

# Union General Daniel Butterfield

A Civil War Biography

James S. Pula



Savas Beatie  
California

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## To My High School Teachers

Richard Dunn who taught me to question.

Charles Hoffman who taught me to write.

Henry McCann who taught me that learning can be fun.



Daniel Butterfield as colonel of the 12th New York State Militia in 1861. *Library of Congress*

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## List of Abbreviations

BPBL: Butterfield Papers, Julia L. Butterfield Library, Cold Spring, NY

GNMP: Gettysburg National Military Park

LC: Library of Congress

MOLLUS: Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States

NARA: National Archives and Records Administration

OCHC: Oneida County History Center, Utica, NY

OR: *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*. Citations are as follows: Series, Volume, Part, Pages. They appear as 1/21/2:153-54. All references are to Series 1 unless otherwise noted. They will appear as 21/2:153-54. If there is only one part, the citation reads 21:153-54.

RG: Record Group

USAHEC: U.S. Army Heritage Education Center, Carlisle, PA

USMA: United States Military Academy, West Point, NY

## Introduction

**Daniel** Butterfield, declared an editor writing in a special issue of the centennial publication *New York State and the Civil War*, “was beyond argument the ‘fightingest’ general this state had given to the Civil War.” Yet, he marveled, “the name of Butterfield is not conspicuous in the Civil War literature.” More than a half century later, this dearth of attention remains.

Butterfield led troops in battle at the regimental, brigade, division, and corps levels through some of the more important theaters of the war, including the 1862 Peninsula Campaign, Second Bull Run, Fredericksburg, and the Atlanta Campaign, earning in the process the Medal of Honor and praise from his commanding officers and subordinates alike. He served in the crucial role of chief of staff of the Army of the Potomac at Chancellorsville and Gettysburg, and in a similar position for the two infantry corps sent from that army to the Western Theater to assist in relieving the siege of Chattanooga in 1863. His lasting contributions to American military tradition included his composition “Taps,” an important instructional manual adopted by the Union armies, and the designing the the first set of badges to identify units to which soldiers belonged.

Such a prominent resume would normally merit the attention of historians. Although he is often mentioned in passing in books and articles, few authors have examined any of his various roles in detail. The only treatment in any depth was a

memorial publication prepared by his wife that included a general overview of his life and a selection of correspondence and other documents. The purpose of this work is to remedy this serious deficiency in Civil War literature.

My focus is the protagonist's role during those tumultuous years. To add context, the first chapter provides some background on his early life through 1860, while the final chapter briefly covers the years following the war and a summary analysis of his military career. The balance of the chapters present a narrative and analysis of his wartime contributions, the first such exploration undertaken by any author. Organized in a generally chronological order, the text relies heavily on original primary sources, which serve as evidence for the conclusions offered. Wherever possible, I have allowed the participants in these events to speak with their own voices.

## Chapter 1

### “A Plain Duty to Prepare” Life Before the War

**Hundreds** of people crowded into St. Mary’s Episcopal Church in Cold Spring, New York, many more than a normal Sunday morning, let alone for a Saturday. This was anything but a typical July morning.

At the conclusion of funeral services, the cortège passed through streets lined with people, the town’s flags lowered to half-staff as the procession made its way to a dock for transport on a steamer across the Hudson River to the United States Military Academy. There, the 12th New York State Militia provided an escort for a line of march that included members of the Grand Army of the Republic Lafayette Post 140 from New York City, the Military Order of the Loyal Legion, and veterans of the Army of the Potomac. Cavalry, field artillery, a battalion of cadets, along with friends and relatives of the departed, completed the lengthy line of mourners. As the discharges of a thirteen-gun artillery salute echoed from the surrounding hills, the caisson carrying the deceased reached the cemetery where the mortal remains were lowered into their final resting place with full military honors, including the haunting musical notes of “Taps.”<sup>1</sup>

1 “Famous Soldier Dead,” Scrapbook of Utica Obituaries, 106, OCHC; Julia Lorrlard Butterfield, *A Biographical Memorial of General Daniel Butterfield, Including Many Addresses and Military Writings* (NY: Grafton Press, 1904), 221; “Gen. D. Butterfield Dead,” “Gen. Butterfield

Interred not far from the grave of the distinguished Gen. Winfield Scott, amidst a sea of graduates of the academy and career military personnel, the deceased possessed neither of these characteristics. A civilian for most of his life, he was a businessman who had never attended the academy or any other military college. He even had to secure special government permission to be laid to rest on the Academy's grounds. Despite this, today he rests beneath a towering marble monument, standing at a remarkable 35 feet in height. Its base is said to have been "the largest and heaviest block of pure white marble" quarried in the United States at that time. The monument's size and elegance dwarf the surrounding headstones and memorials. Who was this individual who commanded such respect from so many people and what had he done to earn these honors?<sup>2</sup>

\* \* \*

The story begins at the mouth of the River Taute near Carentan in Normandy, France, where the Bouteville family maintained their estate. Most genealogists place the family's arrival in England in the twelfth century, supported by records confirming land ownership by Robert de Buteville in Bedfordshire and John de Buteville in Buckinghamshire. Other family members seemingly joined them, leading to various spellings of the surname as it adapted to English usage. The first known descendant to arrive in North America was Benjamin Butterfield, who was born in Halifax, England, around 1611. He, along with his wife Ann, migrated to Charlestown in the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1638, initially as an indentured servant. He later appears as a free man in Woburn's town records in 1643. His descendant, Timothy Butterfield, served in the American Revolution, and at least three of his close relatives also joined the cause. His son Daniel was born in the year the United States declared its independence.<sup>3</sup>

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Buried," and "Daniel Butterfield is Laid to Rest," unidentified newspaper clippings, Putnam History Museum, Cold Spring, NY.

2 Butterfield, *Memorial*, 221-22.

3 Butterfield, *Memorial*, 1-2; George A. Gordon, *Butterfields of Middlesex* (Boston: privately printed, 1890), 1; Paul-Francois Carcopino, *The XXth Century: Normandy, Land of Invasions*, (Shanghai: XXth Century Publishing Co., 1944) Vol 7:2, 96; Letter, Mrs. Arthur R. Norton to Patricia Yatsyla, Sep. 19, 1980, Butterfield Papers, Binder 1, OCHC; Charles E. Fitch, *Memorial Encyclopedia of the State of New York: A Record of Men and Women of the Past Whose Sterling Character and Energy and Industry Have Made Them Preeminent in Their Own and Many Other States* (Boston, MA: The American Historical Society, Inc., 1916), 175; Bill Hartley, "Daniel Adams

The years following the Revolution marked the start of a significant westward migration as residents from New England and other eastern states sought fertile, affordable lands in the west. Embracing this trend, Daniel settled in Berne, located in the Helderberg Escarpment west of Albany, New York. Here, he and his wife, Catherine, welcomed their son, John, into the world on November 18, 1801. Like many young individuals growing up in small rural communities during that era, John received limited formal education. He compensated for this by demonstrating a keen intellect and a strong determination to succeed. As soon as he reached an appropriate age, he found employment as a stagecoach driver for Thorpe & Sprague in Albany. This occupation continued when he was hired by Theodore S. Faxton for a new business venture, formed in collaboration with Jason Parker, who held a contract for transporting the U.S. mail between Albany and Utica.<sup>4</sup>

With his new position, Butterfield moved to Utica about 1818, then a town of 420 homes with an assortment of stores, churches, banks, taverns, printing offices, and 2,861 inhabitants. Genesee Street, the main thoroughfare, was lined with small businesses but remained unpaved, subject to mud when it rained and clouds of dust when sunny and dry. But the town's position along the main east-west trade route through the state offered the potential for growth as transportation improved. That began in 1819 with the completion of the section of the new Erie Canal between Utica and Rome, the first revolution in transportation that would lead to business and industrial development and attending population growth. This dynamic environment presented opportunities for ambitious entrepreneurs astute and energetic enough to take advantage of them. Arriving in the city, Butterfield spent his time "picking up passengers from the taverns and boats for Parker's stages." Frugally saving some of his wages, he purchased a horse and coach with which he opened a livery business. Prosperity followed, due in no small measure to his determination, but also to a mind continually open to any new ideas and opportunities. An admirer referred to him as "one of the class of men who illustrate

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Butterfield," unpublished manuscript, 1, Butterfield Papers, Binder 4, OCHC; Butterfield family website, <http://www.usgennet.org/family/butterfield/>. The Battle Abbey Roll listing those who accompanied William the Conqueror at the Battle of Hastings in 1088 contain the name "Botevyle" which some believe to be a member of the same family, but there is much speculation about the authenticity of the names on the roll.

4 Butterfield, *Memorial*, 3, 7; Henry J. Cookinham, *History of Oneida County, New York: from 1700 to the Present Time* (Chicago: S. J. Clarke Pub. Co., 1912), 2:457-58; Scrapbook of Utica Obituaries, OCHC; Butterfield family website, <http://www.usgennet.org/family/butterfield/>.

the pluck and ability which win success,” a person who “possessed indomitable will, conspicuous ability and the intelligence which is far-seeing.”<sup>5</sup>

With his future looking bright, Butterfield married Malinda Harriet Baker in February 1822. Daniel Adams Butterfield arrived in Utica, the fifth of the couple’s eight children, on October 31, 1831. Not much has been preserved about his youthful years, but Ellis H. Roberts, a future Treasurer of the United States, recalled “He was active in sports and all youthful undertakings, with a certain dash and audacity which were a presage of his future career.” Because his own early education was lacking, the father determined his son would not have the same disadvantage. Educated in local schools, Daniel was prepared for entry into college at the private Utica Academy. Conceived in 1813 when a group of prominent citizens petitioned the New York State Board of Regents for approval of their proposal, the school benefitted from the hiring of trained teachers imported from outside the city for that purpose. With a classical program including Greek, Latin, and mathematics, its standards were considered high and its graduates found their qualifications “exceeding the collegiate standard.” After completing his foundational studies in Utica, Daniel enrolled in Union College in Schenectady. There, he became a member of the Sigma Phi Society, only the second Greek collegiate fraternal organized in the United States and the first to establish branches on other campuses. A biographical article recalled he “maintained an excellent standing, especially devoting himself to studies and outside reading productive of a generous culture. His genial bearing and gracious offices endeared him to his mates, and he had a certain dash and audacity in sports, presaging his future career.”<sup>6</sup>

During his sophomore year, Daniel returned home for the winter break to find his father had a visitor. In his presence, the father asked the student what he had been learning in college, whereupon Daniel recited the names and general contents of some courses he had taken. When he mentioned a lecture on the new magnetic telegraph, the father’s friend expressed interest with a series of questions asking the

5 Butterfield, *Memorial*, 3, 7; Cookinham, *Oneida County*, 2:457-58; Samuel W. Durant, *History of Oneida County, New York, 1667-1878: with Illustrations and Biographical Sketches of Some of its Prominent Men and Pioneers* (Philadelphia: Everts & Fariss, 1878), 257, 288-90; Scrapbook, 107, OCHC; “Death of Hon. John Butterfield,” *Utica Weekly Herald*, Nov. 16, 1869, 4.

6 Cookinham, *Oneida County*, 2:526; Butterfield, *Memorial*, 7-9; Moses M. Bagg, *Memorial History of Utica, N.Y.: From its Settlement to the Present Time* (Syracuse, NY: D. Mason, 1892), 450-51, 455, 457; Nelson Greene, ed., *History of the Mohawk Valley, Gateway to the West, 1614-1925; Covering the Six Counties of Schenectady, Schoharie, Montgomery, Fulton, Herkimer, and Oneida* (Chicago: S. J. Clarke, 1925), 771; Fitch, *Memorial Encyclopedia*, 176; Scrapbook, 107.



youth to “tell us all about it.” To the extent he recollected, Daniel described the instrument’s construction, the electromagnet that formed its core, and its general operation. Asked if the device was easy to operate and who might do so, the student replied: “Any young man of fair intelligence, not necessarily a college-bred man, or any young woman who could play the piano or keep good time.” Daniel supposed at the time that the questioning was to determine whether “the value or benefit of my college work and study” was worth the tuition his father was paying. This was at first reinforced by the father’s response: “The boy has got it; college is doing him good.” But then the father continued, introducing the stranger, “My son, this is Mr. Cornell, and we are going to build a telegraph line from New York to Buffalo.” Ezra Cornell became a founder of the Western Union Company and a co-founder of Cornell University. Years later Butterfield reflected he “never yet determined whether the purpose of this interview was to ascertain if there was any use in sending a boy to college as young as I was, or whether it was a keen and farseeing move on the part of Mr. Cornell to convince my father that the working and understanding of telegraphy would be a very simple and inexpensive matter, and so to get him strongly interested in building telegraph lines, as he did so become interested.”<sup>7</sup> Regardless of the answer, Daniel proved to be a precocious student, receiving an A.B. in 1849 at the young age of only eighteen.

\* \* \*

Aside from Daniel’s graduation, the year 1849 held another significance for the Butterfield family. By then John Butterfield had become a wealthy businessman and a leading citizen in his adopted city. A farsighted entrepreneur, his diversified interests included constructing plank roads, operating packet boats on the Erie Canal and steamboats on Lake Ontario and promoting construction of the Black River and Southern Railroads. He also formed a partnership that established the first telegraph line in New York State from Albany to Utica. Named the Springfield, Albany & Buffalo Telegraph Company, as the name implies it soon extended its reach west to Buffalo and east to Springfield, Massachusetts. The line later merged into the Western Union Telegraph Company. His interests also included being a director of the Utica City National Bank, an officer in the State Agricultural Society, and investing in a variety of other businesses and real estate

<sup>7</sup> Butterfield, *Memorial*, 342-44; Daniel Butterfield, Record & Pension File 566B, RG 94, Box 383, NARA.

dealings. In 1849, he formed a partnership, Butterfield, Wasson & Co., providing express freight services. The following year, through a merger with competitors Wells & Company and Livingston, Fargo & Company, the new business became the American Express Company. With this, its reach extended as far west as St. Louis, Missouri. Later, he built the Butterfield House hotel at the corner of Genesee and Devereux Streets in Utica, adjacent to Grace Church. Constructed and furnished at the then enormous cost of \$250,000 (\$9.591 million in 2023), besides accommodations it contained offices, a gentlemen's reception room and a reading room, a spacious dining room, a ladies' drawing room, and library and billiards rooms. When opened, it was said to be "the most modern hotel between New York City and Chicago."<sup>8</sup>

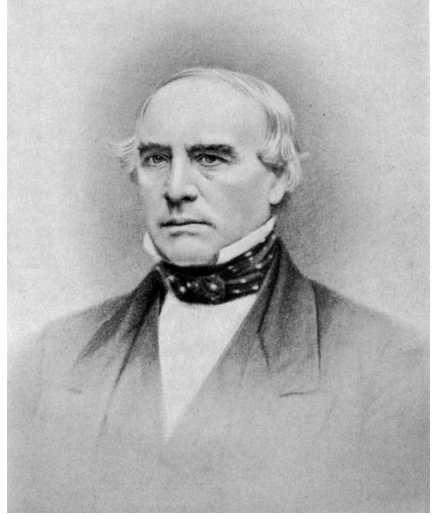
The bedrock of the Butterfield enterprises remained transportation in which he took a leading role promoting shipping, passenger, and later railroad services. Over the years, the partnership formed in 1849 changed in composition and objectives, expanding to some forty routes reaching as far north as Sackets Harbor on Lake Ontario and Ogdensburg on the St. Lawrence River and south into Pennsylvania's Chemung and Susquehanna valleys. The great impetus of the westward movement in the 1840s, fueled by the enormous acquisition of some 525,000 square miles of land under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ending the war with México, the opening of the Oregon Trail, and the popular political slogan "Manifest Destiny" increasingly drew the attention of entrepreneurs and politicians westward. As early as the 1840s there were advocates of a railroad link to the Pacific coast but competition between Chicago, St. Louis, Memphis, and New Orleans as the eastern starting point, coupled with the growing sectional tensions between North and South in the following decade, derailed every proposal. In April 1856 a memorial signed by some 75,000 Californians arrived in Washington, DC, petitioning Congress to support an overland mail route to the west coast.<sup>9</sup> Among those who took an immediate interest in the possibilities offered by the vast expanse of the growing nation was John Butterfield.

8 Bagg, *Memorial History*, 454; Cookinham, *Oneida County*, 2:510; Butterfield, *Memorial*, 4-6; F. Clark L. C. Weir and J. J. Henderson, eds., *The Expressman's Monthly*, Vol. 2 (Cincinnati: James Barclay, 1877), 142, 182, 332; Scrapbook, 106; "American Express Company," *Syracuse Daily Standard*, Apr. 5, 1850, 1.

9 Le Roy Reuben Hefan, *The Overland Mail 1849-1869: Promoter of Settlement, Precursor of Railroads* (Cleveland, OH: A. H. Clark Co., 1926), 79-81; "Butterfield Stables Sold," *Oswego Weekly Palladium* (Oswego, NY), Jun. 13, 1894, 1.

John Butterfield ca. 1860

*Biographical Memorial of General Daniel Butterfield*



Under growing pressure, in March 1857 Congress authorized the postmaster general to solicit bids for the overland delivery of mail between the Mississippi River and San Francisco. Under the terms established for the proposals, competitors had to be willing to use four-horse coaches or spring wagons suitable for passenger service and to agree to a schedule not in excess of 25 days one way. In return for a six-year contract, the government was willing to pay per annum up to \$300,000 for semi-monthly service, \$450,000 for weekly service, or \$600,000 for semi-weekly service, as well as allowing the winning bidder to claim 320 acres of land every ten miles to establish stations along the route.<sup>10</sup>

To back his bid, Butterfield formed a joint stock enterprise, the Overland Mail Company, with himself as president and in partnership with William B. Dinsmore, Alex Holland, William G. Fargo, James Gardiner, M. L. Kenyon, B. F. Cheney, and Hamilton Spencer. Popularly known as “the Butterfield company,” it submitted three separate bids for semi-weekly service, each along a different route, with stations located an average of twenty miles apart and dual eastern terminals at Memphis and St. Louis. The proposal also called for a terminus at Los Angeles, from which the route would continue north along the coast to San Francisco. On July 2, 1857, the postmaster general announced his acceptance of one of the Butterfield bids based on “the amount proposed and the ability, qualifications, and experience of the bidders to carry out a great mail service like this.” For the sum of \$595,000 per annum, the selected route was to run from St. Louis and Memphis, “converging at Little Rock, Arkansas; thence *via* Preston, Texas, or as nearly so as

10 *Report of the Postmaster General for the Year 1857* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1858), 26; Curtis Putnam Nettels, *A History of the Overland Mail* (University of Wisconsin, Unpublished Thesis, 1922), 23; Hefan, 87-88; W. F. Bailey, “Overland by Butterfield Stage: Historical Sketch of the First Transcontinental Line,” *The Express Gazette* XXXX, No. 4 (Apr. 1915), Oneida County Historical Society, PA-US\_TRA.8, 121; *Overland Stage* (San Francisco?: Wells Fargo Bank National Association, 1930) pamphlet, Oneida County Historical Society, PAM-BI-BUT.5, 2.

may be found advisable, to the best point of crossing the Rio Grande, above El Paso, and not far from Fort Fillmore; thence . . . to Fort Yuma, California; thence, through . . . expeditious staging, to San Francisco.” It was approximately 2,795 miles. To ensure safe passage, Butterfield had his agents reach an agreement with the indigenous groups along the way to refrain from attacking the coaches in return for payments of money and goods and promises the passengers would be prevented from killing game along the way or stopping at any sacred sites.<sup>11</sup>

The first coach left St. Louis headed west on September 15, 1858, with another leaving California around the same time for St. Louis. On October 9, Butterfield sent a telegram to the President of the United States informing him the coach from California had arrived in St. Louis carrying mail and six passengers in 23 days and four hours. “I cordially congratulate you upon the result,” President James Buchanan responded the same day. “It is a glorious triumph for civilization and the Union. Settlements will soon follow the course of the road, and the East and the West will be bound together by a chain of living Americans, which can never be broken.” During the first eighteen months of twice weekly service, coaches were late only three times, the record crossing being 21 days, 23 hours. The average time during a six-month period from October 1859 to April 1860 was reduced to 21 days and 15 hours. By the latter year, more mail was going west via coach than by steamship. Service was only interrupted after the beginning of the Civil War when “secessionists burned stages and drove off livestock,” forcing a relocation of the routes farther north.<sup>12</sup>

By 1860 John Butterfield was a notable success, his business enterprises spanning the nation. Naturally, as the son of success, Daniel Butterfield could look to the future in the expectation of a very privileged, affluent life.

\* \* \*

While his father was forming partnerships and traveling west to manage his new transcontinental enterprise, upon his graduation from Union College Daniel

11 *Report of the Postmaster General*, 27-28; *Expressman's Monthly*, Vol. 2, 185; Hefan, 89, 92; Bailey, 121; Nettels, 17; Walter H. Lang, *The First Overland Mail Butterfield Trail: St. Louis to San Francisco 1858-1861* (East Aurora, NY: Roycrofters, 1940), 15; *Overland Stage*, 2; Leo Rosenhouse, “Butterfield’s Truce with Cochise,” *The West*, Mar. 1970, 32-34. The contract would be about \$20,906,000 in 2023.

12 Hefan, 98-99; Butterfield, *Memorial*, 5; Bailey, 122; Nettels, 41; *Overland Stage*, 7.

Butterfield applied for admission to a “cadetship” at the U.S. Military Academy. He was able to secure recommendations, among others, from his friend Alex Seward and his father, Senator William H. Seward. Alex suggested the application ran into difficulty with the local congressman, Orsamus B. Matteson, who Butterfield had angered “for not training in his company,” possibly suggesting a rivalry between local militia units. Whether his application was rejected, or he thought better of the idea, the appointment was never made.

Instead, he turned to the study of law, only to find that under the rules then in place he was too young to be admitted to the bar. With his legal career accordingly on hold, he enlisted as a private in the Utica Citizen’s Corps, a local militia organization formed in 1808 but reorganized in 1837. By the 1840s, most of these organizations served primarily social functions attracting young men from their communities eager for the status membership conferred. Most likely he received no serious training because he soon embarked on an ambitious tour of the United States as far west as the Mississippi River. Traveling by boat through lakes Ontario, Erie, Huron and Superior, with occasional portages, he arrived in Duluth in the Minnesota Territory. There he engaged an indigenous guide for an overland trek to St. Paul where he boarded a steamboat headed south to St. Louis and New Orleans, the latter being the largest commercial center in the South. No doubt interested in potential business connections, he came face-to-face for the first time with the institution of slavery which made an unquestionable impression on him. So, too, did the political tensions he later stated convinced him at that moment of the seriousness of the growing sectional divide.<sup>13</sup>

Upon returning to New York, the young Butterfield assumed, through obvious family connections, the position of general superintendent of the Eastern Division of the American Express Company. Over the next few years, he learned the business from an unusual top-down approach, but apparently readily mastered the intricate managerial and financial aspects of the complicated enterprise. With his office in New York City, in May 1854 Butterfield applied for membership in Masonic Lodge 273 and enrolled in the 71st New York State Militia as a captain. He

13 Letters, Butterfield to Secretary of War, Oct. 16, 1849, William H. Seward to Secretary of War, Oct. 22, 1849, and Alex Seward to Jerome Fuller, Jul. 16, 1850; U.S. Military Academy Cadet Application Papers, RG 94, M688, NARA; Walter S. Cookinham, *Utica Citizens Corps, Utica, New York* (Utica, NY: Utica Citizens Corps Veterans Association, 1938), 9, 14; “Butterfield Memorial Issue,” *New York State and the Civil War*, Jul. 1962, 3; Cookinham, *Oneida County*, 2:526; Butterfield, *Memorial*, 9-10; Fitch, 176; “State’s ‘Fightingest’ General . . . Dan Butterfield Put New Life in Army of the Potomac at Crucial Time,” *New York State and the Civil War*, Vol. 2, no. 2 (July 1962), 3.

performed staff duties as quartermaster for which his business background, though limited at that time, must have prepared him. Unlike those who saw militia service as a largely social activity, he took it seriously because he soon gained promotion to major and then lieutenant colonel of the regiment. However, the myriad of business and other obligations took a toll on his health.

In the fall of 1855 he left on a trip to the Washington and Oregon territories, California, and Granada in Central America. Although he explained the trip as an attempt to restore his health, the timing suggests a strong business motivation as his father was then considering expansion to the west coast, but the venture led to a serious health risk. While aboard the steamer *Uncle Sam*, a cholera epidemic led to the death of some 150 passengers and crew. An article in the *San Francisco Times and Transcript* praised Butterfield's behavior during the crisis. Parker H. French, a Nicaraguan official on board, maintained in an interview appearing in the *San Francisco Le Phare* that

There were but two persons aboard the ship who were deserving of any credit—as for the officers they done but their duty. The two persons are—one Dr. Moses, who showed himself a skilful as well as a kind physician, the other Mr. Butterfield, a passenger, who might be seen first at one berth then at another, nursing the poor and friendless average passengers; cheering them and encouraging them with kind words and heartfelt sympathy. The blessing of Almighty God and the consciousness of having performed a noble and self sacrificing duty, will ever follow these two noble hearts through the world.<sup>14</sup>

Upon his return to New York, no doubt through the business contacts he made managing the family business interests in New York City, Butterfield met, fell in love with, and married Elizabeth “Lizzie” J. Brown, the daughter of New York City merchant and copper foundry owner Edgar Brown and his wife Jane Bergh Brown. The wedding took place at the bride's home on February 12, 1857. He also resumed his militia activities. “I had long been impressed,” he later wrote, “from what I had seen while traveling in the South that war was inevitable on the slavery issue, and sure to come between the North and South.” With this prophecy, “There came to mind a plain duty to prepare to the best of my ability for what seemed the inevitable, upon every patriot and lover of his country who had any desire to discharge his duty. I was laughed at and jeered for my explanations, made privately, to personal friends.”

14 Cookinham, *Oneida County*, 2:526; Butterfield, *Memorial*, 10; *Evening Telegraph*, Nov. 14, 1855, newspaper clipping, OCHC.

Believed to be Elizabeth “Lizzie” J.  
Brown Butterfield

*James S. Pula*

Undeterred, he took his military commission seriously, studying tactics with the aid of every publication he could find. He was, a later biographical article declared, “*semper paratus* whenever duty bade him.” Perhaps because of his preparation, but certainly because of his social status and connections, when the 12th New York State Militia, known as the “Independence Guard,” reorganized in December 1859 it elected Butterfield its new colonel. Within three months the state

adjutant general reported “The spirit evinced by this regiment, now designated by the numeral 12, suggests the belief that it must become, under its present skillful commander, a thoroughly reliable military body.” Commenting on a review in June 1860, the New York *Herald* noted the regiment’s “evolutions were executed with great spirit and promptness,” especially when the “double quick step was taken up and the regiment went down Broadway alternating quick and double quick time in a manner that surprised and delighted its warmest friends.” In the crowd, “No little excitement was created along the street; applause and commendation were freely expressed on all sides at novel and effective display of the drill and efficiency of the Independence Guard.”

The correspondent was convinced “Colonel Butterfield has taken the lead in the light infantry drill. . . . A very promising future looms up for Colonel Butterfield’s command.” Another observer noted his “energy soon revived the spirits of the Regiment,” and

a new vitality seemed now to be infused into the organization, and so rapidly did it regain its proper position that on the occasion of the Division Parade, October 11th, 1860, in honor of the Prince of Wales, the Twelfth was detailed by Major-General Sandford to







Butterfield with his pointed “English” style mustache as he appeared in early 1861.

*Biographical Memorial of General Daniel Butterfield*

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receive the Prince, and acted as his escort. The occasion of the reception and entertainment of the Prince of Wales was a very notable event in the History of New York.<sup>15</sup>

However, the Prince of Wales was in the future when Butterfield became colonel. December 1859 was the same month in which the state of Virginia sent John Brown to the gallows for leading his abolitionist raid on Harpers Ferry and only months before the political tensions climaxed in the election of the anti-slavery

Republican Abraham Lincoln as President of the United States. This critical national event soon gave Butterfield an opportunity to test his newly acquired military knowledge and his devotion to his country.

15 Butterfield Papers, Binder 4, OCHC; Hartley, “Daniel Adams Butterfield,” 5; Family Search, <https://www.familysearch.org/tree/find/name?self=Elizabeth%7CBrown%7C0%7C0&gender=female&birth=New%20York%20City%7C1837-1837%7C0%7C0&marriage=New%20York%20City%7C1857-1857%7C0%7C0>; Cookinham, *Oneida County*, 2:526; Butterfield, *Memorial*, 10; *Report. Annual Reunion and Dinner of the Old Guard Association*, N. G. S. N. Y., *Saturday, Apr. 21st, 1894 at the Manhattan Athletic Club* (New York: Ronald Press, 1894), 103, 122; *Proceedings of the Third Brigade Association*, 17; New York Monuments Commission for the Battlefields of Gettysburg and Chattanooga, *Final Report on the Battlefield of Gettysburg* (Albany, NY: J. B. Lyon Co., 1902), 1:341, 344; “Annual Report of the Adjutant General of the State of New York,” Document 179, New York State Assembly, Mar. 12, 1860, 8; Fitch, 175-76; Augustus Theodore Francis, *History of the 71st regiment*, N. G., N. Y., *American Guard* (New York, NY: The Veterans Association, 71st regiment, N.G., N.Y., 1919), 19, 81; New York *Herald*, Nov. 20, 1857 and Jun. 6, 1860, Butterfield Papers, OCHC; Scrapbook, 107; E-Mail, Don West to Ms. S. Biles, Apr. 10, 2002, U.S. Military Academy library.