

## Carlisle Barracks — 1854-1855:

From the Letters of Lt. Thomas W. Sweeny, 2nd Infantry

*Edited by Richard J. Coyer*

### INTRODUCTION

In July 1855, six companies from the 2nd Infantry took possession of an old fur trading post on the banks of the Upper Missouri River and transformed it into a base of operations against the Sioux.<sup>1</sup> But before setting out on this assignment, the officers and men of this regiment spent almost a year and a half at Carlisle Barracks filling their ranks, drilling, and preparing for service on the prairie. Among the officers in this contingent was 34-year-old Lieutenant Thomas William Sweeny.

A native of County Cork, Ireland, Sweeny and his family came to the United States in 1832 and settled in New York, where he received his education and later apprenticed to a book publisher. Sweeny also belonged to "military and literary" clubs in the city, and it was through these associations that he received a commission in the 1st New York Volunteers when the Mexican War started.<sup>2</sup> The regiment took part in the drive from Veracruz to Mexico City, and suffered heavy casualties in the battle of Churubusco. Among those casualties was Lieutenant Sweeny, whose right arm was amputated.<sup>3</sup> After the war he received a commission in the 2nd Infantry and served at San Diego and Fort Yuma in Southern California from 1849 to 1853.<sup>4</sup> He returned to New York in January 1854, and after a brief stint on recruiting duty joined his regiment at Carlisle Barracks in September of that year.<sup>5</sup>

Sweeny served twice on the Upper Missouri and then had a two-year assignment on general recruiting duty before the outbreak of the Civil War. He spent the first year of the Civil War in Missouri. There he played a major part in keeping the state from seceding and was shot in the leg at the battle of Wilson's Creek. He saw action at the battles of Shiloh (where he was wounded in his good arm) and Corinth; his performance in the latter engagement earned him the rank of brigadier general of volunteers. Sweeny later commanded a division in General William T. Sherman's Atlanta Campaign.<sup>6</sup>

In 1866 the Army dismissed Sweeny for his involvement with the Fenian Brotherhood (an organization seeking to free Ireland from British rule), but reinstated him 18 months later. During Reconstruction he commanded troops in Augusta and Atlanta,



Georgia. The Army retired Sweeny with the rank of brigadier general on May 11, 1870 and he spent the rest of his life in retirement. Thomas W. Sweeny died on April 10, 1892, in Astoria, New York.<sup>7</sup>

What follows are nine letters Sweeny wrote to his wife, Ellen,<sup>8</sup> from Carlisle Barracks. In these letters he talks about his fellow officers, some he and his wife already knew, others new acquaintances, including recent West Point graduates. The letters also contain gossip around the post, news about their upcoming assignment, the excitement over forthcoming promotions, and information on the daily chores of garrison duty.

These letters are part of the Thomas W. Sweeny Papers (Letterbook SW862) at the Henry E. Huntington Library in San Marino, California, and are published here with their permission.

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Carlisle Barracks, Pa.,  
September 4, 1854,

My own sweet Ell.:

I received your dear letter yesterday, which gave me infinite pleasure to learn that you and our darling children were in the enjoyment of good health . . . and everything going on as well as I could expect under the circumstances. I have been quite busy since my arrival here, in closing up my Recruiting Accounts, which I forwarded on Saturday last [September 2], complete, and the ordinary garrison and company duties. I have made several pleasant acquaintances in the town of Carlisle through the medium of Capt. Davidson,<sup>9</sup> among whom are the family of Capt. Brent<sup>10</sup> of the Quartermaster Dept., Major Merchant's<sup>11</sup> family, whom you recollect were at Fort Columbus [New York] in 1848, (though I can hardly call them new acquaintances,) yet it is so long since we met, that it appears as such: the Major is in Minnesota at present, detailed on the same Court<sup>12</sup> Gen. Hitchcock<sup>13</sup> is on, and expects to be ordered to California when he gets through with that duty: his family will accompany him:—Capt. Merchant,<sup>14</sup> his son, is also here . . . and is on leave at present: we did not know him, he belongs to the 8th Inf., and shops with his mother in town: old Mrs. Merchant & her daughter inquired very kindly after you, which I was very much obliged to them for. We all went to the Episcopal Church on Sunday, and Davidson & myself dined the same day with Mrs. Brent, whose husband I saw in California in 1852: she has treated us very kindly indeed: Capt. B[rent] is stationed at [Fort] Vancouver in Oregon [Territory] at present, where she thinks of joining him this winter. . . . [I]n fact, every body seems bent on making us feel as happy and contented as possible while we remain here, which we ought to feel truly grateful for: but still, dear Ell., there is one thing wanting, which all the pleasures of this world, and all the kind attentions of our friends cannot supply, and that is,—the presence of my dear wife and children . . . Davidson left this morning for Washington, which leaves me in command of the H[ea]d. Qu[arter]s. of the 2d Inf. with six commissioned officers





FIGURE 1. Thomas W. Sweeny, as a captain at the start of the Civil War. Courtesy National Archives and Record Service.



and about two hundred enlisted men subject to my orders. Lt. McArthur<sup>15</sup> of the 5th Inf. arrived here today with a Detachment of twenty-five Recruits for Company "M" 2d Art[iller]y., he leaves here tomorrow for Fort Columbus: I have given him your address, and told him he must call with his wife (who is in New York) to see you . . . Capt. Lovell,<sup>16</sup> 2d Inf[.], is expected here every day: Lt. Curtiss,<sup>17</sup> with part of his Company, is here at present. We expect to be ordered to Fort Laramie or Kearney [sic] the two posts nearest our Indian troubles, but are uncertain as to the time of leaving. If we are to remain here until next Spring, do you think, Ell., that your health would permit you to accompany me?<sup>18</sup> I'm afraid, dear Ell., to expose you to the hardships of a journey of such a distance: however, let me know what you think about it, as I shall be guided entirely by your advice in this matter. If they have decided upon sending our Companies West this Winter at Washington, Davidson will find out as soon as he gets there, and will Telegraph to me immediately of the fact, upon the receipt of which I will write to you: in that case, of course, it would be impossible for you to accompany me . . .

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Carlisle Barracks, Penn.  
September 28th, 1854.

My Dearest Ell.,

I arrived here yesterday from Philadelphia, having stopped there all day Tuesday [September 26] on account of meeting some friends who had heard of my coming, and insisted upon my remaining with them at least one day; so I sent on my baggage with the Detachment, and remained with them until Wednesday morning at 7 1/2 o'clock, when I bade them a last farewell for several years at all events. They treated me very handsomely, and escorted me to the cars when I was leaving. I arrived here about 2 o'clock in the afternoon, just in time to take dinner with the Mess. They were all very pleased to see me. It is a beautiful place, and about three quarters of a mile from the town of Carlisle. The officers here at present are Capt. Davidson, who is in command of the post; Dr. Madison,<sup>19</sup> who has his family here; Lt. Paige,<sup>20</sup> 2d Inf., who got out his Buggy the afternoon I arrived and gave me a delightful drive around the country . . . Lt. Curtiss, who sends his kindest regards to all the folks in Brooklyn; Lt. Kellogg,<sup>21</sup> who is not yet married, but expects to be next month; Lt. Smead,<sup>22</sup> 2d Artillery, just from West Point, and whose mother & sisters live here in Garrison on a pension they receive from Uncle Sam since the death of their natural protector, Capt. Smead,<sup>23</sup> of the 2d [sic, 4th] Artillery. We are likely to remain here until Spring,—so Davidson says; but Quien sabe? [who knows] something may turn up in the mean time that will send us somewhere muuy pronto [very soon].<sup>24</sup> General Hitchcock will not be back much before November, and then we may probably find out something about our destination. I have told Davidson that I intend to get on General recruiting service if I could; he said he couldn't blame me, but he would be very sorry to lose me for two years. I will write to you soon and give all the news on this part of the world:



I must now close, as the mail is about being sent off. . . .

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Carlisle Barracks, Pa.,  
October 11, 1854.

My own darling Ell.;

I received yours of the 6th and 7th the day before yesterday, and would have answered it sooner, but that I had to go with Capt. Lovell yesterday morning for the purpose of showing him where to purchase some articles of furniture for his quarters, he being unacquainted with the different localities about town. He arrived here with his family on the 5th., but did not assume command until the 7th.; Mrs. Lovell, Miss Lovell, three children and a servant, are living in garrison: when I called on them, Mrs. L. inquired particularly after you, and was surprised to find you were not here, and wanted to know the reason? I told her that your health was in such a state, that it would not be prudent for you to travel at present, and therefore I insisted on your remaining at home until Spring at least, when, if the state of your health permitted, you would probably join me at this place. . . .

I have received a letter from Davidson since his arrival in Washington, and he informs me that we are to remain here, in all probability, until next Spring; it is then contemplated to send a considerable force against the Sioux and Pawnees, consisting of Infantry, (our Regiment,) Light Artillery, and Dragoons in order to chastise them for the many depredations they have recently committed, and particularly for the murder of poor Lt. Grattan and his party of thirty men.<sup>25</sup> It is expected that the Campaign will last all summer, and that there will be considerable promotion in the different corps engaged before it terminates: who knows but I may be a captain about this time next year! wouldn't that be fine? . . . I think, dear Ell., that your determination to join me next spring will have to be reconsidered, on account of the difficulties with the Indians, and the determination of our Government to prosecute the war against them with vigor: however, when I see you, we will talk over the matter. . . . As the hour for closing the mail is drawing nigh, I must come to an end. . . .

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Carlisle Barracks, Pa.,  
October 27th 1854.

My own sweet Ell.;—

I received your kind letter of the 23rd which has relieved my mind from a world of anxiety and apprehension, as I feared you were unwell, not having received your answer to mine of the 17th sooner. I was at drill when it came, and immediately halted the Company and brought it to a rest, to enable me to read it, as my anxiety was such that I had not patience to wait until the drill was over. After the perusal of your letter I felt quite relieved. . . .





FIGURE 2. *Carlisle Barracks, about 1859. Photo Collection, CCHS.*

Lt. Wright<sup>26</sup> was here about a week ago, and stopped a few days with us. He is recruiting for our regiment in Baltimore at present. He brought on a Detachment of Recruits.—He has applied for leave, and will get it as soon as some one can be found to relieve him in the recruiting service. . . . Lt. Washington<sup>27</sup> of the 1st Inf., who is Recruiting at Harrisburg, came on here with Wright and left at the same time. He is a very nice fellow, and gave me a very pressing invitation to run down and spend a few days with him, which I promised to do. . . . Lt. O'Connell<sup>28</sup> arrived here with a detachment of recruits the day before yesterday, and left for Cleveland, Ohio, where he is recruiting, yesterday morning. He would have remained two or three days with us, were it not that he promised Lt. Kellogg that he would attend his wedding . . . Lt. McLean<sup>29</sup> is recruiting in Louisville, Ky., and Maj. Wessells<sup>30</sup> is recruiting at Utica, N.Y. Companies "G" and "D" are still to be filled, when the regiment will be re-organized. It is rumored, and generally believed by the officers here, that the Companies of the 2d Foot, will be filled up to 84 rank and file: they are now only 52, including non-commissioned officers and field music[ians], (fifer & drummer.) That was the strength of our companies, you recollect, when we went to California, but they were soon reduced to a very low standard after getting to San Diego.<sup>31</sup> There is a rumor in circulation here, that we are to be ordered out West before the cold weather



sets in, but we do not believe a word of it for two good reasons, viz: first, because it is too late in the season to think of going so far north this winter:—and, 2nd it would be impossible to fill up our Companies to the contemplated standard,—84 rank & file,—before next spring, unless, indeed, they assigned general recruits to our regiment, which they are not at all likely to do; so that the probabilities are that we remain here this winter, and start early in the spring to enter on a vigorous campaign against the Sioux and Pawnees, who are becoming more and more impertinent every day since the massacre of Grattan and his party. . . .

Capt. Davidson applied for a leave of 4 month's about a week ago to Genl. [Winfield] Scott, and was refused: he received the answer yesterday. He intends applying to the Secretary of War [Jefferson Davis] now for six months leave,—he thinks he'll get it! Lt. Smith<sup>32</sup> of Lovell's Company applied also for two month [leave], with permission to have it extended, and was refused tambien [also]. I wonder what luck I'll have? Quien Sabe? The Court Martial that Genl. Hitchcock was on has been dissolved, but the Genl. is not expected here before the middle of next month. As soon as he arrives I intend to apply for thirty days leave, so as to enable me to spend the holidays with my dear wife and children. . . .

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Carlisle Barracks, Pa.,  
March 2, 1855.

My own Sweet Ell.,

I received your favor of Feb. 28th which relieved me from much anxiety, as I knew Charlie<sup>33</sup> was not very well when I left, and indeed yourself was not very strong: however, I am glad ye are all getting better, and I fervently hope ye will continue to improve. . . .

I have been very busy dear Ell. since I arrived here, in the performance of my company duties, all of which devolve upon me at present. Kellogg talks of resigning:<sup>34</sup> he leaves here on seven days' leave on Monday next [March 5], with permission to apply for an extension, in order to take his wife back to Cleveland: she is sick of military life already: I don't expect him back after he leaves. . . . All our companies here now are armed with the rifle: we practice at the target every day the weather permits. Genl. Hitchcock got here yesterday: he told me he was sorry he could not keep me on recruiting service in New York. I don't think I stand much chance of being appointed on General Recruiting Service, as Hendershott<sup>35</sup> has been offered the appointment, and accepted. However, I can't tell what may turn up. The four Regiments will probably pass:<sup>36</sup> if they do, I may get a captaincy. Quien Sabe? . . . I hope you won't forget sending me those dagauuretype [sic] likenesses when you feel well enough to have them taken. Any time before I leave here will do. You must not write unless you feel well, dear Ell., and then you needn't write long letters, you know, but just enough to let me know that yourself and the children are well.



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Carlisle Barracks, Pa.,  
March 9th 1855.

My own darling Ell.,

I received your kind letter of the 6th which gave me great joy to learn that my dear wife and children were, comparatively, in the enjoyment of good health, which I trust in God will continue to improve. I suppose you have seen the appointment to the field officers in the new regiments; they are all made.—Colonels, Lieutenant Colonels, and Majors, and the best of it is, Silas Casey<sup>37</sup> of the 2d Inf. is full Lt. Col. of one of them [9th Infantry], and ranks old Heintzelman<sup>38</sup> all to pieces, who is only Major by regular promotion: won't Old H. be mad, and particularly Mrs. H.; and won't Mrs. Casey rejoice: you know Mrs. H. turned Mrs. C's nurse out of the cabin of a steamboat they were once travelling in together, and Mrs. C. told Mrs. H. that she hoped she would live to see the time when her husband would yet rank her's. The prophecy has come true. You recollect Emory<sup>39</sup> of the Topographical Engineers, in San Diego? [H]e has been appointed Major in one of the cavalry regiments [2nd Cavalry] . . . Genl. Smith<sup>40</sup> has been appointed to the new Brigadier Generalship. . . . Davidson will be here on the 15th or 16th; he didn't get the Majority he expected. Davis<sup>41</sup> and Gardner<sup>42</sup> of my regiment are promoted to Captaincies, which leaves only Hendershott & Moore<sup>43</sup> above me. It is rumored that the President [Franklin Pierce] will take most of the Captains and first Lieutenants from the Army, which, if he does, will probably make me Captain before the 4th of July next. Congress has done nothing for us except passing the four new regiments. We have nothing more to expect, I'm afraid. We are all well here; the officers with whom you are acquainted here, send their kind regards. . . . My company duties keep me busy all the time, besides we have a great many courts martial here. Capt. Lovell's family will remain in Carlisle when we leave for the West, which will be about the middle of next month. . . .

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Carlisle Barracks, Pa.,  
March 20th 1855.

My own dearest Ell:

I owe you an apology for not answering your kind letter of the 13th sooner, but I have had so much writing of an official character to do . . . that I assure you, dear Ell., I had very little time to devote to matters of a private nature. Under these circumstances, dear wife, I hope you will excuse me for not having written to you sooner, particularly when I assure you, that I have been in misery ever since the receipt of your letter until I was able to answer it. So that, hereafter, when your letters are not answered regularly, you will have the satisfaction of knowing, dear Ell., that it is no fault of mine, but that you may be sure there is some good reason for my letters not reaching you in good season. Therefore, dearest, you must give yourself no trouble or uneasiness on that count.



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There is very little army news stirring here: it is now decided, I believe, that we will leave for the West about the middle of April, and that General Harney<sup>44</sup> of the [2nd] Dragoons will take command of the expedition: I saw him in Washington when I was there last. . . . Davidson has got an extension of his leave until the 1st of April. If I can manage it, I intend to pay you a flying visit before I go to the West. Steele<sup>45</sup> has just returned from Washington: he says the appointments of Captains in the new Regiments will be out to-day, so that we will have them here tomorrow: he thinks I stand a good chance, but my hopes are not very sanguine, for I know there are thousands of applicants for those places.<sup>46</sup> Wessells left here today for Utica, N.Y. where his family resides, on a seven days' leave. Kellogg is still absent. . . .

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FIGURE 3. Officers and families at Carlisle Barracks, about 1859. Photo Collection, CCHS.



Carlisle Barracks, Pa.,  
April 14, 1855.

My own dearest Ell.:

... We are kept very busy here at present, preparing our command for field service against the Sioux Indians: we drill three times a day, one Battalion and two Company drills, besides dress parade, and the other duties appertaining to Camp & Garrison service. ... It is supposed that we will be kept in the field all next winter, as that is the best season to do the Indians the greatest injury: we expect our troops will suffer very much during the winter campaign in that country, the cold is so severe there. If we should be kept in the field next winter, which is very likely, you must not expect to hear from me, as I will, in all probability, be in a position where it will be impossible for me to write to you, and the only news you will receive will be through the public papers. However, dear Ell., if there is a possibility of writing to you, you may expect a letter from me whenever an opportunity offers [itself]. General Hitchcock will not accompany us beyond St. Louis; he leaves us there on four months leave: Lt. Paige also ... leaves us there on 4 months sick leave: I expect there will be others besides him sick of the Expedition before it is over. ... Gardner has had his leave extended two months, so that there is little prospect of his going with us: I wish I had command of his company in his place. We will probably not leave here much before the first of May, as the communications with the north-west will hardly be open before that time; we will go to Pittsburgh by Railroad from here, and take steamboat from there to St. Louis, where we will receive further instructions from Genl. Harney whose Hd. Qrs. are there, and then proceed up the Missouri river to Fort Leavenworth, where we will take in our supplies of all kinds, and then proceed to Fort St. Pierre [sic], on the Upper Missouri, where our Head Quarters are to be established, and where six companies of the 2d Inf. and 4 companies of the 2d Dragoons are to be stationed permanently. ...<sup>47</sup>

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Carlisle Barracks, Pa.,  
April 18, 1855.

My own dearest Ell.:

Your kind letter of the 15th was received yesterday, which gave me much satisfaction to know that my dear wife and children were in the enjoyment of good health, thank God. Tell Sarah and Fanny<sup>48</sup> that papa is very much pleased with them for being such good girls, and will love them very much if they continue to behave well, and do every-thing mamma tells them to do; and when I come home, I will bring them something very nice. I am delighted to hear that my dear little son is doing so well, as I had more fears for his health, (being the youngest and most delicate,) than for either of the others ... Capt. B[rent] returns in the last steamer from Cal[iforni]a and is expected in Carlisle today ... Maj. Canby<sup>49</sup> is here: he has been made a Major in one of the new regiments (10th Inf.) which will take our place when we leave here: he sends his kindest regards: Mrs. C. is in Washington but will be on here soon: the



Lieut. Colonel, Major, Adjutant, and regimental Quartermaster of that reg[imen]t. are now here,—all married men.<sup>50</sup> There is a prospect of our being kept here some time on account of cholera having broken out among the troops at Jefferson Barracks, [Missouri,] where we must necessarily stop on our way to the West, as the Hd. Qr. of the Sioux Expedition are there at present. All the troops that were stationed there have been sent on to Fort Leavenworth.<sup>51</sup> The small-pox is very bad in Carlisle at present; everybody is getting vaccinated. . . .

## Notes

1. For an account of the problems the 2nd Infantry endured during the Sioux Expedition of 1855, consult Augustus Meyers, *Ten Years in the Ranks U.S. Army* (New York: Stirling Press, 1914), 49-95; see also Richard J. Coyer, "We'll Never Forgive Old Harney," *True West* (July 1982), 22-25. Many of the letters Sweeny wrote to his wife during this expedition can be found in Richard J. Coyer, ed., "This Wild Region of the Far West,: Lieutenant Sweeny's Letters from Fort Pierre, 1855-1856," *Nebraska History* LX (1982), 232-254.
2. Thomas W. Sweeny, "Narrative of Army Service in the Mexican War and on the Plains, 1846-53," *Journal of the Military Service Institution* XLII, no. 151 (January-February 1908), 127-128; Francis B. Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, from its Organization, September 29, 1789, to March 2, 1903*, 2 vols. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1903), I, 939.
3. Sweeny, "Narrative of Army Service," 128-134.
4. Arthur Woodward, ed., *Journal of Lt. Thomas W. Sweeny, 1849-1853* (Los Angeles: Westernlore Press, 1956). Some of Sweeny's letters from Fort Yuma have been published in Richard J. Coyer, "A Pleasant Prospect of Being Starved to Death," *Periodical: Journal of the Council on America's Military Past*, XII, no. 3 (April 1983), 15-26.
5. Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 939.
6. William M. Sweeny, *A Biographical Memoir of Thomas William Sweeny, Brigadier-General United States Army* ([New York]: Privately printed, [1907]), 6-36, 43-46.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 37-41; William D'Arcy, *The Fenian Movement in the United States: 1858-1886* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1947); Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 939.
8. Ellen Swain Sweeny (née Clark) came from a distinguished background, being a distant relative of Peter Folger, Benjamin Franklin's grandfather. She married Thomas Sweeny on May 15, 1848 and traveled with him to California, but returned to New York in 1852 and never again joined her husband on the frontier. A chart of Ellen Sweeny's family tree is in the Thomas W. Sweeny Papers, Henry E. Huntington Library.
9. Captain Delozier Davidson and Sweeny were close friends since their stay in Southern California. His military career began in 1838 with an appointment to the 2nd Infantry. In the Mexican War he won a brevet captaincy for gallant and meritorious conduct. He transferred to the 4th Infantry with the rank of major on November 1, 1861. In the Civil War Davidson was taken prisoner at the battle of Gaines' Mill; after being exchanged he faced a court martial for leaving his regiment without authorization. The court found Davidson guilty and cashiered him from the service on March 9, 1863. A year later many prominent men in Pennsylvania politics, including Governor Andrew Curtin and members of the state legislature, came to his defense and through their influence President Lincoln ordered Davidson to be reinstated. Unfortunately Davidson's position in the regiment had been filled and there were no other vacancies. In 1865 he resigned from the Army, and the War Department made his resignation retroactive to the date he was cashiered. Davidson died on July 17, 1888. Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 355; Richard J. Coyer, "The Strange Case of Maj. Delozier Davidson, 4th U.S. Infantry," *The Regular: The Official Newsletter of Sykes' Regulars* (August 1999).



10. Thomas Lee Brent (West Point 1830) joined the 4th Artillery in 1836 and became a captain assistant quartermaster in 1847. In the Mexican War he won a brevet captaincy. He died January 11, 1858. Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 42.
11. Charles Spencer Merchant graduated second in his class at West Point in 1814 and served with the 1st Artillery and Corps of Artillery after graduation. In 1834 he was a captain in the 2d Artillery and a major (1849) and lieutenant colonel (1857) in the 3rd Artillery. He was colonel of the 4th Artillery in 1861 and retired two years later. Merchant received a brevet brigadier generalcy on March 13, 1865 for long and faithful service. He died on December 6, 1879. Ibid., I, 703; George W. Cullum, *Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., from its Establishment, March 16, 1802 to the Army Re-Organization of 1866-67*, 2 vols. (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1868), No. 92. (Citations to Cullum will be by the "Number" of the individual on the roster of graduates, rather than by volume and page, which differ in the various editions.)
12. The defendant in this case was Captain Napoleon J. T. Dana, assistant quartermaster at Fort Ridgely, Minnesota Territory. The Army claimed that during the construction of the fort Dana bought lumber from a sawmill in which he was part owner. The court found Dana not guilty on October 26, 1854. General Orders, No. 6, October 26, 1854, Headquarters of the Army.
13. Ethan Allen Hitchcock served with the Artillery Corps after his graduation from West Point in 1817 and transferred to the 8th Infantry a year later. He became colonel of the 2nd Infantry in 1851 and resigned in 1855. He reenlisted during the Civil War with the rank of major general. Hitchcock was honorably mustered out of the service in 1867 and died on August 5, 1870. Cullum, *Biographical Register*, No. 177; Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 532; Ezra J. Warner, *Generals in Blue: Lives of the Union Commanders* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1964), 230-231.
14. Charles George Merchant served with the 8th Infantry ever since his graduation from West Point in 1833. During the Mexican War he received a brevet first lieutenantcy and captaincy. He died on September 4, 1855. Cullum, *Biographical Register*, No. 1204; Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 703.
15. Joseph Hunter MacArthur (West Point 1849) served with the 2nd Infantry, 5th Infantry (1850), and 2nd Cavalry (1855-1860) where he attained the rank of captain. At the start of the Civil War he was lieutenant colonel of the 6th Pennsylvania Cavalry. He returned to the regular Army in 1863 as a major in the 3rd Cavalry, retiring two months later. MacArthur died on January 23, 1902. Cullum, *Biographical Register*, No. 1443; Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 652.
16. Christopher S. Lovell received a commission in the 2nd Infantry in 1838 and won a brevet captaincy in the Mexican War. Lovell transferred as a major to the 3rd Infantry in 1861 and resigned a month later on November 23. He died on August 16, 1868. Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 643-644.
17. James Curtiss joined the 2nd Infantry after his graduation from West Point in 1851 and escorted recruits to Fort Yuma, where he met Sweeny. When the Sioux Expedition was over Curtiss resigned from the Army and worked as a civil engineer in Illinois. At the start of the Civil War he reenlisted, this time with the 15th Infantry, and won a brevet majority for service at Shiloh and Atlanta. He died in Chicago on January 19, 1878. Cullum, *Biographical Register*, No. 1521; Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 346.
18. About this time Ellen Sweeny suffered from nervous fits, believed to be epilepsy. She died from this disease on August 30, 1860. Genealogy charts, Sweeny Papers.
19. Thomas C. Madison became an assistant surgeon in 1840 and a major surgeon in 1856. He resigned in 1861 to join the Confederate Army, where he also served as a surgeon. Madison died on November 7, 1866. Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 683.
20. Another acquaintance from Fort Yuma, George H. Paige graduated from West Point in 1848 and the next year joined the 2nd Infantry. He was regimental quartermaster from 1853 to 1856 and later captain assistant quartermaster. Paige died on April 18, 1859 at Camp Floyd, Utah. Cullum, *Biographical Register*, No. 1394; Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 765.
21. Lyman Mack Kellogg joined the 2nd Infantry after he graduated from West Point in 1852, first serving at Fort Yuma with Sweeny. He resigned in 1855 but was reappointed to the 3rd Artillery a year later and



- ended up back at Fort Yuma and other posts in California. In 1860 he was cashiered for drunkenness on duty, but reinstated the next year. In the Civil War he fought at Shiloh, Corinth, and the Atlanta Campaign, and won a brevet majority. After the war he served on the frontier and was discharged at his own request on December 31, 1870. Kellogg died on January 31, 1877. Cullum, *Biographical Register*, No. 1572; Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 589.
22. An 1854 graduate of West Point, John Radcliff Smead served with the 2d Artillery until the start of the Civil War when he was promoted to captain in the 5th Artillery; he also briefly commanded a company of volunteers in Washington, DC. He died August 30, 1862 at the Second Battle of Bull Run/Manassas. Cullum, *Biographical Register*, No. 1645; Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 893.
  23. Raphael Cummings Smead was seventh in his class at West Point in 1825 and served with the 4th Artillery (not the 2nd, as Sweeny wrote) until his death on August 20, 1848. Cullum, *Biographical Register*, No. 398; Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 893.
  24. After serving over four years in California Sweeny liked to sprinkle Spanish terms throughout his writings. According to early travelers the expression "*quien sabe?*" was a popular catchphrase used throughout Spanish California.
  25. In August 1854, Lieutenant John Lawrence Gratten, a recent graduate of West Point, and a detachment of 30 men questioned a band of Sioux about a cow missing from a wagon train. Despite the insulting questions the Indians kept calm until Gratten's party fired an artillery piece at them. Then the Sioux attacked and killed the entire detachment. Commenting on the expense of sending troops to the Upper Missouri, Senator Thomas H. Benton said it was a "heavy penalty for a nation to pay for a lame runaway . . . cow, and for the folly and juvenile ambition of a West Point fledgling." Lloyd E. McCann, "The Gratten Massacre," *Nebraska History* XXXVII (1956), 1-25; Cullum, *Biographical Register*, No. 1614; Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 471.
  26. Thomas Jefferson Wright received a commission in the 2nd Dragoons upon his graduation from West Point in 1854. He served as regimental adjutant from 1855 to 1857. He died at Fort Randall, Nebraska Territory, on April 30, 1857. Cullum, *Biographical Register*, No. 1642; Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 1063.
  27. Thornton Augustin Washington graduated from West Point in 1849, transferred to the 1st Infantry in 1850, and served as its regimental adjutant from 1857 to 1860. He resigned in 1861 and served in the Confederate Army as a major and assistant adjutant general. Washington died on July, 10, 1894. Cullum, *Biographical Register*, No. 1439; Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 1007.
  28. John Dawes O'Connell went straight to Fort Yuma from West Point in 1852. During the Civil War he rose to the rank of brevet colonel in the 14th Infantry. After the war he was a major in the 17th Infantry in Texas, where he died on September 16, 1867. Cullum, *Biographical Register*, No. 1562; Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 755.
  29. Nathaniel Henry McLean joined the 2nd Infantry from West Point in 1849. He held the post of regimental adjutant from 1855 to 1857, and then regimental assistant adjutant general. He retired from the service in 1875 with the rank of lieutenant colonel and assistant adjutant general. McLean died on June 28, 1884. Cullum, *Biographical Register*, No. 1395; Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 675.
  30. Henry Walton Wessells received a commission in the 2nd Infantry after graduating from West Point in 1833. In the Mexican War he won a brevet majority. During the Sioux Expedition Wessells commanded Fort Pierre for a short time. In the Civil War he was colonel of the 8th Kansas Infantry and later a brigadier general of volunteers. He won a brevet brigadier generalcy for meritorious service during the war. Wessells retired from the army in 1871 and died on January 12, 1889. Cullum, *Biographical Register*, No. 735; Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 1019; Warner, *Generals in Blue*, 551-52; Coyer, "We'll Never Forgive Old Harney," 24.
  31. In 1849 the 2nd Infantry's second highest desertion rate in California was in San Diego (99 desertions). See "Special Report of Casualties in 'D' Comp[any]. 2nd Inf., San Diego, Cal., Jan. 16, 1850 (from Nov. 6, 1848 to Jan. 16, 1850)," in: *Returns from Regular Army Infantry Regiments, June 1821 - December*



- 19, 1916, microfilm publication (Washington, DC: National Archives and Records Service, 1966): *2nd Infantry, January 1849 - December 1853*, roll 18.
32. The nephew of Virginia Governor William Smith, Caleb Smith joined the Army in 1848 as a second lieutenant in the 2nd Artillery; he transferred to the 2nd Infantry the next year. He resigned at the start of the Civil War to be a major in the 49th Virginia Infantry (commanded by his uncle) and was wounded at the First Battle of Bull Run/Manassas. Dropped from the regiment during reorganization, he was later a captain in charge of paroled and exchanged prisoners. After the war Smith worked as a lawyer in Virginia. He died on December 22, 1874. Robert K. Krick, *Lee's Colonels: A Biographical Register of the Field Officers of the Army of Northern Virginia*, 3rd ed., rev. (Dayton, OH: Morningside House, Inc., 1991), 350; Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 894.
  33. Sweeny's third child, Charles Baxter Sweeny (named after the lieutenant colonel of the 1st New York Volunteers) was born in New York on November 17, 1854. Genealogy charts, Sweeny Papers.
  34. Kellogg resigned from the Army on August 16, 1855, but was reappointed on June 27, 1856 (see note 21 above).
  35. Henry Bascom Hendershott graduated from West Point in 1847 and served in the Mexican War and in California (along with Sweeny). In 1859 he transferred to the 2nd Artillery. Hendershott fought in the Civil War, retiring in 1864 because of illness; the next year he received a brevet lieutenant colonelcy and colonelcy. Cullum, *Biographical Register*, No. 1355; Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 522.
  36. On March 3, 1855, Congress approved four new regiments: the 9th and 10th Infantries and the 1st and 2nd Cavalries. The two infantry regiments had existed earlier, but were disbanded on August 26, 1848 with the end of the Mexican War. In 1861 the two cavalry regiments were redesignated the 4th and 5th, respectively. Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 70-71, 99-101.
  37. Silas Casey (West Point 1826) spent nineteen years with the 2nd Infantry before his promotion mentioned here. Six years later he was colonel of the 4th Infantry. In the Civil War he rose to the rank of major general. Union and Confederate commanders used his book *Infantry Tactics* (1861) during the course of the war. He retired in 1868 and died on January 22, 1882. Cullum, *Biographical Register*, No. 467; Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 289; Warner, *Generals in Blue*, 74-75.
  38. A native of Manheim, Pennsylvania, Samuel Peter Heintzelman graduated in the same class with Silas Casey. He served on garrison, recruiting, and quartermaster duties before the Mexican War, where he won a brevet majority. After serving in California (where he founded Fort Yuma) he was made a major in the 1st Infantry. In the Civil War he was wounded at the First Battle of Bull Run/Manassas and later attained the rank of major general. Heintzelman retired in 1869 and died on May 1, 1880. Cullum, *Biographical Register*, No. 445; Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 521; Warner, *Generals in Blue*, 227-228. Sweeny is clearly gloating over Heintzelman's misfortune. The two men despised each other and their letters and journals are full of complaints and innuendoes against each other. Sweeny often referred to Heintzelman as "Old H."
  39. William Helmsley Emory graduated from West Point in 1831 and resigned from the Army five years later. He was reappointed in 1838 to the Topographical Engineers and served with them until his promotion mentioned by Sweeny. During the Mexican War he wrote *Notes of a Military Reconnaissance [sic] from Fort Leavenworth . . . to San Diego* (1848). He gained the rank of major general of volunteers during the Civil War and retired as a brigadier general in 1876. Emory died on December 1, 1887. Cullum, *Biographical Register*, No. 642; Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 405-06; Warner, *Generals in Blue*, 142-143.
  40. Persifor Frazer Smith's military career began as colonel of Louisiana volunteers in 1836. In the Mexican War he again commanded Louisiana volunteers and was colonel of the Mounted Rifles. In that war he received brevet brigadier and major generalcies. Smith died on May 17, 1858. Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 902.
  41. Nelson Henry Davis graduated from West Point in 1846, joined the 2nd Infantry the following year, and remained with the regiment until the start of the Civil War. In the war he saw action at Gettysburg



- and fought Apaches in Arizona. He rose to the rank of brigadier general inspector general in 1885. Davis died on May 15, 1890. Cullum, *Biographical Register*, No. 1320; Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 359.
42. William Montgomery Gardner was a classmate of Nelson Davis's at West Point and joined the 2nd Infantry about the same time. He resigned from the service in 1861 and died on June 16, 1901. Cullum, *Biographical Register*, No. 1326; Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 446.
  43. Tredwell Moore joined the 2nd Infantry after graduation from West Point in 1847. In the Civil War he served in Ohio and Nevada and won four brevets. By 1872 he was a lieutenant colonel deputy quartermaster general. Moore died on May 29, 1876. Cullum, *Biographical Register*, No. 1356; Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 723.
  44. William Selby Harney received a commission in the Army in 1818. He fought against the Creeks and Seminoles and by 1836 was lieutenant colonel of the 2nd Dragoons. He was a full colonel when the Mexican War began and received a brevet brigadier generalcy. Early in the Civil War he commanded all troops in Missouri. Harney retired in 1863 as a major general and died on May 1889. Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 518; *Dictionary of American Biography*, s.v. "Harney, William Selby."
  45. Frederick Steele graduated from West Point in 1843 and won a brevet captaincy in the Mexican War. He commanded the 8th Iowa Infantry at the start of the Civil War and fought in the battle of Wilson's Creek (where Sweeny was wounded). Steele took part in the Vicksburg Campaign and rose to the rank of major general of volunteers. After the war he was colonel of the 20th Infantry and commanded the Department of the Columbia. He died in a riding accident on January 12, 1868. Cullum, *Biographical Register*, No. 1196; Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 918; Warner, *Generals in Blue*, 474-475.
  46. Sweeny did not receive a promotion at this time. He would have to wait until January 19, 1861, to be promoted to captain. Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 939.
  47. Established in 1831, this fur trading post was named for Pierre Chouteau, Jr., not "St. Pierre" as Sweeny thought. Purchased by the U.S. Government on April 14, 1855, the troops found Fort Pierre in a dilapidated condition; they spent a great deal of effort cleaning up the post in addition to building new quarters. Besides the 2nd Infantry and 2nd Dragoons, companies from the 4th Artillery and 6th and 10th Infantries also occupied the fort. In 1856 the Army abandoned the post, dismantled some of the buildings, and used them as material for Fort Randall, downriver. Frederick T. Wilson, "Old Fort Pierre and Its Neighbors," *South Dakota Historical Collections* I (1902), 263-297; Robert W. Frazer, *Forts of the West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972), 136; Coyer, "We'll Never Forgive Old Harney," 24.
  48. Sarah Barnard Sweeny was born in San Diego on July 24, 1849 and died in New York on May 25, 1871; her sister Frances Ellen Sweeny was born in Benecia, California, on September 29, 1851 and died in New York on April 27, 1929. Genealogy chart, Sweeny Papers; *New York Times*, 30 April 1929, p. 29 (Frances Sweeny's obituary).
  49. Edward Richard Sprigg Canby received a commission in the 2nd Infantry upon his graduation from West Point 1839. While with the 2nd Infantry he served as regimental adjutant and assistant adjutant general. He won brevet majority and lieutenant colonelcy in the Mexican War. In the Civil War Canby saw action in New Mexico and the South, and rose to the rank of major general of volunteers. After the war he was made a brigadier general in the regular Army. Canby was killed by the Modoc Indians in Northern California on April 11, 1873. Cullum, *Biographical Register*, No. 1015; Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 279.
  50. Sweeny is referring to Lieutenant Colonel Charles F. Smith, Major Edward R. S. Canby, Lieutenant John McNab, and Lieutenant Henry E. Maynadier, respectively.
  51. The cholera epidemic later spread to Fort Leavenworth. On the voyage up the Missouri River a steamboat accident forced one company of the 2nd Infantry to stay at the fort until transportation could be found for them. Fourteen members of the company died of cholera before the company continued on its way to Fort Pierre. Coyer, "This Wild Region," 237; Meyers, *Ten Years in the Ranks*, 59-61.