged unqualified support and urged a vigorous and swift prosecution of the war. Both were inclined, insofar as they criticized at all, to prod the administration to greater activity. In the new perspective of national peril partisan disagreements assumed the character of mere squabbles rather than battles. Local editors found a satisfactory outlet for their invective in damning the followers of "Jeff." Davis or the abolitionist Radical Republicans, as the case might be, and thus fortified themselves for the novel task of treating those closer home with reasonable courtesy.

The era of good feeling so loudly proclaimed at the outbreak of the war lasted without serious interruption until the fall of 1862, so far as the older newspapers were concerned. There were differences of opinion between the two parties as represented therein, and there were oscillations of enthusiasm and depression throughout the community according to the fortunes of war, but these variations remained

[6] *Union*, Apr. 9, 1861.

[7] *Democrat*, Apr. 13, 1861.

within certain definable limits. Public opinion clearly precluded serious consideration of any slackening in the conduct of the war, of any proposition either completely to subjugate the people of the South or supinely to let them go their way in peace, of any attempt to turn the conflict into a crusade avowedly for the purpose of abolishing slavery within the South, or of any maneuver to "supersede" Mr. Lincoln as President of the United States. Within these limits there was room for discussion.

The war fever hit Rochester hard. A letter ostensibly written by a lady to a friend out of town, published in the *Democrat* on April 27, 1861, describes the malady at length:

> Its symptoms are a frantic effort to devour the morning and evening papers, a wish to rush forth immediately after to talk patriotic with your neighbors—(the only drawback being that your neighbors are seized with the same desire, and you both talk at once, which is rather unpleasant, but very amusing to spectators)—an overwhelming anxiety to render yourself as conspicuous as possible, and a constant inclination to offer service which will not be required of you. I had no sooner entered Rochester, and saw the flag of our country's independence waving from innumerable houses—stores—public and private buildings—and miniature flags attached to horses, carriages and drays—than I was seized with the first symptoms of the fever—my blood began to boil with indignation at the conduct of the Southern traitors, and such a feeling of revenge took possession of me, that I could with pleasure, have strangled Jeff. Davis, Beauregard, and half a dozen others. I know you think this is not a very womanly observation—but recollect it is caused by the fever, which inspires a love for the Union and a hatred of its enemies. As soon as the men are attacked with the epidemic, they wish to fight for their country, and exhibit the greatest military ardor by immediately volunteering. Rochester may well be proud of the courage of her sons.[8]

The Union Must Be Preserved

It is a matter of curiosity to later generations, once they discover how earnestly the Northerners of Civil War days disavowed any intention of taking up arms to stamp out slavery, to determine just what, concretely, the men of that time believed they were fighting for. The key word, of course, was "the Union." Doubtless, even as many today

[8] *Democrat*, Apr. 27, 1861.

risk their lives for "democracy" or "the American way of life" without having any clear picture what those symbols mean, so many men of Civil War days were ready to fight for "the Union." The verbose patriotic oratory of the time does not adequately define the concept. Something very precious—the Union, the flag, the American form of government—had been attacked and must be defended. At a gala flag-raising in May of 1861, for example, the Hon. O. H. Palmer proclaimed:

> [The North] has but one voice, and that cries out in thunder tones, "The Union now and forever." It has but one purpose and that is to maintain the Constitution and the laws, and crush out rebellion now and forever. . . . We seek to maintain rights, not to destroy them—to preserve and hand down to our children the priceless boon purchased for us by our fathers' blood and transmitted to us by them.[9]

On the Fourth of July, 1861, General Martindale amplified the concept:

> Not American liberty only, but Irish liberty, German liberty, universal human liberty, which is illustrated in forms of government wherein distinctions and official hereditory rank are abrogated, is at stake. . . . Who so craven, that he prefers to transmit this quarrel as an inheritance to his children.[10]

Much the same note was sounded in September of 1862, when Professor Cutting spoke on the occasion of the presentation of a stand of colors to the new Rochester regiment, the 140th New York State Volunteers:

> Go then, soldiers of the Republic! Go to restore from unnatural, cruel and causeless violence, the supremacy of the Union, and of the Constitution by which the Union is defined and defended. Go to proclaim the ancient and honored doctrine of our fathers, local self-government in states, under the shield and authority of one Federal Republic. Tell your enemies that it is at their option to become your equals as fellow citizens, governing themselves by their own laws, within a Union which shall be the equal protector of all and the oppressor of none, but that broad as is the territory of the Republic, it is not broad enough for the foot of a rebel, or an alien foe. As brothers alienated, we may become brothers again,

[9] *Democrat*, May 10, 1861.
[10] *Democrat*, July 6, 1861.

and enjoy together, as in our best and most glorious days, the common and equal blessings of the most beneficient government on earth, but tell them that one flag, one only, can float where the National Ensign ever floated, and that flag, the Stars and Stripes forever.[11]

Underlying such language are several clues to the mood of the generation, made more explicit in contemporary editorial columns. It is fundamental, first of all, to remember that the people felt they were fighting a defensive war. It may seem strange that two sections of a nation, both devoted to the idea of democratic government, should find themselves shedding blood over the concept, but such bewilderment is not new. Thus the Rochester *Democrat*, just after the disaster of Bull Run, admitted that its grief for the slain was multiplied by the fact that the "*war is the most utterly causeless on record.*"[12] In the light of the general editorial policy of this Republican paper, it would be ridiculous to interpret this statement as an evidence of defeatism or lack of determination. It constitutes, instead, an indictment of the leaders of the South. Months earlier, the *Democrat* had worded that indictment more precisely:

The intelligent world knows that the struggle now going on is, on the part of the lawfully constituted authorities purely a defensive one; on the part of the South, the struggle of disappointed political ambition, conducted in flagrant violation of every principle of justice and honor and merely because in a contest of the minority's own choice, a majority triumphed, in accordance with the democratic principles to which the minority treacherously professed adherence.[13]

This still does not fully explain why the North was unwilling to let the secessionist states go in peace. To answer that question, it is important to understand two different moods. One was typical, generally speaking, of Republicans, of optimists, and of the community as a whole at times when the war went well; the other is oftener evident among Democrats or pessimists and was contagious in periods of military defeat.

[11] *Union*, Sept. 16, 1862.
[12] *Democrat*, July 29, 1861.
[13] *Democrat*, Apr. 22, 1861.

The first mood was one of bold, confident opposition to the Southern way of life, by a North which felt itself to be more democratic, more wealthy, and more powerful. It was akin to the hearty dislike of a newly rich, self-made man for the faded, genteel aristocrat who snubs him. It was this attitude which led many a Northerner, before the outbreak of war, to feel that the South would have to give in without any real contest or that the war would be a speedy and easily won affair. That particularly acute form of disdain for the South died speedily in Rochester after Fort Sumter, but a sense of basic and *irrepressible conflict* between two fundamentally alien societies carried on throughout the war. It was implicit in the habitual designation of the enemy as "aristocrats" or "slaveholders" and in references to the arrogance of "King Cotton." Occasionally it was discussed quite explicitly in print, as in an editorial in the *Democrat*, May 11, 1861, commenting on the origin of the war.

> The North had grown rich and powerful under free institutions. It had no fear of the introduction of a system of Slave labor upon its soil. The South, on the contrary, had been growing poor and weak under Slave institutions, but nevertheless hugged the delusion that expansion would restore it to prosperity. The North was conscious of its own flourishing condition, and the cause therefor, and was naturally anxious that the territory in which it had at least an equal interest, and perhaps greater interest by virtue of a larger contribution to the joint wealth of the United States, should be sacred to freedom and everlastingly debarred from the delaterious influences of Slavery.

The *Democrat* went on to explain how "Lincoln men" had felt when the Southerners in effect taunted them:

> "You have elected your man, havn't you? but what good has it done? what has all the labor of the campaign amounted to? you havn't compelled us to submit to him, and you hain't prevented the extension of Slavery. We have checkmated you so far, and we mean to spread Slavery all over this continent, in spite of you and your 'Abolition President.' "

"No man," declared the *Democrat*, "is worthy the name of an American citizen who does not feel his blood boil at such indignity, and who will not fight to the last gasp, to resent

it." In a slightly earlier editorial the resentment flared up in even more bitter terms:

> The Southern people accustomed from infancy to domineer over slaves with a whip in one hand and a knife or pistol in the other, have been educated to a condition of arrogance that nothing will cure them of, but a sound thrashing well laid on. It is the settled determination of our people to administer this. They will not hold their property privileges and peace at the will of an arrogant oligarchy. They will not engage in business with a financial halter about their necks. They will not have the mails rifled, nor their liberty of speech and action controlled by an insolent mob. They do not propose to lay down their arms which they have so reluctantly taken up till they are sure that they have a government, which will be respected and obeyed in all its constitutional forms, without hesitation or question.[14]

Democrats and pessimists were not insensitive to the existence of this antagonism, but they were far from ready to *fight* over such an issue. The optimists looked in one direction, toward the possibility of winning over an alien way of life a victory which was rightfully theirs, now within reach. The pessimists looked in another direction, surveying an assortment of gloomy alternatives to war—and then turned back, resolved to accept armed conflict as the least of the array of evils. It is this attitude, perhaps, which it is hardest of all for a later generation to understand. The blood and the bitterness and the long, sad train of consequences of the war are history, clear enough in most minds. The fears of the generation which made the choice are unsubstantial, having died with them. Yet they were none the less real at the time and operated powerfully in bringing unity to the military effort of the community. What were these alternatives? The division of the Union meant the weakening of the Union. It meant the restoration not only of the economic chaos of the period of the Articles of Confederation but also of the military weakness which went with it. Europe would be all too ready to profit by the situation, greedily consuming the remnants of the Republic as it had disposed of the quarreling states of Italy, setting up protectorates here, seizing colonies there. Wars between the fragments of the nation would be

[14] *Democrat*, May 1, 1861.

inevitable. Military dictatorships would ensue. The fair experiment of democracy in a hostile world would be lost. It is the fear of such consequences, rather than an empty love of prestige, which committed Rochesterians, even in those moods in which they envisioned the recognition of the Confederacy as an ultimate military necessity, to a continuance of the war. The *Union* took that possiblity into consideration from the very first, writing in April of 1861:

> If we assume that we must consent to a separation and acknowledge the independence of the Southern States as a distinct nationality, it would still seem to be necessary to make some exhibition of our military power. Had we, prior to any hostile demonstration on their part, *negotiated* a *peaceful separation*, no such necessity would now exist; but having persistently refused to entertain any such proposition, we cannot recognize the separation without subjecting ourselves to the imputations of cowardice or weakness, and losing caste among the nations of the world.[15]

By August of 1862—a time of military reverses—the *Union* felt the possibility of Southern independence was by no means hypothetical:

> For our own part, though not very sanguine of success in any event, we are in favor of making one more energetic effort to save the Union in its integrity; and to avert the interminable wars and the consequent miseries—*not* merely of *one* division, but—of an indefinite subdivision of the Territory over which the Stars and Stripes have been accustomed to float.[16]

The *Democrat*, though clamoring for more effective military management, was still arguing in terms of theory, considering a long war rather than defeat the worst possibility in sight. Seeking to rally the wavering, it reminded its readers:

> The people who exhibit the hate which this war has developed, are not safe neighbors. It is better to fight them ten years as rebels, than a hundred as alien enemies. Peace could not be maintained for a year. The brutal passion which has brought on this war, never reasons, and would lead to other wars without provocation, just as it led to this. The United States was never a partnership, but a Government. Its jurisdiction over every inch of territory within its boundaries, is as unqualified as the jurisdiction of the

[15] *Union*, Apr. 20, 1861.

[16] *Union*, Aug. 29, 1862.

English Crown over the West Riding of Yorkshire; or that of Napoleon on the departments of the Rhine. To ask us to abandon our jurisdiction, creating by the act a foreign power hating us with unparall[el]ed intensity, is no less absurd than a proposition to abandon Dover to Napoleon, or Bordeaux to Victoria.[17]

The Foe and his Property

Granted that no considerable section of the community would, in the period of which we are speaking, have favored any attempt to make peace upon the South's own terms, it is still desirable to define somewhat more precisely the position which Rochester wished to see the government take toward the enemy. There were paper arguments, in abstract terms, as to the wisdom or folly of "conciliation," the Republican papers of course taking the sterner view of the situation. But upon the major practical question there was basic agreement. The *leaders* of the rebellion could scarcely be treated too harshly; no measure could make them worse traitors than they were. But to the *people* of the South—assumed to be the *deluded* people—Rochester was willing to extend the olive branch upon as easy terms as military necessity would permit. Thus even the *Union* was ready enough to hang Jeff Davis—quite literally; whereas even the *Democrat*, for all its fulminations against the traitors of the South, freely admitted that when peace should come, "Reconstruction is not to be imposed from without, but evolved from within. . . . We are a people and they are a people accustomed to self-government, and neither we nor they can work on any other principle."[18] There was disagreement, to be sure, as to whether it would be magnanimous statesmanship or cowardly folly for the North to do away with annoying legislation such as the fugitive slave laws. There was also disagreement as to whether civilian property in the South should be confiscated whenever possible or simply whenever necessary.

One major aspect of the great discussion as to how the South should be treated was, of course, the question of what to do with the slaves. Rochester's youngest and most

[17] *Democrat*, Aug. 6, 1862.

[18] *Democrat*, June 12, 1862.

radical newspaper, the *Express*, beginning in July of 1861 with a tentative statement that "if among the contingencies naturally arising from the war, the extinction of slavery by the Federal Government may yet be numbered, the slaveholders can blame no one but themselves,"[19] moved gradually toward open advocacy of emancipation, to be undertaken as soon as the will of the majority would permit. But it was not until March of 1864 that either of the two older newspapers dared to champion the view that the liberation of oppressed humanity was intimately and purposefully involved in the fighting of the war. This does not mean that the community in any sense relished the concept of slavery or cherished any ill-will toward the Negro. It simply was not prepared to shed the blood of white men—whether Northern or Southern—in order to free him. Emancipation might have been worth the expenditure of money—so far as the District of Columbia's slaves were concerned, Rochester thought it was—but not lives. Meanwhile, however, now that the war had been undertaken in order to save the Union, what was to be done with the slaves of the enemy? So far as right and wrong were concerned, the *Democrat* and *Union* agreed that it was according to precedent for the Northern army to confiscate rebel property, including slaves; though they likewise agreed that the deliberate incitement of servile insurrection would be a crime against humanity and, indeed, a distinct unkindness to the blacks themselves. It was agreed that, within the Union lines, slaves belonging to rebels might be taken from their owners and put to whatever use best served the federal cause. Whether or not they should actually be used as *soldiers* might be determined by experience, as a matter of expediency. If they made good soldiers, they might well be employed as such; if not, certainly they could relieve white men of much of the arduous labor of digging trenches, building fortifications, and the like. These questions were to be decided according to the North's pleasure, not the South's.

The question of general emancipation, to take effect even beyond the lines of the North's actual military control, was more delicate and provoked greater debate, but there was

[19] *Express*, July 22, 1861.

still general agreement as to the *grounds* on which it should be decided: it was a military, not a moral question. Even the *Express*, though tacitly assuming slavery to be a moral abomination, waited for the rest of the North to seize upon more utilitarian arguments for emancipation. Up until the very eve of the emancipation proclamation, it seems safe to state that the great backlog of public opinion in Rochester felt that such a measure would probably be, in Lincoln's own words, "like the Pope's bull against the comet," utterly futile. What point was there in infuriating the South by decreeing emancipation in those areas over which the federal army could exert no control? The *Democrat*, for example, late in August of 1862, deprecated a rumor that the President had prepared a proclamation of emancipation, pointing out the danger that, if made, it might be ineffective.[20] When the actual preliminary proclamation was published, a month later, this staunchly Republican organ naturally supported Lincoln's decision loyally, but it was careful to explain:

> As Abraham Lincoln, the President may have moral views of one kind or another,—he has such views, and they are in favor of gradual, peaceful, compensated emancipation; but as President, commanding the Army and Navy, he strikes this blow as a military measure, as breaking down power by power, and in carrying it into effect he will be bound to see that the rules of warfare are observed within the lines of his forces, that non-combatants are uninjured, and that no atrocities are committed.[21]

The *Union* went briefly through a similarly circumspect stage, in which its criticism of the president's action was mild indeed. Voicing its continuing loyalty to the president late in October, the *Union* explained that Democrats nevertheless "hope that the President will yet be convinced of the utter futility of pursuing the Abolition policy further; and that he is enough of a Patriot and Statesman to abandon a policy after he becomes satisfied that it is fraught with unmixed evil only."[22] Only the *Express* hailed the proclamation with unfeigned delight, proclaiming at last that "The war here-

[20] *Democrat*, Aug. 26, 1862.

[21] *Democrat*, Oct. 7, 1862.

[22] *Union*, Oct. 27, 1862.

after is to be conducted with a fundamental principle. It is to destroy that which otherwise will destroy the Republic."[23]

But it is at this time and largely over this question that Democratic opinion in Rochester broke with President Lincoln. It is also at this time that public opinion in the city swung to the Democratic side, delivering a slim majority of the city's vote to Horatio Seymour, candidate for governor of New York State. This political campaign ended the honeymoon of concord between the two major representatives of popular opinion in Rochester. From the bitterness of that partisan contest stemmed the ever-sharpening antagonism between "Copperhead" and "Abolitionist" which was to be blunted only in the last days of the war, by the victories of Grant and the assassination of President Lincoln.

It is a good point at which to look back and survey the practical military activities of the community of 1861 and 1862 more thoroughly before attempting to describe the process by which the very different Rochester of 1864 evolved.

Recruiting the First Troops

Rochester's loyalty was not all talk. In April of 1861 the community, in advance of any strong encouragement from the state or federal government, set about raising a regiment of volunteers. Local and individual initiative was much in evidence. Several of the city's militia companies hoped to have their services accepted in specialized organizations: the Rochester City Dragoons, true to their name, fancied themselves as cavalry, while the Union Grays preferred to become artillery, and the Light Guard wished to wear the stylish baggy uniform and execute the lightning manoeuvres then associated with the name Zouave. They were crestfallen when they discovered that ordinary infantry were, according to the authorities, the need of the day. The Dragoons and the Light Guard refused to enlist as organizations, but George W. Lewis of the Dragoons and Robert F. Taylor of the Light Guard each enlisted an infantry company, with members of the old organizations forming the nuclei of their

[23] *Express*, Sept. 26, 1862.

new commands. The Union Grays decided not to serve at that time. Meanwhile individuals opened enrollment lists for other companies from Rochester. One such company was made up of Germans, led by Captain Adolph Nolte, editor of the German *Genesee Observer* and veteran of the French army in Algiers. Another, designed to serve as a rifle company, was recruited by the sheriff of Monroe County, Hiram Smith, who rounded up many of its members in the towns of the county. One company was made up principally of young men from the neighborhood known as Frankfort, and another—the Volunteer Rangers—from Cornhill. Two other companies from Rochester, one from Brockport, and one from Dansville completed the ten required for a regiment, approximately seven hundred men. Many of the units were ready for service before the military depot at Elmira, then the rendezvous for volunteers from western New York, was ready to feed and house and uniform them. Finally, however, on May 3, the eight Rochester companies marched through cheering crowds to the New York Central Station. The Brockport company, having gone directly to the depot, got into the wrong coach and was left behind, but the train came back for them. More serious difficulty was encountered at Canandaigua, where the expected transportation to Elmira failed to materialize, leaving the regiment to subsist on the hospitality of the good people of Canandaigua for a time, but the nine companies finally reached Elmira, where Captain Stephan's men from Dansville joined them. There, on May 14, the 13th Regiment of New York State Volunteers was mustered into the service of the United States for three months and of the State of New York for two years. By a little-noticed provision, the Governor of the State was empowered to order the men to serve under the federal government beyond the three months, up to the full period of their state enlistment. The companies were permitted to retain the officers they had elected. Isaac F. Quinby, professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy at the University of Rochester, graduate of West Point and veteran of the Mexican War, who had been very active in organizing the regiment, was the natural choice for colonel. Before the troops left Elmira, two of the company captains obtained

more important commands, Captain Stephan of Dansville becoming Lieutenant-Colonel of the regiment and Captain Taylor of Company A, in the face of protests from his men, accepting the colonelcy of another regiment.*

At Elmira the Rochester men were housed in a row of wooden shanties, one to a company, on the outskirts of the town. Their meals were cooked in an old brick shop of the Williamsport Railroad. The officers were housed separately. For a time the Rochester papers were full of letters from the men, relating the novelties of camp life. City dignitaries vied with the friends of the soldiers in visiting them at Elmira. Back home the Patriotic Relief Fund, started at the public meeting after Fort Sumter, was functioning after a modest fashion. A total of $36,280 had been promised by May 3 and the committee in charge had called for the first installment, 10 per cent of all subscriptions, to be paid out to the families of volunteers in amounts dependent on need, up to four dollars a week. The women of the city had promptly set about outfitting the soldiers with articles of clothing; they had turned out 700 shirts, 700 bed ticks, and 400 pairs of drawers before the regiment left Rochester, and they continued to work busily thereafter, producing not only such useful articles as those noted above but also thoughtful little gifts for the volunteers—"Havelocks" to protect their heads and necks from the Southern sun and "housewives" to hold their sewing equipment—which the men duly cherished while in camp, though on active duty they became a laughing-stock. The city fathers had done their bit by arranging to house and feed the volunteers during their stay in Rochester, before the state was prepared to undertake this duty, and by buying the materials necessary for the articles of clothing and so forth furnished to volunteers *gratis*. Nearly $15,000 was thus spent by the city during 1861 (not all on the 13th Regiment). The monetary contribution was slight compared with the calls to be made upon the community purse later in the war, but greater personal attention was showered upon these first volunteers than upon any of the thousands of troops later enlisted in the

**Editor's Note:* See the Letters of Samuel S. Partridge, printed below, for a first hand account of the experiences of the "Rochester Regiment."

General Isaac F. Quinby
Professor and Commander

Colonel Patrick H. O'Rorke
Hero of Little Round Top

Colonel Francis E. Pierce
of the 108th New York Volunteers

General John A. Reynolds
First Captain of Reynolds Battery

Reproduced from portraits in the Rochester Historical Society Collections.

city. A climax came at the end of May, when the gentlemen of the City Council and other citizens, crowding six railway coaches, journeyed to Elmira to present a stand of colors, carefully prepared by the ladies of the city, bearing the inscription, "Rochester Regiment."

Two days later, May 30, the men left Elmira, some of them traveling in freight cars, whose ventilation they improved by knocking out an occasional board. They reached Baltimore when that city's loyalty was still a matter for grave conjecture, and marched through its streets, fully armed, ready for trouble; an incident holding up their baggage train was the only indication that their concern had been justified. Safely across the city, they took train for Washington, and from there they soon marched to the "sacred soil" of Virginia, across the Potomac.

This was only the beginning of Rochester's contribution to the manpower of the Union army. There was no real pause in recruiting from the city until the spring of 1862, and that pause proved temporary. Three companies from the city reached Elmira while the original Rochester Regiment was still there. It was a matter of accident that they became Companies G and H of the 26th Regiment and E of the 27th instead of being incorporated in the 13th. They enlisted upon the same terms. Two companies recruited in Rochester and nearby, who journeyed to New York City in June expecting to enlist directly in the federal service for three years, decided upon reaching that city that they would obtain better treatment in a state regiment then being recruited in that vicinity, which was variously and colorfully known as the "First Long Island Volunteers" or the "Brooklyn Phalanx," officially the 67th New York State Volunteers. During the summer and fall of 1861 a number of cavalry companies were organized at Rochester for Van Alen's (3d New York) and Crooks' (8th New York) Cavalry Regiments. Company G of the 13th Infantry—the foster-child of the Rochester City Dragoons—attained its dream in the fall of 1861 when it was transferred to the 3d Cavalry (Captain Lewis, indeed, succeeded to the colonelcy of the regiment, late in the war.) The Union Grays obtained similar satisfaction at about the same time: a company organized

under their auspices left Rochester in October to join the 1st New York Artillery as Battery L, long known to Rochesterians as simply the Reynolds' Battery, since both its first captain and its second bore that familiar Rochester name.* One company of the 89th Infantry, a regiment commanded by a favorite son of Rochester, Colonel Harrison S. Fairchild, was recruited in the city toward the end of 1861.

Late that year and early in 1862 a strenuous effort was made to raise an Irish Brigade in western New York. Father Daniel Moore of St. Mary's, a leading Catholic church of Rochester, joined with others in obtaining authority from Albany to recruit a regiment for the brigade. The earnest young priest prepared to leave his flourishing pastorate and become chaplain of the regiment, because, as a Rochester newspaper put it, "the patriotism which prompted him to resist British oppression in his own country, and caused him to be driven from the land of his birth as an exile, will not brook inaction while an unholy rebellion threatens to destroy the land of his adoption."[24] Recruiting offices were opened in November. Ads in the papers promised the modest bounty generally offered at that date—$100 at the end of the war. In December four companies took up quarters at Camp Hillhouse, the military depot which had been opened on the county fair grounds, back in September, for Crooks' Cavalry. Early in 1862 the Rochester papers ran a splashy ad headed dramatically, "War with England," appealing to Irishmen to "rally for the defense of the truly paternal government, which has fostered and welcomed them here; exiles as they are from their own beloved land, *Exiles Through the Oppression of England.*" But though many Irish names are to be found in almost any list of Union soldiers from Rochester—whether of heroes or of deserters—the attempt to recruit an Irish regiment as such dragged on so slowly that the authorities, wanting fighting men but caring little about their nationality, directed the consolidation of the companies at Camp Hillhouse, now six in number, with nine companies assembled at LeRoy to form a new regiment, the 105th (the

**Editor's Note:* George Breck's Civil War Letters, printed below, supply a graphic account of the experiences of the "Reynolds Battery."

[24]*Union*, Nov. 7, 1861.

six companies from Rochester were merged into three, G, H, and I.) They left the state in April. Then recruiting tapered off for a time.

The regiments and companies above noted do not accurately portray Rochester's contribution to the army, for from the outset Rochester men went elsewhere to enlist, just as men from outside came to Rochester for that purpose; meanwhile local squads were delegated to reinforce existing regiments and to complete new ones, and lads from other communities were frequently added to those organizations which the community felt to be peculiarly its own. Newspapers of the day commonly ran column after column of recruiting ads for different military units, displaying in bold type sometimes an appeal to patriotism, sometimes pecuniary inducements, and sometimes the peculiar merits of the company or regiment in question—frequently all three. The prospective volunteer might survey the field and take his choice.

Contemporary opinion differs as to the character of the first recruits. The picture is beclouded by a jealousy which grew up between these men and the "higher-priced" bounty men of the summer of 1862. Two letters from Rochester men, both enlisted in 1861, reveal something of the community's attitude toward its soldiers, once the extravagant patriotic utterances of recruiting days had died away. "Scorer," of the 13th, wrote from Sharpsburg in October, 1862: "What a contrast between the 'milksops' and the 'solid men' of the North! . . . Half the high priced men who enlisted did so for money, nothing else; others were afraid of being drafted; few of them came from pure patriotism as did the first regiment who came without any inducements, not even the $100 bounty."[25] "Marker," of the 27th Regiment, writing in the same month, regretted the fact that "the material of which the old regiments were formed, was considered the 'scum of creation,' and their absence in the community as 'good riddance to bad rubbish' at the North," in contrast to the situation in 1862 when, "The almighty dollar thus has saved many a State from such a humiliation [i.e. from the draft], and we see new regiments swarming to

[25] *Union*, Nov. 1, 1862.

the field direct from Wall street coffers, with well lined purses, and purporting, as a mass, to hail from the upper class of social rank." "Marker's" resentment of this attitude is apparent in his phraseology; yet he admitted: "Throwing aisde all prejudice, however, it must be acknowledged that the new regiments are composed on the whole of a better class of men, more earnest, more orderlike, and more willing to submit, and learn what is required of them."[26] From these comparisons with the 1862 regiments, we may perhaps draw the conclusion of the recruits of 1861 that, as in any body of soldiers, some were attracted by patriotism and the love of adventure, some by want of money, many by both. The monetary inducements offered at first were low; hence only those badly off financially would be tempted by such considerations. The purest patriots and the poorest classes would be the most apt to join.

It is not remarkable that so large a number of the volunteers were German or Irish, for the city itself was plentifully supplied with these nationalities, as well as with a large element from Britain and Canada who were less distinct from the rest of the community. In 1865 those actually born abroad numbered practically 18,000 out of a total population of 51,000.[27] No civic celebration or political campaign was complete without the participation of German organizations. The Irish were taken somewhat more for granted, as members of the Catholic faith and the Democratic party, but ventures such as the formation of Irish companies in 1861-1862, the collection of thousands of dollars to aid the starving population of the Emerald Isle, and the formation of a Fenian Brotherhood late in the war betrayed their numerical strength and solidarity.

The 13th Regiment in the Field

The men of the 13th or Rochester Regiment were the first among the city's soldiers to serve under fire. They won that distinction three days before the first Battle of Bull Run, during the advance of the Union army into Virginia, when

[26] *Union*, Oct. 27, 1862.

[27] New York State Census for 1865.

they found themselves within range of the enemy's artillery fire at Blackburn's Ford, unable to retaliate in any way. Having survived that experience, they went on to take part in the Battle of Bull Run, July 21, 1861; in another division of General McDowell's army that day was the 27th New York, with its one Rochester company. The 13th, if we may believe letters written home to the papers, bore itself well. Claims were made that they advanced some rods farther than any other regiment, that they were the last to leave a hill they had occupied, that they were the only regiment to rally, amid the general panic, to cover the retreat. Conflicting reports that the regiment was thoroughly scattered even while advancing lead one to believe that the true story of that excited day will never be pieced together. Doubtless both the bravery and the cowardice displayed by Rochester's soldiers were the bravery and the cowardice of individuals and of improvised groups, not of organized and disciplined fighting units. It took some days for the regiment to collect itself and survey its losses. The official reports list 11 dead, 27 wounded, 20 missing, from the 13th.[28] The 27th Regiment suffered more heavily, but the company from Rochester lost only one killed and three wounded.[29] Some men took their baptism under fire with bravado, bragging that the Rochester Regiment was now known as "The Bloody Thirteenth." Others wrote home their deeper feelings. "It was not a battle. It was a regular slaughter. They fought like devils, not men."[30] An officer in the 27th in similar mood wrote: "No one who has not been upon the battle field can conceive of the horrors of war."[31]

It is in the light of this experience that Rochesterians may most charitably survey one incident in history which they would perhaps prefer to forget. Outsiders called it mutiny. Unfortunately for local pride, it happened not to some de-

[28]Frederick Phisterer, *New York in the War of the Rebellion, 1861 to 1865* (Albany, 1912). Figures for regimental casualty losses are taken from this work unless otherwise noted. Any figures given for individual companies are from other sources.

[29]*Democrat*, July 29, 1861.

[30]*Democrat*, July 30, 1861.

[31]*Democrat*, July 29, 1861.

tachment of Rochester troops in a regiment known by number, of uncertain geographical origin, but within the one regiment upon which the city had most lavished its attention, the regiment, indeed, which bore the name Rochester—more frequently to be designated, thereafter, simply as the 13th. This regiment had enlisted in the federal service for only three months. That period was up in mid-August. The provision, mentioned above, by which the troops could be retained longer was little advertised at the time of enlistment; indeed, the highest authorities did not mention it until the last moment. The troops were inclined to assume, consequently, that it was up to them to decide whether or not they would continue to serve. Some individuals felt that it would be distinctly unpatriotic to leave at such a time; others counted the days until they might go home. Army life, even before the experience of actual battle, had proved no summer outing. At best it is never that, but the Rochester men, enlisting before the government was really prepared to care for them properly, had experienced many unnecessary annoyances. Since the days at Elmira, they had been accumulating grievances. Opinions differed as to whether army food was palatable or not, but no-one undertook to defend the uniforms first issued. Hastily ordered and hastily made, apparently by an unscrupulous contractor, they failed miserably to measure up to army specifications. Of dull gray shoddy fabric, ill fitting, they came to be known as the "Penitentiary uniform." The weapons first dealt out were likewise a disappointment, for they proved to be altered 1840 muskets instead of the new Enfield rifles which had been expected. Since Sheriff Smith's so-called rifle company fared no better than the rest, the offending arms were dubbed "Smith's rifles." Letters complaining of the food situation were particularly frequent about the time the regiment crossed the Potomac. Since refutations arrived in equal number, one may suspect that the *distribution* of supplies was ill-organized, leaving one man hungry and another bountifully fed. Some of the discontent seemed to focus on certain officers, mercifully left unnamed; one of their cardinal sins was an undemocratic attitude toward the common soldiers, who had been their equals back home in Rochester.

All this discontent was brewing before the Battle of Bull Run. By that time some of the specific grievances had been corrected. New Springfield rifles had been issued, "the admiration of all." Food problems had been straightened out (except for the period of severe disorganization immediately following the battle.) The dull gray of the "Penitentiary uniform" proved actually an asset in combat, as it was a poor target, and new, sturdier clothing was duly issued. After the battle the regiment was promised—and given—a quiet post, out of the way of actual fighting for a time. But the damage had been done. Speculation was rife up until the last moment, both as to what the government would require and as to how the troops would react. Rochester did not know what to think. Perhaps the consensus of opinion back home was that it would be wise for the government to disband the regiment as such, weed out the chronic sore-heads, and re-enlist the good soldiers under new officers of their own choosing. The authorities seem to have considered such a solution. Perhaps, since the 13th was not the only three months' regiment in the field, it did not seem prudent, in the interest of a single regiment, to create such a dangerous precedent at a time when the government needed all its troops, particularly experienced troops. The Governor of the State therefore ordered the men to remain in the federal service. This situation was explained in the Rochester papers, but apparently not to the troops themselves. On the crucial day, August 15, Colonel William T. Sherman, the commander of the brigade, lined the men up on parade and "ordered all who had resolved not to obey orders to step two paces in front." Some eighty—far fewer than had threatened revolt—did so. Colonel Sherman then outlined the consequences to them if they should persist in their resolve. He gave any who had changed their minds an opportunity to step back into line. All except 31 did so. These recalcitrant 31 were shipped off to the Navy Yard, and ultimately transported to the Dry Tortugas, the westernmost part of the Florida reefs, where for some months they worked alongside slaves building the formidable Fort Jefferson.

The greater part of the regiment went on to serve the rest of their term of service without serious mishap. In time,

indeed, they acquired a distinct regimental pride, bragging of their long experience on the battlefield. Their *esprit de corps* took a turn for the better with the appointment of a new colonel in the spring of 1862. (Quinby had been replaced early in August by an honorable but senile friend of General Scott's.) Colonel Marshall, long a member of the regular army, was a strict disciplinarian and hence won first fear and then respect, as the soldiers learned that his efficient methods, in the long run, promoted the health and safety of the fighting unit. After a winter in the proverbial Virginia mud, the regiment sereved ably both as sharpshooters and in McClellan's "Shovel Brigades" at the siege of Yorktown. They were then entrusted with the duty of guarding supply lines of the army near Richmond, in the course of which they successfully engaged the enemy at Hanover Court House late in May. Rejoining the main army, they took part in the famous Seven Days' Battles, concerning which one soldier wrote home: "It was fight during the day, get two or three hours' sleep after the battle, then fall in, forward march to our next scene of operations; eat whenever we had a chance, if we were the fortunate possessors of any 'hard tack.' "[32] Although the toll of wounded was heavy, only a few were killed. The regiment's service was relatively quiet until the end of August, when they were among those taking part at the second Battle of Bull Run. Their losses that day were staggering: 30 killed, 75 wounded, 10 missing. The men were exhausted. Subsequently, they served near the scene of action at Antietam, but were held in reserve, taking no part in the actual battle. Some skirmishing across the Potomac a few days later, at Shepardstown, West Virginia, cost them no lives. In December the regiment was engaged in the bloody tragedy of Fredericksburg. Captain Albert G. Cooper, estimating their total casualties accurately at 75, wrote home: "I never saw the men of the 13th look so rough and so played out as they do this morning. There is hardly a man that is not covered with mud from head to foot, as the ground where we were engaged was rather soft."[33] The mud was no mere joke, for it effectively stopped a second

[32] *Democrat*, Aug. 4, 1862.
[33] *Union*, Dec. 20, 1862.

advance on Fredericksburg, attempted in January. Not only did the 13th share the general low spirits of the army, resulting from the dismissal of McClellan followed by these military fiascoes, but as April approached they again began to count the days until their term of service should expire. Early in the spring they whiled away the time with baseball, proudly defeating Rochester's younger regiment, the 140th. Then just before the third attempt to take the stronghold across the Rappahannock, the regiment left the battlefront. On May 2, almost to the day the second anniversary of their departure, they marched once again through the streets of Rochester, 316 strong, only some 190 of them original members of the regiment. Two companies of three years' recruits, who had joined the regiment during its career, were left behind to take part in the Battle of Chancellorsville.

Other Rochester Regiments

Rochester men in the 13th's brother regiments, the 26th and 27th New York State Volunteers, who had seen a similarly long and bloody service, were less fortunate in the date of their dismissal; they remained to take part in the battle. The community's distinctively Irish volunteers, now reduced (after General Pope's campaign, Antietam, and Fredericksburg, as well as many lesser engagements) to a single company in the 94th New York State Volunteers (with which the 105th had been consolidated), were likewise present. But Rochester's heaviest stake in the battle and her heaviest losses were in the ranks of the two regiments recruited in the vicinity during the summer and fall of 1862: the 108th and the 140th.* The former had undergone its baptism of fire at Antietam, the latter at Fredericksburg; both participated in the bloody business at Chancellorsville. It was shortly after this bitter experience that Lieutenant George Breck of the Reynolds' Battery, faithful correspondent of the *Union* and something of an idealist by habit, wrote concerning the sentiments of the army: "When Shakespeare spoke or wrote

*The reader will be interested in the vivid letters and diaries by members of these regiments printed below. See Francis E. Pierce's letters of the 108th Volunteers, August Seiser's Diary of the 140th, and Porter Farley's Reminiscences of the same Regiment.

of 'glorious war,' he must have referred to it as illustrated in the 'tented field' and not on the battlefield." He scarcely shared the prevalent feeling that the North would have to be invaded before it awoke to a vigorous prosecution of the war, but he did comment bitterly that *some* of the people seemed to be more concerned with their material interests than with the loss of their neighbors' lives.[34]

1862: More Men

During the summer and fall of 1862, despite military reverses, the community's unity of purpose had held firm—indeed, inspired more vigorous action than ever before. Within a short time after the call of July 1 for 300,000 volunteers from the nation, both the *Democrat* and the *Union* had put themselves on record in favor of a draft if it should prove necessary in order to obtain the number of soldiers requisite to crush the rebellion. Meanwhile the community set about filling its quota without resort to that expedient. Recruiting was organized more carefully than previously. A military committee was set up to supervise this activity in the county. The Board of Supervisors gave serious consideration to a project for granting a $100 county bounty to stimulate volunteering, but abandoned the idea when it became known that Governor Morgan had undertaken the responsibility of offering a uniform state bounty of $50.[35] A big mass meeting of citizens from the entire county was held on July 15 to mobilize community sentiment, with fiery speeches, provoked by discouraging news from Virginia. Dr. Martin B. Anderson of the University urged his hearers to put aside all questions of policy, such as the slavery issue, and "Go into the armies and fight, and God will take care of the cause of Freedom." He appealed particularly to the Irish to prevent British interference in the war and to the Germans to enlist for the preservation of liberty. Then Roswell Hart struck a more radical note:

> Let us now see if we cannot prosecute the war without regard to slavery. [Applause.] If it stands in the way and goes down, so

[34] *Union*, May 21, 1863.

[35] Proceedings of the Board of Supervisors.

be it; it is none of our funeral. [Laughter and applause.]. . . . How long shall we be fettered by questions of policy, when our brothers' blood is drenching the soil? . . . There is no peace to be had, except through vigorous, remorseless war. . . . If the war ends in anything but complete submission, with full power to punish treason, it will break out again, as soon as it has recovered its energies.[36]

The following resolution was then offered by Frederick Starr, a prominent antislavery man:

RESOLVED, That everywhere our soldiers should be quartered upon the rebels—their property confiscated and appropriated to the use of the army—their slaves confiscated and employed as laborers, and in untold thousands enrolled as soldiers to crush this horrid viper of rebellion—save our fathers, brothers, sons in the hot climate of the South, and annihilate now and forever the cause of all our troubles and greatest of our crimes and sins, the curse of slavery.

The resolution was adopted—much to the disgust of the *Union's* reporter, who was doubly displeased when there was cheering at the mention of the name of Fremont.[37]

Despite the Radical Republican tone of Hart's discourse and Starr's resolution—which cannot have been altogether pleasing to the conservative majority in the city (*not* in the *county*) who were to vote for Governor Seymour that fall—all elements in the community were ready to co-operate in practical measures to raise troops. Attention was concentrated upon the recruiting of a new regiment from Monroe County, together with two "flank companies," one of sharpshooters and one of artillery; these units were ultimately to be known as the 108th Infantry, the 6th Company of the 1st Battalion of Sharpshooters, and the 18th Independent Battery of Light Artillery. (It was originally designed to arm the battery with a weapon invented by its captain, Albert G. Mack, and called after its promotors the Requa or Billinghurst rifle battery.) Volunteers were also enlisted for a number of the older regiments. To increase the financial inducement, it became the fashionable and patriotic thing for individual gentlemen or organizations—including ward societies formed for the purpose of obtaining enlistments—

[36] *Express*, July 15, 1862.
[37] *Union*, July 15, 1862.

to offer private bounties, generally about $25 per recruit. The men were assembled at a new military camp located south of the city on the west bank of the Genesee, above the Genesee Valley Railroad Bridge; it was named Camp Fitz John Porter, in honor of the general under whom the 13th was serving.

The call for an additional 300,000 men, early in August, caused the city to redouble its efforts. This was particularly necessary inasmuch as the recruits in the 108th were drawn disproportionately from the towns of the county rather than from the wards of the city, each of which was expected to fill its individual quota. Arrangements were made to organize a new Rochester Regiment, later numbered the 140th. Noting the example of other cities, the mayor issued a proclamation on August 19 requesting all places of business to close their doors at 3:30 P.M. for a period of ten days, in order that citizens might devote their undivided attention to the task of enabling the city to meet its quota. The same day the county Board of Supervisors voted to grant the $100 bounty which it had debated earlier.[38] That afternoon the 108th Regiment left the city, seen off, we are told, by the largest crowd ever assembled at the Central Depot up to that time. During the days following, the newspapers were full of material relating to recruiting—ads, news items, editorials urging on the people. "The work must be carried on like a political campaign or religious revival," wrote the *Union*.[39] Wards, societies, nationalities, and the community at large held war meetings. On September 3 it was announced that the county quota was full, and payment of the county bounty was therefore suspended, although recruiting continued at a slower pace. Monroe County was one of the first four in the state to meet its quota. A revised table published on November 15 indicated that the county as a whole had furnished 3,310 men, an excess of 198 over its quota. Of these, the city provided 1,627, to meet a quota of 1,484.[40] In addition to the 108th, the county had dispatched to the front the 140th, two companies for the 13th, one for the 3d Cavalry

[38]Proceedings of the Board of Supervisors.
[39]*Union*, Aug. 22, 1862.
[40]*Union*, Nov. 15, 1862.

and three for the 8th. Barnes' and Mack's rifle batteries (18th and 26th Independent Batteries) as well as Gray's sharpshooters (in the 1st Battalion of Sharpshooters) were later to go. Of the new organizations, the 108th had participated in actual combat within a month after it left the city, losing 26 killed, 122 wounded and 47 missing at the Battle of Antietam. It was again engaged at Fredericksburg in December, where the 140th also took part. The two rifle batteries found their way into a field of action distinct from that of other soldiers from Rochester; practically all of the city's recruits served in the campaigns in Virginia and other states along the eastern seaboard, but these two companies were dispatched to the Department of the Gulf, serving in Louisiana and Alabama. Gray's sharpshooters followed the more usual pattern, serving principally in Virginia. The 3rd Cavalry by this time was engaged in constant skirmishing in North Carolina, whereas the 8th Cavalry followed the fortunes of the Army of the Potomac.

Harmony Fades

During the enthusiastic military activity of July and August, 1862, the truce upon partisanship remained effective in Rochester. Although the war was going badly, so that both the *Union* and the *Democrat* felt obliged to criticize someone for insufficient zeal and poor management, they were united in upholding Lincoln's hands, apologizing for his mistakes if such they were. At this time, indeed, before the Emancipation Proclamation, the *Union* was far more ready to support Lincoln than were the antislavery members of his own party. In July that paper reiterated a sentiment it had voiced more tentatively in January: " 'He has grown upon us,' as he has grown upon the country, during the progress of this war."[41] The *Express*, too, at the other extreme of Rochester opinion, by this time the champion of emancipation and of a stern policy toward the South, remained loyal to the President, trusting that he would see fit in his own good time to deal a death-blow to slavery.

But when, in September, 1862, Lincoln delighted the

[41] *Union*, July 7, 1862.

Express and other Radical Republicans by issuing the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, he alienated conservative sentiment in Rochester. At the same time Horatio Seymour's campaign for the governorship precipitated a normal political battle, with the usual amount of partisan mud-slinging. There was an attempt on the part of Republicans to insinuate that a vote for Seymour would give aid and comfort to the enemy, principally because it would lead Southerners to a mistaken belief that the North was not united. Democrats, on the other hand, voiced opposition to "unconstitutional" measures. Seymour carried the city by a majority of less than 500. Freeman Clarke, a moderate Republican who championed the Emancipation Proclamation as a military measure, was sent to Congress by the district comprising Monroe and Orleans counties, defeating Sanford E. Church, an Orleans County Democrat who, though loyal to Lincoln and anxious for a vigorous prosecution of the war, followed Seymour in his opposition to unconstitutional measures (by implication, the Emancipation Proclamation) and to the government's extravagant financial policy.

From this time on, partisan bickering became common again in the columns of the two older Rochester newspapers. The *Union* took particular deight in making fun of the *Democrat* as the "organ of Rochester University" or of "the Sorbonne," since Dr. Cutting, professor of moral philosophy, had taken over some of the editorial work of that paper. Early in December the *Union* broke openly with Lincoln, disgusted by the preoccupation with "the inevitable Nigger" displayed in his second annual message. Concerning his new scheme for gradual emancipation, to be complete by 1900, it commented:

> Whew, what a glorious spectacle to contemplate! . . . This beneficent scheme, reckoning from its indistinct and shadowy beginnings, will have cost the lives of more than Five Hundred Thousand robust White men slain in battle, or dying of wounds or disease received or contracted on the field or in the camp; it will have made tens of thousands of widows, and probably hundreds of thousands of orphans; it will have filled our country with the cripples and the maimed; it will have devastated some of the fairest portions of the whole earth; it will have engendered hates

Abraham Lincoln's Sacrifice of 35,000 White Soldiers in Georgia—Keep it Before the People!

The memorial of the 35,000 white soldiers in Georgia to Abraham Lincoln beseeches him to "waive for a time" the claim for the negro and let their "suffering, starving and dying" be exchanged and made happy. Abraham Lincoln does not heed them.

Say these 35,000 "suffering, starving and dying" memorialists:

But to starvation and exposure, to sun and storm, add the sickness which prevails to a most alarming and terrible extent. ON AN AVERAGE ONE HUNDRED DIE DAILY. * * It needs no comment, no effort at word painting, to make such a picture stand out boldly in most horrible colors.

It illustration beyond words is required we have it in the following *fac simile* of a photograph of private John Q. Rose of a Kentucky regiment, one of the victims of Lincoln's interruption of the exchange for the benefit of the negro:

This is the picture of each "suffering, starving and dying" hero of the 35,000 as he sinks into his shroudless and coffinless grave!

Rochester Daily Union and Advertiser
Dec. 17, 1864.

DAILY UNION & ADVERTISER

ROCHESTER, N. Y., APRIL 10, 1865.

Beginning of the End!

The most glorious news broken to the public ear since the outbreak of the rebellion came last night in the dispatches given elsewhere announcing the surrender by Gen. Lee of the rebel army of Northern Virginia to Gen. Grant. It dates the beginning of the end and writes the chief line of the "Confederacy's" epitaph.

On Friday, after successfully turning Lee from his route to a junction with Johnston, Grant addressed him a note suggesting the hopelessness of further resistance, a shifting to his shoulders of responsibility for the further effusion of blood, and "asking" a surrender. Lee responded, same date, that although he was not "entirely" of Grant's opinion as to the ability of his army to maintain the contest, yet he reciprocated the desire to avoid further bloodshed and asked the terms to be offered on condition of surrender. Grant replied next day, Saturday, that he insisted upon but a single condition: "that the men surrendered "shall be disqualified for taking up arms again "against the government of the United States "until properly exchanged;" and solicited a meeting to arrange preliminaries. Lee respon-

These simple illustrations, the only ones found in the *Rochester Daily Union and Advertiser* during the war period, reveal much of the character of Civil War journalism.

and animosities which even the grave can but partially extinguish . . . and it will have cost in the Fruits of Human Labor . . . vastly more than all the Wealth of the whole country now in existence.[42]

The following day it raised before its readers the awful spectacle of the consequences, should the emancipated Negroes of the South be distributed evenly over the entire country, Rochester's quota being 7,000:

One Thousand Negroes—*one-seventh* of our distributive share—picked up from the cotton fields and dropped down here, would involve Whites and Blacks in one common misery. A very large portion—probably full nine-tenths of the whole number—would have to be supported either as paupers or as criminals, from the day they should set their feet upon our soil. What could they do, were they here to-day, but beg or steal? . . . We have a laboring population already—a *White* laboring population—which is adequate to all the wants of society. Are they willing to give up their vocation and yield the position they occupy, to the Negroes? . . . We may . . . assure the President that WE AS A STATE WOULD PERMIT NO SUCH INFUSION OF NEGRO POPULATION, EVEN THOUGH EVERY SLAVE WERE FREED TO-MORROW.[43]

A week later, expecting that its newly proclaimed opposition to an "abolition war" would raise questions as to its loyalty, the *Union* explained its attitude:

Possibly we may be asked if we would yield everything the South demand, rather than continue the war; and we may as well anticipate and answer the question:—We would yield all that the Constitution and the Laws passed in pursuance thereof; and all that the laws of comity and good neighborhood entitle them to. We would permit them to "dictate terms" in respect of practical measures, provided only the limits here indicated should not be transcended. But to their demand for Disunion, we would answer *Never*—rather ten years more of desolating war if we can sustain it, than permit an independent and hostile Government to be organized on our Southern Border, under the auspices of men who should be capable of preferring War to Peace on such a basis.[44]

The *Democrat*, meanwhile, commented little upon the Proclamation. The nearest it came to hearty support was in bringing forth the theory, earlier voiced by the *Express*, that, if slavery inevitably bred disunion, then it was best

[42] *Union*, Dec. 2, 1862.
[43] *Union*, Dec. 3, 1862.
[44] *Union*, Dec. 9, 1862.

that slavery should go. Sensitive to the new lack of unified sentiment in the North, it brought forth for the first time in unequivocal terms the economic argument for the continuance of the war, even referring specifically to its vital significance for the business of the city:

> Rochester was not built up by the rich soils of the Genesee Valley alone, nor by the Falls alone, but by a Union whose inducements brought settlers to these soils, and erected mills on these waters, and, most of all, by a canal and a railroad, whose building was necessitated by conditions springing from the Union, and whose means of transport have given rise, at this point, to manufactures and trade, which the protection of that Union has made the beautiful [sic] source of wealth and power. There is not a block of stores at our centre, not an humble dwelling at our outskirts, not a mill nor shop within our corporate limits, which has not a large part of its value in the integrity and endurance of the Union of the States. Secessionism is antagonism to every inch of real estate in our city, to every form of our manufactures, to every variety of our labor. It smites at every one of our capitalists, and proposes to rob our industrious laborers of their daily bread. "Give me the Union whole and sound," remarked one of our most intelligent and thoughtful capitalists, "and I should feel that I was the gainer by making over to the government which saves it, one-half of all that I have." He said this deliberately, and he said it wisely, and his interest is the interest of every man, rich or poor, in the city of Rochester.[45]

The disaster of Fredericksburg brought new cause for discontent in Rochester. Premature news on Sunday, December 14, spread largely by rumor, painted the picture in even more gloomy colors than the reality; more accurate casualty lists from the 13th, the 26th, the 105th, and the 108th Regiments on Tuesday and succeeding days, together with news that the sacrifices had been in vain, gave scant occasion for rejoicing.

In February the Democracy of the city acquired a new grievance, the conscription bill. Ostensibly the objection was not to the principle of the draft but rather to the practice of imposing direct federal conscription, over-riding the previous intermediary authority of the individual states.

In the spring elections that year, the Republican candidate for mayor, Samuel Wilder, was tarred as an abolitionist

[45] *Democrat*, Dec. 23, 1862.

and the Democratic Nehemiah Bradstreet as a "Copperhead." Bradstreet won by approximately the same slim majority accorded to Seymour the November previous. As the year wore on, the split in public opinion widened. The prospect of peace was more openly discussed than ever before, Democrats resenting the idea of continuing an "abolition war," while Republicans proclaimed them disloyal.

In March the "Sons of Washington, Union League No. 1" was set up in Rochester, receiving its charter from the Union League in Washington, D. C., but co-operating also with the Loyal National League in New York City. Judge John C. Chumasero and D. M. Dewey were the local ringleaders, and J. S. Poler, a Washington member of the United States Sanitary Commission, apparently provided contact with the national organization. The League was anti-Copperhead in intention. Republicans in Rochester claimed it had originated in East Tennessee in 1861 as "simply a secret pledge of fidelity to the Union and to each other, entered into for mutual defense."[46] Printed copies of the secret ritual reveal nothing more startling than an extravagant devotion to the ideal of the Union and a pledge to support only political candidates of Union sympathies. Partisan discussions were specifically outlawed.[47] In practice, however, the organization was known for its Radical Republican views, and Democrats charged that its secrecy covered far more than loyalty to the ideals of the Declaration of Independence. Even less is known concerning a secret Democratic society, the Jackson Association, allegedly ultra-Copperhead, which attained considerable political power in the closing days of the war.[48]

Except for the activities of its prominent colored citizen, Frederick Douglass, largely in other places, the community gave little attention to the effort to recruit Negro soldiers. Its colored population was very small. Frequently, beginning in May of 1863, a detachment of Negro recruits en route from the West might be delayed at the railroad depot in Rochester for half an hour or so, and a curious crowd would gather to

[46]*Democrat*, Nov. 22, 1864.
[47]Papers of Union League of America, Rochester Public Library.
[48]*Express*, Mar. 4, 1865.

observe their gayety and listen to their strange singing, but the city's role was largely that of the spectator.

Inflation and Strikes

In the early months of 1863, Rochester experienced a wave of labor difficulties. Hard times had counteracted the drain of manpower for the army during the first months of the war. An attempt to run a workingmen's candidate for assemblyman from the city in the fall of 1861 won the selected person, Lewis C. Gilbert, the Republican nomination, but the Republicans and the workingmen together did not stir up sufficient partisan vigor to defeat the Democratic nominee in this lightly contested election of the era of good feeling. (Labor later claimed that the Republicans had deserted Gilbert.[49]) Labor as such stayed out of the limelight during 1862. Meanwhile, however, times were improving; full employment gave the working classes greater bargaining power, though inflation provided a new grievance.

The depreciation of the currency was impressed upon the popular mind in July of 1862, when metallic coins, being more prized than paper money of equal face value, disappeared from circulation. A strange array of privately, illegally issued paper "shinplasters" of small denominations brought confusion to retail transactions. In September the Common Council of Rochester sought to provide a more reliable, though still dubiously legal variety of small change. The city issued $50,000 worth of city checks, signed by the treasurer, before October 15, later supplementing and replacing them by $100,000 worth of more distinctively printed notes, harder to counterfeit. Rochester shinplasters circulated in many towns in western New York. Together with nationally issued postal currency, they supplied the need for small change, enabling retail trade to go on. Inflation, however, continued.

The printers were the first workingmen in Rochester to use their increased bargaining power in an organized fashion to bring their real wages back toward pre-war values. Instead of asking higher rates, they seized the opportunity to

[49]Allan Gleason, "The History of Labor in Rochester: 1820-1880," Master's Thesis, University of Rochester, 1941.

do away with an old grievance, the "order system," whereby workers in those days received their pay in orders for goods, which in practice were worth less than cash. As early as June 14, 1862, the Printers' Typographical Union warned the three daily papers that they must institute the cash system by January 1, 1863. All three granted the request peaceably, but the *Express* subsequently discharged the corresponding secretary of the union from their employ and refused to recognize in any way the union's right to negotiate concerning the question. Almost at the same time, on February 18, 1863, a mass meeting of the workingmen of Rochester, including the carpenters and joiners, the printers, the iron moulders, the cutters, and the painters unions, stirred up sentiment in favor of demanding higher wages and abolishing the order system generally. Resentment was expressed against capitalists, who were felt to be profiting from the war while laboring men paid the bill in the form of high taxes passed on to the consumer. Early in March the iron moulders sought to obtain a union shop in the firm of William Kidd & Co. Only part of the union employees, however, carried the matter to the point of absenting themselves from work (they insisted they were not "striking"), and the concern was able simply to discharge these union members. A small strike against a single master builder who hired a non-union man, late in March, spread in April as the carpenters and joiners union struck against those employers who would not grant an advance in wages of $.38 a day. Yet in no case did these labor difficulties seriously threaten the community's war effort.

War Comes Home to the North

The sad news from Chancellorsville, received in Rochester May 7, 1863, was followed on Saturday evening, May 9, by a rumor that Richmond had fallen. An extra was issued, bells rang out, cannon were fired and bonfires lit at downtown corners, but the report was, of course, unfounded, like many another weekend scare or celebration during the war. Word of the fall of Vicksburg on Saturday evening, May 23, was taken with a grain of salt; later the verified fact of Grant's

near-possession of the city, though less gratifying than the original rumor, brought encouragement.

In spite of political disharmony, the community of 1863 was ready to unite upon practical measures. The invasion of Pennsylvania in June brought the war closer home than it had ever been before. Once again the *Democrat* urged a truce to partisanship: "Enough for the present that our enemies are in Pennsylvania, and that it is our business to put them out."[50] The *Union* urged that New York State put itself promptly on a war footing. As news came of the rebel occupation of Gettysburg, the community anxiously waited for word of the battle soon to be waged. Meade's appointment seemed surprising but satisfactory. The Fourth of July passed without definite news and without any general public demonstration. The next evening, finally, good news came from the battlefield. About eleven o'clock in the evening the bells of Rochester rang out the tidings. The whistles of the new steam fire engines joined in the merry din, attracting people to the center of the city to hear and celebrate. Newspaper extras were snapped up. The next day news of the surrender of Vicksburg provided occasion for repeated jollification. Then for days the sadder news of regimental casualty lists filled the papers.

Rochester had contributed in full measure to the victory at Gettysburg. Both the 108th and the 140th were engaged, as well as the 67th, the 94th, the 8th Cavalry, and Reynolds' Battery.

Rochester Soldiers at Gettysburg

The 108th served with particular gallantry on Friday, July 3, supporting Woodruff's Battery at the forefront of the horseshoe formation, on Cemetery Ridge, under a withering shell-fire from the rebel artillery. A private in Company F wrote to his father:

> It was the hardest fire the 108th ever experienced—perfectly awful—murderous. Not a second but a shell-shot or ball flew over us or by us. Large limbs were torn from the trunks of the oak trees under which we lay and precipitated down upon our heads.

[50] *Democrat*, June 18, 1863.

One shell came shrieking and tearing through the trees with the velocity of lightning striking a caisson causing it to explode, wounding several. Three or four men started to their feet to leave the spot, but Lieutenant Card drew his sword and commanded them to go back and lay down in their places, which they did. Small trees were cut down and large ones shattered almost to pieces. Five different cannon balls struck a large oak three feet in diameter which stood not five feet from where I lay, and one of them passed entirely through it. A shell struck right at my feet killing Sergeant Maurice Welch and Private John Fitzner. This destructive and murderous fire continued to pour in upon us for more than an hour—in fact until they silenced our batteries, or rather until we had exhausted our ammunition.[51]

At this point the rebels had killed so many of the horses attached to Woodruff's battery that the men of the 108th had to move the guns back to await the charge of the enemy, and then forward again to pour canister—the only ammunition left—into their ranks. The rebels still advanced. A volley of infantry fire failed to halt them. The second volley brought confusion to their ranks, but officers succeeded in rallying the men. A third volley, finally, routed the enemy. A large number of prisoners were taken, but the 108th paid a heavy price. Of some 200 taking part, 16 were reported killed and 86 wounded.

The 140th, including the remnant of the 13th as well, likewise distinguished itself. On the second day of the battle, July 2, the regiment reached the scene of action just in time to play a dramatic role in the holding of Little Round Top against the rebel advance. General G. K. Warren called the regiment aside from the division's line of march to climb swiftly up one slope of Little Round Top and then charge down the other side, in the face of enemy fire, without time to load or fire on the way, to reinforce the line of Vincent's brigade at the foot of the hill. Local legend embroidered the story somewhat, putting the gallant Colonel O'Rorke in the advance with the regimental colors in his own hands while the men came on with clubbed muskets. The bold young colonel did indeed lead his men with dispatch and courage, but a member of the regiment, Captain Porter Farley, speak-

[51]George H. Washburn, *A Complete Military History . . . of the 108th Regiment, N. Y. Vols. . . .* (Rochester, 1894), pp. 13-14.

ing 26 years later at a regimental ceremony at Gettysburg, dismissed the apocryphal features:

> O'Rorke carried only his sword, and you carried your muskets, grasped by the butts and not by the barrels. History should record the simple truth without exaggeration; and this is the truth of the matter: that as the regiment came over the ridge its muskets were empty and its leading companies rushed down the hill to meet the enemy without firing a shot. It was only when you came abreast of Vincent's brigade near the foot of the hill that you had time to load and return the fire which spit a deadly fusillade from the woods before you. Those woods seemed to swarm with the grey-coated crowd. The enemy had almost enveloped Vincent and had nearly seized this vantage ground on which we stand. Vincent's men, who for some minutes had maintained the fight, were outnumbered and outflanked. Reinforcement was never more opportune. The arrival of the 140th regiment at that crucial moment saved Little Round Top, and a glance at the surrounding topography carries conviction as to the supreme value of its possession.[52]

The young Irish colonel, whose honors at West Point, Rochester had once chronicled so proudly, lost his life in the battle, as did fully 25 of his command. Eighty-nine were reported wounded. Among them was noted a private named Smith, better known in Rochester as "the Razor Stop Man," whose humor had helped in recruiting the regiment and was later to brighten the lives of convalescents at the Rochester City Hospital.

Reynolds' Battery was in the thick of the fighting. They lost one killed and 15 wounded, not to mention 18 horses. Captain Reynolds lost his left eye. George Breck, who thereupon took command, wrote to the *Union* more hurriedly than usual, describing the fighting as the most severe he had ever experienced. In a later, more leisurely letter he reflected upon his conversation with some of the rebel wounded, after the battle:

> These wounded rebel officers and soldiers expressed a wish that the war was ended, but they appeared to manifest no disposition to yield *first*, notwithstanding they were experiencing in their minds and persons all the horrors of war. However bad the rebel cause may be, and however just the war is as waged against it, the soldiers engaged in it have won the respect and admiration of

[52]Porter Farley, *The 140th New York Volunteers at Gettysburg*, see below.

their adversaries, the Federal troops, for their undaunted bravery and fortitude. They are not a whit inferior in valor and soldier-like qualities to our own troops. Both sides are equally matched in that respect.[53]

More Men to Meet the Crisis

Rochester in the meantime had been called upon for more men, both to aid in repelling the enemy from Pennsylvania and, a little later, to reinforce the authority of the government in New York City, where draft riots broke out on July 13. In June, as the danger in Pennsylvania became apparent, there were available in Rochester four companies recruited by Captain William B. Barnes, known at this time as the 11th Heavy Artillery and designed for service in the forts of New York habor. The authorities, refusing to recognize the validity of Barnes' promise to the men that their service should be restricted to this relatively quiet post, ordered the companies to Pennsylvania. They reached Harrisburg on June 26, expecting action, and served in the Pennsylvania campaign but not at Gettysburg itself. Later they were stationed at New York harbor as part of the 4th Artillery.

Rochester was also ready to supply the troops recruited by Colonel Marshall for the 14th Artillery (sometimes called 13th at this time), a regiment whose nucleus consisted of veterans of the old 13th Infantry. The 54th Regiment of the National Guard was also available for emergency service. Both were called upon at the time of the New York draft riots. They left Rocheter July 16 and got as far as Albany, but by that time communication down the Hudson to New York had been interrupted, so that the men could proceed no farther. As there were rumors that the trouble would spread up-state, they remained at Albany a few days. The 54th had left Rochester without rations and were obliged to rely on the generosity of Colonel Marshall and the military authorities at Albany. After one night, they refused to remain at "Camp Louse," the usual army barracks outside the city, and were therefore quartered at the City Hall while Colonel Marshall's regiment took over the Armory. As no

[53] *Union*, July 20, 1863.

trouble materialized, the 54th returned to Rochester on July 23 and the artillery a few days later.

Rochester was indignant that draft riots should take place just at the time of the North's great peril. Even the *Union*, though it attempted to shift the blame from Democratic shoulders, joined the rest of the community in abjuring any resort to mob violence against the hated and perhaps unconstitutional federal conscription:

> The lives, and property, and interests of the whole community are stripped of all protection the moment law and order are struck down; and hence the great body of the community will ever be found arrayed against popular violence, and, coöperating with local, state and general governments with all their resources, will certainly in every instance put it down in the end.[54]

On July 19, as a further appeal to the disaffected Democratic and Irish elements, a pastoral letter from Bishop Timon of Buffalo was read in all the Catholic churches of the diocese, urging abstention from all violence, riot, and resistance to law.

Rochester set about seeing to it that no such incident should disgrace the city. Many, to be sure, were opposed to the idea of federal conscription. Such sentiment was aggravated by the provision which permitted those financially well off to escape conscription either by obtaining a substitute or by paying to the federal government $300 as "commutation." This was felt to be an injustice to the poor man. It may also have been looked upon as a loop-hole by which entire communities might escape the draft, together with such disorder as had troubled New York City. At any rate, for whatever purpose, the Common Council of the city of Rochester made an attempt to borrow sufficient money to pay out $300 for each man who was conscripted, to be paid to him if he entered the service, to his substitute if one was obtained, or to the federal government as commutation if neither of the other procedures proved feasible. The banks, doubting that a future Republican state legislature would legalize such a loan, hesitated to advance the funds required. The Common Council therefore substituted another measure,

[54] *Union*, July 18, 1863.

explained in terms of *relief* to the indigent, offering to conscripted persons in that category $300 if they actually served or the price of a substitute, up to $300, but no funds for commutation.

The draft began in the city on August 5 and proceeded without disorder, though great discontent was manifested. A meeting of those conscripted on August 15, addressed by Democratic Alderman Rowley, voiced vigorous protest but was held within the bounds of civic order by the chairmanship of Mayor Bradstreet.

A Sense of Grievance Breeds Dissension

An attempt was also made to show that Rochester had already furnished so many volunteers that it did not owe the nation any soldiers under the draft. Colonel Charles H. Clark copied from the muster rolls in Albany the names of over 4,000 men enlisted at Rochester, as compared with what he estimated to be the city's rightful quota, some 2,900.[55] Unfortunately for the city's vanity, Colonel Clark's figures are open to serious question, as he seems clearly to have included volunteers who, although they may have been mustered in at Rochester, were residents of the surrounding towns and countryside. (The one flagrant example is the 108th regiment, well-known at the time of its formation as the "Monroe County Regiment," probably containing only some 350 Rochesterians *at the most*; yet Colonel Clark credits Rochester with substantially the entire regiment, over 1,000 men.) The grievance was thus fancied rather than real. It seems, nevertheless, to have been of the most fundamental importance in the growth of truly "Copperhead" sentiment in Rochester. Up until the time when the Provost Marshal General of the United States refused to consider Rochester's plea that the enforcement of the draft be delayed until there should be time to present its case, there was abundant criticism in Rochester but nothing which approached real disloyalty, no unwillingness to co-operate in bringing the war to a conclusion. The *Union* urged conciliation and the abandonment of an abolition policy but, having failed to

[55] *Union*, Sept. 1, 1863.

carry its point, recognized an obligation to aid in carrying out the wishes of the majority. But when a concrete local grievance was added to the previous abstract differences over national policy, something snapped. The *Union* wrote:

> Do not let us ever say anything more of the tyranny and injustice of European powers,—of the cruelty of Russia to Poland or of Austria to Hungary. The conduct of these powers is mild compared with the course of this same Lincoln administration toward any State or District which happens to incur the ill will of the low lived, malignant creatures it has placed in responsible official positions.[56]

Two days later:

> The whole draft is . . . in effect a lottery to see what men of a certain class shall pay $300 or less towards carrying on the war, and a press gang to force into the ranks of the army a chance number of poverty stricken citizens.[57]

The practical effect of this alienation was more evident late in the fall. The draft had been completed by that time, furnishing a riduclously small number of men. The district including Monroe and Orleans counties had supplied fewer than 400 soldiers, most of whom were substitutes, plus 440 commutation fees of $300 each, out of more than 3,000 names drawn. The remainder included nearly 1,000 rejected for disability, 250 excused for dependency, about 400 not liable because they were aliens and some 350 improperly registered for other reasons.[58] As this result was typical of the nation as a whole, a call was issued on October 17 for 300,000 volunteers, with the threat of conscription in whatever localities failed to meet their quotas. The Republican-controlled Board of Supervisors set about providing financial inducements, higher than ever before, $300 per volunteer in addition to state and national bounties. For the first time the Democratic press refused its approval:

> This paper has co-operated most heartily in all the operations for adding soldiers to the army of the Union, believing as we do

[56] *Union*, Aug. 15, 1863.

[57] *Union*, Aug. 17, 1863.

[58] Report of the Provost Marshal, *Union*, Nov. 2, 1863.

that men and brains are all that will put down the rebellion, but after what has been inflicted upon the people of these two counties, we propose to stop and think before endorsing any scheme for taxation which is not a fair one—just and equitable as between this and other Districts.[59]

The political campaign that fall was bitter. Republicans sought to fix upon the Democratic party in general and Governor Seymour in particular responsibility for the New York draft riots. The *Democrat* appealed to its readers to rescue the state from "the gulf of misery, devastation and disgrace into which Copperhead management would inevitably precipitate us." The Democratic party not only sought to ward off such charges but vigorously attacked the policies of the central government, following Seymour's line of argument. A speech by Hon. Sanford E. Church, delivered at Rochester October 27, conveys the prevalent Democratic spirit:

I aver that the radical leaders of the Republican party who control that party and the action of the President, have determined that this war shall not be prosecuted to restore the Union—they have determined that it shall be prosecuted *to destroy the Union.* . . . The proposition on the part of the radical leaders is that they will reduce the Southern States to territories—that they shall not be brought back into the Union, nor permitted to come back to the enjoyment of the rights which they now have as States, but as conquered provinces, and not until they are so degraded as to consent to adopt such constitutions as the eminent philosophical and very pious statesmen of Massachusetts offer them. . . . Shall New York vote in favor of the Republican party when it would be claimed as a verdict in favor of these measures to operate upon Mr. Lincoln in order to make him acquiesce in the adoption of that scheme? . . . Mr. Lincoln is a negative man—a man who moves by outward pressure and not by internal power, and it depends upon the pressure brought upon him how much he yields. . . .

But I charge those men again with attempting to overthrow the Constitution, but they intend furthermore to concentrate and consolidate all the power of the loyal States in the general government, and when they have consummated that they overthrow the government made by our fathers—wipe out the constitution and declare it a despotism. [Cites federal conscription, the national banking system, and the suspension of habeas corpus as evidences of this trend.]. . . .

[59] *Union*, Aug. 15, 1863.

With Massachusetts it is a question of power. They talk about slavery, but only as a means to an end. They think they have an opportunity to rule this country, and they know, too, that if the Southern States come back into the Union their power is gone forever and ever. [Great applause]. . . .

If these men succeed in adopting these measures of subjugation . . . the burden of taxation in this country will exceed that of any other on the earth. And it is utterly impossible to enjoy free institutions as citizens and republican liberty where such a system of taxation prevails.[60]

The Republicans nevertheless carried New York State, but the Democratic party carried the city of Rochester.

Threat from Canada

Just after this election came the first of a series of rumors of threatened raids from Canada upon the Genesee. In the opening year of the war Rochesterians had discussed the exposed situation of the unfortified Genesee harbor in the event of war with Britain. During the winter of 1861 the Common Council acted with a citizens' committee to study the situation, but without appreciable result. Concern was felt locally for the security of the Erie Canal aqueduct and of the New York Central Railroad bridge over the Genesee, but neither Congress nor the state legislature saw fit to take action to fortify Charlotte. In November of 1863 Stanton warned Mayor Bradstreet of a rebel project, disclosed by the British minister at Washington, to seize steamers on Lake Erie, release Confederate prisoners at Johnson's Island, and go on to capture and destroy Buffalo. The scare passed off without serious incident, although, on the authority of the Buffalo *Courier* in December and of the rebel Secretary of the Navy in February, Rochesterians decided the threat had not been wholly imaginary. An attempt was made to obtain passage of a state bill authorizing the construction of a new arsenal at Rochester to replace the completely inadequate building on Exchange Street—"mean in appearance, inadequate as to space, inconvenient in shape, and completely indefensible in case of attack."[61] The state as-

[60] *Union*, Oct. 29, 1863.

[61] New York Senate Document No. 28, 1864, Appendix, p. 71.

sembly passed the bill, but the end of the session forestalled final action.

A Little Harmony

Public opinion in Rochester was better pleased with Lincoln's plan for reconstruction, announced in his annual message in December, 1863, than it had been with Chase's. The *Union* even admitted:

> If the overthrow of Slavery and the execution of the whole class of leaders whom Mr. Lincoln excepts from the benefit of the amnesty he proclaims, are practicable and compatible with the Constitution; *if* a road to Reunion and Peace lies through these measures, we would not have that road departed from because of the sacrifices it necessitates.[62]

These were, of course, a couple of formidable conditions, but even such a concession was noteworthy from a paper attacked as "Copperhead."

The *Democrat* defended the plan, "test oath" and all:

> If at some future time it shall be deemed expedient to admit repentant rebels, it will be an easy matter to repeal the present law; but just now it would seem to be an excessive stretch of magnanimity to invite into the National halls of our legislation men whose hands are reeking with the blood of our friends and brothers. If "not one man in a thousand in the southern States" can take the oath, why then not one in a thousand is fit to sit in Congress.[63]

The Ladies Also Serve

Just before Christmas, 1863, Rochester gaily and generously supported an unusually bold venture of the Ladies' Hospital Relief Association. This organization, founded early in 1862 to channel aid, largely in the form of clothing and foods prepared by the women of the community, to the nation's sick and wounded soldiers, found itself from Gettysburg on in increasing financial straits. Therefore, following the example of New York, St. Louis, and Buffalo, the ladies decided after some fear and trembling to put on a mammoth bazaar at Christmas time. Corinthian Hall was turned over

[62] *Union*, Dec. 10, 1863.

[63] *Democrat*, Jan. 27, 1864.

to them from December 14 to December 22, to be lined with colorful booths representing Russia, Turkey, Italy, Ireland, Yankeedom, the Nation, and so forth, with a gypsy tent and a side-show to boot, and a band playing in the gallery. Dinners served daily by young ladies in gala red, white, and blue costumes swelled the proceeds, as did the receipts at a temporary art gallery and a stereoscopic exhibit. Crowds packed the hall beyond comfortable capacity. The net proceeds exceeded $10,000, by far the major portion of the society's income for that year. Perhaps this was the reason why the organization, renamed the Rochester Soldiers' Aid Society early in 1864, felt able to supply materials at less than cost to smaller aid societies in the villages surrounding Rochester, ranging as far as Gasport and Avon. During the three years from January 17, 1862, to January 17, 1865, the women forwarded, mainly via the United States Christian and Sanitary Commissions, a wide variety of articles—for example, some 3,500 shirts, nearly 5,000 handkerchiefs, napkins, and towels, about 1,900 pillows and cushions, 204 kegs, barrels, and casks of pickles, and over 1,000 bottles of wine, brandy, and whiskey, not to mention large but unspecified amounts of lint, bandages, and the like.[64]

Restlessness Among the Workers

Labor matters again came into prominence during the spring of 1864. Just prior to the first draft in 1863 there had been one notable workingmen's meeting, addressed by Fincher and Sylvis, two Philadelphia labor leaders, the former being the editor of the only workingmen's journal in the country at that time. In August a group of coopers, in attempting to get a union shop, precipitated a lockout. In November Rochester played host to the Carpenters' and Joiners' State Convention, which proceeded to organize a statewide union. In December the Workingmen's Assembly in Rochester expressed their sympathy with striking machinists in New York City in the tangible form of subscriptions to aid the strikers. In February they stirred up senti-

[64]Annual Reports of the Ladies' Hospital Relief Association and of the Rochester Soldiers' Aid Society.

ment in favor of demanding higher wages for laborers than the seven shillings per day received the previous summer, and also called for a careful survey of the intentions of political candidates as to the proper wages for public works employees.

A separate, wholly unconnected political organization, the Workingmen's Independent Union, acting counter to the wishes of the Assembly, nominated a labor candidate for mayor, John M. French. They had only some 600 members, most of whom were normally Democrats. At the last minute French withdrew in favor of the Democratic candidate, James Brackett, who was elected by a majority of around 200, together with a Republican-dominated Common Council.

Late in April the printers of the city struck for higher wages and a fixed scale to be determined *by them*. They also asked a union shop, regulations governing the number of apprentices employed and the hours worked, and provisions for steady work on "dead copy" to fill in at times when the men were waiting for "regular copy." The three newspapers of the city, although in the midst of a bitter editorial feud, co-operated to suppress the strike. Proprietors and editors set type, for other papers as well as their own, and a few women were employed as compositors. Some of the strikers drifted back to work, some new men were employed, and the strike was broken. One paper boasted that it was already paying more than 20 per cent over peace-time wages. There was no pretense, however, that real wages equalled those of pre-war days. A list of retail prices published in the same paper July 2—in another connection, of course—showed figures averaging at least double those of 1860.[65] The employers, however, argued that the workers were obtaining *as great a share* of the proceeds of the business as they ever had and that all must share proportionately in the sacrifices of war. Prices were to remain at a high level until late March, 1865, although employment conditions appear to have worsened, from labor's point of view, as 1864 advanced.

[65] *Union*, July 2, 1864.

Tooth and Nail

In April, 1864, there began the bitterest newspaper battle of the war period. On the first day of that month the *Democrat* changed hands. The new editor, an out-of-town man, openly announced what amounted to a change of policy. He believed:

> That compromise with Slavery is perpetual discord; that Union with Slavery is eternal disunion; that peace with Slavery is chronic war.
>
> We believe heartily in States Rights subordinate to National Law and the general welfare; but as a State cannot create a Baron, a Count, a Duke or a Lord—so it cannot legally create a Slave.[66]

Again some weeks later:

> Most truly is this war a war of slaveholding *aristocrats* against *democracy*—against the rights of labor and the right of every man to reap and enjoy the fruit of his toil. The rebel leaders claim that capital should own the laborer—that the mechanics and laboring men of the North are mere *mud sills* of society, and should be slaves; and they would degrade all white laborers to the level of the poor clay-eating whites of the South.[67]

Naturally the *Union* was ill-pleased. This forthright abolitionism was anathema, and the appeal to the laboring classes amounted to stealing the *Union's* fire.

It seems probable that this shift in the editorial policy of the *Democrat*, maintained in substance by a series of editors during the year 1864, represented a more gradual and moderate change in the sentiment of the community. The same trend was observable in the increasingly radical views of the *Express*. Its importance should not be exaggerated, however, for the *Democrat* seems to have fared rather poorly during its crusading year, and it returned at the beginning of 1865 to the hands of a somewhat more conservative Republican, of the ex-Democratic wing of the party, D. D. S. Brown, whose first move was to promise a more courteous policy toward other local newspapers. Nevertheless it is worth noting that during this period it was tacitly assumed that abolitionist sentiment in Rochester had grown more

[66] *Democrat*, Apr. 1, 1864.

[67] *Democrat*, Apr. 27, 1864.

pronounced during the war. It will be seen that in the fall elections the radical faction captured the Republican party in the congressional district, although the Democratic party, by that time so war-weary as to deserve the epithet, "Copperhead," won a slender victory in the city. Thus the *Democrat's* change of policy seems to represent not simply a shift from conservative to radical but also to further deepening of the division of Rochester opinion. The community as a whole was growing sick of war. Some longed for peace at almost any price. Others felt a growing resentment against the Southerners who had perpetrated the conflict. Thoughts of vengeance became more common.

All of Rochester's vocal opinion had agreed long since upon the idea of hanging "Jeff" Davis. The *Democrat* was not willing to stop there. In May of 1864 it came out unequivocally in favor of confiscation of the landed wealth of all prominent rebels:

> The patrimonial estates must be broken up, and distributed among our noble army of soldiers, the meritorious blacks, and that even lower sediment in the bitter cup of rebellion—the degraded poor whites of the South.[68]

In June it considered seriously—although pleading in defensive terms, as if the idea were unpopular—the prospect of Negro suffrage, explaining that "Those who have supreme faith in Republican institutions will not try to narrow down franchise or eligibility, simply because there are several millions of men in the United States who are not fit for President."[69]

Meanwhile the notion of granting political equality to repentant rebels was passing into disfavor.

> These rebel States, which are costing the loyal masses so much, ought to be satisfied with a colonial condition, until they have atoned for their great guilt. They ought to be reconstructed on the principles of absolute justice, or not at all.—And they ought to be made, in some way, to pay the whole expense of the war.[70]

[68] *Democrat*, May 19, 1864.

[69] *Democrat*, June 4, 1864.

[70] *Democrat*, June 9, 1864.

In July a new principal editor, Robert Carter, proclaimed his definite opposition to slavery, "an aristocratic and barbarous institution, hostile to christianity, democracy and civilization; the sole cause and main supporter of the rebellion, the chief promoter of discord among the states and the chief obstacle in the way of the restoraton of peace and union."[71] To those who attacked Lincoln for a change of policy during the war, the *Democrat* replied by admitting the fact but comparing it to the now universally applauded shift, during the American Revolution, from a demand for redress of grievances to a declaration of independence.[72]

The *Union*, meanwhile, became more and more dissatisfied with national policies. By this time the veteran editor, Isaac Butts, had disclaimed any intention of further promoting recruiting by contributions from his well-filled purse, a declaration which his opponents of course capitalized with glee, pronouncing it equivalent to treachery. To be sure, if it be treachery to desire a negotiated peace in time of war and, furthermore, to publicize one's own sulky mood, Mr. Butts deserved the title "Copperhead" at this time. His paper consistently opposed any proposal to continue the war in order to "subjugate" the South, repeatedly pointing with a warning finger to the history of Ireland or Poland:

> Centuries of tyranny and misrule—penal laws that would disgrace a barbarous despotism, an Established Church, and all the appliances that British wealth, power, and intrigue could bring to bear, have failed to "subjugate" the Irish people, or to render Ireland anything but a thorn in the side of England. The great mass of the Irish people to-day are the implacable enemies of the British government, and their descendants of generations scattered over the whole earth, in every clime, share their revengeful enmity and transmit it to their children. Such, intensified an hundredfold, will be the result of the emancipation-confiscation-subjugation policy of the federal government towards the South if it is ever successfully carried out.[73]

In the interchange of invective at this time, the *Union* habitually referred to the *Democrat* as a New England organ.

[71] *Democrat*, July 18, 1864.
[72] *Democrat*, Aug. 17, 1864.
[73] *Union*, June 2, 1864.

The compliment was returned by allusions to "the Tipperary warbler," an Irish-American member of the *Union* staff who occasionally indulged in poetic effusions.

The *Union* maintained its opposition to abolition, its unwillingness to spend white lives for black freedom. It treated the idea of political equality for Negroes as equivalent to social equality, which it assumed the united sentiment of the North would reject as utterly ridiculous. Meanwhile it was not unfriendly to colored men as such. Although opposing the Thirteenth Amendment, when it came up for consideration, as "it will only be placing another brand in the hands of Jeff Davis with which to 'fire the Southern heart,' "[74] the *Union* indicated that it would be *pleased* to see slavery abolished, were there not such serious practical complications in accomplishing that result.[75] It opposed the Freedmen's Bureau bill, not as unduly favorable to the Negro, but as likely to reduce him to a state of peonage under the domination of swarms of Northern office-seekers.[76] It became indignant when, in the summer of 1864, the original Republican championing of the Negro's right to serve in the army became degraded in some communities into a willingness substantially to buy and sell colored substitutes, "a traffic now going on in human flesh beside which Southern Slavery is a humane enterprise."[77] The *Union* also betrayed a genuine respect for Rochester's outstanding colored citizen, Frederick Douglass. A curious combination of this feeling with a distaste for the abolitionist's preoccupation with the "inevitable Nigger" made it seem peculiarly uproarious, now and then, to propose Douglass for some outstanding federal office, pointing out, for example, that he would make a better Secretary of War than Stanton.[78] (Susan B. Anthony had similarly been offered the Treasury Department.[79])

[74] *Union*, Feb. 9, 1865.

[75] *Union*, Feb. 6, 1865.

[76] *Union*, June 17, 1864.

[77] *Union*, July 11, 1864.

[78] *Union*, Aug. 12, 1863.

[79] *Union*, Apr. 21, 1863.

Scraping Bottom

The attempt, in 1864, to obtain more soldiers from communities already stripped of much of their manpower, forms a sorry chapter in American history. Rochester was scarcely an exception. Yet the successive, cumulative calls of October 17, 1863, February 1 and March 14, 1864, were successfully met before the end of April without resort to a draft, largely owing to the county bounty of $300, first voted in November and renewed as more men were demanded. By this time the profits, legitimate and illegitimate, to men who took it upon themselves to locate and bring in recruits were substantial. Consequently, wrote the *Union* in January concerning the more mercenary members of this profession, "They are scouring the face of the earth, taking everything white that has a head, trunk and limbs, and everything black that is a degree above a baboon, to market."[80] Partisans took delight in unearthing instances of "scalping" or "shaving" implicating members of the opposing party. Thus Republicans were shocked to note that members of the "floating population" arrested by certain Rochester policemen (Democrats, of course) turned up later in the ranks of the army, at Rochester or elsewhere, whereas Democrats discovered that many volunteers did not receive the full cash value of their county bounty checks, as a result of "discounting" going on in the County Treasurer's office (Republican). All in Rochester were displeased that the examining authorities of Niagara County, at Lockport, admitted men whom the Monroe County physicians had rejected as physically unfit for service. A further quarrel arose between the towns of the county and the city, over the credit to be given for 1,002 volunteers who enlisted at Rochester but without giving any specific ward residence. As it was common knowledge that men frequently enlisted where they could get the greatest rewards without regard to the locality of their origin, the county authorities felt that, having provided the financial inducements, the whole county should share in the credit for these recruits, most of whom seem to have been members of the indefinable "floating population." The city, of course, felt

[80] *Union*, Jan. 16, 1864.

otherwise, but the recruits were credited *pro rata* among the towns and wards of the county, less than half of them to Rochester. The county's quota, however, was filled, whether the city could rightfully claim to have provided one thousand men or two.

In June the Supervisors revoted the $300 county bounty in anticipation of a draft. On July 18 the call was issued for 500,000 volunteers from the nation, Rochester's quota being 1,168. There was now no longer any provision for commutation. Individuals bid against one another to procure substitutes before a draft should take place. The price soared. In mid-August the demand for men in Rochester was so great that the *Union* complained—doubtless in somewhat exaggerated terms, for the *Union* was chronically out of sorts at this time:

> It is absolutely unsafe for a young white man to come into Rochester a stranger now, unless he has at least average intelligence, and it is no longer a safe place for a black man if he is among the smartest of his race. The scalper will surely gobble up all the able bodied negroes they find and just as many verdant white chaps as put themselves in the way. They watch the Charlotte cars and the steamers at the dock for Canadians, and if they cannot induce them to sell themselves as soon as they land they will follow them night and day till they find a chance to steal them.[81]

Those who were unable to read and write were evidently particularly apt to be victimized.

A week later the *Union* disgustedly noted that Niagara County's quota, thanks to the lenient surgeons, was full.[82] In Rochester the county bounty was proving woefully insufficient except when supplemented by substantial contributions made by individuals in order to secure substitutes. The City Council finally took remedial action, making the total financial inducements peculiar to Monroe County: a city bounty of $400 to one-year, $500 for two-year, and $600 for three-year volunteers, or $300 for a substitute; a county bounty of $200 for one-year and $300 for three-year men; and $100 offered by the county to the person bringing in a

[81] *Union*, Aug. 12, 1864.

[82] *Union*, Aug. 19, 1864.

recruit. Even so, greater inducements were offered elsewhere. At the end of September, when the draft had already begun for the towns of the county, only the Third Ward had filled its quota, by the expedient of advancing cash to recruits on the city and county bonds in which bounties were paid. (The city bonds at this time were worth only seventy to eighty cents on the dollar in greenbacks.)

By October 11, however, the city's quota was reported full. The city bounty committee had paid out nearly $500,000 for 917 men recruited at Rochester and $50,000 more for 115 volunteers obtained by such distinguished talent scouts as Mayor Bradstreet, Alderman Hebing, and Alderman Milliman at Sackett's Harbor, Ogdensburg, and Louisville. The Louisville recruits were negroes, and those from up the lake may well have been Canadians, as were many of the men enlisted at Rochester. Just before election time—hence somewhat unreliably—it was reported by the *Union* that nearly three hundred of the volunteers credited to Monroe County had deserted.[83] Certainly there were enough instances of "bounty-jumping" to scandalize the community. The nearness of Canada made it possible for skillful professionals to enlist and desert repeatedly, each time in a different place, spending the intervals across the border, beyond the reach of federal officials.

The city no longer took such extraordinary pride in particular regiments or companies gathered in the vicinity. It is substantially impossible, indeed, to designate the geographical origin of the later regiments with brevity, except by some such term as "western New York." The 140th seems to have been the last regiment with whose fortunes Rochester saw fit closely to identify itself, although the careers of the 4th and 14th Artillery, the 1st Veteran Cavalry, the 21st and 22d Cavalry, and others were followed with interest.

The Price of Victory

Nearly all of Rochester's soldiers took part in Grant's steady, hard-hitting campaign of 1864. During May and

[83] *Union*, Oct. 25, 1864.

June the papers were full of casualty lists from the successive battles of the Wilderness, Spotsylvania Court House, Totopotomoy, Cold Harbor, and the assault on Petersburg. In addition to the 108th and the 140th, Rochesterians in the 8th and 22d Cavalry, Battery L, the 4th and 14th Artillery, the 1st Sharpshooters, and the 67th, 89th, and 94th Infantry served in these engagements. Their losses were severe. Hardest hit of all were the 140th at the Wilderness and the 14th Artillery at the assault of Petersburg. The 140th's casualties at the Wilderness swelled its total losses in the series of battles to 37 killed, 187 wounded, and 169 missing according to official reports—or even more according to casualty lists which the regimental surgeon sent home to the papers. Among the dead was Colonel Ryan, killed while leading his men in a charge, within a few rods of the rebel lines. Captain Clark wrote in mid-May that the regiment had only 227 men fit for duty, only 9 of them officers. Forty-three of the men were later reported at Libby Prison, Richmond. The 14th Artillery, recruited by Colonel Marshall as a successor to the 13th Infantry, was a large, new regiment, which first saw combat at Spotsylvania Court House. Its *theoretical* strength was 1800, four battalions of 450 each. At Spotsylvania Court House, Totopotomoy, and Cold Harbor, its losses totalled 27 killed, 94 wounded, and 64 missing. At the assault of Petersburg, as related by a letter from Lieutenant J. P. Cleary, the regiment, numbering 930, charged an enemy breastwork at the point of the bayonet, without pausing to fire, and seized a battle flag, 250 prisoners, and a rebel general. Lieutenant Cleary's statement that the regiment came out with only 649 men checks well enough with the official report that they lost at this assault 38 killed, 152 wounded, and 124 missing.[84]

As Reynolds' Battery was somewhat less fatally engaged in this series of battles, Lieutenant Breck found greater leisure to comment upon the army's staggering losses. Gettysburg was eclipsed. On May 13 Breck wrote:

> I believe it is no exaggeration to say, that the campaign of the last ten days in this state, exceeds anything which has ever oc-

[84] *Union*, June 27, 1864.

curred in the annals of all modern warfare. Such terrible fighting, such slaughtering of human beings with war's tortures and deadly missiles, such tenacity and desperation of purpose on both sides to overcome and defeat each other, such displays of bravery, herosim and endurance, such an exhibition of scenes, incidents, and everything associated with the strife and carnage of battle, have but few parallels in history. . . .

Lee has been badly handled, his army has suffered greatly, but I believe he will fight till he has not another man to fight.[85]

At the end of the month, writing of events near Spotsylvania Court House, he struck a lighter note:

Towards evening, bands of music along the federal and rebel lines, almost within sight of each other, struck up several airs most industriously. A Union band would play the Star Spangled Banner, with a response from rebeldom with Dixie. Then the lively music of Yankee Doodle or the patriotic strains of Hail Columbia would be heard, followed on the other side by the Bonnie Blue Flag. The music was variated with the occasional whizzing and zipping of a sharp-shooter's bullet. Is there a greater anomaly in the world than this matter of fighting between man and man?[86]

A month later, in front of Petersburg, he observed that by some private agreement of a completely unofficial and unauthorized character, the pickets of the two armies facing one another had ceased firing and begun to fraternize—a phenomenon earlier noted along the banks of the Rappahannock.

How very quickly this war would terminate if its settlement were left to the soldiers to make. "Tired of the war," is the sentiment of both armies, echoed by that, "we want to go home." And with such a friendly, generous feeling as is now existing and manifested between the two lines of our pickets in our front, is it unreasonable to suppose that the two sides would come together, and that the two parties would coalesce and become one, reforming the Union that had been so long broken, and cementing it with stronger ties and bonds than ever?[87]

Throughout the remainder of 1864 the letters of George Breck, now a captain, continued to express a longing for

[85] *Union*, May 18, 1864.
[86] *Union*, June 21, 1864.
[87] *Union*, July 6, 1864.

peace. So did the letters of other Democratic correspondents, most of whom alluded with far less subtlety to the coming electoral contest between Abraham Lincoln and George McClellan, the soldiers' hero.

Meanwhile increasing numbers of soldiers, originally listed as "missing," turned up in one or another rebel prison. Cavalrymen, particularly, engaged in exploits in the enemy's territory, were frequently listed simply as "missing"; on one raid at the end of June, 80 of the 3d Cavalry, 104 of the 8th, and 125 of the 22d were thus reported. Some of these men came back to the Union lines safely, after exciting adventures. Perhaps the most striking reported in Rochester was the odyssey of some 55 members of the 8th Cavalry, cut off from the rest of the federal forces at Stony Creek, who hid from the rebels and trekked 75 miles through wooded enemy country, over 24 hours without water and three days and nights without food, before reaching friendly territory. When they arrived, wrote "W.H.D.", "Many dropped on the road perfectly exhausted with hunger and fatigue. Such a forlorn set of men I think you never saw. Some without boots, their feet badly swollen, many without hats, others with their clothes torn to shreads, and some with their hands and faces badly scratched, all worn and wasted by hunger and fatigue." The regiment's commander, Major Pope, had escaped separately in more orthodox fashion, alone.[88] More melancholy were the reports which filtered back from rebel prisons. In December a soldier of this same regiment brought back a complete account of its captured members. Twenty-nine of them had died, 88 were still prisoners, and 4 had returned. Among the dead was "Genesee," a former regular correspondent of the *Union*, whose chronically melancholy letters seem rather less overdrawn in the light of his unhappy ending. One of the discharged prisoners brought word that the correspondent and three comrades at Andersonville had died substantially of starvation: "They were too ill to eat the food furnished them and it aggravated the disease they suffered from."[89]

[88] *Union*, July 20, 1864.

[89] *Union*, Dec. 17, 20, 1864.

Care for the Convalescent

In the summer of 1864 the city of Rochester first had occasion to care for really large numbers of sick and wounded soldiers. By July 1, St. Mary's Hospital, which had been opened in 1857 and very substantially enlarged in 1863-1864, reported accommodations for 600 soldiers. Previous to June, however, no such number had been cared for—probably not over 100 at any one time. On May 10, 1863, the hospital had made an arrangement with the government to take care of soldiers, but only 414 were admitted between that time and May 31, 1864. A few of these were "Albanians," for on August 31, 1863, the city fed a hungry Albany regiment, the 177th New York Volunteers, en route from the Southwest to their homes, and local physicians took it upon themselves to transport those who were seriously ill to St. Mary's Hospital for proper care. Dr. Backus, the United States surgeon in Rochester, tried in December to obtain permission for wounded soldiers on leave in western New York to remain in St. Mary's for treatment after the expiration of their furloughs, but the government preferred to keep the men nearer Washington. In January of 1864 the Rochester City Hospital, which had been standing empty for over a year, was formally opened.

At the time of the Battle of the Wilderness, in May of 1864, ex-Mayor Bradstreet and other prominent citizens journeyed South to look into the condition of the wounded from the vicinity and to get those who were well enough to stand the trip transferred to Rochester hospitals. As a result, 375 wounded men arrived in the city by train on June 7, and 73 more on June 17. Ninety-five were admitted to the City Hospital, but the bulk of them were taken to St. Mary's. They made the trip via the horse-drawn streetcars which then graced Rochester's streets. Only about twenty were so seriously incapacitated that they had to be lifted from the cars. Contrary to the assumption of later Rochesterians, very few of these soldiers were residents of the city or even of the county. They came mainly from scattered small towns in western New York, and seem to have been men who for some reason could not be cared for in the place then judged the best—their own homes—but who still preferred to be in

a community where their relatives and friends could visit them upon occasion.

During July, from the second through the fifteenth, a strenuous effort similar to the famous bazaar of December, 1863, was made on behalf of St. Mary's Hospital, in order to defray some of the expenses of the expansion. This time the sponsors constructed a special building, 128 feet by 80, at the corner of State and Allen Streets, to accommodate the throng at the bazaar. The net receipts were gratifying, over $8,000.

Successive groups of wounded soldiers, arriving at the hospitals during 1864 and 1865, caused less stir. Yet by January 25, 1865, St. Mary's had admitted 1,233 soldiers since June 1, 1864, and continued throughout the remaining months of the war to care for hundreds at a time; while the smaller City Hospital received 364 soldiers between June 1, 1864, and June 30, 1865.[90]

Those Left Behind

The city meanwhile had been making some regular provision for the most needy among its own soldiers' families. For a time, the families of those enlisting in regiments other than the 13th and its sister organizations had been obliged to rely upon aid from the regular Poor Fund of the city, or none. In August, 1863, simultaneously with the measure for "relief" from the first draft, the Common Council voted to borrow $5,000 to aid needy soldiers' families. This small sum proved inadequate, of course. Before a new Council took office, April 1, 1864, the Relief Committee expended more than $25,000, and during the succeeding year over $33,000 was thus spent, whereas during 1865-1866, largely after the end of the fighting, the disbursement of nearly $8,000 proved necessary. The burden fell most heavily during the winter months, when it was more difficult for the soldiers' wives to obtain employment and when fuel was a significant added expense, as both coal and wood prices soared. At the end of March, 1865, 431 families were receiving regular aid, at an average rate of "10/s 6/d" a week, the highest weekly allotment being two dollars. Of these families, 163 were Irish,

[90] [*Union* and *Hospital Review*].

108 German, 104 American, 20 Canadian, 16 English, and the rest of scattered nationalities. About a third of the families continued to receive aid after the bulk of the soldiers had come home.[91]

The Presidential Election

The increasing dissension of the year 1864 in Rochester was traceable, of course, not only to growing war-weariness but also to the fact that a presidential election was imminent. As early as the spring municipal elections, local Republicans had come out in favor of a second term for President Lincoln.[92] The *Union* early betrayed the partisan character of much of its criticism of administration policy by taking a stand quite *friendly* to the once-hated Fremont faction, obviously hoping to promote the threatened split in Republican ranks. It had reason to be well satisfied with the candidacy of McClellan, who had long been one of its favorites. It took the Republican party's designation of Lincoln with ill grace, expressing humiliation over the fact that the President of the United States, in the midst of a great civil war, should meet the news of his renomination with a stale joke about "swapping horses."[93] Lincoln's re-election would surely bring "the certainty that 1868 will not see these States freed from civil, if indeed they are not involved in foreign war."[94]

A big ratification meeting in McClellan's honor was held in mid-September, with the usual array of speeches and a procession. "Transparencies," carried by the various groups participating, bore popular mottoes:

> Sheathe the sword and save the Union.
> War makes the rich richer, the poor poorer.
> Despotism is passing away.
> We, the old Thirteenth, know the man; he is our choice. He was our commander at Yorktown, Hanover Court House, Gaines Mill, Malvern Hill, Antietam.
> We go for swapping horses.[95]

[91] Common Council Proceedings, Apr. 1, 1862, June 21, Nov. 15, 1864, Apr. 18, Aug. 8, Nov. 28, 1865, Mar. 27, 1866.
[92] *Union*, Mar. 1, 1864.
[93] *Union*, June 10, 1864.
[94] *Union*, June 9, 1864.
[95] *Union*, Sept. 17, 1864.

Lincoln supporters seized the opportunity to capitalize on the celebration of two military victories—the capture of Atlanta, September 3, and Sheridan's victory in the Shenandoah, September 22—for political speech-making.

In September Democrats made political capital of the ill treatment accorded to federal prisoners, blaming their sufferings on the administration's unwillingness to arrange to exchange white soldiers until the status of colored prisoners should be settled. For two weeks an engraving showing an emaciated specimen of humanity, just out of rebel prison, graced the *Union's* pages.

> Who would be a soldier liable to capture in battle if he fights, liable to die in a pen unfit for swine to inhabit, and when dying to have a deaf ear turned to him by the President of the United States, to have the columns of Federal papers closed against his appeals and have stay-at-home editors, who hold fat offices and enjoy rich contracts, ridicule him in his distress and belie those who intercede for him![96]

The solution of the dilemma was, of course, not necessarily to stay out of the army but rather to vote for McClellan and thus end the war speedily.

Meanwhile the Republicans of the area had staged a three-cornered contest for the Congressional nomination. Roswell Hart, the Provost Marshal of the district, a Radical Republican, won out over the two previous incumbents, Alfred Ely and Freeman Clarke. Many Republicans were dissatisfied with the nomination, ostensibly because Hart's party loyalty had not been unquestioned and because he had promised Ely that he would not be a candidate for Representative if he were granted the position of Provost Marshal. As the congressional district was proverbially Republican, opposition to Hart centered for a time around an independent candidate, James L. Angle, sponsored by Freeman Clarke, J. W. Stebbins, Jacob Gould, William C. Rowley, and others. Angle promised to co-operate with whichever presidential candidate should be elected, working for peace and union without regard for the slavery question. He finally withdrew from the contest, however, and Hart was elected. The

[96] *Union*, Sept. 28, 1864.

Provost Marshal was severely attacked during the campaign as a coal monopolist and also for his conduct in office. Yet the *Union* was later to wish him well as he left his old position, explaining that "When the *Union* has to oppose a candidate for office it does so earnestly, but it does not follow that it should hate the individual ever after or lose respect for him because he happened in the chances of politics to turn up a candidate for office."[97]

Although Rochester's representative in Congress was thus once again a Republican, and a Radical Republican this time, the city's vote showed a slight preference for McClellan, its choice by a majority of less than 100. At this time, it will be recalled, the city had a Democratic mayor but a Republican majority in the Common Council. Rochester was moving away from the Democratic aspect it had assumed in the fall of 1862, when it had repudiated Lincoln's emancipation policy in favor of Governor Seymour's demand for "The Union as it was and the Constitution as it is." But the balance of power still inclined slightly toward the party of protest. That party's organ accepted Lincoln's re-election promptly but grudgingly:

> The New York Times said with bitter truth that a man having a million armed men at his command can do pretty much as he likes. The command of so large an army and the expenditure of some Three Thousand Millions of Dollars within so short a period, are facts of themselves quite sufficient to account for the popular re-adoption of a dynasty whose infidelity to constitutional obligation and the principles of English Liberty has been matched only by the inefficiency of its operations against the "public enemy."[98]

Nor was the *Democrat* ready to forgive and forget. On the contrary, the editor and proprietor, William S. King, announced his intention of showing up Isaac Butts for "a low, vulgar and ignorant person, whose accidental wealth, which he so constantly parades . . . only added to the universal contempt in which he had for years been held, and which has constantly excluded him, and still excludes him, from all respectable society in this community."[99] The *Democrat* was

[97] *Union*, Jan. 30, 1865.
[98] *Union*, Nov. 9, 1864.
[99] *Democrat*, Nov. 14, 1864.

particularly enraged by the *Union's* criticism of abolitionist clergymen for bringing politics into the pulpit.

The Pulpit and the War

Rochester's clergymen differed among themselves as did other citizens, of course. From the beginning of the war they seem without exception to have granted their moral support to the cause of the North, but some "preached politics" while others refrained. Dr. Ezekiel G. Robinson, professor at the Rochester Theological Seminary, appears to have been the most prominent of them in leading the community toward a view of the war as a moral struggle for the extirpation of human slavery. He and Dr. Cutting bore the brunt of Copperhead wrath.

Perhaps the median of the community's religious sentiment concerning the war was portrayed in a sermon preached by Dr. Anderson, Baptist president of the University, at Brick Presbyterian Church late in November, 1864. In 1861, Dr. Anderson had been loath to accept the inevitability of the war and had worked for compromise. In 1864, he mentioned that the conflict would scarcely have been begun if all of its events could then have been foreseen. Yet when war came, he embraced it with vigor and served frequently as an orator at community war gatherings.

In this speech he told at length how the progress of the struggle, both its victories and its defeats, betrayed God's hand. (In those days, even the "infidel" *Union* was wont to explain victory or disaster as Providential.) He noted with pleasure that "We have decided the great question of Universal Democracy—the question of the superiority of man as man whether red or black or white over his accidents of wealth, birth or position." But there was no vengeance in his attitude: "We must prepare ourselves for a new order of things. We must prepare ourselves soon to leave the judgment seat and sit on the mercy seat."[100] This combination of moral opposition to slavery with a forgiving attitude toward the people of the South was typical of Rochester divines.

[100] *Democrat*, Nov. 26, 1864.

The City on Guard Again

In November there was talk of another, more serious threat of trouble from Canada. In August a rumor of plans for a rebel raid on Buffalo, at a time when the 54th Regiment of the National Guard was absent on 100 days' service guarding rebel prisoners at Elmira, had stimulated the formation of a veterans' Home Guard to protect Rochester against attack. Just before the presidential election in November, an anonymous letter from a Canadian source warned Mayor Brackett of a projected rebel invasion from Canada; a communication from a federal official in Canada confirmed the rumor. It was feared that strangers coming from across the border would quietly filter into Buffalo or Rochester and set fire to the city. By way of precaution special vigilance committees were set up in the various wards, a detachment of Veteran Reserves was sent to Suspension Bridge, and a group of the Union Grays manned two guns at Charlotte, examining every vessel which entered the harbor. As no dramatic incidents eventuated, Democrats charged that the whole scare had been concocted for electioneering purposes, but later they joined others in demanding precautionary measures against future threats. It was peculiarly annoying to note that Eastern papers, harking back to the War of 1812, assumed that the fortification of Sackett's Harbor was adequate to ensure the safety of the Lake Ontario border. The *Union* was particularly ill-pleased with the practical result that "the bears and wolves in the John Brown tract will be safe and the waters of Black River will continue to flow to the Lake," while the metropolis of the Genesee lay undefended. The legislature finally passed the Rochester arsenal bill, but practical action was delayed until after the war owing to the state's unwillingness to accept the site on the west bank of the Genesee which the city proffered. A slight scare in March, 1865, passed off with little excitement.[101]

[101] *Union*, Aug. 10, 16, Nov. 7, 11, 30, Dec. 22, 1864, Jan. 17, Mar. 6, 1865.

1865: The Clouds Begin to Scatter

In January both the *Democrat* and the *Union* changed hands. The *Democrat* did not return to its old equivocal stand upon the question of emancipation, but rather rejoiced that "The epithet 'Abolitionist' . . . is no longer a reproach, and still Freedom is marching on."[102] Nevertheless it proffered the olive branch so far as any conflict of personalities was concerned, promising "a good understanding and a careful observance of all the proprieties and courtesies of civilized society."[103] The former junior editors of the *Union*, who now bought out Butts' interest in the paper, were grateful for the courtesy, but within a week the honeymoon was over and normal relations restored, as the *Union* resurrected the question of the treatment of prisoners. The two papers differed, of course, over the antislavery amendment, and even more over the question of Negro suffrage. The *Democrat* admitted that many Negroes were not fit to vote, but suggested the need for some criterion other than race, a literacy test, for example—which would conveniently exclude many a New York Irishman, to boot. The *Democrat* was beginning to breathe an atmosphere of optimism. With it came a diminished worship of the past.

> The "Constitution as it is" is too good for slaveholders to appreciate or traitors to obey. But the patriots of the Revolution wrought and taught to little purpose, if their grand-children are not wiser than they. They made the Constitution so well that we can make it better.[104]

The city's mood lifted as word came of the fall of Charleston and of Columbia, South Carolina. The celebration of those victories brightened Washington's birthday. The spring elections were quiet, resulting in narrow Republican victories, partly as a result of Democratic dissatisfaction with two ultra-Copperhead nominations made by the city convention of that party.[105]

Lincoln's Second Inaugural was received in strictly partisan fashion. The *Union* considered its magnanimous phrases

[102] *Democrat*, Jan. 2, 1865.
[103] *Democrat*, Jan. 3, 1865.
[104] *Democrat*, Feb. 7, 1865.
[105] *Union*, Mar. 8, 1865; *Express*, Feb. 28, Mar. 4, 1865.

"a mere insipid mixture of demagogic drivel and puritanic cant, thrown out as a sop to the fanatics and fools who form the upper and lower strata of Mr. Lincoln's partisans."[106] The *Democrat* believed it:

> Brief, modest, moderate and commendably pious. Its solemn and simple reference to the overruling power of Providence will commend it to the "plain people," who believe that God reigns, and that His favor is vouchsafed to those who are struggling in defense of Liberty, Justice and Humanity against the atrocious barbarism of those who persecute the poor, who rob the laborer of his hire, and who wish to live by "wringing their bread," as the President says, "from the sweat of other men's faces."[107]

Both papers, meanwhile, were and had long been staunch supporters of General Grant. General Sherman also won approval from both, although the *Union* spent its ink in support of his realistic policy toward the Negro while the *Democrat* took it upon itself to defend his practice of merciless confiscation as the shortest road to peace.

An interesting difference arose at this time as to terms of peace, betraying an underlying similarity in spirit. It took the form of a quarrel as to just what terms Lincoln was ready to offer the rebels. The *Union*, still opposed to Lincoln, insisted he would hold out for unconditional surrender. The *Democrat*, loyal to the President, was sure he would accept simply submission to the Constitution and the Laws. Neither, obviously, was talking of a "colonial status" now.

During the early months of 1865 Rochester was called upon to furnish a quota of 651 soldiers, by draft if recruiting were inadequate. Liberal state bounties failed to provide sufficient volunteers, and drafting began, but none of the conscripts actually served, as they were discharged in April.

On March 17, attention was distracted from all other concerns by a flood which became proverbial in the city's history.

Victory

On April 3, at long last, came the news that Petersburg had been evacuated and Richmond had fallen. "The situ-

[106] *Union*, Mar. 6, 1865.

[107] *Democrat*, Mar. 6, 1865.

ation is glorious," wrote the *Union*, "and the prospects all that the most ardent could desire."[108] The *Democrat* heaped praise upon Grant, Sherman, Sheridan, Thomas; Lincoln, Seward, Welles, Stanton; and upon the people of the nation.[109] The *Union* quoted Henry Ward Beecher in favor of clemency to the vanquished.[110] The *Democrat* only suggested gently that "there is a possibility that *rebellions may be made too cheap*."[111]

On April 9 came news of Lee's surrender. The bells of the city rang out the joyous tidings, and thousands of citizens flocked to the Four Corners to vie with one another in celebration. Speeches were inaudible in the happy confusion. Bonfires were built, rockets sent off, guns and pistols fired. Someone set fire to a barrel of petroleum at the corner of Buffalo and State Streets. A cannon was brought out and fired. Rain failed to check the celebration. Next morning the *Union* reported, "To-day everybody smiles but the scalpers," and the celebration was continued that evening, including a salute of a hundred guns.[112]

The joy of the city was only surpassed by the jubilation of its soldiers. The 8th Cavalry, the 4th and 14th Artillery, the 1st Sharpshooters, and the 89th, 94th, 108th, 140th, and 188th Infantry took active part in the Appomattox Campaign. A lieutenant in Company D of the 140th, in a private letter published in the *Democrat*, graphically described the day of the surrender:

> Coming out of the woods, the country was beautifully rolling. From the ridges one could see our battle formtions, concentric to the right or to the left, for miles, four lines deep, at intervals of 150 to 200 yards, and bayonets fixed.
>
> The Sabbath morning was bright and still, save here and there occasionally would fall upon the ear the premonitions of the coming storm.
>
> While in the woods I thought of nothing more, than, perhaps, an hours engagement between the 2d Division and the rear guard of the rebel army. But once out of the woods, where we could see

[108] *Union*, Apr. 3, 1865.
[109] *Democrat*, Apr. 4, 1865.
[110] *Union*, Apr. 5, 1865.
[111] *Democrat*, Apr. 5, 1865.
[112] *Union*, Apr. 10, 11, 1865.

and gather in the mighty movement, and—how are you, Gen. Lee with your Southern Confederacy?

Surrounded in the open country! Here are the Second, Fifth, Sixth and Twenty-fourth Corps of the Union army, with Sheridan and his cavalry—how? Have you reached the last ditch? . . .

Our skirmish line goes out—slowly and surely they move up; "forward!" comes to us, and how the bright bayonets dance and dazzle in the sunlight. The skirmishers have crowded up close under the rebel works, the rapidity and accuracy of their fire making a reply on the part of the rebels a matter of some difficulty. . . .

I'm looking and listening, and wondering for the thunders of a thousand pieces of artillery to break the unnatural stillness.

The rebel artillery has not yet taken the alarm. Do they reserve everything for the onset? But, Gen. Lee, our boys are eager, and excited, and angry; they will make a good fight this morning: a few minutes more will find them rushing upon your demoralized legions, as the waters of Niagara's cataract go rushing down to the whirlpool below. . . .

Still our lines go sweeping on, when my eye caught a movement inside the rebel works, as if they were leaving in haste.

And then from our right along the line comes the "Halt!" I looked for the reason. The alignment was good, the battle formation perfect, the brigades were moving up with the steadiness and precision of a corps review. And then away on the right I half thought my ear caught the sound, "General Lee has surrendered!" "What is it?" asked a thousand anxious listeners; and then it came broad and full, "General Lee has surrendered his entire army."

There was a moment's stillness, without breathing, and then—hurrah! hurrah!! hurrah!!! Hats and caps went up like leaves in the whirlwind, there was swinging of sabres, and cheering, and crying, and whistling, and shouting, and singing, interminably. It seemed as if the tumultous joy would never end; and why should it? Then again "Forward!" for one or two hundred yards; another "Halt! stack arms!" For a few minutes how lively the boys debated as to whether General Lee *had* surrendered—'twas too good news to be true.

Soon after General Ayres rode up in front of our colors (the 140th held a proud position to-day in the front line of battle) and, amid breathless stillness, with uncovered head said, "I have the honor to announce to the Army the surrender of General Lee, in accordance with the terms now being agreed upon." For a minute the boys forgot to breathe, but there could be no mistake about the story now. They were crazy, mad with delight. This was all our fun and early in the day—10 o'clock A. M. 9th of April. With couriers, and signals, and lightnings, you will get the news; then ring the bells and burn blank cartridges, but you are second at the table still.

To me it seemed curious, inexplicable. Did I live? Was I a witness of all this?

"O! my God! I thank Thee that I live!"

Every weary mile between Rochester, September, 1862, and Appomattox Court House, April 9th, 1865, seemed suddenly blazing with glory; every dark and midnight march seemed sublime! Who would not be a soldier now?[113]

Battery L, in the artillery reserve at City Point, received the news only a couple of hours before the citizens of Rochester, Major Breck reported.

For nearly three hours, since nine o'clock to-night, there has been one continuous sound of music playing, of cannon firing and musket firing, of bell ringing on board of boats and steamers, of jubilee and jubilation. The air is all lighted with the blaze of bonfires. Soldiers are singing and dancing, buglers are blowing their trumpets, fiddlers are playing, men are running and jumping, embracing each other, rolling on the ground, standing on their heads, and, in a word, there is the greatest demonstration of enthusiasm I ever heard or witnessed. . . . Words are poor things to adequately express the feelings of the heart over such a triumph as our arms have ultimately achieved. We would render to God devout and reverent thanksgivings for this crowning victory which has caused so much rejoicing to-night. His hand is in the glorious work, and though we ought not, cannot forget the human instruments of our magnificent successes, we must certainly recognize a Divine Power as having brought for us victory over the enemies of our government. With no spirit of boasting or proud exultation would we rejoice over our brilliant achievements. We would cherish and manifest no feelings of vindictiveness or revenge toward our conquered foes, but with loving and generous hearts we would extend to them forgiveness of the past and bid them welcome back to the family of states, acknowledge them as our friends and countrymen. Let there be no barbaric demands which would deny the rebellious people all rights and privileges of American citizenship, or expel them from the land. Let there be no avaricious cruelty indulged, which would take from the *people* of the south, all their lands and estates, their homes and firesides, and bestow them on the soldiers who have fought for our country. Let there be no unjust measures adopted which will rouse the feelings of discord and hatred in the hearts of those who are now the subjects of the federal government. The Southern people are actually, for aught I can see, under our absolute control, and the government can treat them as it pleases, impose any terms it sees fit, can wipe away their late organizations, reduce their States and territories,—

[113] *Democrat*, Apr. 28, 1865.

can, in a word, follow the unjust example of England in her treatment of, and domination over, Ireland. But we are sure our beneficient government will practice no such barbarism. The restoration of peace and brotherhood, true and lasting, is the prayer of the nation, and to accomplish this requires a reuniting of the chords of friendship and good will which this "cruel war" has so sadly severed and shattered. Heaven grant that union and peace, fraternity and freedom, may soon be secured throughout the length and breadth of our land.[114]

The citizens of Rochester were agreed that there was now no point in partisan recrimination. The *Union* was pleased beyond all expectation by the magnanimous terms which Grant has given Lee, and the *Democrat* undertook to defend the same terms of surrender as "substantially unconditional."[115] A few days were sufficient to unearth some hints of the fundamental differences over reconstruction which were to plague the North, but before this process had gone far, the shock of Lincoln's assassination brought to the community a momentary unity unparalleled since Fort Sumter.

Mourning and Vengeance

Lincoln became a hero overnight:

The terrible tragedy at Washington—the foulest blow ever struck at the liberties of our country—is the all absorbing topic in our city to-day. Nothing else is thought of—nothing else talked of, and nothing ever gave cause for such an unanimous expression of sorrow. Business is neglected, and citizens walk about or stand in groups in the streets and public places exchanging expressions of profound regret at the calamity which has befallen the country.

The city wears the aspect of mourning in all quarters. The flags are draped in mourning and suspended at half-mast. Emblems of mourning appear on the public and many of the private buildings, and the tolling of church bells for the religious services of the season adds to the general solemnity. Many, very many citizens were affected to tears as they conversed on the subject. Sorrow for the event and indignation against the perpetrators spoke from every lip and in every eye. . . .

Let us all, sacrificing our preferences and our prejudices upon the altar of our country, rally around the man who rises in the room of a stricken down predecessor, and make him feel that he has the entire physical and moral support of the People to rest

[114] *Union*, Apr. 14, 1865.
[115] *Union*, Apr. 10, 1865; *Democrat*, Apr. 10, 1865.

upon and encourage him in the task of administering the Government in this stormy period of our country's history.[116]

This was the reaction of the "Copperhead" press! The *Democrat* added a vengeful note, blaming the crime upon the South and therefore upon slavery, predicting:

> In the whirlwind of wrath and vengeance which is sure to follow, every vestige of slavery will be swept away. . . .
> If the present feeling could be enacted into deeds, the despised olive-branch which has so long extended over the South in vain would be decorated with ten thousand halters. With the people's sober second thought widsom, prudence and justice will displace revenge; but we trust the intention will never again be entertained to repeal the penalties of treason, or to reinstate its infamous authors as citizens of this good Republic.[117]

On April 19, the Wednesday following the assassination, the city joined in the nation-wide observance of the funeral obsequies of the martyred President. A solemn procession nearly two miles long wound its way to the Court House, where music, prayer, and addresses by Roswell Hart and Dr. Robinson solemnized the occasion. Both orators lauded Lincoln to the skies, but both also drew from the assassination the conclusion that such magnanimity as his had failed, and that treachery must now be punished, not forgiven. Hart's closing sentences were ominous:

> Whatever may be the stern lesson of the hour let us address ourselves to the work, nerved with new courage and animated by the noble example of the great and good man whose loss we this day deplore. Never before have we been so united a people. If lasting peace can only come by not only the destruction of Slavery but of all men whose souls are branded with its leprous stain and debauched by its hellish spirit, let us go on to the perfect work. The nation's life belongs not to us alone but alike to those who come after. Blood and treasure have been spent in vain if after all we have snatched a barren triumph; if "we have scotched the snake but not killed it." In vain is our land draped with weeds of woe, if we are to take again to our bosoms the vipers with fangs steeped with the same poison as before. If as brethren they propose to live with us, they must be brethren in deed and truth—obedient to law—respecting rights of person and property, and arrogating no superiority of birth of blood. They have destroyed

[116] *Union*, Apr. 15, 1865.
[117] *Democrat*, Apr. 15, 18, 1865.

by this last most foul and unnatural murder, that confidence which is the bond of free society; and upon themselves it lies that we now draw back from immediate return to that fellowship we were ready a few short days ago to entertain. Here, by the bier of our murdered Chief, we record our vows that the Union shall be restored and this great Republic saved. Treason has done its worst, and Justice shall now bear the sword. The nation has been redeemed and regenerated, but not yet disenthralled. God demands a still more perfect work.[118]

Strange words with which to commemorate the author of the Second Inaugural!

Ten days earlier one would have assumed that the war was over. The soldiers were done, indeed, with the fighting of battles, and as summer came on "Johnny" came marching home, the 108th first, on the last day of May, honored as Rochester loved to honor its returning sons by a formal escort of the National Guard, the Common Council, the Fire Department, the various civic societies, and a disorderly, pushing, but more welcome crowd of friends and relatives of the men. A brief speech by the mayor in front of the courthouse and dinner at the Brackett House were judged the fitting sequel. Similar festivities greeted the 140th six days later and other groups of veterans arriving subsequently. The fighting was over. But though the more magnanimous among Rochester's returning soldiers might long for "a reuniting of the chords of friendship and good will which this 'cruel war' has so sadly severed and shattered," her representative in the policy-determining body of the nation felt that "a still more perfect work" was demanded; and the bitterness of civil war dragged on.

[118] *Democrat*, Apr. 20, 1865; *Union*, Apr. 20, 1865.