

OTSEGO COUNTY IN THE CIVIL WAR

Firsthand Accounts of War Experiences

BOOK PREVIEW

Compiled by
Otsego County Historical Association
Dominick J. Reisen, Editor

Contributors:

William Beardslee	Richard Graham
Nancy Beardslee	Ronald Jennings
Duane Bliss	Frank King
Anna Buell	David Petri
Leigh C. Eckmair	Sherlee Rathbone
Harriett Geywits	Leslie Rathbun
Virginia Schoradt	



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Firsthand Accounts of War Experiences**
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OTSEGO COUNTY IN THE CIVIL WAR

The story of valor is written,—
How they marched, how they fought and they bled
How few there came back without blemish,
And the many they left with the dead.

John K. Tyler, Company G
Born in Westford

THE PRELUDE

Letter from Abner Doubleday to Ulysses Doubleday
September 23, 1860

Band of North America
Wall Street
New York City

Fort Moultrie, Charleston S. C.

Dear Brother

I will not write to you at present in the way I proposed for I doubt if there will be any necessity for it. A little piece of information was obtained here yesterday, which throws a new light upon the state of affairs here. I have all along been puzzled by the way the people, or rather the leaders of the peoples talk. Secession with every one I meet seems to be a foregone conclusion. They all say as a matter of course they must have the forts if they secede, and yet they do not appear to think of attacking us. They deny all intention of doing so, and no appeals are made to popular passions with reference to this place, which would be made if they really designed to take the forts with a strong hand. I think now I have obtained the key to this mystery Trescott is Asst. Sec of State, and before his late visit to this place was acting as Sec. That is, as one of the cabinet. Being a secessionist and a leader, besides being deeply interested as a resident of the sea-board, he would be likely to ascertain the intentions of Government if any man could. Trescott stated unreservedly in his late visit here that there would be no fighting, that the administration would withdraw the troops in the harbor and give up the Forts to the south if secession took place, but that they would put a revenue cutter or a war vessel of some kind to cruise off the mouth of the harbor to prevent any exit or entrance, and would declare Charleston not a port of entry. In addition to these, all postal and telegraphic arrangements would cease.

I do not believe the Administration have the right to give up one foot of U. S. soil to the State of S. Carolina. Castle Pinckney not only commands Charleston, but the interior passage between Charleston and Savannah.

The conversation alluded to above took place between Trescott and Col. Gardner. Col. G. has now adopted some food plans of defence in case of an attack, but they require us to have ample time for preparation and due notice which is not likely to be given.

Ordering Engineers here to put these Forts in complete order at the expense of the U. S. and then turning them over in that condition to S. C. looks rather queer.

Acknowledge the receipt of my letters alphabetically.

There is a great quantity of broken bone fever about, but we have escaped so far.

With love and regards to all

Your aff. brother

Abner Doubleday

Excerpt from *The Freeman's Journal*, May 10, 1861

A Military Soiree will be given at the Eagle Hotel this [Thursday] evening, by citizens of this place, complimentary to the Officers of the Fifth Division. S. S. Burnside, General. Music by Crumwell's full band.

A number of our citizens meet three or four times a week at Burgess Hall, for military drill. They will be ready to respond to the call of the Government for troops, when needed.

It has been proposed to organize a "Home Guard" for Cooperstown, with the understanding that it shall not be required to leave this village unless invaded.

ENLISTMENT

Letter from Cyrus J. Hardaway of Pittsfield to his Mother December 27, 1861

Albany

Dear Mother

Last night was my first of genuine soldier life We got in Albany at two o'clock PM. And I looked the capitol over and then went to barracks which was the worst thing that I have seen yet. Had frank and beans for supper and each man had to go to the shed and fill his own tick with straw and then march back to the barracks and make up the beds. All we had to do was lay the ticks down and then put the blanket over us and the bed was done. There is about 1500 soldiers in the barracks now of all sorts I slept in a room with about 250 last night Expect to leave tomorrow sometime. The picture that I sent home was for Libbie. Have not been homesick any yet and hope that I shant be. I shall let you know where to write as soon as I can find out myself. Please sent me the Freemans Journal as soon as you can find out where to send it

Your aff son, C. J. Hardaway
Sternbrix Hall



*Cyrus Hardaway (right),
and his friend St. John*

THE WAR FRONT AND THE HOME FRONT

**Letter from Amasa Cook Myrick of Gilbertsville to his Father
December 2, 1861**

Fort Worth

Dear Father,

I received your letter today but there is not much in it. I wish when you write you would tell me what is going on there. There is the devil to pay amongst the boys here and the people at Gilbertsville. Some of the boys receive letters every day stating that some of the boys write home that our Quartermaster Henry Bushnell and Orderly Sergeant Charles A. Hurlbult have connived together to cheat us out of our rations and pocket the money, and today he received a letter that he had been trying to cheat us out of our pay which is all utterly false and very unjust and we have heard that some of our boys have been writing home that this is so. And if this is so I wish you would try and find out who it is. It would oblige us very much, for find out we will if it costs us a journey home and back again. I have heard that I wrote home to you that we had been two days without anything to eat and what we did get was not fit to eat. If this is the case I wish you to write to me and tell me the same and I will have it read before the company and if they wish to tar and feather me they can do so and I will find out about this matter and let me know as soon as possible. We hear rumors every day about the boys that some devilry is amongst us and that we do not like very well.

I can write to you no news of any consequence except within a week there has about 20 thousand troops encamped within half a mile of us and there is about 14 or 16 thousand more coming here this week. We can raise an army of 200 thousand men within 2 hours ride. I wish you would send me a lot of postage stamps. Send me about fifty for we can not get them because we can not get passes to go where they are

and they hate to take the change or money for fear that letters may not reach home.

Please to ask Mr. Green what regiment Isaac is in and the captain's name and what company he is in and if he is near us. I will try to find him. Tomorrow I am going to see Henry Smith. Please write as soon as you get this.

Yours truly,
Cook Myrick

Direct to:

Fort Worth Alexandria, Virginia, 2 Regt. N. Y. V. Artillery Co. E care Capt. Klinck. Please put on these directions.

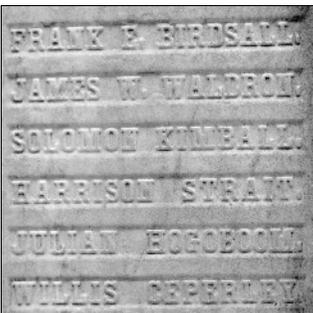
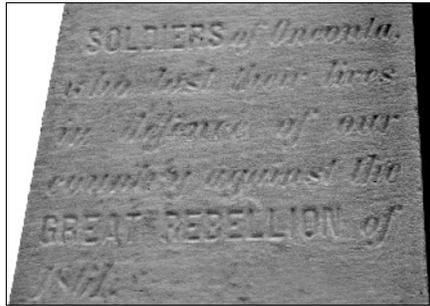
I can not tell you where our flying artillery is for I have not seen it myself.

Please not to sell any of my clothes. If it did not cost you to much I should send home for a pair of boots with legs that comes up to my nees made of kipskin. If you would send me a pair get some that are double soled and he has go the measure of my foot. Get Leland Parks to make them, be sure and not get them to small. They will cost about 5 or 6 dollars and I can not get them here short of 10 or 11 dollars. Our shoes are poor miserable things and will not last more than 2 months. I have got to have some more within 8 [?] weeks at the utmost. I wish you would send me the boots if you can possibly. Our payday comes next January and then I will send you some money.

Cook Myrick

Perhaps you think I have spent all money but I have not yet.

Oneonta Monument



SURRENDER AND AFTERMATH

Excerpt from a Letter from
John S. Kidder of Laurens to his wife, Harriet Kidder
(in *Subdued by the Sword* by James M. Greiner)
March 30, 1865

Camp of the 121st Regt. N. Y.
9 P. M.

Dear Wife,

I have a few words to write as we have rec'd orders this hour from Lt. Col. Olcott that we shall have to storm the enemies works tomorrow morning by daylight. We shall probably move out of our camp about midnight. I think from the plan of battle we shall not have the worst place in the line. I shall leave this letter in the hands of our Quartermaster who will, if I fall, forward it to you. I hope to survive the contest but God only knows. I feel in good spirits. If I should fall do not mourn for me. I leave you and my little girls in much better circumstances than many fathers do. I feel that it is not any more for me to die for my country than it was for poor Brother George or thousands of others. I do not know of anything more to write. Kiss my little Girls for me and bring them up, educate them well. I hope to come home and see them.

Yours truly,
J. S. Kidder