

Subdued by the Sword: A Line Officer in the 121st New York Volunteers

James M. Greiner



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Subdued by the Sword: A Line Officer in the 121st New York Volunteers James M. Greiner Drawing on previously unpublished letters written by John S. Kidder to his wife, Harriet, during the Civil War, James M. Greiner recounts the triumphs and tragedies endured by one New York family. Kidder, a carriage maker living in the rural village of Laurens, responded to President Lincoln s call in the summer of 1862 for more troops by personally recruiting over seventy men living nearby. Serving under Emory Upton, considered one of the most talented soldiers produced by the Union, Kidder was captain of Company I of the 121st New York Volunteers. The regiment saw action at Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, Rappahannock Station, the Wilderness, and Spotsylvania. Kidder s letters home contain rich details of camp life, the difficulties of commanding men who had only recently been his neighbors, and the highs and lows associated with soldiering during the Civil War. They also reveal Harriet s struggle to maintain the family home and business due to the uncertainties of army pay."

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