Fall 12-13-2013

The Civil War Years: Rochester and the Civil War

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The Civil War Years

Rochester and the Civil War

Alan Schlageter
12/12/2013
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Abstract

Citizens of Rochester, like all Americans, found their lives interrupted in some manner by the events of the Civil War. Many men went off to perform their patriotic duty and fight to save the Union while the women of Rochester saw their roles change as they circumstances dictated that they had to take care of more of the duties of men at home as well as support the volunteers in battle. The war dominated local newspapers and politics and new organizations and charities appeared across the American landscape to help citizens meet the needs of a long, bloody battle.

This paper will look at the historiography of causes of the war, beginning with those who helped bring about the conflict. It will look at the citizens of Rochester and the important role they played in the Underground Railroad and abolitionist movement, highlight some of the greatest achievements and embarrassing moments of volunteers from Rochester, and look at what citizens who remained at home did to support those who went off to war. Finally, this paper will discuss ways in which teachers can teach about the Civil War using primary documents, with an eye towards local contributions as well as provide some resources for accomplishing this.
I. The Civil War- A Look Back at Scholarship

“Both parties deprecated war; but one of them would make war rather than let the nation survive; and the other would accept war rather than let it perish. And the war came.”

Abraham Lincoln, March 4, 1865

Abraham Lincoln spoke these words at his second inaugural address on March 4, 1865, just one month before the formal end of the Civil War and his own assassination. In a mere 32 words Lincoln managed to depict the South as aggressors in an attempt to destroy the Union and the North as protectors of the founding fathers creation nearly 100 years earlier. 148 years later, and after thousands upon thousands of pages have been written about the Civil War, many of the same debates still continue: what caused the war, did the North win the war or did the South lose the war, why did the war commence when it did, and could it have been avoided. The Civil War remains a popular event in American culture today. In 1996 Steven Woodworth edited a 751 page book of essays in an attempt to provide a starting point for someone trying to research the Civil War. Topics include secondary and primary sources, causes of the war, military leaders and strategies, life on the home front, Reconstruction, and a section dedicated to popular media (movies, novels, and documentaries). Woodworth estimates that that there have been around 70,000 books printed on the Civil War, and in the past 17 years, that number has continued to grow.

Civil War historiography has gone through many separate stages. The first stage, from the start of the Civil War until about the 1960’s, focused on causation, Reconstruction, and

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military history. For the most part these themes remained separate and military historians did not connect events on the battlefield with morale at home or vice versa. While many different theories and debates appeared, many voices of the Civil War generation remained silent. These voices began to be heard in the 1960’s with the Civil Rights movement and Civil War historiography branched off into many different fields. The voices of women, and African-Americans, and the “normal” every day Americans began to grow in the form of new social histories. While the essential debates did not change over such issues as causation, the information changed as historians discovered “new” histories for the first time or pulled down “old” histories from the shelf where they had remained silent for so many years. To try and encompass all of these topics and subtopics would go beyond the scope of this paper. This paper will instead focus on some of the major theories that have been debated about this era. This paper will also look at how historians have been influenced by their own eras and how this influence changed their views on the Civil War and finally how these new histories and new voices can interact with each other to tell a more complete story of America during the Civil War Era.

Over the years the causes of the Civil War have ranged from being moral, ideological, political, economic, social, and/or psychological while reasons have been placed on the shoulders of individual men, forces beyond human control, conspiracy theories (both North and South), different interpretations of the Constitution, economic interests, political ambitions, emotional sabotage, differences in culture and civilizations, and plain old chance. Today, a

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4 While I may have failed to mention many important Civil War historians who have provided many outstanding insights into Civil War research they have still been vital to my research. It would take years and years to read all of the scholarship necessary to do a completely thorough historiography on all aspects of the Civil War, including Reconstruction and the many fields that one can find today.

majority of the American public, except maybe in the South where a portion of the population still supports the “lost cause,” would agree with the majority opinion in the 1860’s that slavery, either morally, economically, or politically, caused the Civil War. Northern and Southern leaders espoused this view both before and immediately after the firing on Fort Sumter opened the start of the Civil War.

John C. Calhoun, a leader of Southern views, in his last speech to Congress on March 4, 1850 remarked that “One of the causes is, undoubtedly, to be traced to the long continued agitation of the slave question on the part of the North,” and “…There is a question of vital importance to the Southern section [slavery], in reference to which the views and feelings of the two sections are as opposite and hostile as they can possibly be.”⁶ William Seward and Abraham Lincoln in 1858 both referenced slavery as a dividing factor between the North and the South. In his “Irrepressible Conflict” speech given in Rochester, NY on October 25, 1858 Seward described slave labor and free labor as an “irrepressible conflict between opposing and enduring forces” and that “it is failure to apprehend this great truth that induces so many unsuccessful attempts at final compromise…”⁷ In his “House Divided” speech, Lincoln made the prediction that America would not be able to survive half slave labor and half free labor and that ultimately America would have to become one or the other in order to survive as a Union. Even Stephen A. Douglas, the main architect of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, stated that abolitionists caused the South to defend their institutions and he also believed that if not for the formation of the Free-Soil Party emancipation would have continued gradually state by state.⁸ Even in declaring their

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⁶ John C. Calhoun, “The Causes By Which the Union is Endangered,” The Causes of the American Civil War, ed. Edwin C. Rozwenc (Boston, Massachusetts: D.C. Heath and Company, 1961), 2, 7. I included the word slavery because that is what this section of his speech was referring to.
own independence South Carolina referred to slavery and the “election of a man to the high office of President of the United States, whose opinions and purposes are hostile to slavery,” as the main cause for their secession.⁹

After the fighting had begun official views on the cause of the war did not change much in the South. In his speech to the Confederate Congress on April 29, 1861, Confederate President Jefferson Davis alluded to slavery as a main cause of the conflict and war. Davis came to the defense of slavery and how “…they[slaves] had been elevated from brutal savages into docile, intelligent, and civilized agricultural laborers…”¹⁰ The Vice-President of the Confederacy, Alexander H. Stephens, shared these same views in his famous “Cornerstone Speech.” He declared that their new government’s “cornerstone rests upon the great truth, that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery- subordination to the superior race- is his natural and normal condition.”¹¹ In 2001, Charles B. Dew in his book *Apostles of Disunion* further proved how slavery influenced many Southern actions. In his book he studied men who seceding states appointed as commissioners to go to other slave states in an attempt to persuade them to leave the Union and he found that ideas of slavery and white supremacy dominated the points made in trying to get them to join the secession movement.¹²

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Howard Beale described the first years of Civil War history, from 1861 to about 1900, as the “devil’s theory” of history. Histories written during this time period looked to place blame on the other side and to defend the righteousness of their own side, often times defending their own personal actions. The men who first wrote of the Civil War came from the clergy, Congress, literary circles, and popular authors of the time. Most Northerners blamed the South for the war so something Southern must have caused the war. Unionists viewed the war as a rebellion and authors such as Joel Tyler Headley, referenced the war as “The Great Rebellion” or referred to Southerners as rebels. Southern secessionists, like Robert Barnwell Rhett, Edward Ruffin, and Roger A. Pryor, also referred to themselves as “revolutionaries” or “rebels” in an attempt to compare their cause to those of their ancestors who had fought against tyranny to form the Union, the difference being that the tyranny came from the North this time and not from across an ocean.

Some Northern writers, like abolitionist John Smith Dye (The Adder’s Den: or Secrets of the Great Conspiracy to Overthrow Liberty in America), Joshua Giddings, and Horace Greeley began to develop a “slave power” conspiracy theory. They did not believe that the majority of Southerners wanted secession or the continuation of slavery but that only a small group of wealthy plantation owners had used their influence and control over government to extend their own personal power. They saw the war with Mexico, annexation of Texas, and Fugitive Slave Acts as moves influenced by this Southern conspiracy in an attempt to gain more land and power. In his address to Congress on July 4, 1861, Abraham Lincoln enhanced the slave power

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15 Ibid, 18.
16 Ibid, 56.
conspiracy when he remarked that the idea of a constitutional right of secession that Southern leaders cited to justify their actions, did not exist and proved to be nothing more than a way of enticing the majority of the people who possessed the “moral sense…devotion to law and order…pride in reverence for the history and government of their common country as any other civilized and patriotic people” into an act of rebellion.18

Southern writers placed blame on the North and often referred to the war as “The War Between the States” or “The War of Northern Aggression” in recognition that their secession had formed an independent Confederacy and they viewed the war being caused by Northern aggression against individual states’ rights.19 Southern secessionists, or “fire-eaters” like Rhett and Ruffin believed that the South needed to secede to protect their way of life, to keep from being subjugated by the “commercial and non-slaveholding Northern states.”20 Men like Edward Pollard, James Williams, and Henry Hotze defended this Southern view and often referred to protective tariffs, internal improvements which would help Northern business, and other economic issues as signs that the Union would no longer be able to protect the Southern way of life.21 They placed blame for the war on Lincoln, who Pollard believed forced the South to fire the first shots on Fort Sumter to make them look like the aggressors, and on abolitionists as using slavery to exploit emotions of Northerners despite racial views being similar in the North to the South.22 Despite their attempts to show that the majority of the South agreed with secession, some different viewpoints did emerge from the South. Moderates like John Bell and Robert E.

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19 Presley, Americans Interpret Their Civil War, 88.
20 Ibid, 57.
21 Ibid, 65-68.
22 Ibid, 65, 67-68. The fact that Northerners had as much prejudice against African-Americans is often cited in many works and the primary cause of the conflict given is due to the fact that the majority of African-Americans lived in the South which made racial conflict a much more pressing issue for Southerners, a point first made by John C. Calhoun.
Lee did not believe in secession. Bell believed that Congress did have the power to prohibit slavery in territories, and Robert E. Lee, who did own slaves, saw the evil in slavery. These men still fought for the Confederacy because of their loyalty to Virginia, in the case of Lee, and in defense of the South against an invading North, in the case of Bell.23

A minority third view could also be seen prior to and during the war. Some believed that the war should have been avoided at all costs. Northern “copperheads” believed in slavery but opposed secession and supported the Union in the war.24 Their Southern counterparts, “croakers,” believed it to be a “rich man’s war and a poor man’s fight.”25 Both of these sides agreed the war could have been avoided, that no true fundamental differences caused the war but extremists on each side, with special blame placed on abolitionists, and inept, conniving leaders had brought about the war, a view that future historians would embrace for a time.

Immediately following the war until the last Union troops left the South in 1877 the primary voices of the war came from the North. In the writings of Benson J. Lossing, Southern conspirators took the brunt of the blame and he created an image of Robert E. Lee as a man who fought against his own countrymen in defense of the institution of slavery.26 Northern abolitionists who wrote during this time, men like Joshua Giddings and Horace Greeley, felt a sense of vindication. Their cause, the abolition of slavery, had been proven righteous by the outcome of the war. Henry Wilson, a Northern abolitionist, wrote a three volume History of the Rise and Fall of the Slave Power in America in which he described a Southern conspiracy that collaborated as early as the 1850’s in a defense of the institution of slavery.27

23 Ibid 57-59.
26 Ibid, 33-34.
Hermann Eduard Von Holst, the first trained historian to write on the Civil War, wrote an eight-volume history of the United States covering from the Revolution to the coming of the Civil War. He described US History during this time period “as a great moral struggle between absolute good and absolute evil.” He believed in the inevitability of the war because the economic conflict between manufacturing and agriculture had intensified the debate over slavery, which he deemed evil.

As is the case after most conflicts, the victors tell the story, and this story often becomes the truth in history. While the North emphasized Southern responsibility for the war in their defense of the institution of slavery, Southerners become united in what would become known as the myth of the “Lost Cause.” The rallying points for leaders of this myth believed that the South had not fought to defend slavery but had fought to defend their nobler way of life, and to protect state sovereignty which had been guaranteed in the Constitution. Men like Davis and Stephens exchanged slavery for state sovereignty as a main cause of secession and war. While Northerners celebrated the war as vindication of the righteousness of their cause, Southerners rallied around their honor and in their belief that they represented a more noble cause than their capitalistic, industrial Northern neighbors and they refused to believe that defeat in the war had demeaned their principles on which they fought.

Southerners began to look to the future, to their children in the hopes that their way of life and their honor would be preserved. Many Confederate leaders formed the Southern Historical Society (1869) to preserve and produce materials that would ultimately show the world the principles they fought for in the war. Patriotism in the South meant defending their actions and

29 Ibid, 48. Up until this point most authors had not touched upon the inevitability of the war.
30 Ibid, 74.
31 Ibid, 77.
other groups like United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) formed to counter the “false”
history being told in the Northern textbooks being used in Southern schools which depicted their
fathers as rebels and who had fought to defend slavery.\textsuperscript{32} The success of the movement could be
seen years later when a North Carolinian who had been educated in the South in the 1920’s and
became dean of Yale Divinity School remarked, “I never could have understand how our
Confederate troops could have won every battle in the War so decisively and then have lost the
war itself!”\textsuperscript{33}

The myth of the “Lost Cause” found a voice in Edward Pollard when he wrote \textit{The Lost
Cause: A New Southern History of the War of the Confederates} (1865) and \textit{The Lost Cause
Regained} (1867). Pollard defended the honor of the South as the only thing that they did not lose
during the war.\textsuperscript{34} In his writings Pollard traced the origins of both the North and the South. The
North had been settled by Puritans, known for being cold, intolerant, and selfish and found
morals to be convenient while Cavaliers had settled the South, known for adventure, hospitality,
polite manners, and fine sentiments.\textsuperscript{35} From these innate differences arose two separate nations,
only held together by the Constitution, which served as more of a treaty.\textsuperscript{36} He defended slavery
as mild compared to other countries, one in which slaves were protected, uplifted, treated well,
and “full of cheerfulness and contentment.”\textsuperscript{37} Slavery served as a convenient battle line but state
sovereignty, which gave the Union “moral dignity,” ultimately caused the war.\textsuperscript{38} The myth of the
Lost Cause still remains strong in the South today and still can be seen in the hanging of

\begin{footnotes}
\item[33] Ibid, 105.
\item[34] Ibid, 94.
\item[36] Ibid, 49.
\item[37] Ibid, 51.
\item[38] Ibid, 49-50, 53.
\end{footnotes}
Confederate flags throughout the South by those who believe the flag symbolizes their heritage, a heritage not based on a defense of slavery but on a protection of their rights as individual states.  

John Draper wrote one of the few histories during this time that did not try to place blame on either side. Draper attempted to use his background as a scientist to find natural causes that had led to the war. Similar to Pollard, he found that differences between the settlers of the sections had a direct influence on current times. In the South he described settlers as persons devoted to ease and material pleasure, while in the North moral and religious ideas had more of an influence. The differences in climate had then further separated them. The North became more self-conscious of a democracy with individualistic sentiments, more of an emphasis on personal freedom, while the South became an aristocracy with strong beliefs in personal independence, based on human slavery to do the work in the hot Southern weather, leaving them more time for personal freedom.

With the removal of federal troops from Southern soil in 1877 a new sense of nationalism began to enter American culture. Northern views towards the South began to soften as they grew tired of the African-American question and how to integrate them into society. Northerners had their own problems to face: the rise of immigration and rapid growth of cities and the social and political problems they brought with them, as well as growing tension between workers and employers, and more and more government corruption at every level. Southerners found vindication in the fact that the troops had left and many federal court decisions had left it up to

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41 Ibid, 78-79
them how to handle the new roles of freed slaves in the South, a vindication of their Lost Cause. This time period also saw economic ties renewed between Northern and Southern businesses and politicians promoted many “Blue-Gray” reunions of veterans from the Civil War. Ex-soldiers could talk of their foes bravery and that they fought for what they honestly believed in, a new sense that two sides made up the story of the war and they no longer had to find blame on their “enemy” but could respect their heroism for what they believed in.

During this time James Ford Rhodes wrote one of the first truly influential histories of the Civil War, *History of the United States from the Compromise of 1850* (1893). He tried not to place blame on either side but rather show how each side had been right and wrong. Like those before him, he still placed blame on slavery but he found the North and new technology complicit in the growth of slavery and he believed that despite the evils of slavery the South deserved sympathy from the North. He blamed the invention of the cotton gin and increased demand for cotton as the reasons why the South had fought so hard to defend slavery. He found secession wrong and placed the blame squarely on Calhoun and Davis, but he did call the war a “Civil War” and debunked the slave power conspiracy in his belief that the people of the South supported secession. Instead of earlier histories which placed blame either on Calhoun or Davis or the “slave power,” he put the blame on “broad and impersonal forces.” Finally, he saw Reconstruction as an attempt at oppression of the Southern people and that it had been a failure and error from the start. This history appeased both sides. Northerners agreed with the wrongfulness of secession and the righteousness they had in their moral argument against

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43 Presley, *Americans Interpret Their Civil War*, 143. Draper traced slavery back to England and pointed out that if not for differences in climate and soil conditions slavery may not have ended in the North.
46 Presley, *Americans Interpret Their Civil War*, 146.
slavery, while Southerners found that Rhodes agreed with their view of African-Americans as an inferior race and that Northerners attempted to oppress the South under the guise of Reconstruction. This history represented a balanced judgment and remained a dominant view for many years.

In the 1880’s and 1890’s trained historians began to try and think in nationalistic terms when looking at causes of the Civil War and tried to remove as much sectional bias from their writing as possible. Historians like Woodrow Wilson, the future President of the United States, and Frederick Jackson Turner began to look beyond the question of the North v South and look at the role that the West played in the conflict. Woodrow Wilson in *Disunion and Reunion* (1893) recognized that the conflict over slavery had erupted again over expansion into the west and believed that the true conflict came between the South and the West and not the South and New England. He also noted that the evolution of the South with slavery had created a different civilization than the one found in the North and in the West. The west played a major role in Frederick Jackson Turner’s views on the Civil War also. He believed that westward expansion heightened the tension around the slavery question in America. In his view though slavery was not the sole cause of the war; tariffs, land, and political power also played a part. These authors, along with others like Edward Channing, represented a shift in Civil War historiography. Edward Channing, like Draper before him, saw two distinct national cultures, economically and socially, that could not live side by side under one government. Historians now began to look at the conflict in areas outside of just the North and the South and they began

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48 Ibid, 170.
49 Tulloch, *The Debate on the American Civil War Era*, 119. Turner never wrote anything specifically on the Civil War. Many of his ideas came from his other writings on different topics.
to look at other explanations beside the moral aspects of slavery and states’ rights. These histories began a time period in which Southern views dominated Civil War history, either by looking for other causes of the war besides slavery or by fully supporting the myth of the Lost Cause.

During this time period William A Dunning began to dominate the field of Reconstruction and he would for the next half of a century through the work of his graduate students from Columbia University who would do state by state research of Reconstruction in the South. Dunning and his students portrayed a South that had withstood attempted takeovers by radical Republicans and had redeemed their values, the supremacy of the white race, and once again ruled their homeland. In 1915, the release of Birth of a Nation supported this view as the movie portrayed the Klan heroically saving the South and white womanhood from the horrors and chaos brought about by freed African-Americans. Dunning and his students based their work on the assumption that corruption ran rampant through Southern reconstruction government, and that freed African-Americans did not have the knowledge or ability to vote or support themselves. W.E.B. DuBois fought against this image and attempted to give the black race its rightful place in history and reconstruction as active members in their own freedom and not passive players in their attempt for equality. Unfortunately, America was not ready for these views yet and not until the 1960’s did the views of Dunning and his students come under serious attacks.

52 Tulloch, *The Debate on the American Civil War Era*, 218.
53 Ibid, 218.
54 Ibid, 221. The first biography of Harriet Tubman was first written in 1943 by Earl Conrad but America was still not ready for this history and it went largely unnoticed until it was reprinted in 1990.
55 Challenges to the Dunning view of Reconstruction really gained ground with the Civil Rights Movement, when both African-American and white historians began to look at the good of Reconstruction and on the freedmen’s contribution to this time period.
In the early part of the 20th Century Americans faced a new set of problems and these problems and debates shaped the way historians of this era interpreted the Civil War Era. Americans faced more social problems due to the rapid growth of cities and industrialization. In this Progressive Era reformers worked to find solutions to these new social problems, and the distribution of wealth and political power to the different social classes in American society. James Harvey Robinson, a reformer and historian, summed up a historian as “one who studies the past…in order to understand the present…so that one could aid in its improvement.”\textsuperscript{56} In this time period Charles Beard, with the help of his wife Mary Beard, wrote \textit{The Rise of American Civilization} (1927) and changed the shape of Civil War historiography for future historians.

In \textit{The Rise of American Civilization}, Beard described the Civil War as a “Second American Revolution” but his revolution did not come with the end of slavery, but rather with the alteration of balance of political power between the North and the South which allowed for the increase of industrial capitalism.\textsuperscript{57} Like historians from previous and future eras, he viewed the Civil War through the eyes of his contemporary issues. In a time period dominated with economic issues Beard sought to find the source of these economic problems and found them in the Civil War Era. When discussing slavery, he speaks of it in economic terms and not with any moral aspect and he also ignores the actual war in his writing.\textsuperscript{58} He saw the conflict in terms of two conflicting economic systems: Southern agrarian vs. Northern industry and capitalism. Climate, soil, industries, and different labor systems had created these two separate economic systems.\textsuperscript{59} The shift in political power came when free farmers outside of the South had united with Northern capitalists. This paved the way for the passing of protective tariffs, free

\textsuperscript{56} Presley, \textit{Americans Interpret Their Civil War}, 197.
\textsuperscript{58} Presley, \textit{Americans Interpret Their Civil War}, 205, Tulloch, \textit{The Debate on the American Civil War}, 122.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid, 204-05.
homesteads, internal improvements like railroads and canal systems, and opposition to slavery in federal territories, all of which Southern planters fought against as they did not help their agriculture business and protective tariffs hurt their interests.\textsuperscript{60} Beard even looked skeptically at the Fourteenth Amendment, which he believed was meant to protect the interests of businesses and corporations from state and federal regulations and not meant to give blacks civil equality.\textsuperscript{61}

After World War I two major changes happened in the American psyche that again changed Civil War historiography: Southerners began to feel under attack from the rest of the country again and Americans became dis-enamored of war. After WWI, tensions between farms and cities had grown again, the African-American question, which still had not been answered in the South, rose again with new organizations being formed, and the Harlem Renaissance, and the Scopes Trial in 1925, which Southerners saw as an attack on their intelligence and way of life.\textsuperscript{62}

In response to these new attacks, a group of influential historians, writers, and poets met at Vanderbilt University in the 1920’s (known as the Nashville Fugitives) and published the manifesto \textit{I’ll Take My Stand} (1930). This manifesto promoted the South and Southern society. Frank Owsley wrote \textquote{The Southern Defense of the Agrarian Ideal\textquote} in this manifesto and in it he fully supported the Lost Cause. He described a South that had been invaded by the North and had resisted all attempts to destroy the spirit of the South and change the hearts and minds of their young.\textsuperscript{63} Not only did Owsley contend that the heart of the conflict did not include slavery but he depicted a South that did not want to keep African-Americans in bondage but they had no other option because of fear of race wars or even worse, the white race being absorbed into a

\textsuperscript{60}Presley, \textit{Americans Interpret Their Civil War}, 205.
\textsuperscript{61}Tulloch, \textit{The Debate on the American Civil War Era}, 124.
\textsuperscript{62}Presley, \textit{Americans Interpret Their Civil War}, 241-242.
\textsuperscript{63}Frank Lawrence Owsley, \textquote{The Southern Defense of the Agrarian Ideal\textquote}, \textit{The Causes of the American Civil War,} ed. Edwin C. Rozwenc (Boston, Massachusetts: D.C. Heath and Company, 1961), 120.
This line of thinking coincided perfectly with the Southern belief that they had the superior civilization and had only been acting in defense of this noble way of life. The release of *Gone with the Wind* supported this ideal by glorifying life on a Southern plantation.

This idea of states’ rights had begun to come under attack. In 1922 Arthur Schlesinger Sr. wrote an essay entitled “The States’ Rights Fetish,” in which he argued that Southern claims of states’ rights covered up their true defense of slavery. Schlesinger made the point that those in the minority often use states’ rights as a way of protecting their interests, and this was not something special to the South as Northerners had tried it near the end of the War of 1812 with the Hartford Convention. He also questioned how the South could argue for states’ rights on one hand to protect slavery and at the same time pass and enforce Fugitive Slave Law Acts which undermined any states that had passed personal liberty laws. James McPherson has also argued that states’ rights are a means to an end and he cited the 2000 Presidential election and the controversy over the ballots in Florida as another situation in which states used this idea when it suited them for other purposes.

After WWI, Americans had become dis-enamored with war and the pain and suffering that came with it. More Americans began to think that other solutions could be found to solve conflicts and war should be the last measure and avoided at all costs. This line of thought created the revisionist history of the Civil War. Revisionist history has two major beliefs: the fact that slavery would have died out on its own in a matter of one or two generations, which would have eliminated the main goals of the abolitionists and one of the ultimate goals of the

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In 1921, Mary Scrugham predicted this revisionist thought in her doctoral dissertation entitled, “The Peaceable Americans of 1860-1861: A Study in Public Opinion.” In her dissertation she looked at the majority of Americans during the Civil War and she discovered that many of them, $4/5$ of the population according to her, did not want the war and that they favored compromises and had been led into war by extremists on each side pulling at their emotions.\(^{68}\) Avery Craven, James G. Randall, and Charles W. Ramsdell became the leading revisionists of the era. In their eyes, all wars were useless, therefore any so called causes of these wars had to be “abnormal” or “artificially” created.\(^{69}\) In the case of the Civil War, abolitionists of the North and fire-eaters of the South brought about the war, with special blame being placed on abolitionists since they believed that slavery would have died out on its own.

In his article, “The Natural Limits of Slavery Expansion,” Charles Ramsdell attempted to show how slavery had already begun to die out on its own and would have been gone within a generation or two. He believed that slavery would not have expanded into the west like Northerners feared it would. He argued that Texas, where cotton production would have been the most feasible, would not have been profitable due to lack of transportation for the cotton and because Mexican labor would have been much cheaper as settlers moved closer to the border.\(^{70}\) He also cited the 1860 census and showed that two slaves could be found in Kansas and fifteen in Nebraska.\(^{71}\) In response to Northerners who argued that Southerners had looked to annex

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\(^{68}\) Presley, *Americans Interpret Their Civil War*, 258-259.

\(^{69}\) Ibid, 274.

\(^{70}\) Charles Ramsdell, “The Natural Limits of Slavery Expansion,” *The Causes of the American Civil War*, ed. Edwin C. Rozwenc (Boston, Massachusetts: D.C. Heath and Company, 1961), 153,155. He showed that most of the soil in the west would not have been able to produce cotton and that even in Texas cotton production would have been able to go so far west.

\(^{71}\) Ramsdell, “The Natural Limits of Slavery Expansion,” 157.
countries like Cuba and Nicaragua he determined that these had very long chances of happening and William Walker, who had once claimed to be President of Nicaragua before being deported, had more connections to the North then he did with the South. With the question of expansion of slavery now mute in his opinion he looked at slavery in the South. He noted that many of the border states had been selling their slaves into the Deep South and began to have more connections to the North then they did with the South and overall there had been a decline in cotton prices because of overproduction which made slave labor less profitable. In summation, slavery had run out of land to expand into and over time it would have become too much of an economic burden for Southern states to continue and another solution would have been found for the African-American question.

James G. Randall and Avery Craven looked at why these conflicts ended in war and ultimately blamed politicians and extremists. In his article “The Blundering Generation” Randall describes the horrors of war, or as a “realist” would call it, “organized murder” or a “human slaughterhouse.” He believed that small minorities started the war, and then regions and sections found their way into it. Avery Craven supported this notion with the idea that people fought over things they knew, and in the era of the Civil War the things they knew were mainly local. They both argued that none of these sectional conflicts alone would have proven to be genuinely divisive. Craven specifically argued that all of the conflicts that could be found to separate the North and the South had at other points in history divided these sections into

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72 Ibid, 158-159. Northerners often referenced Southern attempts at expansion into the Atlantic as proof of their continued attempts at expanding slavery.
73 Ibid, 160-162. This connection is often made by those who focus on economic causes for the war.
75 Ibid, 13.
76 Avery Craven, "Coming of the War Between the States: An Interpretation," *The Journal of Southern History*, 2, no. 3 (August 1936), 305. Later political historians would later look at local voting patterns and determine that many voters voted with an eye on issues local to them rather than larger issues like slavery.
separate sections (Upper South v Deep South, Upper and Lower New England), and that these conflicts had been resolved without going to war.\textsuperscript{77} 

Roy Nichols in \textit{The Disruption of American Democracy} (1949) specifically looked at Washington during the Civil War Era and the politics of the times. He found the cause of the war to be the chaotic system of irresponsible and blind politicians who he found to be drunk in Congress, and giving shocking speeches to incite emotions.\textsuperscript{78} He also partly blamed American democracy itself for the coming of the war. He believed that the practice of frequent elections kept especially decisive issues in America in the forefront.\textsuperscript{79} During these constant elections extremists on each side had ample opportunities to excite the people over superficial issues which made them bigger than they should have been. Extremists on both sides had pulled on the emotions of the people until politicians had been “tricked” into war.

In these histories men like Stephen Douglas and James Buchanan became heroes because they advocated for peace, while men like Lincoln and Davis lost some of their luster for bringing on a war that did not accomplish much of anything.\textsuperscript{80} However, abolitionists received the most blame and criticism. Many Southerners, according to revisionists, already had begun to realize slavery would die out gradually but the actions of abolitionists had caused them to unite in defense of their way of life.

Revisionism and the Beardian economic causes of the war both faced serious challenges as America entered World War II. Challenges to American democracy forced many Americans to realize that evils did exist in the world, and as a world leader America needed to stand up to these evils. At times, the necessity of armed conflict made war not only acceptable but

\textsuperscript{77} Craven, “Coming of the War Between the States: An Interpretation,” 304.  
\textsuperscript{78} Tulloch, \textit{The Debate on the American Civil War Era}, 133-134.  
\textsuperscript{79} Presley, \textit{Americans Interpret Their Civil War}, 287.  
\textsuperscript{80} Craven, “Coming of the War Between the States: An Interpretation,” 319.
honorable in America. The economic view of Beard also came under attack because World War II did not represent an economic difference but an ideological one between Americans and the Axis Powers and then later between democracy and communism during the Cold War.

One of these challenges on revisionism came from Bernard de Voto who blamed revisionists for focusing too much on emotionalism and sentimentalism and not focusing on slavery and secession and what they actually stood for.\textsuperscript{81} Arthur Schlesinger Jr. believed that revisionist history started with the false assumption that evil in the world would die in the face of progress.\textsuperscript{82} Once again slavery became prominent as a main cause of the Civil War and Avery Craven, one of the leading revisionists, revised his outlook and began to question how the democratic process makes settling great moral questions very difficult, a question that may never truly be answered.\textsuperscript{83}

From 1947-1950 Allan Nevins published his 4 volume history of America called \textit{Ordeal of the Union}. These volumes represented a mix of revisionism and the new nationalism. He found that war in 1861 was the path of least resistance but if leaders had taken the harder path, and used both wisdom and had the courage to stand up to extremists then war could have and should have been avoided.\textsuperscript{84} He focused on the deep and fundamental differences between the two sections which allowed extremist propaganda from each side to be successful and on underlying forces which caused leaders to make decisions that they made.\textsuperscript{85} He understood that not one single cause had led to the Civil War but a series of events and circumstances brought about the conflict, with slavery at the heart of it. At the time both Northern and Southern

\begin{footnotes}
\item[81] Presley, \textit{Americans Interpret Their Civil War}, 305.
\item[82] Ibid, 305.
\item[83] Fehrehbacher, “Disunion and Reunion,” 117.
\item[84] Presley, \textit{Americans Interpret Their Civil War}, 311.
\item[85] Presley, \textit{Americans Interpret Their Civil War}, 312, Tulloch, \textit{The Debate on the American Civil War}, 141
\end{footnotes}
historians challenged his thesis. Either he was too hard on abolitionists or he did not give enough voice to the issue of slavery or they felt it was too Northern biased.

Starting in the 1960’s and the 1970’s Civil War historiography began to break off into many different directions, much like the historical profession itself did around this time. The Civil Rights Movement and the Vietnam Era changed the way Americans began to look to their past. Social historians broke off into sub-fields of African-American history, and gender history, political history grew into a major field. The invention and growth of the computer and the internet gave historians access to more resources and information and allowed them to sort mass amounts of data into many different categories. These “new” social historians looked at history differently than previous historians. Previous histories had focused on institutions and events in political terms first, a “presidential synthesis” where historical study was organized around the terms of office of elected leaders. These new histories looked for continuity and used a long history when telling their stories. Many of them became larger in scope but smaller in vision, looking at one group or another, and often created a fragmented history that made it harder to place in a larger context. Think of a military historian who studies the Battle of Gettysburg from a Southern point of view and only focuses on the errors made by Southern Generals, which often times does happen, but they do not take into account the North or as George Pickett responded when asked which Confederate general deserved most of the blame for the loss at Gettysburg, “I always thought the Union army had something to do with it.”

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86 These two fields only serve as a representation for the many subfields now find in historical scholarship.
88 Ibid, 6, 8-9.
Historians following the 1970’s have attempted to “extend” or create a long history and they have done this with Civil War history also. The debate over the actual causes of the Civil War has not varied much from the 1960’s. Some still support economic reasons, and other neo-revisionists still believe the war could and should have been avoided. More historians have looked past the Civil War Era to decipher why the Civil War came when it did. David Brian Davis in *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture* (1966), looked back to the Revolutionary Era and how the Federalist world viewed a society of order, and harmony, and how this view needed to be broken down before abolitionism, which had been around since colonial days, could take hold in America. He believed this occurred in the 1820’s-30’s as society became more market-oriented, with competing individuals. Much like Calhoun did in his last speech to Congress in 1850, Leonard Richards in *The Slave Power: The Free North and Southern Domination, 1780-1860* (2000), also looked back to the Revolutionary Era and at the formation of the Constitution and how many of the compromises favored the South. While the South had been in power, for most of the history of the Union until the mid-19th Century, they had been able to protect their lifestyle, particularly slavery, through the use of the gag rule in Congress, and banning antislavery literature in the mail going to Southern states, and enacting Fugitive Slave Laws which the Supreme Court reaffirmed (most of these violated the rights of Northern states). The election of Lincoln in 1860 and the rise of power in the Republican Party stripped the South of all its protection. In 2011, Jonathon Earle supported this viewpoint that secession

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90 Slavery as a primary cause is one area that most historians do agree on today.
was in response to the collapse of Southern slaveholders’ control of federal power; leaders of the South faced a new political reality.\textsuperscript{93}

Recently historians have looked abroad to see how debates over slavery in other countries influenced the American debate over slavery and for underlying factors that may have led to the war. Matthew Clavin in particular looked at the Haitian Revolution and analyzed how this impacted Southern thought and caused a fear of a union of slaves and “fanatical whites.”\textsuperscript{94} Ritchie Devon Watson Jr. depicts the 1840’s as a transition period in which Southern whites began to view the Northern white race as inferior, a view not evident before this time.\textsuperscript{95} Michael Wood’s asks what impact the changing of the guard, so to speak, in American politics had on the time period. In the 1850’s many dominating figures in politics, like Henry Clay, John Calhoun, and Daniel Webster, passed away and a younger generation of politicians and leaders had begun to take over Congress.\textsuperscript{96} Others have asked the question of why yeomen farmers in the South would have joined forces in secession with Southern plantation owners and the most common answer is for their own place in society. By siding with plantation owners and the elites of the South on the issue of race they found a common ground that put them above the slaves. These are just a few examples of some of the new scholarship on the Civil War as historians continue to add to the extensive literature available.

Out of these new histories, African-American history may be the most important in terms of the Civil War. For decades the story of the African-American race had been told by white men, while the voices of African-Americans remained silent or ignored. Despite African-Americans like Frederick Douglas, who wrote \textit{The Life and Times of Frederick Douglas}, George

\begin{footnotes}
\item Ibid, 424.
\item Ibid, 425.
\end{footnotes}
Washington Williams, who wrote *History of the Negro Race in America from 1619-1880* (1883) and *History of the Negro Troops in the War of the Rebellion* (1888), and W.E.B. DuBois, who wrote numerous books on the plight of African-Americans in America, Americans still pictured the image of a black man from white sources. Their images came from men like Calhoun and Pollard, and movies like *Birth of a Nation* and *Gone with the Wind*. Ulrich Philips in *American Negro Slavery* (1918) and *Life and Labor in the Old South* (1929) described relations between blacks and whites in the Old South as cordial with a mutual respect and he believed that black codes were hardly ever enforced and punishments were mild and “beneficial to the recipient.”

He believed that without slavery, the South would have entered into a race war and blacks would have returned to their “African savagery” or died out.

In 1956 Kenneth Stampp wrote *The Peculiar Institution*, challenging Philips view on slavery, and the profitability of slavery. He asked the question why did slave prices continue to rise and why did Southerners feel the need to not only enact slave codes, but enforce them if they were not profitable. To refute claims of slave laziness he provided the explanation that maybe slaves had dietary deficiencies or were just plain tired after working from sunup to sundown every day of the week for years and years. To challenge the contentment of slaves, Stampp showed that while they did not have many major revolts, they did rebel on a day to day basis through sabotage and arson. Stanley Elkins also looked at the apparent lack of many large scale slave revolts. He looked for psychological reasons and believed that slaves took on the personality of their masters because of a sense of complete powerlessness and had no family

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98 Ibid, 35.
99 Ibid, 41-42.
100 Ibid, 43. Claims of slave laziness and idleness were often made by Southern plantation owners when defending why they should not be given their freedom. They felt they would not do the work unless forced to.
101 Ibid, 43.
structure to help with the trauma of slavery. In 1974 Genovese published his own book on slavery entitled *Roll Jordan Roll*, and attempted to understand the black race and what they endured during their time in bondage. He did find the roots of a Black Nationalism movement within the common religion many slaves practiced in the black community.

All of these works, and many more, came at the time of the Civil Rights Movement and many of these authors had taken an active role in the movement. With the anti-war period of Vietnam in the 1970’s a black nationalism movement gained more power and black intellectuals like Julius Lester and Eldridge Clever believed that history had to be” rewritten by blacks, for blacks, to meet urgent current black demands.” African-Americans had to write themselves into history, to give future generations a workable past to see and build upon and this could not be done by white men. White historians like Eric Foner and August Meier were attacked, physically and verbally, for attempting to encroach on a subject that was not theirs, black history. In 1972 John Blasingame, an African-American historian, wrote *The Slave Community*, and in using the WPA interviews he found a rich black culture that had managed to survive despite all of the adversity that slaves faced on a day to day basis. In 1976 *Roots*, based on the novel by Alex Haley, also appeared and follows a slave family through their life of oppression and struggle for freedom from the antebellum period until emancipation.

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102 Tulloch, *The Debate on the American Civil War Era*, 47-48. His thesis was proven wrong, when compared with Latin America, the South had smaller average plantations, with less policing of slaves, and less of a black majority, while the whites controlled all the guns and ammunition, blocked all escape routes, and had vigilant patrols, to the point that Eugene Genovese said slave revolt in America was tantamount to committing suicide.

103 Ibid, 60-63. Genovese did feel empathy for the South and believed Southern slave owners acted on paternalistic emotions.


105 Ibid, 25.

106 Ibid, 66. While there are many issues with the WPA interviews (time passed, who was doing the interviewing, and a slew of others) these still remain one of the largest resources from African-Americans from this time period as often slaves were illiterate or their writings were destroyed.

With American withdrawal of troops from Vietnam and the Watergate scandal America seemed to become more introspective and lost focus on larger, more idealistic agendas, perhaps because they felt as if they had been let down; America may not be as exceptional as everyone thought. The race question, still not answered, again took a back seat and some in the South called for a return to the “Old South,” a hierarchy where blacks and whites knew their place and socio-biologists Charles Murray and Richard Hernstein again tried to prove blacks inferior to whites genetically. These ideas did not represent the majority and today there is a rich history of scholarship for African-Americans to see their true place in American history. Recent scholarship has focused on the active roles that slaves played in their own fight for freedom. Steven Lubet examined fugitive slave cases and determined that white northerners felt that these laws threatened their freedoms since they could be the ones who faced charges and not the runaway slaves. In this way, the slave resistance of running away helped to fuel the conflict between whites in America. John Ashworth and William W. Freehling came to the conclusion that conflicts between masters and slaves forced white Southerners to “support undemocratic policies that threatened northern liberties,” escalating the conflict. These works represent just a few of the many works being done on slavery which continue to branch out into many different areas.

Views on abolitionists have varied depending on when and who did the writing. They have gone from being neglected, to being denigrated during revisionist histories, and then vindicated with the Civil Rights movement as more writers and historians understood what those men and women were feeling. John Brown provides a good case study for radical abolitionists in general. Following Harper’s Ferry most moderate, and even many radical, Republicans and

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109 Ibid, 27.
110 Ibid, 433.
abolitionists, distanced themselves from his actions. Following his death, public opinion about him began to change in the North, as they began to see him as a martyr. This new outlook outraged the South who saw him as a murderer and tried to bring about what they feared the most, an alliance in revolt of slaves and whites. With reconciliation between the North and the South came more of a consensus of Brown as a crazy terrorist and murderer. Brown had always been a hero among African-Americans, but many whites again began to praise Brown himself, if not his actions, at the same time as writers began to understand what abolitionists faced as they fought themselves for civil rights.\textsuperscript{111} After 9/11, though, an interesting debate started. David Blight, a Yale historian, asked: “Can John Brown remain an authentic American hero in an age of Timothy McVeigh, Osama Bin Laden, and the bombers of abortion clinics?” especially when some of these men have invoked John Brown’s name in their messages.\textsuperscript{112} Some believe he is a terrorist while others believe he did what he needed to do to rid the country of a great evil: slavery.

Of course, the Civil War was a military engagement, a very bloody one from 1861-1865, and many of the books on the Civil War have focused on the military aspects of the war. For most of this history focus has been on individual battlefields, the actions and decisions made by leaders, and why the South lost, or why the North won. The actions of Lee, Grant, Sherman, Meade, Jackson, McClellan and a host of other leaders have been scrutinized over and over since the battlefields have been cleared. Each has gone through periods of praise and periods of scrutiny. A main part of the myth of the lost cause came from Lee after the war and he believed that the South lost the war because of the overwhelming numbers and resources of the North, or

\textsuperscript{111} James McPherson, “Escape and Revolt in Black and White,” \textit{This Mighty Scourge: Perspectives on the Civil War}, ed. James McPherson (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007), 37. Most of information in this part about Brown comes from this essay by McPherson. Through much of history Brown has been depicted as a madman and in 2005 a study was done that found he may have been bi-polar.

\textsuperscript{112} Ibid, 38.
as Shelby Foote said in Ken Burn’s 1990 documentary of the Civil War, “The North fought that war with hand behind its back…” This belief helped support the superiority of the South in intelligence and cause and they could only be defeated by the brute force of the North. History though has not shown this to be the case. The Americans defeat of a much stronger British army in the Revolutionary War and the defeat of Americans at the hands of the out-manned and out-resourced Viet Cong have proven that manpower and resources does not always equate to victory.

Another line of thought, noted by Thomas Connelly and Archer Jones in The Politics of Command (1973), showed that many Southern governors refused to send most of their troops to a “national” army and chose to keep them in their own states to protect their own lines. This, along with portrayals of Jefferson Davis constantly bickering with his generals, the ineptness of leaders at all levels, and lower morale on the home front because of wide-spread shortages would depict a split Southern Confederacy as the reason they lost the war. Many historians though have since challenged these ideas, citing the fact that the North faced all of these same conditions on their own side. McPherson argued that both the North and the South had drafts, suspended such privileges as habeas corpus, and Gary Gallagher compared draft riots in NYC to bread riots in the South. Brian Steel Will, The War Hits Home (2001), studied the area around Suffolk, Virginia and he found an area that remained committed to the Confederacy despite the loss of

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114 For much of history a debate has been over if Lee or Grant was the better General, a debate still ongoing today.
115 Tulloch, The Debate over the American Civil War Era, 183-84. This is just one debate among military historians of the war. Another popular debate is over the importance of the Eastern vs. the Western theater and Lee’s focus on the Eastern theater.
slaves to the Union, the loss of many in Lee’s Army of Virginia, and confiscation of war property and slaves by the Union.¹¹⁷

Gary Gallagher, in The Confederate War (1997) thought a more prudent question than why the South lost would be why the South fight did so long and hard despite these overwhelming circumstances. He believed they fought so hard to defend slavery.¹¹⁸ Others believe they fought so hard and for so long to defend their honor, which they felt had been challenged by the North over the issue of slavery and on the battlefield. Whatever the reasons, Wills found in his research of Suffolk, Virginia “a people who sought to secure victory until there was no victory left to win.”¹¹⁹ To truly understand why soldiers on both sides fought so long and so hard though focus needs to be brought upon the men and women who actually did the fighting. The first books to really look at those who fought and died on the lines were written in 1943, The Life of Johnny Reb and 1952, The Life of Billy Yank, both written by Bell Wiley.¹²⁰ Wiley used letters and diaries of soldiers from soldiers to understand the common soldier more. James McPherson, For Cause and Comrades (1997) and What They Fought For (1994) analyzed over 1,000 letters and diaries from soldiers to determine what they fought for. He concluded that Unionists fought for duty while the South fought for honor and to preserve their homes from invaders.¹²¹

More and more regimental histories and personal stories can be found today based on more resources that have been found but recent scholarship has taken a different direction. Carol Reardon has pointed out that most soldiers in wars only remember bits and pieces of the fighting

¹¹⁸ Tulloch, The American Civil War Era, 190.
¹²¹ Tulloch, The Debate on the American Civil War Era, 173.
and often times, especially in earlier eras, did not understand their place in the overall battle.\textsuperscript{122} Soldiers can then use newspaper accounts or accounts of others to fill in the gaps of their own memory, which may or may not recreate what really occurred.\textsuperscript{123} She cautions that the memories of a first battle often linger much longer and can become confused with other battles later on, and that often a hardened veteran remembers even less because they have become immune to what they see and these images do not remain in their memory.\textsuperscript{124} She also mentioned that immediately after the war many soldiers did not want to talk about the battles, and that in the 1880’s and 1890’s, time had hurt their memories while a desire to defend their own actions, their unit, or their side, they may alter what they do remember to provide a more favorable picture.\textsuperscript{125} Drew Gilpin Faust notes that for there is no gray area for a soldier and often times they find themselves in a life or death situation where decisions need to be made quickly and decisively.\textsuperscript{126}

George Rabble, in the tradition of social historians, has looked to extend the battlefield. He believes that “war news” at home and camp rumors on the front line greatly affected what the common soldier felt and how they acted. He correctly asserts that the effects of battle move well beyond the battlefield or political arena and that these results need to be considered to do a true battlefield study.\textsuperscript{127} This would allow the inclusion of research in other areas of the Civil War to be included to battlefield history which would allow a clearer picture to be formed.

In 1990 more than 40 million people watched at least one part of Ken Burn’s documentary \textit{The Civil War} on PBS and millions more have watched it on re-runs or on DVD.

\textsuperscript{122} Carol Reardon, "Writing Battle History: The Challenge of Memory," \textit{Civil War History}, LIII, no. 3 (2007): 253.
\textsuperscript{123} Ibid, 255.
\textsuperscript{124} Ibid, 260.
\textsuperscript{125} Ibid, 261.
\textsuperscript{126} Drew Gilpin Faust, ""We Should Grow Too Fond of It": Why We Love the Civil War," \textit{Civil War History}, I, no. 4 (2004): 377.
\textsuperscript{127} George Rable, "The Battlefield and Beyond," \textit{Civil War History}, LIII, no. 3 (2007): 247.
Shelbey Foote, one of the historians featured in the documentary, had sold 30,000 copies of his war trilogy in the 15 years before the release of *The Civil War*, and sold more than 100,000 copies in the first 6 months after it appeared. While many critics came out against the series, in the South because of the focus on slavery as the main cause and from some in the historical profession because they felt it focused too much on the war and leaders and not enough of a focus on the common people, women’s role, or slavery and emancipation, this documentary brought the emotional, tragic side of the Civil War to the American people. Civil War history saw a significant boom during this period and it does not seem to have ended as can be seen by the popularity of the recent blockbuster *Lincoln*.

In 1960 David Donald wrote that “as subject of serious historical analysis, Civil War causation was dead.” The fact that so many books and articles and documentaries continue to come out today might at first glance signal that he may have been too quick to make this judgment but in looking deeper he may have been right. Since the expansion of history to include more minorities and focus in on much smaller subjects great research and insights have been discovered to help *enhance* or *debunk* previous causes of the war. In reality though all of the debates still today revolve around many of the same causes that have been brought up time and time again, some even before the first shots had been fired at Fort Sumter. Historians today continue to write about the Civil War but with a different focus on gender, race, and the effects of the war just as much as the causes. They continue to elongate the time of the Civil War to trace where causes have come from and to see where the effects of the War may have stopped.

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Local historians focus on their local roles in the war that affected all Americans for almost a half a century in one way or another, while other historians continue to beyond the borders of the North and South for causes and comparisons to try and tell a fuller picture of the antebellum and Civil War period in America. The Civil War will always remain a primary topic in US History with new questions for new historians to try to answer.
II Rochester and the Civil War

Between 1861 and 1865 almost every American had their life affected in some manner by the American Civil War. Southerners felt the impact of the war the most with many battles being waged on their soil and a Northern blockade denying them access to many necessary products and limiting their ability to trade. Men from all over the country left their families in the name of patriotism. Women took on more of an active role in many communities doing what they could to help with the war effort. Some businesses prospered due to the needs of war, while others succumbed. The city of Rochester, on the Genesee River in Upstate New York, far from the frontlines, felt all of the angst, all of the pain and sorrow, and all of the joy and happiness of war as every other city in America.

At the start of warfare in 1861 Rochester had only been around for about 50 years, a short amount of time compared to many other eastern cities. In this brief amount of time Rochester had undergone many changes in population and to better understand the citizens of Rochester and their place in the Civil War, one must take a look at this early history and see the development of this city on the Genesee River.

With access to trade through the Genesee River and the natural power provided by the Upper and Lower falls the land that would become Rochester seemed a natural place to locate a mill town but from 1755, when Captain Thomas Davies of the English Royal Regiment of Artillery drew the first known sketches of the falls, until 1811, when Nathaniel Rochester, Charles Carroll and William Fitzhugh, Jr. surveyed the land into small lots, the area had

Figure 1-Nathaniel Rochester 1824
remained relatively undeveloped.\footnote{Blake McKelvey, \textit{Rochester on the Genesee: The Growth of a City}, (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1993), 2.} Originally inhabited by the Seneca Tribe, many new owners purchased this land but failed to fully develop it, beginning with Oliver Phelps in 1788 until finally purchased in 1803 by Rochester, Carroll, and Fitzhugh, Jr.\footnote{McKelvey, \textit{Rochester on the Genesee}..., 2-3.} While the falls provided the necessary power to run the mills, they also kept the Genesee inferior to other rivers, like the Susquehanna and Mohawk, as a trade route because of the necessary portage of goods around them.

Despite these limitations, the land began to see some more development after 1803. Samuel Latta, along with some other men, purchased the land at the mouth of the Genesee River and created the village of Charlotte. It was here in 1814, during the War of 1812, that citizens of this community would rally in defense against a British fleet approaching Charlotte.\footnote{Ibid., 10.} Charles Harford would open a new mill in 1807 in the area near the main falls, which he would eventually sell to Matthew and Francis Brown in 1807, that would become known as Brown’s Race, a popular area still today. In 1811, Colonel Nathaniel Rochester surveyed the land around the falls of the Genesee into town lots and placed the proposed site of the bridge over the river in the center of his tract.\footnote{Ibid., 8.} Settlers like Abelard Reynolds, Elisha and Harvey Ely and Josiah Bissel, Jr. found their way to the new lots of land and opened up mills, and shops in the growing mill town and village.

1817 proved to be one of the most important years in the history of Rochester. In March 1817, with a population near 700, Rochesterville, as it was known until 1823, gained its village charter and elected Francis Brown as the president of the first City Council.\footnote{Ibid, 12-13.} Competition for
control of the village grew between the workingmen and the merchants and Elisha Strong and others attempted to build a rival village on the east side of the river.  

The principal reason for the immediate growth of Rochester came in 1817 when designers of the new Erie Canal, which would connect Lake Erie with the Hudson River, opted to cross the Genesee River just below the small upper falls, located within the village of Rochester. Although it would not be completed and opened until 1825, the canal had an immediate effect on Rochester. A surge of settlers found their way to Rochester and new, surrounding villages to take advantage of the natural resources of the land and falls with anticipation of the new canal system which would open up the western market. In 1821 the state legislature created Monroe County from parts of Ontario and Genesee County. Rochester sat at the seat of this new county, which allowed for settlers to conduct their legal business in Rochester instead of having to travel to Canandaigua or Batavia. Construction of the canal, building the aqueducts and slips, as well as a large increase in the building industry (houses, hotels, churches, mills, shops, etc.) boosted the local economy by providing for jobs and also increasing the supply needs of local merchants.

The opening of the Erie Canal in 1825 pushed Rochester into the forefront as one of the leading market centers in the U.S. The canal cut the cost of shipping goods to and from Albany dramatically, from $60-100 a ton by wagon to a maximum of $10 by boat. More woodworking and iron working shops opened as well as lumber mills and distilleries. In a real sense, Rochester represented the first “boomtown” in America and became known as the “The Flour City,” as flour mills began to appear along the falls and Rochester became the leading exporter of flour in America. The population jumped from near 700 in 1820 to almost 8,400 in 1830 and

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136 Ibid, 15. This new village would be called Carthage but its challenge to Rochesterville would end in 1820 when the bridge they constructed over the gorge would collapse.
by 1834 Rochester had gained a city charter. Rochester had become such a hot spot even Sam Patch, America’s first great daredevil, came to Rochester to jump the main falls. Unfortunately, on November 13, 1829, one week after successfully completing his first jump from a lower height and just months after successfully jumping into the Niagara River from near the base of Niagara Falls, Patch jumped into the Genesee River and never surfaced again.

By the early 1830’s the growth of Rochester began to slow down. Brighter prospects further west lured many out of Rochester and in 1834 about 9 out of 10 Rochesterians would have been newcomers in the last 7 years. As cities and towns out west developed into larger market centers, and the railroad began to displace canals as trade routes, Rochester had to focus more on the potential of the falls and become more of a city of industry than trade. During this time Patrick Barry, from Ireland, and George Ellwanger, from Germany moved to Rochester and opened up the Mount Hope Garden and Nurseries, which would become the largest nursery in the country. The nursery business would soon give Rochester another nickname, “The Flower City,” as it blossomed with the fertile soil in Rochester, excellent transport facilities, and the natural protection against an early frost being provided by Lake Ontario. Hiram Sibley worked with Ezra Cornell to create a telegraph system that would span the United States and would become Western Union.

In the years leading up to the Civil War, Rochester kept most of its focus on local issues and not on the increasing tension between the North and the South over slavery. Conditions of

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138 U.S. Census 1820 and 1830
139 New York Times, August 12, 1883.
140 McKelvey, Rochester on the Genesee, 36.
141 Ibid, 48.
the bridges over the Genesee River had deteriorated over the years. A new suspension bridge, which cost $23,244, was built at Carthage in 1857 but, despite claims that the bridge was secure and safe for travel, it collapsed in April 1857 with the first heavy snowfall.\textsuperscript{143} Despite constant delays, construction of the new Main Street bridge finished in 1857 along with new bridges on Court Street and Andrews Street. The Erie Canal also needed to be updated with enlarged locks and made deeper to accommodate larger ships being used. These improvements cost a total of $1,363,597 and were completed in 1862.\textsuperscript{144} Street conditions improved along with the emergence of street lamps throughout the city. Water and sewer systems went under renovations to improve the sanitary condition of the city.

Social changes occurring in Rochester in the 1850’s mirrored those one would find in many American cities. Citizens still celebrated holidays like Christmas and Thanksgiving but new holidays like St. Patrick’s Day became more common, especially among the Irish immigrants of Rochester. Organized sports and leisure activities increased and on August 5, 1858 the first organized baseball match in Rochester took place when the Live Oaks defeated the Flour City Nine 24-13.\textsuperscript{145} Clubs like the Knights Templar, and the Pundit Club formed and women began to take on more of a public presence in religious and reform organizations, a trend that would increase during the Civil War.

Rochester, with a diverse population of Irish, Germans, and English, became a friendly haven for many reform movements of the time. In 1831 Charles G. Finney came to Rochester to help with the religious revival “burning” through many parts of Upstate New York and many reform movements found life within religious revivalism as focused began to shift from individual salvation to helping others. The Temperance Party, an off-spring from the

\textsuperscript{143} Ibid, 28.  
\textsuperscript{144} Ibid, 5.  
\textsuperscript{145} Ibid, 50.
Temperance Movement, produced the first mayor of Rochester, Jonathon Child. Susan B. Anthony not only pioneered the fight for women’s suffrage from just outside Rochester but she also organized the Women’s State Temperance Society in Rochester in 1852 and became a leading advocate in the anti-slavery movement.\textsuperscript{146} Slavery had been issue in America since the signing of the Declaration of Independence and had become more of a heated topic with western expansion and the growing dependence of the southern economy on the cotton trade. In the 1830’s, men like William Lloyd Garrison advocated for the immediate abolition of slavery in America while others, like Thomas Weld, argued for the gradual emancipation of all slaves. The religious revival of the Second Great Awakening had transformed slavery from an evil aspect of society or peculiar institution of the South to a sin of Southern plantation owners. As Northern protest of the institution grew in strength and rhetoric, Southern defense of their culture and way of life became firmer and the seeds for a future war began to be sowed.

Rochester became a home for the Anti-Slavery cause. The Rochester Anti-Slave Society grew into the Monroe County Anti-Slavery Society and in 1847 Frederick Douglass, an ex-slave and leading abolitionist, moved to Rochester and started the \textit{North Star}, an anti-slavery newspaper published until 1851. Rochester also became a main stop along the Underground Railroad, a series of routes and safe houses or “stations” that fugitive slaves followed in their plight for freedom. With easy access to Canada on the Genesee River and Lake Ontario, Rochester became the last stop for many escaped slaves. Amy Post, the wife of Isaac Post and one of the most active “station masters” on the Underground Railroad in Rochester estimated that 130 slaves

\textsuperscript{146} McKelvey, \textit{Rochester on the Genesee}, 68.
came through Rochester on their way to Canada every year. Some of the many stations that could be found in Rochester included Frederick Douglass’s house on South Avenue and newspaper office on Main Street, the residence of Samuel D. Porter on Fitzhugh Street, the residence of Isaac and Amy Post on Sophia Street, and the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church on Favor Street. The Corinthian Hall, located behind the Reynolds Arcade on Main Street, hosted many anti-slavery demonstrations and speeches and William Seward gave his famous “Irrepressible Conflict” speech there on October 25, 1858.

The strong presence of the abolition cause went largely unnoticed by much of the population in Rochester. Some believed that the question of slavery should be left to the South to answer since they lived with it and had grown up with it. Despite all the work done by abolitionists in the city, most politicians still avoided the slave question. In 1860, the African-American population represented a huge minority with only about 400 in Rochester. Also, whites in Rochester still believed African-Americans to be inferior. They “did not believe all men are created equal in color, in height, or in intellectual ability,” only that they had as much “right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” as all men. In 1860 a bill granting state suffrage to African-Americans was defeated by a majority of 1642. They also contended that Southern men promoted social equality more with slaves because of the way they allowed slave and white children to play as equals with each other, or “mix” with each other, at a young age. Even after the election of Abraham Lincoln in the Presidential election, Isaac Butts, the editor of

\[147\] Democrat and Chronicle, January 30, 1889.
\[148\] Democrat and American, October 24, 1860. From a speech by William Yancey, a leader in the Southern secessionist movement.
\[150\] Democrat and American, October 24, 1860.
\[151\] McKelvey, The Flower City, 62.
\[152\] Democrat and American, October 24, 1860.
the *Union and Advertiser*, seemingly ignored the slave question when he mentioned Lincoln’s financial program the gravest danger to America.\(^{153}\)

As sectional tension continued to mount, the three Rochester newspapers, *Union and Advertiser, Democrat and American*, and the *Evening Express*, debated over what the proper action of the North should be. The *Union* and the *Democrat*, along with the workingmen of Rochester, called for compromise. They insisted that the North should do whatever needed to be done to avoid war with the South. On January 5, 1861 Rochester observed a day of fasting and prayer, along with many other cities across the country, in which citizens asked for tolerance and peace with the news of secession in the South. The election of Lincoln, who won in Rochester with a majority of 975 votes, did not sit well with them because of how it would affect relations with the South and any attempts to reach a compromise.\(^{154}\) This sentiment manifested in a mob that appeared outside Corinthian Hall in January 1861 to protest against an anti-slavery rally which would be seen as yet another insult to the South at a time when many states had followed South Carolina into secession. The protests caused the organizers to move the convention to the African Zion Church the next day.

On the opposite side of the debate, the *Evening Express*, a more radical paper, argued that the North should not give into Southern demands no matter the cost. Republicans organized rallies and meetings, preceded by torchlight processions by Wide Awakes, a paramilitary organization of the Republican Party during the Presidential election of 1860. Leaders spoke at those meetings denouncing the South and demanding that citizens be prepared to show their true patriotism.\(^{155}\)

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\(^{154}\) Ibid, 3.

\(^{155}\) *Democrat and American*, October 24, 1860.
The mood and attitude in Rochester changed dramatically once news of the attack on Fort Sumter reached Rochester. After the election of Lincoln and the secession of the southern states, most understood any form of compromise would not avoid the seemingly inevitable war between the states. A crowd of fifteen thousand greeted the train of President-elect Lincoln on February 18, 1861 on the way to Washington, and even the Union and the Democrat pledged their loyalty and support to the union. Following Fort Sumter, all disputes and disagreements disappeared as all citizens of Rochester became united with a great feeling of patriotism. Flags hung outside of doorways and on rooftops of most buildings and houses. The Star Spangled Banner and My Country Tis O’ Thee appeared in all three newspapers. Rochester Mayor John Nash called for a public meeting to be held at City Hall on April 18 and citizens flocked to the meeting and filled not only City Hall up but also the County Court. The Democrat called the meeting a “demonstration of united patriotism.” Speaker after speaker called for action and a quick end to the rebellion and for citizens to “uphold and maintain at every cost the dignity, honor, and greatness of these United States.” The Express argued that the federal government needed to crush the rebellion to remain a free nation and not become a slave Republic. Like most Northerners, people in Rochester had been reluctant to fight the South over slavery but the attack on Fort Sumter had forced the North to defend the Union and traitors to the cause had no place. The Express described traitors being threatened or beaten for expressing their views and while not condoning these actions, they did not disagree. One of the resolutions from the town

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156 Democrat and American, February, 19, 1861.
157 Evening Express, April 19, 1861.
158 Democrat and American, April, 19, 1861.
159 Evening Express, April 19, 1861.
160 Evening Express, April 13, 1861.
meeting on April 18th summed up these views: “Resolved. That the fine soil of the east, the north, and the west, has no place for treason or a traitor, but a grave.”

For the next four years the people of Rochester heard news of the war from a variety of sources. The Reynolds Arcade became a place where family members gathered to hear news of their loved ones from the battlefields. The Reynolds Arcade had been built by Abelard Reynolds in 1829. The Arcade could best described as a modern indoor shopping mall, with stores and offices opening to the inside immense hallway on the ground floor and to the balcony on the second floor. John Rothwall Slater once said about the arcade,

“Along its little galleries were shops, factories, offices, studios, clubs, barbers and tailors, dentists and jewelers and bootblacks – a little of everything. You could buy a suit, pawn a watch, see a doctor, meet a friend, escape a bore, borrow money, sell a bond, send a telegram, read a paper, get a shine, eat a meal, play a game of chess and buy flowers for the lady; or you could hire a desk and wait for customers to come pouring in. Leisure and haste were joint tenants.”

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161 *Evening Express*, April 19, 1861.
The Arcade had many famous tenants including Western Union, the Post Office, Bausch and Lamb started there, George Eastman first worked there, and Thomas Edison spent a night there. The Arcade remained a fixture of downtown Rochester for over 100 years.

All three newspapers saw a spike in circulation as they devoted most of page two to war news. The Ladies’ Hospital Relief Association printed *The Soldiers’ Aid* on the first Wednesday of every month from June 1863-May 1864 to update members on the work of the US Sanitary Commission and on the work they accomplished for the men on the front lines. Friends of the Rochester City Hospital issued *The Hospital Review*, updating readers on the wounded men that they took care of. Even Moore’s *Rural New Yorker*, a newspaper devoted to agricultural interests issued by Daniel D.T. Moore, enlarged the News Department to keep readers informed about happenings from the front.\(^{163}\) News also came directly from the frontlines through personal letters, correspondence to newspapers, visits home and to the front, and through diaries.

Attitudes expressed in the local papers towards the South and the rebels quickly turned into a form of propaganda demonizing the Southern population. The *Democrat*, a newspaper that had argued compromise before the attack, printed an account of a man named John Farley. He had moved from Rochester to New Orleans prior to the war in search of more economic opportunities. According to him, a Southern Sargent entered his room and gave him and his roommates the choice of enlisting in the Southern army or going to prison. All three chose prison where each day they were asked if they changed their mind and would like to join the service. After three days they enlisted, only because they thought they had a better chance of escape from the army then prison. Farley managed to escape and he described the Southern army as being made up of the “vilest characters to be found in the slums of New Orleans and

\(^{163}\) *Moore’s Rural New Yorker*, April 20, 1861.
other river and seaport towns of the South.\textsuperscript{164} The Democrat also printed a very dramatic comparison of the two different populations:

“People of the North possessed by an indomitable energy, industry, and an almost endless extent of unoccupied lands of the richest soil, could not fail to become what they are in wealth and numbers, while the free people of the South, averse to labor and believing it a thing fit only for slaves, have reaped the necessary portion of that belief. They have a population of whom are so poor, ignorant, and wretched that they are ready for any change, knowing that their condition cannot be worse.”\textsuperscript{165}

The Express attacked the South for stealing from the federal government the arsenal and money to rebel against the government and called the rebels and their leaders cowards and their method of war “villainy.”\textsuperscript{166} These feelings lasted throughout the war and extended to Southern women also. An alleged letter from a girl to her brother in Nashville explained that she would only marry a Yankee “to avenge the wrongs of my poor oppressed country. Little peace should he find by day or night; thorns should be placed in his couch…and my dry goods bill as long as the Internal Revenue Law.”\textsuperscript{167}

Rochester soldiers in the field backed up these sentiments in their first skirmishes with the southern rebels. Samuel Selden Partridge of the 13\textsuperscript{th} NY Volunteer Infantry commented that the “the damned rascals won’t fight fair. They wear the same uniform that we do- this creates some confusion. They hoist the Stars and Stripes until we are within range and they throw them down and fire on us…They can’t help being treacherous.”\textsuperscript{168} Unlike those at home though, soldiers began to gain a mutual respect for each other. Charles Curtis Brown, also of the 13\textsuperscript{th} NY Volunteer Infantry remarked how good of a shot one Southern sniper had.\textsuperscript{169}
side often times called informal truces and met in the middle and talked and often traded items like coffee and tobacco. They became friendly with each other, at least as friendly as they could become with the enemy, and learned that they had more in common then they originally believed. Partridge, after seeing the aftermath at Gettysburg, remarked, “However bad the rebel cause may be and however just the war is as waged against it, the soldiers engaged in it have won the respect and admiration of their adversaries, the Federal troops, for their undaunted bravery and fortitude. They are not a whit inferior in valor and soldier-like qualities to our own troops. Both sides are equally matched in that respect.”

“We are in peril. They breasted the danger. The Republic called: They answered with their blood.”

At the onset of the war Rochester had a population of roughly 48,000. With Lincoln’s first call for troops, the men of Rochester rushed to show their patriotism and enlist to fight, a trend that would continue throughout the war and save the city from taking place in some of the future drafts. The city of Rochester alone would send a total of about five thousand troops to fight in the Civil War. Combined with surrounding towns and counties the region would send a total of seventeen regiments, a mix of infantry, heavy and light artillery, and cavalry.

The 13th NY Volunteer Infantry Regiment, also known as the Rochester Regiment, became the first regiment from Rochester to volunteer for the war. Commanded by Colonel Isaac F. Quinby, a professor from the University of Rochester, the men drilled in the Center Market as no camps had been built for troops at this time. The regiment grew so quickly new accommodations had to

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171 Letter from Samuel Selden Partridge to Macomber, July 20, 1863.
be made and some men stayed in School No. 6 on Lyell Avenue and then marched to Jones Square to drill.\textsuperscript{175} They also stayed at Military Hall on Exchange Street, Bennet’s Hall on Buffalo Street, Hamilton’s Hall on State Street, and Irving Hall in Smith’s Arcade.\textsuperscript{176} On May 3\textsuperscript{rd}, 1861, the Rochester Regiment marched down State Street to a crowd of about twenty thousand on their way to the train station as they departed for Elmira, the first stop on their journey to the front.\textsuperscript{177}

The men of Rochester went off to fight for a variety of reasons. While slavery may have been at the center as a cause of war, volunteers did not enlist to free the slaves. They went for the Union, for their patriotism, as a sense of duty, and to show their courage so no man could call them a coward. In a letter to his son, Lieutenant Colonel Duncan McVicar may have summed up the feelings of many other soldiers, “Since I entered the service of my adopted country, I have endeavored to perform my duty as a soldier…I never, to my knowledge, evaded the danger which my duty demanded…and whatever may be said to you of your father in future, my enemies (if I have any, God forgive them) will not have it in their power to call you the son of a coward.”\textsuperscript{178}

While the men of Rochester marched off to war, those left behind did their part in the war effort. Women formed a Volunteer Relief Committee and produced seven hundred shirts and bed ticks, four hundred pairs of drawers, and eight hundred havelocks.\textsuperscript{179} Women at the First Presbyterian Church produced one hundred and sixty shirts, over two hundred drawers, and over three hundred bed ticks.\textsuperscript{180} Besides clothing, money had to be collected to support the troops and

\textsuperscript{175} Marcotte, 18. *Democrat and American*, April 27, 1861.
\textsuperscript{176} *Evening Express*, April 23, 1861.
\textsuperscript{177} *Union and Advertiser*, May 3, 1861.
\textsuperscript{178} Letter from Duncan McVicar to his son Montcalm, January 18, 1863.
\textsuperscript{179} McKelvey, “Rochester’s Part in the Civil War,” 6.
\textsuperscript{180} Marcotte, 19.
their families. Within the first weeks of the war the Volunteer Relief Commission collected $36,000 to support families of volunteers but demand proved to be so great this committee could only support families of those enlisted in the 13th Regiment and benefits dropped from $4.00 a week in 1861 to $2.00 by November 1864. The Rochester Common Council also gave up to $10,000 to cover expenses for the Rochester Regiment.

Many women assumed the duties of the household and raising the children. Women also had to be the ever present conscious for those men who did not volunteer and go off to fight, especially as the war dragged on. The *Union and Advertiser* urged young women of Rochester to shun young able bodied men who did not go off to fight like those in the South did. The *Union* also believed that young men in Rochester and Monroe County found themselves just as welcomed by young ladies and female relatives as those who had gone off to fight and even accused some mothers and sisters of restraining men who wanted to fight into staying at home instead of going off to war.

Despite all of the support, the first Rochester regiment headed to Elmira a rag-tag looking bunch, without proper uniforms or proper guns, which the *Evening Express* found embarrassing when Colonel Quimby had to ask all citizens to donate their guns to the war effort. The uniforms they first received turned out to be poorly made gray uniforms that the makers claimed had been that way because they ran out of material, but Rochester newspapers, just as embarrassed by the uniforms as the volunteers, believed they had been “swindled.” The same situation also occurred with their rifles when first issued. They had been expecting to receive the

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181 McKelvey, *The Flower City*, 78.
182 Marcotte, 18-19.
183 *Union and Advertiser*, August 3, 1862.
184 *Evening Express*, April 20, 1861.
185 Marcotte, 36.
new, modern rifles but instead received old-fashioned 1840 flint-lock muskets. They complained of the “the bad hash” and the “beef that stunk” while at Elmira. These complaints, along with complaints of the New York and Erie Telegraph Company for making men find messages from home themselves when they did have the opportunity to make the trip to the headquarters, a mile away, and complaints over a lack of rations once the regiment reached Arlington Heights outside of Washington, filled the newspapers as those at home followed their first volunteers every move. By the end of the war, complaints like these would hardly be noticed as almost all regiments had to face these and other inconveniences during the war.

The men of the 13th had gone off to war in search of an adventure, in defense of the Union, and with the prevailing thought that the war would be over quickly. Men had such a misconception of war that Rochester Congressman Alfred Ely and former district attorney Calvin Huson both went to observe the Battle of Bull Run only to be captured by the rebels. However, these men quickly discovered that the war would be a long, bloody struggle, and that the life of a soldier could be long and tedious. Like many soldiers after them, the threat of being thought of as a coward or a “secesh” often kept them going in the fight. Even at camp in Elmira, Samuel Partridge found pride that many considered the 13th “the best in the state,” and far from the Utica Regiment who had “40 men and women in the guard house yesterday.” Charles Curtis Brown noted that five or six men from the Brockport company had refused to take the oath during their mustering in and “were tossed in a blanket filled with water,” and even while writing the letter that “a sentinel just deserted and company is chasing him down.”

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186 Marcotte, 36.
188 Evening Express, May 20, 1861.
189 Secesh was a derogatory word that Northerners used to describe secessionists.
190 Letter from Samuel Selden Partridge to Francis Allen Macomber, May 20, 1861.
191 Letter from Charles Curtis Brown to Caroline Lansing (his sister), May 15, 1861.
Run, the first fighting that the 13th saw, Partridge claimed that they were called the “staunch thirteenth, the brave thirteenth…and the artillery say we were the only fighting men in the field.”

The story of Truman Robbins tells of the courage and bravery of the 13th NY. In the Second Battle of Bull Run, Robbins had gotten “within four rods” of the infantry posted behind a railroad and he managed to get off one shot before being shot in the mouth, with the “ball lodging in my throat.” From there Truman describes how he managed to stumble back to the lines with the help of his friend Andy, and then a doctor put him on an ambulance the next day which brought him to a series of hospitals that ended near South Amboy. Becoming homesick, he escaped and made his way back to the regiment, still with the bullet lodged in his throat, unable to talk or eat solid foods. On October 23rd, “he awoke in the night coughing. I thought I would choke to death when up came the bullet out of my throat,” He had lived for almost two months with a bullet lodged in his throat and returned to the front lines to fight with his regiment.

Letters from the men of the 13th showed how eager they anticipated their entrance into the war. Samuel Partridge wrote that the men were for “a thundering good fight” so they could feel better and not “spoil.” Charles Curtis Brown echoed these sentiments in a letter to his mother in which he described the men “as anxious to get near the work and do not like staying so far away and reading of the actions going on.” The Evening Express wrote on May 22, 1861 that “The Rochester boys were much elated this morning by the announcement that they would soon move to the seat of war…”

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192 Letter from Partridge to Macomber, August 2 or 3, 1861.
194 Civil War Memoirs of Truman H. Robbins (Circa 1883), 6-8.
195 Letter from Samuel Selden Partridge to Macomber, June 9, 1861.
196 Letter from Charles Curtis Brown to his mother, May 28, 1861.
197 Evening Express, May 22, 1861.
The carnage of war had different effects on each individual soldier. For some, like Brown, it enlightened him on just “how little differs between life and death,” and how he was surprised at how he felt “cool and fearless…with no anxiety over being hit by a shell.”198 Daniel Pulis of the 108th NY Regiment found battle to be “real fun,” but admitted to being a “little skittish when I commenced but I have got over that now. All I think about now when I get in a fight is where is the nearest rebb and the next thing you hear from me is the crack of my gun and perhaps a yell if I can see any effect from the shot.”199 Others saw the agony in war and questioned how long it could last. August Seiser remarked, “Here and there one falls down, axe or spade in hand, hit by a bullet, yet that is nothing new. How is it possible to endure such strain and how long will it still last in this way?”200

As much honor as the 13th brought on the citizens of Rochester, shortly after the Battle of Bull Run the 13th became a source of dismay and shame on Rochester. The 13th had been mustered into service on May 14th, 1861 and the volunteers had enlisted for what they thought would be 90 days. In their short time of service they had been embarrassed by their uniforms and weapons, introduced to a bloody war in a defeat at Bull Run, discovered the tedious life in camp, and the unseen enemy of disease. For many volunteers, they had seen enough and had begun counting days until they could go home and rest up and possibly re-enlist. Despite orders to muster out in late July, by early August most realized they would not be dismissed from duty on the 14th. On August 14th several companies refused guard duty as the regiment entered a state of mutiny believing that the government had lied and cheated them.201 The next day General William Tecumseh Sherman lined the regiment up and informed them that they had actually

199 Letter from Daniel Pulis to his parents, August 18, 1863.
200 Diary of August Seiser, May 8-15, 1864.
201 Letter from Partridge to Macomber, August 14, 1861.
signed up for two years duty to the state which had been transferred to the federal government. They had two choices: either serve honorably, or go to prison at Dry Tortugas. To the dismay of those at home, thirty one members of the regiment chose prison over their duty. The 13th would turn things around under a new commander, Elisha G. Marshall, and go on to serve bravely in the Seven Days Battle, Second Bull Run, Battle of Shepardstown, and the Battle of Fredericksburg. They would be mustered out on May 14, 1863 and many of the volunteers would re-enlist in other regiments.

The 13th may have been the first regiment to become demoralized but they were not the last, especially as the war dragged on with seemingly no end in sight. One soldier remarked after Fredericksburg, “It is awful to think of the thousands who were killed and wounded for nothing at all. We (our army) occupy the same ground as before the battle, no more. When are we going to accomplish anything? Now more than ever before, I feel discouraged.” Augustus F. Hall of the 50th NY Engineers said that, “The soldiers as a general thing are very much discouraged about ending the war. Lots of them are deserting every day and a good share of those left, though I think they enlisted from patriotic motives, remain only from principle.” The Emancipation Proclamation did not help matters for many from New York. While the newspapers back home argued back and forth if the Proclamation represented a good military maneuver or if it would just strengthen the resolve of the South, the soldiers on the frontlines had to contend with the fact that they now fought to free the slaves, a fact many of them would have either denied or ignored beforehand. Edward Pierce of the 108th NY Infantry may have summed it up best, “Before the first of January I could meet a rebel and face him. Now I can’t. Formerly when a reb on picket or any other place asked me, ‘What are you fighting for?’ I could answer,
proudly too, for the restoration of the Union- now when one asks me I have to hang my head or else answer, for the (negros.)”

The call for troops did not stop throughout the years of the war and the city of Rochester continued to produce regiments whenever called upon. Bounties first appeared in Rochester in the fall of 1861 and newspaper ads consistently drew upon patriotic strings in urging men to join the war effort. In 1862 bounties ranged from $90 to $150, with promises of pay in advance. Irish and Germans ads, both with prominent populations in Rochester, called for their brethren to join national units to “fight for their adopted country,” and to “protect their paternal government.” When local communities raised troops in this matter, the common practice throughout the North, regiments never received reinforcements. New troops went to form new units and older regiments, as they lost men to disease and battle, shrank in numbers. This put many inexperienced troops in the field and left veteran troops outmanned and demoralized with losses. The federal government instituted the draft in order to solve this problem and also in an attempt to stimulate volunteering in communities as the Union predicted that the announcement of the draft “will have the effect to crowd forward all who prefer to volunteer.”

The Union and Advertiser saw the draft as a necessity to finish the war but did blame the federal government for this predicament because they did not foresee the true nature of this war and call on volunteers to serve throughout. A soldier who wrote to the Union under the name of “G” described the draft as a fair way of making sure that it is not only the first class who “feel the evils of the war,” and a good preventive measure of war since more may have sought

205 Letters of Edward Pierce, January 26, 1863.
206 Union and Advertiser, August 1, 1862. Evening Express, February 19, 1862.
209 Union and Advertiser, August 31, 1861.
compromise if they had known they would have been the ones to actually fight the war. He also argued against the idea that draftees or conscripts would not be as good as soldiers as volunteers since they were being forced to fight. He recalled that conscripts had made up Napoleon’s armies and that the simple fact was that most would prefer to avoid fighting if possible but would make good soldiers if forced to fight.210 Others argued that the only ones who argued against the draft would not volunteer and would be afraid of being drafted.211 In an attempt to avoid a draft, the mayor issued an order for all businesses to close their doors at 3:30pm on August 20th and remain closed for ten days so workers could spend a few hours each day to focus on filling the city quota.212 As the draft approached in July of 1863, news of the riots from both Buffalo and New York City reached the streets of Rochester. The Union appealed for citizens to “learn a lesson from the riots which have disgraced eastern cities this week,” and to show restraint and turn to the “…courts for justice if it is believed to be constitutional.”213 The city conducted the draft without any violence or rioting in the streets.

The draft did have other effects on Rochester. Citizens had two avenues in which to avoid service even if drafted. They could hire a substitute to serve for them. This practice created a broker system in which agents would travel to border states and hire men to come to Rochester to serve as substitutes. The system proved corrupt as agents would get men drunk or beat them and sell them off into the army.214 Others could pay a commutation fee of $300 to the government and not serve in the army. This practice created tension among the socio-economic classes of Rochester. The Rochester Common Council attempted to remedy this tension by

210 Union and Advertiser, August 2, 1862.
211 Union and Advertiser, August 2, 1862.
212 Union and Advertiser, August 21, 1862.
paying the commutation fee for those who could not afford it. The practice of commutation was stopped in 1864. The draft also created tension between the towns of Rochester. Each town had a quota dependent on their population and where a man volunteered and not where he lived determined which quota he went to fill. If towns filled their quota they did not have to conduct a draft. As a result, towns argued over volunteers and bounties skyrocketed in towns to lure men to volunteer with them. The 28th District alone paid out $2.5 million in bounties for the July 18th call for troops.215

Rochester papers also noted the rush of men seeking exemptions from the draft from the local doctor due to a medical disability. The Union believed with all the men rushing to the doctor’s office that “a fearful mortality was prevailing,” and that if all the men who went to the City Clerk’s office to file an exemption had gone to the recruiting station they would have a very large army.216 Exemptions included disabilities, son of a widowed mother, taking care of infirmed parents, two in the same household in the service, and motherless children and would be printed in the paper for all to see.217 One man went so far to have all of his teeth extracted just to avoid the draft.218

As the war progressed and more regiments formed in Rochester three camps formed to handle the men and their drilling. Camp Hillhouse, on the Monroe County Fairgrounds alongside West Henrietta Road, and Camp Fitz- John Porter, on Cottage Street on the opposite side of the river from the University of Rochester, housed most of the troops. A third camp, Camp Genesee, on the site of the Maplewood Rose Gardens on Lake Avenue, opened later in the war. Visitors often came to these camps to see family and occasionally treat the men to a dinner

216 Union and Advertiser, August 6, 1862.
217 Union and Advertiser, September 1, 1863.
218 Union and Advertiser, July 29, 1864.
like the ladies of third ward did for the men of Captain Hollister’s company at Camp Porter with roasted pig and peaches and cream and ice cream for dessert.\textsuperscript{219} Captain Albert Mack and about seventy five of his men from Camp Porter also managed to help a Mrs. Stone of Henrietta husk about six acres of corn.\textsuperscript{220}

However, volunteers often were young men who did nothing but drill while at camp and often went into the city to unwind and this led to some mischievous and criminal acts. Three volunteers from Camp Porter went to a house on Chili Road and demanded food from a twelve year old boy home by himself. When he refused they entered the house and helped themselves to whatever they wanted.\textsuperscript{221} In another incident soldiers helped themselves to apples from a lot on Lake Avenue and when asked to leave they refused until police arrived.\textsuperscript{222} For the most part, citizens wanted the officers at the camps to take care of these problems and the ones causing them, like they did with two recruits who returned to Camp Hillhouse drunk and suspected of some robberies. The rest of the regiment shaved their heads, blacked them with shoe blacking and India ink, took off their uniforms, and kicked them out of camp.\textsuperscript{223} Camps attempted to increase security and soldiers needed a pass to leave and re-enter the camp. To get around this soldiers who did not have a pass would find someone on the streets and bring him to camp as their “prisoner” so they would be let in. The next morning they would simply release their “prisoner.”\textsuperscript{224}

Acts by the soldiers grew more violent and became more of a problem for the city police. Cavalrymen from Camp Porter burned a barn on the farm of a Mr. Worthy in an attempt to burn

\textsuperscript{219} \textit{Union and Advertiser}, September 19, 1862.
\textsuperscript{221} \textit{Union and Advertiser}, October 13, 1862.
\textsuperscript{222} Levy, and Tynan, 18.
\textsuperscript{223} \textit{Democrat and American}, October 29, 1861.
\textsuperscript{224} \textit{Democrat and American}, October 17, 1862.
the barn of a Mr. Williams in an act of retaliation for being shot the night before while stealing turkeys and a hive of bees.\textsuperscript{225} Two nights later five more cavalrymen from Camp Porter entered the restaurant of C. Merrell on Exchange Street and demanded liquor without paying for it. When Mr. Merrell refused they assaulted him, leaving “a gash in his forehead and his eyes blackened.”\textsuperscript{226}

The 22\textsuperscript{nd} NY Cavalry though committed the worst crimes. The 22\textsuperscript{nd} began to form in December of 1863, made up with many veterans from the infantry recently mustered out of service. Their commander, Colonel Samuel Crooks, had previously been relieved of a command because of poor discipline and results. The 22\textsuperscript{nd} drilled at Camp Hillhouse and by the time of their departure, which had been delayed many times, in March 1864, the citizens of Rochester could hardly believe that they had actually gone.\textsuperscript{227} On January 17, 1864, about eight men from the 22\textsuperscript{nd} went to Duffy’s beer shop to help themselves to whatever they wanted. Two officers heard the commotion, and when they went to investigate they threatened to take the men to the station. Sgt. Bradley ordered his men to charge with bayonets but let the officers go when they pulled their weapons. The officers went for help and cut the soldiers off on St. Paul Street and again Sgt. Bradley ordered his men to charge with bayonets. The officers managed to take the guards prisoner after a heated exchange.\textsuperscript{228} A month later a soldier named James Caldwell entered a barracks and made comments towards a group of soldiers sparring. A soldier named Allely chased him with a board from a bunk and struck him in the shoulder and in the temple and then kicked him while he was down. Caldwell died an hour later from his wounds.\textsuperscript{229} Col. Crooks did not believe his men accountable to the civil authority, only to a court martial, which

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textit{Union and Advertiser}, October 9, 1862.
\item \textit{Union and Advertiser}, October 11, 1862.
\item \textit{Evening Express}, March 7, 1864.
\item \textit{Evening Express}, February 18, 1864.
\end{enumerate}
citizens did not agree with. Eventually civil authorities performed an investigation but the suspect was tried by court martial.

The troubles for the 22nd did not end once they departed Rochester. At Giesboro Point, outside Washington, the government issued an order that all cavalry not yet mounted or only partially mounted should give all their horses to veteran cavalry units and be used as infantry. This order would have applied to the 22nd that had been listed as “partly mounted.” According to Curtis Brown though, Col. Crooks managed to get the documents showing that they were fully mounted and armed to General Burnside, who went to Halleck, who had called the 22nd undisciplined and unfit for the field, to get the order changed and the 22nd remained mounted.

Once in the field the blunders of an inexperienced cavalry continued. On May 7th, Colonel Crooks, who had been placed on watch duty on the right flank of the Union line, reported enemy movement when he saw clouds of dust approaching. These turned out to be Union Cavalry and General Meade had Crooks arrested for sending false reports. Major Peter McLennan took charge but the adventure had just begun. As Charles Curtis Brown and the rest of the 22nd cooked dinner that night they came under enemy fire and proceeded to retreat across a creek. When they again came under fire, they again retreated but the bridge over the creek ended and they ended up in the stream and mud where Brown “expected to be engulfed in the mud, horses, and humanity.” When they reached the other side, the horses went into a stampede, an embarrassing action for cavalrymen.

The next day they had been assigned to the rear guard of the II Army Corps. They received fire by a concealed enemy and McLennan wrote that they “returned fire but horses, not

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230 Levy and Tynan, 20.
231 Letter from Charles Curtis Brown to Sarah, April 17, 1864. Marcotte, 190.
232 Marcotte, 190.
having been trained to military noises, caused some confusion so they moved forward and formed with infantry.”

He then ordered a portion of his men to dismount and deployed them as skirmishers and officers in charge of horses to keep near the dismounted men. According to his report, Lieutenant Beeby did not follow his orders and that the men and horses with Beeby disappeared and search parties had not found them as of yet.

James Beaver, Colonel of the 148th Pennsylvania Volunteers described a different scene. He wrote that the infantry had been attacked by “a few skirmishers” and the attack had been repulsed when “a portion of the cavalry…came down in disgraceful confusion, without any apparent cause, no firing have been heard and no considerable force seen at any other point.” He went on to say that “the horses of the men who had been dismounted were captured or abandoned without any sufficient cause.

The officer in charge of this regiment displayed a want of energy or skill in all his movements…”

Major-General Winfield S. Hancock showed less pleasantry in his description of Major McLennan when he gave command to a lower rank leading wounded to Fredericksburg and said he did so because “…his regiment certainly did not act well this morning, and he appeared stupid.”

All in all, in two days of very little fighting, the 22nd managed to have one commander arrested, another officially called stupid, three men killed, eight wounded, ninety-six men and one officer missing, one officer captured, twenty-seven horses killed, two hundred and forty-one missing, and four died of fatigue and want of forage.

The 22nd would turn their fortunes around under the command of Sherman and General Custer and perform superbly against Jubal Early and his cavalry in the Shenandoah Valley.

234 Report of Maj. Peter McLennan, 22nd NY Cavalry, of Operations May 7-8, May 9, 1864.
235 Report of Maj. Peter McLennan, 22nd NY Cavalry, of Operations May 7-8, May 9, 1864.
236 Official Correspondence from James A. Beaver to Lieutenant Colonel Walker (Assistant Adjutant-General II Corps), May 8, 1864.
237 Official Correspondence for Winfield S. Hancock to General Williams, May 8, 1864.
238 Report of McLennan, May 9, 1864.
Curtis Brown even managed to almost capture Early himself. While securing prisoners, he came across three rebel officers, two of whom ran and the third identified himself as Gen. Early’s medical director. Brown discovered later that the other men were Gen. Early and his Assistant Adjutant General and Brown declared that “had I known what great game was under my hand, they would never have escaped…I never was more vexed than I was after learning…that the general was so near me and I missed him.”

The title of most famous regiment from the Rochester area belongs to the 140\textsuperscript{th} NY Volunteer Infantry who had the most significant victory for Rochester soldiers at Little Round Top in the Battle of Gettysburg. Mustered in on September 13\textsuperscript{th}, 1862, the 140\textsuperscript{th} formed just as news of the bloodshed at Antietam reached Rochester. German and Irish farmers and laborers comprised the majority of the regiment, with Irishmen Patrick O’Rorke commanding. Prior to Gettysburg the 140\textsuperscript{th} had seen brief action at Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville but their actions on Little Round Top would be their greatest achievement. On July 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 1863, the 140\textsuperscript{th} was held in reserve near Power’s Hill when O’Rorke, understanding the battle that would ensue and “a man of but few words and not given to speech making,” told his men “if there is a man this day base enough to leave his company, let him die in his tracks. Shoot him down like a dog.” As Longstreet’s men attacked, Union generals attempted to fill weaknesses as they appeared and the 140\textsuperscript{th} had been ordered to help Major General Daniel Sickles III Corps near the wheat field. As they passed Little Round Top, they met General Gouverneur K. Warren, the chief engineer of the Potomac,

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{Figure7-PatrickORorke.jpg}
\caption{Patrick O’Rorke}
\end{figure}

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\textsuperscript{239} Letter from Charles Curtis Brown to Sarah, March 10, 1865.
\textsuperscript{240} Military Memoirs of Captain Henry Cribben of the 140\textsuperscript{th} NY Volunteers, 1911. Marcotte, 126.
\end{flushright}
who asked the regiment to go against their orders and follow General Weed and defend Little Round Top, a vital position that had been left unguarded, against the 5th Texas. With only thirty to sixty seconds to react, they had no time to load their weapons or fix their bayonets or even to form the normal battle line. O’Rorke led his men in a charge towards the enemy still in columns of four with only their bodies in motion as weapon. They ran as fast as they could over the rough terrain, loading as they went, taking heavy artillery and muskets. Held back the Confederates on three attempts to take the hill. The 140th managed to save Little Round Top but they suffered 132 casualties and lost their heroic leader Col. Patrick O’Rorke, who had died instantly from a gunshot wound to the throat. 241 O’Rorke’s body received a hero’s welcome back in Rochester and hundreds of people said goodbye to him at his funeral at St. Bridget’s Church, the same church he had been married in one year before, on July 15, 1864. 242

Besides facing the enemy in battle, Civil War soldiers faced the invisible enemy of disease, most notably dysentery and typhoid, both of which stemmed from the use of contaminated water. Moore’s Rural New Yorker reprinted a list of rules, originally published by “An Old Soldier,” to serve as a guide for new recruits to avoid diseases.

1. Remember that in a campaign more men die from sickness than by the bullet.
2. Line your blanket with one thickness of brown drilling. This adds but four ounces in weight and doubles the warmth.


242 Union and Advertiser, July 16, 1864.
3. Buy a small India rubber blanket (only $1.50) to lay on the ground, or to throw over your shoulder when on guard duty during a rain storm. Most of the eastern troops are provided with these. Straw to lie upon is not always to be had.

4. The best military hat in use is the light-colored soft felt; the crown being sufficiently high to allow space for air over the brain. You can fasten it up as a continental in fair weather, or turn it down when it is wet or very sunny.

5. Let your beard grow, so as to protect the throat and lungs.

6. Keep your entire person clean; this prevents fever and bowel complaints in warm weather. Wash your body each day, if possible, avoid strong coffee and oily meat. General Scott said the too free use of these (together with neglect in keeping the skin clean) cost many a soldier his life in Mexico.

7. A sudden check of perspiration by chilly or night air often causes fever and death. When thus exposed do not forget your blanket. ²⁴³

Despite these precautions being taken, over 200,000 troops died from disease during the war.

Soldiers often built latrines to close to their water source, contaminating their water. The hot, humid weather in the South and the overcrowding of camps allowed disease to spread throughout a regiment quickly and the lack of a proper diet made the soldier’s especially vulnerable to disease. Conditions in the hospitals or field tents did not help with the problem. Supplies ran short and medicine did not have the advances and knowledge they would have by the time of World War I and infections often appeared in the wounded. Doctors performed amputations one after another using the same tools without even washing them but doctors and nurses did manage to keep the average mortality rate below 6%. ²⁴⁴

In response to this, the federal government set up the US Sanitary Commission to inspect camps and help prevent disease, supply armies and hospitals with needed supplies, and help discharged soldiers gain their pensions, papers, and transportation. The job of keeping soldiers needs met fell to the women who had been left at home. In Rochester, women formed the Ladies’ Hospital Relief Association as well as many other smaller groups to help gather supplies and other necessities for the soldiers. In June 1863, the LHRA began to publish The Soldiers’

²⁴³ Moore’s Rural New Yorker, May 4, 1861.
²⁴⁴ The Soldiers’ Aid, July 8, 1863.
Aid in an attempt to pass along the duties of the US Sanitary Commission and Christian Committee and to pass along information about sanitation. They also used the newsletter to promote for donations and to record what they had received and where they had sent it to. Their motto read, “Our Country, our whole Country, and nothing but our Country,” and “Liberty and Union, now and forever, one and inseparable.” They urged women to “perform some tangible duty…nearly all can aid our soldiers in some way at home, contributing for the comfort of the sick and wounded, either money, materials, or labor,” and not to be idle spectators but “take part in the struggle with head, heart and hand.” One issue told a story from the Clifton House in Niagara Falls in which a Southern lady and an 8 or 10 year old boy ate within hearing distance of a Northern lady. She overheard the mother say, “My son, you must eat some dinner; eat a great deal; for you know I want you to grow hearty and strong so that you can shoot Yankees…” demonstrating an attitude which showed that the women of the country had to maintain their efforts for as long as the war dragged on and could not be something they only did when convenient.

Donations to the society included such items as cotton shirts, cotton drawers, socks, bandages, pants, fruit, onions, vinegar, handkerchiefs, slippers, reading materials, sheets, wine, and of course money. The Ladies’ often gave suggestions, like to dry fruit in the form of marmalade or to make soles for slippers from “pasteboard or old boxes.” Once received, the donations would be catalogued and then sent off to who they felt needed the most aid. This included hospitals, field camps, and battlefields. At the Battle of Gettysburg, the Sanitary Commission, who often delivered the donations to the actual soldiers, distributed “to the sick and

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245 *The Soldiers’ Aid*, June 19, 1863.
246 *The Soldiers’ Aid*, June 19, 1863.
247 *The Soldiers’ Aid*, August 5, 1863.
248 *The Soldiers’ Aid*, August 5, 1863.
wounded of our own army and those of the rebel army left upon the field, one hundred wagon loads of hospital supplies and had five rail car loads on the way to Gettysburg.\textsuperscript{249} While not all of these supplies came from Rochester, one soldier from the 4\textsuperscript{th} Massachusetts Cavalry sent a letter to the Third Ward Society thanking them for everything they did and remarked that almost every item he saw at Gettysburg had the mark of their society.\textsuperscript{250} These supplies had more of an effect on the soldiers than a physical one. A surgeon with the 140\textsuperscript{th}, M.L Lord, reported that

\begin{quote}
“indeed such a few delicacies from home seem to throw a peculiar charm over the soldier…their eyes fill up with tears, his chin trembles, and he draws his rough blanket up to hide his face for a moment before he thinks of eating that sacred food. God alone can fathom the depth of that main’s gratitude or estimate the fervor of his whispered prayer.”\textsuperscript{251}
\end{quote}

Many societies also held bazaars as another way to take donations to aid the soldiers. The largest bazaar, the Christmas Bazaar, ran at Corinthian Hall from Monday December 14\textsuperscript{th} until the end of the week. Tickets for the bazaar cost 25 cents for a single ticket and $1 for a season pass with lunch tickets, which included admission and dinner costing 50 cents.\textsuperscript{252} The Society decorated the booths with different nationalities: Irish, Italian, German and Swiss, Turkish, Russian, French, Chinese, English, Yankee, and Young America.\textsuperscript{253} Everyone who went to the bazaar found the displays delightful and charming, and proceeds exceeded $10,200, which would be used for clothing, bedding, and edibles for the soldiers.\textsuperscript{254} The LHRA also ran a refreshment booth at the state fair in 1864 in which all proceeds went to the soldiers.

Societies did not own a patent on the idea of bazaars and many children ran their own bazaars to raise money to donate for the soldiers. Three little girls on Sophia Street had arranged

\begin{footnotes}
249 \textit{The Soldiers’ Aid}, August 5, 1863.
250 \textit{The Hospital Review}, January 15, 1865.
251 \textit{Union and Advertiser}, March 31, 1863.
252 \textit{The Soldiers’ Aid}, December 2, 1863.
253 \textit{The Soldiers’ Aid}, December 2, 1863.
254 \textit{The Soldiers’ Aid}, January 6, 1864.
\end{footnotes}
to have two or three tents in a neighboring yard for their fun. When they realized they could make money for the soldiers they ended up raising $65 over three nights. Children bazaars began to appear all over Rochester. The “Atkinson Street Bazaar” raised $50 in the yard of Mrs. Hall, one in Brown Square raised $104, and one near Troup and Plymouth Avenue in Mrs. Hamilton’s yard raised $86. The feeling to give became so great a story circulated about “a lady who had refused to give after hearing a charity sermon, had her pocket picked as she was leaving the church. On making the discovery she said, ‘God could not find the way into my pocket, but it seems the devil did.’”

In 1864 City Hospital opened in Rochester, and along with St, Mary’s, gave Rochester two hospitals. About 2,000 wounded soldiers spent some time at one of these hospitals during the last year of the war. Both hospitals tried to make the soldiers as comfortable as possible and relied on donations from the Ladies Hospital Relief Association and other societies. At the City Hospital, soldiers had a Thanksgiving oyster dinner, a large Christmas dinner, and a New Year’s dinner all from contributions from individuals. With soldiers occupying many of the beds in the hospitals, citizens of Rochester had a hard time finding room. According to the Hospital Review in September 1864 out of 119 patients in the hospital only 13 were citizens and in October, out of 104 patients only 12 were citizens. This caused many citizens to complain about inadequate health services and health care.

Citizens had many more complaints beside health care in Rochester with many of their able bodied young men off fighting the war. With civic authorities worried about war demands,
many of the public utilities, like streets and sewer systems, began to show signs of neglect. The responsibility for these fell on private organizations that then turned to the municipal government for help.\textsuperscript{261} The fire department transformed from numerous groups of volunteers to a small, paid force that used horse drawn cars.\textsuperscript{262} Schools, due to a loss of teachers, began to see overcrowded classrooms and absenteeism as children had to take on more of the responsibilities of adults gone to war. Local farmers may have been the hardest hit though with a loss of their labor force. In November 1862, the \textit{Democrat and American} reported that the “corn crop had not yet been secured and in many places apples remain frozen on the ground and in the trees. Farm laborers demanded and earned $1.50 a day for farm work- double the ordinary rate.”\textsuperscript{263}

The community and police force also had to determine what to do with the problem of deserters in Rochester. Desertion had been a problem throughout the war but the longer it dragged on the more men deserted from their duty. Many blamed substitutes and bounties for the increased problem, believing that these men received their money and then moved on and re-enlisted for another payment. The \textit{Union} suggested that citizens should treat them like a “Spartan mother…custom of ancient Spartans to refuse food and shelter to deserters from their armies,” and also publish a list of all deserters in the neighborhood (which they did on August 23\textsuperscript{rd}) – in an attempt to embarrass them back to the front.\textsuperscript{264} The \textit{Democrat} also argued that deserters needed a harsher treatment and all resources should be used to find them and return them to their duty.\textsuperscript{265}

Many local businesses flourished during the Civil War. The shoe and clothing industries both managed to procure army contracts for their goods partly due to the fact of the conditions of

\textsuperscript{261} McKelvey, \textit{Rochester: The Flower City}, 78.
\textsuperscript{262} Ibid, 81.
\textsuperscript{263} \textit{Democrat and American}, November 18, 1862.
\textsuperscript{264} \textit{Union and Advertiser}, August 2, 1862.
\textsuperscript{265} \textit{Democrat and American}, November 12, 1862 and November 22, 1862.
Rochester Regiment at the beginning of the war. Millers also found success with an increase in the demand for flour and the horse trade spiked with the rise of the Union Cavalry.\textsuperscript{266} Pork dealers and wool merchants found more prominence with greater demand for their products and the Western Union men, including Hiram Sibley, profited greatly from the war.\textsuperscript{267} The first horse cars also began operation on Lake Avenue in July, 1863 despite complaints of many locals of the line passing in front of their house.\textsuperscript{268} Overall, prices for basic necessities, especially coal, increased while wages remained stagnant.

The period of agreement did not last long in Rochester and the three newspapers once again began to attack one another. Writing about the spring elections of 1862 the \textit{Express} noted, “no pretense of union between Republicans and Democrats. The Democrats have their own tickets in nomination and if they succeed in electing them Rochester will...be a democratic, anti-administration, semi secession city.”\textsuperscript{269} The city would continue a trend of flipping every two years from Democratic to Republican with Democrats winning in 1862 and Republicans re-taking control of the city in 1864. They argued over how the Union fought the war, with the \textit{Union} pushing for peace again, especially after the Battle of Gettysburg, and blaming the staunch resistance of the South on Republican efforts to enforce equality on it, a stance supported by the \textit{Express}.\textsuperscript{270} With the announcement of the Thirteenth Amendment, the \textit{Union} protested, the \textit{Democrat} supported the amendment, while the \textit{Express} complained of the limited scope of the amendment.\textsuperscript{271}

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\textsuperscript{266} McKelvey, “Rochester’s Part in the Civil War,” 10.
\textsuperscript{267} Ibid, 10.
\textsuperscript{268} McKelvey, \textit{Rochester: The Flower City}, 82.
\textsuperscript{269} \textit{Evening Express}, March 3, 1862.
\textsuperscript{270} McKelvey, \textit{Rochester: The Flower City}, 91.
\textsuperscript{271} McKelvey, “Rochester’s Part in the Civil War,” 21.
\end{flushleft}
On March 17, 1865, Rochester experienced one of its greatest natural disasters when the Genesee River rose at a rate of ten inches per hour and flooded the canal and downtown Rochester. The waters flooded Front Street, State Street, and Buffalo Street and the water rose to twenty inches in the Reynolds Arcade. For two days after the flood, the only form of communication came with people using rowboats. It took several weeks before they could begin clean up after the flood and it cost the city millions in dollars. Less than a month later, the city had a celebration that lasted until the early morning as news of Lee’s surrender reached Rochester on April 10.

![Main Street Bridge Before the Flood](image)

Figure 9-Main Street Bridge Before the Flood

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272 *Evening Express*, March 20, 1865.
Figure 10-Main Street Bridge During the Flood of 1865

Figure 11-Remains of Barton Building and Main Street Bridge After the Flood
Figure 12 - Inside of Building on the Bridge, March 20, 1865

Figure 13 - Aftermath of the Flood

Figure 14 - Buffalo and Front Street After the Flood

Figure 15 - Rochester after the Flood.
The emotional rollercoaster for the city of Rochester continued a few days later with the news of the assassination of President Lincoln. Rochester took place in the national observance of Lincoln’s funeral on April 19th. At St. Luke’s Church, R. Bethell Claxton gave a sermon praising the late President. He called him a man who “knew what the unprincipled traitors of the South never knew— the meaning of love of country, of true patriotism,” the man who “seemed about to lead the nation out of night into day, out of storm into calm, out of grief into joy, out of
war into peace, out of strife into love.”

Blame for his death landed squarely on the shoulders of the South, who had first dared to rebel against their own countrymen and now with their “last foul blow have exceeded all the wickedness of their previous career.”

In the days, months, and years following the Civil War, life in Rochester would return to normal as local politicians returned to old business that had been ignored throughout the war, lecturers and art shows came to Corinthian Hall, celebrations of national holidays and special occasions for the different ethnic groups, crowds continued to gather at the Reynolds Arcade but no longer waited to hear of the bloodshed and loss from some far off battlefield, and the three newspapers argued over local policies and elections.

Underneath though, the Civil War changed Rochester forever. Out of 5,000 troops that Rochester sent, at least 300 did not return home and in Monroe County, who sent a total of 10,000 troops to fight, 1,400 did not return. Eight Civil War Medal of Honor recipients came from Rochester, with 28 in total being awarded to Monroe County residents. Some veterans went on to lead successful lives in the public sector, while others returned to their farms and families, to the quiet life they once knew. The city of Rochester had come together as one for a brief period in the name of the Union. These shared experiences would unite the community forever in a small way, even as economic, political, and social issues once again drove them apart.

Today in Rochester one can see many reminders of this time past. The Patrick O’Rorke Bridge runs over the Genesee River from Charlotte into Irondequoit. The Soldiers’ and Sailors’ Monument, dedicated on May 30, 1892, still remains in Washington Square Park. A monument to Frederick Douglass still remains but today in a new site, in Highland Park, having moved from Central Avenue and St. Paul Street in 1941. While Douglass’s first home burned down, his

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274 R. Bethell Claxton, Sermon on the Death of President Lincoln, St. Luke’s Church, April 19, 1865.
275 R. Bethell Claxton, Sermon on the Death of President Lincoln, St. Luke’s Church, April 19, 1865.
second home in Rochester, on South Avenue, still remains along with the Susan B. Anthony House on Madison Street and many other houses, like the Post House, that used to be stations for the Underground Railroad. The Talman Building, the site of the *North Star*, still remains on East Main Street, across a street from the new Reynolds Arcade building. Susan B. Anthony and Frederick Douglass are buried in Mt. Hope Cemetery and Patrick O’Rorke is buried at Holy Sepulchre Cemetery, along with so many other citizens of Rochester who gave their life to the Union in blood, sweat, and tears.

![Figure 16-Dedication of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument on May 30, 1892 in Washington Square Park](image-url)
III. Connection to Teaching - Teaching the Civil War Locally with Primary Documents

Perhaps no event in American history, besides the Revolutionary War, had as much impact on the forming of our independent nation as the Civil War. The Civil War resulted in the passing of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments which abolished slavery, and gave African-Americans citizenship and the legal right to vote. While the Amendments did not immediately lead to these changes in the south, they started the long Civil Rights movement for the equality of African-Americans. The war altered the economic course of both the North and the South forever. In the North, the war helped to stimulate industrial growth, a growth which only continued following the war. In the south, the war had a much different affect. With many of the battles and events like Sherman’s March to the Sea taking place on Southern land, the south had years of costly rebuilding ahead of it. The Northern blockade of Southern trade forever hampered the cotton industry as countries like England had to find another source for their cotton needs. Turning to Egypt and Central Asia, Britain located new sources thus permanently impacting the world market for southern cotton. With the abolition of slavery, the Southern agricultural industry underwent major changes and the two combined, less of a workforce and less demand, deeply hampered the profits of the cotton trade. Today, many parts of the south still remain economically behind the North.

In social studies classrooms across the state of New York, students and teachers discuss the political and economic factors leading up to the Civil War, during the Civil War, and following the Civil War, but the curriculum often forgets how these events affected the average American citizen, both in the north and the south. Students will read the Emancipation Proclamation and attempt to understand what it meant and how Lincoln used this as a military
strategy but they will not discuss how it affected the soldier who did not go to fight to free the slave but fought to preserve the Union. They may learn about Clara Barton, battlefield nurse and founder of the Red Cross, but what about the thousands of other women who volunteered their time to help the wounded, organize donations, and see to it that the men from a community did not become forgotten. They will not hear about the young children who gave up their time from their own pleasures to help raise money for supplies, a lesson that even the smallest bit can help in the time of need. More importantly, most students will not learn the history of their own city, town, or village and how the Civil War was not just fought in towns like Gettysburg but in every city, town, and village of America. Student understanding of the Civil War would significantly improve by using local history: local newspapers, diaries, sites, and people, to enhance their lessons.

In *Classroom Instruction that Works*, Robert Marzano, Debra Pickering, and Jane Pollock identified many strategies that have been proven to be effective for increasing student achievement. Many of these strategies could be used, along with looking at many aspects of the Civil War from a local aspect, to improve student understanding of the Civil War and how it affected the shape and nature of future events. A primary goal of educators should be to help students become problem solvers and Marzano et al. identified that many problems can be overcome by identifying similarities and differences from one situation to another.\(^\text{276}\) Almost any situation that arises over the course of a lifetime has happened at some other point in time in some form. While the situations may not be exactly the same and circumstances and experiences will be different between the participants, we can still learn a great deal from the past. Prior to the Civil War a great sense of sectionalism and party politics grew in America. Today, party

politics have begun to dominate Washington and government more and more. While America may not be as sectional in relationship to North, South, and West as in the antebellum period, the gap between rich and poor continues to expand and create separate socio-economic “sections” in America. Students could compare these two time periods for similarities and differences to gain a better understanding of the Civil War period and also of the world they live in now. The use of a graphic organizer in these comparisons, a Venn diagram or comparison matrix, will also enhance student learning and understanding.277

Learning the proper way to summarize information and texts and take notes will also help with student achievement. Many teachers today have their students use the Cornell style of note taking and this effectively incorporates both note taking and summarizing. In this strategy a student takes short notes from a lecture or a reading on the right hand side of a sheet of paper. Shortly afterward, the student then identifies main themes or key points from the notes they have taken on the left side of the paper. At the bottom of the page, the student creates a summary of the lecture or reading from the notes they have taken. By using this strategy the student has not only created a good source for review for a test or exam but also has practiced how to delete less important information, substitute other information, and keep the most important information.278

Understanding the basic structure of a text will also help students effectively summarize information. When a reader understands the form of a text they have an easier time finding important points that they will need to keep and understanding what details they may be able to get rid of or substitute. In the “rule-based” strategy for summarizing, Marzano mentions the idea of creating topic sentences if one is not there.279 Topic sentences play an important part in summarizing. A topic sentence will act as a preview of what the following paragraph will focus

277 Marzano, 16.
278 Marzano, 30.
279 Marzano, 32.
on; giving the reader a sense of what will be important within that paragraph. Creating topic sentences can also show a good understanding of the text by the reader. Besides technical aspects of writing though a student should also understand who the intended audience is for a writer. This can be especially useful when working with primary documents. Understanding that the *Evening Express* was a radical newspaper in Rochester, New York during the Civil War years will give the student the idea of who this newspaper wrote for and how they would try and project their ideas to the readers, allowing them an easier time understanding the information being presented.

Both practice in the classroom and homework provide students the opportunity to work on the skills they have learned and reinforce ideas discussed in class.\textsuperscript{280} Homework should be assigned starting in the elementary grades, even if the homework only involves ten to twenty minutes of reading. While research has shown that homework at these young ages may not improve school performance, it provides the groundwork for later years by instilling a routine at home for the student to complete their work and shows them that learning does not end with that last bell but continues at home every day.\textsuperscript{281} For homework and practice to be effective though they must have a purpose, either building upon a skill learned that day or preparing them for the next day, and students must understand this purpose.\textsuperscript{282} Pictures can be a valuable tool in understanding the past but it takes practice to be able to see everything that can be seen in a picture. A teacher could model this skill and have students practice in class using pictures of Rochester during the Civil War. Students would be gaining a better understanding of life in Rochester during the Civil War and decrypting information provided by pictures. For homework the students could use this same practice using pictures of Civil War battlefields, again finding

\textsuperscript{280} Marzano, 71.
\textsuperscript{281} Marzano, 62.
\textsuperscript{282} Marzano, 65.
information in pictures while preparing them for the next lesson on life on the battlefield for Rochester area soldiers.

Marzano discusses the importance of using nonlinguistic representation for information in the classroom. While pictures would be one form of nonlinguistic representation, Marzano focuses on the use of graphic organizers, physical models, mental pictures, drawing pictures and pictographs, and engaging in kinesthetic activity.\textsuperscript{283} Research has shown that helping students with these forms or representation, and not just using discussion and readings, will help stimulate and increase activity in the brain.\textsuperscript{284} Many teachers use graphic organizers in schools today and they can be used for a variety of uses: creating a timeline, cause and effect, and concept patterns to name a few. All of these allow students to see the information from a new perspective. Students can also use primary documents to create a mental picture of past eras. Reading about the town meeting called in Rochester in April 1861 at the start of the Civil War can transport students to City Hall on that night. What was the mood like? What tone of voice did the speakers use? What were people wearing? What would you see while walking to City Hall that night?

Group work has become a staple in most schools today as the world has become smaller and interaction with teams has become more vital to success. Student groups have many positive effects. They teach students how to use cooperatively with each other, they teach teamwork as each member must do their job for the group to be successful, they teach students to rely on each other, and they help students with face to face interaction, a skill that has been slipping away with texting and Facebook.\textsuperscript{285} Research has shown that using groups also will enhance student

\textsuperscript{283} Marzano, 73-74.  
\textsuperscript{284} Marzano, 73.  
\textsuperscript{285} Marzano, 85-86.
achievement over the use of individual tasks. Groups should vary and they can last varying lengths of time, from two students sharing ideas from a reading from the diary of Charles Curtis Brown for five minutes to four students completing a presentation to the class on Patrick O’Rorke and the role of the 140th NY Infantry on Little Round Top at the Battle of Gettysburg.

Generating and testing hypotheses lies at the heart of teaching. Students must take limited information and make a prediction on what would happen, and then prove this prediction. It allows the students to work with information in a variety of ways. By having them clearly explain these hypotheses and their conclusions it will deepen a student’s understanding of the information and ideas. While this strategy often is linked with a science class it can be used in a social studies class by using historical investigation to create a possible scenario for events from the past. In learning about the Civil War, a student will learn about the policies and ideas of Abraham Lincoln. His assassination altered the era of Reconstruction in America. A student can gain a deeper understanding of Reconstruction in America by predicting what may have happened if President Lincoln had not been shot and killed. Would this have changed anything and if so, what would it have changed. To do this a student must understand what did happen and how President Lincoln could have changed if this if at all. To prove this a student would have to use facts from Reconstruction and facts from Lincoln’s presidency to determine if their prediction is possible. Along the way students need to explain their conclusions and processes.

Students bring different levels of knowledge to each particular lesson or idea taught. Students have different experiences in life which will determine how much prior knowledge brings with them to class. Research has shown that activating that prior knowledge through cues

\[286\] Marzano, 86.
\[287\] Marzano, 105.
\[288\] Marzano, 107.
and questions can improve learning. Cues and questioning can focus attention on certain details and should be kept to important details. This will increase a student interest in a topic as well as help them obtain a deeper understanding of the information. The use of higher level questions and waiting for answers will lead to deeper thinking and deeper understanding of the information. In other words, teacher questions should not just force students to recall a fact but they should make students to think about information and connect information or create their own ideas. A teacher needs to allow students the time to make these connections which requires the practice of patience to wait for a well thought out answer. Besides being a great tool for student learning, a teacher can use these tools for their own use. A teacher may realize that more time needs to be spent on certain topics based on answers being given or may conclude that certain ideas they thought would take more time may take less because of prior student knowledge. These tools can allow the teacher to design and plan better lessons to keep the topic moving at the needed pace for the students.

Having both short and long term goals has allowed many people to have success in their particular career choice. Goals or objectives set a direction for learning and give students something to aim for. Objectives should be outlined for both a unit and for each lesson, with the objectives of each lesson leading toward the overall unit objectives. Marzano makes the point that these goals should not be too specific but general enough for individual students to be able to personalize the goals. If a student has the capacity to personalize the goal they will have a much better chance of working to attain them and eventually reaching them. A teacher objective may be that students understand the role of women in the Civil War, which a student

289 Marzano, 111.
290 Marzano, 113.
291 Marzano, 113-114.
292 Marzano, 94-95.
could personalize to focus on many different roles that women played: abolitionists, charities, or spies.

Along the way to attaining these goals or objectives, students need to be provided with feedback and recognition. Teachers need to reinforce the idea of effort because of the affect effort can have on learning. Research has shown that students who emphasize effort and realize the importance of it often have increased their performance.²⁹³ All students have the ability to give a maximum effort despite having different abilities and capabilities but many students do not make the connection between the effort put in and the result achieved. Teachers must make this connection for them in multiple ways. A teacher can use personal experiences or the lives of many famous people who overcame great odds in their achievements. In the Civil War, the 140th NY Infantry experience at Gettysburg provides a great example of the power of giving a great effort. On Little Round Top, a pivotal position in the battle, the 140th found themselves outmanned and with no time for preparation, yet they managed to hold off the multiple attempts by the 5th Texas to overtake the hill. Learning the power of effort will provide students a skill they can use throughout their life in multiple situations.

All students like to be recognized for their achievement or effort. They like to know that what they do does not go unnoticed and this can often help to keep them engaged. Recognition can be something as simple as just a verbal acknowledgement of a job well done to a reward for reaching a certain goal, which contrary to popular belief does not necessarily deter intrinsic motivation if used properly.²⁹⁴ Recognition, in whatever form it takes, should only be given for certain accomplishments as research has shown that giving praise for easy tasks may hurt the

²⁹³ Marzano, 51.
²⁹⁴ Marzano, 55.
achievement and lower student confidence in their ability. Recognition also has the most effect when it is personalized for the individual. It gives more meaning to it for the student and this can have a powerful effect on their effort and achievement.

Along with recognition, students also benefit with feedback from teachers throughout a lesson and unit. Feedback should not just be right and wrong or a grade at the top of the paper. The feedback should explain to students what was wrong, why it was wrong, explain to them what they did right (another form of recognition), and how they can improve in some cases. Most important feedback should be given in appropriate timeframe as to be useful to the student. If a teacher gives a quiz one week and then a test before they have returned the quiz then the quiz has had no real use for the students except for a grade in the gradebook. A paper or essay with a grade at the top will not help with the growth of a student if it does not tell the student why they earned the grade they received. Research has also shown the importance of student feedback, or self-evaluation. It gives the student some ownership in the grading process and also forces them to actively reflect upon their work and the process they used to complete their work. This can lead to student discovery of where they need to improve and where some of their own strengths lie.

When students learn about the Civil War either in middle school or in US History in high school, they invariably learn about the political, economic, and some social aspects of the conflict leading up to the war and during Reconstruction. They will read about the presidency and assassination of Abraham Lincoln, the Emancipation Proclamation and the Gettysburg Address. They will learn about the attempts at political compromise from the Missouri Compromise to the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854. They will discuss the Lincoln-Douglas debates and how the election of 1860 led to the ultimate secession of the Southern states. They

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Marzano, 55.
will evaluate how westward expansion affected arguments over slavery and how *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* made many Northerners aware of the true horror that a slave endured in the south. They will become aware of how the growth of the cotton industry made slavery an even more important aspect of the southern economy, all while abolitionists grew more fervent despite in their efforts despite the fugitive slave laws. They will list the strengths and weaknesses of the North and the South and debate if the ultimate result of the war could have been different based on the overwhelming advantage of the North. They may even learn about some battles and how they affected the outcome of the war.

The New York State Core Standards clearly outline these themes and objectives for the Civil War and all of them are important in understanding how the Civil War broke out and the outcome and results of the war. However, when students in New York learn about the Civil War, they only hear about events that took place in other parts of the country, unless a local teacher brings William Seward’s “Irrepressible Conflict” speech from Corinthian Hall into one of the lessons on political causes of the war. Most other important events took place in other states yet the Civil War had a dramatic effect on Rochester and all other citizens in the United States but many students never make the connection from a battlefield in Maryland to their hometown in New York.

Most researchers agree that connecting students to the learning will improve student interest and student achievement. Using local history can increase the connection students make with the past. Teachers who live in the area near Gettysburg can bring their students there, where they can see the battlefield and make a meaningful connection with the soldiers who lost their lives in that battle. Here in Rochester, no battlefields exist but teachers can still use real places to make the learning more real and tangible which can help in their interest and
understanding. Many of the prominent houses and buildings from the Underground Railroad still exist, including the building where Frederick Douglas printed the *North Star*, as well as the Susan B. Anthony House, where students can tour the house of the famous abolitionist and pioneer for women’s suffrage. The Rochester Museum and Science Center has the “Flight to Freedom” exhibit, an interactive tour of the trail used by many fugitive slaves. The RMSC provides tours to schools and also will visit your school or provide video conferencing if a class cannot make it there. The Soldiers’ and Sailors’ Monument still stands in Washington Square Park. Many abolitionists, including Susan B. Anthony and Frederick Douglass, are buried in Mount Hope Cemetery and Patrick O’Rorke, along with many soldiers, are buried in Holy Sepulchre Cemetery. Teachers can also use pictures of, or a make a trip to, Maplewood Rose Garden to help students create a mental image of camp life for soldiers at Camp Genesee in Rochester.

The three major local newspapers from this time period, the *Daily Democrat and American*, the *Daily Union and Advertiser*, and the *Evening Express*, provide a great local resource for students to learn about the Civil War. While the *Democrat* and the *Union* both believed in compromise before the war, the more radical *Express* took a harsher stance in regards to the South. These papers argued with each other through editorials on the pros and cons of each side, all points made in the national debate, but with a local spin and how they would affect the citizens of Rochester. They printed speeches made by national and local politicians, and national and local leaders. They commented on the slave issue and printed speeches by both abolitionists and southern defenders of the institution. By using these three newspapers students will not only read events leading up to the Civil War using primary documents but they will see

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all the different perspectives with each paper looking at the issue from a different angle and
writing for a different audience. Students can compare and contrast each paper’s views and how
they spun certain events to defend their views.

The local newspapers, along with the letters and diaries of many Rochester area soldiers,
can be used to learn about camp life and battles throughout the war. Men like Charles Curtis
Brown, who served in the 13th NY Infantry and the 22nd NY Cavalry, and Samuel Partridge
wrote letters to loved ones describing the dreariness of camp life, the sights they encountered in
the South, the horror of the battles they fought in, and a vivid description of their own feelings as
they encountered these new experiences. The memoir of Truman Robbins describes his ordeal
of living with a bullet in his throat for almost two months like he had a sliver in his finger, except
for the fact that he could not eat solid foods. Duncan McVicar, in a letter to his son, describes
his reasons for his fighting and risking his life in a poignant manner full of emotion and pain.
Many soldiers also wrote to the newspapers under alias names like “G,” describing what they
saw and many times how they felt about issues going on at home. One volunteer correspondent
commented on what he believed should be done with deserters, a common problem especially as
the war dragged on, and also on how he felt about the draft going on back home. Many of these
letters, diaries, and memoirs can be found at the Rochester Historical Society, in the University
of Rochester Archives, and the local history division of the city library. Using these texts,
students have the ability to gain a deeper understanding of what the Civil war soldiers
experienced, how they interacted with each other, the enemy, and those at home, and their
feelings for the enemy as they grew from a mutual hate for each other to respect for their abilities
and strength of will. They may gain a better understanding of why many Union soldiers fought
and how the Emancipation Proclamation affected different men in different ways. By doing this
they will be able to see past political and military strategies to see how the policies of Lincoln affected the average Northern soldier.

Students can use the local newspapers and such publications as *Moore’s Rural New Yorker*, and the *Soldier’s Aid* to see the role women played in the public eye during the war. Throughout the war many articles in local newspapers urged women to play the same role as Southern women, who often pushed their men to fight. They believed men with less courage would go off to fight despite their apprehensions if the women of Rochester shunned them in society, made them outcasts for their lack of action. Often times articles from Southern newspapers found their way into Rochester papers to show their willingness to continue to fight, urging the women of Rochester to continue to aid in the fight.

The *Soldiers’ Aid*, published by the Ladies Hospital Relief Association, directly outlined the contributions of women in Rochester to aiding the soldiers. Using this publication students can see what items many people donated, where the money and donations went to, and the role the US Sanitary Commission played in the war. *Moore’s Rural New Yorker* provides a unique insight into the Rochester community during this time. Daniel D.T. Moore published this agricultural newspaper and would become mayor of Rochester in 1865. The paper dedicated most space to agricultural news from around the country: best types of seeds and practices for certain weather, new practices and technology being used, and answering questions from local farmers. Many articles also discussed the role of women and how to act, how to be a good wife, a good mother, and a good citizen. *Moore’s Rural New Yorker* also describes the role of education in society during this time period, providing a good description of the role of teachers and students.
Local newspapers can also enable students to understand exactly what issues the citizens of Rochester found important. Writers placed emphasis on the attitude and evil nature of the South throughout the war, especially at the beginning of hostilities, demonizing them in an early form of propaganda. The question of deserters and the draft found prominent space the longer the war dragged on. Newspapers discussed crimes committed by volunteers from camps within Rochester and questioned if civic authorities or the military held jurisdiction in many of these cases. Ads appeared in just about every issue appealing to men to do their duty, with Irish and German units pulling at the patriotic strings of their brethren. Local politics broke the peace between the papers as each praised their own candidates and denounced ones from other parties.

In using these strategies and sources, local teachers can take the Civil War out of the textbook and allow students to use primary sources from across the country and from the local community to gain their own insights into this time period. Students will be rewarded with a better understanding of not only American History, but also the history of Rochester and their own local communities.
Resources for Teaching the Civil War

While the focus of this paper has been on teaching the Civil War with a local perspective, the causes of the Civil War happened on a national scale and caused national debates. To best understand these causes, students must look at what Southerners and Northerners actually believed and felt and using primary sources and the words of those who made history will allow students to hear it directly from the source. While students will often hear or read the Gettysburg Address or one of Lincoln’s Inaugural Addresses, many other sources remain buried and their views only looked at in a textbook, mixed with other views into a larger idea. Using some of the following sources could enhance student understanding of the causes of the Civil War.

- **John C. Calhoun, “The Causes by Which the Union is Endangered.”** (A Southern point of View on the causes of conflict between the North and the South) In his final address before Congress on March 4, 1850, Calhoun discussed many of the issues that he and many other Southerners believed threatened the south. He discusses westward expansion and how population changes in America have greatly favored the North and Northern advantage in government. On the topic of slavery, he blames Northern abolitionists for the problem, believing their actions have forced Southerners to defend the institution so fiercely.

- **William H. Seward, “The Irrepressible Conflict.”** (A Northern point of view of the causes of conflict between the North and the South) In a speech given at Corinthian Hall in Rochester, New York on October 25, 1858, then presidential hopeful William Seward aggressively spoke out against slavery and the hope of any form of compromise between slave states and Free states ever working. Directly rebuts southern claims of states’ rights as a cause of tension between the two regions.

- **Stephen A. Douglas, “The Irresponsible Agitators.”** (Supports compromise) Stephen A. Douglas defeated Abraham Lincoln in the Senatorial election of 1858, the race that included the famous Lincoln-Douglas debates. Upon accepting the Republican nomination for this seat Lincoln gave his famous House Divided speech. While obviously critical, the response by Douglas gives insight into those who sought compromise during this time period. In this speech
Douglas defends the need for states’ rights and attacks abolitionists for causing the conflict with the south with their attack on slavery.

- **Declaration of the Immediate Causes Which Induce and Justify the Secession of South Carolina from the Federal Union** In this document, South Carolina, the first state to secede from the Union, outlines their various grievances with the North and why they have chosen to secede. While they do discuss states’ rights and state sovereignty they also place a lot of emphasis on the protection of the institution of slavery.

- **Jefferson Davis, “To the Confederate Congress, April 29, 1861.”** In this speech given to the Confederate Congress, the Confederate President Jefferson Davis gave an official explanation for the firing on Fort Sumter and the start of the Civil War. He called secession a necessity for the South and they only sought their own peace and independence in this war.

- **Abraham Lincoln, “Message to Congress in Special Session, July 4, 1861.”** In this speech before Congress, President Lincoln stressed the importance of Northern victory in this war in the defense of the Constitution of the United States. He believed that the entire world had their eyes on America to see if a democratic government could work or if the minority had the power to break up and end this form of government.

*Local Sources for Teaching the Civil War using Rochester, New York*

**Primary Sources**

*Memoirs, Diaries, and Letters*

- Civil War Memoirs of Truman H/ Robbins
- Diary of August Seiser
- Letters of Charles Curtis Brown
- Letters of Daniel Pulis
- Letters of Samuel Selden Partridge
- Military Memoirs of Captain Henry Cribben of the 140th NY Volunteers

*Newspapers and Other Prints*

- *Rochester Daily Democrat and American* One of the three major newspapers in Rochester during the Civil War. A more moderate newspaper which sought compromise before
the war and again as the war dragged on. All issues can be found at the Rochester City Library on microfiche in the Local History Division.

- **Rochester Evening Express** One of the three major newspapers in Rochester during the Civil War. Expressed the most radical view of the three. Took a hard stance against slavery and the south before the war and believed the Union should not compromise to avoid conflict. Often times at odds with both the Union and the Daily Democrat. Supported Republicans in local and national elections. All issues can be found at the Rochester City Library on microfiche in the Local History Division.

- **Rochester Daily Union and Advertiser** The most conservative of the three major newspapers in Rochester during the Civil War. Pushed for compromise before the war and supported the Crittenden Amendment. Believed that abolitionists had caused the strong defensive position of the south. Supported Democrats in local and national elections and believed the election of Lincoln would only bring economic hardship to the north. All issues can be found at the Rochester City Library on microfiche in the Local History Division.

- **The Hospital Review (1864-1865)** A local publication issued by the Friends of the Rochester City Hospital updated the community on the wounded soldiers at the new hospital. Once a month they would list who had been treated, what they were treated for, and where they went after they left the hospital. They also listed what donations the hospital needed and listed those who had given donations and what they had donated. They would also print letters they had received from soldiers thanking them for their service. Issues of The Hospital Review can be found online at the Many Roads to Freedom website.

  [http://www.libraryweb.org/rochimag/roads/civilian.htm](http://www.libraryweb.org/rochimag/roads/civilian.htm)

- **The Soldiers’ Aid (1863-1864)** A local publication printed by the Ladies’ Hospital Relief Association on the first Wednesday of every month. They wanted to update readers on the work of the US Sanitary Commission and highlight important information from the releases of the Commission. They also collected donations for Union soldiers and made sure they went to where they were most needed. They ran the Christmas Bazaar and many smaller bazaars to collect donations. In each issue they listed who donated, what they donated, and where the donations had been sent. Issues of The Soldiers’ Aid can be found online at the Many Roads to Freedom website. [http://www.libraryweb.org/rochimag/roads/civilian.htm](http://www.libraryweb.org/rochimag/roads/civilian.htm)
• Moore’s Rural New Yorker (1861-1865) A local publication dedicated to agricultural issues of Upstate New York issued by Daniel D.T. Moore. While Moore focused mainly on agricultural issues, he devoted more space to war news following the war. This publication also gives great insight into the role of women and education during this time period. Many of the articles and letters printed discussed how to be a good wife, a good daughter, and good mother. They also discussed education and the roles of teachers and children in schools during this time period. Issues can be found online at the Many Roads to Freedom website.
http://www.libraryweb.org/rochimag/roads/moores.htm

• Sermons on the Death of President Lincoln- R. Bethel Claxton, April 19 and 23, 1865
These two sermons were given at services in honor of President Lincoln after his assassination. They give an insight into what citizens of Rochester felt at this time and how many placed the blame for this crime all on the south. These two sermons can be found online at the Many Roads to Freedom website. http://www.libraryweb.org/rochimag/roads/april.htm

Further Reading

• Brian Bennet, An Unvarnished Tale: The Public and Private Writings of Porter Farley
A collection of letters written by Porter Farley written to Rochester newspapers following the war describing what he experienced during the Civil War as a volunteer in the 140th NY. This collection also includes some of his private writings following the war in defense of the accomplishments of his troop. Can be found at the Rochester Public Library.


• Paul Tynan and George Levy, “Campgrounds of the Civil War,” Rochester History edited by Ruth-Rosenberg Naparsteck. no. 3 (Summer, 2004) This article gives a detailed description of camp life within Rochester during the Civil War. From the creation of the camps until a tour of old campsites in 1930 with a veteran of the Civil War, it looks at interactions between the camps and local residents, some of the events held at camps, and what happened to the camps after the war.

• Robert Marcotte, Where They Fell: Stories of Rochester Area Soldiers in the Civil War A comprehensive account of the volunteers from Rochester and many of the surrounding
areas. Marcotte follows the soldiers of every unit from their creation in Rochester and through all their trials and hardships throughout the war. He also looks back at Rochester and what happened to many men after they served their time and how local residents followed their troops in the field. Marcotte also created the Civil War Research Guide, which can be found at the downtown library or on the library website, which helps follow a soldier throughout the Civil War using various resources.

- **Blake McKelvey** Blake McKelvey served as the Rochester City Historian for many years and has published numerous books on the history of Rochester. *Rochester on the Genesee: The Growth of a City* details the whole history of Rochester. This book gives a great history of Rochester in its infancy and allows readers to see where the city of Rochester came from and who helped to settle this land. *Rochester: The Flower City, 1855-1880* provides readers with a more detailed description of Rochester in the years just prior to the Civil War, during the Civil War, and during the years of Reconstruction. He has written many articles in *Rochester History* with a wide range of topics covering the Civil War years and those that served in the military.

- **Civil War Medicine and Rochester City Hospital** This article can be found on the website of the Rochester General Hospital in its digital archives. This article looks at some of the common procedures used by hospitals to treat wounded soldiers and the dangers of disease during the war, both on the battlefield and in the hospital. Also, highlights local surgeons and their accomplishments.

**Websites and Local Archives**

- [http://www.libraryweb.org/rochimag/roads/home.htm](http://www.libraryweb.org/rochimag/roads/home.htm) From the Rochester library website, one can navigate to the page, “Many Roads to Freedom: Abolitionism and the Civil War in Rochester.” This site includes many primary sources, secondary sources, pictures, and maps from Rochester from 1830 to the years after the war. Resources are separated to before the war, during the war, and after the war. Information about abolitionists, and the Underground Railroad can be found here as well as the all the copies of Moore’s *Rural New Yorker*. Also, the Civil War Master Index, which catalogs many of the articles from the *Union and Advertiser* during the war by topic and by names found in them. Many more resources of the library can be found here for various topics like the Underground Railroad, Frederick Douglass, and veterans of the war, separated for children and for older students and adults.
• **Rochester Library, Local History Division** On the second floor of the downtown library, in the local history section, a variety of resources for the Civil War can be found. All of the local newspapers can be viewed here on microfiche as well as many of the memoirs and diaries of local area soldiers. Regimental histories can be found here and all official reports and correspondence of the war can also be found here.

• **Rochester Historical Society and other local historical societies** The Rochester Historical Society, also located on the second floor of the downtown library, has many letters, diaries, and memoirs of civil war soldiers in their archives. The Society also has many artifacts from the Civil War period including the field journal of the doctor from Rochester from the Battle of Gettysburg. It may be possible to set up a time for them to visit your local classroom with some of these artifacts but only if funding for the Society allows it to stay open to the public. Local towns have their own historical societies with their own artifacts and correspondence from local veterans during the war.
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