

# Introduction

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On a brisk morning in early fall of 1861, Stephen M. Doyle, adjutant in one of Brigadier General Daniel E. Sickles's five New York regiments, approached a young private. Doyle asked the private to accompany him on an inspection tour of the regiment's outposts and to write down his impressions. The 3rd Excelsior Regiment was deployed around the southern reaches of Washington, DC, part of the capital's defense during those uncertain early months of the Civil War following the Union's defeat at Bull Run. The private, twenty-one-year-old Arthur McKinstry, was thrilled both at the opportunity and that Lieutenant Doyle recognized him as a capable "writing man." But as thrilled as Arthur was, the invitation was not entirely unexpected since McKinstry's prolific writings were well known throughout the company and regiment.<sup>1</sup>

Arthur enlisted that June in a volunteer infantry company forming in Fredonia, New York, eight miles from his home in Forestville. Forestville is one of a number of small villages and hamlets that dotted Chautauqua County on New York State's western edge, which stretched along the shore of Lake Erie. Settlers began moving into the county in the late 1700s and in 1808 the limits of "Chautauque" County were established with the county government formed in 1811, boasting a population of around five hundred souls.<sup>2</sup> By 1861, with the onset of civil war, the population had grown to more than fifty-eight thousand, with much of the local economy focused on farming and the various opportunities provided by Lake Erie.

The Fredonia Censor, Fredonia's local newspaper, owned by Arthur's two uncles, Willard and Winthrop McKinstry, was one of several papers in and around Chautauqua County. From the day of Arthur's enlistment, the young McKinstry and his uncles had a plan; Arthur would send letters home describing the goings on within the company and regiment, with Willard and "Wint" publishing them.

The McKinstry family had had a long and integral relationship with the *Censor*. Willard McKinstry was twenty-six years old when he purchased part ownership of the paper in 1840. McKinstry was well experienced in the newspaper and publishing business and took sole ownership of the paper in 1847. Though Willard was a Democrat, he maintained the *Censor* as a Whig paper through the hiring of various political reporters and editors. In 1851, Willard's younger brother, twenty-three-year-old Archibald Winthrop "Wint" McKinstry, who had worked as an apprentice at the paper for the past seven years, became co-owner.<sup>3</sup>

Following Arthur McKinstry's enlistment, Arthur's "Dear Uncles" pieces became a staple of the *Censor's* war coverage as officers granted McKinstry unprecedented access to the inner workings of the regiment. Arthur concluded that his letters, combined with other material, had made the *Censor* the "military journal" of the region. Other soldiers' letters would be published in the Chautauqua papers, but none would have the detail, frequency, immediacy, consistency, and popularity of Arthur McKinstry's "Dear Uncles."

Arthur McKinstry was born on November 2, 1839, in Chicopee, Massachusetts. His father, William McKinstry, died of consumption when Arthur was five. His mother Mary remarried Austin Chapin and the family, including his sister Laura Jane (called Jennie by Arthur), along with half-brothers Francis (Frank) and Luther, moved to Forestville, leaving his extended family behind in Massachusetts. In Forestville the McKinstry-Chapin family took root.<sup>4</sup> Arthur was articulate and well read, and at age fifteen he was accepted to the US Naval Academy starting in the fall of 1854. The young cadet was eager for his instruction to move from the classroom to shipboard. In fact, so enthusiastic was Arthur that a poem he wrote called "A Sailor's Farewell" was printed in the *Censor*. Early on Arthur found the studies not as "severe" as he had expected, but by November his roommate had moved out and he had collected seventeen demerits during October alone. By January he was struggling in mathematics and was butting heads with the professor. His mother tried to console her son, speculating the instructor had "mistaken your pranking for insolence." Young McKinstry hoped if he could "pass a good examination" all could be set right in mathematics, making up for a host of low marks. However, by May, Arthur had accumulated 140 demerits as he prepared for a series of make-or-break examinations. But a second year at the academy was not to be. Finishing at or near the bottom of his class in nearly every subject, Arthur was deemed "unfit" for naval service and sent home. McKinstry would later call this time at the academy a missed opportunity.<sup>5</sup>

After his time at the Naval Academy Arthur traveled to Mexico and New Orleans. While it is unclear exactly when, for how long, or why he went, these

visits were clearly impactful since he makes reference to both in later letters with his mother. What is clear is that, whatever the circumstances, his health suffered during his absence and he was likely not fully recovered by the time the country began to prepare itself for a looming civil war.

Arthur left for the seat of war that summer of 1861 and maintained a vigorous correspondence with friends and relations. Aside from the pieces intended for publication in the *Censor*, Arthur wrote frequently to his mother, sister, and Uncle Wint. These letters reveal Arthur's personal side, his joys and frustrations of being in the army; his relative success and failures in procuring a watch, respectable boots, a pistol, and the other equipage a proper soldier would need in the field. Arthur took what opportunities were afforded him to write home, be it in his tent with feet up writing by candlelight or at a picket post with the sound of Rebel artillery booming in the distance.

Before the war, Chautauqua County had already established a robust militia regiment in the form of the 68th NYSM under the command of David S. Forbes. When the first call came for three-year volunteers, the county filled its quota by sending five companies from the 68th. Many men and officers active at company and staff levels eventually became fixtures in the newly forming 3rd Excelsior Regiment. Arthur joined a company led by Chautauqua district attorney William O. Stevens. Stevens was a prominent figure in the county by virtue of his public service and his captaincy of the 68th's Company D. This company now formed the nucleus of the unit McKinstry joined and would retain its "Company D" designation in the new regiment. Stevens's reputation as a military man was well established, having led his company to victory in various drill competitions throughout the state. Stevens's quality as a leader was clear as soon as his company arrived for mustering near New York City. His Chautauqua men shone and Stevens was soon offered the position of major, a post he did not accept until receiving the consent of the men he had recruited. Stevens would eventually be offered his own regiment but would elect to stay. Remaining with the regiment initially known as the 3rd Excelsior, Stevens would rise to the rank of colonel, commanding the regiment from late 1862 until his death at Chancellorsville in May of 1863.<sup>6</sup>

Third Excelsior was just one of five regiments belonging to a brigade founded by former United States congressman Daniel E. Sickles. Sickles was a product of New York City's Democratic Party machine. Dirty political tricks and shady dealings were part of the political landscape and Dan was good at all of it, leading him eventually to a seat in Congress. Sickles may have very well stayed in Congress and ridden out the upcoming war on Capitol Hill except for a debacle that threatened to undo him both politically and personally. Though Dan him-



Figure I.2. BRIGADIER GENERAL DANIEL E. SICKLES. Daniel E. Sickles raised the Excelsior Brigade and eventually rose to the rank of major general with command of the entire 3rd Corps. *Courtesy of Library of Congress.*



self never believed much in the sanctity of marriage while he maintained various liaisons around Washington, DC, he never could tolerate the same indifference from his young and attractive wife Teresa. In February of 1859, once he discovered her affair with US District Attorney Philip Barton Key, Sickles murdered the unwitting paramour on the street as he attempted to signal Teresa. The following trial was a national sensation. And though Dan was acquitted on the grounds of “temporary insanity,” his political career was wrecked. Perhaps only something as momentous as a civil war could redeem him?<sup>7</sup>

Sickles received approval in the spring of 1861 to form a brigade of five regiments, which he naturally would command. Dubbed the Excelsior Brigade, after New York State’s motto meaning “Ever Upward,” Sickles promised this brigade would represent the entire state. Sickles was eventually able to cobble together his five regiments, collected from twelve New York counties and five states; these were designated 1st through 5th Excelsior. Eventually these regiments received their official numerical state designations as 70th through 74th New York State Volunteers. And though affectionately still referred to as 3rd Excelsior, McKinstry’s regiment would officially be designated the 72nd New York. Companies formed from preexisting militia units or those with strong company officers and hometown backing like that of Stevens’s Chautauqua boys were the pride of their respective regiments, while many companies had been, as regimental chaplain Father Joseph O’Hagan put it, collected from “the scum of New York society, reeking with vice and spreading a moral malaria around them.”<sup>8</sup> It was into this environment the articulate and well-read Arthur was thrust. He wrote:

Those who were not uniformed when they left home are not yet any better off in that respect than when they started. We are of course in excellent trim, which we owe to the liberality of our friends and the active exertion of the ladies.

Our boys, the Jamestown boys, and the few other companies, occupy the northern part of the ground, and the rest is occupied by, the Lord only knows who. They are the very dregs of humanity, and are raked up from the Points and other places of similar repute. Some are coatless, more hatless, and not a few have blankets girt around them to cover the deficiency of pantaloons. All are outrageously filthy, but as no object in nature is without its use, so they furnish an inexhaustible fund of merriment . . .<sup>9</sup>

Chautauqua County sent more than five hundred men into the 72nd New York Infantry, with many going on to prominent positions within the regiment. But the 72nd was by no means the only unit in which Chautauqua men served. The bulk of the 112th New York Infantry was formed from the county

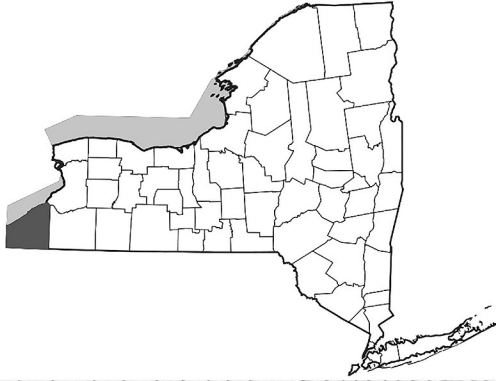


Figure I.3. MAP OF CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY. Chautauqua County is the western-most county in New York, tucked in between Pennsylvania and Lake Erie. This map from 1885 shows the various towns and villages within the county. *Courtesy of New York Public Library.*

as was the 9th New York Cavalry. Four companies of men were raised for duty in the 49th New York Infantry, while numerous other men joined regiments formed from outside the county, including two companies into the 154th New York. In all, almost 2,300 Chautauqua men served the Union in the Civil War, though some calculations put the number much higher.<sup>10</sup>

Because of Arthur's writings in the *Censor*, the Chautauqua companies and the entirety of the 72nd New York had become minor celebrities, at least in the western part of the state—and perhaps in their own minds. With Arthur's letters appearing almost weekly, officers looking to have themselves and their unit portrayed in the best possible light granted the twenty-one-year-old private firsthand access to some of the inner workings of the regiment. "I find that it is a very nice thing to be the correspondent of the *Censor* for I notice that the officers had rather have a good word there than a bad one. Take it all together I am about as well off as a private can be."<sup>11</sup>

This is Arthur McKinstry's story, told in his words and the words of those around him.

### About This Work

Two collections are combined in this work. The first collection was published in the *Fredonia Censor*, most under the heading of "Dear Uncles," and is stored at the Darwin R. Barker Historical Museum in Fredonia, New York. The second collection, mostly letters to McKinstry's mother, is stored at Mississippi State University and included as part of the Ulysses S. Grant Presidential Library. This collection of letters made its way to Mississippi after the war when Arthur's niece, Lucy Chapin White, moved there to be near cousins who had migrated south prior to the war. All of McKinstry's letters are presented here in the sequence written, though it should be noted the "Dear Uncles" pieces did not appear in print until several days after Arthur penned them.

These letters are presented in their entirety in order to understand the full scope of Arthur's experiences. Unfortunately, because of the condition of portions of the letters, and some faulty storage of these papers, a few words and phrases are illegible. In these cases, the missing phrases will be marked with ellipses or a "best guess" effort will be made and set off by brackets. Arthur McKinstry sometimes wrote with a marvelous dramatic flair and often with a sentence structure to match. Unfortunately, Arthur's lack of punctuation makes understanding these passages difficult at first glance. In order to facilitate smooth reading, some punctuation has been added to tidy up a particular sentence's flow. Perhaps it was Arthur's "stream of consciousness" style of writ-

ing or his desire to save space, but there is very little use of paragraph conventions and subjects often change without notice. To help with this transition, a few paragraph breaks have been inserted. Other word use, such as “tomorrow” written as two words, “to” and “morrow,” for example, will be left alone as they do not detract from the flow of the piece. Arthur also had a fondness for using foreign words and phrases, along with references to works of literature. While these phrases may have been common in the McKinstry household, many are somewhat obscure and arcane to the modern reader. Definitions or explanations of these words and phrases are included with each letter. Arthur also makes frequent references to friends, relatives, fellow soldiers, or characters from various pieces of literature. Every attempt has been made to identify these people or characters, but when Arthur provides too little information, the true identity of these references will unfortunately remain hidden.

While Arthur McKinstry clearly finds the institution of slavery immoral, he still remains a man of his times and occasionally uses racist terminology when referencing African Americans that would be deemed offensive today. These terms will appear unedited within the body of his letters, if for no other reason than to shed light on the dispassionate use of these dehumanizing terms even among more enlightened Northern men.

It is unfortunate this collection does not include the entirety of Arthur’s writings. In letters home there are several references to letters sent to this or that friend or distant relative. It is reasonable to assume these letters, while personal in nature, will not shed much additional light on Arthur’s personal trials, camp life, or politics within the company, regiment, and brigade.

This work also includes letters, reports, and newspaper pieces not written by Arthur McKinstry that are set off by the heading “Other Voices.” These “other voices,” along with a limited amount of notes, will serve to highlight, provide context, or to otherwise illuminate Arthur’s writings and experiences. The final chapter will briefly describe the remaining experience of both Arthur’s regiment, the 72nd New York, and the Excelsior Brigade after his death in May of 1862 and shed light on the fate of some of the men mentioned prominently by Arthur. An appendix includes additional primary source material, supplemental to Arthur’s story. Material in the appendix includes items such as company rosters, officer reports, and newspaper pieces germane to Arthur’s experience.

Please enjoy.

Sincerely,  
Rick Barram

**GOOD MEN TO THE RESCUE!**

**CHAUT. CO.**

**BATTALION!**

I AM AUTHORIZED TO RAISE SIX COMPANIES OF MEN IN THIS COUNTY TO BE ATTACHED TO

**COL. N. TAYLOR'S REGIMENT,**

**EXCELSIOR BRIGADE,**

So as to form with Companies from this County, already in that Regiment, a

**CHAUTAUQUA BATTALION.**

An opportunity is now offered all good men who desire to defend the good old Flag of our Country, and preserve and vindicate its Constitution, to join their brothers, friends and neighbors in the same regiment, and stand shoulder to shoulder with them. The Regiment is now at the seat of war in face of the enemy.

Men enrolling themselves will **RECEIVE PAY FROM THE DAY THEY SIGN THE ROLL.** They will be mustered in immediately by me.

**PAY FROM \$13 to \$24 PER MONTH!**

Clothing, Boarding, and, in case of sickness, medical attendance and medicine found, and a **BOUNTY OF \$100 IN GOLD,** when discharged.

**The Men will be Boarded and Lodged from the day that they Enlist.**

Those enlisting at Dunkirk will apply to Lieuts. L. MARCUS and D. LOEB, at

**GERMANIA HALL, BUFFALO ST. DUNKIRK.**

**JAMES. M. BROWN,**

Capt. 3d Reg't, Excelsior Brigade, Recruiting Officer.

Union Print, Dunkirk.

Figure I.4. CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY RECRUITING POSTER. Recruiting in Chautauqua County in spring of 1861. *Courtesy of Heritage Auctions, HA.com.*

## From the Fredonia Censor: June 12, 1861

### Muster Roll of Company D

Muster Roll Company D of Dunkirk—We copy from the Union, the names of the members of this Company, (which left for New York on Thursday of last week, with Company E, whose names are not furnished.) as follows:

Captain, Wm. O. Stevens,	Dunkirk
1st Lieut., Caspar H. Abell,	"
2d Lieut., H. C. Hinman,	"
1st Sergeant, J. H. Howard,	"
2d " Wm. H. Post	"
3d " Daniel Loeb	"
4th " Samuel Bailey	"
5th " George W. Fox	"
<i>No Corporals yet appointed.</i>	
Webster Averill	Villanova
Oscar Ames	Hanover
Thos. Barton	Dunkirk
Wm. Babcock	"
L. H. Belknap	Springfield, Pa.
J. T. Boughton	Dunkirk
W. C. Brooks	"
Geo. H. Bush	Silver Creek
Wm. Bruning	"
Henry Beverly	Smith Mills
James Bowen	Dunkirk
Martin Boyden	Ellery Center
Milo Bailey	Stockton
Henry Brevier, drummer	Silver Creek
Horace A. Cox	Dunkirk
W. F. Chapman	Versailles
N. D. Clark	Laona
H. F. Ellis	"
C. A. Foss	Dunkirk
Frederick F. Francis	Centerville
Francis Ferry	Hanover

Marvin H. Farnsworth	Gowanda
W. H. Godfrey	Ellington
Hiram B. Gilbert	Cherry Creek
Onan Griswold	Sheridan
Mathew I. Gifford	"
B. Getz	Dunkirk
Frank Grey, fifer	Evans Station
Almond B. Hamilton	Fredonia
Frank Halsey	Laona
Francis M. Halsey	"
Alfred A Jewell	Dunkirk
J. Kennedy	"
J. Kramer	"
Harvey T. Lopez	"
Joseph Laughlin	"
Ira S. Lewis	Silver Creek
John Leroy	"
G. H. Lewis	Sheridan
Stephen H. Lines	Dunkirk
Otis B. Luce	"
Charles H. Ludlow	"
Chas. H. Miller	Silver Creek
Percival R. Moon	Villanova
Jas. D. Mount	Cherry Creek
Arthur McKinstry	Forestville
Daniel Nichols	Cherry Creek
John Neupling	Stockton
Lee O'Donaghey	Silver Creek
Allen Pickard	Ellery
F. A. Pickard	"
Augustus A. Page	Fredonia
W. H. Porter	Cherry Creek
Geo. F. Parker	Versailles
Jas. K. Palmer	Gowanda
David B. Parker	Ellery Center
Wm. H. Pugh	Dunkirk
R. Riley	Portland
Richard Ransom	Ellington

E. L. Row	Cherry Creek
Carmi T. Ryther	"
C. H. Sanborn	Dunkirk
Christopher Schutt	"
John Story	Cherry Creek
G. W. Shelly Fredonia	
W. Simpson	Dunkirk
Chas. H. Stillman	"
Wm. Schindler	"
R. Stafford	"
Jerome C. Sprague	"
Wm. H. Staats	Gowanda
Wm. Squire	Forestville
Chas. F. Sisson	Gowanda
August Schlutter	Buffalo
Henry Squire	Forestville
Daniel Tyrrell	Dunkirk
Chapin Tiffany	"
Frederick Tide	"
George Tate	Fredonia
S. Taylor	Portland
Jas. H. Vanbatten	Dunkirk
J. Vanhausen	Cherry Creek
C. Van Wormer	"
Claus H. Wriborg	Dunkirk
Jas. G. Warner	"
D. W. Worth	"
Ferdinand Weiler	Dunkirk
T. D. Walden	"
A. M. Wright	Elmira
J. Whitney	Portland
Melvin E. Wright	Villanova
Geo. Whitney	Fredonia
Chas. Youly	Dunkirk
Carl Zents	Dunkirk



CHAPTER I

Installed among  
Fine and Gentlemanly Fellows

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*End of May to Mid-July 1861—  
Joining Up and Departure for New York City*

Off to New York to join the brigade • Impressions of men and officers • Rigors of soldiering • A nasty surprise at Bull Run and a call for capital protection

Dunkirk May 27th, 1861

Dear Mother,

I safely arrived here and am installed among as fine and gentlemanly a set of fellows as I ever have seen. Several from Forestville. Tom Brown, Frank Kennington and some others mean to join but they are too late for we are already over full and can take no more. I stand drill first rate and the erect position favors me. I have not yet been examined by a surgeon but I believe I can pass. I met Uncle Willard to day and I expect that he will give me a letter of introduction to the Captain to-morrow and take care of my citizens clothes. I could not get my portrait to-day owing to the crowd of similar applicants but will try to do so early in the morning and send it with this in time for the mail. We shall not go before Wednesday.

I am much pleased with my situation. We stop at the Eastern Hotel and there is no distinction made between us and the most wealthy guests.

Your aff. son

Arthur

Dunkirk May 27<sup>th</sup> 1861  
Dear Mother,  
I safely arrived here and am installed among as fine and gentlemen a set of fellows as I ever have seen. Several from Forestville, Tom Brown, Frank Kensington and some others mean to join but they are too late for we are already over full and can take no more. I stand with first rate and the exact position favors me. I have not yet been examined by a surgeon but I believe I can pass. I met Uncle Willard to day and I expect that he will give me a letter of introduction to the

Figure 1.1. LETTER TO MOTHER. Arthur McKinstry's first letter to his mother after leaving home. Courtesy of Ulysses S. Grant Presidential Library.

## Other Voices: From the *Fredonia Censor*

Published May 29, 1861

### OFF FOR THE WARS

The first companies accepted from this County for service in the war are to leave for New York to-day. They consist of three volunteer companies, one commanded by Capt. Brown, of Jamestown, the other by Captains Stevens and Barrett, of Dunkirk, and go from that village. They are designed for Gen. Sickles' brigade, now organizing on Staten Island, which volunteers for the war. Under the arrangement each company is required to comprise at least 101 men, including officers and privates. We understand that Capt. Stevens' Co. has enlisted about 125 men, and that Capt. Barrett has also enlisted a surplus, sufficient to supply the places of those who may not pass inspection.

. . . The ladies of our village turned out patriotically, on Saturday last to make up the outfits for the soldiers, at Concert Hall. Through their exertions the recruits will be sent forward well clothed, and doubt not they will prove a body in which the County may take a laudable pride.

On Staten Island a camp of instruction is to be formed, of 60,000 men. Eighteen rifled cannon have been engaged for General Sickles' brigade . . .

### Editorial Notes

By the end of May 1861, Daniel E. Sickles's Excelsior Brigade moves its base of operations to Staten Island and out of New York City, where the newly forming brigade was fast outgrowing their hastily organized accommodations. Fort Tompkins is a mobilization center located on Staten Island. While Sickles was originally charged with recruiting a regiment, his commission is soon changed to the formation of a brigade thanks to his successful recruiting. Sickles nominally holds rank of general since he commands the brigade, though officially still only a colonel.<sup>1</sup>

Nelson Taylor is designated colonel of Sickles's 3rd Regiment, receiving its numerical designation 72nd New York later on. Taylor is a veteran of the Mexican War and a prominent member of the early California political scene. Taylor eventually returns to New York, receiving a law degree in 1860 and failing in a bid for congress that same year.<sup>2</sup>

### Other Voices: New York City Newspaper Coverage of Sickles's Recruiting Efforts

#### EXCELSIOR REGIMENT.

The headquarters of the Excelsior regiment is at the City Assembly Rooms, in Broadway, the whole of the building being devoted to the officers of the regiment, and it is needless to add that the spacious room is admirably adapted to the purpose of drilling the recruits. Our readers are already apprised of the organization of this regiment, which is to be under the command of Colonel Daniel E. Sickles. There are over five hundred members enrolled, and the good work is speedily going on. Captain Bradlee, the efficient recruiting officer, is exerting himself to complete the requisite number (1,200) as soon as possible. The men are undergoing thorough discipline under the instruction of competent military men, and if we may judge from their performances last evening, the name of the regiment will indicate its efficiency when it is called to active duty. A portion of the recruits are able to furnish themselves accommodations outside the building, but those who are not are kept in the Assembly Rooms, and furnished with comfortable sleeping apartments and substantial food.<sup>3</sup>

*Fredonia Censor: Published June 5, 1861*

From the Chautauqua Boys

We have received the following letter from a volunteer in Captain Stevens' Company.

Camp at Ft. Tompkins, near N.Y., Staten Island, June 2, 1861

Dear Uncles:

As I promised, I write to inform you at the first opportunity of our past adventures and present situation.—After leaving Dunkirk we passed the evening with song and music, and cheers from the crowds assembled along the line, in the jolliest manner imaginable. In the morning we arrived at the city, and were received by a battalion from Port Jarvis, and reviewed by our Colonel, and inspected by our Brigadier General, Sickles. This part of our adventures however, you have probably learned from the *Herald* of Saturday. As we entered the Park barracks I heard a citizen exclaim, as he glanced at our tall front files, "My God! There's men for you!" Our men were much admired by the crowd which lined the streets for their fine, erect bearing, and their straight lines. After dinner we marched to the Ferry, and were brought over to the Island and marched to Camp Scott, two and a half miles from the landing.

Here we were drilled a little—went through a dress parade, and finally marched through a dress parade, and finally marched to our present quarters, where we are very comfortable and in fine health and spirits.—Yesterday we marched down to where Capt. Brown, and those who previously arrived, were encamped. There we drilled until 11:35, when word came that we were selected as part of the escort of the famous 7th. Instanter we were in line and off at quick for the landing, which was two and a half miles off. We were there before the required time which was 12 P.M. We crossed over by the ferry, which is several miles wide. And after marching for some time through the principle streets, we were drawn up in line to receive the Seventh. After waiting for some time they appeared, and marched past in fine order by platoons, preceded by their howitzers which they took with them. We then marched after them with double files until we reached Broadway, when, as we reached it, we flanked by the left in platoons, and passed its entire length in lines which were unsurpassed by any on the ground, not even the Seventh its self, if I may credit the expressed opinion of spectators and my own critical observation. Twice we passed them in review, and each time they returned the compliment. Many inquired eagerly of our men to what regiment we belonged, and expressed much

admiration at their fine marching order. After drilling pretty nearly until noon yesterday, we marched about twenty miles, and if the Seventh made half work for the enemy that they made for us, they deserved well for their country. On our entry Friday, we were greeted by roars of applause that drowned our music.

On our journey down the Captain telegraphed ahead for coffee, as occasion required, and thanks to the ladies, we did not lack for provisions, and first-rate at that. Indeed, even now, whenever we get hungry we nibble away at the contents of the baskets, and invoke a hearty blessing upon the ladies of Chautauqua. Thanks to them also for our Havelock's and housewives, which are stored with many usual things. The towels are in use, for we quarter upon the shore at the Narrows, and can bathe at pleasure. The Havelock's are a great protection against the sun, and yesterday they were very useful indeed. I will soon write again and enter more into minutia. It is not yet decided whether we receive the Minie or Enfield rifle.

Yours truly,

A. McK.

*7th*: the 7th Regiment of the New York Militia, aka the “Silk Stocking” regiment, was an infantry regiment also known as the “Blue-Bloods” due to the disproportionate number of its members who were part of New York City’s social elite.

*Instantly*: immediately; without delay.

*Havelock*: cloth covering attached to a cap to protect the neck from the sun or bad weather.

*Minie*: probably shorthand for the Springfield rifle, or any rifle capable of accepting the Minie-styled conical bullet.

*Enfield rifle*: British import rifle considered equal to the Springfield.

Other Voices: *Fredonia Censor*; Departure and Arrival

Published June 5, 1861

DEPARTURE OF THE VOLUNTEERS.

The two Volunteer Companies of Captain Stevens and Barrett raised in Dunkirk, departed from that village on Thursday last, by Erie Railroad, for the encampment of Gen. Sickles' brigade on Staten Island. The acceptance of these companies is mainly due to the energy of Captain W. O. Stevens . . . Secretary Cameron [Secretary of War Simon Cameron] . . . was so favorably impressed with Capt. Stevens' energy and military spirit that he offered him a commission as Captain in the regular service, which the former with a true soldierly spirit of honor, declined to accept no less he could first secure the consent of his company. After his return from Washington a telegraphic dispatch was received offering to accept two companies from this section to be attached to Col. Taylor's Regiment in the Sickles Brigade. Within a week from the reception of the dispatch the men had been enlisted, uniformed, and equipped with havelocks, handkerchiefs, and other necessary articles, ready to march . . .

Published June 5, 1861

ARRIVAL OF TROOPS IN NEW YORK

The *Tribune* of Saturday notices the arrival of the troops in the city in the following complimentary manner:

Two companies of 108 men each, under command of Capts. W. O. Stevens and P. Barrett, arrived in this city from Dunkirk yesterday. They formerly belonged to the 68th Regiment N.Y.S.M., but the prospect of the 68th reaching the seat of war being very doubtful, they retired from the militia ranks and volunteered for the campaign. Their uniform consists of light-blue army overcoats

and pantaloons, and brownish gray chasseur jackets and caps. They have brought neither arms nor equipments, as these will be supplied in the city, where they are to be embodied in the Sickles' Brigade.—

They were escorted from the Erie Railroad Depot to the Park Barracks by Capt. Bradley's and Capt. Mahan's companies of the Jackson Regiment with Dodworth's Band where they partook of a sumptuous breakfast of eggs, steak, roast beef, potatoes, bread, radishes, green onions, and coffee. At 12 o'clock, they were reviewed by Gen. Sickles and staff and Mayor Wood. During the afternoon they proceeded to Staten Island.—

The uniforms of the Dunkirk Volunteers are the gift of citizens of Dunkirk. Two handsome flags were presented to them by the ladies of Dunkirk on the eve of their departure. Their soldierly appearance is highly creditable both to the men and the officers.

**Other Voices: *Fredonia Censor*,  
Making an Impression in New York City . . .**

Published June 12, 1861

From the Camp

June 6, 1861

Dear Sirs,

I embrace this first opportunity to write to you . . .

. . . Our Camp is situated on Staten Island, about twelve miles from New York. It is the most delightful spot on earth, so far at least as I have seen. The encampment comprises part of the Sickles Brigade, there being other camps of the same on Long Island and in New York City. Our Regiment is composed of 8 companies, so far—3 of which are from Chautauqua county,