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CADET LIFE

BEFORE THE MEXICAN WAR



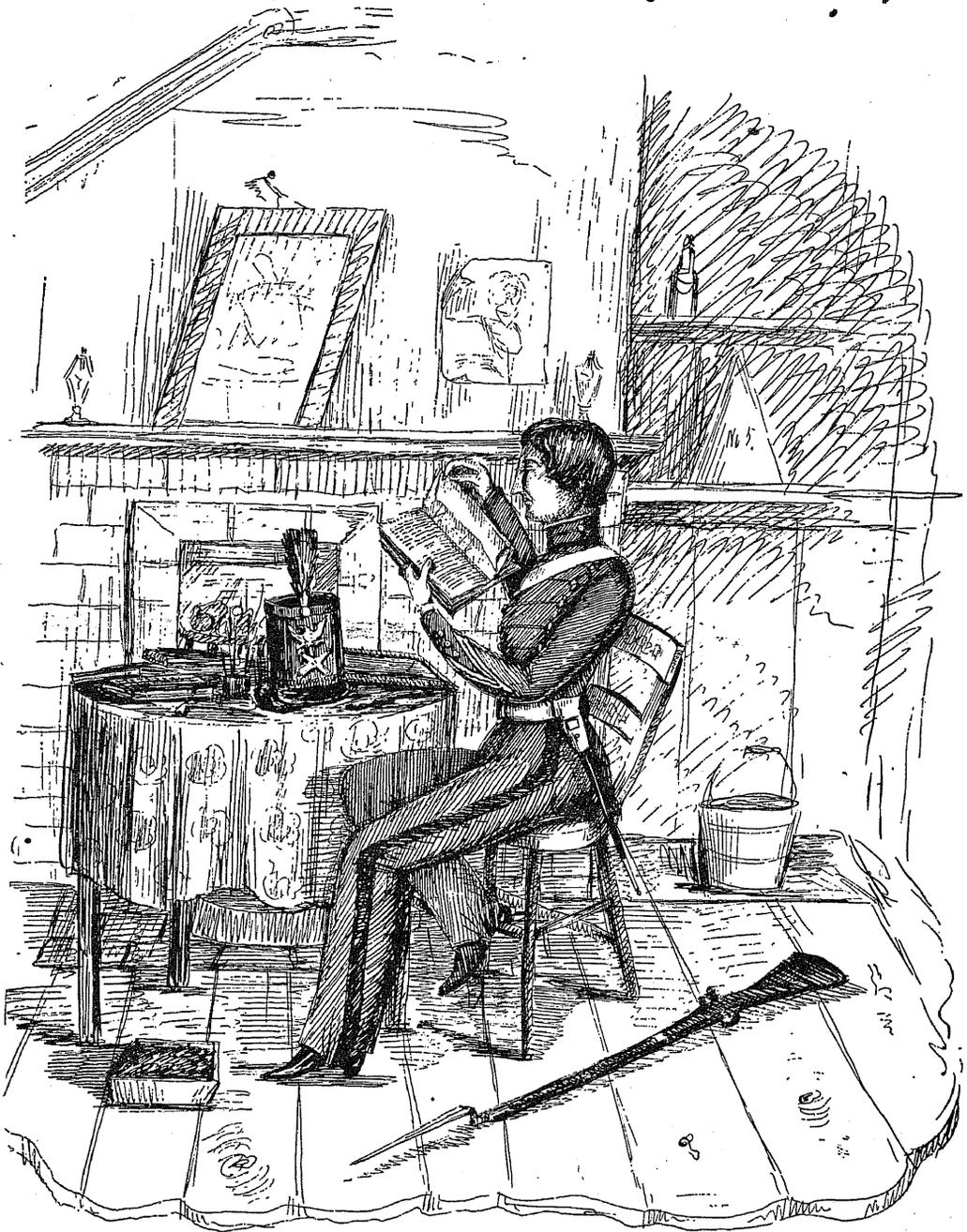
BULLETIN NO. 1

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378 V (1842) : Given by Benj. A. Walker, 1903.



Drawn by Cadet George H. Derby, at West Point, 1842.
Afterward known as John Phoenix a humorous writer.

Le Cadet BY GEORGE H. DERBY, U. S. M. A. 1846.

CADET LIFE

BEFORE THE MEXICAN WAR

Episodes in cadet life drawn from the manuscript collection in the Library of the United States Military Academy, excerpted from cadet letters, selected and annotated by Corporal Sidney Forman. Foreword by Lieutenant Colonel William J. Morton, Field Artillery.

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CADET LIFE BEFORE THE MEXICAN WAR

— ● —

Come, fill your glasses, fellows, and
stand up in a row
To singing sentimentally, we're going
for to go;
In the Army there's sobriety, promo-
tion's very slow,
So we'll sing our reminiscences of
Benny Havens, oh!
Oh! Benny Havens, oh! Oh! Benny Havens, oh!
So we'll sing our reminiscences
of Benny Havens, oh!

(To the tune of "Wearing of the Green.")¹

West Point served as a matrix for leading cadres of the United States Army since the organization of the Military Academy in 1802. The unique mission of the Academy—the training of officers for the Army—reflected itself in the perspective of the cadet. The various elements of cadet life formed a master-pattern which influenced all military and technical education in America.²

¹This is the first stanza of an almost endless army song attributed to Dr. Lucius O'Brien who wrote it while visiting Cadet Ripley A. Arnold at West Point in 1838. Benny Havens, Oh! records the fame of Benjamin Havens, a seller of contraband liquor and viands to cadets at West Point. His establishment at West Point and at Buttermilk Falls, now Highland Falls, was well known to succeeding classes of cadets from 1816 to 1859 when he closed his business.

²William Couper, Colonel, *One Hundred Years at V. M. I.* Garrett & Massie, Richmond, Va., 1939. Colonel Couper shows the relationship between West Point and the whole ante-bellum military school movement in the South.

Oliver James Bond, Colonel, *The Story of the Citadel.* Garrett & Massie, Richmond, Va., 1936. Colonel Oliver shows the West Point influence at the Citadel.

It is significant that the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, established in 1824, added a course in Civil Engineering in 1829. This school, with West Point, was the only source for scientifically trained men in America for about 20 years. The Lawrence Scientific School was established at Harvard and the Sheffield Scientific School at Yale, both in 1847. These were the only engineering schools in America before the Civil War and much in debt to West Point for their staffs and textbooks.

"The Academy was planned to meet the need for competent native military engineers. The War of 1812 and its conclusion gave impetus to the pressing need for civil engineers. American independence demanded independence of Europe in every type of skill.

The academic course was fashioned largely by the Superintendent, Sylvanus Thayer. His strong personality guided the Academy for a long span of years, 1817-1833; time has not effected much change in the broad outlines of his organization. He brought to West Point a first-hand knowledge of the European military schools and a close relationship with many prominent American educators and educational institutions.

In establishing the conditions of cadet life, Thayer¹ was guided by the national interest and social mores. There was a persistent demand for scientific information for the purpose of developing the country; for improving communication, and for increasing production. A loud cry arose for better means of transportation to the West. The demand for scientific information to increase production in agriculture and domestic manufactures was voiced in an enormous number of memorials, petitions, and committee reports to the various state legislatures. The country was going through a phase of its transformation from an agricultural community into a complex urban society. Congress turned to the Corps of Engineers and the national institution at West Point to provide the necessary skills. The Academy went through this phase by adding new objectives to its course of study to meet the new needs. Civil engineering was accentuated; an extra-curricular organization was set up to read papers on the subject. Opportunity to study the new canal and railroad developments was sought. The cadet looked forward to becoming not only a military engineer, but also a well-equipped civil engineer.

The intense intellectual ferment of the 1830's and 1840's also had its effect upon the cadets. New concepts of democracy, of humanitarianism, and of the brotherhood of man were in the air. A nationwide cultural reawakening affected all classes.² The cadets at West Point organized various extra-curricular activities for self-educational purposes.

¹ Richard Ernest Dupuy, Lieutenant Colonel, *Where They Have Trod*, Frederick A. Stokes Company, New York, 1940. passim. Col. Dupuy accentuates Thayer's role in the organization of the Military Academy in its formative years. See also the article on Thayer in the *Dictionary of American Biography*. Thayer's letters reveal a correspondence with various college officials in reference to textbooks, course of study and plans of organization.

² Charles A. Beard and Mary R. Beard, *The Rise of American Civilization*. The Macmillan Co., N. Y. 1932. 2 Vols. Vol. 1, pp. 725-825.

tion; debates were held. Subjects changed from the innocuous "Should the writings and doctrines of Infidel philosophers be read and tolerated"¹ in 1817 to the more topical "Is England justifiable in her conduct to China and Naples?" and "Have Railroads and Canals proved beneficial to the Country?"² in 1840. The lyceum movement which provided a platform for every conceivable type of public speaker also had a section at West Point. Congressional legislation, party politics and the growing heat of sectionalism did not pass unnoticed. The cadets looked abroad too, and were enthusiastic in their strong support for Greek and Polish independence, as well as French republicanism.

Only a present-minded person would consider the United States Military Academy isolated before 1846. The fact that railroad and telegraph lines had not yet been built to bind West Point to the nearby cities did not mean physical or intellectual isolation. The steamboat and sloop, the most effective means of communication with New York City or Albany, were sufficient for that day.

West Point had come to be considered a show-place. European dignitaries, diplomats, writers and critics of American life found it necessary to visit West Point to observe the Corps of Cadets and to be welcomed by the Superintendent. Among them were Ralph Waldo Emerson, who proposed "to take a hasty glance at the beauties of the Hudson."³ Charles Dickens, noted that the hotel for strangers at West Point suffered from the "drawbacks of being a total abstinence house (wines and spirits being forbidden to the students), and of serving the public meals at rather uncomfortable hours; to wit, breakfast at seven, dinner at one, and supper at sunset."⁴ The Duke of Saxony, Weimar and Eisenach admired Thayer for his "Bibliomanie."⁵ The list of travelers, observers, and critics who scrutinized the Corps of Cadets is endless.

The amusements of the cadets were the same as those enjoyed by the rest of the American people. Writing in 1821, Timothy

¹ Debate of the Amosopic Society, April 19, 1817. The Society was organized "for the cultivation of Literature and for other purposes," May 4, 1816.

² Questions for debate by the Dialectic Society, May 16, 1840.

³ William Emerson to Robert W. Weir, October 21, 1834. Ms. 1392.

⁴ Charles Dickens, *American Notes*. The Gebbie Publishing Co., Ltd., Philadelphia, 1895. p. 174.

⁵ *Reise Sr. Hoheit des Herzogs Bernhard zu Sachsen-Weimar-Eisenach durch Nord-America in den Jahren 1825 and 1826*. Wilhelm Hoffman, Weimar, 1828. p. 183. Samuel Peter Heintzelman, USMA 1826, noted that the Duke "is a large sorry looking chap." Ms. Journal, September 17, 1825.

Dwight, who had long been president of Yale College, made this general observation of the people of New England and New York:

The principal amusements of the inhabitants are visiting, dancing, music, conversation, walking, riding, sailing, shooting at a mark, draughts, chess and unhappily in some of the larger towns, cards and dramatic exhibitions. A considerable amusement is also furnished in many places by the examination, and exhibitions, of the superior schools

Boys, and young men, play at foot-ball, cricket, quoits, and at many other sports of an athletic cast; and in the winter are particularly fond of skating.¹

These observations could have been made of West Point as well. Cadets responded to the fads which swept the country. They participated in the national holidays and shared in all the national virtues and vices. Apathy towards religion, and religious revival had their counterpart at West Point.²

Military tradition, the particular demands of the military profession and the geographical environment of the Academy at West Point marked the details of cadet life. The four-year course, arranging the cadets in four distinct classes, enforced a rigid pattern. The newly-appointed cadets joined the Corps in June, when they were immediately formed into squads and taught the manual and drill of the soldier. During the months of July and August the cadets were encamped in tents on the Plain; instruction was purely military. The remaining months of the year were devoted to academic exercises.

The cadets employed in the first year's course constituted the fourth class. They studied French, algebra, geometry, trigonometry, the application of algebra to geometry, and mensuration of planes and solids; they were also taught the school of the soldier. The first six months were confined solely to the study of French and mathematics. At the expiration of that time, a semi-annual examination terminated the probation of the cadet who, having passed the examination, received his warrant.

Those in the second year's course formed the third class and were instructed in French, mathematics, rhetoric, geography and history, and the first part of the course of artillery and in the school of the company.

¹ Timothy Dwight, *Travels in New England and New York*. New Haven, 1822. p. 354.

² The Reverend Franklin C. Smith, "The Spiritual Awakening at West Point," in *The Living Church*, February 21, 1943.

Those in the third year's course composed the second class. They were instructed in the remaining part of the course of drawing, in natural philosophy and in chemistry. They were also taught the school of the battalion, and the second part of the artillery course and were practised in the duties of sergeants.

Those in the fourth year's course constituted the first class, and were instructed in engineering, the science of war, mineralogy and geology, moral philosophy, political science, rhetoric, the first part of the course of artillery, evolutions of the line, the duties of commissioned officers and the use of the sword.

All classes were arranged in sections according to merit. Each cadet ranked in each branch of study according to his proficiency as ascertained from weekly class reports and from the results of the semi-annual examinations held before the whole academic board in January and June.¹

The writings of the cadets, which follow, dated prior to the War with Mexico, present us with the story of their training at West Point. The excerpts are arranged according to subject matter, to form a continuity which delineates the life of a cadet at the United States Military Academy.

¹ Outline of course from Report by Hamilton Fish. Rep. No. 476, 28th Congress, 1st Session, May 15, 1844.

SIDNEY FORMAN,
CORPORAL, DEML,
Historian, Library, U. S. M. A.

CANDIDATE



On arriving at the Steam boat wharf, *here*, the Officer in Charge, supposing from my "*Look*" that I might be from 35 to 40 years of age, *neglected* to ask my name, and *whether* I was a *Candidate* for *admission*, as was his duty. This, however, was of very essential advantage; as, in case he *had discharged* his duty, faithfully, I should have been conducted to Quarters, straightway, and not permitted to make observations or inquiries.—*Marsena Rudolph Patrick, USMA 1835, to Mr. Oliver Baker, July 9, 1831.*

The Point & Country adjoining it far exceeds the most Sanguine expectations I had formed of it. I had anticipated entering a wilderness where there was nothing to gratify the optical sense but a few old Buildings used as habitations for the Cadets, but instead of that I find 7 or 8 large brick buildings occupied by professors & officers. Two very large Stone Buildings 2 Story High, one used as the Hotel & mess-hall for the Cadets, the other as a Library, Chapel & Examination hall, & two very large Stone buildings one 3 & the other 4 Story High, used as barracks for the Cadets. There being but two, sometimes three in a Room, at the most, & well calculated for Study. There are also a great many buildings of Inferior note, 2 Stores—Wash women, Suttlers, Doctors, Shoemaker, Tailors, Barbers, Shoe Blacks & a large framed building for the Musicians & Regular Soldiers.—*Abner Riviere Hetzel, USMA 1827, to his father, John Hetzel, June 28, 1823.*

The first day after my arrival I was taken out to drill & sure you never saw a more awkward creature in your life than I was or appeared to be. Indeed every new Cadet appeared to have gyves on. To display the Chest, draw in the Corporation, draw the Chin in perpendicular to the Chest, hold the hands down so as to touch the seam of the Pantaloons, & take care dont bend the elbows, keep the

Shoulders drawn back & always be sure to keep the feet in an angle of 45° etc., etc. Indeed I had so many things to learn that I almost despaired of ever being a Soldier, but I have got over most every difficulty & am in very good hopes of being a Soldier yet.—*Abner Riviere Hetzel, USMA 1827, to his father, John Hetzel, June 17, 1823.*

I have not yet been examined before the Academick Staff, but expect to be next Saturday or Monday at the farthest. There has been a new system of things established since my arrival: every preceding year since the founding of the Institution the Cadets were obliged to prepare themselves for an examination but this year about 100 new Cadets came on & agreed many of them being Ignorant even of the Ground rules of Arithmetick—& some have come all the way from Louisiana & Georgia—It was therefore thought advisable by the Academick Staff to have professors appointed to prepare them for an examination. Consequently the new Cadets were divided into Sections & each Section having its particular professor it is very probable that nearly the whole of them will be admitted.—*Abner Riviere Hetzel, USMA 1827, to his father, John Hetzel, June 17, 1823.*

I was examined for admission into the Institution last Saturday in Co. with nearly 100 others. We remained Ignorant of the Result of the Examination until the next day morning, when we were order'd to drill before the Barracks. The Captain called all those who had been admitted by name & order'd them to Step three paces in front. Among the rest my name was called. The rejected amounting to 12 or 15 remained in the Rear rank, 4 out of 9 were rejected that came up with me on the Steam Boat, one of whom came from Louisiana a distance of 2300 miles. We then received our Knapsacks, pack'd up our clothing & marched into Camp.—*Abner Riviere Hetzel, USMA 1827, to his father, John Hetzel, June 28, 1823.*

ENCAMPMENT



After our Examination, we, (that is the 4th class "Plebs," as we are termed) were marched into camp from our Quarters. Here, we shall be kept until the First of September, Studying Tactics of all kinds, Infantry, heavy and light, Rifle, Artillery, etc., etc., etc.—*Marsena Rudolph Patrick, USMA 1835, to Mr. Oliver Baker, July 9, 1831.*

I was obliged to stand Guard 4 hours in the Day & 4 hours in the night. I tell you about 3 O'clock at night walking Post both Cold & Dark and raining I thought of my Dear Mother & home & wished that I were with them but as the old saying is, Whatever is, is right, and with that I console myself, although it is but poor Consolation.—*John Pope, USMA 1842, to his mother, Mrs. Lucretia Pope, July 7, 1838.*

You may think I do not like it here—if so you are mistaken—However I would like to see Mecklenburg—& a field of corn—or wheat or some such thing & would above all things like to get into Aunt Dorcas's cupboard a *moment* . . . —*William Dutton, USMA 1846, to his uncle, John W. Mathews, July 31, 1842.*

The skin is coming off my face up to my nose on account of standing Guard yesterday for four hours during the most intense heat and we are obliged to wear those tall bell crowned leather Caps which with the brass trimmings weigh about 5 Pounds and hurt my head extremely and the rim also coming just to the nose.—*John Pope, USMA 1838, to his mother, Mrs. Lucretia Pope, July 7, 1842.*

. . . when at first us new Cadets stood post the old cadets used come round at nights and try to fool us in trying to cross our post, and to frighten us at night, but some of our fellows run at some of them and came very near runing some through. Immediately after guard mounting we had Artillery drill, we had six large brass field pieces, at first it used to almost deafen me, it would have astonished you I think to see little boys not 5 feet high touching off a large cannon, and performing all the different duties necessary to man a piece.
—*William Davidson Frazer, USMA 1834, to the Rev. James P. Wilson, December 1, 1832.*

. . . many a time I have seen the "Guard turned out" & some man being missed—find him, snoring on the ground *without* a blanket just like a hog—I never had sweeter sleep than I have had—in that way—But our duties are so arduous together with walking one hour in 3 for the 24—that exhaustion is the result—All I want of those Editors who say—that "the lily fingered cadets, lounge on their velvet lawns—attend their brilliant balls & take pay for it" as I saw in a paper yesterday—is that they may go through *but one* "plebe" encampment.....—*William Dutton, USMA 1846, to his cousin, Lucy J. Mathews, Feb. 18, 1843.*

We are now in Camp and have no duties to attend to except Guard dutie, and Drilling the "Plebes" as soon however as they shall be sufficiently advanced to enter the Battallion—we shall commence Drilling ourselves, Just imagine me invested with the authority of a Drill master trying to make Soldiers of 4 or 5 young greenhorns, fine sport indeed. I have generally thought that the manners of the Cadets at table would hardly suit the ideas of elegance which the haut ton pride themselves on, but if the Class of New Cadets is to be taken as a specimen of Citizens as they are now, I think that the Old Cadets need not feel much ashamed, I never saw such a number of raw uncouth young men before. They are now in fine Spirits, and feel all their consequence, Lacroix Algebra, and the January Examination however will alter them much. The place where we are encamped is near Koziusko's monument. The camp is named in honour of our last Commandant "Camp Worth" We live 4 in a tent and are allowed for the furniture of the tent, 1 pail, 1 wash bowl, 1 broom, 1 candle box, and candle stick, 1 looking glass, for each

occupant 1 Chair, 2 blankets, 1 Canvass bed cover, 4 Shirts, 2 pair shoes, 4 pair socks, 1 bandbox etc. There has been a great improvement made this year, viz the introduction of board floors to the tents, which keep us perfectly guarded from the dampness of the ground.—*Jacob Whitman Bailey, USMA 1832, to his mother, Mrs. Jane Keely, June 27, 1829.*

I wish you could be here one night when I am on guard to visit with me some of those raw *plebes* on post. I can assure you I have some rare sport with them. Sometimes we get into Fort Clinton which is close by the line of posts, and flash powder at them or wrap ourselves in sheets and then run across their posts on our hands and feet muttering some undiscovered language, which they, poor simpletons, take to be ghosts or the devil himself. To their challenges of "Who comes there" we always answer something outlandish such as a "Steamboat and file of men", "Thunder and Lightening with an escort of two plebes", "The devil's chariot drawn by four mud-turtles" or something of the kind.—An old cadet the other night put on his accoutrements placed himself on the post of one of the plebes as soon as his back was turned and immediately commenced challenging the plebe ordering him to advance and give the countersign, knowing which he visited the other posts and played them a variety of tricks.—*George Washington Cullum, USMA 1833, to Alfred Huidekoper, June 21, 1832.*

We are now instructing the Plebes in firing canon which affords us no small quantity of amusement. Never being accustomed to hear so many pieces discharged at once so near them they make as much fuss as though they had an arm or two shot off. Some get so frightened that it is almost impossible to get them again to their duty before ten minutes—As soon as the Artillery Drill is over we attend the Laboratory where we are instructed in making all sorts of things for doing mischief such as Cartridges, fire balls, Congreve Rocketts etc., etc.—*George Washington Cullum, USMA 1833, to Alfred Huidekoper, July 30, 1832.*

Since we pitched our tents the Point has been thronged with visitors of every rank and description from "Boz"¹ who was here sometime since . . . —*William Dutton, USMA 1846, to his uncle, J. W. Mathews, July 12, 1842.*

¹ A pseudonym assumed by Charles Dickens in his "Sketches by Boz" first published as a collection in 1836.

It is rather a dry business dancing without ladies, however we cannot complain for the want of them in the evening. The Cholera in New York has driven legions of girls here who generally, if they are not true orthodox or cripples, attend our cotillion parties very willingly.—*George Washington Cullum, USMA 1833, to Alfred Huidekoper, July 30, 1832.*

We shall go into Barracks next week, The day before we move we are to have a Grand Fancy Ball, all Cadets who will wear fancy dresses will be allowed to attend, the others will see the fun. The objections which exist against Fancy Balls in cities, do not exist here, In the city any ragamuffin can obtain admittance, here all the actors are Cadets. It really seems like "old times" to get into a room with men, women, girls and boys, dressed as they used to when we were in the World.—*Jacob Whitman Bailey, USMA 1832, to his brother, William M. Bailey, August 21, 1829.*

BARRACKS



I believe I have never given you a description of our room—etc. If not it may not be uninteresting to give you an "Order" posted on every door—"Bedstead—against door—Trunks—under iron bedsteads—Lamps—clean on mantle—Dress Caps—Neatly arranged behind door—Looking-Glass—between washstand & door—Books—neatly arranged on shelf farthest from door—Broom—Hanging behind door—Drawing books—under shelf farthest from door—Muskets—in gun rack and locks sprung—Bayonets in scabbards—Acçoutrements—Hanging over muskets—Sabres—Cutlasses & swords—hanging over muskets—Candle Box—for scrubbing utensils—Against wall under shelf nearest door, & fire place—clothes—neatly hung on pegs over—bedsteads—Mattress & Blankets neatly folded—Orderly Board—over mantle—chairs—when not used under tables—Orderlies of rooms are held responsible for the observance of the above mentioned arrangement. By order of Lieut. E. J. Steptoe—1st Lieut. 1st Art. & commd't A compy."—*William Dutton, USMA 1846, to his cousin, Miss Lucy J. Mathews, February 18, 1843.*

. . . we have five in our room, which you know is but about 10 by 12. At 5 A.M. which is $\frac{1}{2}$ an hour after the morning gun, the drums are beat by the barracks, & the cry grows—"fall in there," when we all have to be in the ranks or be reported. The roll is then called, we go to our rooms & have 15 minutes to roll up our blankets put them up, wash, clean the room etc., when *every thing must* be in order. We have no mattresses & only 2 blankets to lay on the floor and cover ourselves with, & when we all five spread ourselves out we just cover the floor—(In camp, we have no more.) We then remain in our rooms until the drums beat for breakfast, again if missing we are reported. We then march to the mess hall, & if one speaks, raises his hand, looks to the right or left (which is the case on all parade) we are reported indeed we are reported for everything. I have been so fortunate as to escape as yet. When we arrive at the tables, the com-

mand is given "take seats," & then such a scrambling you never saw. For breakfast we have the remains of the meat of the former days dinner, cut up with potato with considerable gravy—& not more than two thirds of them get a bit.—bread cut in chunks, butter and coffee. We have to eat as fast as we can, & before we get enough, the command is given "Squad rise," at dinner we have "Roast Beef," & boiled potato, & bread—no butter, at Tea, bread & butter & tea. We have to drill twice a day, & a good many faint away. It is *terrible*, but I like the whole of it, after we have marched from tea, we stay in our room till $\frac{1}{2}$ hour past 9 when we can go to bed if we choose, & at taps at 10 every light must be out & after that the inspector happens in all times of night.—*William Dutton, USMA 1846, to his brother, C. Dutton, June 19, 1842.*

Last evening I fixed up a blanket so that I might keep a light after taps.—*Ms. Journal of Samuel Peter Heintzelman, USMA 1826, February 18, 1825.*

Fortunately I live with a Cadet Professor who is entitled to a light after taps (10 o'clock) by which I am very glad to profit until about 12, as it requires all of that time for me to get my lessons.—*George Washington Cullum, USMA 1833, to Alfred Huidekoper, September 9, 1830.*

There are about a dozen or 15 of splendid talent who have *been about through* the course 1 graduate of Yale & if I take a place near the head it must be by tremendous exertion.—*William Dutton, USMA 1846, to his brother, C. Dutton, June 19, 1842.*

I suppose you would like to know what the studies are. We have to study from the 1st of Sept. until January Bourdons Algebra it contains 390 pages, and is all theory, every thing that we do we have to give a reason for, it is not like the common Algebra's we have to demonstrate every thing at the black board, after January until [part of page missing] study Legendre's Geometry and Descriptive Geometry, every morning at 8 oclock we have to go to the section room, and remain there until 11 oclock to recite Algebra, we generally get from 8 to 10 pages for a lesson, in the afternoon at 3 oclock I have to go to French where I remain an hour. The 3d class study

Perspective shades and shadows, Biot, Bouchalart, two of the best French Authors on Mathematics, and all of the highest branches of Mathematics, and 3 volumes of Gil Blas, and the history of Charles 12th of Sweden. The 2d class study Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, Mineralogy and drawing. The 1st class study Engineering, Rhetoric, Moral Philosophy, Political Science, Infantry and, Artillery tactics. I have now endeavored to give you as minute a detail as possible of all the duties and studies we have to attend to . . . —*William Davidson Frazer, USMA 1830, to the Rev. James P. Wilson, December 1, 1832.*

Monday morning April 25th.—I have just returned from a hard morning's work, of surveying. I have been taking a plan of the point, for the sake of a little practice and still more for some fresh air. It is delightful working on the field instead of on the blackboard, particularly as we sometimes have a peep at some of the *fair sex*, when taking the positions of their dwellings.—*George Washington Cullum, USMA 1833, to his sister, Miss Catherine Cullum, April 24, 1831.*

The whole Corps supped on bread and milk to-day.¹—*Ms. Journal of Samuel Peter Heintzelman, USMA 1826, April 27, 1825.*

Mrs. Alden would like that I should come to board with them at the same price that I get boarding at the Mess Hall which is \$10. pr month. I think I shall accept the proposal when the plain becomes a little free'd of mud.—*George Washington Cullum, USMA 1833, to his sister, Miss Catherine Cullum, April 11, 1830.*

It is truly a lovely day & as our arms glittered in the sun at morning inspection I could not help contrasting in my mind the difference between a Sunday morning at home and here. There all is peace and quiet. Here accoutrements must be in their best order, & then

¹ Complaint against the quality and quantity of food was recurrent. Board was provided by a caterer; the names of Partridge and Cozzens have become legends. At this period, with permission, a few of the cadets ate at various private homes. Mrs. Thompson's became weel known. In 1876, an Army officer was charged with supervision of the mess, and the present cadet mess organization was established.

$\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour spent in evolutions. But then from Inspection till the Church Drum, one can call home his thoughts or let them rove on home if he chooses without interruption, as there is no visiting on the sabbath.—*William Dutton, USMA 1846, to his cousin, Miss Lucy J. Mathews, March 11, 1843.*

I have just got back from church, after hearing rather a dry sermon. Going to church here is very different from what it used to be at good old Meadville. If I had not there the pleasure of hearing a good sermon, I had at least the pleasure of seeing all my young friends, particularly my female acquaintances; but when I go to church here, I am obliged to sit for two long hours on a bench without a back, squeezed up among a parcel of Cadets, and squeezed up still more with my belts, as we have all to wear our side arms to church.—*George Washington Cullum, USMA 1833, to Alfred Huidekoper, November 22, 1829.*

We had no Inspection this morning the ground was too wet. We had two sermons to day I did not hear the first on account of my being on guard. The guard are always excused from Church the one I heard was well written but it was wretchedly delivered. I have been reviewing Chemistry all the evening.—*Ms Journal of Samuel Peter Heintzelman, USMA 1826, January 16, 1825.*

We have finished our course for this year and are now reviewing, we went as far as Spherical Projections in Descriptive Geometry, it is a study which is studied no other place but here, its object is to represent all Geometrical Problems on planes, the objects are given in space, we have to find the Projections of them on planes. I drew yesterday the intersections of two cylinders. I will send them to you just to show you what it is like, may be Mr. Findley can explain it to you.—*William Davidson Frazer, USMA 1834, to his brother, Reah Frazer, April 24, 1833.*

I hardly know which to prefer, Encampment or Barracks, there is one thing however about the former which suits me very much, viz, the privilege of walking on Public Ground on Saturday afternoons. I make the same use of Saturdays that I used of Sundays at home. Rain or shine I start upon a ramble, There is scarcely a place near the Point which I have not visited, from the highest point of the Crows Nest, to the muddiest marsh on the shores of the Hudson, I

have been three times upon the Crows nest, and intend to go again next Saturday, if I am not on Guard. A pretty story is told of a precipice in this neighborhood, "I *vouch* not for the *truth* to ye, but I'll tell the tale as 'twas told to me." Two Soldiers (some say Cadets) discovered an eagles nest, on the side of the precipice, and attempted to take the eggs. The way which they adopted was this, one of them with a rope tied round his body was lowered down from the brow of the precipice by the other, just as the one on the rope had secured his prize, he espied the old eagle comeing at full speed to defend her "castle in the air," The Soldier immediately called to the one above to hoist him up, but long before this could be done, the eagle arrived and instantly commenced a fierce attack upon the robber of her nest. he had nothing to defend himself with but a Jack Knife, with which he fought as well as he could, however in making a lunge at the bird with it he partly cut the rope, just above his head. His weight made the rope untwist and there he was suspended by almost a single rope yarn, with a depth of more than a hundred feet below him, with the monster fiercer than ever, the support from above constantly becoming more frail, as the rope untwisted, not daring to make any defence against the bird, from fear of breaking the rope, all this was more than he could support. he swooned, and when his companion had succeeded in getting him once more on "terra firma," his hair which formerly was of a jet black was found to have turned perfectly white!—*Jacob Whitman Bailey, USMA 1832, to his brother, William M. Bailey, August 21, 1829.*

EXAMINATION

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Attendent upon a West Point *Inquisition*.—In preparing for this last, I believe for two weeks previous, that I scarcely lifted my eyes from my book except to eat and sleep my six hours, and even then after such close application I shuddered to obey the call of “turn out first section second class”.—This however was not the trying time, although my heart palpitated strong enough to have shaken the Alleghanies had they been placed upon it.—*George Washington Cul-lum, USMA 1833, to Alfred Huidekoper, January 21, [1832]*.

The long *agony* is at length over, & it may well be called “*The agony*”: for I have never seen more *anguish* depicted in the countenances of any than the U. S. Corps of Cadets have manifested.—*William Dutton, USMA 1846, to his cousin, Miss Lucy J. Mathews, June 22, 1843*.

My troubles are over for a while. I have been examined both in Philosophy and Chemistry. I did not miss in either, which was much better luck than I expected to have. I am most heartily glad that the dreaded thing is over. I feel now like a free man. For the last 5 or 6 weeks I have done nothing but study from morning till night, every day in the week, now I have nothing to do, but to sleep and grow fat.—*Jacob Whitman Bailey, USMA 1832, to his brother, William M. Bailey, June 15, 1831*.

The closing up of the Examination was signalized by a display of fire works etc. In the PM. horses were attached to *all* the cannon on both sides of the plain & the way the cannon balls & bombs flew about was like hail. It seemed as if the earth would open, & the echoing from hill to hill produced an effect. Astonishing. In the evening they sent up rockets from every quarter & the air was full of them, while every now and then large *fire bombs* were fired from the mortars shaking the earth, & lighting the vale as far up as Newburg & when several hundred feet from the ground would burst & those fragments would again burst with a noise. They then placed candles around a hollow square and danced.—*William Dutton, USMA 1846, to his brother, C. Dutton, June 19, 1842*.

PASTIME

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They mounted an 18 & a 24 pounder to assist in the celebration of the Completion of the Grand Canal.¹ One is placed on the east bank & the other on the north.—*Ms. Journal of Samuel Peter Heintzelman, USMA 1826, October 24, 1825.*

Last night at Taps I went down to Havens to get a supper, there were six of us, two went down before tatoon to engage the supper, it was very dark and muddy we had a pretty good supper we started to return at one o'clock.—*Ms. Journal of Samuel Peter Heintzelman, USMA 1826, February 15, 1825.*

Three Cadets arrest[ed] for going to Havens after Taps.—*Ms. Journal of Samuel Peter Heintzelman, USMA 1826, November 10, 1825.*

Temp. $4\frac{3}{4}$ below zero Went skating . . . I broke in several times, once up to my middle there were over a dozen broke in. It was on the flats where the water is not deep. I played chess this evening the first time for a long time and beat a man six or seven times in succession.—*Ms. Journal of Samuel Peter Heintzelman, USMA 1826 February 5, 1825.*

You wished to know if we had a gymnasium² and that if so I would give you a description of it. Although there is none attached to the Academy, there is one over the river belonging to a school called the

¹ West Point participated in the celebration of the opening of the Erie Canal. The Professors went to New York City for the ceremonies.

² The first reference to the existence of a gymnasium at West Point is made in Order No. 5, February, 2, 1846.

In order to counteract the injurious effects likely to arise from the too sedentary habits of the Corps of Cadets at this period of the year, when Military exercises are necessarily suspended and with a view to physical development, the Superintendent has caused a Gymnasium to be prepared, which however limited in extent will it is hoped answer the desired end until something more extensive and permanent can be established.

Post Orders, Vol. 2, p. 294.

Highland School I saw it last summer in a unfinished state so that I cannot give you a description of it.—*George Washington Cullum, USMA 1833, to Alfred Hvidekoper, November 8, 1830.*

A bear and three cubs were seen in the mountains and about half a dozen cadets took their muskets and went after them but did not see them.—*Ms. Journal of Samuel Peter Heintzelman, USMA 1826, July 29, 1825.*

I went on a mineralogical excursion last Saturday, I went to the ruins of Fort Montgomery which are about 6 miles below West Point and directly opposite Anthonys nose. This fort was taken by storm by the British during the Revolution, but was of no use to them as they could not get West Point. I did not think it so interesting a place as Fort Putnam is. It is merely a fort built of earth and is now entirely overgrown with trees of considerable size. I found several interesting minerals. I never saw grapes in such abundance as I found them Saturday. When I was returning I picked some branches which were so loaded with clusters of grapes, that I could not carry them 5 minutes in one hand with out being obliged to change hands from the fatigue. I think I shall go next Saturday to Cotton Rock on the opposite side of the river. this [is] a rock which contains considerable quantities of Asbestos which has caused the country people to give it its name.—*Jacob Whitman Bailey, USMA 1832, to his brother, William M. Bailey, September 27, 1831.*

The Cadets played Foot-Ball to day The Cadets were fired on for running after the Baker girls.—*Ms. Journal of Samuel Peter Heintzelman, USMA 1826, October 5, 1825.*

I went up to Crow's nest last Saturday and found a party of 10 or a dozen Cadets already on the top. When they started to come down, I appointed myself pilot and for my own amusement led them home by one of the most frightful ways which I knew, there is in reality not much danger in the path I chose, but it would make one not used to climbing feel somewhat queer. I pretended to lose my way and led them to the brink of a precipice some hundred feet high.—*Jacob Whitman Bailey, USMA 1832, to his brother, William M. Bailey, April [25] 1832.*

I took a walk to day with several others along the bank of the river as far as Cornwall (about 4 miles from the point) the scenery was sublime beyond description.—*Ms. Journal of Samuel Peter*

Our barber has finished the addition to his shop, he has his soda fountain playing.—*Ms. Journal of Samuel Peter Heintzelman, USMA 1826, May 7, 1825.*

This evening I attended a meeting of the Lyceum of which I had been elected a member.—*Ms. Journal of Samuel Peter Heintzelman, USMA 1826, December 3, 1825.*

We have had some fun here last week in a course of lectures by a Prof Grimes on Animal Magnetism and Phrenology I was delighted to witness such a *transparent* piece of humbuggery, for I expected to be perhaps puzzled to account for the results, but to convince one that miracles are performed I must see something that I can only account for by a miracle. The most that this fellow could do, was to get a man who was unknown to any of the audience into a state in which he would do what Grimes *told* him to do, Oh wonderful—The magic of money would easily effect this—Grimes told some good stories, and we got our moneys worth of laughter, to say nothing of being confirmed in ones previous opinions concerning Animal Magnetism and Phrenology.—*Jacob Whitman Bailey,¹ USMA 1832, to his brother, William M. Bailey, March 11, 1844.*

I believe I never told you that our class was called the Carroll class. Every Saturday evening we have a meeting for the purpose of literary improvement as our course of education here is almost purely scientific, which does not fit one very well to palaver in the world. We have regular debates and recitations. Many voluntary compositions are made by a reader selected by the society. The pieces are handed to him so that nobody but him knows the authors. You would be surprised to hear so many stories, essays etc., etc. serious and comic written in one week besides attending to our other studies. There are scarcely ever less than ten or twelve good compositions. Our debates are very interesting and instructing: perhaps

¹ Bailey was then Professor of Chemistry, Mineralogy, and Geology.

you would not judge so from the one I have just been on. That was chosen as a kind of relief as we had had a very long run of serious ones before.

In addition to this we have another society, called the United Carroll Club: its object is to keep up the present generous and noble feeling, which characterizes our class, by having a grand meeting of the whole class once in four years in Baltimore, on the anniversary of our graduating day.¹—*George Washington Cullum, USMA 1833, to his sister, Miss Catherine Cullum, February 14, 1833.*

To day it was proposed by the Corps to illuminate, we obtained permission from the Superintendent to do it. We prepared a transparency with the name of Washington. At 9 o'clock the signal was given to light candels, in the South Barrack we closed the window shutters and lighted the candels before the time, so that at the instant that signal was given we threw open the window shutters.—*Ms. Journal of Samuel Peter Heintzelman, USMA 1826, February 22, 1825.*

. . . at 11 o'clock we marched to the chapel where the Declaration of Independence was read by Cadet Allen, and an oration delivered by Cadet Henderson (B.N.) it was a very eloquent one, at 3 o'clock we marched to the mess-hall to an excellent dinner served up by Mr. Cozzens, many patriotic toasts were drunk & many more would have been drunk but the new-cadets became very noisy so that we retired (at half past 5 o'clock) much sooner than is usual on such occasions

¹ See *United Carroll Club; Constitution And Bylaws, 1833.* (Ms.) This volume was owned by Francis Henney Smith, USMA 1833, Virginia, later Superintendent of V. M. I., and includes a number of poems written that year by cadets.

Many classes took or received names. The Class of 1833 was designated "The Carrolls," in honor of Charles Carroll, then the sole surviving signer of the Declaration of Independence.

& before all the toasts were drunk (if I can obtain them I will record them) some few got tipsy.¹—*Ms. Journal of Samuel Peter Heintzelman, USMA 1826, July 4, 1825.*

We had a splendid celebration here on the 4th. Just as the sun began to peep over the mountain we fired a salute of 13 guns from the Cadets battery, at eleven oclock the procession began, it was in the following order, 1st colours and escort, 2d cadets of the 4th class, 3d Cadets of the 3d class, 4th Cadets of the 2d and 1st class, 5th invited guests, 6th citizens. we marched to the chapel where a very fine address was delivered by Cadet Pope of Kentucky. in the afternoon at 4 oclock we had a splendid dinner, all the Officers were there and also General Scott, there was a great many elegant toasts drank, among them the following struck me the most. Poland the land where justice sleeps and liberty lies bleeding. The spirit of 76, 9 cheers, tune Yankee doodle. The Union esto perpetua, tune a hymn. We had claret and champagne but not a drop of it touched my lips, and may God grant that it never will.—*William Davidson Frazer, USMA 1834, to his brother, Reah Frazer, July 9, 1833.*

We had glorious times on the fourth. Nearly the whole Corps, and invited Citizens too, were quite patriotick, or to speak unequivocally, most celestially *fuddled*. All passed off very well and the next day we were all as sober and as wise as if we had not had the exquisite felicity of being *independent*.—*Edwin Wright Morgan, USMA 1837, to Lieutenant James Duncan, USMA 1834, July 9, 1835.*

You may remember what I wrote you some-time since, respecting the effort of Mr. Parks to make a *Choir* of the Corps—it has been perfectly successful—and we have met every Sunday morning and evening since I wrote you about it—The families of many of the Profs. attend and this evening it was *so* glorious!—*William Dutton, USMA 1846, to his cousin, Miss Lucy J. Mathews, March 29, 1846.*

¹ "The celebration of the 4th July by a Public dinner, with wine having been sometimes permitted, and having nearly as often, led to much inebriety and disorder among Cadets, it was, with their cheerful acquiescence, omitted in 1838, and may now be considered as permanently discontinued at the Military Academy." Excerpt from Opinion of a Court of Inquiry, General Winfield Scott, President, July 6, 1840. In Engineer Department Orders, February 1838 to April 1842. p. 64.

Whiskey was a regular part of Army rations until November 2, 1832. See William Addleman Ganoe, *The History of the United States Army*. New York, D. Appleton-Century Co., Inc., 1942. p. 172.

Our enjoyments might sometimes be perfect if some one shared them with us—Such would have been mine this P. M. if you, (I speak in a plural sense) could have been with me—I have spent it in an “*artistes studio*”—His parlor is a picture gallery & I spent a half hour waiting him, playing with a half a dozen little girls, & it truly seemed like being once more among *folks*—After showing me various coins & relicks, Mr. Wier¹ asked me to follow him, I had no idea where he was leading me until, throwing open a door he bid me enter.—It would be impossible to describe my feelings, when having descended five or six stairs I found myself in a room about 30 feet square—24 high, lighted by a single apex sky-light—its walls hung with rich paintings ancient armor, & a thousand relics collected during a sojourn of some years in Europe—But All this was insignificance, when compared with “*The Embarkation of the Pilgrims*”—which is nearly completed—indeed none but an artiste could pronounce it at present not entirely done—For a half an hour I sat—my eyes rivited on this Divine Painting, while feelings almost too good for human nature depraved filled me with rapturous delight—The place—The deep & holy devotion marked on each countenance. as bending on the ships deck they were pouring out their souls richest affections to Him who gave them—The wandering of the thoughts unbidden, to those fearful days—& all the fearful scenes through which they passed—The prescence of its Author—who had the conception to conceive, & the skill to perfect so great a design—all mingling, made a wild & rich confusion in my breast of—Devotion—wonder sympathy, & admiration—A whole half hour had passed—neither Mr. Wier or myself had spoken—I turned towards him—& never shall forget that look as sitting in an easy careless posture, he was regarding the work of his creation with looks so full of satisfaction, & tinged with such a cast of melancholy benevolence—What a holy atmosphere—said I—It was all I could say—& that was involuntary—I spent 5 hours there—He told me the names of all the different individuals—showed me a manuscript of Gen Washingtons orders—of some 86 pages—etc—This Piece of which I have spoken was ordered by Congress for one of the pannels of the Rotunda, some years since at \$20,000—Boz—Lord Hay—& Morpeth spent some hours admiring it, when here—To describe it would take this sheet, & then it would only be a description, & from me—But you will one day see it—at the Capitol—Wier is the first American artist—a devoted christian—& perfect gentleman—He told me whenever I felt the least *homesick*, I must be sure & call.—*William Dutton, USMA 1846, to his cousin, Miss Lucy J. Mathews, February 25, 1843.*

¹ Teacher and Professor of Drawing—USMA, 1834-1876.

FIRST CLASSMAN



One year more and my pilgrimage will be completed. When I think of the three last and particularly of the past year, all seems a dream. It appears but as a month since I was receiving the warm greetings of relatives and friends at my own beloved home. It is astonishing how constant employment gives wings to time. I can hardly realize the fact that we are first class-men, lords of the land, independent as journey-men shoe-blacks, under half pay, turning neither to the right or left for favour from Uncle Sam or any of his numerous progeny, and fearing not even Black Hawk and his thousand warriors.—*George Washington Cullum, USMA 1833, to Alfred Huidekoper, June 21, 1832.*

I thought when I entered the first class that we should have a comparatively easy time, but the contrary was the case, we have been obliged to study this year, almost as hard as when Lacroix' Algebra was our trouble. I have had so much writing to do, that I am heartily tired out. Memoir after memoir, and note after note, have been required of us, ever since last September.

* * *

We shall [have] a very busy time between now and next June, it will take about a week to examine my class, next June we shall have so many subject to be called upon, Civil engineering is the most important of them, and the one to which I shall pay the most attention. The number of Railroads constructing in all parts of our country will furnish employment for many engineers. and if I do not get stationed at West Point, I think I should try to get employed on some one of them for a while.—*Jacob Whitman Bailey, USMA 1832, to his mother, Mrs. Jane Keely, January 13, 1832.*

I am well aware that engineering at this time is one of the most lucrative & honorable professions that a young man can get in to but on the other hand it takes man of superior talents to get into that body. there is not more than 10 out of 100 of the graduates of this place who immediately get into that Corps.—*James W. Burbridge, USMA ex-1831, to W. G. Hawkins, March 18, 1828.*

This evening there was read out an order from the Secretary at war that the vacancies in the Marine Corps should be filled from the Military Academy and that the Marine Corps should be put on the same footing with the other Corps composing the army.—*Ms. Journal of Samuel Peter Heintzelman, USMA 1826, February 1, 1825.*

The Cadets are very much dissatisfied with this order to fill up the vacancies in the Marine Corps from the Academy.¹—*Ms. Journal of Samuel Peter Heintzelman, USMA 1826, February 2, 1825.*

The new army bill will give me a better situation when graduating than under the old one provided that the President does not fill up the present vacancies with citizens. It is hard for us to be placed under citizens who have spent no time in preparation for their commissions, while we have spent four or five years here at hard toil fitting ourselves for the various duties of our stations.—*Henry W. Halleck, USMA 1839, to Theodore Miller, July 6, 1838.*

¹ Apparently two graduates in the Class of 1825, James D. Burnham and Frederick Thomas accepted commissions in the Marine Corps. Cullum's *Register* also records that Augustus L. Roumfort and Ambrose Madison, both of the Class of 1817, accepted Marine Corps commissions upon graduation.

William W. Whetcroft left the Academy before graduation to accept an appointment in the Corps of Marines, June 1817. See *Post Orders*, Vol I, May 16, 1818.

Richard Stoddert Ewell wrote to his brother Ben, June 10, 1840, "I have always had an inclination for the sea, and on that account should prefer the Marines. Henderson (the Colonel of the Corps) is said to be anxious to get graduates to enter and, I have heard, says he will give them their choice of ship or station." See *The Making of a Soldier; Letters of General R. S. Ewell*. Arranged and edited by Captain Percy Gatling Hamlin. Richmond, Va., Whittet & Shepperson, 1935. p. 29.

The Examination is over and I have graduated at last. I am 5th this year which is as high as I wished, and higher than I expected. I suppose you expect me in Waterville soon, there is a chance however of your being disappointed. The Indians! in the west have been making bad work and General Scott, has orders to proceed immediately to the scene of action and he wishes to take my class with him. If he concludes to do so, I shall be informed of it in a few days. The Indians will probably be put down long before the expedition under General Scott, can get to the seat of war, So that you need not dream of tomahawks and scalps.—*Jacob Whitman Bailey, USMA 1832, to his mother, Mrs. Jane Keely, June 1, 1832.*

It would take a fortune almost to furnish a graduate with his dress etc. if he purchased it here for instance, the price of boots here is \$7.00, of leather trunks \$20.00 Which I'd be shot before I'd pay. Coat \$30.00 to 34.00 I shall buy as little here as possible I have spoken for a coat in New York.—*Jacob Whitman Bailey, USMA 1832, to his brother, William M. Bailey, April [25] 1832.*

I have sold my accounts: July to Mr. De Witt; August to Mr. Wilton; September to Mr. Sparrow; Oct. & Nov. to Mr. Wilton.¹—*Ms. Journal of Samuel Peter Heintzelman, USMA 1826, June 22, 1826.*

I received my appointment as Lieutenant. It came from the Post Adj at West Point. My station is at Belle Fontaine Missouri. I belong to the 3rd Reg. of Inf. I am Furloughed to the 31st of Oct.—*Ms. Journal of Samuel Peter Heintzelman, USMA 1826, August 2, 1826.*

¹ This was not an uncommon procedure of anticipating one's pay.

