

companies came from rural Cattaraugus County: H, from Allegany, and I, from Ellicottville. Jones had undoubtedly been helpful in rallying to the cause the railroad workers who had settled on Irish Hill and elsewhere in Ellicottville.¹²

The 37th New York was frequently called the Irish Rifles because of its ethnic makeup.¹³ The regiment was organized at New York City, and there Jones was mustered in as second lieutenant, Company H, on June 7, 1861. From that date until June 30 Jones was on leave and when he returned to New York he found the regiment had proceeded to Washington on June 23. At his own expense the lieutenant journeyed to Washington and rejoined his regiment as ordered. In July, the 37th New York participated in covering the retreat after First Bull Run after being held in reserve during the war's first large battle. General George McClellan's long period of building the Army of the Potomac followed. As Colonel Samuel B. Hayman drilled his Irish Rifles, Jones learned the business of war. On September 21 he left his company to go on recruiting service and returned the following month. On November 4 he was promoted to first lieutenant and adjutant and mustered in as such four days later. Another promotion followed on January 21, 1862 and Jones became major of the 37th. The elevation in rank entitled him to a horse and a soldier as a servant.¹⁴

The Peninsula Campaign of the following summer put the 37th into its first fight. As a member of Berry's brigade, Kearney's division, 3rd Corps, the regiment reached the battlefield at Williamsburg during the afternoon of May 5 after a march delayed by crowded, muddy roads. Immediately, they were involved in their first full scale combat, officers