

Flags, Bands, Parades Prelude to Battle

By REV. ROBERT McNAMARA

This is the fourth in a series of several articles Father McNamara of St. Bernard's Seminary is to write for the Courier Journal to mark the four year centenary of the Civil War.

When the news of the fall of Fort Sumter reached the North, a tidal wave of patriotic indignation swept across the land. Three days later, April 15, 1861, Abraham Lincoln issued a call for 75,000 militiamen to help put down the revolt which threatened.

Crackling with zeal for the preservation of the Union, the North responded.

The question we intend to ask and partially to answer it: What part did Catholics of the Rochester Diocese play in this patriotic reaction?

(By the Rochester Diocese we mean, of course, those counties in western New York which were to become the Diocese of Rochester when that diocese was founded in 1868. During the war itself they belonged to the Diocese of Buffalo.)

Area Catholics answered "Father Abraham's" call as vigorously as their fellow Non-Catholics. As a matter of fact, the patriotism which Catholics showed throughout the land during the Civil War was to win for them a much higher regard than they had previously been accorded by Non-Catholic Americans.

At Rochester, the "Union and Advertiser" quickly sold out four editions on the day the war broke out. Thereafter the air was charged with patriotic fervor, and the local militia companies prepared to enroll in active service.

The Loyal Germans of Rochester met on the night of April 17, and forty-one of their number then and there volunteered for the army.

On April 18, a grand mass-meeting was held in City Hall. So many packed the room that the overflow was sent to the County Court Room. Simultaneous rallies were held in both places; and in both meetings the officers chosen to preside over the gathering included a prominent Rochester Catholic, like John Rigney, James Galley, and Louis Ernst. They sang patriotic songs, made patriotic speeches, enacted resolutions brimming with patriotism.

What was more, an impetus was given to enlistments by reading the roll of those who had thus far signed up. The volunteers belonged to a company in the process of organization by William F. Tully, Captain; Michael McMullen, 1st Lieutenant; and Jeremiah Sullivan (later one of Rochester's most dashing heroes), as 2nd Lieutenant. They called themselves the Volunteer Rangers, and were eventually designated as Co. I.

Enlistments went on apace during the next two weeks. Many more Irish Catholics from Rochester and its environs enrolled, like Daniel A. Sharpe (of Co. A) and Edward Toole (of Co. D).

There was likewise a representative group of German Catholics, like Michael Schlaeger of Co. D and Joseph Himmelfarb of Co. G.

Rochester citizens, meanwhile, gave their volunteers every encouragement. The Common Council voted to establish a barracks for its soldiers; and to erect a flagstaff on City Hall which would float the nation's flag until peace returned.

A civic committee took up a collection for the support of the soldiers' families. Patrick Barry the nurseryman, Rochester's wealthiest Catholic, contributed \$100 to this cause.

Friends, employers, or neighbors of the new military officers gave them appropriate military mementoes. Citizens of the



REV. MICHAEL CREEDON
Patriot-priest of Auburn

Third Ward, for instance, presented Captain Tully and Lieutenants McMullen and Sullivan with swords.

Local newspapers meanwhile did their best to stimulate further volunteering. The "Union and Advertiser," ever solicitous of the local soldiers, advised them on the type of hat and blanket to take, and counseled them "let your beard grow so as to protect the throat and lungs."

One by one, the eight era companies (from Monroe, Livingston and Wayne Counties) were mustered in to form a regiment which was given the designation of the 13th Regiment, New York Volunteers. After some delay, the 13th re-issued orders to depart for the south.

On the morning of May 3 they marched to the railroad station in serried ranks. Most picturesque of the proud departing warriors were the Irishmen of Company I, whose shaven heads and red shirts captured every eye.

Hundreds of sad but enthralled fellow-citizens, including the old veterans of the War of 1812, were at the depot to cheer them off with huzzas and martial music, as the men entrained for their Elmira rendezvous.

Elsewhere in western New York, other men had been enrolling in other regiments. The 3rd Volunteers drew from Tioga, Chemung, and Schuyler Counties; the 19th from Seneca, Tioga, Tompkins, Wayne, and Cayuga; the 23rd from Schuyler, Steuben, Tioga and Tompkins; the 32nd from Ithaca; the 33rd from Monroe, Ontario, Seneca, Wayne, Chemung, and Livingston.

In Livingston County, Dansville contributed Co. B to the 13th Regiment. Dansville was then the most populous Catholic center in Livingston. It is impossible for us to say at the moment, however, whether any of its German Catholics or Irish Catholics joined the 13th.

Down in Steuben Co., the 23rd Regiment had its Irish en-rolled, and Co. K boasted Lieutenant Florence Sullivan as its first lieutenant. ("Florence" was, of course, a popular men's name.) This lieutenant was a W.A.C. Lists of soldiers enlisting from Waverly and Owego contain a fair number of Irish names. At Corning, several, including apparently individual members of the Emmett Guard, an Irish company of militia, signed up in the 23rd or other regiments of their choice. (Thus Cornington Charles E. McCarthy was mustered in as a drummer in Co. F of the Rochester 13th. Hornellsville Catholics followed much the same course.

The name of John Mulligan is the only presumably Catholic name among the members of Ithaca's two earliest-formed companies. But this did not mean that Ithaca's small Catholic minority was wanting in enthusiasm. On May 9, Captain Whitlock's Co. I—the 1st California Volunteers—they were called, for no particular reason—marched off to war.

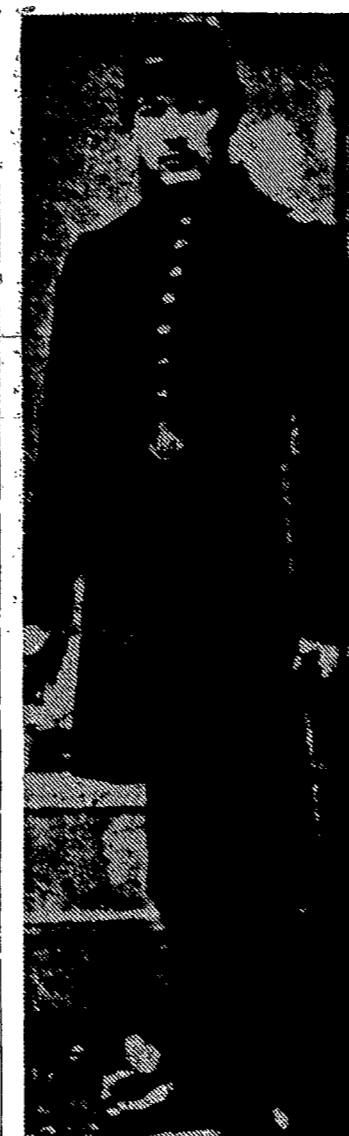
As they paraded down Owego Street past Geneva Street, on the corner of which Immaculate Conception Church was located, the local Catholics ("the adopted citizens," as a local paper called them) were gathered together by their church to give the soldiers a pleasant surprise.

When the companies marched by, the parishioners ran up an American flag on a fine new ninety-foot flagpole, and fired a cannon in salute. The soldiers, startled yet gratified, gave the Ithaca Catholics an appreciative cheer.

The Catholic soldiers from Phelps, we are told, were treated special church services before they set out for the front. It was most likely at this time—April or May, 1861—that this took place, and the volunteers would probably have belonged to the 33rd Regiment, which recruited extensively in Ontario County. Co. C, 33rd Volunteers ("The Waterloo Guards"), had about a dozen Catholic members when it left home on May 2, 1861.

Co. H, departing from Geneva on the following day, likewise had a few Catholics in its ranks.

Many of the smaller settlements doubtless made their Catholic contribution, too. But of all the villages in the diocese, Seneca Falls probably responded most enthusiastically of all to the call to arms.



DANIEL SHARPE
Color-bearer of the 13th Regiment at the Battle of Bull Run, July, 1861. Sharpe volunteered from the Town of Greece. Photo, courtesy of his granddaughter Mrs. Louis N. Roche of Rochester.

Seneca Falls, although it then had a population of only 4,000, had always been most civic-minded. In fact it was to send, in all, 500 of its men to the defense of the union. That, as can be seen, was no small percentage.

The extensive Catholic population of the Falls did not lag behind its Non-Catholic fellow citizenry. Militant Irishmen quickly set about organizing not one but two volunteer companies. Patrick McGraw captained the Irish Volunteers, and Martin O'Neill the Jackson Guards. Apparently the O'Neill company did not materialize; but the company formed by McGraw, who had served in the British army for fifteen years, was ready to go towards the end of April.

The "Seneca Falls Reveller" singled out Mrs. O'Toole as a war-mother deserving of special praise.

On May 9 the "Reveller" declared that nine of her sons had

already enlisted. It stated furthermore that Mrs. O'Toole had said she would be ready to give to the nation the other thirteen, including the baby at half-price. "Mrs. O'Toole," the editor affirmed, "is as genuine a specimen of the female American eagle as was ever imported."

Since no O'Toole appears on the available lists of Falls volunteers, the local newspaperman may have been engaging in a spoof of truly Hibernian proportions. But spots or not, the little item shows that Seneca Falls was edited by the patriotism of its immigrants in the early days of the war.

On Sunday, April 28, Father Edward McGowan, the civic-minded pastor of St. Patrick's Church, fulfilled a promise to address the Seneca Falls volunteers. That day his parish soldiers first gathered at the armory, then marched to church with bands beating the step. When they had been seated in the crowded little church, the choir sang, "in the most stirring manner," the "Red, White and Blue."

Then Father McGowan delivered his address, "an able and eloquent production," in which he urged the volunteers to be ever loyal and obedient to the constitutional authorities, and to imitate, in their spirit of dedication, the heroes of the American Revolution. The address, according to the "Reveller," "elicited frequent bursts of applause, and it had a most happy effect on the minds of all present."

When Captain McGraw's company (designated Co. K of the 33rd N.Y.S. Volunteers) left town on May 22, Father McGowan was ready with another inspiring speech. The farewell ceremony took place at the fair grounds.

Ladies of the village presented Captain McGraw with a beautiful flag; the citizens as a group gave him a sword. At the request of the donors of the sword, Father McGowan made the actual presentation. "I do sign," declared the pastor, "putting this sword in the keeping of a brave man." McGraw, accepting it, replied with a laconicism proper to a military man: "I trust I am no coward. I'll do my duty!"

The various regiments which left western New York in May, June, and July, 1861, did not have to wait many weeks before tasting battle. They marched into the fray with a fine spirit, but with all too little preparation and organization.

The first big clash of arms, at the Battle of Bull Run, on July 21, proved only too well the inexperience of the Northern combatants. This first Bull Run was, as Bruce Catton, the

Civil War historian has put it, "the momentous fight of the amateurs, the battle where everything went wrong."

Ill-trained Northerners and ill-trained Southerners faced each other with equal bravery. But by almost sheer mischance, the South thrust the North back, and sent it into confused retreat. The retreat became a rout and a panic when tourists from Washington, who had come out with picnic lunches to watch the fight, clogged the roads, blocking the Federal withdrawal.

The Rochester area had three regiments engaged in this battle: the 13th, the 18th, and the 32nd. When the final tally was made, it was found that the 13th, the "Rochester Regiment," had suffered more casualties than the other two. Of the 600 who participated, twelve had been killed, 26 wounded, and 2 captured.

The North was shaken by its defeat. A pall fell over Rochester when its own casualties became known.

It was not that Rochester had suddenly lost all its spirit. The welcome which the city gave to its first returning casualty proved that that was not the case. Lieutenant Charles C. Buckley, a parishioner of St. Bridget's had been severely wounded in arm and neck on July 21. When he came home on leave the evening of August 2—his arm still in a sling and his neck still wry—a crowd of most as large as the one which broken fragments of our council had seen the 13th off greeted try.

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him at the station. The police almost had to carve a path through the crowd as the young soldier was conducted to the waiting carriage.

At the step of the carriage, Mayor John C. Nesh, greeted Buckley in the name of his fellow-citizens. The lieutenant spoke a few words of thanks. Then the procession to his home began. Led off by Perkins' Band, Capt. Fee's Cochrane Guards, Capt. Biegler's Washington Independent Zouaves, and Fire Co. No. 3.

Hundreds joined in behind the carriage to do their soldier honor. When they reached his home on Hand Street, his father, Coroner Buckley, welcomed both son and convoy, and invited the militia and the firemen into the house for refreshments.

No, Rochester's patriotism had not vanished. It was just that First Bull Run had made the Flour City—and the rest of the North—more sober about the implications of this first national defeat.

Henceforth, it was clear, the fun was over; the time for bombast was gone.

War, like a disease, is quick to contract but slow to cure. More blood than either North or South had dreamed of would have to be drawn in order to cement together again the broken fragments of our council.

Red Warsaw Paper Hits Vatican 'Bias'

Warsaw — (RNS) — A Communist newspaper here sharply attacked the Vatican for its alleged centuries-old Pro-German and anti-Polish policies.

An article in Zycie Warszawy, which was later broadcast by the Warsaw Radio, charged that the Vatican's pro-German line started when the Holy See was convinced by German prelates that a papal crusade against the East could be successful only with the support of pre-war Germany under Hitler.

THE NEWSPAPER claimed that the late Pope Pius XII never condemned racism, and after the last war was opposed to the principle of the collective responsibility of the German nation for the war.

"Papal excommunications," Zycie Warszawy declared, "never fell on the executioners in the Nazi concentration camps, but fell like an avalanche on Catholics behind the

Iron Curtain who collaborated with the Communists."

The paper said Pope Pius also strongly opposed the return to Poland of "her ancient territories held by Germany until the end of the last war."

Now, it stated, the present Pope continues the same policy and refuses to appoint permanent Polish bishops in the former German territories now part of Poland.

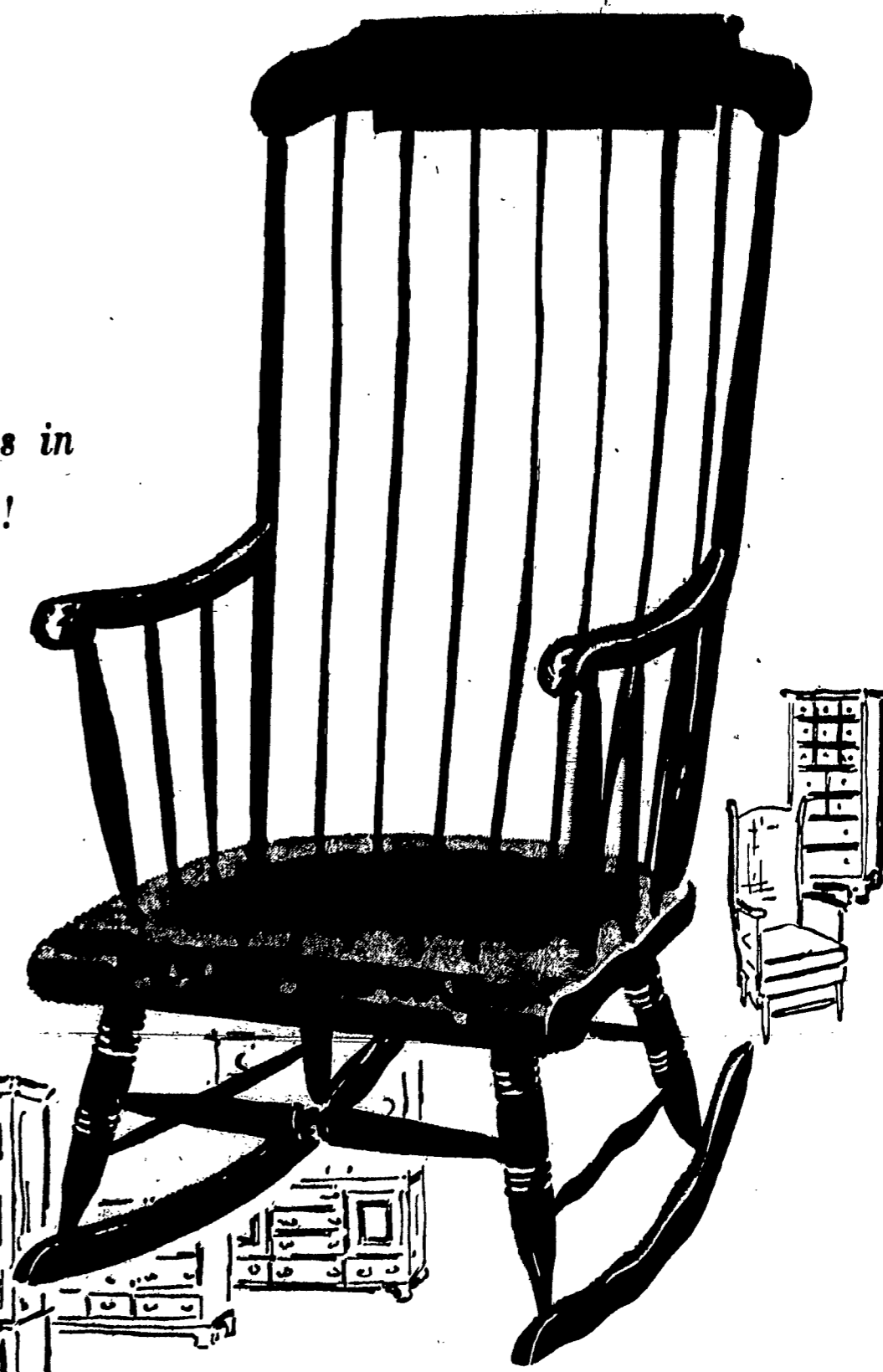
"THIS SHOWS," the paper commented, "that all who hoped that Pope John XXIII would alter the Vatican's policy toward Poland molded by his predecessor have been very disappointed."



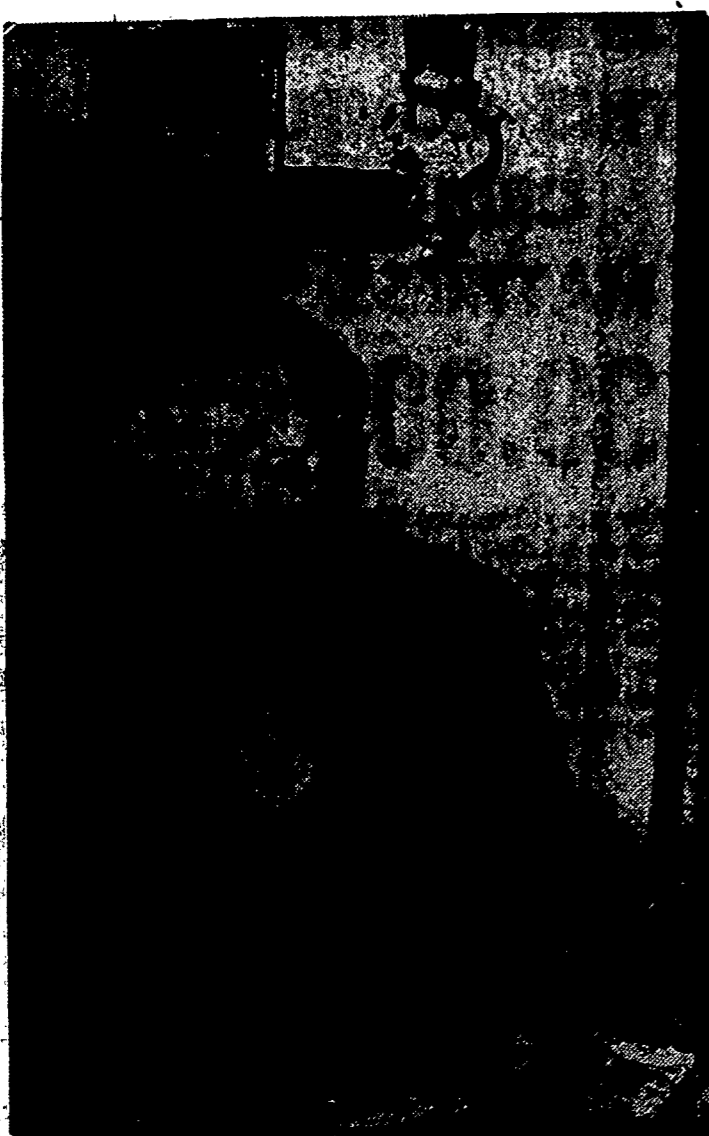
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Eastern Church Exhibit

Brooklyn — (RNS) — Father Allen Malow of the Melchite Rite stands at a Greek altar, displaying Eastern Church vessels in a preview of an art exhibit of icons and ceremonial objects dating from the 16th century. The exhibit is being held through May 10 at St. Joseph's College for Women, Brooklyn. The priest holds in his hands a gospel book of velvet and gold embossings and a ceremonial cross. Eastern Catholic and Orthodox articles are included.