

Fathers, Sons, and Brothers

Book One

2nd Edition

By, James “Gus” Filegar

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This novel is dedicated
To:
THE TWENTIETH MAINE REGIMENT
August, 1862 ~ June, 1865
And to Nathan Small Clark
a Citizen Soldier with the 20th Maine

Front Cover

Top: The 20th Maine flag from Little Round

Bottom left; Nathan Small Clark post war

Bottom right; His brothers Prentice and Sydney Clark

Back cover photograph by Mick Filegar

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For those in today's world, first, my wife Cynthia - she has been so patient the last months, years actually. She is a good wife, good person, and wonderful mother. Sure, we have our times. Who doesn't? Overall, love has gotten us through, especially when it came to this novel. And to our children, Mick, Jessica and Hayley for being patient with this old man when we trekked out into open

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battlefields and encamped during our living history adventures.

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Did I say finally? There is one more to graciously thank - God. I thank Him, for having a

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sense of humor, and putting me on this Earth. The talent I have for writing is on loan from Him.

In addition, I would like to acknowledge the following books I used for reference. Pullen, John J., *The Twentieth Maine: A Volunteer Regiment In The Civil War*, (1985, 1991): Gerrish, Theodore, *Army Life; A Private's Reminiscences Of The Civil War*, (1995): Powell, William H., *The Fifth Army Corps* (new material ©, 1984): Trulock, Alice Rains, *In The Hands Of Providence; Joshua L. Chamberlain & The American Civil War*, (1992)

From The Author

The author wishes to state, that the characters in this novel have been given personality as seen through his eyes. It is not meant to be an actual account of their lives, but merely a representation of what they might have experienced, and thereby, is not meant to be a factual representation of them. Any and all fictional characters are named by coincidence only, and do not represent anyone living or passed on. The only thing factual is the reality that the Civil War did occur and the main characters were involved.

To the reader

The story you are about to read is based, in part, on the diary and pension records of Nathan S. Clark along with the movements of The Fifth Corps, Army of the Potomac during this time in the Civil War. He was a soldier in the Twentieth Maine Regiment, Company H from its beginnings in August 1862 until June 1865. During his enlistment, he kept a diary of some of his feelings and experiences.

The author hopes the story will bring the reader to an understanding of the life of a soldier, both Union and Confederate, during one of our Country's most important crossroads.

Some have referred to this time in our Nation's history as our second Revolution, and some, merely the continuation of it. Despite how one looks at this bloody conflict, one must not forget, the soldiers on both sides experienced privations of one kind or another throughout their enlistment. In addition one must realize that the families of these soldiers experienced life-changing events also.

The Civil war has also been referred to as the last gentleman's war. Though it was a very bloody, drawn out affair, soldiers on both sides recognized they were in the same crisis. There are numerous

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accounts of opposing soldiers calling casual truces, then meeting to share letters from home, or to simply trade coffee, tobacco and food.

Book One and Book Two are dedicated to the more than 2.8 million men, boys and some women who fought this bloody war on both sides, the 620,000 soldiers who lost their lives and their *families* who sacrificed as well.

We must never forget one important fact ; they were all *Americans* who fought for what they believed in. For the Union: to fight for freedoms; liberty, equality, and justice for all and preserve our Union of States and to show the world that, "*this experiment in democracy*", could work. For the Confederacy they fought for a way of life and for state and individual rights. For them the government of their home was a non-intrusive government to which they were not bound. Home is where they believed they were bound.

There are, of course, many other reasons. That in itself is a whole other work. So, it should be noted that *where we are today as a Nation, a people*, has its roots in a war that took place not so long ago.

Introduction

Irish born, Nathan Clark was a stocky, curly-haired lad just under six foot tall. His red mustache, darker than his sun-bleached red hair, curved down the sides of his mouth and continued to drape just below his chin. His hands were callused from long hours worked in the fields with his father.

The lines on his face, the crow's feet around the eyes and the sun-aged skin gave him the appearance of being older than his young age of twenty three.

He, his brothers and sister had all been born in Ireland into a hard-working family. Their father was tenant farmer there, with their main crop being potatoes. This was their prime source of income and monies earned were usually just enough to pay the land baron's rent.

With the given circumstances it was near impossible for a man to own the land he called home. The land barons saw to that.

In order to buy necessities the majority of tenant farmers more likely than not, borrowed money from their land baron. In this part of the Irish economy there was scarcely enough left over for a man to save for his children's futures. Their future frequently meant inheriting their father's

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debts. The same consequences prevailed for nearly everyone that farmed there.

When too much money was owed, it commonly meant going to debtor's prison. If the father passed away there, the oldest son would often be required to take his place. It seemed a never-ending cycle.

The potato famine had hit hard in 1840's and Nathan's father prayed often for the opportunity to remove his children from this cruel way of life. He would not have that institution decree their inheritance of no freedom of choice, somehow.

Nathan, like the rest of his siblings, had started to work in the fields by the time he was six years old. It was a family affair, to be sure. When his mother could, she would sew new clothes for their land baron and his family for a pittance of what they were actually worth. The extra cloth would more than likely be used to make clothes for her family. They often wore patchwork clothing of multiple colors.

A great opportunity came before Mr. Clark in 1848. A far away uncle had passed on and left his family with four hundred and fifty dollars. In their terms they were rich then! However, what to do with the money had become quite a heated discussion in the household for a few weeks.

The final decision was made. They would pay up their back loan to the baron, pack up what they could carry and set off to go to America. This was a

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gift from God, as he saw it, and they would not spend one more day in Ireland.

Mr. Clark had a desire for *his* sons to *own* their land. He had heard it was different in America. Liberty, justice, equality among men and *freedom*. Freedom to pursue opportunity . . . to be what one wanted to be could only be imagined. Equality . . . not to be judged by who your father was and his debts, but what one did for himself. In this land of opportunity it appeared hard work would be rewarded and liberties protected by a constitution, the likes of which the world had never seen before.

With the dowry received from his late uncle, he took his family to America in the later part of 1848 to live under these fine principles. Since their arrival in this great land, they had found what their father had heard to be true. Opportunity *was* everywhere. Liberty, justice, and equality, well, they discovered they were a bit harder to come by.

Immigrants that came to America were not looked upon favorably. Although there were factories springing up all over the northern states, there was angst among American colonial descendants that they might lose job opportunities to these freedom-seeking people. Those who came from the Emerald Isle were no exception.

Finding work was not as easy as they thought it might be at first and it seemed they would be no more at an advantage here than in Ireland. Fortunately for them, Providence had intervened,

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as quite a few Irish had immigrated into the New England area.

Mr. Clark had found work at the wharfs in Boston and his wife set up as a seamstress, which she found to be lucrative. They found a place at a reasonable rent by the week which was owned by a fellow Irishman. By 1850 they had saved enough to move to Levant, Maine, down southeast in the state, in from the coast.

It was here they purchased some land and began to farm. Nathan helped his father for a few years and learned the proper way to grow potatoes, which Mr. Clark had found to be lacking in quality here in America. Within a small number of years they began to make a good living growing them.

At seventeen Nathan partnered with him as his brothers had and in just three years had saved enough of his profit to buy his own land. With his parents blessing Nathan moved from Levant to Masardis in 1859, where he had purchased twenty acres with an option on another fifty and began to build on the dream seed his father had planted while on the ship that brought them across the sea.

Located in northern Maine, its rich soil was suited for farming, perfect for potatoes. The land was sloping ground, but tillable and there were stands of pine that had grown straight and tall. This made excellent timber to build his homestead and became his second cash crop.

Two of his brothers traveled from Levant often to help him, when they could. Sidney, the oldest,

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loved horses and was a strong-willed lad. Prentis, one of the youngest, had a business mind.

The two had partnered a thriving horse stable in Levant and business was good in this growing part of the Nation. They too had grabbed hold of the dreams set forth by their father. In addition to running the stable, they lived at home and helped their aging parents work their farm.

Nathan labored hard to bring his dream to reality. 1860 saw his first potato crop come in and his home quickly took shape. The acreage he had purchased began to transform into a homestead and a fine potato farm. The virgin land was becoming what he had envisioned in his mind's eye. It became a farm with which to feed his future family and an opportunity to earn a fine living, not owing anyone anything.

The winters could be brutal but spring, summer, and fall made up for that. Farming would begin mid-spring and continue through the summer and early fall. Lumbering would take up the rest of the seasons. He found there was an excellent market for good pine lumber, as towns and cities were growing at a quick pace. He had the best situation any man could possibly have.

For Nathan, there was one more dream to be realized. He desired to raise a large family - to be able to pass on his life's labor to his own children, as *his* father did.

He met a fine woman at Stark's General Store soon after he had settled in Masardis. He knew her

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as Sarah. It wasn't long until they began to court and marriage had been talked of quite often these last few months. They had planned a wedding back in her home of Portland, Maine.

Francis Sarah Cowperthwait had moved here with her mother in 1858 to help run the small general store her mother's uncle had started. From the first time Nathan had met her he knew in his heart that she was the right woman. She was short and petite, graced with long red hair and blue eyes that gleamed. She had a comforting manner about her and her smile would light up a room when she walked in. Moreover, it seemed, her goal in life was the same as Nathan's. Praise the Lord, work hard, raise a large family and enjoy life to its fullest.

Nathan's sister, a year younger, had married at a young age, but she had not enjoyed the joys of the union for long. She had died from smallpox about a year to the day of her marriage to a fine young man from Portland.

His youngest brother, Benjamin, had decided college was why he had been put on this earth. He had saved his part of the profits from farming and left in late 1859 to enter Bowdoin College, just outside of Brunswick. Mr. Clark had hoped at the very least it would settle his youngest boy's practical efforts for money-making.

Now, events in America challenged the very reasons the Clarks had gone there as rights, liberties, and equality were being tested. The threads the founding fathers had sown into the

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fabric of American Independence were now being ripped and torn. The country had become entangled in a great Civil War and events of the next few years altered their lives and those close to their hearts for a lifetime and longer.

The war showed prejudice toward none, malice toward all and it would not only be felt by the soldiers. Wives, mothers, and children experienced the effects of war as well. As Minie balls zipped through the air, heritage would accompany each man's death. Traditions often disappeared in a moment of exploding shell. Even those who came home would leave something behind on the battlefield. It did not have to be just an arm lost, a leg amputated or some life-draining ailment that would stay with them the rest of their lives. Part of their own soul was often left behind, even if only a memory of burying their own father, son, or brother on some distant battlefield, far from home.

Chapter One

Lincoln's Call

It was now July 1862. The war had consumed a whole year. As most had on both sides, Nathan prayed for a quick end to this bloody war between brothers and states. For now there seemed no end in sight and he ached to volunteer to fight with a Maine regiment.

At Lincoln's first call for volunteers in 1861 many of Nathan's friends and old schoolmates had answered the call with enthusiastic patriotism. Some had already come face-to-face with the horrible consequences of war.

His brothers, Sidney and Prentis, had joined the First Maine cavalry that summer. They had talked Nathan out of volunteering then, knowing it was his dream to own his own land, something their father had not been able to do back in Ireland. They also knew marriage was in his future.

Nathan had kept abreast of the war with the letters his brothers and friends had sent home. He believed in Mr. Lincoln's war and believed in *why* it was being fought. The right of self-determination was at stake. He had come from Ireland; that alone was a right worth fighting for in his mind's eye.

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He stared out the window at the sunrise that moved over the Maine ridges to the east. The yellow brilliance forced itself through the morning mist that hung in the warm July air.

Such a majestic sight, he thought to himself. Morning had always been his favorite time of day. He always thought of it as new beginning.

Nathan turned to the table beside him, reached for his tin cup. He brought it to his lips, carefully sipped the hot coffee, then looked back out the window and thought back to the previous July. It had been one year to the day that Sidney and Prentis had ridden off to join the fight. He remembered how the people had cheered and the band had played patriotic music as the group of volunteers galloped from Levant, as the men that had volunteered for the infantry marched behind. It was a grand day.

He recalled the feeling of patriotism that moved through his breast that day as they marched through the streets. He loved watching military parades, but this day was different for him. He had wanted to volunteer so badly, but had taken his brother's advice to wait awhile. He recalled what Sidney had said to him . . . *that it wouldn't take long to put down the rebellion*. He had much to look forward to, particularly, marrying Sarah.

A loud knock at the door interrupted his daydream. He dropped his cup, the coffee in it

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spilled on his boot. He leaned over to pick it up and gently swore to himself as a second knock came.

“Nathan, are you there?” a gentle voice excitedly asked.

He walked to the door. It was Sarah.

He hoped she had not heard his choice words, greeted her with a warm smile, “Sarah! I am so glad you’ve come!”

They hugged then kissed each other gently on the cheek. She walked in and handed him a basket full of fresh baked muffins, where folded on top was a newspaper from Portland, Maine, dated July 14th, 1862.

Nathan took a deep breath. “Oh. The muffins smell so good!” He put the paper on the table, grabbed a muffin, then brought the pot of coffee to the table. He refilled his cup, then offered Sarah some tea he had brewed.

She turned and sat at the table, “Look at the front page! And yes, I will take a hot cup of tea, thank you!”

He enjoyed the muffin as he picked up the paper and unfolded it. It read, “LINCOLN TO CALL FOR 300,000 VOLUNTEERS”. He stared at it for a moment, then sat down and began to read the commentary, then looked to her as she enjoyed one of the muffins.

“Sarah, me darlin’, it is time.”

She leaned toward him and soberly asked, “You mean...to volunteer, don’t you?”

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She picked up her cup, got up from the table, moved to the window. She had known this day would come. In a solemn tone she asked, "When will we be married Nathan? Will it be soon?"

Then she paused for a moment, "I do so love the morning air. Don't you?"

"Ah Yes. It is me favorite time of day. And I love *you* Sarah. I think we should get married next Sunday. I know ya wanted to get married back home, but I don't see why we should not get married here. 'Tis our home now. We have met so many good people here. Why should they not be a part of it? And your mother isn't . . . "

Sarah eagerly interrupted, "Yes. I agree. We should get married here, in Masardis. I think we should go see Reverend Howe today and make arrangements. And . . . I agree. My mother's health would not stand the trip back to Portland. And as for your volunteering . . . well, I would be proud of you Nathan."

Nathan got a serious look on his face, "I should go right away and see if Thomas has heard of anything from the Governor's office. Would ya like to accompany me?"

"I would be honored, sir, to accompany such a patriot. I must also tell you this. I know you have been torn. I can see it your eyes. I have seen it since your brothers left."

He walked over to her, held her hand gently, then stared out the window one more time before they walked out on the porch. The bright yellow

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sun had started to burn off the misty morning fog and the fragrance of freshly bloomed flowers filled the summer air. He took a deep breath and looked out to the land he had farmed.

Dispirited, Nathan sighed, "Oh, Sarah, I do get melancholy. I get a feelin' this war will go on for a while yet. This country is split. It must be made whole again. The reason me family moved here is bein' torn away. I don't see it being resolved in any short time either."

"What will you do with the house and the farm? Who will manage it?"

"I've given that some thought me love. I believe the Reverend's boy would be just the one to take care of it. And, well . . . I think I will lease it to him. He is as good a farmer as I know around here. I believe he would take great care of this place."

"Oh my . . . you *have* been thinking of this for a while, *haven't* you? I should have known."

"Yes...I have. Does it surprise ya? Ya know how I feel about President Lincoln's stance. I feel this country deserves a chance to show the world what this country should and does stand for. Equality. Not being judged for who your father was, but who *you* are. If the . . . Confed'racy . . . becomes a nation on their own. . . well, I don't see it faring too well on the rest of this Nation to survive such a thing. We must have this Nation as it was *before* this horrible war started. To really settle the slavery issue, or any other issues, we must stand as one nation, united in our efforts, not divided."

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"Nathan Clark . . . did you ever consider running for President? You do have a way with words."

"I don't think so. . . I am not tall enough!"

They both laughed on the way over to the barn to get the horse and buggy ready for the ride over to the church. As they began to pull away, a horse moved up the road quickly. Nathan reined his horse and brought the buggy to a stop.

The horse galloped up to the buggy, stopped and the rider awkwardly dismounted.

"Nathan. I think you would like to have these! I have three letters here and I think they are from your brothers!"

"Thank ya Thomas. Yes. I have been waitin' quite a spell. Say. . . boyo. Have ya any news from the Governor . . . I mean about raisin' volunteers?"

"Yes, Nate. Word just came. Mustering should take place right away. The state is even offering a bounty of seventy-five dollars to any man who volunteers in the next 30 days! That should raise quite a few men, don't you think?"

"My God . . . I should say so Thomas."

"I should get back to town now. Hope it is good news from your brothers. And M'am, it has been a pleasure as always."

He tipped his hat to Sarah and returned to his dark brown mount. He turned the horse quickly and stirred up quite a dust as he headed back to town.

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Nathan hesitated for a moment, then asked,
“Do ya mind if I open these now?”

“Do my dear. I am as anxious as you to hear.”

He quickly opened the first letter and read it aloud.

May 10, 1862

“Dear Nathan. We have been on the move quite a bit since I last wrote you. The Rebs have quite the cavalry. They have caught us unawares more than once. We have mostly been in Western Va. the last couple months. We are now with Gen. Kirkpatrick. He is a good general I think and if anyone can whoop these Rebs, he can. Prentis was down sick for a few days, but is better now. This dampness can get to a fella quickly and without warning. Have lost quite a few good horsemen the last few months. We buried two soldiers yesterday. They had bad wounds from a battle last Sunday. Lucky they lasted this long. One had a leg shot completely from him. A shell hit his horse with him on it. Some of our horses have gotten ill also. Got some bad feed. That is what I think anyway. They frothed and died quickly. One other I had to shoot, for his misery’s sake. Tell everyone we are well and send regards to Sarah and her mother as well. Prentis and I have been sending most of our pay home to Uncle Elishah. That is, when we get paid. The Gov’t. is two months behind to date. We don’t mind though. Have you seen our brother Benjamin? Hope he is not giving Uncle Elishah a hard time of it. So . . . when are you and Sarah getting married anyway. We

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*have some leave coming soon as we get new fish in our unit. Maybe some time in June . . . As always,
Your brother Sidney”*

Nathan began to open the second letter as Sarah sat quietly. In deep thought, she looked towards the cabin for a moment then turned and put a hand on his shoulder.

“It is good to hear they are well.”

He sighed, “Yes it is.”

“Nate. How is your brother Benjamin? Have you heard from him lately?”

“Yes. I received a letter last week. Said he is getting used to stayin’ at Uncle Elishah’s. It was so good of him to take Ben in while he goes to Bowdoin College.”

Sarah became quiet for a moment. He looked over to her and held her slender hand.

“My darlin’. What is it? What is on your mind?”

Sarah sighed, “It does sound like a terrible time of it for them. Dangerous too. I don’t think I could ever get used to that Nathan. It is so hard with just your brothers away . . . I just can’t imagine you . . . well, gone to war.”

“Ah. They are tough Micks. Just like our father. And as for me . . . I might be shorter than Lincoln, but I can put up a pretty mean fight if I have to. Ya needn’t worry me sweet darlin’. But there is no one I’d rather have worry ‘bout me.”

He kissed her on the cheek, then grabbed the reins and moved down the dusty road to town.

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Along the way another horse galloped toward them. As it got closer, he recognized its rider. He slowed the buggy, came to a stop.

It was George Buck. He had helped to arrange Nathan's land purchase and they had since become good friends. He was a good natured, stout fellow with a balding head and, at full straightness, was as tall as his horse at the saddle. He mostly showed his Irish side, though his mother was English, a fact that Nathan never let him forget, in a jesterly way.

"Why George! I thought ya had gone off to fight the war!"

"That was me intention Nate. But on the way to Portland, I came across this paper. Lincoln is to be callin' for 300,000 more men. I just thought better of goin' by me self . . ."

"I know George . . ."

"Forgive me Ma'm." George bowed and removed his hat.

"That's quite alright George. I have seen worse manners!"

George unfolded the paper, began to read, "Well Nathan. . . it says here . . . Lincoln is worried about Lee's advance onto northern soil."

Nathan looked to the sky.

"God's will George. Sarah . . . yes it is time."

George asked, "Are ya goin' to volunteer?"

"Yes me boyo. It is 'bout time to ante up. Follow us into town. We will find out together what to do next."

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He started the buggy toward town and George followed behind.

Nathan turned to Sarah as he managed the buggy, “We will stop at your mother’s after we find out what is going on in town. Then we will go see Reverend Howe.”

“Ok my love. I should check on the store anyway, to see how Cousin Francis is doing. This is his first day by himself there, you see.”

When they arrived, there was quite a commotion around the telegraph office. There was a crowd of men straight into the street that blocked the buggy from moving along. He reined the horse to a quick stop.

“Word of the bounty must be out! I’ll go and sneak around the backdoor to see if Thomas has found out anymore. George . . . watch the buggy and Sarah for me.”

“Nathan, I am going over to the store while you check with Thomas. I won’t be but a short time.”

“Ok. I will just come over to the store then when I am done. George. Could ya still watch the buggy for me? Jake never has gotten used to crowds.”

“Sure Nate. No problem.”

Nathan scurried around the back, ran in the door. There were men crowded at the front desk; they hollered different questions all at once. Not one could be understood. He walked up behind Thomas, put his hand on his shoulder. Thomas jumped.

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Nathan asked loudly, "Thomas. What is the news?"

"The Governor has called for four thousand volunteers. He says it is the least the State of Maine can do for the cause."

Thomas yelled out to the unruly crowd, "Would you all just settle . . . the Mayor . . . ah, *what's* the use?"

Nathan continued, "Ya don't say? What has our town decided to do? Has the Mayor come around yet?"

"He just left a few minutes ago, Nate. Said he will be right back. He went over to the bank."

Nathan took off his mechanic's hat, folded his arms, and said, "Guess the bounty has brought the best out of these fine felluhs . . . must say, I don't need no bounty to join up me self, but I won't turn it down either."

The Mayor, Samuel J. Hawkens, was a fine gentleman from the south. Having moved from South Carolina in 1853, he had stated many times he didn't like the talk of secession and he had decided to move as far north as he could and still stay in the country. The town had elected him mayor the same time Lincoln was elected President in 1860.

He came out from the bank, stood on the wood-planked walk, then looked over to the telegraph office. He wiped the sweat from his brow as he walked across the street.

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A man yelled from the crowd, “Mayor . . . Mayor. What *are* we gonna do?”

In his charismatic, southern accent he answered, “We are gonna do the best we can to raise a small company to send to the Governor, that’s what.”

Mayor Hawkens pushed his way through the crowd, then entered the telegraph office. He looked up, saw Nathan, then moved through the mass of men to the end counter. Samuel motioned Nathan to come over to him.

Hawkens, at five foot four looked up at him, “Nathan Clark. Am I glad to see ya. If I made ya Orderly Sergeant, do ya think ya could muster enough men for Masardis to send to Bangor?”

“Mayor. I would be honored. Yes . . . I think we can muster quite a few men from here, and the surrounding plantations, that is for sure. It seems undoubtedly quite sure that the bounty will help do most of it for us. Do I need to fill out papers for orderly?”

“Yeah. That’s what I went back for. *And* to make sure we could draft money from the bank. Ya may as well take ‘em home and be back on Monday, the twenty-eighth. It seems we are to be off tuh Bangor sometime before the second week of August.”

Nathan scurried back to the buggy. The excited crowd had gotten quite loud. It was all George could do to keep the horse still, as he talked to a

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couple of friends over the roar of the excited throng of men who t clogged the street.

“Well . . . it seems I am the orderly sergeant. Mayor Hawkens gave me papers.”

“When Nathan? When do we sign up?”, George asked excitedly.

“Next Monday, July twenty eighth.”

Nathan wiped the sweat from his neck, continued, “I’m gonna go over to the store and get Sarah, George. I’ll be right back boyo.”

“Aye. I hope I can hold this here horse. He is quite feisty ain’t he?”

Nathan walked across the street to Stark’s General Store where Sarah and her mom worked. As he walked in the door, he saw Sarah talking to Francis as he leaned over the counter.

“Hi ya Francis. And how are ya this fine day? How’s the arm?”

“Oh . . . it is tolerable. What is left of it. I still can’t believe it’s gone. Lucky to be alive I suppose. If it weren’t for Mr. Leighty being there, I am sure it would have been worse.”

Sarah sighed, “Yes. Praise God he was there. That horse would have dragged you all the way to Portland, had it not been for him. So Nathan, what is going on. Are they going to take volunteers?”

“Yep. Startin’ Monday the twenty-eighth. Mayor Hawkens asked if I would sign to be orderly sergeant and do the recruitin’. I told him I would be honored, of course.”

James "Gus" Filegar

Sarah covered her mouth as it opened then began to cry softly.

"What's wrong? Sarah . . . What . . ."

"It's just that . . . well . . ."

"I know. We will have just been married a day. We will just muster in some boys. We won't be leavin' right away. I give ya me word. We will have some time."

Sarah contained herself, then said, "Francis. We must be going now. Nathan and I are going over to mothers, then to Reverend Howe to arrange for the wedding. Are you sure you will be fine here today, by yourself?"

"Ah . . . go on now. I will be fine. You worry about me too much Sarah. Besides, I am getting to be pretty good with my left hand, writing and all. You go on now. Tell mother . . . I will be home about eight o'clock."

They walked back to the buggy then just as the crowd began to disperse from the telegraph office. George had an easier time with the horse since the crowd had quieted.

"Looks as though George is getting to handle Jake pretty well there." Nathan said as they walked through a small crowd of men, over to the buggy.

He helped Sarah up into the buggy, moved around to the driver's side, took the reins from George then said, "Come over to the homestead Monday morning after next early and we will go into town together."