BETWEEN CAMPUS AND WAR: STUDENTS, PATRIOTISM, AND EDUCATION AT MIDWESTERN UNIVERSITIES DURING THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

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INTRODUCTION

“THE SAFEGUARD OF CIVIL LIBERTY”

“Our Country - may she be right but right or wrong, our country”
Isaac N. Stewart, University of Wisconsin Student, 1862

College students have regularly played a vocal role in shaping how the youth of this country view the direction of the United States. They have especially made their presence and their opinions felt in the national discourse on wars fought in this country, largely because it is generally their age group that is expected to fight. In the early and mid-1800s, college students were notorious for rioting against their faculty, their host towns, or in general against some idea or policy of the local, state or national government with which they did not agree. A century later, students fell into line more easily. In 1918, during World War I, 140,000 college students nationwide joined the Student Army Training Corps on their campuses. President Woodrow Wilson informed them that their choice meant that they “had ceased to be merely individuals…[and had joined] with the entire manhood of the country.” The patriotism of college students, specifically when that

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2 Toast offered, May 9, 1862 Hesperia Society Records, 1859-1865, Hesperia Society Bills of Exercises 1860-1870, University of Wisconsin – Madison Archives (hereafter UW Archives; hereafter Hesperia Bill of Exercises).
commitment to their country was challenged in a time of war, has captured the interest of historians and the general public alike throughout America’s involvement in various conflicts during history. Often this research focuses on those students who left their classrooms to head to a battlefield or explores the nature of protests that rocked college campuses throughout the Cold War era.³

Popular understanding of university student unrest or participation in American wars jumps quickly to images of the May 4, 1970, tragedies at Kent State University or the barracked army soldiers on college campuses in World War II. Soon after the Kent State University anti-war riots of May 4, 1970, Newsweek published a poll in which 58% of those questioned believed the “demonstrating students” were to blame for the death of two male students and two female students from shots fired by the National Guard. The Vietnam War made Americans familiar with the term “draft dodger,” and university students in classrooms across the country today mingle and learn beside returning veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan. Serving the country in the military continues to be a choice for every young man, and now woman.⁴

These questions and concerns regarding the nature of college students’ American patriotism were debated regularly and with intensity during the American Civil War as well. When the Civil War broke out in 1861, those students enrolled in colleges and universities in every corner of America faced a life-altering decision; each one had to

decide whether he should stay in school and complete his education or hasten to enlist. The Civil War presented a unique set of circumstances to these potential soldiers unmatched by any American conflict since its end in 1865. In fact, besides the American Revolution, which in many ways was a civil war that successfully led to independence, no other American war threatened to pit countryman versus countryman, friend versus friend, and brother versus brother. The Civil War tested the very definition of patriot and caused university students to question their devotion to their country and their devotion to their own personal educational development.

Additionally, the ideals for which Americans fought in the Civil War emphasized issues specific to the nation itself. While racial slavery existed outside of the United States, few nations had witnessed a war that ended slavery without the initial impetus coming from the slaves themselves. Granted, the war began to save the Union, as a disagreement between the supremacy of federal and state power, but ultimately addressed many other issues as well, one of which was slavery. Students at colleges and universities did not always agree with the motives for the Civil War, which makes them similar to almost every American of that era, but they were of the age where they stood to gain or lose quite a bit from the outcome of the conflict.

This dissertation will consider the reactions and responses of state university students in the Midwest to the war and focus specifically on their development of ideologies of patriotism during the American Civil War. This war was against people who had called themselves American, and until recently, respected the same flag. College students in 1861, the youth of that generation called to war, responded to the country’s
call in diverse ways. Many left school and immediately volunteered for duty and others waited to graduate and then put their lives on the line for their country. Yet, some students remained in school and avoided military service altogether. In the Midwest, their presence on the home front contributed to arguments about how Americans served their country in a time of war.

Wallace G. Chessman’s brief yet illuminating Civil War centennial publication, *Ohio Colleges and the Civil War*, fostered the initial interest in questions regarding the relationship between the Northwest Territory, education, and the Civil War. In just thirty-two pages, he discussed many of the main points of inquiry one would make when considering the home front experience of universities during the war and essentially provided an outline for a larger study such as this one. He concluded that, overall, college “life retained its familiar dimension” and “seemed so unaffected by the war.” Writing for a centennial audience, he contrasted the Civil War experience with subsequent conflicts, in some ways judging life during the Civil War anachronistically. “There was no speedup in the scholastic pace, no compromise with the traditional curriculum,” Chessman maintains. “There were no special training courses for officers, no barracks for newly marrieds. There was none of the disruption of routine that later generations have come to associate with wartime education.”

This dissertation began by attempting to understand these conclusions more deeply and to see how they applied to other institutions throughout the Midwest. “Yet,”

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5 J. Matthew Gallman concurs that this was the pattern across the North; there were “very few dramatic changes” in the North as “Northerners did not go to war in search of change.” J. Matthew Gallman, *The North Fights the Civil War: The Home Front* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, Inc., 1994), 194. G. Wallace Chessman, *Ohio Colleges and the Civil War* (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1963), 12-13.
Chessman argues, “beneath this placid façade, there was a tension no one missed, a restless dissatisfaction straining at a patient will. So many classmates had gone off to war, so many others wanted to – it was discouraging and difficult to settle into the accustomed ways.” These statements raised additional questions that were surely historically significant and in need of further investigation. Combined with the intriguing framework suggested by Chessman, the link between the ideals of the Northwest Ordinance, patriotism, and higher education led directly to the three universities selected for this study.⁶

The University of Michigan, the University of Wisconsin, and Indiana University were the only three institutions operating as public, state-mandated universities in the former Northwest Territory prior to the Civil War. As such, they offered a unique perspective into how the intellectual demands of a collegiate institution further complicated the challenges that war posed on a community. Ohio had chartered two schools early in its settlement that may have been considered state institutions, Ohio University in Athens and Miami University in Oxford, but neither school was supported by the state and both had essentially been abandoned to Presbyterian denominations. While Michigan, Indiana, and Wisconsin did not unload their state schools onto religious groups, they also did little to bolster their success. By the eve of war, this designation of being a state university did not necessarily allow for a productive relationship between state and school. Historiography regarding state universities during the Civil War is severely lacking, as institutional histories, education histories, and Civil War histories

⁶ Chessman, 12-13.
glazed over the intricacies of how these universities responded, both reactively and proactively, to the challenges set before them. Set within the unique context of the Midwest, this dissertation therefore contributes to the literature on the Midwestern home front and higher education during the American Civil War.7

For the purposes of this study, when I refer to the West or western, I mean any part of the United States not considered in 1860 as the North or South. Midwest, in this dissertation, by contrast, is a subset of the West, and refers to the states that formerly constituted the Northwest Territory: Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, Ohio, and Indiana. Congress organized this section of the country through the Northwest Ordinance of 1787. The term “Midwest” did not come into common usage until the early 20th century but historians generally agree that many of the cultural identifiers that allow this region to be discussed as a section developed by the Civil War. Andrew R. L. Cayton and Peter S. Onuf, as well as Nicole Etcheson, identify Midwestern “commonalities” as a

“commitment to free labor, bourgeois middle-class values, and a sense of itself as the most American of regions.” I will also occasionally refer to the Midwest as the Old Northwest. This is in keeping with historiographical trends by scholars such as those noted above. During the Civil War, however, Americans living in any of these five states and in Kentucky, California, and many other states and territories considered themselves westerners.8

Examining the Midwestern home front is historically significant both with respect to the Civil War and higher education in general. The clause in the Northwest Ordinance expressly endorsing public education mandates that the developments of these five states with respect to education require special attention. Studying education in the Midwest inevitably leads one directly back to the Northwest Ordinance. Congress unveiled the Ordinance in 1787 in order to promote settlement in the frontier country and control its organization. Article III of the document provided that “schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged.” Immediately, education in the territories, and subsequent states, became linked with the spirit of the Ordinance, and supporters claimed that public universities should serve as the capstone institutions for these systems. Peter Onuf describes the Northwest Ordinance as holding a “central place” in “patriotic rhetoric” as the people who populated the Northwest Territories believed themselves to

be on a mission from the country’s founders to “set forth the most advanced Revolutionary ideals.” In some views, this included higher education.⁹

Kenneth Wheeler adds a new dimension to this intersection between historical questions about education and the focus on the Midwest. He argues, and this dissertation offers further evidence to prove, that “college students in the Old Northwest differed from their counterparts in other regions.” He mainly cites the lack of rioting against college administrations, so prevalent elsewhere in the country, and says that “students and college leaders negotiated non-violently” when discord occurred. In Chapter Five, this dissertation offers a crucial example regarding a two-year conflict between Indiana University students and their faculty members during the Civil War that supports such conclusions. Wheeler partially attributes this to their age, as students in the Midwest were older than the average student nationally, and partially to the creation in the Old Northwest of a “culture of usefulness.” This ideology created “action-oriented people” who fashioned institutions “to accommodate their needs,” which they believed to be different from the North and South. A college education, therefore, “[resulted] in a useful citizen,” meaning someone who could fulfill the doctrines established by those settlers who organized the Old Northwest under the Ordinance.¹⁰

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Midwestern home front literature still lacks a contemporary synthesis of the fine work contributed to date. Many scholars have written community studies, analyses of various political or economic aspects of the war’s impact in the Midwest, but too often the Midwest is merely lumped in with larger works regarding the Northern home front. Several excellent studies foreshadow the war period by examining how the Midwest developed its regional character and identity but most of these end on the eve of the Civil War. Biographies abound of key figures from the Midwest during the war, although numerous focused studies of this genre are still left undone. Regarding education there is very little scholarship about the Midwest during the Civil War. Denominational colleges with reputations for abolitionist fervor in the prewar period receive most of the attention. Thus, this dissertation seeks to contribute to the discourse regarding the Midwestern home front and also lead historians to the myriad research opportunities regarding the Midwestern home front that still await attention.11

Moreover, this dissertation offers necessary correctives to institutional histories.

In reference to the ways in which universities responded to the Civil War, Kent Sagendorph wrote, “Every college had the same experience.” According to this broad generalization, students were swept up in war enthusiasm, faculty found themselves in empty classrooms within weeks, and university livelihoods were threatened. Regarding Indiana University, historian Thomas D. Clark claims, “The university itself did little more than keep its doors open.” Merle Curti and Vernon Carstensen contend that the University of Wisconsin faculty and Board of Regents “were content to carry on virtually without experiment.” Much of the institutional scholarship on this topic was written in the mid-twentieth century and dismisses both the variety and complexity of reactions that occurred on campuses across the country.12

In his 1970 history of Indiana University, Thomas D. Clark argues that during the Civil War, the university,

was forced to become a provincial island while the red winds of war blew about it. Now it could only operate largely as a holding institution, and await the return of more stable times...for the time being the tasks were to


keep a faculty, enforce discipline, and preserve order in the chapel.

My research demonstrates that these assertions were incorrect. This description does not apply to Indiana University or the other two schools in this study. Those leading the schools, along with those who derived a majority of their financial security from its location and success in their towns, worked actively and tirelessly to strengthen the universities in the face of such unparalleled challenges. Additionally, faculty and Regents were careful to balance pride in those who left for the front with encouragement of those willing to stay. Surely, these communities received word from around the country of other colleges and universities whose campuses emptied and doors shut following the immediate rush to arms in the spring of 1861.13

Several historians in the last few years have considered the impact of the Civil War on college campuses, with a heavy focus on the Ivy League and southern schools.

13 Clark, 98. Historians have documented well the depletion of the student body at northern schools. For example, Richard F. Miller revealed that “within a few days [of the fall of Fort Sumter] Harvard itself had almost ceased to function.” Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, suffered such enrollment and financial difficulties that they struggled to recover even after the war and closed in 1873 for more than ten years. Many southern universities closed their doors when the war began and either never reopened or later appeared in a form much different than originally intended. In his institutional history of Tulane University, John P. Dyer asserts that the “parsimonious legislatures and lethargic citizens of New Orleans had failed to kill the university, but the war now administered the coup de grâce.” Tulane ceased to operate during the four years of war and its buildings stood “silent and deserted.” Richard F. Miller, Harvard’s Civil War: A History of the Twentieth Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 2005), 16; John D. Millett, chairman, Higher Education in Ohio (Ohio Interim Commission on Education, 1962), 33; Willis Rudy, The Campus and a Nation in Crisis: From the American Revolution to Vietnam (Madison: Fairleigh Dickenson University Press, 1996), 60; John P. Dyer, Tulane: The Biography of a University, 1834-1965 (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 28. Southern schools, however, felt the brunt of the war’s impact, as the war left them “completely destitute physically and financially.” John Thelin explained that “most colleges in the South had abandoned instruction” by the end of the war. J. Matthew Gallman notes, however, that “at least fourteen new schools opened their doors in the midst of the conflict.” Kenneth Sager counts the total new universities opened during the decade of 1860-1870 at 66. Kenneth Roger Sager, The Impact of the Civil War upon higher education in the United States, (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1940), 36, 77. John Thelin, A History of American Higher Education (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 2004), 74. Gallman, 88.
There has also been some excellent work done on the intellectual, social, and cultural perspective of college-age Americans. This dissertation will complement these new trends by contemplating the nature of the response in these three Midwestern state universities, while challenging the conclusions of historians whose institutional focus glazed over the war years.¹⁴

One of the first issues that came to light in studying the existing literature, which spans both historiography and educational histories, is that scholars agree that very little differentiated public and private universities and colleges in the antebellum period. Donald Tewksbury defines a state university as a “degree-conferring institution of higher education placed by legal stipulation under the predominant control of the state.” This dissertation accepts Tewksbury’s definition. Private colleges were generally directly associated with, controlled by, and largely funded through denominational organizations. As William Ringe points out, it was as difficult to “distinguish the state universities from the church colleges on the basis of their approach to Christian religion,” as it was to “distinguish the two on the amount of public financing they received or on the basis of how they were controlled.”¹⁵

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None of the three state universities in this study received financial support from their respective states prior or during the Civil War. John Thelin explains that “there is reasonable doubt that anyone in the early nineteenth century made a substantive distinction between “public” and “private” colleges in the United States.” Thus, it was clear that the utmost care had to be taken in this study not to overly emphasize these three institutions as being state universities. They were in name state universities and they were not tied to denominations, but even by the time of the Civil War, these three institutions still struggled to explain to the public, the state legislature, and potential students just how they were different from their competitors.16

J. David Hoeveler explains that “while the state universities were struggling to find communities of interest and identity, the smaller colleges experienced much less soul-searching…[as] the church was a spiritual strength and source of unity.” These private, denominational colleges appeared for purposes that went beyond the education of America’s youth, especially in the West. Both Emerson David Fite and James Findlay agree that Eastern churches targeted the West for universities in order to spread their influence. Fite describes the impact of this determination as “misguided zeal” because the schools focused on attracting the frontier people to their denomination and “the interests of the denomination were put ahead of the interests of the cause of education.” Findlay

16 Richard N. Current, The History of Wisconsin, Volume II The Civil War Era, 1848-1873 (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1976), 174. Although the three universities in this study also suffered from a lack of state financial support prior to the Civil War, none of them sought alternate funding or direction from a religious denomination. The University of Michigan ostensibly faced some competition for being the sole public institution for higher education in the state when the legislature chartered the Michigan Agricultural College in 1855. This latter school however struggled for its very existence and by the start of the war had contracted into a two-year professional school. Thus, it seemed unlikely in April 1861 that Michigan Agricultural College would ever amount to serious competition for the university in Ann Arbor. See Madison Kuhn, Michigan State: The First Hundred Years (Lansing: The Michigan State University Press, 1955), 55. Thelin, 71.
points out that as the East funneled money and people into the West to build local churches and colleges, “the educational aims and purposes of the colleges had to be explained and made meaningful to the farmers, small shopkeepers, and tradesmen of the Midwest.” Eventually, these church schools created “broad public support for the colleges and for education generally,” which in turn led to “local and regional networks of support in small towns and cities” throughout the Midwest. Denominational success, therefore, caused strife for the state universities in the Midwest that struggled to compete with these networks.17

Religious questions contributed to the continual crisis of identity for budding Midwestern state universities. Without clear direction from the states, and regular hiring of ministers as faculty and presidents, even the universities themselves were not entirely consistent on the jurisdiction for their institutions with regard to religious observance. All three state universities had compulsory chapel attendance. And, as Gayle A. Williams pointed out in her dissertation, Indiana University intended only to be nonsectarian, not secular, as was their ultimate fate. The same can be said of the other two institutions.

Despite wanting desperately to be identified as state universities, they nonetheless determined to also function as institutions of Christian morals. Williams sums up this identity crisis in her assertion that “in many ways, the state universities that emerged in the period prior to the Civil War were mirror images of the more dominant denominational institutions of higher education.” Ringenberg concurs, explaining that “almost without exception these institutions [state universities] were Protestant in nature and emphasis even though theoretically under public control.” Andrew Wylie, esteemed president of Indiana University early in the antebellum period, told the legislature in 1830 that “education without religion is worse than none.” Ringenberg calls the University of Michigan “a Christian college by virtually all standards of measurement.”

However, despite these sincere motions toward imbuing their state institutions with religious zeal, Indiana, Wisconsin and Michigan faced regular attacks from the denominational schools in their states. These private colleges hammered away at these schools designated as belonging to the people of the state as being immoral institutions. The Methodists in Michigan, in particular, lashed out at the University of Michigan prior to the war, accusing the school of having “a very doubtful character,” and harboring students who were lacking in their moral and religious constitution. This doggedness continued into the war era, as Michigan professor Silas H. Douglas wrote in early 1863 that “the Methodists are making a desperate effort all over the state to obtain control of the University.” In fact, quarrels over the religious purpose of state universities may have

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contributed to Henry Tappan’s removal from the university presidency in June of that year, as Methodists angled to gain more influence over the institution. They did not bother then to hide their pleasure at Tappan’s firing and the installation of Methodist minister Erastus O. Haven into that position at the University of Michigan. In his inaugural address, Haven insisted that “a state university in this country should be religious” and called on the professors to be “coworkers with Christ, in the divinely appointed enterprise of evangelizing the world.” Even during the war, the debate raged regarding the role of state universities in inculcating their students with religion.\textsuperscript{19}

It is also important to realize that these churches and university administrators were in competition for a small number of higher education students in the antebellum period. Certainly, university students were a small, distinctive subset of the nation’s white male population. Prior to the Civil War, there were 455 colleges in the United States, serving almost 55,000 students. John Thelin found that these institutions “were not exclusionist or elite in matters of admission…they helped to create an elite rather than to confirm one.” However, “a college education remained a scarce commodity and a rare experience [before 1860].” In her study of military schools in the Old South, Jennifer Green notes that “education played a significant role in the formation of the middle class, the development of professionalization and the definition of social mobility” in the United States during the nineteenth century. When a young man arrived at school, often barely eighteen years of age, he learned to take pride in his associations with groups

\textsuperscript{19} William Dusenberry, “Religion and the University of Michigan, 1837-1875” Department of History, (University of Michigan) Student Papers 1930-1987, Box 2, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor (hereafter Bentley Historical Library), 15, 19. Elizabeth M. Farrand, History of the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor: Register Publishing House, 1885), 140.
outside of his immediate family. He joined a fraternity, a literary society, or the campus choir. He made friends with others in his same course of studies, or with his fellow student-residents at a local boarding house. Thus, when the Civil War broke out, these young students often related to it in ways different from others in American society. Moreover, far from the throes of battle, college students had a unique opportunity to explore their own maturation process while learning about the world outside of their parents’ homes.\(^{20}\)

George Fredrickson argues that northern intellectuals before and during the Civil War contemplated “the role of the scholar in an egalitarian society,” which in turn led thoughtful young men to consider the meaning, type, and degree of social obligation. The “ultimate question,” Fredrickson asserts, revolves around the “proper relation of the individual to any society.” The northern intellectuals of Fredrickson’s study rejected the “voluntaristic social and political organizations which denied [them] recognition,” in order to represent “the ultimate embodiment of American individualism.” College students in the Midwest grappled with similar questions of individuality in a society that pressured them to join the army when the war broke out. Students who stayed at the University of Michigan, the University of Wisconsin, and Indiana University during the Civil War sought to justify their position in society under the protection of the university. They were not men in the public realm, earning a living in a particular profession. They

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were enrolled in an institution of higher education and pursuing intellectual development that promised to catapult them into a new sphere of society.\textsuperscript{21}

Many walked away from that path and into the army, an institution that largely negated the importance of the individual. Of course, they could possibly earn rank and glory on the battlefield, but in theory, volunteers did so within the army for the benefit of their country, not for personal gain. Those who remained on campus understood that they would not achieve the same recognition as the soldiers; they could not be martyrs for their country by attending class. Nevertheless, as these young men in such a new section of the country, pursuing dreams in such new universities, considered their options in the era of the Civil War, a significant number decided that they could best fulfill their social obligations by staying in school and completing their educations.

Much of this dissertation makes an argument about expressions of patriotism among students in these three universities during the Civil War. Patriotism is defined as “love for or devotion to one’s country.” Patriotism can be felt or performed. Merle Curti defines patriotism as “love of country, pride in it, and readiness to make sacrifices for what is considered its best interest.” In an 1863 article for his literary society journal, University of Michigan student William B. Hendryx described patriotism as “that feeling of attachment, which we all possess for the land that gave us birth. It is a nation’s bulwark and without it no government can exist. Within the hearts of the people, lies the strength of the nation…” He argued that “the great aim of the American education” should be to instill this devotion in the citizenry. It is important to distinguish patriotism

from nationalism; although they are related, they are distinctly separate concepts. Curti argues, and I agree, that nationalism “has developed in the modern world as the philosophy of the national state.” Because the Civil War crystallized the formation of the American nation-state, contemporary Americans did not refer to nationalism; they spoke solely of patriotism. To be true then to their paradigm, this study refrains from using patriotism and nationalism interchangeably. Nationalism relates closely to a sense of superiority, while patriotism evokes more of a sense of dedication. Gloria Ladson-Billings summarized this as “patriotism is not what you say; patriotism is what you do.”

The first part of this dissertation begins by outlining the environment at the University of Michigan, the University of Wisconsin, and Indiana University in 1860 in order to understand the ways that the campus community influenced the response of college students to sectionalism, secession, and the outbreak of the war. Next, this study considers the reasons why students left school to become soldiers and argues that the relationships established during their time at the university, both with students and faculty, shaped the course of their wartime experience. It is important to understand how

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students felt about leaving for war, in order to fully contrast their experiences with the choices and lives of those who remained behind.

The second part of the study examines how these students at the University of Michigan, the University of Wisconsin, and Indiana University justified staying in school during the war and experienced the war from the home front. Regular comparison between these three universities reveals the similarities and differences of the war’s consequences on their campuses, but the schools are treated separately in the text in order to highlight and preserve their individuality. At the University of Michigan, those who continued their education developed an ideology that equated their higher education to serving in the military. They deemed college the best place to prepare for leadership during the Reconstruction era. The students at Wisconsin and Indiana also viewed themselves as the future leaders of the country, but they faced more uncertain conditions on their campuses than those experienced in Ann Arbor. Wisconsin students faced immense changes on their campus due to enrollment issues, while Indiana students lashed out at the school’s faculty as a way of expressing their own ambivalence about the war. Students in all three schools deemed themselves patriots, but managed to defend their decisions to remain on campus. They also each perceived an enemy in their immediate vicinity – the Board of Regents in Michigan, female students in Wisconsin, and restrictive professors in Indiana – that allowed them to practice for potential careers by invoking the dialogues that they heard in the national political and social realm. This dissertation contends that Midwestern university students during the American Civil War were actively engaged with the ideology created by the war, regarding politics and
patriotism, in ways that enhanced the nature of their educations and forced those related to the institutions to adjust quickly and creatively.

Furthermore, this dissertation explores ways in which some Midwestern university students articulated opposition to the majority opinion during the war. Civil War Americans fought over the meaning of patriotism, how one acted out patriotism, and how true patriots expressed their devotion to the Union. By considering how students addressed slavery and emancipation, Copperheads, and conscription, we can understand that political conflict shaped the way they related to the war. They used the opportunities offered by the war as far as debate topics to develop further their notions of leadership and responsibility to their country.

This dissertation also highlights the ways in which the institutions responded to fluctuations in enrollment during the war. The University of Michigan presents a unique case-study itself, as the student body increased significantly despite the war. Civil War centennial scholars believed that students who enrolled at Michigan while younger than enlistment age or “the high level of prosperity throughout the North during the war [that] enabled more students to secure the funds needed to pay the expenses of going to college” contributed to this trend. Other historians credit Michigan’s thriving medical and law departments with attracting students who hoped to contribute to the war effort with the new skills acquired in these arenas. Regardless, by the end of the war, Michigan stood as the largest university in the country. By contrast, Wisconsin found itself forced to admit women in order to save the school in 1863 and Indiana faculty members indirectly
pursued new students by attempting to shore up new professorships and financing for the institution.\(^{23}\)

The Midwestern state universities were not isolated from the war; they in fact were located in cities that experienced their fair share of war-related upheavals. Ann Arbor, Bloomington, and Madison could not have been more different from one another when the war began. As university towns they each had unique advantages and disadvantages. The home front experience in Ann Arbor, Bloomington, and Madison must be understood within the context of the relationship that existed between the people who lived there and the university upon its hill. Unlike other northern and Midwestern communities, towns with colleges and universities in their midst often found the war a threat to both the stability of their families and to their most vital economic entity. Wartime was a test of the university’s, and by extension the town’s, viability. At moments, residents, faculty, and students together found common strength, protection, and escape from their worldly concerns. When the initial excitement over the prospects of glory in battle gave way to the realities of war, these schools and the people they served realized that circumstances required conscious efforts to preserve the institutions for future generations.

This symbiotic relationship was clear even before the war. By 1849, Ann Arbor kept a close watch on its local growing university. When the University of Michigan expelled twenty-two students for disregarding rules against the formation of social fraternities that year, residents disagreed with the decision because it meant the loss of

nearly half of the total student body at the time. They published a statement and resolutions expressing their disapproval, arguing “that in the prosperity of the university depends, in a great degree, the prosperity of our village; and hence it is not only our right but our duty to look to the manner in which its affairs are managed.” This bond was less strong in Madison, where the frontier people of the young state supported “policies that did not consider the long-range interests of a university to be superior to the immediate interests of the plain people of a state.” But, there were still those in Wisconsin who “insisted that a university should represent the community’s highest and most sacred interest.” Luckily for the university, the governor elected in 1864 numbered among the latter group. Indiana experienced tremendous support in Bloomington and truly the university served as the intellectual and cultural hub of the town. Residents recognized its economic benefits and potential and supported the school through numerous challenges in its first three decades. However, Bloomington was a small town itself, the smallest of the three locales, and did not have the resources available to propel its resident university onto center stage in the state.24

Thus, this dissertation examines the nature of the home front experience from the perspective of the administrators of the universities and the towns where these schools existed. The first year of the war saw university faculties react to the threats to their institutions and they tried desperately to restrain their students from enlisting. Fearing the disintegration of the schools from lack of enrollment, professors implored their students

to complete their degrees before serving their country. Later, as the war progressed and its duration became more uncertain, both administrators and local residents worked together to proactively situate the institutions to stride forward despite the challenges of the war years. The passage of the Morrill Act in 1862 propelled all three universities out of their war-induced stupor and into action. Passed by Congress in 1862, the Morrill Act provided states with claim to the money from sales of western lands in the possession of the national government, eventually totaling approximately 11.4 million acres of land.

Congress then directed state governments to use the proceeds from these sales to create college programs that were vocational in nature. Examples of this type of curriculum included military instruction, agricultural programs and the mechanical arts. The states were free to set their own prices for the sellable lands and choose whether to invest the profits from those sales into an existing institution or create a new school. 

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25 Studies exist regarding the ways higher education institutions have responded to other wars as well. Brian A. Williams notes that World War II “sparked campus debate and prompted the university to move forward at an increased pace, redefining its mission, altering its research agenda, and reordering priorities.” Brian A. Williams, *Michigan on the March: The University of Michigan in World War II* (Ann Arbor: Bentley Historical Library, Bulletin No. 42, 1995), 1. Gordon C. Lee, “The Morrill Act and Education,” *British Journal of Educational Studies* Vol. 12, No. 1 (Nov. 1963), 26. Vermont congressman and author of the act, Justin Morrill, did not consolidate the ideas for this legislation without regard to the current national situation of civil war. He deplored the “sheer ignorance of military art” that existed in the country and believed that institutions of higher education needed to be a spoke in the wheel of creating a military-ready society. Thus students and those responsible for teaching them military tactics would then “constitute an integral part of the national defense.” Formerly defeated by southern congressmen, the Morrill Act passed during the war and immediately captured the imaginations of higher education proponents across the nation. Historian Allan Nevins contends that the Morrill Act illustrated a dedication to expanding democracy in the country, as it would enable “all men [to have] full opportunity to pursue all occupations at the highest practicable level,” thus securing “liberty and equality.” As Nevins explains, “the mid-[nineteenth]century concept of democracy included a belief that men learned by doing.” The Morrill Act was “a profession of faith in the future in the midst of civil war.” Wyatt Rushton, “Training Student Soldiers: Obligatory Military instruction in our Land-Grant Colleges,” *The American Review of Reviews* Vol. 53 (Feb. 1916), 201. See Gallman for more information on the partisan politics of the Republican measures passed in Congress during the Civil War. See also Lee, 26, where he mentions that Morrill’s memoirs comment on the absence of the “representatives of the states in rebellion” during the successful vote on the Morrill Act. Allan Nevins, *The Origins of the Land-Grant Colleges and State Universities: A Brief Account of the Morrill Act of 1862 and its Results* (Washington, D.C.: Civil War Centennial
Colleges and universities, denominational and secular, private and public, clamored for these funds. Many schools, like the three in this study, already explored these types of educational programs prior to the passage of the Morrill Act. They recognized that securing this new funding from their state, or at least the bulk of it, could propel their institutions to a different level. Obtaining the Morrill Act funds would allow the University of Michigan, Indiana University and the University of Wisconsin to position themselves in a unique set of circumstances at the end of the war. All three schools tried aggressively to ensure that their states received the most income possible from the sale of the lands and that their governments would then funnel that money directly into new and innovative programs in Ann Arbor, Bloomington, and Madison.

The Civil War marks the era when state universities began their aggressive rise to prominence. This dissertation confirms the scholarship that more specifically identifies that turning point within the Civil War as the passage of the Morrill Act. The combined impact of the Civil War and the Morrill Act shifted higher education away from the classical curriculum and into a more practical, vocational mission. Mark Nemec even credits the rise of the university with providing “both intellectual and institutional apparatuses that legitimized and formalized” “the new American state” between 1862 and the turn of the century. In looking at the development of Indiana colleges prior to 1860, David Randall Gabrielse found that colleges believed that education could contribute to the formation of residents in ways that would shape the Midwest and “[respond] to local
and regional developments.” He argues that Protestantism was a main characteristic that communities sought to establish through educating their youth but there was also an emphasis on civilizing settlers in order to erase the primitive nature of the frontier and thus separate Americans from the natives.26

Ideas about education, patriotism, politics, and other elements of society abound throughout this dissertation. As the study examines the student experience from the perspective of those who left and those who stayed and then delves into the ways in which university and community leaders addressed the challenges and opportunities of the era, it consciously engages with these scholarly conversations. These universities were not stagnant during the war and neither were their students. The young men who left for battle did so forever changed by their relationships back on campus and those who remained behind shaped a new discourse in which the imperatives and methods of the war held sway. This dissertation reveals how youth on the Midwestern home front perceived the war, how they responded to it, and how their reactions then shaped and instigated the actions of faculty, townspeople, and state governments in this evolving region of the United States.

PART ONE:

WHEN THEY LEAVE

“Wait; this is not to be a war of months, but years. You will have your chance.”
Professor Andrew D. White, University of Michigan, 1861
“After hearing my story, the kind professor welcomed me to the glorious University –
next, it seemed to me, to the Kingdom of Heaven.”27
John Muir, University of Wisconsin student, 1860-1863

In July 1859, noted politician Carl Schurz stood before an audience in Madison,
Wisconsin, and began his speech to welcome Henry Barnard as the new president of the
University of Wisconsin. Founded in 1848, the University of Wisconsin was intended to
be the flagship institution in a state-wide school system, per Wisconsinites’
understanding of the provisions found in the national Land Ordinance of 1785 and the
Northwest Ordinance’s educational ideology. However, ten years later, Wisconsin
schools, from the elementary through the university level, were in disarray. Schurz
complimented the people of Wisconsin for having courage, energy, and a generally
strong work ethic. As pioneers on a frontier, they had proved themselves worthy of their
material successes. But it was time, he argued, that education offset the “spirit of
materialism” that was growing too strong, in his opinion, in the new state. Schurz
contended, “This is the point where a higher order of popular education has to interpose

Company, 1913), 275.
its ennobling influence.” Barnard promised to lead Wisconsin towards a brighter future, as he had done as superintendent of Connecticut’s public school system.28

Indiana University welcomed a new president to its Bloomington campus in 1860. Cyrus M. Nutt took the helm at an institution that had existed for almost forty years. Still, Indiana University had failed to develop a strong and credible reputation among residents as the state’s leading collegiate institution. It suffered from hostile denominational colleges and most Hoosiers’ overall lack of belief in higher education. The faculty wanted to improve the perception of their institution beyond Bloomington’s borders in an attempt to dispel the recurring sectarian attacks on the morality of the university. Local residents had demonstrated their commitment to Indiana University in 1854 when they had quickly raised ten thousand dollars to rebuild the main campus building after a fire. Six years later, it was time for the university and its new president to take the steps necessary to earn the school more respect from the state’s residents and the region. All parties involved hoped that their efforts would result in the financial support from the legislature that the institution so badly needed.29

28 Schurz, a German immigrant, served on the Board of Regents for the young, struggling university. He was an active Republican politician and supporter of Lincoln. Schurz served as a general in the Civil War and eventually as a United States Senator. See Hans L. Trefousse, Carl Schurz: A Biography (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1982). The Land Ordinance of 1785 included a provision for towns to dedicate sections of each township to public schools. The Northwest Ordinance inspired the quest for institutions of higher education with this command in Article Three: “Religion, morality, and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged.” See Peter S. Onuf, “The Importance of the Northwest Ordinance,” in Indiana University, Bloomington, et al, Liberty’s Legacy, 10. Historian Richard Current argues that the state’s educational system was in “serious trouble” before the Civil War, with cities having to shorten school years and downsize schoolhouse building plans. The university only had five professors and in 1860 cut their salaries. Current, 254-55, 258.

29 On the night of April 11, 1854, the university building caught fire. The students were on vacation and the townspeople did not find the fire until the morning. Theophilus A. Wylie, professor of philosophy and chemistry at Indiana from 1837 to 1886, described the fire as “a death blow to the University. Its small, though valuable library, its chapel, recitation rooms, the neatly fitted up Philomathean
As Nutt presided over the opening of the new term in 1860, he and the faculty saw additional control of the students as one way to demonstrate their *in loco parentis* status. They discussed new options for limiting the students’ freedoms within their literary societies, such as only allowing juniors and seniors to speak at public exhibitions and requiring “all speeches and essays, original and selected, [to] be submitted to the supervision of the Professor of English Literature.” Nutt did not immediately implement these new ideas but consideration of such proposals foreshadowed the direction faculty sought to take in the subsequent years. The scholars leading Indiana University entered the new decade determined to earn a higher spot in the state’s priorities, even at the expense of student free speech.\(^{30}\)

State financial support was also on the minds of faculty and Regents at the University of Michigan in 1860. Ann Arbor residents were pleased with the significant progress of their local school “upon the hill,” and actively took note of the increasing enrollment figures for the first term of the new decade. In less than twenty years, the

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\(^{30}\) In 1830, Andrew Wylie, then president of Indiana University, gave a speech to the Indiana legislature about education, and argued, “the society of a college ought to be a family, in which the Faculty is the parent, and their pupils the children...Thus educated may we not expect them to prove a comfort to their parents and an honor to their country… If these things are so, no further argument is necessary to demonstrate the interest which the State has in the cause of education. The truth is, the State must have educated men...” Wylie, *A Discourse on Education*, 21. See Wylie’s speech also for his defense of the university from charges of godlessness and lack of religion and morality. Hoeveler, Jr., 391-402, see page 395 for a discussion of this mindset in Midwestern higher education. James Albert Woodburn, *Higher Education in Indiana* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1891), 97. October 29, 1860, Indiana University Faculty Minutes, Collection C236, Indiana University Archives, Bloomington, Indiana (hereafter IU Faculty Minutes; hereafter IU University Archives).
The university had made its presence known beyond the state of Michigan and competed for the country’s best students. With a medical school and a law school contributing more than half of its total enrollment, the University of Michigan boasted well over 600 students. Yet, its widely regarded president, Henry P. Tappan, actively pursued legislative funds in order to fulfill his vision of the University of Michigan as an equal of the famous research institutions in Europe. The students also fueled the school’s momentum by starting a financial campaign to build a new gymnasium. They pooled their own funds while requesting additional donations from citizens and faculty. “I have no doubt that they will succeed,” boasted Fredrick A. Buhl, a freshman from Detroit. The new decade portended great things for Michigan’s growing university.

Students experienced the immediate pre-war period within the ideological realm of their state university in the Midwest and thus based their initial reactions to the advent of Civil War on the influence of their local environment. As Americans became more aware of the nation’s troubles in the spring of 1861, the manner in which local residents, faculty, and students responded to the reality of war’s imminence shaped the individual student experience of this period. This chapter will describe the characteristics of each university community as 1860 dawned and a presidential election loomed. It will then trace the reaction in the towns to the secession crisis that threatened to unravel their progress. Students at the University of Michigan, the University of Wisconsin, and

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Indiana University attempted to earn their education within environments that were increasingly agitated, politically charged, and expanding in focus beyond the local arena. The momentous events of the previous years, such as the Kansas-Nebraska Act, the Dred Scott decision, and John Brown’s raid and execution, did not go unnoticed among those toiling in Ann Arbor, Madison, and Bloomington. Many feared that troubling times were ahead, but like most Americans very few foresaw the danger to the Union and the bloody civil war that would soon commence.

Madison, the capital of Wisconsin, had more than 6,500 residents in 1860. Wisconsin was still fairly undeveloped prior to the war, but Dane county, where Madison was located, was one of the most advanced counties in the state. The same can be said of Michigan’s Washtenaw county where Ann Arbor was the second largest town with over 5,000 inhabitants. New Englanders as well as significant numbers of Irish and German immigrants principally populated both Wisconsin and Michigan. The universities in these states, in contrast with Indiana, found themselves in bigger towns with faster growing economies and larger European immigrant populations. Their social and political agendas more closely reflected the concerns of reformist New England such as temperance, abolition, and nativism. Students at the University of Wisconsin were in the heart of their state’s activity, attending legislative sessions in their spare time and mingling with state leaders. Michigan students experienced a level of racial interaction greater than their counterparts at Wisconsin or Indiana. Census figures for Ann Arbor in 1860 showed 106 free blacks living in the town, while Madison and Bloomington counted 32 and 13,
respectively. Ann Arbor’s free blacks were “a visible, acknowledged presence,” and maintained a church in the community.\textsuperscript{32}

Of the three schools considered in this study, Indiana University was located in the most rural area. Approximately 2,400 people lived in Bloomington, and even the surrounding Monroe county was just over one-third the size of Washtenaw county and under one-fourth the size of Dane county. Bloomington sits less than 100 miles north of Louisville, Kentucky, and like many towns at this time in the southern portion of northern states, a significant number of its settlers came from the South. Settlers from Kentucky, North Carolina, and Virginia moved to Indiana in much larger numbers than to either Michigan or Wisconsin. Indiana had a larger state population than did Wisconsin or Michigan and the smallest portion of foreign-born residents among the three states. Historian Melinda Lawson argues that Indiana, along with Illinois and Ohio, was “in a sense, [a microcosm] of the nation.” Northerners and southerners shaped a society in

Indiana that closely reflected the economic, political, and ideological underpinnings of the original parts of the country.³³

Indiana University’s presence in Bloomington further complicated the character of the community. As in Ann Arbor and Madison, there was little distinction between being a part of the town and of the university in the antebellum years. Bloomington embraced the faculty, the students, and the trappings of the college; the university was “the soul of Bloomington.” Students immersed themselves into Bloomington life by dating daughters of prominent citizens, attending local churches, and befriending residents. One 1861 graduate recalled, “the student who was received into the Society of Bloomington in those days was fortunate for it was considered one of the best.” In illustrating the close relationship between the towns and the universities, the local newspaper in Ann Arbor put it best in 1862: “The State furnishes the means of education for the young men who come to our noble University, and Ann Arbor furnishes pretty girls for wives for the young men, when they have graduated.” Surely, those in Bloomington and Madison felt the same way as this editor who hastened to reassure his readers, “We have no word of complaint to make, for in almost every instance the girls have done well and the boys have done better.”³⁴

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The University of Wisconsin lacked national credibility in 1860 largely because of the absence of a vigorous leader. Additionally, of the three universities in this study, it had the fewest roots in its community and state and had the least amount of financial interdependence with its surrounding city. The university was intended to “embody the idea, already taking form in other western states, of an inclusive, secular, democratic, and utilitarian as well as intellectual institution.” Like many other of the colleges and universities founded in the former Northwest Territory during the antebellum period, the University of Wisconsin faced significant financial struggles. The construction of buildings and the recruitment of students were slow and often tenuous. Eleven other colleges competed with the University of Wisconsin in the state in 1860, and they regularly attacked the university’s efforts to obtain legislative funding or in any way improve its reputation.35

The first commencement ceremony in 1854 consisted of two graduates. Eight men made up the graduating class in June 1860, and as the fall term opened that year, 180 students enrolled at the University of Wisconsin. Less than half of this number was advancing towards one of the two degree programs. The university offered collegiate degrees in either a classical or scientific course of study, the latter described as the same as the classical course except with “advanced scientific studies [taking] the place of the

35 In addition to the limitation to the number of faculty and salary reduction already noted, the Regents also had to decrease operating expenses in 1860 and issues with debt caused the capital funds of the university to fall by half during the war. Current, 173, 255, 400; Wyllie, 167. In the decade prior to the Civil War, Wisconsin’s denominational colleges became aggressive in their attacks on the institution. Beginning in 1855, friends of these church colleges proposed legislation to the state assembly that would dissolve the state university and divide its funds among the denominational colleges. This bill failed, but the denominational colleges did gain some concessions prior to 1860 through several acts which funneled additional money to them but withheld a share from the University of Wisconsin. Willis Dunbar, “Public versus Private Control of Higher Education in Michigan, 1817-1855,” The Mississippi Valley Historical Review Vol. 22, No. 3 (Dec. 1935), 387. See also Current, 174.
ancient languages.” Six professors guided the students through the curriculum. The
University of Wisconsin also supported a Preparatory Department, essentially equivalent
to a high school and at the time, students in this department took classes at the Madison
High School. Additional instructors taught courses in bookkeeping through the
Commercial Department and surveying and engineering in the Engineering Department.\(^{36}\)

Despite facing a disdainful attitude from many of Wisconsin’s state leaders and
other settlers, faculty, students, and many Madison residents held a very positive outlook
for the university’s prospects at the turn of the decade. The freshman class was more than
quadruple that of any other year and even included several students from beyond the
state’s borders. Seeking a professorship at the institution, L.E. Holden wrote to the
University of Wisconsin Board of Regents in June 1860:

...if you confer the honor of this chair upon me I shall
make the place my home and enter heartily into the
educational work of your young and promising state. My
experience in the University of Michigan, knowing as I do
that that Institution is no longer an experiment but a marked
success, makes me forsee a coequal prosperity for yours.
But I am aware that there is much work to be done both in
the University and among the people before its possibilities
can be realized.

Thus, the University of Wisconsin began to attain some recognition as a reputable
institution of higher education, potentially on the level of Michigan, in the late
antebellum period. However, its hopes stalled prior to the Civil War when Henry Barnard
failed to make any headway on improving the state’s educational system. Barnard never

\(^{36}\) Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the Wisconsin State University, for the year ending
June 27th, 1860 (Madison, WI: Atwood & Rublee, Book and Job Printers, 1860) (hereafter UW Catalogue,
academic year). UW Catalogue, 1861.
established a permanent residence in Wisconsin and spent much of his brief tenure away from Madison. His few efforts focused only on the local normal school and largely ignored the university. Hampered by health problems and disgusted by the lack of legislative funding, Barnard submitted his resignation to the Board in June 1860.37

Astounded by the turn of events, the Board of Regents did not accept Barnard’s resignation until the following year, thus leaving the university without a leader as the war broke out in 1861. The remaining professors, ever loyal, tried to promote the school’s progress but did so with decreased funding and reduced salaries. John W. Sterling, a professor at the University of Wisconsin prior to Barnard’s hire, served as the Dean of Faculty and Vice Chancellor of the institution until 1867. The top position of the university remained open throughout the Civil War and doubtlessly made outsiders speculate as to the school’s strength and potential longevity.38

Indiana University made its start in 1820 as a seminary, although it remained only an idea for a number of years. In 1828, it opened as Indiana College in Bloomington. The state legislature refashioned the young institution again in 1838 as Indiana University. Thomas D. Clark, who published an institutional history in 1970, describes the school’s early years thusly: “There is perhaps no more eloquent example than that of Indiana University of the fallacy of the American belief that a grant of public land would endow an institution in healthy and growing condition.” Like both the University of Michigan and the University of Wisconsin, the Indiana state legislature did not include its state

38 Current, 255; Allen and Spencer, 27.
university in the annual budget during the antebellum era. An arduous and complicated court battle with Vincennes College, which claimed to be the sole recipient of state university status in Indiana, prevented the legislature from appropriating money specifically to their new state university in Bloomington during the antebellum period. The school struggled to secure a new president after the sudden death of its first leader Andrew Wylie in 1851. According to Emma Thornbrough, the university’s “darkest days” occurred in the early 1850s. They endured short terms by controversial administrators who did little to further the school’s progress and suffered many rejected invitations to assume the presidency from distinguished professors and college presidents around the country. Finally, with Cyrus Nutt’s acceptance of the position in 1860, the school hoped it could enter a period of stability and growth.39

As the new decade dawned at Indiana University, enrollment numbers were nearly the same as its Wisconsin counterpart, hovering just short of two hundred. Indiana students split about evenly between the collegiate courses and the preparatory department. At the time, Indiana did not offer separate departments for engineering or commerce. They did have a very small, and sometimes empty, law department. They boasted of more out-of-state students than did the University of Wisconsin. Young men registered for classes in Bloomington from Mississippi, Kentucky, Illinois, Ohio, the New Mexico territory, Missouri, the Kansas territory, and even Washington D.C. Doubtless, this made Regents and faculty proud, especially when Indiana University had to compete with sixteen other higher educational institutions in the state alone. Indiana

39 Clark, 10. Emma Lou Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War era, 1850-1880* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1965), 507. See also Clark, 191-197.
seemed to host every possible denominational college ranging from the popular Methodist and Presbyterian colleges to Earlham College, devoted to the Society of Friends, and Notre Dame du lac, affiliated with the Catholic church. All of the state’s higher education institutions fought for legislative funds and particularly attacked Indiana University. They disagreed and disapproved of its very existence, its methods, and the possibility of its special treatment by the state.\footnote{There is no list for the law department in the 1860 catalogue, but in 1861-62 there are five students listed in this program. Indiana University, \textit{Annual Report of Indiana University Including the Catalogue for the Academical Year 1860-1861} (Indianapolis: Berry R. Sulgrove, 1861) (hereafter \textit{IU Catalogue}, academic year). \textit{IU Catalogue}, 1861-62. \textit{Statistics of the United States}, (including mortality, property, &c.,) in 1860, United States Census Office, Eighth Census, 1860, 505. Regarding the competition between denominational schools and Indiana University for legislative funds and students, see Herbst, 102; Sager, 12; Dunbar, “Public versus Private Control,” 386.}

Beyond the antagonism and resentment from competing schools, Indiana University also had to overcome the lack of education in the state’s general population. Much to the state’s embarrassment, the 1860 census revealed that Indiana had the highest illiteracy rate among northern states. In fact, with more than 62,700 residents considered unable to read or write, Indiana’s illiterate population was more than triple that of Michigan and Wisconsin. The university catalogue acknowledged in its section regarding the “Sphere and Object of the University” that “It may be of comparatively little moment to our wealthy citizens whether there be a College in Indiana at all, and what its character may be.” The leaders of the university understood that many of the state’s best families continued to send their sons to Europe or to the East to be educated. Therefore, in fulfilling its obligation as a vestige of public opportunity, the school took pride that “The larger portion of students in this University are aspiring young men from the middle, and
even from the very humble walks of life; many of them having by their own efforts, procured the means of their education."

Unlike the regional diversity represented in Bloomington, prominent New York transplants shaped the culture of Ann Arbor and its resident university. New York native Henry P. Tappan served as president of the University of Michigan from 1852 until 1863. He oversaw important developments at the school during the pre-war era including a significant increase in enrollment and the opening of the law school. While Wisconsin struggled to secure a leader and Bloomington entered the war years with a new, inexperienced man at the helm, the University of Michigan possessed incredible momentum and confidence, all embodied in its president. President Tappan was an iconic figure, known around the country for his impressive innovations in higher education. Students respected and admired him. Unlike most people in Ann Arbor, the president kept his views on slavery rather quiet. Thus, Tappan occasionally drew criticism that he was only a lukewarm Republican. It is impossible to exaggerate the impact that Tappan had on the success of the university during the mid-nineteenth century. He had a clear vision for its future and pushed aggressively for the implementation of his ideas. Within a few years after Tappan’s arrival in Ann Arbor, he molded an institution of higher learning with which other prestigious colleges in the land had to contend.  

The University of Michigan was by far the most distinguished of the ten colleges in the state before the Civil War. It attracted students from nearly every state in the

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country. The territorial government initially founded the university in Detroit in 1817, but following several reorganizations, the institution moved to Ann Arbor in 1837. At first, the town and the school were little more than polite neighbors. In fact, even in the early 1850s, residents considered the university “out in the country.” A closer relationship developed as the town became more aware of the merits of a strong local college and as the university decided not to provide dormitories for the students. The young men had to find room and board with local residents. This arrangement factored significantly into the development of a strong bond between the students and the townspeople. By the late antebellum period, Ann Arbor supported public education in ways lacking in both Bloomington and Madison. The town built another primary school in 1860 to accommodate the increasing numbers of students. The public school system erected additional schools in 1862, 1866, and 1869. Ann Arbor illustrated progress and residents fostered their connection with the university as a symbol of their community’s evolution.  

By the opening of the 1860s, the University of Michigan campus consisted of nine buildings and twenty-seven professors. Young scholars could choose between bachelor’s programs in Classical, Scientific, or Civil Engineering studies. The Medical and Law

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schools offered advanced degrees. “The University,” boasted the annual Catalogue, “thus meets the wants of the people, in all the higher degrees of education.” University of Michigan students enjoyed the most extracurricular activities among the three schools. Each academic department hosted a literary society, plus there were seven Greek fraternities (compared to three at Indiana and one at Wisconsin), a social society for seniors, a social fraternity for the medical students, the Student Lecture Association, the Students’ Christian Association, the Shakespearean club, two chess clubs, two music clubs, and one cricket club. This impressive array of social and personal developmental opportunities further highlighted the progress of the young Michigan university.44

Students thus encountered these environments when they arrived at the three campuses in the fall of 1860. The students were aware of the precarious and changing times as they entered college. The towns, counties, states, and campuses subsequently affected the way they went about their daily responsibilities. Young men took up their books and began or continued their studies, but soon national events also captured their attention. Students at Wisconsin and Michigan energetically participated in campaign activities leading up to the presidential election of 1860. Wisconsin students formed a Republican Club on campus of their own volition, while the University Republicans at

Michigan were closely tied to the club in town. Both groups also participated in public political rituals prior to the election, but at Michigan especially, students stood as credible leaders within the community during this period and residents eagerly heard their viewpoints. As such, it seemed that in Ann Arbor, unlike in Madison, residents were willing to recognize the agency of the students in assuming involvement in the local political scene, thus acknowledging their standing as insiders in the movements of the town.

University of Wisconsin students who identified themselves as Republicans came together in June 1860 to “use [their] influence to secure the election of Lincoln and Hamlin.” Thirty-eight students signed the club’s constitution and vowed to meet weekly until the election. The young men associated with this new Republican Club also viewed their organization as serving more than just a political audience because they also formed a Republican Glee Club that summer. As the election drew closer, the young Republicans invited the rival Democratic Club for a joint debate. The invitation was accepted by Gideon Winan Allen, Secretary of the Democratic Club, and the rivals faced off on October 21, 1860. Along with “all questions debated since the discovery of the Western hemisphere,” the two groups discussed the proposed Homestead Bill previously submitted by Republicans in Congress during President James Buchanan’s administration. Edward G. Miller, one of the campus Republicans, argued that the Homestead Bill was evidence of how “The Republican party in Congress has originated and labored for more measures truly valuable than the Democratic party has done for the last eight years.” Through activities like this, the young students demonstrated their
understanding of the discourse of partisanship. On November 1, the Republican Club went en masse to the polls and voted. Satisfied with the results, the University of Wisconsin Republican Club adjourned until June 1864, when they would reconvene to campaign during the next presidential election. Apparently they felt that organized campaigning among the students was only necessary during presidential election years, rather than in a continual fashion for local or state elections. Their lack of direct connection with Republican groups in Madison also contributed to the temporary nature of their efforts. The temporary nature of this organization was illustrative of their separation from the political activities of Madison.45

Many University of Michigan students attended the Republican national convention of 1860 in Chicago. Professor Andrew D. White, the young history scholar and later president of Cornell University, led much of this political activism; he fostered the passions of his adoring students. White used his political connections in his home state of New York to engage his students in the political process. Before leaving for Chicago with his students, White convinced those on the train carrying the New York delegation to the Republican convention to stop in Ann Arbor for ten minutes in order for its members to address his students. Following White’s lead, most of the students zealously supported William H. Seward and they returned to Ann Arbor temporarily disappointed when Abraham Lincoln instead captured the nomination. Quickly though, the devout Republicans pledged their support to Lincoln. Along with two residents,

45 June 7, 1860, June 14, 1860, October 11, 1860, October 29, 1860, November 1, 1860, November 8, 1860, Wisconsin Republicans Club, UW Archives. Edward G. Miller, Speech at Joint Debate of Republican and Democratic Clubs, October 21, 1860, Edward Gee Miller Civil War papers, 1861-1906, Folder: Correspondence, biographical sketch, WHS.
university student Byron M. Cutcheon addressed a large crowd that had gathered in Ann Arbor to hear reports from the convention. Ann Arbor welcomed the input and perspective of university students in their election season activities and the university students, zealous themselves about politics, were happy to oblige.46

The *Ann Arbor Journal* reported on the initial meeting of an active student Republican Club in the university chapel in the summer of 1860. Sensing the excitement of the students regarding the upcoming election, the local editor of the Democratic newspaper, the *Michigan Argus*, warned students to remember that they could not legally vote in Ann Arbor if they were not technically residents of the town, despite their involvement in the Ann Arbor political scene. University enrollment did not earn a young man residency in Ann Arbor and the newspaper reminded them to return home to vote. Democrats who sensed victory for the Republicans in 1860 sought to temper the infectious excitement of the young college students in their midst, many of whom were participating in their first presidential election.47

Indiana students experienced by far the most diversity of political opinion on their campus as compared to the other two universities. Most Michigan students lined up on the Republican side of the fence, while the majority enrolled at Wisconsin initially showed sympathy with Democratic ideals in early 1860 but ended up firmly in the Republican camp by the fall election. Indiana students were not as lopsided in their

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47 *Ann Arbor Journal*, June 13, 1860. *Michigan Argus*, October 26, 1860. This newspaper was the Democratic party’s voice in Ann Arbor and may have wanted to ensure that the students would return home in order to lessen the Republican vote in that locale.
loyalties. The student body in Bloomington, comprised of young men from a wide array of geographical backgrounds and heritage, exhibited a full spectrum of political opinion. As the election of 1860 approached, students discussing politics at Indiana University agreed that territorial governments could legally exclude slavery and supported Stephen A. Douglas instead of Abraham Lincoln. Their distinct composition even set them at odds with the surrounding town. Surprisingly, considering the pro-southern character routinely attached to southern Indiana by historians, Bloomington polled 60 percent of their votes for Abraham Lincoln in 1860. In 1856, Buchanan won the most votes in Bloomington because John C. Frémont and Millard Fillmore split (32 and 19 percent respectively) the rest of the population. Monroe county as a whole was not quite as torn in 1856, giving Buchanan 57 percent of its votes. Bloomington was also much higher than the county in voting for Lincoln in 1860, 60 percent to the county’s 50 percent. Only one town in the county voted over 50 percent for John C. Breckenridge in 1860, while four towns gave more than 50 percent of their votes to Douglas. The students, therefore, demonstrated more of the political ambivalence apparent in the rest of Monroe county and southern Indiana than what they must have encountered in their host community. 48

The outcome of the 1860 elections in these Midwest towns seemed clear to many residents. Willet S. Main, who moved to Madison from New York in 1847 and held

48 This was true across the state. David Randall Gabrielse contends in his dissertation on the development of Midwestern colleges during the antebellum period that abolitionism did not affect Indiana colleges as it did in Michigan, Ohio, and Illinois. Gabrielse, 112. December 9, 1859, October 12, 1860, C135 Athenian Society Box 2 Minutes, 1856-1865, IU University Archives (hereafter Athenian minutes). Historian Richard F. Nation argues that several scholars have demonstrated that Indiana was not “peculiarly pro-Southern in orientation,” and yet the opposite perception persists among scholars and in the literature. Richard F. Nation, At Home in the Hoosier Hills (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 200. Blanchard, 386-387.
various public offices during his career, recorded in his diary the electric anticipation alive in the town as the November presidential election approached. He described Republicans as “jubilant & full of hope & confidence,” commenting that he had “never [seen] the Republicans so wide awake as at present.” By the end of October, Main had “little doubt of Lincoln's election.” Lucius Fairchild, a Madison Democrat and politician, also recognized the momentum of the Republicans. Running for office himself in 1860, Fairchild bemoaned that it was “a bad year for democrats to run here, the Republicans all come out of their holes on Presidential elections.”

Jairus C. Fairchild, Lucius’ father and the first mayor of Madison, wrote to Elizabeth Gordon of Cleveland, Ohio, on election day. After complaining that Wisconsin “has gone in a perverse way for the opposition,” the elder Fairchild wondered about the immediate impact of the election on national, and thus local, affairs. “We are all looking anxiously to see what the ‘South’ will do for ‘Old Abe,’” he declared, “I hope they wont [sic] refuse to send us up Molasses to sweeten our Rum.” Fairchild’s concerns appeared humorously economic but clearly recognized the possible dangers associated with Lincoln’s triumph. Ann Arbor Democrats acquiesced to the election results, offering their humble conclusion that they “were pretty effectually cleaned out… routed, ‘horse foot, and dragoon.’” The hopeful editor of the Michigan Argus reassured his readers that the victory would be temporary, “until…the patriotic masses of the country return to their

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49 Willet S. Main, October 27, 1860, October 30, 1860, Box 1, 1860 Diary, Willet S. Main Diaries, 1850-1902, WHS (hereafter Main diary, year). Lucius Fairchild to Elizabeth Gordon, September 16, 1860, Box 10 Folder Correspondence 1860 June-December, Lucius Fairchild papers, 1819-1943, WHS (hereafter Fairchild papers).
first love and reinstate the Democracy in power.” Democrats attempted to encourage their
defeated party while keeping a wary eye on the election’s consequences.50

Also during the election season, the students were aware of a new organization
that formed in the Ann Arbor community. Several dozen men came together in October
1860 to form the New York Society, a social club for native New Yorkers. This group
included a few professors from the University of Michigan and Henry P. Tappan served
as the first president of the organization in 1860. The society held its inaugural charity
festival in early December of that same year. The opening five toasts offered by its
members hailed the following: the State of New York, the State of Michigan, Our whole
Union, Santa Claus, and the University of Michigan. The first two highlighted the local
perspective of Americans at the time. Celebrants saluted New York as “The land of our
Nativity, richly endowed by nature, advanced in knowledge and industry, the home of
great men and true patriots - an Empire within herself. Her sons have brought with them
into the Great West, Industry, Art and Education.” Michigan received acclaim for
“fertility and variety of soil, extent of commerce and mineral wealth, intelligence and
enterprise of her citizens, and in her educational institutions, she ranks with her older
Sisters.” The Union came third, followed interestingly by Santa Claus, and then the
university.51

50 Jarius C. Fairchild to Elizabeth Gordon, November 9, 1860, Box 10 Folder Correspondence
51 October 25, 1860, December 6, 1860, New York Society Records (1860-63), Bentley Historical
Library. The toast to Santa Claus was as follows: “The reality of childhood, the memory of mature years.”
For explanation regarding localism in the United States prior to the Civil War, see Nation, 188; Gallman,
16, 31, 188; Leslie, 257-258; Hoeveler, Jr., 391-402, 292, 395; Potts, 363-380, 368-369.
The close relationship between the New York settlers in Michigan and the state’s institution for higher education as well as the ambitious place its leaders envisioned for it in the national hierarchy were clear during the 1860 festival. “The crowning glory of our State system of Education,” New York Society members raised their glasses to honor the University of Michigan:

   Its benefits and its blessings are not parsimoniously confined to the youth of the State in which it is located, but are dispensed with a liberal hand to the whole brotherhood of man who choose to come and partake of them. May she continue to prosper until from the lips of her grateful alumni her praises shall be uttered in every land under the whole Heaven.

This social club further reinforced the connections apparent to the University of Michigan students between their faculty leaders, the North, and New York specifically, and the prestige of the university at such a crucial time in national events.52

   When the consequences of the election quickly moved beyond simply welcoming a new president into office, initial reactions to threats of secession affected those in these three locations in various ways. Some like Jarius Fairchild were concerned with how trouble with the South might affect their personal lifestyle or the economy of the region. Willet Main reacted to the political consequence of South Carolina’s threatened secession. Linking the southern state’s condemnation of Lincoln’s election directly to the slavery issue, Main declared “I thank God that this land is no longer to be the land of Slavery extension…I hope [South Carolina] will go out of the union, never to return.” In his history of the University of Wisconsin, Reuben Thwaites contends that secession and

52 December 6, 1860, New York Society Records (1860-63), Bentley Historical Library.
the events that followed early in 1861 unsettled the campus. “Many of the students in the University were uneasily watching the outcome, anxious to enlist in case the storm broke,” he states, “All this tended, more or less, to disorganize work upon ‘the hill.’”

Ann Arbor residents were not uniformly taking South Carolina’s intentions seriously either. Even though “the great secession bluster is the all absorbing topic of the day,” the Republican newspaper, The Michigan State News, emphatically dismissed all such notions, claiming, “It is a plan of Northern and Southern politicians to distract and disrupt the Republican party.” When that failed, the editor argued, the South “will tamely submit to the powers that be. There will be no secession.” Two days later, South Carolina adopted its Ordinance of Secession, followed quickly by similar actions in six other Deep South states. Michigan law student Benjamin Dudley Pritchard, originally from Nelson, Ohio, wrote to a friend just before Christmas with the utmost confidence. “Secession,” he asserted, “does not frighten us or effect us farther than to depreciate western currency… I am in favor of holding the south to the express provisions of the Constitution and if we must fight it is as good a time in 1861 as ever.” His attitude towards the nation’s plight seemed almost dismissive. 53

53 November 12, 1860, Main diary, 1860. Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., The University of Wisconsin: Its History and its Alumni with Historical and Descriptive Sketches of Madison (Madison: J.N. Purcell, 1900), 76. The Michigan State News, December 18, 1860. Benjamin Dudley Pritchard to friend, December 24, 1860, Benjamin Dudley Pritchard letters 1860-1861, Bentley Historical Library. Pritchard attended the University of Michigan in 1860, but did not graduate. Several sources list him as a graduate of the Law Department in 1860, but according to official University of Michigan records, he is a non-graduate. See General Catalogue of Officers and Students, 1837-1911, 840. After leaving the university, he passed the bar exam and began a law practice in Allegan, Michigan. Pritchard left his promising career as a lawyer and enlisted in the cavalry in 1862. He rose in rank over the next three years, and is most famous for leading the cavalry regiment that captured Jefferson Davis in May 1865. Following the war, he returned to his law practice and held various local and state political offices during his career. James J. Green, The Life and Times of General B.D. Pritchard (Allegan, MI: Allegan County Historical Society Publication, 1979).
As the secession winter intensified, local events riled up students and residents in Ann Arbor. In January, the abolitionist Parker Pillsbury of Boston arrived in Ann Arbor to offer his insight into the current situation facing the country. Pillsbury’s attempt to speak at the Free Church on the theme “No Union with Slaveholders Religiously or Politically” was interrupted by a riotous group of students and residents who joined together to prevent the Bostonian from delivering comments they considered treasonable. Other students, ashamed by the actions of their colleagues, cleaned up the destroyed furniture and other remnants of the hostile occurrence so that Pillsbury could finish his speech the next day. One student described the church as “completely sacked” and blamed “a few of the students and a great many town roughs.”

Tappan called the students together and had them draft resolutions apologizing for the disruption. They tried to reassure the citizens, “that such things are at the utmost variance with the spirit of our institution, whose chief officer is strongly inclined to toleration and teaching that it is best to permit heretics to run their course, that we may come to the truth.” The editor of the Michigan Argus printed the resolutions, but expressed his dismay at them, which placed some of the blame for the riot on the city for not “putting enough police at the meeting and for not taking proper precautions to avoid a suggested mob…” The Michigan Argus editor found the resolutions disappointing and inappropriate. He was perturbed that the students did not accept more responsibility for what had transpired. Apparently, he felt that the university students needed to show more respect to Ann Arbor residents. But while condemning the actions of the mob, the

54 Peckham, 46. Frederick Augustus Buhl to brother, February 1, 1861, Buhl letters.
University of Michigan students still maintained that Americans had a right to hold and communicate diverse viewpoints in ideological debates following the altercation. They did not sway in their determination to bring noted speakers to campus. In February 1861, the University of Wisconsin Regent Carl Schurz spoke at the request of the University of Michigan Students’ Lecture Association as did reformer and author Grace Greenwood.55

In Wisconsin, morale was low for those who wanted to avoid war with the South for fear of its impact on their political fortunes or their personal economic conditions. Others, who saw a place of merit for themselves in a potential conflict, joined the anxious crowd who asserted the North’s superiority in civilization, economy, and power. Lucius Fairchild wrote to his brother regarding the legislature’s response to the secession crisis. “Every body [sic] feels Patriotic like hell,” Fairchild testified. He characterized the Wisconsin government’s initial response as “very strong antislavery – for fight - & all that”; the government was making plans to prepare the militia. Fairchild predicted that once Wisconsin began to prime the state for war, “we will hear the sound of the drum & be surrounded with all the pomp and circumstance of war in good earnest. What almighty strutting there will be…” Some residents recognized that the conflict would be more than parading in uniform. On February 20, Willet S. Main recorded in his diary, “Jeff Davis has delivered his inaugural address [it is] full [of] war & slaughter - Lincoln has a tough job.” The students absorbed the residents concern and cynicism. Isaac Stewart, a student and Democrat from Waukesha, Wisconsin, wrote to his sister in March:

55 Michigan Argus, January 25, 1861, February 1, 1861, February 22, 1861. A list of speakers from the 1860-1861 season for the Students’ Lecture Association shows that Greenwood charged the most of their 14 speakers for the year for her appearance, but also brought in the most receipts. William Soule, “The S.L.A. in '60-'61,” Michigan Alumnus Vol. VIII, No. 6 (Mar. 1902), 272.
I have got all over caring for the state of our country, but have a few vials of wrath safely stopped, & stowed away for the proper time. I apprehend no war; Lincoln will presently acknowledge their [the Confederacy] independence. If they are in earnest, that is the best policy. If they are not in earnest; peace is the only policy.

Students like Stewart at the university, no matter which political party they supported, could no doubt sense the change in the air as the state capital that surrounded their place of learning took on a distinctly excited and martial tone.56

As students at the University of Michigan realized that secession might lead to war, and watched as their peers and elders began to prepare for armed conflict, they reflected upon what war might mean to their future. At this crucial juncture, former governor and Democratic Senator Alpheus Felch spoke before the students at Michigan in March 1861 about the patriotism of public servants. Attempting to address the questions raging about the possible need for soldiers in the near future, Felch contended, “I give no assent to the assertion that patriotism is buried with our fathers, and will never again arise. It is my honest conviction that no nation ever had among its citizens purer or better patriots than this day walk abroad through the wide limits of our nation.” He subtly reminded Michigan students that “He who serves his country in public station with the unselfish feelings of a pure patriot, and stamps upon its character the impress of true national dignity and greatness, merits peans of commendation.” This message conflicted with those received daily in favor of joining the impending war effort. Felch made it clear

56 Lucius Fairchild to Cassius Fairchild, January 9, 1861, January 21, 1861, January 27, 1861, Box 10, Correspondence 1861 Jan-Feb, Fairchild papers. Actual quote reads: “…address it full war & slaughter…” February 20, 1861, Main diary, 1861. Isaac Stewart to Sister, March 24, 1861, Isaac and Mary Stewart Papers, Box 1 Folder 2, 1837-1869, WHS.
to these students that if they chose to make public office their career path, they might still
maintain their status in the community as patriots and worthy leaders.  

Bloomington residents mobilized to discuss possible responses to the secession
ordinances adopted by the states of the Lower South. On February 2, 1861, numerous
citizens spoke at a courthouse gathering and outlined the choices facing the Buchanan
administration and Congress. After much discussion the group approved resolutions
demanding that “all conciliatory measures should be adopted to prevent a collision
between the South and the North...we advise coercive measures to be pursued to prevent
the desecration and dissolution of the Union.” The group heatedly debated but ultimately
rejected stronger proposals that implied an approval of war. Following these attempts to
advise the national government on a course of action and soothe the nerves of locals, the
community took to its knees, turning the problems of the nation over to God’s hands. On
February 21, students, faculty, and residents gathered at a Bloomington church and held a
prayer meeting on “the state of the States.” They waited together for the next shoe to
drop.  

Some college students in Indiana obviously felt a close association with their
compatriots in the South, developed by the close proximity of Bloomington students to
the bordering slave state. Greek fraternities contributed to these connections and came to
hold a significant place in these young men’s college experience by the 1860s. In a letter
to the Phi Delta Theta chapter at Centre College, Kentucky, James T. Mellette, a Luray,

57 Honorable Alpheus Felch, “Address to Graduating Class, 1861,” March 27, 1861, Law School
Publications, Box 1, Bentley Historical Library.
58 Blanchard, 414-415. February 24, 1861, Theophilus A. Wylie diary 1832-1892, Theophilus A.
Wylie papers, 1814-1992, IU University Archives (hereafter Wylie diary).
Indiana, resident and student in the Classical department of Indiana University, worried that the threat to the nation might sever the bond of fraternity members:

The condition of our country is a most lamentable one. Truly it is a time for patriotic tears to be shed. I yet hope we shall be united as one Nation, that the fraternal ties may be strengthened, and that our Brotherhood may last and swell its members, North and South, the embodiment of virtue, wisdom and patriotism of our land.

Mellette’s desire for an improved state of affairs in the country derived from his aspirations for the fraternity. He attempted to find common ground with his fraternity brothers in Kentucky from a distinctly northern perspective. Mellette wished for the perpetuation of the Union, and found the current crisis “lamentable.” It was very possible though that the recipients of his letter were not at all sad about the disintegration of the Union, and in fact wished for their state to join the Confederacy. Nevertheless, Indiana students attempted to assess the impact of the nation’s predicament on their relationship with their counterparts in the South. At Indiana University, students who held a range of political opinions and lived in an environment wrought with sectional tension felt more angst about the possible breakup of the Union than did their counterparts in Ann Arbor or Madison.\(^{59}\)

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\(^{59}\) J.T. Mellette, Indiana University, to Kentucky Alpha, February 9, 1861, in Palmer, 237. See also http://www.inalpha.org/documents/IndianaAlpha.pdf. Uncertainty regarding the impact of secession on the notions of brotherhood and the rapport between chapters on opposite sides of the Ohio River continued as Indiana’s Lambda chapter of PDT received no word from their brothers in Kentucky after the war broke out. In 1863, the Indiana chapter again tried to renew contact. “It has been a long time since we heard of your welfare or even your existence,” the Indiana brother writes. “What has become of the chapter at Louisville, Ky.?”\(^{59}\) The Kentucky chapter had all but ceased to exist due to low membership, but what was left of the two groups apparently restored communication because active discussion of a national meeting took place in 1864. S.B. Hatfield to Kentucky Alpha, December 14, 1863, Palmer, 237, 224, 270.
Additionally, student debates in college literary societies revealed how students at Indiana University, the University of Michigan, and the University of Wisconsin reacted to the changes in their environments during 1860 and early 1861. Literary societies were the first structured extracurricular activity in American colleges, dating back to 1753 at Yale, and followed quickly by similar groups at Princeton and Harvard. These early debate societies found inspiration in aspects of Enlightenment thought and in the early stirrings of colonial revolution. They became a way for students to enhance their overall educational experience and to express their independence from the sometimes-oppressive demands of antebellum college faculties who often believed it to be their duty to change boys into elite gentlemen. Thomas S. Harding, who wrote the definitive book on nineteenth century college literary societies, claims that “by the eve of the Civil War, literary societies had been established as the chief student extracurricular activity from coast to coast.”

In his extensive survey of literary societies at northern, southern, and western institutions, Harding found that college-age students focused on questions regarding social, educational, religious, and historical issues. Debate societies in the antebellum era functioned as effective forums for students to express their growing intellectual understanding of the pressing issues around them. Students embraced theoretical debate outside of the classroom as another aspect of collegiate life. In addition to frequent orations and debates, collegiate literary societies invited well-known and sometimes

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controversial speakers to campus such as Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry Ward Beecher, often to the dismay of the faculty who instead wished their students would focus on classical recitations and Christian dogma. Occasionally, community residents served as their audience in annual public exhibitions or open debates. Literary societies offered students a channel for discussing current events as well as a forum for practicing and perfecting their writing, speaking, and debating skills surrounded by their peers.  

In the West, college students established literary societies almost immediately after doors opened for classes. Students at Indiana University established the Henodelphisterian Society in the same year as the school’s founding. Within ten years, however, this one group split into two new associations, the Athenians and Philomatheans. Two literary societies also graced the halls at the University of Michigan. The Alpha Nu and Phi Phi Alpha organized soon after classes began in earnest at the institution, but in 1857 a portion of Phi Phi Alpha’s membership withdrew and created a new organization, the Literary Adelphi. Phi Phi Alpha attempted to continue, but disbanded in 1861. Generally, students studying in the classical program joined Alpha Nu, while the Literary Adelphi gained most of its members from those in the scientific program. The Law Department boasted two literary societies, the Webster and the Justinian, while the Medical Department organized its own group called the Serapion. At the University of Wisconsin, Professor Sterling began the first literary society on campus in 1850; its student members decided on the name Athenaeum Literary Society for their new organization. While Sterling saw the importance of this extracurricular activity

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61 Harding, 141-143.
before the students did, he quickly stepped aside once the group gained momentum. A second literary society, the Hesperian, organized a few years later by disgruntled Athenaeans. 62

By 1860, literary societies were well-established at these schools and had become a regular part of the academic landscape. These groups had their own rooms within the main campus buildings, often called, for example, the Athenian Hall, and usually an impressive private library for members. Like their fellow undergraduates across the country at the turn of the decade, students at Indiana, Michigan and Wisconsin deliberated on pressing national issues with regular frequency. Their records indicated that young men attending college during these crucial months understood the pivotal questions facing political leaders, but also were not entirely distracted from the traditional topics of the era. Students considered questions ranging from female suffrage to the propriety of Mary Queen of Scots’ execution to “Resolved: That what we have is worth more than what we hope for.” These questions, although all sampled from early 1860 Hesperian Society records at the University of Wisconsin, are representative of the type of questions asked across decades of literary society records and across the spectrum of college campuses. As war appeared on the horizon, members increasingly addressed

62 During the Civil War, literary societies in the West did not suffer for membership as much as did those in the North and South, whose groups lost more members to enlistment in the military. The number of literary societies overall in the western schools actually grew during the conflict. Harding, 235, 121, 230. Wilfred B. Shaw, A Short History of the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor: George Wahr, 1937), 124. Palladium, 1860. Utley and Cutcheon, 24.
topics such as slavery, American foreign policy, contemporary economic issues, and the propriety of secession.\textsuperscript{63}

An analysis of literary society debates at the University of Michigan in 1860 and early 1861 confirmed the Republican leanings of the student body. The Alpha Nu Literary Society deemed Ohio Republican Senator John Sherman’s recommendation to distribute Hinton Rowan Helper’s \textit{The Impending Crisis} (1857), a scathing analysis written by the southern-born Helper condemning the institution of slavery, “justifiable.” The Literary Adelphi Society voted in kind two months later, calling Helper’s doctrines “right and expedient.” Adhering to other aspects of the Republican platform, Alpha Nu members supported the protective tariff and found popular sovereignty “unsound in theory and unsafe in practice.” The students also later supported Congress’ right to legislate with regard to slavery in the territories, but criticized their imprisonment of John Brown’s accomplice Thaddeus Hyatt. Twice, this society debated the popular literary society question of the period: “Resolved, that the signs of the times indicate a dissolution of the Union,” and both times, in the spring and fall of 1860, the resolution failed. Michigan students in Alpha Nu apparently had faith in the permanency of the Union. The second debate on that topic even occurred following Lincoln’s election, with the threat of secession very much in the news. Still, the students found little substance in secessionist threats. Members of the Literary Adelphi also dismissed this fear in their May 1860 debate on the fate of the nation.\textsuperscript{64}

\textsuperscript{64} January 6, 1860, January 13, 1860, March 16, 1860, October 19, 1860, November 30, 1860, May 4, 1860, November 16, 1860, Alpha Nu Literary Society (University of Michigan) records, 1843-
The Literary Adelphi Society at University of Michigan displayed somewhat more diverse opinions on political topics than those of Alpha Nu. The varying degree of political opinion was clearly less than at Indiana University, but evidence existed in meeting minutes to illustrate that University of Michigan students did not blindly accept the straight Republican platform in its entirety. In March 1860, these young men found John Brown’s execution appropriate and as late as October 1860, supported the right of nullification by the states. The group agreed in early April 1861 that “the union as it is and the constitution as our fathers bequeathed it is as should be preserved.” A few weeks later, after Lincoln’s call for troops, it appeared that members were not yet entirely convinced as to the necessity for war to preserve the Union. The suggestion that “the separation of the gulf states would be detrimental to civilization” did not find support in Literary Adelphi Hall. These young men did not see secession as a hindrance to the future prosperity of the nation.  

Alpha Nu remained firmly in the Republican sphere on all questions of national importance. The group quickly turned in the late spring to discussing the imperatives of the young war. These students, who always displayed such consistency in their pre-war political opinions, did not waver at this point either; the North’s war effort must include and require a “forcible destruction of the institution of slavery.” Membership diversity offered one possible explanation for the differences in political perspectives between the Alpha Nu and Literary Adelphi Literary Societies. In 1861, Alpha Nu claimed nearly

1931, Box 1, Minute book 1859 – 1868, Bentley Historical Library (hereafter Alpha Nu Minutes). March 2, 1860, May 18, 1860, Literary Adelphi (University of Michigan) records, 1857-1939, Box 1, Minutes, 1857-1860, Bentley Historical Library (hereafter Literary Adelphi Minutes, 1857-1860).

65 March 9, 1860, October 19, 1860, April 3, 1861, April 21, 1861, Literary Adelphi Minutes, 1857-1860.
three-fourths of its members from within Michigan’s borders, including far more Ann Arbor resident-students than Literary Adelphi. By contrast, students from other states comprised nearly half of the roster of the Literary Adelphi. It may be the case that young men taking their course in the classical department more regularly joined Alpha Nu and scientific students leaned toward Literary Adelphi, but this split also affected the geographic assortment of members and thus possibly their political tone.  

At the University of Wisconsin, members of the Hesperian and Athenaen Literary Societies occasionally debated matters of national importance in 1860, including a decision in the Athenaen hall on April 27, 1860, that states did not have the right to secede. These students tended to side with popular sovereignty and states’ rights proponents in 1860 and held a pessimistic view of the oncoming threats to the nation. Only the Wisconsin students voted in the affirmative prior to the war regarding whether “the signs indicate the downfall of the American Republic.” This vote came before South Carolina officially approved its Ordinance of Secession. When most of the country doubted that secession would occur and skeptically dismissed the southern states’ rhetoric, students at the University of Wisconsin felt that the country’s future was not very bright. In the year before the war, they found the Wilmot Proviso unconstitutional but not the Dred Scott decision, thus signaling a rather Democratic view on recent affairs. On March 22, 1861, three weeks before the Confederate States opened fire on Fort Sumter, Wisconsin students in the Hesperian Literary Society agreed that the states’ rights and strict construction philosophies of the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions were

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66 May 3, 1861, Alpha Nu Minutes. See Palladium, 1860.
“in accordance with the principles of our government.” Although the Hesperians had voted one year prior that the states did not have the right to withdraw from the Union, members did not believe immediately after the fall of Fort Sumter that the federal government should coerce the seceded states to rejoin the nation. The Atheneans disagreed on the latter point two weeks later and instead supported the need for war. By April 26, Wisconsin students became caught up in the euphoria of war and confident of its outcome.67

The election season of 1860 also saw temperatures rise in the halls of Indiana University literary societies. Following their decision that Stephen A. Douglas deserved the presidency instead of Abraham Lincoln, the Athenians engaged in a fierce debate regarding prominent Americans worthy of honorary membership. It began when one student suggested that honorary membership be conferred on Lincoln. Another member nominated Republican Joshua Giddings and southern author and critic of slavery, Hinton Rowan Helper, by amendment. Next, someone amended the motion to include Constitutional Union presidential candidate John Bell and Chief Justice Roger B. Taney, author of the infamous Dred Scott decision. This was quickly followed by a nomination for John C. Breckenridge, presidential candidate from the southern wing of the Democratic party. Indiana students with southern leanings or heritage thus demanded that the literary society recognize supporters of southern ideals. The debate escalated, with members motioning for various parts of the amendments to be tabled. The president of

the literary society eventually called for a vote on the motion, which did not include Breckenridge and Taney. It passed, but then a motion to elect Breckenridge carried in the next vote.68

The situation intensified as someone moved to nominate the Democratic presidential candidate Stephen A. Douglas and another suggested an amendment to include the prominent secessionist William L. Yancey of Alabama. These two names represented a direct ideological conflict between proponents of popular sovereignty and pro-slavery secessionists. Finally, the debate ended when a motion passed to table the entire discussion for six weeks. The national conflict commanded center stage throughout late 1860, as the Athenians debated questions such as “Is slavery necessarily sinful?” and “Has any state a right to secede?” That the students who participated in these literary debates answered the former question in the negative and the latter in the affirmative revealed the clear Democratic party background of students on Indiana’s campus.69

Early in 1861, as Lincoln took office and additional states left the Union, the Athenians found political consensus more difficult to attain. A January debate that questioned whether southern states had adequate cause for seceding from the Union resulted in a split decision, as the “Jury” of three students voted in the affirmative but the rest of the group (called the “House”) voted in the negative. John C. Breckenridge wrote to the Athenian Society in February 1861, accepting his honorary membership and passing along his “best wishes for the success and prosperity” of the Indiana University organization. As much had occurred on the national landscape since the students had

68 October 12, 1860, October 19, 1860, Athenian Minutes.
69 October 19, 1860, October 26, 1860, November 20, 1860, Athenian Minutes.
extended the invitation to Breckenridge in the fall of 1860, one young member, Joseph M. Dufour from Vevay, Indiana, moved that the group not receive the letter formally into the society’s minutes. He wanted to exclude Breckenridge’s acceptance but the rest of the Athenians voted against him and indeed the southern politician’s honorary membership in the Athenian Society became a fact. One week later, the president of the Athenian Society, senior Richard Miller of Old Summit, Indiana, tried to get the letter expunged from the records, creating a heated discussion. The majority of the group overruled him and the honorary membership remained.70

    In April, the group accepted the argument that “the principles of the Republican party in respect to slavery [are] incompatible with the good of the country.” Students found the repeal of the Missouri Compromise unjustifiable and agreed that Congress should adopt the Crittenden Compromise. This stance on the Crittenden Compromise correctly echoed the tremendous support the measure enjoyed within the state. Tellingly, the debate regarding “Should the Republican party be tolerated?” failed to yield a definitive vote as the meeting devolved into chaos and ended without resolution. This result hardly agrees with Harding’s evaluation that distance from battle allowed western students to “discuss the war dispassionately.” Instead, these Indiana University students found themselves mired in partisan conflict within their own extracurricular organizations.71

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70 January 16, 1861, February 1, 1861, February 8, 1861, Athenian Minutes.
71 April 26, 1861, January 25, 1861, February 1, 1861, February 8, 1861, Athenian Minutes. Thornbrough, 111. Harding, 234.
In March 1861, more controversy occurred at an Athenian Society meeting at Indiana University when a student nominated the Confederate leaders Jefferson Davis and Alexander H. Stephens as honorary members. Both motions passed but on April 19, 1861, a member moved to strike Davis’ name from the record. Even following the outbreak of the war, this call to exclude Davis’s membership from society minutes failed by the vote of 16-15. Two students then changed their votes from Nay to Yea. John Hood, the president of the society, argued that the changing of the vote could not affect the result, but the society overruled his decision and crossed out Davis’s election to honorary membership from the March meeting minutes. The heavily contested character of this decision highlighted the fractured nature of the student body regarding politics in April 1861.\footnote{March 13, 1861, April 19, 1861, Athenian Minutes.}

On that same day, members further expressed frustration by putting the following question up for debate: “Does the discussion of political questions result in more good to the members of this society than those of a historical or moral character?” Perhaps some of the students found the recent topics too controversial, too emotional, or too repetitive. Or perhaps the president or other leading members wanted to make sure that such contentious subjects that strained the society did not intensify divisions that might cause the group to split. Unfortunately, debate on this question did not yield a consensus either as the Jury voted in the negative and the House in the affirmative. Apparently, many of
the members felt that political questions distracted the society from its intended purposes.73

Harding offers the following conclusion regarding the balance of political questions with other types of topics during literary society meetings. “If a generalization could be made,” he argues, “it would be that most of the Western college societies turned to philosophical or standby questions for escape from the conflict.” It does seem as though the Athenian Society at Indiana University attempted in the spring of 1861 to consider questions other than those regarding the country’s political dilemma. In May, one debate focused on Napoleon; a second on the current state of fictitious writing; and a third asked whether “England’s shame exceeds her glory.” The University of Wisconsin demonstrated a similar trend. Following their debate regarding the proper response after the fall of Fort Sumter, the Hesperian Literary Society discussed various topics over the next few months that ranged from the legality of Mormonism, the constitutionality of the United States Bank, and whether women and men should receive the same level of education. They also considered whether there should be a property qualification for voting and if the positives of secret societies outweighed their negatives.74

At the University of Michigan, the literary societies did not show this kind of distraction. These groups got off to the slowest start of the three schools in terms of introducing topics of current concern to their debate agenda. This may have been because the student body seemed to have been rather uniform in their political affiliation and thus

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73 April 19, 1861, Athenian Minutes.
74 Harding, 233. Various dates, May 1861, Athenian Society Minutes. See, for example, May 3, 1861, May 10, 1861, May 31, 1861, June 14, 1861, August 30, 1861, Hesperian Record Book.
did not find as much fascination in political debates. There were Democrats among the students, but their numbers were less in 1860 than in the later war years. The *Ann Arbor Journal* reported with delight in October 1860 “that the students in all the departments of the university are decidedly Republican.” The editor estimated that only three of fifty seniors identified themselves as Democrats and argued that similar numbers held in the rest of the classes. “We also learn that it is quite impossible to get up a good political discussion” in the literary societies, boasted the newspaper to the town’s residents, “because there is not a sufficient number of students who have either the desire or the hardihood to attempt to sustain the Democratic side.” Even taking into account possible exaggeration, this claim supports the former conclusion regarding the trends in political debates during the immediate prewar period.\(^75\)

April debates cover topics relevant to the country’s dilemma and, in May, a debate on the relationship between slavery and the war replaced the scheduled debate question regarding Oliver Cromwell. Despite the concentration of the University of Michigan students on current events, it was unlikely that this indicated more patriotism among students than at Indiana University or the University of Wisconsin. This shift in topic choice probably had less to do with an escape from the war and instead more to do with the fact that both sides were in the midst of a drawn-out mobilization process following Fort Sumter. Because the student body at Indiana and Wisconsin was more politically diverse, they likely shied away from repeated emotional battles over controversial topics in their debate halls during this tenuous period, whereas students at

\(^{75}\) *Ann Arbor Journal*, October 24, 1860.
Michigan felt more comfortable tackling these questions due to the largely homogenous nature of political opinion. At that point, none of these three student populations truly understood the consequences of the events about to unfold, thus it was only natural that their attention at times wavered from a state of perpetual crisis to thoughts of a more pleasant time.76

The early days of the war left a lasting impression on these young students at Michigan, Wisconsin, and Indiana. Their memories of the first call to arms captured both their visceral responses to the threats to the country and their understanding of how people in their university communities reacted to the start of the rebellion in Charleston harbor in the early morning of April 12, 1861. In November 1921, John D. Alexander wrote a letter to Frank Levell, then editor of the Indiana Alumnus magazine. Alexander shared with Levell some recollections of his years at the Hoosier institution before his 1861 graduation and subsequent enlistment in the Union army. One morning, after South Carolina passed its Ordinance of Secession, students found a red flag with one white star (generally used to denote southern secession):

flying from the highest point on the University Building. The whole town was thrown into a frenzy of excitement. Students and people of the town soon filled the campus. The flag was torn down and dragged through the street to Doctor Nutt’s residence – then to the Court House Square where speeches were made denouncing the ones who placed the flag there and particularly South Carolina and the flag was burned.

76 May 3, 1861, Alpha Nu Minutes. April 3, 1861, April 21, 1861, Literary Adelphi Minutes, 1857-1860.
Alexander reported that following the attack on Fort Sumter, students and townspeople hastily formed a company to protect southern Indiana from invasion with “all the old Flint Muskets, Squirrel Rifles and Horse Pistols that could be found.” Not all in Bloomington were quite as enthusiastic about donning a military uniform to fight for the Stars and Stripes. At a mass meeting after the war began, one resident vehemently declared that the abolitionists and the North in general were to blame for the hostilities and that he would only consider fighting on the southern side. Despite his outburst, the rest of the community adopted resolutions acknowledging that an appeal to arms may be necessary in order to save the Union. Within days, military enlistment and company organization began.\footnote{Alexander letter. South Carolina adopted the red flag with one white star as its flag of secession, and other Confederate states used similar patterns. Mississippi’s secession flag, for example, displays one white star on a blue background. Blanchard, 416.}

In Ann Arbor, residents and students gathered when the bells tolled and called President Tappan to address the city after the start of the war. He was the man that the city chose to guide the response of the community to the astounding national events. The editor of the \textit{Michigan Argus} paraphrased Tappan’s remarks as such: “He thought the General Government had forborne with disorganizers, secessionists and traitors until forbearance was no longer a virtue…He was in favor of conquering a peace.” Charles M. Perry, a Tappan biographer, states that “It was with the declaration of war that Tappan’s popularity with the students reached its peak.” One student remembered Tappan’s speech as “the magnificent address. In all Michigan’s splendid history this was the great historic
occasion. It was the same for the University. Both were from that hour for the Union and the war.”

In the early twentieth century, a Michigan alumnus and Union veteran published an article in a Detroit newspaper about the university’s reaction to the opening shots of the war. Under the meaningful heading, “All Swarmed to Campus,” the author wrote, “President Tappan was there, the central figure, and all turned to him as the Romans did to Fabius when Rome was threatened, and like Fabius he counseled calmness and deliberation, but with the wrath of Achilles he stormed against those who should destroy this republic, the last hope of the world.” Another student remembered Tappan as “a chief inspiration” to the malleable young men who hung on his every word. Andrew D. White, who had stirred students to political activism in the months leading up to this moment, also spoke. His impact was like “a live coal, a torch lighting into flame the patriotism of that student body.” The town as a whole resolved to support President Lincoln and immediately raise money and troops for the war effort. Tellingly, they did so with university representatives guiding their sentiments on the subject.

Wisconsin also rallied around the flag following the outbreak of hostilities. Residents and students at first quietly and privately received the news of the attack on Fort Sumter. It was raining that Friday afternoon when word arrived in Madison and most people stayed inside and awaited further information. Many turned to their personal diaries to release their tension. Willet S. Main of Madison burst with emotion following

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the opening of war, writing in his journal on April 12, “War! War!...This is but the
beginning of the end - the end no man can tell. God alone can see & know the result - We
are now to know if we have a country. The blood thrills with patriotic fire…” Two days
later, he declared, “The great Era of the age has come.” Along with many Wisconsin
citizens, Main believed that slavery was the ultimate cause of the hostilities and must be
one of the significant casualties. “Freedom is again to be baptised [sic] in Blood –
Slavery must now die,” he asserted on April 13. By the following Tuesday, students and
residents alike crowded inside the Wisconsin legislature to watch their state’s leaders
begin to organize the mobilization process. The next morning, officers opened enlistment
books and young men signed up for the war. On April 17, 1861, the Wisconsin
Governor’s Guard’s minutes candidly revealed the spirit of the day; the page was empty
except for one sentence: “Off for the Wars.”

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Before the end of the month, Horace A. Tenney, a local Republican politician and
University of Wisconsin Board of Regent, began to organize the State Agriculture
Fairgrounds in Madison as a military camp. These facilities were used for housing and
training additional regiments beyond what Wisconsin sent upon Lincoln’s first request.
Camp Randall (named for the state’s governor) significantly shaped the wartime
experience of Madison and thus University of Wisconsin students. No one lived in or
passed through Madison without understanding the immense social and economic impact
Camp Randall had on the people in the state’s capital. Madison responded quickly and

80 Walter S. Glazer, “Wisconsin Goes To War: April, 1861,” The Wisconsin Magazine of History
Vol. 50, No. 2 (Winter 1967), 147. April 12-14, 1861, Main diary, 1861. April 17, 1861, Reid diary.
Governor’s Guard MSS 145, WHS.
positively to the Union cause, taking with it a number of promising young students from the university. By the end of April 1861, war had drastically altered the paradigm of those who just a short time before had anticipated an upcoming summer of farming, studying, or other activities.81

With fewer than two hundred students registered at Indiana and Wisconsin when the war broke out, each student’s decision regarding whether to enlist held dramatic consequences for the university. Numerical strength did not give President Tappan any less concern regarding student enrollment at the University of Michigan. He, along with the popular professor Andrew White, initially faced the same challenges as their students responded passionately to the outbreak of war. Times had changed radically in such a short period. Students whose biggest concern in early 1860 was whether to join a certain fraternity or how to pass an upcoming exam suddenly had to attend class and go through the motions of school responsibilities, all while contemplating riveting national news and the drastic choice placed before them. The environment in these three communities during the immediate pre-war period, including the emotionally laden election season of 1860, the vitriolic rhetoric of the secession winter, and finally the opening of warfare,

81 Daniel S. Durrie, A History of Madison, the capital of Wisconsin: including the Four lake country; to July, 1874, with an appendix of notes on Dane county and its towns (Madison: Atwood & Culver, printers, 1874), 276. Governor Randall appointed Tenney to this position, taking the esteemed public figures off of his farm for approximately 7-10 days worth of work in transforming the fairgrounds into the state’s foremost camp. Enlisted men started to arrive almost immediately, but it took Tenney more than nine months to fully arrange the facilities. It was a massive task. Tenney recognized the significance of his work, writing later in his unpublished autobiography, “I had probably done a more thankless, yet important work than any citizen of Wisconsin perhaps ever did. It was well done, and I felt proud of it. It had been inspired simply by love of country.” Horace A. Tenney Papers, 1797-1929, Volume 2, Experiences in the Civil War, 1861-1864, 6, 12, WHS. See Carolyn Mattern, Soldiers When They Go: The Story of Camp Randall, 1861-1865 (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin for Department of History, University of Wisconsin, 1981).
epitomized what Americans all across the country were feeling. However, the fact that these particular towns also physically, financially, and intellectually supported and profited from a rather large contingent of young men in their midst added a special complexity to these particular home front experiences.

The manner in which these communities reacted as circumstances began to challenge their progress contributed to the way these specific college students would come to understand and relate to their role in the war. The country was in a frenzy. University of Wisconsin student Harvey Reid wrote home on April 20, 1861, that “Madison is in a great state of military excitement…the fever has penetrated the University walls.” Residents and faculty looked at the buzzing young men surrounding them on whom so much depended and collectively held their breath.82

82 Harvey Reid to Father, Mother & all the rest, April 20, 1861, Harvey Reid Papers, 1857-1910, Box 1, Folder 6, Correspondence 1858-1863, WHS (hereafter Reid papers).
CHAPTER TWO:

“THE REAL GAME”83

“I am a Union soldier at last.”84
Arthur Calvin Mellette, Indiana University student, 1864

In June 1861, as thousands of men of military age rushed to enlist in the Civil War, some college students took a few extra moments before signing their names to a Union army enrollment book. They preferred instead to participate in the graduation ceremony at the University of Michigan. Yet the thrill of war was not far from their minds. The seniors presented their traditional class poem, but this year it was entitled “A Soldier Class”: 

It needs no prophet to foresee that tears
Shall drench our hearth-stones in these stormy years,
For when vile traitors with a murderous hand,
Dare to assail our dear-bought native land,
Each patriot heart indignant at the sight,
Swells with impatience for the deadly fight;
And so, mayhap, it shall be yours to yield
Your dying breath upon the battle-field;
Yet by such treasure victory must be bought
And Heaven shall bless the cause for which you fought.

83 The title of this chapter comes from a statement in Utley and Cutcheon’s book about the University of Michigan Class of 1861. “In 1861,” the authors recall, “we had some military companies and drills in the ‘foot movements,’ but it was in earnest preparation for the stern game of actual war. More than half the class afterward played the real game, and played it well.” Utley and Cutcheon, 40.
Despite the exclusive education their diplomas represented, these graduates entered the Union army to accomplish a task beyond what their books had taught them. When these young men left the classrooms of the University of Michigan for the battlefield, they were unlike students in previous graduating classes who departed Ann Arbor to start their own businesses, enter a law practice, or become teachers. As the poem revealed, many of the college graduates who chose war over the professions of their training immediately associated patriotism with the need to fight and were anxious to join the fray.85

This chapter will consider the student-soldiers of the University of Michigan, the University of Wisconsin, and Indiana University. This term, student-soldier, specifically encompasses the wartime experience of the students who voluntarily enlisted in the military before or after their graduation dates. It also includes those who took a break from their educational pursuits to serve in the war but then returned to the classroom to finish their degrees. Whether students at these three Midwestern state universities hastened to enlist before they graduated or waited to don a uniform after they fulfilled their educational goals, the university was not something easily left, nor forgotten. Either in their decision-making about leaving, in their contact with those back in the university community, or in their experience as soldiers, their associations with the university were an important part of their self-definition and their understanding of war and society.86

86 Burke Hinsdale, in his institutional history of the University of Michigan, compliments the young men who left the university to fight in the war by contending, “The abounding patriotism of the state was reflected in its University.” Burke Hinsdale, History of the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1906), 49.
For those who began their schooling during the Civil War, circumstances forced them to ponder the pros and cons of staying at their university versus enlisting to serve their country. For those who left, it was often a decision weighed down by the knowledge of what they might sacrifice, the money they had worked hard to raise for tuition, the future that had been so carefully planned, or, like many others, the loved ones they would leave behind. Some left without ever looking back. They may not have returned because death found them at a tragically young age, making them a statistic of the war. Or, it may have been that the war opened a new door to them, to a new career, a new path, than the one they envisioned for themselves while in college. Many others left the university and headed off to war before completing their collegiate course. Some of these returned and eventually received their diplomas, but a great many more never set foot again on campus. This chapter will examine each of these situations and demonstrate the impact that the relationship between university and student-soldiers had on the wartime experience of the latter group.

The response to the start of the war on the campuses of Indiana University, the University of Michigan, and the University of Wisconsin was swift. Isaac H. Elliott, a senior at the University of Michigan, remembered how “the whole body of students seemed inclined to break away and rush blindly to the defense of the government at the first call for troops.” In Ann Arbor, President Henry Tappan tried desperately to calm the public while also containing his antsy students. One day later, forty-three members of the class of 1861, just months from their graduation, attempted to enroll in the military
companies then forming in answer to President Abraham Lincoln’s request for troops. Michigan turned them away because it had already fulfilled its quota. Discouraged, the young men returned to campus. Tappan discussed the conflict with the students during chapel that day. The faculty hoped to temper quickly that enthusiasm among the young students in their care; it was not an easy task. Their greatest fear was the wholesale depopulation of campus in one fell swoop.  

Tappan called for the students to organize themselves into military companies, hired someone to drill them, set aside university property for practice, and made it clear that he expected them to train daily. Tappan recognized that he could mold their response to the war and hoped that by encouraging and controlling their desire to fight, he could hold them off until after commencement. The students quickly formed the University Battalion and nicknamed their companies with titles reminiscent of their university life such as the University Guards, the Tappan Guards, or the Chancellor Greys. Ann Arbor residents were impressed with the student companies, boasting that the young men held their own in comparison to the companies formed from the town.

President Tappan was successful in restraining the seniors at the University of Michigan from enlisting before graduation. A few students left school before commencement and headed straight to the army in April 1861; one went to fight for the

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88 Kenneth Roger Sager confirms that this was the general trend in the nation. Sager states that most college students waited until after Lincoln’s second call for soldiers in May before enlisting. Therefore, like in Ann Arbor, students who intended to enlist after graduation, concentrated on drilling and learning about army life in their last days on campus. “The first flush of excitement,” Sager contends, “did not subside until after the commencements of 1861.” Sager, 66. Perry, 272. *The Michigan State News*, April 30, 1861. Isaac Elliot, “Stepped from Class Room to Ranks of Union Army,” unknown newspaper and date, Class of 1861 (University of Michigan) records, 1861 and 1910, Bentley Historical Library. Bald, 18.
Confederacy. The rest heeded Tappan’s advice to graduate before enlisting; fully half the class entered the army following their commencement. Fred Arn, who moved with his German parents from Switzerland to Indiana in the late 1840s, remained on campus to receive his degree “with difficulty” because he “seemed to have but one thought and one motive – that of serving his country.” Arn then returned to his home county in Indiana, recruited a company of infantry soldiers, and served in the 31st Indiana Regiment.

Another 1861 graduate under Tappan’s tutelage, William H. Beadle, joined Arn’s company and participated in many pivotal events of the war. Notably, Beadle was the general who was responsible for the military protection of Washington D.C. during Lincoln’s second inauguration in 1865. After receiving his honorable discharge in 1866, Beadle returned to the University of Michigan and earned a law degree the following year. There were many more such as these who marched across the stage in June 1861, received their degrees and then marched off to war.89

Military drill overwhelmed the college campuses in April 1861. Students often pushed coursework aside or blended it with time spent on matters of martial interest. “I have delayed answering your letter for a longer time than usual,” University of Michigan student Frederick Buhl wrote to his brother, “but really, what with drilling, getting my lessons and listening to the news I have not much time left to write letters.” William H. Arn fought well and earned a promotion to Major, before dying on the battlefield at Shiloh in 1862. Arn was the first of the University of Michigan student-soldiers to sacrifice his life for his country. Utley and Cutcheon, 34, 57-59, 65, 168.

89 From the graduating class of 1861, 79 of the 150 students immediately enlisted in the Union military. According to Howard H. Peckham, after graduation, 32 of the 62 Literary graduates, 30 of the 44 Medical department graduates, and 17 of the Law Department graduates enlisted. Peckham, 47. Not all waited for graduation. In their book about the class of 1861, Henry M. Utley and Byron M. Cutcheon mention that William E. Crume, from Mississippi, left immediately for home and fought with the Confederacy. Two other students, Solomon Brockway of Albion, Michigan, and William Coyl from Detroit, enlisted in the army and left before receiving their diplomas. Arn fought well and earned a promotion to Major, before dying on the battlefield at Shiloh in 1862. Arn was the first of the University of Michigan student-soldiers to sacrifice his life for his country. Utley and Cutcheon, 34, 57-59, 65, 168.
Beadle remembered the intensity of his feelings in those early days of war. “Many,” he recalled, “who had planned for professional careers laid such things aside indefinitely and gave their every hour's spare time to military drill, counting all as uncertain or of little worth unless the Union were saved.” The excitement still consumed the students one month later. For two days in late May, Buhl recounted to his brother, “under the circumstances we could not have recitations yesterday afternoon nor this morning.” The presentation of an expensive American flag by the young ladies of Ann Arbor to the University Battalion occupied the first day. The next morning, the student-soldiers escorted a local company to the train depot as they departed for the front. Each of these events included hours of marching, maneuvering, and parading for the benefit of the townspeople.\textsuperscript{90}

The scene in Bloomington was similar to that in Ann Arbor. The location of a university within the town’s borders only enhanced the drama of the earliest calls for the Union army. Residents in Bloomington already understood the tenuous nature of Indiana University’s existence. Young men who had previously devoted their time to their studies headed off to war instead. Several Indiana University students left school in 1861 to enlist in the army and did not return to complete their education. David A. Devin, a junior from Princeton, Indiana, served in the regimental band of the 58\textsuperscript{th} Indiana Volunteers. Although his regiment was discharged at the end of their term in 1862, he did not return

\textsuperscript{90} Frederick Augustus Buhl to brother, April 28, 1861, May 29, 1861, Buhl letters. Frederick A. Buhl served as secretary of his class before leaving school after his sophomore year in 1862 to join the war. He did not graduate. According to his file in the Michigan Adjutant General’s Office, Buhl enlisted at age 18 and served as second lieutenant in the 24\textsuperscript{th} Michigan Infantry before becoming captain of the First Michigan cavalry. He fought in the battles at Gettysburg and Fredericksburg, was wounded, and died in Annapolis, Maryland (in 1863 or 1864). November 15, 1873. Adjutant General’s report, Buhl letters. William H. Beadle, “Ascendat!” Michigan Alumnus Vol. IX, No. 82 (Mar. 1903), 244.
to complete his last year of schooling. James A. Weed, a freshman from Bloomington, left school in 1861 and enlisted with the 10th Indiana Regiment. Weed was at the front that fall but died early in 1862 from typhoid-pneumonia. The war also enticed some of the school’s younger preparatory students. Robert M. McMaster was finishing his preparatory program at Indiana when he entered the army in the late summer of 1861. The military life apparently suited him because he re-enlisted at the end of his term of service, rose to the rank of quartermaster, and fought until the end of the war.⁹¹

Only one Indiana University student enlisted in the first days of the war in 1861 and returned that fall in time to finish his education and graduate with his class. James Vincent Mitchell of Martinsville, Indiana, had completed his preparatory education at Indiana in the late 1850s but then had moved around to several different universities, seemingly unable to feel comfortable anywhere. He thus unenthusiastically returned to Bloomington in 1860. After Lincoln made his first call for troops to enlist in three-month regiments, Mitchell “hired a two horse hack, and in company with three of my schoolmates, [he] started for home, twenty-one miles north of Bloomington.” He participated in some of the war’s early engagements in Virginia, but escaped “without a scar.” After being discharged in August 1861, Mitchell chose to complete his education at Indiana University and began his law practice rather than re-enlist.⁹²

At Indiana University, it was not the students closest to graduation who hurried off to war. The first responses to the passionate rhetoric of war lured mostly

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⁹² In his record of these events, he gives no indication as to the motivations for this decision. James V. Mitchell, *The genealogy of the Mitchell family of Martinsville, Indiana: Including a brief biography of James M. Mitchell* (Martinsville, Republican Steam Print, 1885), 55.
underclassmen away from the school’s halls. Even after commencement that June, only five of the twenty-two graduates of Indiana University in 1861 fought in the war. Not all of these enlisted immediately following graduation. John Alexander and Samuel Wylie Dodds were among several of the seniors who waited until after their commencement in 1861 to enlist. Dodds became a sergeant in a company of the 18th Indiana Volunteers that also included several underclassmen from the university. Alexander returned to his hometown of Hobbieville, Indiana, to enlist in the 97th Indiana, where he rose to the rank of captain. Alexander served three years in the army and then enrolled at the University of Michigan law school in 1865. Richard M. Johnston Miller also graduated in 1861 and enlisted in 1862. He served throughout the war, largely as the captain of Company B of the 65th Indiana Volunteers. Another of their classmates, John Chalmers Orchard, returned to Indiana in 1863 following his 1861 enlistment in the Union army and graduated in 1865 with a law degree from the school.  

Despite the smaller percentage of the graduating class that headed off to war, this early period of 1861 still shook Bloomington. Each student meant quite a bit to the town and as the enlisting Indiana University students left for war, the town responded as if the young men were their own children. In some cases, these new soldiers were indeed their sons. However, the close relationship between the Bloomington community and the students at the university was illustrated by the fact that most of the students who left the school to enlist did so with a company from Monroe county, rather than returning home.

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to enlist with family or friends. They were either incredibly eager to get to battle, thus finding the trip home inexpedient, or they truly felt welcome and comfortable entering a local company. The first Indiana University student to enlist in the army was James Buckley Black, a junior from Hagerstown, Indiana. He left school at the outbreak of hostilities and joined the 18th Indiana Volunteer Infantry with other Bloomington and university men. Company “H” of the 18th was a three-year unit consisting mostly of Bloomington residents and the group elected Black as First Lieutenant. In May 1861 when the first company consisting of some Indiana University students left for the front, the town made sure to acknowledge the young men. The ladies of the community purchased a beautiful American flag and presented it to the company in an emotional ceremony. James Black had the honor of receiving the flag. The Bloomington residents followed the company to the train depot and saw them off to war.94

The early war period also confirmed the influence of the relationship between the town and the university on students departing for war in Wisconsin. It was not hard to imagine what provoked the students at the University of Wisconsin to leave their studies and enlist in the Union army. Unlike students in Ann Arbor or Bloomington, the young men in Madison saw the daily efforts of their state’s government in mobilizing its citizenry for war. Madison was by far the most frequent location for regimental organization in the state during the war. Thirty of the more than seventy regiments

representing Wisconsin mustered in at Madison. Despite vigorous enlistments, company recruiters still took aggressive measures to inspire military-age men to join their ranks. On April 17, two days after Lincoln’s call for troops, the Wisconsin State Journal included an advertisement from a captain of a local company encouraging enlistment, in which he reminded potential recruits that by choosing to enlist, they would earn:

“The chance of promotion, the glory of a just war, and the consciousness that we are needed to protect our wives and mothers, to sustain our much loved American Union, and protect the integrity of our American Flag.”

In this environment, University of Wisconsin students struggled to maintain focus on their studies. The student military company that formed in the aftermath of Fort Sumter energetically drilled; this experience allowed many of the nineteen students who enlisted in 1861 to become officers in their companies.95

University of Wisconsin freshman Pliny Norcross, originally from LaGrange, Wisconsin, was the first student to enlist from that institution in April 1861. Professor James D. Butler recalled that Norcross’ action inspired many other students, thus commencing “a stampede” from the university into the army that “sadly thinned out” the “best Greek class I ever had.” Eight students, five freshman and three juniors, signed the enlistment roster at the first possible moment. Fellow classmate James L. High called these students “our first heroes.” High attempted to enlist himself but was turned away because he was too young. As in Ann Arbor, the faculty at the University of Wisconsin

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95 Wisconsin Adjutant General’s Office, Wisconsin in the War of the Rebellion: table compiled from records in the Adjutant General’s Department in Madison concisely showing important statistical features, Wisconsin Veterans Museum. Reuben Gold Thwaites numbered this at 70,000 of the 91,300 men who enlisted with the state of Wisconsin “were at various times quartered in and drilled at Camp Randall.” Thwaites, 27. Wisconsin State Journal, April 17, 1861. Allen and Spencer, 27.
rushed to control the emotional responses of their young charges. In chapel the next morning, Professor Butler implored the students to wait before enlisting, advising them to not rush to “give up the still air of delightful studies for the sterner duties of the tented field.” Butler was explicit in his belief that the national situation did not “warrant depopulating the colleges.”

Edward G. Miller, a freshman from Sweet Home, Wisconsin, who left the university for the front in April 1861, wrote fondly in 1889 of his initial time in the 1st Wisconsin Volunteers. “I wish it were possible,” he recalled, “for me to describe the patriotic enthusiasm, the war meetings and the music, of those first days of the war…at 11am the book was opened at the armory, and my name was the 13th enrolled.” Miller returned to the University of Wisconsin when his three-months enlistment was completed in August and attempted to “school himself again to the quiet routine of college work, but the war spirit within him would not be repressed.” By the spring of 1862, Miller again walked away from his studies and began recruiting his own company for the war. He told James High before he left, “When they ask me fifty years hence where I was during the war of the rebellion, it won't sound just right to say, ‘grinding Latin and Greek at No. 11, North College.’” While his sense of duty may not have kept him at the school, Miller recognized the significance of his education there by naming his newly-raised company

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the “Myrmidons,” after “the fiercest warriors in the Greek Army at the siege of Troy.” Miller used this historical reference to create a bridge between his past and his future.97

Many of the young students were not willing or able to make the decision about joining the army alone. It was not surprising that the influence of home and parents still held significant sway in something as important as whether to go to war, especially if they had to abandon their education. Professor Sterling of the University of Wisconsin strongly suggested that the students get permission from their parents before enlisting. He argued that the country had plenty of willing men who could fight and “there was no need of taking students.” Sterling evidently vested much hope in this obstacle to impulsive departures.98

Students also anticipated that their parents would have strong views on the subject and often did not feel it appropriate to make the choice without consulting them. Immediately following the outbreak of hostilities, University of Michigan sophomore Stanton B. Thomas wrote home to his mother and inquired, “How does father feel about war? The citizens here had a meeting yesterday and appointed a committee to take the names of volunteers. The students have got up a large company. Don’t know but I shall join it?” Presumably, the reply was not favorable, because Thomas graduated with his Bachelor of Science degree in 1864. Some were more determined in their requests. Joseph Quarles, a freshman at the University of Michigan from Kenosha, Wisconsin, implored his mother in November 1862:

98 Reid to Father, Mother & all the rest, April 20, 1861, Reid papers.
Wm English writes that Col. Lane wants me to take the position of Adjutant…How I wish you would let me accept it! Although I am much pleased with this institution it would please me more to stake my life in my country's cause - The present time seems one inappropriate to be devoted to one's self when the common interests of mankind are at stake and when the future of our country depends upon the exertions of the American Youth.

Quarles also received a negative parental response that year. In 1861, at the height of the initial military excitement, Harvey Reid wrote to his parents about the students who were leaving the University of Wisconsin to enlist. One young man who had recently graduated from the institution signed up to go to war but then had to back out. Reid wrote, “He decided [to enlist] too hastily – He says that his mother will never consent to his going, & he is afraid if he did go it would kill her.”

Joseph G. Hall from Monroe, Wisconsin, received a letter from his father in late April begging the young man, who was then in the preparatory department at the University of Wisconsin, to remain in school.

Libbie and your mother are almost nervous for fear you will enlist. If the war should continue and there should be any trouble in getting enough to volunteer you and I will probably go, but at present I don't want you to think of it. Your opportunity is now good for an education. If you let it pass unimproved times may change and you may never have another chance. It seems wrong for young men who are improving their minds and preparing themselves for usefulness in the world should drop all and go to the army when there are thousands who have nothing on hand, ready to go. So you had better wait and if there is any lack of men to go it will be time to think of it then -- and you can come

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99 Stanton B. Thomas to Mother, April 16, 1861, Box 1, Folder: Thomas, Correspondence, 1860-1864, Nathan M. Thomas Papers, Bentley Historical Library. *UM Catalogue*, 1864. Joseph V. Quarles to Mother, November 23, 1862, Box 2, Folder Correspondence 1860-62, Joseph V. Quarles Papers, 1843-1911, WHS. April 20, 1861, Reid Papers.
home and one of us can go and the other take care of the farm.

His father’s promise that he could potentially fight later in the war, if it continued, doubtless convinced young Joseph. He enrolled at the university for his freshman year of college in 1862. However, recognizing the potential emotional trauma their enlistment could impose on their parents did not always convince a young man to remain at home.100

In June, Reid recounted to his parents a story of another student at the university who originally enlisted but then backed out due to parental disapproval, “has now concluded to go in spite of them.” That young man was Charles S. Curtis, a freshman who was still “enjoying [himself] first rate” in college in March 1861. When the war broke out though, his taste for an education disappeared. On April 16, 1861, he enlisted in a company that was leaving for Washington D.C. in one week. He wrote home the next day, “I do not wish to go without your consent. If you are determined that I shall not go the only way to prevent it will be send a letter by the next mail ordering me not to go…” Curtis even attempted a desperate plea at the end of his letter, imploring, “Please don't say no for I am anxious to go.” They hastily responded with their disapproval and Curtis returned to the classroom.101

His acquiescence to his parents’ wishes lasted only seven weeks. On June 9, 1861, he again enlisted and left campus for the final time. It was not without a heavy heart. “I sometimes think that perhaps I have done wrong in taking the step that I have without the

100 By 1863, Joseph was not at the University of Wisconsin. It does not appear, based on the Roster of Wisconsin Volunteers at the Wisconsin Historical Society, that Hall served in the military. His post-University of Wisconsin life, therefore, is unknown. April 28, 1861, Hall, M. letters, 1861-1862, WHS.
101 Reid to parents, June 9, 1861, Reid Papers. Charles S. Curtis to parents, April 17, 1861, Charles S. Curtis letters, 1861-62, n.d., MSS 459 Box 1 Folder 2, WHS.
knowledge of my parents. I took the step I did cooly[sic] and determinedly after several
days reflection upon it,” Curtis pondered. He was firm in his goal to attain an officer
position, believing that with such a role he “shall then be on the road to fame and shall
strive to win a name.” Obviously, he saw the military as a faster path to glory than that
which he could attain through a college degree. “I do not like to leave the University,”
Curtis concluded, “but…I should never be content in any place unless I did volunteer. I
hope to return in a year and resume my course here.” He did not. Death claimed Curtis at
the battle of Cedar Mountain in August 1862.  

In all three communities, the students expressed their motivations for enlistment.
These included, for example, a hatred of slavery, a determination to defend the
constitution, or a sense of duty to their nation. Students-turned-soldiers described any and
all of these at one time or another as patriotism. Years later, Byron M. Cutcheon and
Henry Utley, both graduates of the class of 1861, depicted those who completed their
degrees at the University of Michigan in the year the war began as “above all, a patriotic
class.” They defined patriots as “the army heroes and martyrs who offered life and all its
bright hopes upon the alter of country…” In their eyes, those who fought in the Civil
War earned the label of patriot.  

One of Michigan’s martyrs did not enlist immediately following commencement
in 1861. Goodwin Beaver, who was originally from New York, took a teaching position

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102 This two-page writing, dated June 9, 1861, is found among letters at the Wisconsin Historical
Society, MSS 459, Box 1, Folder 2, Charles S. Curtis Papers, 1861-62, n.d. But it does not seem to be a
letter addressed to anyone nor has Curtis signed it. It may have just been thoughts he wanted to get onto
paper, to work them out through his pen. It is unknown if Curtis sent this document to his family or if they
found it among his belongings upon his death.
103 Utley and Cutcheon, 40.
at Albion College, also in Michigan, where he taught Greek and Latin for two years. In 1863, he “heard and heeded his country’s call,” joining fellow classmate William Beadle’s newly recruited regiment, the 1st Michigan Sharpshooters. Apparently Beaver was unable to withstand, or perhaps did not try to withstand, encouragement from a college friend who was tying his fortunes to the army. Beadle’s star continued to rise but Beaver did not survive the war; he died in 1865 from disease. Trying to help abolish slavery motivated Indiana University student-soldier Arthur C. Mellette to enlist in 1864. “I find it will be a hard year on me,” Mellette confided to his journal, “but I can never regret becoming a soldier whatever may happen. May Providence grant peace to our distracted country again scourged of the curse of slavery the cause of the war.” Another young man who left Indiana University in 1864 wrote ceremoniously in his diary from the Union depot in Indianapolis, “farewell home, friends, all for the flag.”

The first student-soldiers from the University of Wisconsin also discussed the meaning of patriotism. Edward G. Miller, one of the earliest students to enlist, recalled a discussion in camp in which the former undergraduates talked about whether they would re-enlist after their three-month terms expired later in the summer of 1861. The young men agreed, “it would not be necessary.” All but two of Miller’s student-soldier cohort did, despite their agreement to the contrary, re-enlisted, as did he a short time later. Miller argued to his fellow Athenaeans that their decision to re-enter the army rather than continue their studies was not for the glory of war but because they felt a strong sense of

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duty. “They could not rest,” he insisted, “till they were enlisted for the war. Then were they worthy to be called patriots.” Such ideas propelled these young men to abandon their education.\(^{105}\)

In addition to ideologies of duty and honor that encouraged young men to enlist in the Union army, notions of gender also contributed to the reasons that students at the University of Wisconsin, for example, chose the battlefield over the classroom. Specifically, they interpreted participating in war as a manly experience. Madison residents contributed to this perception. On April 23, 1861, the *Weekly Patriot* commented on the first companies heading to the front, which included several former university students. The editor complimented the new soldiers for taking part in the war in order to “vindicate their manhood and character.” A female resident of Madison recalled years later that when the first students from the university enlisted, the Athenaean Society wanted to have photographs of the new soldiers hanging in their hall. As they had not yet reported to camp, the young men borrowed military uniforms for the occasion. This staging effectively portrayed the boys as men; they felt that they needed the uniforms to reflect their new stature. That their new responsibilities earned them a place on the walls among other historic and admirable men of the Athenaean Society’s past, for all others to admire, literally and figuratively, demonstrated how their acquired position as soldiers catapulted them into a different status than the rest of the students. Having photographs of the students for those remaining to remember were not enough.

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\(^{105}\) Miller sketch. One did not re-enlist and the other died in the fall of 1861. High address, 154.
The new heroes needed to look the part and in doing so attempted to demonstrate their masculinity. The students themselves also described soldiers in gendered terms. When the first student-soldiers left for the front, young Harvey Reid recorded their departure in his diary. Along with listing who spoke, who sang, and how long it took for the soldiers to fill the trains, he took a moment to note their individual responses to the occasion. The manner in which he did so spoke to the expectations others had of the manhood of their soldiers. “Norcross & Bull of the Univ. boys stood it well, but Miller, Wyse & Smith were much affected.” During his short tenure back on the University of Wisconsin campus, Edward Miller gave a speech at an Athenaean Literary Society meeting in which he responded to the toast honoring former members then serving as military volunteers. Miller spoke of those with whom he had fought during the previous summer, saying that he had respected them as fellow students prior to the war but became “doubly proud of them as soldiers.” As evidence that they deserved such recognition, he mentioned the “little emotion” with which they went into battle and argued, “Discipline does much

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towards making soldiers, but it requires a certain amount of manliness to face unmoved the most appalling dangers, and I believe that they have enough of it.”

Young men who wondered whether they could consider themselves men without fighting in the Civil War continually faced rhetoric that would have contributed to this concern. In late 1862, the state treasurer, Samuel Hastings, addressed a departing company in the Congregational Chapel in Madison. His remarks revealed the concern of those staying at home that young soldiers would return vastly changed in character. He reminded the new soldiers that they would be citizens again someday and that they had not “adopted the business of a soldier as a permanent occupation.” Most importantly, Hastings implored the enlisted men to remember, “while in the army, that you are MEN, and that as such, you should refrain from every vice and evil practice that would tend to degrade and demoralize you.” A local printer published the full text of this speech and circulated it around the state. Statements such as these emphasized the extant links in public discourse between manliness and soldiering and underscored the pressure heaped upon departing soldiers to maintain the qualities associated with their gender by the home front.

Lucius Fairchild, who lost his left arm at Gettysburg and then embarked upon a successful political career after the war, gave a campaign speech in 1864 in which he very clearly laid out the differences between Republicans and Democrats in terms of gender. Democrats, he argued, “had the manhood” to oppose the demands of the South.

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107 April 24, 1861, Reid diary. Miller sketch.
“just as long as there was no danger to their persons” for they did not “have manhood enough to stand up and assert their rights with their blood.” Granted, Fairchild was speaking about political opponents, but the underlying message applied to all men regardless of party: fight and you are a man, stay home and you are not. Students at the University of Wisconsin were exposed to this type of rhetoric due to their close proximity to the hub of the state’s military activity.\textsuperscript{109}

In his analysis of northern intellectuals, historian George Fredrickson argued that some college students saw the war as a way to find their place in the world. By late summer 1861, the young men who had been motivated to join the war from their hearts, or for one reason or another personal to them, had already done so. Others waited, perhaps for parental permission, while some considered their decision regarding enlistment from a different perspective. Spurred not by a hatred of slavery or a sense of duty, these students, like many other American men, instead waited to determine the level of personal benefit that would come from fighting in the war. What they sought were associations with the war that would further the public’s perception of them as gentlemen.\textsuperscript{110}

Charles L. Watrous, a junior at the University of Michigan from Freetown, New York, wrote eagerly to his professor and fellow Empire State native, Andrew D. White, regarding an officer commission in August 1861. Despite a letter of recommendation from President Tappan, Watrous had failed to obtain a commission from the state of

\textsuperscript{109} 1864 Campaign Speech, Box 55, Fairchild papers.
\textsuperscript{110} Fredrickson contends that “personal commitments” such as “a hope for personal salvation” drove many young men into the military who “had been seeking something worth doing, and the opportunity for a commission in the army seemed an answer to their prayers.” Fredrickson, 72.
Michigan. If he enlisted in Michigan, Watrous would face “carrying a musket, which I don’t feel just ready to do.” Quite sure that he “had the material of which officers are made,” Watrous implored White to see if the professor had any connections back in their home state. Although it was obvious that the young man sought individual recognition before he would lower himself to join the military rank and file, he attempted to persuade White to respond quickly as “at present, it is very hard to work to ‘keep cool’ and study.” Watrous epitomized those students who felt out of place at the university during the war but could not reconcile themselves to enter the fray at the rank of private.111

A hatred of slavery, a passion for honor, or a quest for manhood did not always easily trump the sacrifices recognized in abandoning educational pursuits. For those students not close to graduation, the war raised particularly difficult choices. Michigan professor Andrew D. White recalled that in the fall of 1861 two students struggled with the decision of whether to enlist or continue with school. They had saved money for years to pay for college and hesitated to walk away from their dreams. He later recounted that the students woke him up early one morning to say goodbye and departed for the army because, “They could resist their patriotic convictions no longer.” These two men could not separate their understanding of patriotism from military duty in a time of war.

However, the nation’s predicament failed to drive others to abandon the dreams promised by their education. John Bennitt, a medical student at the University of Michigan, wrote to his wife that army service did not appeal to him. “I am not very anxious to go into the Army,” he confessed in November 1861, “unless you can go along. Still I will if duty

111 Charles L. Watrous to Andrew D. White, August 6, 1861, Andrew Dickson White papers, 1857-1867, Bentley Historical Library (hereafter White papers).
calls…I shall however remain here as long as I can, for the opportunities here are too good to be lost.” Bennitt did enlist in the summer of 1862, but letters to his wife suggest that it was more for the financial benefit to his family than for a devotion to the Union cause.\textsuperscript{112}

The military enticed many student-soldiers from these three universities because it represented immediate gratification of their quest for leadership in the world. Instead of waiting until after graduation to run for public office or become a successful merchant, these young men believed they could quickly earn glory and fame on the battlefield. Michigan students were eager to obtain leadership roles in the early days of the conflict. Even within their student companies, Isaac Elliott described the competition for positions as “a glorious struggle…very few indeed were so lacking in ambition as to be satisfied with the rank of private.” After commencement, the students took their experiences on campus and transformed them into opportunities on the larger stage. George Sanford graduated from the University of Michigan in 1861 and recruited a company to join the 1st Michigan Infantry regiment. His company, nicknamed the Tappan Rifles after his beloved former university chancellor, went to war with Sanford as their captain. Indiana University boasted a few students who entered the army as officers as well. One of them, Thomas W. Zook, went home after graduation in 1861 to enlist with family in the 63\textsuperscript{rd} Indiana, where he obtained the rank of First Lieutenant. Student appetites for recognition

as leaders in their country found opportunities to achieve those goals quickly during the war if they could obtain an officer’s ranking.\footnote{David Randall Gabrielse argues that “in the West, college faculty expected graduate who held the BA would become the leaders of a ‘natural aristocracy.’” Gabrielse, 123. Elliot, 429. During his senior year, Sanford was in the Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity and an officer of the Alpha Nu Literary Society. He was originally from Saline, Michigan. After several battles, Sanford’s health declined and he returned to Ann Arbor, where he worked as a deputy provost marshal and earned his master’s degree at the University of Michigan. Then in 1864, Sanford returned to the Union army as a paymaster, where he remained until mid-1866. Utley and Cutcheon, 139-140. Joseph Cookman Nate, History of the Sigma Chi Fraternity, 1855 to 1925 (Chicago: The Fraternity, 1929), 439. Indiana, Report of the Adjutant General, Vol. 3, 590; Vol. 6, 25. Later Zook rose to Major. Interestingly, he was the student who originally nominated Alexander H. Stephens to be an honorary member of the Athenian Society in March 1861. He apparently chose the Union over his prior southern sympathies. Zook was killed in battle on June 7, 1864 during the Atlanta campaign. Barbour, 489.}

In a few cases, disillusionment with the institution provoked some students to leave and enlist. At Indiana University, at least three students joined the military after hostile confrontations with faculty. In 1862, President Nutt announced the expulsion of Martin Luther Prather for insubordination. Prather left campus and enlisted as a soldier in the war. John Hood, an 1862 graduate, ran across the exiled student in Tennessee where both men were serving in the Union army. Hood wrote, tongue in cheek, to Professor Woodburn, “M. L. Prather called upon me a few days since, I was surprised to find him in the Army. But Prof as I feel quite unwell – I shall say no more at present.”\footnote{See April 28-29, 1862, IU Faculty Minutes. Lt. John Hood letter to Professor Woodburn, Feb 22, 1863. Murfreesboro, TN, Woodburn, James, Family Letters and Papers, 1795-1942, Lilly Library, Indiana University}

At least two other Indiana University students left for the army as the result of a disagreement between the faculty and the students in the 1863-1864 school year. Both Joseph M. Dufour and Melville Cox Robertson turned to the army when their collegiate careers unexpectedly ended. Joseph M. Dufour found himself at odds with the faculty while disputing a Board of Trustees declaration that threatened to alter the rights of the
literary societies. During this process, faculty members expelled him from the university because of several incidents of disorderly conduct, absenteeism, and “unimpressive academic progress.” Thus, Dufour’s college education halted in his senior year on the heels of the literary society controversy and the young man left campus to enlist in the 139th Indiana Volunteer Infantry.\footnote{This altercation is discussed at length in Chapter 5. Dufour was from Vevay, Indiana, where his ancestors had established the town in the early 1800s. Immigrants from Switzerland, the Dufours built a successful winery. This heritage continues to flavor the county into the twenty-first century through, for example, their annual Swiss Wine Festival. Thus, Dufour came from a notable and accomplished family, although not one replete with college graduates. Following his time in the Union army field service, Dufour stayed in Washington D.C. for the rest of his career, where he worked in various positions for the government. Dufour died in 1931 and was buried in Washington. See Perret Dufour, \textit{The Swiss Settlement of Switzerland County, Indiana} (Indianapolis, Indiana Historical Commission, 1925) for more information about the Dufour family. February 9, 1864, IU Faculty minutes. “Joseph Malin Dufour Dies in Washington,” \textit{The Alumnus Issue of the Indiana Daily Student} Vol. 61, No. 54 (Nov. 23, 1931); “Alumni Notes by Classes,” \textit{Indiana University Alumni Quarterly} Vol. 19, No. 1 (Jan. 1932), 93.}

Melville Cox Robertson also left Indiana University during the scandal after completing almost four full years at the institution. In his time at Indiana University, Robertson had been an active leader among the students, serving as the president of the Athenian Society and his Greek fraternity, Beta Theta Pi. The 1864 student catalogue lists Robertson, originally from Paris, Indiana, both as a senior in the scientific department of the undergraduate college and as a junior in the university’s law department. This would suggest that he was serious about his studies and held some ambitions for his professional future. However, Robertson enlisted in February 1864, prior to his graduation. The altercation with faculty doubtless prompted this decision.\footnote{Robertson journal, 116. \textit{IU Catalogue}, 1863-1864.}

Robertson kept a diary during his year in the army, which does not reveal any sadness over his predicament. The young man appeared quite at peace with his assumed role in life, perhaps even relieved. Although his college career ended unfulfilled,
Robertson evidently expected much from his military endeavors. After enlisting in the 93rd Indiana in 1864, a unit organized in southern Indiana, Robertson traveled to join the Army of the Tennessee. On March 21, 1864, he wrote, “I leave home perhaps forever . . . I hope to have the proud satisfaction of saying ‘My country is saved and I have done my duty as one of its citizens.’ . . . remember me only as a dead soldier of the republic. I want no brighter immortality.” Less than one month after entering the army, it seems that loved ones at home were still trying to accept his choice. Robertson records that a letter from his cousin expressed that “she like every one[sic] else I have heard from, expresses her surprise that I had patriotism enough to go into the army.” The student-soldier adapted much more quickly to this sudden shift in life plan than did those he left behind.117

Initially, those who left college at the start of the war did not easily dismiss thoughts of their time in college. They believed that the military would provide a short-lived adventure, and the university experience still held more of an influence on their self-perceptions in the rosy, romantic early days of war. While in regimental camp in June 1861, former University of Wisconsin students found time during a break in their military activities to celebrate the commencement ceremony that they were not attending back in Madison. These young men came together across companies in the regiment and formed their own small group for a few brief moments to express a shared bond. They pooled their money, purchased pies and cakes, and met near the camp for a picnic to

117 Confederates captured Robertson during the Battle of Brice’s Cross Roads on June 10, 1864, and he remained a prisoner for over eight months until his release in early 1865. The young soldier came down with typhoid fever at the Union parole camp in Vicksburg and died in April. Robertson diary, 117, 120, 128.
honor the traditions of the institution they had so recently left. Although mostly comfortable with their decision to choose a military life over the continuation of their studies, student-soldiers felt the loss of customs such as commencement. By respecting the festivities of their former institution, Wisconsin student-soldiers reassured themselves of their link with the school despite their absence.\footnote{118}

Service in the war did not break the bond of those who attended these universities. Isaac H. Elliot, one of the first University of Michigan students who enlisted after graduation in 1861, recalled that when recovering from a wound in St. Louis, another 1861 graduate heard of his arrival. William Coyl, then serving in an Iowa regiment, found his former classmate and took care of Elliot until he was transported home.

Another University of Michigan student-soldier, Henry B. Landon, even attempted to reconnect with the one southern student who had dashed back to Mississippi after Fort Sumter to serve in the Confederate army. In the spring of 1862, Landon tried on two occasions, when he knew he was near his friend’s Confederate regiment, to gain permission to visit with his old classmate. Landon’s general agreed and so the young soldier went across the river under a flag of truce in a boat filled with prisoners to be exchanged. His friend was on picket duty and could not be found before Landon had to return to his side of the river. A second attempt occurred a week later, initiated by the Confederate classmate, but that attempt was foiled by the realities of war when skirmishing broke out near their planned meeting spot.\footnote{119}

\footnote{118} Miller sketch, 6.  
\footnote{119} Elliot offers a tremendously humorous and humble account of his first months in the war: “Before I left home my fellow citizens presented me with a sword, sash and belt. In acknowledging the gift I stated that I would not lay down that sword, “until the Stars and Stripes again waved over every foot of
Students who chose to participate in the nation’s military struggle kept personal diaries and wrote letters from the front that reveal the close relationships that they developed with faculty members in their time together at, for example, Indiana University. Student-soldier John Hood wrote to Professor James Woodburn from Murfreesboro, Tennessee, in February 1863. He begins with an apology:

You will doubtless think that I have forgotten [sic] you, but such is not the case. I have been very unwell for the last five weeks. . . . I am very much afraid [sic] that my health is failing me; and I assure you should I be forced to leave the Army I would regret it very much, as I have not yet seen the day that I regretted having joined the Army.

Hood writes more about his illness and the nature of army camp, but soon turns to lighter matters. “Well Prof,” he wonders, “have you got as many hard chaps to deal with as you formerly [sic] had, I would suppose not though, as you have got [rid] of me and some more of the hard ones.” Woodburn’s former student closes the letter with a request for the professor’s opinion on “the present condition of our country . . . what you think of the prospects.”

Students enjoyed relaying their experiences back to the men who taught them so much. In a late December 1864 letter to former professor Andrew White, student-soldier Oliver LaFayette Browne confessed, “I always like to write of our success for I know you

American soil”; that I would "bring it back with honor or not come back at all," and much more in the same happy vein. Within six weeks I was home again, wounded, and a paroled prisoner, but I had not brought back my sword, not even my uniform. All had been appropriated by some people in Missouri who held different views about the “Stars and Stripes” from mine. I leave my mortal chagrin to be imagined.” Elliot, 250. Henry B. Landon, “A Class Reunion that Failed,” *Michigan Alumnus* Vol. IX, No. 82 (Mar. 1903), 253-254.

are as well to hear of it.” Browne, a New York native who graduated from the University of Michigan in 1862, discussed his experience during Sherman’s March to the Sea. He admitted his dismay at the lack of discipline in the army during the campaign, criticizing the “western hoosiers & wolverines” as being “only half civilized.” “They would as soon…smash a vase as eat,” he wrote scornfully. He may have felt that White, originally from New York himself, would concur with this assessment about western settlers, but he still thought fondly of his alma mater, remarking in his letter, “I have a pleasant place now. My duties have a fragrance of the old school days.”

Browne wrote several times to Professor White over the course of his time in the army and used the letters to discuss ideology and impressions of southerners, along with military policy. While in Savannah, Browne wrote, “We shall soon be on the path again and shall go to Richmond if Sherman wills – May the Army of the Potomac enter first – They deserve it.” Along with the thousands of letters that soldiers wrote home to friends and family, student-soldiers from these three universities also sought continued communication with the professors who had molded them during their time at those institutions.

Relationships made during college days were not easily dismissed either. Students serving in the war wrote back to former fellow students at the university. In October 1861, E. C. Hungerford, originally from Watertown, Wisconsin, wrote to Isaac Stewart at the University of Wisconsin. The two young men were both juniors when the war broke

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121 Upon entering the army, Browne secured a position as a First Lieutenant in the 149th New York Infantry. Oliver LaFayette Browne to Andrew D. White, December 29, 1864, White papers, Bentley Historical Library.

122 Ibid.
out in April 1861. Hungerford forwent the rest of his education to fight in the war, while Stewart continued and graduated in 1862. Stewart was an outspoken Democrat but Hungerford did not shy away from chastising his former classmate about political divisions. “Every state organization that runs two candidates will encourage the Rebels,” Hungerford asserted in a letter from camp in Virginia, “‘To the Devil’ with Politics and make one Union strike, and send along all you can to help us.” University of Michigan law student Gideon Winan Allen kept in touch with Phineas J. Clawson, an old friend from his undergraduate days at the University of Wisconsin. Although Allen was one year ahead of Clawson at the school, the two became friends and remained so as circumstances took them in different directions. Clawson left after his junior year in 1863 and enlisted in Company A of the 20th Wisconsin Infantry where he served as First Lieutenant until the end of the war. Allen left the University of Wisconsin in 1862 and spent the next two years in law school at the University of Michigan. At the end of April 1865, Clawson sent a letter to Allen from Mobile, Alabama, and requested his friend’s guidance. “I feel that the war is over,” Clawson wrote, “and begin now to turn my attention to my prospects. What shall I do? [sic] is the question which bothers me most. I can hardly solve it. Give me your opinion.” Allen’s response is unknown but Clawson returned to the University of Wisconsin and graduated with his Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees after the war.  

123 Hungerford died at Fredricksburg. Said classmate James L. High “Hungerford, who charged with his company up the heights at Fredericksburg, and fell only when his regiment had stormed the very crest.” High address, 202. EC Hungerford to Isaac Stewart, October 3, 1861, Isaac & Mary Stewart Papers Box 1 Folder 2 1837-1869, WHS. Allen by this point in the war had graduated from the University of Michigan Law School and was working in Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin in a law practice. PJ Clawson to GW
University students often made successful recruiters of their cohort during the course of the war, thus demonstrating the depth of the bonds formed between students at these three universities. In the summer of 1862, Michigan graduate Byron M. Cutcheon left his post as principal of a local school and organized a company for the 20th Michigan Infantry regiment. Cutcheon did not, however, encourage others to follow in his footsteps regarding graduation, as he took with him a good number of University of Michigan students that summer. Walter McCollum of Lodi, Michigan, earned his Bachelor of Arts in 1861 and later abandoned his subsequent law studies to join Cutcheon. An 1862 law school graduate, Wendell D. Wiltsie, was captain of the company. The position of First Lieutenant went to an 1861 graduate from the law department, Edward P. Pitkin. Hiram Rollin Mills also joined the company, having entered the Medical department following his 1861 graduation with his bachelor’s degree. Mills served in various medical posts with Michigan regiments until the close of the war. He then returned to the University of Michigan and earned both his medical degree and his master’s degree in 1866. Horace V. Knight of the University of Michigan left to go with the 20th Michigan during his sophomore year. This regiment also attracted freshmen David E. Ainsworth from Kansas and Edgar A. Phelps from Dexter, Michigan, along with law students Albert E. Cowles and Lewis S. Holden.  

Allen, April 29, 1865, Gideon Winan Allen correspondence, 1862-1867, 1872, WHS (hereafter Allen letters).  
124 Cutcheon became Major of the entire 20th regiment. He returned to Ann Arbor following the war and graduated with his law degree in 1867. Utley and Cutcheon, 74-75; Peckham, 48. Another University of Michigan student, Gabriel Campbell, saw the effects that close relationships in school had on recruiting. Campbell left school after his sophomore year to answer Lincoln’s call for three hundred thousand in the summer of 1862. He estimated that about half of his class entered the army at that point,
Some students waited until late in the war to join the fight. Their actions disclosed the difficulties of choosing between personal educational accomplishment and their understanding of demonstrating patriotism. Charles H. Vilas, who graduated from the University of Wisconsin in 1865, chose to stay in school rather than fight in the war, but recalled fifty years later the nature of the situation for many of those who made the opposite decision. Throughout the time he was in school at the University of Wisconsin, students participated in military drills either at the university or through companies organized in the city in order to prepare for future service. “War was real then,” Vilas recounted, “and short notice was given by departing students, who perhaps had enlisted the night before under more or less excitement down town, and were speedily hastened to the front.” Even the evident hardships of war could not discourage all students from being swayed by the conflict’s pomp and circumstance, sometimes at the expense of their future education.125

Arthur Calvin Mellette graduated from Indiana University in 1863 and continued his education the next fall at the Indiana Law School. In October 1864, he left school, went to Indianapolis, and enlisted in the army. Upon returning home to Bloomington, Mellette discovered that his brother James had been drafted. Arthur obtained permission to enter the army as a substitute for his brother instead. Mellette expressed much relief that he would serve in his brother’s place. “It is a satisfaction to know,” Arthur wrote, “that if a man shall be slain by my hand it is done at the call of my country & instead of

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my brother.” Further education could wait; Mellette wanted any burden on the conscience due to the brutality of war to be on his own shoulders instead of those of his brother. He confided to his diary after his enlistment, “I have long felt it my duty to serve a term in the defense of my struggling country. The war has waged for nearly four years & a month ago I was still obeying the earnest entreaties of my friends & prosecuting my studies with what zeal I could.” His words illustrated the conflicted emotions of a young man pulled in two directions, one by his devotion to his education and the other by a desire to serve his country.126

President Lincoln’s call for additional volunteers in the spring of 1864 for a term of one hundred days fueled the desire of students who had always wanted to serve but had either been hesitant to abandon their studies or prohibited to enlist for a long term by their parents. Lincoln agreed to a suggested plan by Ohio governor John Brough that raised 100,000 new soldiers from several Midwestern states in order to help those in the more experienced units of the Union army make a strong push to win the war in the upcoming summer campaign. This summons had a dramatic effect on the student bodies at the University of Michigan, the University of Wisconsin and Indiana University. The University of Wisconsin felt the most crushing blow as thirty students formed a company and left school with Professor Charles H. Allen as their captain. As the company took almost all of that year’s graduating class away from May through September, the University of Wisconsin held no commencement ceremony that June. Despite not having

126 Wolff and Kant, eds., 9.
fulfilled their final requirements, the university decided to confer degrees upon the departing seniors.\textsuperscript{127}

At the University of Michigan, Joseph Quarles, who had so desperately begged his mother to let him enlist in 1862, somehow managed to escape school for three months in 1864 to participate in what may have been his last chance to serve his country. President Erastus Haven, Tappan’s successor in 1863 at the University of Michigan, conceded to release Quarles from his scholarly responsibilities, writing, “Quarles ...is now excused from College, at his own request, to serve his country in response to the call for volunteers for a hundred days. At the end of that time we hope to see him back again.” Quarles completed his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1866.\textsuperscript{128}

Those in the hundred days’ regiments who intended their stints in the military not to extend past this commitment also demonstrated their attachment to the universities they left behind. Robert W. Weir of Bloomington enlisted with the 133\textsuperscript{rd} Indiana Infantry Hundred days’ regiment in May 1864 after graduating the prior year. Writing home from camp in Alabama, Weir inquired about the commencement ceremonies. Another soldier in his regiment, Samuel Henry Weed, was among those who left Indiana University that May just one month shy of graduation. He joined the same company as Weir and, also

\textsuperscript{127} These regiments are commonly referred to as Hundred Days Regiments and will be so in this dissertation as well. Kenneth Sager found that “the defeat of General Banks in May, 1862, the draft of 1863, and the hundred days movement in 1864 drew greater numbers than usual into the service. The latter movement, very nearly depleted the small Western colleges.” Sager, 68. See also Fite, 239. The core of this company had been training together since the fall of 1861, when Edward G. Miller returned from his first three month stint in the army and organized a student drilling company. He left the next spring and recruited a company for the 20\textsuperscript{th} Wisconsin Regiment and took several students with him, but the rest remained in school until enticed to sign up for the hundred-days campaign in 1864. Edward Lemuel Hines, “The University during the Civil War” (Unpublished B.A. Thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1913), 24. Curti and Carstensen, 116.

\textsuperscript{128} May 9, 1864, Statement from Dr. Haven, Joseph V. Quarles papers, 1837-1911, Box 2, Folder Correspondence 1863-64, WHS.
like Weir, served only his one hundred days. Indiana University granted their student-soldiers in this particular situation their degrees that year.\textsuperscript{129}

All three universities had students return to their campuses following a stint in the military. Some came back to finish degrees abandoned in the passion of war’s early days, while others came to further enhance their education by obtaining additional diplomas. By far, however, this situation occurred most often at the University of Michigan. They welcomed back more of their student-soldiers than did Wisconsin or Indiana, perhaps because of their growing prestige by the end of the war. One Law Department graduate of the 1866 class recalled “Our class had as many returned soldiers in it as both the other two [1865 and 1867], and was sometimes called, from the great average age of its members, ‘the old men's class.’” Charles H. Denison, who graduated from the University of Michigan in 1861, joined the 5\textsuperscript{th} Michigan Infantry later that fall but was wounded and thus honorably discharged the following spring. He returned to Ann Arbor and earned his master’s degree and his law degree over the next two years. John Johnson returned home to Pennsylvania after his graduation in 1861 and enlisted in the Union army the next summer. Johnson was captured at Gettysburg and spent the remainder of the war in various Confederate prisons. After his release and honorable discharge at the end of the war, Johnson also returned to Ann Arbor and earned his law degree in 1866. That first year of war also witnessed student Henry Merrill forgo books for the battlefield. After he served his full three-year term, Merrill returned to Ann Arbor and graduated in 1866 from

\textsuperscript{129} Robert Weir to cousin James, July 15, 1864, John W. Strong Family Papers, 1853, 1860-64 Collection # M0800, Indiana Historical Society (hereafter IHS). Barbour, 514. April 29, 1864, IU Faculty minutes.
the University of Michigan Law Department. Henry Bishop Landon, another 1861
graduate of the University of Michigan, had a similarly telling story. Following
commencement, Landon enlisted in the Union army but was wounded the next spring at
the Battle of Fair Oaks in Virginia. Unable to continue his military service, Landon
returned to Ann Arbor and took classes in the university’s medical department. In 1863,
he utilized his new training by serving as an assistant surgeon for the 7th Michigan
Infantry but found his old wounds to be an overwhelming hindrance for the position.
Thus, Landon’s second attempt to serve his country ended prematurely and he appeared
again in Ann Arbor, finishing his medical program and graduating in 1865.130

Edgar H. Tallman of Coldwater, Michigan, enrolled at the University of Michigan
in the fall of 1861. If all went according to plan, he would have graduated with the class
of 1865. However, Tallman decided to enlist in the Union army the following summer,
finding a spot in Company C of the 19th Michigan Infantry. He returned to campus
following the war and earned his diploma in 1868. James Post graduated from the
University of Michigan in 1861 and began his studies in the Medical Department of the
school the following fall. After one year, he joined the Union military effort as a member
of their medical department and served until the end of the war. In the fall of 1865, Post
returned to Ann Arbor and completed his medical training the next year. Charles
Stocking followed a similar path, beginning the medical course at the University of
Michigan following his graduation with his bachelor’s degree in 1861. After one year, he

71. Denison eventually opened a law office and later worked for the U.S. district attorney’s office. It is
unclear what Johnson did in the year between graduation and enlistment. Utley and Cutcheon, 82, 100,
104-105, 208.
joined the military and served until the end of the war in various positions with their medical staff. He then went back to Michigan and completed both his medical degree in 1866 and his Master of Arts degree in 1867.  

Students who took a break from their work at the University of Michigan, Indiana University, or the University of Wisconsin to fight in the war did so in a precarious attempt to balance their personal goals with what they perceived to be their duty to their country. They left school as one man and returned another, perhaps more mature, or perhaps more jaded. These young men experienced their time at these universities in two parts, unlike those student-soldiers who attended to the needs of their nation after their graduation or in haste during the middle of their intended program. However drastically different might have been the nature of these young Americans’ wartime experience, they shared something instrumental to their understanding of themselves and their place in this momentous period in their country’s history. They shared a relationship with an institution that provided them a level of independence from family and an environment that fostered their intellectual development in ways that made them different from other soldiers in the Civil War. These young men were promising college students or graduates from western state universities, which made them different from other soldiers who could claim only to be westerners or to be educated in another part of the country. When these students left their respective institutions and chose the war as their next venue in which to test themselves, a part of the paradigm that traveled

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with them to military camp and battlefield included what they had experienced at their university. And, for a large number of them, that university relationship continued to be something of which they coveted more, or at the least, something difficult to forget.

Consideration of those who can be called student-soldiers, whether graduates or not, revealed the influence of the university in the wartime experience of those who left the safety of campuses for the danger of battlefields. As was clear in the case of Melville Robertson and Joseph Dufour at Indiana University, the interaction with their university that sent them running to the army was not at all positive. The military then became their alternate option to find glory, to find themselves, and to build a reputation. Failure in college did not mean the end of the road, not for Robertson and Dufour, nor for the other students at these three colleges who left before graduation because the call of war was stronger than the promise of education. They left for pride, idealism, duty, passion; they left to become men, patriots, and to save the Union. For those who left, either before or after graduation, the universities left an indelible impression on their perspective of the world. Some honored that relationship, either by continuing communication with those back on campus, maintaining friendships built during such pivotal years, or returning to their old stomping ground to complete a degree or earn another one. Despite the distance from the battlefield, the university remained influential and relevant for many graduates and former students at the Universities of Michigan, Indiana, and Wisconsin who found themselves participating in the Civil War. Just as these student-soldiers did not all run easily away from the attachments of their university days, the faculty and communities
surrounding these three schools also felt jolted by the abrupt departure of so many of their cherished youth. As the days of war grew longer, these universities realized that they had to also alter their understanding of how a state university survived during such turbulent times.
CHAPTER THREE:

AN ALTERED COURSE

“Those of us who were witnesses of [the faculty’s] arduous labors...may well agree that the heroes of that time were not all at the front.”

James L. High, University of Wisconsin alumni, 1900

“Our University has reached a crisis in its history, and if not passed successfully,” Wisconsin student John Muir wrote, “the doors will be closed, when of course I should have to leave Madison for some institution which has not yet been wounded to the death by our war demon.” These words, written by Muir to his brother and sister after the opening of the fall term in 1862, expressed the sentiment that alarmed University of Wisconsin faculty and Regents during the Civil War era. They could not risk their remaining students leaving the University of Wisconsin during such a moment of weakness for the institution. Such thoughts of the school’s inadequacies if multiplied and acted upon by the student body would surely be the university’s death knell. Just as this young university began to make substantial strides in gaining respect and security as a state institution on the growing American frontier, the Civil War threatened to significantly and possibly permanently derail its progress.

132 High address, 198.
Faculty at Indiana University moved quickly to assess the potential impact of civil war on their institution. A handful of students had already left their classrooms for the world of battlefields, while the students who remained tried to concentrate on their studies amid constant war-related turmoil in the Bloomington streets. One resident remarked in a letter, “All the men from here are gone ... It would be an easier job to tell you who stayed at home.” The presence of overtly pro-southern people brought physical altercations in the streets. A civil war had the potential to make Indiana University’s future increasingly more precarious. In Ann Arbor, University of Michigan president Henry Tappan joined a newly-formed home guard company comprised of local men over the age of forty-five. His participation in the “Silver Greys” signaled to his students a belief in the need to sacrifice life for country, yet Tappan was fully aware that his own action might influence his younger students to participate in the way available to them. Thus, Tappan took extra care to convince the students that preparing to fight and being willing to fight were not necessarily equivalent to abandoning their current course for a new, and potentially life-ending, endeavor.\(^{134}\)

This chapter will consider how the faculty of the University of Michigan, the University of Wisconsin, and Indiana University addressed the changing needs of the schools following the outbreak of the Civil War. Specifically, the chapter will focus on how the schools and their surrounding towns reacted to the students leaving for war. The conflict forced universities into a mode of countering the effects of the war instead of

\(^{134}\) Jennie Strong to brother John Strong, July 13, 1863, John W. Strong Family Papers, 1853, 1860-64 Collection # M0800, IHS. A county history from 1884 recounts several stories of violence in Bloomington. Men were beaten for expressing negative views about the Union or for vocally supporting the Confederacy. Blanchard, 435. George S. May, “Ann Arbor and the Coming of the Civil War,” *Michigan History* 36 (Sept. 1952), 253. May 28, 1861, IU Faculty minutes.
allowing faculty to move the university in a specific direction chosen without the influence of external forces. This chapter will thus assess the reactive nature of the universities’ responses to the war. Suddenly, the universities had to continue to compete with other schools or other professions for the money and attendance of young men and with the new attraction of possible glory in saving one’s country. Just as these three universities shaped the student-soldiers’ wartime experience, the departure of so many of their promising scholars influenced the home front experience of the University of Michigan, the University of Wisconsin, and Indiana University.

With the opening sounds of war in April 1861, the faculty at the University of Wisconsin, University of Michigan, and Indiana University paused with the rest of the country to evaluate the meaning of these extraordinary events. Their instinctive reaction was to try to convince students close to graduating to remain at the schools through commencement in June. But in the face of such unusual times, professors and administrators alike could do little more than try to offer the best support possible to young men who chose to leave immediately for the front. It was a difficult balancing act. Professors at the University of Michigan, caught up in the thrilling emotions of the war’s beginning, surely could understand the students’ need to fight for their country. But most faculty in all three universities also believed that the nascent war would be short and despaired at the idea of young men losing considerable time in their pursuit of their educational goals. As these conflicting thoughts raged through professors and students alike, faculty members realized that they had to take steps quickly to ensure the viability
of their institutions. Additionally, the schools’ leaders could not ignore these responsibilities because anxious towns braced themselves to face the impact. These communities not only stood to lose their own brothers, husbands, and sons, but also their livelihoods. All had much invested in the university and all saw the students excitedly drilling on campus lawns and piling into train cars to head to the front. If ever the community had to work with the university officials to find ways to both stem the tide of youth away from the classrooms and figure out new ways to entice fresh students into them, it was the summer of 1861.

Prior to the war, Indiana University faculty members had been working with the legislature on some key moves that would improve the academic reputation of the institution and possibly increase their chances for legislative funding. They saw the fruits of those labors just after the declaration of war, when the state legislature passed a law announcing that the State Geologist would also hold a faculty position at Indiana University. This was important for two reasons. First, it created a new faculty position at the university, thus enhancing its versatility and appeal to prospective students. Second, the law also called for the State Geologist to “collect duplicate specimens of mineralogy and geology in his reconnaissance of the State and deposit one set of the same in the cabinet of the State University.” The advancement of the university’s scientific collections would augment its credibility and potentially attract additional students.135

However, most likely due to the war’s diversion of the state government’s attention, the impact of this significant victory quickly stalled. This position remained

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135 Wylie, Indiana University, 72.
vacant until January 1, 1864, when Cyrus Nutt finally managed to lure the reputable Richard Owen away from his colonelcy in the army. Owen arrived in Bloomington and began his tenure as professor of natural philosophy and chemistry, which included responsibilities for geology courses as well. But, students were obviously unable to take advantage of this new professorship until late in the war period. This is just one example of the ways in which the Civil War threatened to unravel the hard work of university officials in 1861. They feared for the additional ways that the conflict might stunt the university’s momentum and cause the loss of established and future students.136

Some professors funneled their early responses to the war into their teaching. In his autobiography, Professor Andrew D. White discussed his reaction to the first students who left the University of Michigan for the war. During what he called a “great exodus of students into the armies,” White professed, “I loved [some of the students] as brothers and even as my own children. Of all the most experiences of my life, this was among the most saddening.” Consequently, he adjusted his lectures in 1861 after the start of the conflict as a way to impart knowledge about the war to young students who may soon be fighting. After the war got underway, White used his history lectures to “show what the maintenance of a republic was worth, and what patriots had been willing to do for their country in a struggle not unlike ours.” As an example, he required that his students read John Lothrop Motley's *The Rise of the Dutch Republic*, published in 1856. Motley’s multi-volume history charts the formation of the Netherlands after an eighty-year war for independence from the Spanish Empire. By associating current events with required

readings, White embraced the Civil War from an intellectual standpoint and encouraged his students to do the same, but from within the classroom.\footnote{White, 87, 283.}

Luckily, these three universities did not have to deal with a mass exodus of its professors. White tried to enlist when Abraham Lincoln first called for troops in 1861 because “my friends all about me were volunteering.” However, he was “rejected with scorn,” by the enlisting physician. White recalled that the military doctor told him “your work must be of a different sort.” Two University of Michigan professors in the Medical Department had better luck. Moses Gunn, M.D. and Alonzo Palmer, M.D. both volunteered in 1861 and served in the Union army as regimental surgeons. Their stints were eleven months and six months, respectively. Gunn regretted being away from his post at the university. In December 1861, the professor was in camp in Virginia and tried to get leave from the army during the period in which they were in winter quarters. He felt he could be of more use teaching his students back in Ann Arbor. Granted only three weeks, he hastened back to campus, asking his wife, who resided in their home in Detroit, to meet him there for a visit as “I must begin lecturing. I shall work hard and late in Ann Arbor.” Gunn then gave his entire semester of lectures in the three-week span and returned to the army in early 1862.\footnote{Peckham, 47. White, 89. Gunn to his wife, December 8, 1861, December 15, 1861, Jane Augusta Terry Gunn, \textit{Memorial Sketches of Doctor Moses Gunn, by his wife} (Chicago: W.T. Keener, 1889), 112, 115, 116.}

At Indiana University, English Literature professor Henry Bascom Hibben decided in August 1861 to offer his services to the Union army. He was accepted as a chaplain and served in that position for three years, after which President Lincoln
appointed Hibben chaplain of the Navy. The University of Wisconsin managed to retain its professors until late in the war, when Charles Allen, head of a newly opened Normal Department, led off a company of students for the Hundred Days campaign. Other than this handful of participants, however, the professors at the three universities attempted to serve their country by teaching its future leaders, an example they hoped would prove that patriotism did not only exist on the battlefield.

Marking the annual passage of time for the universities, the month of June arrived shortly after the advent of war in 1861 and thus it was time for graduation ceremonies. Commencement was symbolically significant in each of these three communities. In *A History of Ann Arbor*, Jonathan Marwil explains the magnitude of this annual event in the town surrounding the University of Michigan. “Pride as well as pragmatism formed the townspeople's view of the university during its early years,” argues Marwil, “The university was an opportunity - and responsibility - to improve the cultural life of Ann Arbor.” Because of their understanding of the active role they had to play in the success of the institution, “commencement day was both an unofficial civic holiday and an occasion for Ann Arbor residents to affirm an ‘interest’ in the institution that they saw as equally vital to that of the students and faculty.” After graduation in 1861, the editor of the *Michigan Argus* called upon the university and the Ann Arbor community to address the growing popularity of the commencement festivities. He argued that the annual event, “which [was] yearly increasing in interest and importance,” required larger buildings.

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Only when the facilities existed to house numerous visitors comfortably would the proceedings draw “a larger attendance of educated visitors from abroad.” Greater attendance at the graduation celebrations would increase commercial prosperity in the town and possibly attract new students.\textsuperscript{140}

Graduation activities in the summer of 1861 offered faculty and residents a prime opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to the students despite such national hardship. In fact, one Madison resident who had previously described the town’s focus as, “War is the cry. Nothing but War,” quickly turned his attention to the upcoming festivities associated with the annual commencement ceremonies and attempted to reinstate the celebratory feelings of years past. Emilie Quiner of Madison confided in her diary the events of each day during commencement week at the University of Wisconsin that first summer of the war. She attended the baccalaureate address on June 23, among other things, but then was not able to be present at the commencement a few days later. “I would like very much to go,” she wrote sadly. “This closes another college year, and as usual our city assumes the appearance of a gala day,” the \textit{Michigan State News} cheerfully reported in June 1861. The flurry of visitors and alumni who descended on the university to pay tribute to that year’s graduates, the editor assured his readers, was a sign of “the interest which is felt in our noble University. All is bustle, hurry and joyousness.” The first battles had not yet been fought, the first notices of local casualties had not arrived and thus, these communities anticipated graduation lightheartedly.\textsuperscript{141}

\textsuperscript{140} Marwil, 31. \textit{Michigan Argus}, June 28, 1861.
\textsuperscript{141} September 20, 1861, Charles B. Miller letters, 1856-1875, WHS. June 23, 1861, June 26, 1861, Emilie Quiner, Diary, 1861-1863, WHS. \textit{Michigan State News}, June 25, 1861.
In June 1861, when so much on the national stage competed with the annual commencement for attention, graduation was a welcome break from the stress. The editor of a Madison newspaper, Argus and Democrat, took a moment to remind its subscribers of the upcoming festivities, which began each year with final examinations for the students at the University of Wisconsin. These were open to the public and advertised heavily throughout the community. In his notice about the upcoming examinations on campus that day, the editor of the Argus and Democrat informed his readers, “Those who can find leisure can not pass an hour or two more pleasantly than by dropping in at these examinations. Nothing can be more encouraging...than to see an interest manifested by the public in the progress made in raising up a class of educated men.” Those Madison residents who took interest in the development of the university believed that their support of the institution correlated directly with its potential success, and took this responsibility seriously. Graduation served as an opportunity for the university to gain increased visibility within the busy state capital.142

The students too understood how vital commencement was to the university. Isaac Stewart wrote home from the University of Wisconsin in 1861 about the professors’ attempts to entice alumni back to campus that summer for commencement. Surely, this was a difficult task with the state of the nation in such chaos and excitement. Stewart explained, “I think ‘twould [sic] do much, to renew old sympathies among the alumni, Then ‘twould [sic] bring together some of the best talent & best men in the country, giving character of permanency to the Institution.” In a time of such turmoil in the nation,

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142 Argus and Democrat, June 19, 1861.
the faculty at the University of Wisconsin used commencement week as an opportunity to garner support and mobilize alumni, townspeople, and students alike in loyalty and devotion to the school. Emotions ran high and those leading the institution in Madison looked towards this celebration as a way to capture some of the energy focused on supporting the nation in order to stave off harm to the school.143

These events provided an opportunity for the towns and colleges to come together for a celebration and a distraction from the horrors of war but the communities could not always accomplish that goal easily. The departure of six seniors just prior to the 1862 commencement in Ann Arbor slightly altered the tone of the affair. Twenty-one students in total qualified for graduation that year, but with six gone to war just before final exams, only fifteen walked across the stage to receive their diplomas. Those who remained pleaded with the faculty to recognize the young men who had come up just short of obtaining their degrees when they left to risk their lives for their country. Faculty minutes show that they decided to confer the degrees upon the students with the understanding that they would someday return to pass their graduating exams. Albert Nye, who had captained one of the first student companies formed in the wake of Fort Sumter, died at Murfreesboro, Tennessee, before hearing of their decision. Coincidentally, his body arrived in Ann Arbor on commencement day.144

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143 Isaac Stewart to sister, March 24, 1861, Isaac & Mary Stewart Papers Box 1 Folder 2 1837-1869, WHS.
144 Bald, 22. Student Records (Individual Courses) 1860-63, Box 14, Folder Topical Files, Bentley Historical Library, 129. A similar situation occurred in 1864 when the University of Wisconsin cancelled its commencement due to the departure of the senior class into the Hundred Days movement. Although the Board of Regents preferred to have the seniors eventually participate in a formal graduation ceremony, they were prepared to authorize the faculty to award diplomas to the graduates regardless of whether the young men ever returned to campus after their service. Thwaites, 76
Professors saw commencement as a perfect opportunity to influence the choices of their students. No other moment during the school year brought the emotional connection between the students and their university to a higher point. Students felt pride in their accomplishments and excitement about their matriculation into the next year of their program. In prior years, faculty speakers aimed the final commencement address at the graduating class, to wish them well and offer some final thoughts on the ways to lead a distinguished life. During the war, the faculty had to alter their purpose, and speak only vaguely to the departing graduates, while hoping to reinforce their beliefs about the value of education more specifically to those students who had not yet enlisted in the military.

At Indiana University, President Nutt gave the baccalaureate address in 1861. Some of the graduating class had already left for the war before completing their degree requirements. Nutt faced the few who remained and the rest of the student body with a large burden upon his shoulders. He somehow had to convince the young, virile men of the undergraduate classes to stay in school.

“Greatness is the aim of all generous minded youth,” Nutt conceded. He understood their need to serve and acknowledged that “thousands of young hearts are burning with a laudable ambition to become distinguished as laborers for the advancement of our race; and to leave a bright record on the page of history.” However, Nutt contended that serving in the military would not automatically assure a man’s greatness. His argument was that “Great men are born, not made,” and education was the only activity that can shape and mold that natural potential. “Education is to nature what sculpture is to the marble,” Nutt asserted. He described a great man as one who, among
other things, had faith, self-reliance, and a strong will. Essentially, he encouraged each student not to follow the path into the army because he felt he needed to be with his peers. Nutt challenged his young charges to be confident in their own goals for the future and in their own beliefs as to the best ways to achieve those goals. He maintained that if one followed these suggestions and became a strong, independent, Christian, and, above all, educated man, “success will ever attend you throughout the subsequent battle of life.”

Professor James D. Butler, chair of the Ancient Languages and Literature at the University of Wisconsin, invoked a similar theme in his parting words to students in the summer of 1862. Even after the first full year of the war, Butler was adamant that the country had enough men willing to enlist without draining the nation’s universities. He insisted that education remained a crucial endeavor during the country’s crisis. Given the stage in 1862, Professor Butler used his baccalaureate sermon as an opportunity to persuade students to remain in school until after their graduation rather than enlisting in the Union army. “I honor the patriotic fervor which, in the first week of the rebellion, hurried so many of our students into our first regiment,” Butler declared, “Yet, as I judge, these volunteers were not demanded.” He maintained instead,

their places should have been filled by others, not inferior in thew and sinew, who had no plan of study - which adds a precious seeing to the eye - to interrupt; and they would themselves have rendered more efficient service in the field had they pushed on to the end of their educational curriculum.

145 Cyrus Nutt, Baccalaureate Sermon to the Graduating Class of the Indiana State University, June 23, 1861 (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Journal Company, Printers, 1861), 5-25.
Butler did not ask the students to forgo serving their country entirely; he ended his lengthy speech by sympathizing with their passions. Ultimately, he acknowledged that “when an American has completed an education, which gives to every power a double power, he can sacrifice himself on no grander altar than that of his fatherland.” He wisely knew that to discourage them fully from fighting might turn away their contemplative ears, so instead he focused on emphasizing the greater value of their contribution on the battlefield with a degree in hand.146

Professor Butler also directly addressed the students on their belief that enlisting would confirm their manhood. He insisted that a university education “is suited to develop manly minds.” Butler believed that students could remain on campus and still fulfill their “duties as patriots.” “I am far from supposing,” Butler argued, “that all true patriots must go down to the battle in their own persons – if the whole body were the hand, where were the eye, the ear, the foot?” He directed his remarks at both the graduating class who had remained away from the war long enough to complete their degrees and at the other students who held doubts about their decision to continue at the university. Butler claimed that they should take comfort in the knowledge that their achievement represented something that those who made the opposite choice could not accomplish. He said:

There were fourteen in your class who have fallen away, while you have marched on. I have mourned as I saw them desert your ranks. They must mourn today that they stand not with you, now that you are to be, this week, crowned with those laurel berries which, in all our colleges, give the farewell sermon the name of

146 High address, 155.
Baccalaureate, and betoken that peace hath her victories, not less renowned than war; and their most bitter tears over high aims abandoned, are yet to be shed.

Only three graduates heard these moving, passionate words. The rest of the fourteen who had begun four years earlier were off on a distant battlefield. Yet, Butler hoped that his stirring message sank deep into the hearts and minds of other students listening, who daily faced such significant decisions.\textsuperscript{147}

Without exception, professors at these three universities felt that the path of college students was too important to be drastically altered by military service. Doubtlessly, the academics were sincere in their support of student drilling companies during the war and in their best wishes to those heading to the front. Nevertheless, faculty never truly reconciled themselves to the decisions made by these young men. They wished college students were exempt from the war; they wished that dedication to intellectual development trumped devotion to country. Their attempts to encourage further attendance at the school in these first years of the war were purely reactive. In the first year of the war, they fought against the tide rather than find ways to renovate their programs in a way that would complement the current national situation.

The joy of commencement and the new increased potential for its meaning did not entirely distract faculty at these universities from brooding about the war. Indiana University professor Theophilus Wylie confessed in his diary that he felt “dull at the prospect” of the summer vacation ahead of him and returned to analyzing every aspect of the war after the June 1861 commencement passed. When the conflict began that

\textsuperscript{147} Emphasis in published version of the speech. \textit{Wisconsin State Journal}, June 24, 1862.
previous April, Wylie had written of the war, “Can think of nothing else.” Circumstances with his responsibilities at the college forced him to focus for a short time on meeting the needs of his students, but by the summer, the war’s happenings consumed this Bloomington professor. He regularly updated his diary as to troop movements and battle outcomes as the campus cleared out for the summer. When Professor Andrew D. White at the University of Michigan first read reports of the Battle of Bull Run, they “struck [him] like death.” This type of indulgence in the concerns of war was short-lived, as the potential impact of the war was about to unveil itself in the fall of 1861. As students began to arrive, the communities waited to assess the initial toll.148

An analysis of enrollment figures for the 1860-1861 school year versus the 1861-1862 term revealed the challenges faced by the faculty at these three universities. At Indiana University, the opening of the fall 1861 term saw four more law students enroll than the previous year, but that was the only department that experienced an increase. With 195 total students for the 1860-1861 school year, including seventy-nine in the Preparatory Department, Indiana welcomed 156 students the next year, a 20% decrease. Of these, only sixty-eight were in the Preparatory Department. However, because the number of students in the actual collegiate course decreased by just under 29%, the Preparatory Department, although numerically smaller, actually increased in its proportion to the rest of the school by 3%. So, instead of the Preparatory Department making up 41% of the total university enrollment as it had in 1860-1861, it represented 44% of the total student body in the following year. The largest impact was on the

148 April 21, 1861; June n.d. 1861, Wylie diary. White, 88.
freshman class of 1860 who then became sophomores in the fall of 1861. Apparently, those with the least invested in their education had the easiest time choosing to leave school. Fifty-three students took classes at Indiana University as freshmen in the 1860-1861 academic year, but only twenty-eight enrolled as sophomores the next fall, a decrease of nearly 53%. Numbers such as these did not bode well for the improvements to the institution envisioned by President Nutt and the faculty.\footnote{IU Catalogue, 1860-1861, 1861-1862.}

The University of Michigan experienced a similar state of affairs. Freshmen and sophomores failed to return to the University of Michigan in the fall of 1861 to take their places in the sophomore and juniors classes, respectively, in larger numbers than the other classes. The freshman class decreased by 19% to forty-two men and the sophomore class dropped 22% to thirty-eight. Overall, however, the enrollment figures for only the collegiate courses did not show strain in the first year of war at the University of Michigan, as total enrollment was down only 2%. The majority of the 9% decrease to 611 men in the total student body resulted from 11% and 18% decreases in enrollment in the Medical Department and Law Departments, respectively. The student catalogues for the Medical Department do not differentiate between rank in the medical course, so it is difficult to suggest what may have triggered lower enrollment in that department. One could infer, however, that the war would have drawn off a number of potential doctors who decided to serve on the Union medical staff instead of furthering their skills in school at that time. The numbers of the Law Department more clearly reveal the impact of the war. While the class that headed towards graduation in 1862 lost only three of its
members when the doors opened in fall 1861, only eight-five new law students began their first term at the University of Michigan. This figure was down 23% from the number of new students welcomed on campus the prior year before the war began. Thus, as faculty began to assess the potential impact of the war on the University of Michigan’s future, they initially noticed the most concern in their two professional programs. At least for the time being, the collegiate programs appeared stable.\textsuperscript{150}

That was not the case at the University of Wisconsin. The numbers for that university revealed a much more urgent condition. The first sign that something was amiss was that the school included students in its published register for the year that were not on campus, but in the war. They marked the names of these young men with an asterisk to denote their presence away from the school and in the army, but still listed them in an attempt to hide the true enrollment figures for the year. After removing the student-soldiers in the catalogue from the calculations, the numbers were alarming. With just thirteen students, the sophomore class in the fall of 1861 was smaller by 73% than the freshman class that had started one year earlier, meaning that almost three-fourths of the freshman from 1860 decided not to continue at the University of Wisconsin. The junior class decreased by the same percentage, leaving that rank with only three students, while 75% of those who would have been seniors did not return to the University of Wisconsin later in 1861 to complete their final year. The senior class, therefore, numbered two potential graduates. Not only would these three figures have been disconcerting enough for the school’s faculty, but there was also a 39% decrease in the

\textsuperscript{150} UM Catalogue, 1860, 1861, 1862.
number of incoming freshman. Just thirty young men enrolled that fall. Thus, the University of Wisconsin suffered greatly in its undergraduate departments immediately following the outbreak of war. Luckily, fifty-six students enrolled in the Preparatory Department in late 1861, which was 33% more than the previous year. This development offset some of the losses in the collegiate departments. Despite this silver lining, the faculty quickly had to face what seemed like a dire situation with their university. In absolute numbers then, it appeared on paper that the university had only decreased by five students between the 1860-1861 and 1861-1862 school years. However, a closer look reveals that the outlook was much bleaker; the University of Wisconsin dropped in size by over one-third in the first summer of the war, with its undergraduate student body dipping below fifty students.151

Students arriving on campus in the fall of 1861 surely wondered what college life would be like during the war. In reality, there were few concrete changes at the University of Michigan, the University of Wisconsin, and Indiana University in the first full academic year. Professors and Regents alike waited to assess the harm to their numerical strength. The University of Wisconsin made one swift adjustment in response to the departure of student-soldiers with their decision to establish communal boarding for the students in 1862. Since the university opened, students had taken lodging and meals with townspeople in their homes. University officials recognized that this was income lost to the school itself, so it set aside a majority of one of its campus buildings to host a “limited number of students approved by the dean who desired accommodation at

151 UW Catalogue 1861, 1862.
the lowest possible figure.” Each professor took responsibility for one table full of students at mealtimes and the wife of that professor supervised the situation for her husband’s “tenants.” In the fall of 1861, University of Michigan faculty hoped to avoid the consequences of the war by keeping their students busy. Law student Charles M. Skillen remarked in a letter to his family, “They keep us so close to our studies that we have hardly time to think of house or any thing [sic] but our Books and the Leactures [sic]. We do not get time to read the war news.”

All three universities rushed to provide military instruction after the start of the war. They viewed a military curriculum as a way to convince current students of the value of remaining in school and believed that it would also attract new students. Faculty members supported the students in their determination to learn how to drill and tried various methods of applying pressure to the states to make something more official. As state universities, funding for a venture such as military training could not be obtained through fundraising from a national religious organization, like in a denominational college. Therefore, all three schools had to appeal to their state legislatures for appropriations.

The establishment of military departments was high on the list of priorities for these institutions. This was not their first foray into this field; all three universities had recognized the need for this type of training prior to the war and attempted to meet public demand. Indiana University initially offered some military instruction in the early 1840s, but upon its professor resigning to join the army in 1843, the department quickly

\[152\] Vilas, 554-555. Charles Skillen to Aunt, Uncle, and cousins, December 27, 1861, Charles Moza Skillen letter, Bentley Historical Library.
dissolved. In the 1860 catalogue, the university stated that students could join the “University Cadets,” which promoted exercise and tactical training. In April 1861, unsure yet of what exactly would be the ultimate impact of the war on the school’s stability, the faculty reinvigorated its program. They passed a resolution authorizing President Nutt of Indiana University to “announce in the forthcoming Catalogue that instruction in Military Tactics will hereafter be given to such students as may desire it.” No financial support for a military professorship was forthcoming from the Indiana legislature during the war period, despite repeated attempts to obtain it. Indiana University faculty continued to position themselves throughout the war to begin offering courses in military drill and tactics. They believed that such instruction could help the institution survive and grow, and attempted many routes, however fruitlessly, trying to accomplish that end.153

At the University of Michigan, President Tappan pinpointed a new military school as the next priority for the school’s expansion and began immediately campaigning for such an objective. The Michigan Argus insisted in August 1861, “A demand for military instruction is felt in our own State, and can that demand be better met than by the establishment of a military department in the University of Michigan?” The editor envisioned that the department would meet a growing and permanent interest in military education that was generally unmet nationally. The newspaper’s call aimed directly at the Board of Regents, whom they tasked with determining the most expedient way of fulfilling this need. In the fall of 1861, the Board of Regents moved forward with plans to fulfill Tappan’s request for a military school. Their intention for the new program was to

153 Woodburn, History of Indiana University, 284n11. Wylie, Indiana University, 55. May 28, 1861, IU Faculty minutes.
train students to enter the military as officers. The Regents first turned to Ann Arbor for assistance in executing a fundraising campaign, which would ultimately require state funds. On January 2, 1862, interested citizens of Ann Arbor convened to hear the proposal. Tappan explained the necessity for the new department and easily garnered community approval. Ann Arbor residents quickly engaged in this quest and worked diligently to secure its success. Residents formed a committee of nine prominent men including a former mayor of Ann Arbor and organized their plan for approaching the legislature with the request.154

Community support of this new university imperative did not waver. One week later, as the legislature began to debate whether to fund a military school at the University of Michigan or at the state agricultural school in Lansing, the Ann Arbor-based *Michigan Argus* outlined the current state of affairs on the topic and ended with a reassurance to concerned residents. “The editor feels confident they will pick University of Michigan,” he asserted, “…a committee of our citizens is at Lansing [the state capital] looking after the matter.” This affair epitomized Ann Arbor’s dedication to its local institution through the war era, as its efforts in sustaining and improving the university emphasized that the school was not alone in facing its challenges on the home front. While the town and faculty waited to hear the results of their request for funds for a new military school, formal lectures began in Military Engineering and Tactics. Since the university had not yet received funding to hire a new professor specifically for military courses, the Professor of Civil Engineering expanded his responsibilities to include this additional

President Tappan continued to cultivate a positive relationship between the university and town to solidify support for the school’s imperatives. He gave a lecture in 1862 called “The Uses of War” to benefit the local Soldiers’ Aid Society. This type of event demonstrated to the townspeople how the school could help interpret the war for the masses. Despite the cohesive front presented by the university and the community in their requests for funding, and the dedication to the national cause displayed by both faculty and residents, the University of Michigan received a negative reply from its state legislature. No funds for military education were forthcoming.\(^{155}\)

The University of Wisconsin also hurried to implement military training curriculum. Requests for funding for a military department began with the 1861 Board of Regents report to the state. University officials interpreted student enthusiasm at the beginning of the war as a demand for a new addition to their undergraduate program. The faculty included a segment in the report calling for funding for a new military department. Their plea was quite lengthy when compared with other individual sections of the report and its argument spanned the history of military education in Europe, current practices in other advanced countries, and the existing military education opportunities in the United States. The faculty even cited the efforts at the University of Michigan in installing a new Professorship of Military Engineering and Tactics, which as

\[^{155}\textit{Michigan Argus}, \text{January 10, 1862.} \text{Bald, 21.} \textit{Ann Arbor Journal}, \text{April 16, 1862.} \text{The rejection came most likely from a combination of lack of funds and increasing dislike for Tappan. As his biographer Perry explained, Tappan grew increasingly unpopular with the legislature before his termination in 1863. The state’s denominational colleges tainted state leaders’ opinions of Tappan with their routine attacks against any potential favoritism awarded the state university. Additionally, legislators developed a distaste for Tappan’s routine references to German educational methods and his overt arrogance in certain situations. On his last appearance in front of the state assembly, he expressed his frustration by saying, “The day will come, gentlemen, when my boys will take your places, and then something will be done for the University.” Perry, 265.\]
we have seen was little more than a resident professor taking on additional responsibilities. Regardless, the University of Wisconsin professors found steps taken at their counterpart in Michigan to be worthy of mention in their argument. The state’s population had a need and the state’s university should fulfill that demand. The Board’s final appeal to the legislature demonstrated its willingness to confront its competition directly, stating, “Such a department befits the State University rather than any denominational college; and nowhere are the location, the grounds, and the buildings so favorable as at the University...” The faculty’s push, however, for a formal military department met with failure. The state did not have funding for such an endeavor. Consequently, the faculty did not offer formal training during the war period, but continued to encourage the students to drill in their own companies.156

Overall, the quest to develop military departments did not go well for these three universities. This was largely the case across the North as funding for such ventures did not come willingly or easily from state legislatures. The federal government did not jump to raise money for such efforts either. Faculty members then encouraged students in their determination to learn how to drill but there was little they could do outside of this support and the regular pressure to the states to make something more official. Michigan professor Andrew D. White took pride in these efforts, recalling, “One way in which those of us who remained at the university helped the good cause was in promoting the

156 Board of Regents Annual Reports, September 30, 1861, UW Archives, 8-10. Curti and Carstensen, 116. The University of Wisconsin did not abandon its goal of obtaining a military school on its campus, and as late as 1866 continued to apply to various state and national departments for funding to hire a Professor of Military Science. In the 1866 Board of Regents report, they reported another failure in acquiring a disabled or retired army officer for the position, but remained optimistic that they would eventually find one. Board of Regents Annual Report, September 30, 1866, UW Archives, 11.
military drill of those who had determined to become soldiers.” However, despite the apparent interest and derivative need for military drill, it remained an informal aspect of collegiate education at Midwest universities during the war.\textsuperscript{157}

The schools also reacted to the outbreak of war by taking credit for developing good soldiers and attempting to demonstrate their support of the Union by recognizing those students who had left for the war. The University of Wisconsin Board of Regents report to the state each year contained a section written by the faculty that discussed the “Internal Condition” of the school. In 1861, this report represented the first in which the Regents and the faculty had the opportunity to address the issue of students leaving the school for the army. The first brief paragraph in the faculty report mentioned the achievements of the student body academically including few instances of punishments and a high attendance rate, despite the “unprecedented and soul-stirring political agitations of the current season.”\textsuperscript{158}

After these vague commendations to the students, the faculty made a gesture to its student-soldiers. “The Faculty are proud to record the following nineteen names of those under their instruction within the last University year, who have entered the armies of our country,” the report declared. They may have appeared proud and link their institution to the coattails of possible national heroes, but they did not express this devotion in a very convincing manner. Pride apparently did not propel the faculty to bother to open a university student catalogue and provide full names or even first initials for some of the students, as the list looked incomplete and haphazard:

\begin{footnotes}
\item[157] White, 91.
\item[158] Board of Regents Annual Report, September 30, 1861, UW Archives, 8.
\end{footnotes}
It was clear then that the faculty’s true concern continued to lie with their immediate
surroundings and future of the university. After this fleeting tribute to those serving their
country, the faculty report re-focused on the impact that the state of the nation would
have on their institution. Insisting that “more than one [young man], has been heard to
say that he was making arrangements to becoming a student [here] when interrupted by
the war,” the faculty tried to make the case to the legislature that “On the whole it may
safely be said that, had peace continued, the University would now enroll a larger corps
of students than at any previous period.” In their reactive mindset, the faculty hoped that
the legislature would consider their financial requests as if the war had never began.\textsuperscript{159}

The University of Wisconsin felt such desperation to obtain state funding during
the war that they again attempted to ingratiate themselves to the state legislature in 1862
through reference to those who had left their halls for the battlefields. In their annual
report of that year, the Board of Regents pointed with satisfaction to the student-soldiers
in the field from the University of Wisconsin. “It must fill every patriot heart with
delight, that this call has been so cheerfully answered…from the State University,” the
report declared, “It is a proof of lessons of patriotism well given and thoroughly learned.”
Again, this pride was not unselfish. The Board made this point in its report to the state

\textsuperscript{159} Ibid.
legislature solely as a factor in its request for funds. It continued, “The state may well feel pride in her institutions, that are doing so much to protect her honor and advance her interests, and she should lend most cheerfully a helping hand in their time of financial distress.” Apparently, the state government did not feel that lessons in patriotism from the halls of higher education in Madison justified financial aid. The state appropriated no funds to aid the struggling university in these early days of war.\(^\text{160}\)

Although these three legislatures seemed to ignore their state universities in the first year of war, some residents sought to demonstrate their commitment to their universities by involving themselves in the well-being of the schools. One noticeable way in which the town of Ann Arbor supported the university was through attendance at events hosted by the students or faculty. The University of Michigan’s Student Lecture Association, which brought in nationally recognized speakers, regularly drew a large crowd from among the townspeople. Leaders in Ann Arbor recognized the importance of this relationship and continually advertised the events and then chided residents if turnout was not as high as expected. “The citizens, we believe,” began the editor of the *Michigan Argus*, “are desirous of sustaining first class men; and they fully understand that to do this their attendance [at Student Lecture Association events] is requisite.” Similar to the faculty’s reactive response to the war, residents consciously implored the community to remember the benefits of its local university and demonstrate its support.\(^\text{161}\)

In late 1861, when the audience for a speaker dwindled in comparison to prior engagements, faculty began to wonder about the cause. Townspeople were quick to

\(^{160}\) Board of Regents Annual Report, September 30, 1862, UW Archives, 2.
\(^{161}\) *Michigan Argus*, December 13, 1861.
inform them that people were staying away from the lectures because students were acting rudely towards residents when they took their seats. “Every gentleman and lady are received with staring, stamping and insult,” the newspaper reported. Such bad manners were intolerable, as “all suffer in common and gain not only here in Ann Arbor but abroad the unenviable reputation of being ill-bred, ill-mannered boors. The University is irreparably injured…” Professor White addressed the issue immediately, fully understanding that no breach between town and university could be allowed to fester. He “administered a most cutting and severe rebuke to those guilty of the rudeness.” Thus, the public events organized by the Student Lecture Association at the University of Michigan exhibited the symbiotic relationship of the town and school. Not only did the town expect a noteworthy schedule but also demanded good student behavior, whose actions reflected on both the university and Ann Arbor. Town residents did not hesitate to scold the students when necessary and requested faculty reinforcement on the issue.\textsuperscript{162}

One year later, similar criticism appeared in the pages of \textit{The Michigan State News}. Some students jeered and hooted at late arrivers, others stamped their feet during lectures, which the newspaper called “very unmanly and ungentlemanly,” while others refused to sit closer together to accommodate ladies who could not find seats. The editor published a message to the students that churches in Ann Arbor would stop allowing the Student Lecture Association to use their facilities for lectures if the behavior continued. He finished by admonishing the students and threatened facetiously that he would like to

\textsuperscript{162} \textit{Michigan Argus}, December 13, 1861.
contact their mothers, “for certainly such children should not be allowed to run a single day without them.” The somewhat troubled relationship between the students and the residents did not preclude the *Michigan Argus* from commending the Student Lecture Association in 1863 for putting together a program of “fine speakers” for the year “despite the challenges of procuring good lecturers during the war.” In this early period of the war, the newspapers recognized that the Student Lecture Association presented positive distractions through its offerings to the public and encouraged residents to patronize their meetings “to be diverted in some measure from the gloomy aspects of the country.”

These regular reminders of the close relationship between Ann Arbor and the University of Michigan were all the more important when the war began. As the community and faculty struggled to respond to a national situation that threatened the source of its livelihood, both groups worked hard to improve their appeal to prospective students. Tappan kept a close eye on the military encampments that appeared around Ann Arbor in the summer of 1861. Once state mobilization officials did not initially accept all of the numerous companies that volunteered after Fort Sumter, eager soldiers from Ann Arbor and the surrounding county did not want to return home. Convinced they would be called into action at the front shortly, the companies overrun the county fair grounds and began to drill. As the local *Michigan Argus* reported, these young men began “playing soldier in earnest.”

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President Tappan made regular trips from his post at the university over to the camp, where he offered sermons to the young men on topics of religious merit. He also delivered passionate speeches “in which the secession traitors at the South were severely handled.” This makeshift military camp, nicknamed “Camp Fountain,” hosted picnics for the soldiers attended by thousands of county residents. By the late summer, the local newspaper referred to it as “a favorite resort.” It housed “sober, respectful, and polite men,” rather than the inebriated, ill-mannered soldiers everyone worried that the war would create. Tappan made regular trips there and, for a “gala day” in September 1861, he was the featured speaker in a day filled with patriotic festivities. The university president’s close attention to the reputation and moral fortitude of the community did not dwindle as the war continued. In early 1863, Tappan even made a speech to Ann Arbor citizens requesting them to consider removing questionable businesses such as billiards or drinking that encouraged vice in the town. He argued that these types of changes would enhance morality in comparison to other locales in the state. Tappan did not let the war’s advent distract him from ensuring the quality of the university’s surroundings.\footnote{\textit{Michigan Argus}, May 3, 1861, April 3, 1863. \textit{Ann Arbor Journal}, September 18, 1861. \textit{The Michigan State News}, August 27, 1861.}

The realities of war were readily apparent in the Ann Arbor community at the second meeting of the New York Society in November 1861. The society’s festival revealed the altered environment in which residents, faculty, and students operated by the first fall of the war. While toasts offered at the first annual festival one year earlier focused on loyalties to New York, Michigan, and the university, those men participating in the 1861 festival offered a radically different set of toasts. Local and state attachments
were less prominent. At the Second Annual New York Society festival, national themes captured three of the first four toasts: President, Union, and “the memory of the gallant spirits who have fallen in the defense of our glorious constitution.” Recognition of New York and Michigan came at the fifth and sixth toasts, respectively, followed by a nod to other social groups and the Army and Navy. Thus, by 1861, identity had been reordered with the nation replacing state in the order of allegiances.\(^{166}\)

Additionally, the university did not receive a separate toast as it did in 1860, but fell under the auspices of the city of Ann Arbor in their order to “cherish her noble educational institutions.” Men involved with such an inherently nativist social organization may have adjusted their loyalties to their states to make room for needed demonstrations of national unity, but they continued to keep educational priorities at the forefront of their identity with their local community, their state, and their country. Ultimately, the stark contrast between institutions and entities revered by these residents in late 1860 and late 1861 epitomized the shift in ideologies in this university town. As the war became a more familiar part of the home front discourse, students at the school lived and learned within the sphere of these adjustments.\(^{167}\)

Faculty at Indiana University also reacted to the war by moving to shore up their relationship with their surrounding community and remain a visible part of the town. The faculty minutes revealed a motion to cancel classes in September 1861 so that students and faculty could participate in a national day of fasting and prayer declared by President Lincoln. Professor Theophilus Wylie recorded in his diary that the “Church was full to

\(^{166}\) November 25, 1861, New York Society Records (1860-63), Bentley Historical Library.

\(^{167}\) Ibid.
overflowing…the town like a sabbath day.” In October 1861, the ladies of Bloomington met to form a Soldier’s Relief Society and over the course of the war they collected and distributed an abundance of supplies to the troops. Female members of families connected with Indiana University represented the school well in the group, including committee member names such as Wylie, Dodds, and Hibben. As the faculty attempted to minimize the impact of the war on their institution, they recognized that preserving the collaborative relationship with Bloomington was essential.168

Despite these efforts, concerns continued regarding enrollment at all three schools. When the 1862-1863 academic year opened, alumni Charles K. Adams, filling in for the traveling Andrew D. White at the University of Michigan, updated the absent professor on the state of affairs in Ann Arbor. In discussing his hope for a quick end to the war, Adams wrote of students in the military, “I must say I can not [sic] record without regret that so noble fellows may be the victims of this hellish rebellion.” Adams then directly turned to the impact such realities may have had on the immediate future of university. “We have no means of determining in regard to the no. of students for the coming year. The upper classes must be smaller than usual,” he supposed. Henry S. Frieze, Professor of Latin and Literature, wrote to White in October 1862 with better news than that anticipated by Adams one month earlier. “Students are coming in almost every day,” Frieze reported. He continued, “A few have presented themselves from Kentucky. Many from Indiana, Illinois and elsewhere have just left the ‘three months’

168 September 10, 1861, IU Faculty minutes. September 26, 1861, Wylie diary. The women of these names were likely associated with the following professors at Indiana University: Theophilus A. Wylie, at various times Professor of Natural Philosophy and Chemistry and Professor of Languages; James F. Dodds, former Professor of Mathematics; Henry B. Hibben, Professor of English Literature until his enlistment in the Union army in 1861. Blanchard, 440-443.
service in the army.” He found these new students to be quite “rusty” in their Greek and Latin. After describing a conversation with a war veteran who “very graphically” depicted a battle in which he participated, Frieze despondently wondered, “Is war destined to be the normal condition of the country?”

Faculty continued to grapple with the departure of students as the home front became wholly despondent about the direction of the war by 1863. As the University of Michigan prepared for a new term that fall, law professor Thomas Cooley in a letter to Andrew White discussed university news and talked about the losses sustained by the Union army at Gettysburg. In particular, he was dismayed to report the deaths of University of Michigan students serving in the military. “We lost two noble boys from the Law School in it,” Cooley forlornly stated. “One [was] the Colonel of the Michigan 4th - a Dexter boy, & very young, to whom we were much attached,” he continued. “Such men,” insisted Cooley, “I am sure, cannot die in vain.” Questions of what such loss meant for the entire university community reverberated during the longest days of the conflict.

When the country accepted that the war would be long, the University of Michigan, the University of Wisconsin, and Indiana University situated themselves for a lengthy challenge to their survival. They responded instinctively with care to those young students who left for battle. Their concern for the lives of these men did not wane and

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169 CK Adams to Andrew White, September 23, 1862; Henry S. Freize to Andrew White, October 24, 1862, White papers.
170 Thomas Cooley to Andrew White, July 12, 1863, Thomas Cooley papers, 1850-1898, Box 1, Folder 1853-1862; 1863-1864, Bentley Historical Library.
their hope for each young man who desired military glory was that it came after the glory of intellectual achievement. In the early years of the war, the professors at these schools worked tirelessly to stem the tide of students away from their universities and into the army. They bid those who left a sincere goodbye but never yielded in their desire for the students to remain.

The conflict, although distant, changed the professors individually, it changed the groups they interacted with in the community, and it changed how they taught in the classrooms. They saw the effects of war every day as veterans returned from the front with the desire to finish their education, or as students continued to form military companies and drill on campus lawns. The faculty’s first reactions to the war were intense and idealistic. Too much depended on if they could prevent the students from enlisting. Whether in their quest to obtain a military department or their fervent speeches at commencement ceremonies, these university professors tried to control the energy around them. They could not accomplish this entirely; the draw to war and the impact of war were too great. Early in the war, the faculty and communities of the three universities were reactive in their adjustments to the war.

The haste with which the war changed the university was surprising. Professors and university leaders had not anticipated or prepared for such dramatic shifts in enrollment and in the types of courses they would consider offering. The men who taught the classes that were supposed to shape the lives of these promising scholars did not have the background to teach military drill or battle tactics. The war forced professors to become more versatile, more flexible, and to be able to articulate their own individual
ideologies in a way that would further educate, rather than alienate, their charges.

Students who left the University of Michigan, the University of Wisconsin, and Indiana University did so with their understanding of life, society, and themselves inevitably altered by their experiences at their respective institutions. The universities, too, did not easily let go of these young men. They remained aware that part of its history, its essence, was out in the world, tempting fate. At first, the faculty and towns of these three universities remained frozen in the past. This lasted but a brief year or so, until it became quite clear from enrollment numbers that paralysis of action would only end their existence. The home front experience of these Midwestern state universities was at first caught up in emotional rhetoric, but by mid-war became relentless in their determination to flourish despite the obstacles in their way.

As we turn to consider the proactive responses of students, faculty, and the communities to the challenges of their Civil War home fronts, the meaning of Indiana University President Cyrus Nutt’s intense words in his baccalaureate speech at the 1861 graduation become clear: “The great man never sits down idly waiting for some favorable opportunity to commence his career. An all-important element of success is the tact to seize and appropriate the advantages which the present affords.” Nutt implored his students to take control of their lives and not spend too much time looking at what life was not, but making the most of what it was. As the war turned from months into years,
these three universities and the students who chose to stay on their campuses did just that.\footnote{Cyrus Nutt, \textit{Baccalaureate Sermon to the Graduating Class of the Indiana State University, June 23, 1861} (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Journal Company, Printers, 1861), 21.}
PART TWO:

WHEN THEY STAY

“Ours is the harder lot, to stay behind, and envy their noble, patriotic self-sacrifice, and their destined honorable reward, whether the soldier's death, or the conqueror's wreath.”

Palladium, 1861, University of Michigan
CHAPTER FOUR:

EDUCATION AS PATRIOTISM

“The true worker is not the soldier, but the scholar.” ¹⁷²
Marden Sabin, University of Michigan student, 1862

According to the *Peninsular Courier* of Ann Arbor, students on the University of Michigan campus reacted excitedly in February 1862, to the news of General Ulysses S. Grant’s capture of Fort Donelson. All but one student, that is. When confronted by an appointed committee of his peers who demanded an explanation, the law student defended his lack of spirited celebration. The newspaper reported that he “was constitutionally incapable of boo-booing at every telegraph report. As to his sentiments, he had a right to them and he meant to keep them.” This answer was highly unsatisfactory to the other Michigan law students, who promptly hired a notary public to come to campus. The notary administered an oath of allegiance to the young men as a

¹⁷² These were the words used by the *Ann Arbor Journal* to summarize a speech that junior Marden Sabin of Orland, Indiana, gave at the University of Michigan Junior Exhibitions in the spring of 1862. Unfortunately, no record exists as to the content of the speech, but the newspaper editor’s comments read as follows: “He [Marden Sabin] showed what a great and almost unexplored field is opened to the scholar of to day [sic]. By speaking clearly, distinctly, and earnestly, Mr. S. secured the attention of the audience to his forcibly written and well delivered oration.” *Ann Arbor Journal*, April 2, 1862. Interestingly, Sabin left school after his junior year in 1862 and joined the 100th Indiana infantry then returned to the University of Michigan in 1865 to pursue his medical degree. He later graduated with his medical degree from Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. He was a surgeon in Michigan for a number of years and also served two terms as a state senator. University of Michigan, Alumni Records, Necrology File record group, Bentley Historical Library.
way for them to confirm their loyalty to the Union. All of the law students took the oath including the one whose actions initiated the spectacle.\(^{173}\)

Although the patriotism of these University of Michigan college students was so intense and they felt the need to exhibit it in such an explicit manner, not all of these obviously military-age men enlisted in the Union army and went forth onto the field of battle. Many of them surely did; in fact, more than half of the graduating class of 1861 either immediately or eventually served in that capacity. Nonetheless, the university’s enrollment grew during the Civil War. In 1860, the University of Michigan boasted more than 670 students. By the 1865-66 school year, over 1,200 young men registered for classes at Michigan, thus surpassing Harvard as the nation’s largest university. While the war may have dismantled many schools across the country, the University of Michigan moved forward in a remarkable manner.\(^{174}\)

This chapter will consider why students at the University of Michigan, Indiana University and the University of Wisconsin remained in school during the Civil War and then examine how Michigan students during the war expressed their understanding of patriotism, the home front, and their role in the hostilities. The following chapter will delineate the nature of the wartime experience at the University of Wisconsin and Indiana University. In total, these two chapters detail the home front experience of Midwestern university students during the Civil War.

\(^{173}\) *Peninsular Courier*, Ann Arbor, February 18, 1862 quoted in Bald, 21-22.

\(^{174}\) *UM Catalogue*, 1860, 1865.
The Decision to Stay

In 1861, most university students’ only immediate plan in life was to obtain a college degree. But when the guns of war rang out across Charleston harbor, these promising scholars suddenly faced a potentially life-changing decision. Thousands of their peers rushed to enlist in the Union or Confederate armies. Others remained behind, hesitating as to their best course of action. Some wanted desperately to follow in the footsteps of the departing soldiers, while others remained firm in their quest to obtain an education. As the war progressed, many Midwestern university students made conscious decisions to pursue their studies rather than to enlist. These were not always easy choices. The first part of this chapter will examine why students continued to enroll in the universities during the conflict when public rhetoric encouraged all healthy men of their age to enlist.

The first winter of the Civil War convinced many Americans that the conflict would be long and intense. Students at the University of Michigan, Indiana University, and the University of Wisconsin began to understand the potential long-term implications of their decision to remain in school. Their absence from the battlefield often weighed heavily on the shoulders of these promising scholars. Even in the war’s early years, to stay in school fostered a perceptible self-consciousness among those who were quickly realizing that an experience gap was growing between themselves and the other men of their age who fought in the war. However, many students were quite happy to pursue their degrees instead of bearing arms and rarely questioned their choice. Their wartime
experience occurred within the walls of classrooms, on the lawns of campuses, and in the streets of the Midwestern college towns of Ann Arbor, Bloomington, and Madison.

Students in the Midwest remained in school for many reasons including financial situations, parental disapproval, a desire to complete their education, health, family responsibilities, political opposition to the war, or a number of other personal circumstances. Throughout the war, those who stayed on campus watched as classmates joined the Union army; students left to enlist during every academic year while others simply did not return for the next term. Despite this constant reminder of the choice that faced them, many students decided that conditions were not right for their own participation in the conflict. The young men who remained behind were not always as forthcoming about their choice but sufficient examples exist to indicate the motivations that kept young men out of the army and focused on their studies.\footnote{Jennifer R. Green found this to be the case in southern military schools as well. She wrote, “Although most cadets described wanting to go into combat, some certainly did not risk their lives. It was rare that young men wrote explicitly that they wanted to avoid the war.” Green, \textit{Military Education}, 251.}

The early days of the war were exhilarating but naiveté about the nature and consequences of the war blinded the American people. This sense of a call to duty propelled many students to leave school and enlist; others avoided the spectacles surrounding the early days of war due to their intense disapproval of the burgeoning conflict. University of Wisconsin freshman Henry Reid had difficulty coming to terms with the gruesome nature of war. He stayed in school out of personal aversion to the goriness he might encounter and his own moral disagreement with war as a method to solve a problem. “Why do \textbf{Christian people} resort to such terrible means of settling
disputes?” asked Reid in a letter to fellow classmate John Muir in July 1861. “This is called by some a holy war but to my mind,” Reid contended, “there is little of holiness in sending thousands of unprepared sons to eternity through the bloody gates of a Sabbath fought battle.” Muir concurred, writing to his family in 1861 upon the departure of the 7th Wisconsin Regiment for the front, “I suppose you know by the papers how warlike things are here. The seventh regiment is preparing to leave, their appearance is very imposing but how in all the great and showy coverings of war hide its real hideousness…” One year later, Muir still had hard feelings against the act of war. “This war seems farther[sic] from a close than ever,” Muir bemoaned, “How strange that a country with so many schools and churches should be desolated by so unsightly a monster.” Muir represented the genre of man in the Midwest who believed that religion and education should eliminate the need for war. He failed to find redeeming qualities in the act of military bloodshed.176

At first, Henry Reid expressed his displeasure with the new war by acting disinterested in the excitement that consumed others. On April 20, he wrote in his diary that many of the boys at the University of Wisconsin held a meeting to organize a student drilling company but he did not attend it because he chose instead to go fishing. He could not escape the pressure though, as two days later he joined the newly formed University Guards. Still not engaged with all of the hype, Reid was one of only two students who

176 Harvey Reid to John Muir, July 28, 1861, Limbaugh and Lewis, John Muir Papers, 1858-1957. Reid did not return to the University of Wisconsin that fall, but only because his parents moved to Illinois and he could not afford to continue his education. One year later, in the summer of 1862, he enlisted in the army with friends from his childhood hometown of Union Grove, Wisconsin. Reid served in the Union army until the end of the war. Reid diary, 36-37. Muir to David Galloway and Sarah Muir Galloway, Fall 1861, Fall 1862, Limbaugh and Lewis, John Muir Papers, 1858-1957.
showed up to class on Wednesday, April 24. All the others had gone into Madison to bid farewell to the first companies including some students, headed to the front. Reid and the other student then joined their classmates in the town and participated in the ceremony, but later that evening missed drill practice because they were eating dinner. This young man just could not reconcile himself to the winds of war gusting around him.  

This disconnect from what some perceived as the inescapable thrill of war kept students in the classroom throughout the conflict. Francis Thomas, a medical student at the University of Michigan during the war, concurred wholeheartedly with Reid’s sentiments regarding the Civil War. Thomas derived his abhorrence to war from his background as a Quaker and a pacifist. In the spring of 1865, as the war turned decidedly in the Union’s favor, Thomas still held a “deeply fixed testimony against war” that kept him from celebrating recent victories with the rest of the northern population. “This steady onward march of our army to victory,” declared the young man in a letter to a friend, “appears to me nothing marvelous & but little to brag of. The result of the contest was inevitable from the first…time we knew would terminate the strife in favor of the wealth & power.” Thomas could not reconcile himself with the war in order to recognize the benefits identified by others. Instead, he saw only the loss in both lives and morality that he believed war impressed upon a society. Soldiers, Thomas judged, represented “the most degrading profession” available to humankind.  

177 Reid diary, 47-48.
178 Francis Thomas to Beulah L. Haines, March 5, 1865, Francis Thomas Letters, 1864-1865, Bentley Historical Library.
Other students chose school over the war because of a strong belief in the importance of higher education. In November 1863, Charles B. Howell of the University of Michigan wrote to his brother at home, “I am glad to learn you are to attend school the coming winter. The older you grow the more you will see the necessity of getting the best possible education to be obtained.” He advised his brother regarding course selection, including bookkeeping, and discussed his regret over not having studied harder earlier in life. Others pursued advanced education during the war for personal reasons. Charles Dawson, who began law school at the University of Michigan in 1864, recalled later what a positive experience the venture was for him. Dawson and his wife, Jeannette, “spent two very happy years [in Ann Arbor]...To us both, these two years constituted the greenest spot in our lives - a period to which we ever after reverted with pleasure and enthusiasm.”

The ongoing war did not detract from his experience in law school. In fact, it was in school that Dawson found refuge from the “hardships of pioneer existence.” “I recommend,” Dawson contended, “a like experiment to any studious couple who, with a hankering for opportunities lost to youth, begin to feel at thirty that they are getting prematurely old and in danger of an early breakdown. Let them ‘go to school’ and begin life over again!” While her husband kept a busy schedule at the university, consisting of “Debating Society across the street on Tuesday nights, Club Court on Thursdays, Webster Literary Society on Fridays, and Alpha Phi on Saturday nights. Moot Congress Sat. forenoons,” Jeannette attended public lectures, participated in the Ann Arbor social

179 Charles B. Howell to Brother, November 26, 1863, Howell Family Papers, 1856-1884, Bentley Historical Library. Dawson, 71.
scene, and supported local activities to aid soldiers from the area. They both found little about the war that distracted them from the intellectual opportunities available at the university.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, January 18, 1865, Jeannette M. Dawson papers, 1864-1866, Bentley Historical Library.}

One young man who concentrated on his education during the Civil War was Philip Stein. Valedictorian of the class of 1865 at the University of Wisconsin, Stein epitomized the American dream. He and his family immigrated to the United States from Germany when he was nine years old, settling on a farm in Wisconsin. His father was deceased and his mother and older brothers struggled to make ends meet in their new home. Despite these circumstances, the family decided that Philip must earn a college degree as they deemed him the most intelligent member of the family. In the extant letters written between Philip and his family, it was clear that the young man did not consider abandoning his education to become a soldier. His mother pushed him hard in his studies and expected excellent results. “Stay well,” she wrote in 1863, “Continue to learn and study.” Philip did not disappoint, going on to become a successful lawyer in Chicago and judge in Cook county.\footnote{Babette S. Brody, \textit{This was my grandfather: Philip Stein, 1844-1922} (Chicago: B.S. Brody, 1985), 9, 10, 23.}

These Midwestern university students embraced the educational opportunities presented to them. In June 1861, just two months after the beginning of the war, University of Michigan student Stanton B. Thomas, originally from Schoolcraft, Michigan, wrote to his mother about the thrill of finishing his second year of college, “Just think of it I’m a full fledged Junior now. I tell you I feel my importance highly.”
a January 1865 letter to his father, William Boardman wrote from the University of Michigan, “I know and try to appreciate the advantages which I enjoy, and I hope I shall improve so that when we meet again you may think my time &c has not been wholly misspent.” University of Wisconsin student, James L. High, recalled that those who stayed behind embraced their positions on the home front despite hearing rhetoric of the war’s adventures. “And yet,” he argued, “with all these elements to distract us, the general tone and character of college life and work were excellent.” Many who remained in school did so with a continued sense of pride and accomplishment. Their absence from the battlefield, while sometimes the cause of frustration, did not completely dismantle their satisfaction with educational progress.182

Some students remained in school as a temporary way to pass the time while they waited to obtain a desired position in the army. Completing their education was not necessarily a major priority, but serving as a private in the war was not enough to entice them from the classrooms. William Boardman of Dixon, Illinois, spent the latter part of the war at the University of Michigan hoping for an appointment to the United States Military Academy at West Point. He was a freshman in the fall of 1864. While engaging in the usual activities at the school such as joining a social fraternity and participating in fights between classes, Boardman expressed much anxiety about his future. He wrote regularly to his father inquiring about the possibility of a West Point appointment but also offered to leave the university and go with his father to California or Arkansas to help

182 S.B. Thomas to Mother, June 23, 1861, Nathan M. Thomas papers Box 1 Folder: Thomas, Correspondence, 1860-1864, Bentley Historical Library. High address, 195, William Boardman to his father, January 20, 1865, Boardman Family Papers, 1864-1865, Bentley Historical Library.
him improve his financial situation. “Unless your circumstances should change,” Boardman contended, “it does not seem to me best to continue in college longer than this year, although I would give a great deal to be able to graduate.” Despite being seemingly interested in obtaining his degree, Boardman continued to be vexed by the fact that he was not doing anything related to the war, nor was he contributing to his family’s prosperity. It became clear by March 1865 that his hopes for an appointment to West Point would not materialize, a realization that deeply disappointed the young man. “I had almost begun to think of it as a sure thing,” he wrote to his father. He could not help but despair that “hope, long deferred, maketh the heart sick.” Boardman returned to the University of Michigan for his sophomore year and graduated in 1868.\(^{183}\)

Ambrose Cunning aspired to a similar position as did Boardman during the war. Cunning enrolled at Indiana University and taught school between academic terms while composing a regular stream of letters to various state officials requesting an appointment to West Point. Ultimately disappointed in his pursuit, Cunning moved through his education with a strong sense of the distance between himself and the Civil War. “The boys that are in the army are this blustery\[sic\] evening under cotton tents,” Cunning noted in his diary in November 1862, “while I am snugly ensconsed\[sic\] as petagogue\[sic\] of McDonald's Academy.” As his “Aim in Life” included the goal of becoming “a legislator for my country in the house of representatives,” this young student saw the West Point appointment as one path in that direction. When that door remained

closed for him, Cunning stuck with his education and eventually became a lawyer and a Democratic politician.¹⁸⁴

A small but vocal segment of young men on campus eventually identified themselves as Copperheads and remained in school because of their ideological opposition to the government. Copperheads denoted the nickname given to those northerners who were known as Peace Democrats. They sought a negotiated peace with the Confederacy and called for strict adherence to the constitution including its protections of slavery. Copperheads often avoided military service as a way to express their opposition to the war and sometimes drew hostile criticism from pro-Union students and the community at large. Michigan law student Gideon Winan Allen embraced the ideology of the Peace Democrat wing of his party and called for an immediate end to the war. He saw the conflict only through that lens. “I hardly know whether to rejoice or not at McClellan's removal,” Allen wrote in November 1862, “Anything which will tend to an honorable conclusion of our difficulties, is matter of rejoicing.” His persistent disappointment in the continuance of the war combined with his intense disapproval of emancipation colored his perception of the nation’s conflict. Regarding a speech given by the university president in late 1862, Allen complained, “every body[sic] must talk about the “nigger,” it seems as though folks had forgotten everything else they ever knew.” For Allen, the war was a tragic betrayal of the constitution and the goals of the founding fathers; he abhorred abolitionists and all who supported Lincoln’s administration.


The Civil War took many young men away from classrooms in the Midwest but the ones who stayed mostly kept to their books and took part in the home front of their college campuses. As the following discussions will show, the nature of these wartime experiences varied significantly among those pursuing their degrees at the University of Michigan, the University of Wisconsin, and Indiana University. At the University of Michigan, students began the war with feelings that bordered on shame regarding their presence in Ann Arbor but they quickly altered their perspective. Eventually, they constructed an ideology to defend their positions by arguing that obtaining a college degree was as patriotic as becoming a soldier. At the University of Wisconsin and Indiana University, the students had little time to propagate such discourse. In Madison, students engaged with the war through the massive military camp that appeared on the edge of town and spent numerous hours listening to the state legislature mobilize the state for war. Their understanding of the war came through the eyes of the center of their state government and by the plummeting enrollments on campus. Indiana University students lived a microcosm of the Civil War within the halls of their institution. Engaged in a battle of wills with the faculty and Board of Trustees over perceived violations of their literary societies’ rights, they articulated their own experience through the vocabulary of the nation’s conflict. Each of these home fronts developed as the war progressed in ways
that shaped the students’ understanding of the war and the nature of what it meant to be a citizen and leader in the United States.

The University of Michigan: Education as Patriotism

Students who stayed at the University of Michigan, the University of Wisconsin, and Indiana University adapted the nature of their education to address issues that the war raised. In doing so, they coped with the variety of obstacles and changes created by the war as opportunities to enhance their leadership skills and demonstrate their patriotism on the home front. This chapter concludes with an analysis of the wartime experience of students at the University of Michigan, where the young men on that campus shifted during the war from ambivalence about enlisting to a notion of patriotism that embraced education as the equivalent of military service. In this way, they were then able to justify the expressions of loyalty available to them. This segment explores the change that occurred in student perspectives on patriotism by the middle of the war, and then analyzes the ways in which students utilized university resources to “practice” for what they believed would be their eventual positions on the national stage.

At the University of Michigan, ambivalence characterized students’ thoughts on military duty in the early years of the war. However, by mid-war, their self-doubt disappeared, and they became inclined to rationalize their continued enrollment by arguing that education would serve as preparation for their future leadership of the nation. They recognized that there would be a period of postwar reconstruction and intended to use their schooling to build the foundation for their role in that next era. University of
Michigan students employed their fraternities or literary societies as vehicles through which to practice debating decisions of the national government, including passing judgment on military matters. Even if these men did not intend to become national politicians, they believed that the best citizens in any profession were active and well-educated political participants. They valued education as the primary tool for shaping the general population into a loyal citizenry and viewed their own intellectual development as the first step in being able to teach the masses. To University of Michigan students, this was how they contributed to the war; as one student recalled, “The dominant characteristic of life at the University in those days was the developing patriotism.” Their definition of patriotism centered on education, rather than on soldiering.¹⁸⁶

After the war began in earnest, the students became aware that soldiers and other civilians might question their choice to remain at the University of Michigan. Self-consciously, the fraternities published their annual magazine the Palladium in December 1861 with the following editorial: “Amid the din of a nation at war…it is not without some misgivings that the PALLADIUM ventures to present its humble attractions to the world. We are deeply impressed with the fact that we belong to the class of “nobodies,” who stay at home; and with all-becoming modesty, we publish our names, merely to satisfy agonizing friends and parents that we have not all ‘gone to the wars.’” A later Palladium editorial by Lincoln T. Farr of Michigan and Edward D. W. Kinne of New York, submitted, “Many whose names the Palladium of ‘62 proudly published to the

¹⁸⁶ Campbell, 15.
College world as among the ardent devotees at our “shrine of Learning” will now be found in the ranks of the army. A less warlike, perchance less patriotic and ambitious class, still remain at the University.” These early years revealed that there was a sense of embarrassment running through students, enough that they felt the necessity to articulate it through a written medium that would be saved for posterity. These thoughts were likely representative of the student body, as egregious distortions would have incurred the disapproval of others enrolled. In this way, the Palladium editors succeeded in reflecting the perspectives of their fellow students and giving readers some idea of the state of affairs on the Ann Arbor campus.\(^{187}\)

Students who remained in school understood that their presence on campus was disappointing to outsiders. They also appeared conscious of the long-term impact of their absence from the army. Their friends in uniform faced an armed enemy who threatened the future of the nation; theirs was a journey that invited potential glory, adventure, and death. While important professionally, life at the universities did not offer such grand transformative possibilities. Still, the students felt their circumstances warranted consideration. In a December 1861 Palladium editorial, University of Michigan students argued about those remaining on campus, “Ours is the harder lot, to stay behind, and

\(^{187}\) Palladium, 1861, 1863. While available evidence seems to indicate that the students were debating their role in the war among themselves, and writing primarily for an audience of their peers, it is also possible that they were reacting to pressure to enlist from the outside. Whether they were feeling compelled to join the military effort from fellow students, from Ann Arbor residents, or from friends and family at home, it remains plausible that some portion of their concern for justifying their decision to remain in school stems from the very publicized pressure that the home front was placing on all able-bodied men when the war first broke out. For more, see James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1988), 311; Gerald F. Linderman, *Embattled Courage: The Experience of Combat in the American Civil War* (New York: The Free Press, 1987, 87-90; Jeanie Attie, *Patriotic Toil: Northern Women and the American Civil War* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1998), 28. Regarding re-enlistment pressure, see John Robertson, “Re-enlistment Patterns of Civil War Soldiers,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* Vol. 32, No. 1 (Summer 2001), 15-35.
envy their noble, patriotic self-sacrifice, and their destined honorable reward, whether the soldier's death, or the conqueror's wreath.” Students recognized that their decision to pursue personal achievement at the expense of partaking in the nation’s historic event would forever differentiate them from their former peers who served in the army. At this early point in the war, they conceived of their path in school as much less inspirational and they invoked a discourse of self-pity for their position. Whether their friends lived or died in the service, the students who stayed in school understood that their home front experience might pale in comparison to the achievements of the young men who chose the battlefield over their books.188

Instead of making excuses or explaining why they stayed in school, the students who remained felt that it was their duty to assure departing student-soldiers of their approval. On October 4, 1861, Alpha Nu records included a note regarding the resignation of Albert Nye from the presidency of the literary society. The secretary wrote in the minutes, “The Society evidently regrets the stern necessity, which impels Mr. Nye to this step; but [at] the same time we are proud to number him among the defenders of our beloved country.” It was also not without personal reflection that the remaining students bade goodbye to their friends. In December 1861, the editors of the Palladium published an army list, to which they pointed “with pride, as an evidence of the interest that the University of Michigan takes in this struggle.” Unselfish support, however, was apparently difficult. Most expressions of encouragement to the departing student-soldiers consisted of comments regarding the difficulty that remaining behind caused for those

188 *Palladium*, 1861.
still in school. “We miss them in the class room, the debate, and the social circle - and we watch their careers with jealous eyes, both for the bright predictions we have made for them, and the honor of the University entrusted to them,” declared the editors.189

Early in the war, the students were more overt in their acknowledgment of the space that separated them from their soldier-brethren. Many of the young men who returned to the university in the fall of 1861 would have known those who chose to forfeit their education to join the army. They were classmates, fraternity brothers, and friends. By the later years, it was not as often that fellow students left school for the battlefield. Instead, most who chose to enlist never began at the university in the first place. Thus, the group of young men who toiled over their books instead of marching with their weapons seemed to have felt further removed from outside judgment than those students who matriculated in late 1861. By the fall of 1861, most of the students who were still enrolled in the universities were there of their own choice. However, during the course of the school year, additional students decided that the current state of affairs required their assistance in the fields of battle rather than in classrooms. Although their departure reinforced an awareness that others were staying, those who remained acknowledged the student-soldiers’ reasons for choosing the war and articulated strong support of that decision. At the University of Michigan, students expressed their encouragement of their classmates’ decision to leave both within their own social circles and outwardly to the public. Through these statements, students revealed their belief that the relationships forged at the university influenced the wartime experiences of their peers. Their

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189 October 4, 1861, Alpha Nu minutes. Palladium, 1861.
declarations regarding their classmates’ decision to go to war presupposed that the newly enlisted soldiers would put weight on the judgment of their college friends.

In addition to the internal struggle that they felt pressed to explain to others, students at the University of Michigan also had to address the way they were preparing for war on campus. “To our friends who may be surprised at the absence of all military organizations, suffice it to say, that we are possessing our souls in patience until the arrival of a new military professor,” explained the students. The Board of Regents had passed a resolution earlier in 1861 to pursue the creation of a military department and while waiting for that situation to flesh out, the students felt that the pause in their participation in drilling companies was a “necessary delay” given the circumstances. Their defensiveness of the situation was palpable, as they wrote in their annual publication that they hoped their explanation “will account for all apparent deficiencies in that respect at present.”

The students hoped to have a professor with extensive military experience rather than the “mere drill-master” provided by President Tappan upon the commencement of war. The three student companies formed after the fall of Fort Sumter “served their purpose admirably, and supplied an immediate want, that of drill.” Such experience “enabled those who went from us at that time to take the positions which belong to those whom a long, arduous course of discipline had fitted to lead, rather than to follow.” Nevertheless, outsiders must have questioned the quiet coming from campus, as the fervor with which University of Michigan students drilled in the earliest days of war

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190 Palladium, 1861.
seemed to have diminished. The students attempted to reassure the public that their intentions were to continue to train for war but they deemed mediocre drilling not worthy of their time. They instead chose to do nothing until the state provided funding for experienced military professors. Thus, even as early as the first winter of war, the students who remained on campus blended the war into their paradigm of education. They were no longer driven by a passion for war, but felt that only methodical, professional instruction should shape their wartime preparation.\footnote{Ibid.}

It was nearly impossible for college students to avoid constant reminders of the war in which they were not fighting. Nevertheless, they found humor in certain situations. In chapel one morning in 1863, President Henry P. Tappan spoke at length about the current military situation, including the addition of 40,000 soldiers to General Joseph Hooker’s army to be on hand when he engaged the Confederates at the Battle of Chancellorsville. In calling these new troops “fresh men,” Tappan received a resounding cheer from the freshman class, who took great pleasure in twisting his words. As Sherman’s march to the sea reached its successful conclusion, professors took class time to discuss the war with their students. Arthur Hill, a junior at the time of Sherman’s campaign in late 1864, recalled one day when Professor of Astronomy James C. Watson hailed the general’s methods and spent the entire class period comparing him favorably to other historic military leaders, including Napoleon. Hill remembered:

It was no day to challenge such contentions, and the students were not ill pleased at the diversion, for at the end of the recitation hour only did he quit his theme, when he
said quietly, "Gentlemen, I presume you have the lesson today. You will take (so many) pages tomorrow.

Students could not escape the impact of the war on their campuses. It shaped the way they interpreted lessons, gave them a new paradigm in which to theorize and apply learned concepts, and affected the framework of the lectures given by their professors.¹⁹²

Michigan students struggled with how to participate in the Union effort from within the confines of Ann Arbor. An author in the Literary Adelphi Society journal, the "Hesperian," lamented in his 1862 article entitled "The Soldier," "...Half a million and more are in the field and we are left behind. The great struggle for liberty and the Constitution is being fought; and we are quietly looking on expecting & hoping to enjoy the triumph without helping to gain the victory." An Alpha Nu member remarked in a welcome message at the start of a new term that the young men returned to school in the fall “fresh from the scenes and pleasures of home aloof from the cares of political anxiety, & far from the dangers of the ‘tented field.’” Medical student Francis Thomas, a Quaker from Maryland, referred to the war in a letter as, “the great game on the chessboard of the union,” which “those of us who stand off out of danger” could only follow through newspapers. These young men recognized that their involvement in the nation’s challenge would be from a distance.¹⁹³


¹⁹³ February 7, 1862, Literary Adelphi (University of Michigan) Records, 1857-1939, Box 1, Hesperian 1861-1862, Bentley Historical Library (hereafter Literary Adelphi, Hesperian). November 6, 1863, Alpha Nu, The Sibyl). The Hesperian and the Sibyl were bound volumes kept by the literary societies in the fashion of the day. These were internal literary papers that were read aloud within the society meetings on a regular basis. They were not intended for outside eyes, nor were they published for public consumption. They were often collections of essays, poems, arguments, or other literary expressions meant
Many University of Michigan students thus demonstrated their patriotism through their sense of duty on the home front. As one Alpha Nu member asserted, the students understood that “to be hopeful is our duty.” The editor of the “Hesperian” wrote, in 1862, that although they could not directly witness the war and feel the emotions that accompany victory or defeat, “does it follow from this, that we can take no part in the conflict? that we have no duties to perform? No! certainly not. Every American of today has a duty to perform. The present should be a time of labor, of activity, of industry, of economy & of self-sacrifice.” In his view, the home front was responsible for providing for the needs of the soldiers in the fields and of the families who were left behind with potentially decreased resources. He implored his fellow classmates to assist, both financially and emotionally, those neighbors whose sons, fathers, brothers, and husbands were off fighting. These actions would fulfill their “duty” and “bring honor to the American cause.”¹⁹⁴

One of the ways in which Michigan students felt they were supplying assistance to their nation was through the promotion of education. They consistently asserted that education could aid the country in its current plight and decrease the chances of future national crises. This line of thinking provided both a justification for the students’ personal choices regarding enlistment and helped them to define their contribution to the nation’s cause. In the fall of 1865, when discussing questions of Reconstruction, Alpha Nu members reasoned that the ignorance of southerners was one of the most influential

factors in causing the war and strongly suggested that the national government focus on educating the southern populace for “for our _own_ safety[sic]...for their _own_ good.” “Education is the cornerstone of a republican government,” the article continued, “when the poor whites and blacks are able to read and understand loyal papers, _then_ they will be _loyal_ citizens.” The students even declared that placing an army in the former Confederacy to enforce Reconstruction would be uncalled for “if the masses are _properly educated_.” As a part of their own growing belief that education defined their respective contributions to the war, these young men insisted on formal learning as crucial for the rest of the American populace.\(^{195}\)

The students pursued this spread of education within their own home front in Ann Arbor by inviting speakers to address the important topics of the day. Faculty, students, and residents attended the presentations, which were often held in a local church. In 1864, the Students’ Lecture Association hosted Edmund Kirke, author of _My Southern Friends_. Kirke came to Ann Arbor and gave a speech entitled “The Southern Whites.” Benjamin F. Taylor, a journalist for Chicago’s _Evening Journal_, came that same year to talk about his observations at Missionary Ridge. The students took their task very seriously and in fact stationed themselves around the room armed with clubs in order to allow the controversial abolitionist Wendell Phillips to get through his entire oration in 1862. Even if the young men could not travel south to begin educating the masses

\(^{195}\) May 8, 1863, October 21, 1865, Alpha Nu, _The Sibyl_.


immediately, they adhered to their convictions by offering intellectual programs to those in the university community.\textsuperscript{196}

Another active way that university students participated in the home front was in grieving for former classmates who perished in battle. The young men lamented individually over news of the deaths of loved ones but also publically honored and recognized the legacy of those related to the university. This was not something that the faculty did; it was an independent action of the students. Their presumption was that their relationship to a fallen student-soldier was one of such importance that they were expected, and they desired to as well, offer a tribute to their friend. In doing so, these students claimed a close relationship and a significant role in the deceased soldiers’ lives. They assumed that the public should hear their voices in relation to these specific deaths and published their honorary tributes in local newspapers of their college towns and also in the hometowns of the student-soldiers. This action demonstrated how these students actively participated in the social customs that war provoked on the home front.\textsuperscript{197}

The students of the University of Michigan emphasized the fallen soldiers as students and friends as well as combatants for the Union cause. Joseph Stanfield left

\textsuperscript{196} \textit{Palladium}, 1863, 1864, 1865. Bald, 23.

\textsuperscript{197} Drew Gilpin Faust’s research on the “work of death” in the Civil War offers insight into these actions. The students’ resolutions, in this case, confirm her conclusions that funerals “provided the opportunity for survivors to enact – and thus in some measure assuage – their grief, as well as to honor the deceased.” The students had to label themselves with their “new status” as mourners, grieving over their fallen classmates. “The soldier’s death no longer belonged just to that individual and his family but was also to be understood and possessed by the community – even the nation – at large,” Faust contends. The examples at the University of Michigan and, as discussed later, at Indiana University fall into this category. The students tried to come to terms with their loss and did so by vocally honoring the deceased soldier’s relationship with them. Faust also notes that, especially early in the war, these expressions of grief were also “displays of patriotism.” Midwestern university students used their resolutions of grief to highlight their own devotion to the cause as well. Drew Gilpin Faust, \textit{This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War} (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008), 144, 153, 163-5.
school after one year to fight with the 16th Michigan Regiment and died in 1862 at the
Seven Days’ Battle. The students at the University of Michigan published the following
resolutions in the *Michigan Argus* newspaper of Ann Arbor:

> Resolved - That in the death of our classmate we have lost
> a member, who was, as a friend kind and true, whose name
> we shall ever hold in affectionate remembrance, as a
> student, faithful and assiduous, as a scholar, thorough and
> efficient, as a Christian sincere and earnest, as a soldier,
> energetic and brave, fired with a patriotism which abated
> not until he had offered his life upon the altar of his
> country.

Those who remained in school praised their former classmate in all of the ways that they
knew him: friend, student, scholar, and Christian. They could relate to these aspects of his
memory. Only when they paid respect to Stanfield’s days in the Union army did they
speak from a place of inexperience. Yet, they offered up the words in reverence for the
courageous act of their friend.198

Albert Nye, one of the original and esteemed student company captains, died in
battle in 1862. His passing prompted his Greek fraternity Beta Theta Pi at the University
of Michigan to adopt resolutions into their records to honor the fallen soldier. In this case,
the tribute highlighted the difficulties that students on the home front had in relating to
those who fought in the war instead of staying in school. They described Nye as a hero
not only because he fought in the war until his death, but also because he was able to
withstand “the entreaties of College friends and classmates to return home and join them
in the scenes and festivities of Commencement,” which were “most urgent.” This
comment was in reference to the fact that Nye enlisted in the Union army prior to his

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198 *Michigan Argus*, October 10, 1862.
graduation and did not intend to return home to participate in the ceremony. While Nye’s fraternity brothers recognized that he “[clung] until the very last … to that holy cause to which his loyal and brave heart was wedded,” they almost chided their former classmate for putting his military service before his alma mater. The Board of Regents authorized the faculty to bestow the degree on Nye and others in his similar situation, but Nye died before learning of the news. It was telling that in attempting to praise the memory of their martyred friend, the students of this University of Michigan fraternity found their repeated requests that Nye find a way to leave his post to participate in commencement to serve as evidence of his dedication to the national cause. However, even as they acknowledged his patriotism, the students obviously deemed the events revolving around the life of the university as worth the soldier’s consideration, if not temporary absence from the front.  

The manner in which they responded to former students who died in battle illustrated the depth to which students believed and appropriated their developing ideology regarding their contribution to the nation’s conflict. As the war passed its midpoint, the persistent theme in the students’ discourse on patriotism, duty, and honor revolved specifically around their individual education at the University of Michigan. These young men believed that they were to become members of the future generation of leaders who would help the nation reconcile after the war. As the conflict progressed, the students spent less time bemoaning their dilemma regarding the choice between education and military duty and more time boasting of the invaluable role they would

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199 n.d., Beta Theta Pi, Lambda Chapter (University of Michigan) records, 1845-1931, Box 1, 1st Folder, Bentley Historical Library.
play in returning the country to greatness. In 1863, the *Palladium* describes the students as “gratified, that in this the hour of our country’s peril…the sons of Michigan, and of her sister States gathered together at this ‘Western Athens,’ are not found recreant to their sacred duties and obligations, as scholars, true patriots, and as sharers of the common blessings that our Government bestows…” The fraternity members proclaimed confidently toward the end of the war that despite the failure to yet achieve peace, “the country is alive to her educational interests, and the coming generation will not be wanting in strong and cultivated minds…” William B. Hendryx filled his *Sibyl* article with inspirational prose about the destiny that undoubtedly lay ahead for University of Michigan graduates: “A shattered society will have to be reconstructed… To shape the future destinies of this nation aright we shall need men of sterling worth and integrity…always supporting the cause of truth and justice upon the shoulders of the young men of to-day fall the burden. Let us prepare to receive it.”

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200 Philip Shaw Paludan may give us insight into what provoked this growing confidence in earning a college education rather than going to war. In his seminal work on the North, Paludan asserts that the passage of the Morrill Act in 1862 “increased the trained leadership of the nation and thereby encouraged the continued growth for the economy. Both were endorsed by the deep patriotism shown in existing colleges and universities of the nation.” The Morrill Act granted each state large tracts of public land to sell for profit that would in turn be used to fund higher education specifically aimed at agricultural programs, mechanical arts, and military tactics. As is usually the case when referring to colleges during this era, Paludan relies on statistics from the aristocratic universities such as Harvard, Yale, Amherst, Bowdoin, etc. to make his point about the high rate of educated participation in the military, but does mention that Michigan “was unique among larger schools in gaining students.” Sources from faculty and the Board of Regents at the University of Michigan do indeed reveal an intense preoccupation during the war with obtaining the grant money from the Morrill Act in order to expand their institution. Ultimately, the money went instead to Michigan State University in East Lansing, as is examined in Chapter 7 of this dissertation. It is plausible then that Michigan students were well aware of the increased attention on colleges during the civil war and embraced the rhetoric surrounding the Morrill Act to help build their justification for the link between patriotism and education. The interest of the government in improving and enriching higher education during a war might very well have given the students the impression that their contribution to the nation’s future was equal to that of the soldiers who were fighting at the same time. However, nowhere in
Rather than portraying patriotism as purely the province of the soldier, many young men at the University of Michigan defined it in alternate ways that mirrored their own home front experience. They quickly recognized that soldiers had the opportunity to earn glory and prove their manhood on the battlefield so they adjusted the way that they depicted their own learning experiences in the classroom to incorporate the patriotic and manly qualities they believed Americans valued in soldiers. These promising scholars had an opportunity to be a part of something thriving; they took pride in their personal potential and the success of their university as a way to offset any criticism that might come their way for not enlisting in the army. Their devotion to their country became over the course of the years indistinguishable from pride in their university.

In some cases, students went so far as to compare the growth in size and prestige of the University of Michigan to the fate or progress of their nation at war; they believed that their patriotic duty included being a part of the university’s success. Students sometimes implied that this version of duty was a contribution equal to that of the soldier. Historian Melinda Lawson argues that Abraham Lincoln believed “the blood sacrifice of the soldiers defined the highest type of patriotism.” Surely, Michigan college students heard his rhetoric and understood how their president characterized national duty. However, Lawson further states, “the notion that loyalty to country entailed sacrifice did

available sources from students found to-date do they directly mention the Morrill Act or the struggle that the university was going through in the state legislature to obtain those funds. As intriguing as it would be to identify the passage of the Morrill Act as the impetus for growing student confidence, the sources do not allow that conclusion at this time. Philip Shaw Paludan, “A People’s Contest”: The Union and Civil War, 1861-1865 (New York: Harper & Row, 1988),132-3. Palladium, 1863, 1865. May 8, 1863. Alpha Nu, The Sibyl.
not always come easily to Americans.” Despite widespread encouragement to join the ranks and serve their country, University of Michigan students managed to assure themselves that their collegiate training also distinguished them as patriots.201

As the University of Michigan students gradually formulated ways to associate themselves with the attributes assigned to soldiers, they mixed the praise they offered of those who left to become soldiers with reassurances that the school and the men who stayed were also flourishing. In the fall of 1861, Illinois native Theodore Hurd and Reinzi Baker of Michigan, serving as editors of the *Palladium*, offset their inner struggle about remaining at home by linking their personal sense of patriotism with the success of the university: “Our corps of professors is full, classes well nigh swell to their accustomed numbers, and society halls are crowded. But that this is to be imputed to our prosperity, and not to our lack of patriotism, let our ‘Army List’ show.” By insisting that same year, “Ours is the harder lot,” the students who stayed behind initially expressed frustration at their position as outsiders to the country’s martial endeavors, but began to articulate their own claim for recognition by invoking the achievements of their college.202

Indeed, by 1863 students came to assert that their association with the University of Michigan was an accomplishment equal to that of valor on the battlefield. *Palladium* editors Farr and Kinne boasted that year that though some considered the students a “less

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202 *Palladium*, 1861.
patriotic and ambitious class” than those in the ranks of the army, “…the fact that our zeal continues unabated, the labors of our several Professors untiring and successful, and that our number, although somewhat diminished, exceeds that of many institutions located nearer the Atlantic; - these facts speak eloquently in commendation of the present flourishing condition, and the encouraging prospects of our University.” The achievements of the university during the war reassured Michigan students that they were also a part of a special era in a special place; they grew convinced that their involvement with the institution in Ann Arbor represented a unique and distinct experience unavailable to those off fighting the war.\textsuperscript{203}

Additionally, they linked the courage demonstrated by former students on the battlefield as inspiring those who remained in Ann Arbor to rededicate themselves to their studies in order to prove that “college life has not yet ‘begun to swoon.’” These descriptive choices highlighted the negotiation underway by the students to link themselves with the manly characteristics ascribed to their compatriots on the battlefield. The students refuted any suggestions that remaining on campus challenged their manhood. They described life on campus in ways that conjured images of strength and endurance, and used gendered language to emphasize further that their continued presence on the home front was not feminizing them. In fact, they shaped an argument by which their education provided them with the manly qualities that they perceived the public might feel they could only obtain by fighting. Thus, their decision to remain in school affected the “quest for manhood.” Historian Lorien Foote calls this pursuit “a

\textsuperscript{203} \textit{Palladium}, 1863.
central question…in the Civil War era” and argues that manhood “indicated an achievement rather than an innate nature that all biological males possessed.” These students surely felt that their education symbolized a significant level of personal accomplishment, but the war complicated this notion. Suddenly, the successes for which they strove may not have been the feats and triumphs valued by the American people.  

In 1864, this assertion about the increasing prestige of the university became more explicit. Confidence replaced self-consciousness regarding the attention of these young men to their education rather than to their possible national military duty in wartime. “Though the nation may be struggling for life,” stated that year’s Palladium editors, Scovel Stacy of Michigan and Schuyler Grant of Connecticut, “though the din of arms and roar of battle may greet us from without, though the noble sons of our Alma Mater are falling by scores in defence[sic] of their country's flag, yet the University of Michigan rides proudly on, buffeting the stormy waves, acquiring continually, strength, beauty and renown, an honor to the State, a center of learning for the great north-west, and an object of pride and reverence to her sons.” This kind of prose encompassed the characteristics of manhood so sought by the young men of this generation; a university education then symbolized more than intellectual accomplishment. It provided strength, honor, pride, and beauty – all attributes of gentlemen and, specifically during the Civil War, terms used to pay tribute to Union officers and gloried soldiers.

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205 Palladium, 1864.

A song written by student Arthur H. Snow for the 1864-65 Palladium illustrates this argument.

Song for the University. By Arthur H. Snow, ’65.
Soon after the Union victory in 1865, the *Palladium*’s editor, Henry Smith of Johnstown, Ohio, spoke even more passionately regarding the advantages derived from an education at the University of Michigan. He argued that no school offered a better opportunity for someone who wanted to participate in the “profound knowledge and deep research” that would be necessary during Reconstruction. “No period of a young man’s

Air – “Marseilles Hymn.”

Come, jolly boys, and lift your voices,
Ring out, ring out, one hearty song;
Praise her, in whom each son rejoices,
And let the notes be loud and long.
’Tis Alma Mater wakes the spirit,
And prompts the strain of harmony—
Oh, sing to her triumphantly!
The glorious theme—do ye not hear it?

**Chorus**—Hurrah! Hurrah! ye sons
By Alma Mater blest!
All hail! All hail! her honored name,
The pride of all the West!

A thousand tongues, to swell the chorus,
Shall proudly join with us to-day;
While thousands more, who’ve gone before us,
Will gladly echo back the lay:
And many lands shall know the glory
That crowns the brow of Michigan,
And greet the light in Learning’s van,
The fair Ann Arbor, rich in story.

**Chorus**—Hurrah! Hurrah! etc.

So, now our friends are hither turning
An anxious and expectant eye:
Are we, all base ambition spurning,
On fire with aspirations high?
Oh, earnestly the world is pleading
For men of strong and valiant soul,—
Then let us strive for honor’s goal,
Our country’s youth in triumph leading.

**Chorus**—Hurrah! Hurrah! etc.

By Alma Mater’s precepts guided,
We’ll boldly tread life’s rugged way;
Nor faint, nor falter, though derided,
Or foes our course should wish to stay:
And in our hearts shall perish never
Our love for her, whose halls we’ve trod,—
Her praise we’ll sing till ‘neath the sod
Our voice is silent and forever.

**Chorus**—Hurrah! Hurrah! etc.

*Palladium for 1865*, Ann Arbor, 1865.
life is so important and critical as his years at college,” the editor insisted, “Here is the turning point to future prosperity and usefulness, or to oblivion.” According to these ambitious young Americans, four years spent in the military, defending the nation’s Constitution, did not apparently measure up to a college education. And by way of further convincing themselves that their efforts in the classroom were as demanding and manly as time spent in uniform, the editor remarked that veterans who enrolled in the university in the fall of 1865 “have proved themselves as strenuous in the pursuits of education as they were valiant in war.” It was the returning soldiers who would have to prove their mettle to the already-enrolled students, rather than vice versa.\footnote{Palladium, 1866.}

During the war years, University of Michigan extracurricular clubs and organizations threw themselves into their patriotic public responsibilities as this ideology developed further. Literary societies especially concentrated their attention on current events, routinely staging rigorous debates and formal votes about contentious topics of the day. Essentially, University of Michigan students utilized these venues as a means by which to practice and hone their leadership skills. Their literary society debates allowed them to examine and pass judgment on the political, economic, and military decisions made by the federal government. By pretending to stand in the shoes of a Union general, President Lincoln, or Congress, these young men rehearsed how they would scrutinize and react to similar situations and began to build their agendas and ideologies regarding the future direction of the country. The changing patterns of their views also revealed
how Michigan students actively shaped their involvement in the war despite their distance from the battlefield.

When debating current events, members of the Alpha Nu and Literary Adelphi literary societies explored questions that would have faced them had they been leaders in the national government, their own towns, or churches at that time. Their belief that an educated citizenry would guide the masses through Reconstruction drove their consistent return to these issues. They argued, played devil’s advocate, prepared and gave speeches, and conducted their meetings in a manner that they felt would prepare them for their future responsibilities. Admittedly, throughout the period, these young men also entertained topics that had nothing to do with the war. They frequently deliberated on subjects such as the character of Oliver Cromwell, the intentions of the Church of Rome, the historical benefit of the Crusades, and whether “man is greater in his affection than in his intellect.” The literary societies chose subjects from a broad spectrum of personal enhancement, economics, political history, and religion, to name a few. The propriety of protective tariffs, for example, repeatedly appeared for debate. But their regular interest in contemporary themes of national concern demonstrated that they considered themselves involved in the affairs of the nation and engaged in those real-world situations as best they could from Ann Arbor. Although these young men agreed that their education and participation in debate societies like the Alpha Nu or Literary Adelphi shaped them for their inevitable positions among the highly-regarded of their generation, these two groups came to represent the two opposing factions of the Republican party. By the end of the war, the University of Michigan sent into the world educated and talented
men who would essentially populate at least two of the major viewpoints on the political landscape.\textsuperscript{207}

The Alpha Nu Literary Society followed a largely conservative Republican ideology. In 1860, the young men agreed that the concept of popular sovereignty was “unsound in theory and unsafe in practice.” Following Lincoln’s inauguration, they called for his government to end the secession movement with military force. They supported the idea that the southern states ought to be coerced into conceding to the laws of the country as interpreted by the Republican party. Along the way, the new government could eradicate the nation of dreaded concepts like popular sovereignty. Students also undertook debates about major national political decisions, from the \textit{Trent Affair} to foreign intervention in the war. As late as March 1863, Alpha Nu students resisted the idea that aid from England or France was “desirable.” They even went so far as to approve of Lincoln’s limitations on the northern press and his decision to withhold speedy trials for some of those arrested and imprisoned during the war.\textsuperscript{208}

Military matters held special interest for these young men. They debated the propriety of prisoner exchanges with the Confederacy, the decision to remove General George B. McClellan, and General William T. Sherman’s order to evacuate civilians in Atlanta. Abstract military ideas also piqued their attention. In May 1863, the students defeated a resolution that “a monarchy is better adapted than a Republic for successfully

\textsuperscript{207}June 14, 1861, June 6, 1862, March 3, 1865, Alpha Nu Minutes; May 29, 1863, Literary Adelphi (University of Michigan) records, 1857-1939, Box 1, Minutes, 1857-1891 (hereafter Literary Adelphi minutes, 1857-1891). See, for example, December 7, 1860, April 27, 1865, Alpha Nu Minutes; May 20, 1864, Literary Adelphi minutes, 1857-1891.

\textsuperscript{208}March 16, 1860, March 8, 1861, February 21, 1862, March 21, 1863, January 30, 1863, March 21, 1862, May 30, 1862, Alpha Nu Minutes.
waging war.” Their belief in the “American experiment” thus did not waver, even in the face of civil war. The next year, students disagreed that “victories are due more to the bravery of the soldier than to the skill of the general.” One wonders whether their former classmates-turned-soldiers would have agreed. Foreign policy also received thoughtful attention; in April 1865, for example, the students resolved that the United States government should enforce the Monroe Doctrine against Maximilian’s regime in Mexico. Supremely confident of America’s potential to sustain its own freedoms, the students of Alpha Nu expanded their perception of their country to include expanding its power to protect the freedoms of others.209

The Alpha Nu students’ dedication to Lincoln was unwavering and they agreed that he should retain his position in 1864. During the war and following Lincoln’s assassination, the Alpha Nu Sibyl publication contained many poems and articles in tribute to their leader. “The Honest Man, our Saviour and our Friend, the Great Emancipator,” one contributor mourned on April 21, 1865, “now lies enshrined…Nature might stand up and say to all the world, This was a man.” These young men consistently supported both Lincoln’s political and military policies but clearly remained aloof from the more far-reaching aims of the left wing of his party. As the war came to a close and Republicans started to divide over questions of Reconstruction policies towards the rebellious states, the conservative character of the Alpha Nu members’ Republicanism became apparent. That fall they voted against the idea that the southern states formerly in

209 January 10, 1862, January 23, 1863, October 7, 1864, May 8, 1863, May 27, 1864, April 28, 1865, Alpha Nu Minutes.
rebellion should be reorganized as territories. These young men felt little need to punish the southern states in a severe manner for their actions.210

Literary Adelphi, another literary society on the University of Michigan campus, followed an unmistakably different trajectory during the war era. These students began the secession period from a chiefly Democratic standpoint. Despite adopting a resolution that “neither Congress nor the legislature of a territory have the right to protect slave property in the territory,” they upheld the decision to execute John Brown and contended that it was appropriate for states to nullify federal laws that they deemed unconstitutional. As 1861 opened, the students of this group called on the President to prepare Washington D.C. for invasion, but did not support the use of arms to put down the rebellion. Instead, Literary Adelphi decided against the idea that “the separation of the gulf states would be detrimental to civilization.” They declared that the Union should be preserved “as it is and the constitution as our fathers bequeathed it.”211

Interestingly though, the results of Literary Adelphi debates began to take a clear turn towards a Republican stance in the fall of 1861. At the start of the new term in October, these members declared support for John C. Frémont’s proclamation. In three successive decisions between April 1862 and October 1863 the group not only supported emancipation but called for immediate abolition to be a term required of the Confederacy to end the war. Throughout the war, Literary Adelphi members debated military affairs and twice in 1862 declared that Lincoln should not remove McClellan from command of

the Army of the Potomac. General Ambrose Burnside, however, did not receive similar
tolerance, as his failure at Fredericksburg prompted the students to encourage his
dismissal in December of that year. They supported Lincoln in his suppression of the
freedom of the press, in his suspension of the writ of habeas corpus, and in his decision to
arrest and then banish notorious Copperhead leader, Clement L. Vallandigham. Only in
May 1864 did this group finally decide that Union General George B. McClellan’s
removal was justified. Despite these pro-Lincoln tendencies, there appeared to be a
decided shift towards a Radical Republican stance in the Literary Adelphi hall during the
last year of the war. In the fall of 1864, the students denounced the proposal that the
government should arrange a peace conference to end the hostilities and, for the first
time, took a critical position on a question about Lincoln: they found him at fault for the
failures of McClellan’s Peninsula campaign. In March 1866, the students sided with
Radical Republicans in their denial of admission to representatives sent to Congress from
the former Confederate states. These Literary Adelphi members traveled the furthest
ground politically during the war era, from a Democratic viewpoint to that of the Radical
Republicans.212

The demographic makeup of each organization may have played a significant role
in the differing and shifting political positions of these two groups of young men at the
University of Michigan. In considering the six school years from 1860-1861 to 1865-

212 October 11, 1861, October 25, 1861, April 25, 1862, Literary Adelphi Minutes, 1857-1860.
April 17, 1863, October 28, 1863, April 4, 1862, November 7, 1862, April 15, 1864, November 18, 1864,
January 27, 1865, May 27, 1864, October 7, 1864, October 28, 1864, March 9, 1866, Literary Adelphi
Minutes, 1857-1891. On 13 November 1863, only a few weeks after the first vote, the Literary Adelphi
members again voted on the proposition that “the southern states be admitted into the Union only on the
condition that they become Free.” This resolution lost, but this appears to be an aberration in the pattern.
December 19, 1862, Literary Adelphi, Box 1, brown book with missing cover, Bentley Historical Library.
1866, the percentage of members in the Alpha Nu Literary Society who originally hailed from Michigan significantly outnumbered the same category in the Literary Adelphi Society. In the 1860-61 school year, 73% of Alpha Nu’s members identified a town in Michigan as their primary residence, compared to 57% of Literary Adelphi’s membership. The following year, the ratio was even more drastic, as Alpha Nu remained about even at 72%, while Literary Adelphi claimed 48% of its members from within Michigan’s borders. This pattern continued throughout the war. Michigan residents constituted more than half of Alpha Nu’s membership each year until 1865-1866, while Literary Adelphi attracted at least half or a majority from outside the state every year after 1861. By 1865-1866, only 33% of Literary Adelphi’s membership cited Michigan residency.

Thus, it appeared that the influence of larger numbers of non-Michigan residents may have affected the perspective of the Literary Adelphi in swinging it to a more Radical Republican political stance as the war continued. Especially because the catalogues show that more students from the East began to enroll in the University of Michigan as the war progressed, their opinions would have eventually come to sway or offset those of the Midwestern students who may have been more susceptible to the volatile political loyalties of their region. That Alpha Nu remained Republican, but leaned more toward the conservative side, was also explainable by the fact that large majorities of their membership came from within the state until the war was over. Even in this northern Midwest state, Democrats had regained some political power during the midwar years and Republicans found themselves needing to moderate controversial
positions. Michigan youth who took their oath to Alpha Nu at the University of Michigan not surprisingly reflected their state’s wartime ambivalence to the political agenda of the Radical Republicans.²¹³

Beyond the practice that literary societies afforded them in preparing for their future positions of leadership in the country, the students created and sought out other opportunities to act upon their self-proclaimed positions as student-patriots and hone skills that they might need upon graduation. There were many other student-run organizations with elected leadership positions that offered chances to develop and implement large public events, social affairs, or ceremonies. These were the types of occasions and opportunities with which these young men needed to become fluent in the coming years. Charles B. Howell wrote to his brother in January 1864 about a speech he gave in the Moot Congress of the Law School regarding Lincoln’s Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction. In another instance one morning after chapel, close to the election of 1864, the students in the Literary Department took a vote on Lincoln versus former Union General and Democratic candidate George B. McClellan. Lincoln garnered 131 votes, while McClellan polled 24. William Boardman gleefully wrote home to his

²¹³ These calculations are based on a comparison of the Alpha Nu and Literary Adelphi membership rosters in the Palladium for each school year between 1860-61 and 1865-66, with residential identifications from the Catalogue of Officers and Students that was officially published annually by the university. Students who were listed in the society membership rosters as being in the army were not included in the calculations, nor were the few students for whom no hometown could be identified. The question for the calculation was what percentage of each society identified their residence as being within the state of Michigan, and the breakdown of the results is as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>Alpha Nu</th>
<th>Literary Adelphi</th>
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<tr>
<td>1860-61</td>
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<td>1861-62</td>
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<td>1865-66</td>
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father in Illinois, “It was the first time I ever had the pleasure of casting a vote for old Abe.” The Alpha Nu Literary Society decided following debate in early November that “Abraham Lincoln ought to be reelected.”

Joseph Quarles, an undergraduate from Wisconsin, recognized the importance of the presidential election in his November 1864 speech. He called it “one of the great dates in history,” because both Europe and the soldiers of the rebellious states were waiting in “breathless suspense for the result.” Quarles delineated that the American people were choosing between continuing the war or seeking immediate peace. He was confident that Lincoln would win because “we prefer war, bitter war to such a peace as our enemies declare they will alone accept.” The speech was remarkable in its lucid analysis of the political and military consequences of the election. Quarles drew parallels between this event and other historical moments in American history to help make his argument about the date’s significance. Interestingly, there were clear similarities in prose between Quarles’ oration and the Gettysburg Address. The young man obviously invoked Lincoln as his muse while lifting phrases, such as “mystic chords,” directly from the president’s ceremonial message. In seeking to earn the right to someday replace these men and lead the country, University of Michigan students learned by mimicking their idols.

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214 Charles B. Howell to Brother, January 26, 1864, Howell Family Papers, 1856-1884, Bentley Historical Library. William H. Boardman to Father, October 30, 1864, Boardman Family Papers, 1864-1865, Bentley Historical Library. November 4, 1864, Alpha Nu Minutes.

215 It is unclear what the speech was for, but it was likely for a literary society event or some other student activity. November 9, 1864, Joseph V. Quarles Papers, 1843-1911, Box 1, Folder Quarles Speeches 1864-1870?, WHS.
Brothers in the Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity (Omicron chapter at the University of Michigan) had the opportunity to practice their own formula for communication between the North and the South in March 1862, when they replied to a letter from the Gamma chapter at Vanderbilt University in Tennessee. The Omicron members extended their “promises of sincere and eternal fidelity” to the southern chapter despite location, political party, or “whether they owe allegiance to Lincoln or to Davis.” The author’s attitude of superiority was apparent despite his best attempts to make statements of brotherhood; it was as if he could not bring himself to be truly pleasant without reminding the Gamma members of the current situation. “I hope you will be able to prosper as well as you always have deserved,” one part of the letter began, “notwithstanding the trials which beset you and your state. It does not become me to allude to the causes which have brought on the trouble in our country whatever they may be…” Later in the letter there was a reference to a conversation between Delta Kappa Epsilon soldiers on opposing sides in the eastern theater of the war. The condescension was palpable in the remark that “we were very much pleased to hear from them and to hear of their regret for the necessity which compels them to take up arms against their brothers in ∆ΚΕ.” This clearly places blame for the war on southern shoulders. The overall tone of the letter was warm but it was obvious that the Omicron brothers in Michigan wanted to subtly indicate that the relationship was, and would continue to be, affected by the war’s circumstances.216

216 March 5, 1862, Delta Kappa Epsilon, Omicron Chapter (University of Michigan) Records, 1855-1927, Correspondence of Scriptor folder, Bentley Historical Library.
Whether hosting a national figure for a public speech, practicing arguing a point in a moot court, or participating in a mock election, these young men found a variety of ways to train for their future endeavors. Through these forms of practice, students at the University of Michigan ultimately defined their ideas of patriotism and their understanding of their role in the war. Their function as citizens of the nation in this time of martial conflict was to prepare themselves to hold positions of leadership as the country began its inevitable rebuilding process. Their active intellectual engagement in the most pivotal issues facing their government, including their concentrated attention to the possible needs of the Reconstruction period, makes it evident that the University of Michigan became not just a place to obtain an education in the classics or prepare for a certain standing in society. Through these clubs and organizations, students expanded the purpose of the university to suit their specific needs and shaped their developing ideologies regarding the nation’s future within those venues. In the end, their understanding of their role encompassed not only the verbal expressions of loyalty to the country expected from home front citizens, but the utilization of the resources at their fingertips in a way that would label them as patriots, and thus as men, despite the shadow cast by not wearing a military uniform.

It was true that during many days at the University of Michigan, the battlefield seemed little more than a distant concept. The students of course saw the disabled and deceased soldiers returning to their towns and watched families mourn the loss of their loved ones. But for these young men who each at some point contemplated going to war,
their daily lives in the “circumscribed college world” essentially intertwined with the way that they experienced the conflict. Granted, for a few days following the fall of Fort Sumter, the university cancelled classes and the students spent most of their time drilling on the campus greens and attending Union mass meetings. However, there was hardly the same type of paralyzing response long-term that so many other universities, both North and South, experienced during the war era. In Ann Arbor, students, faculty and residents managed to integrate the immense changes wrought by the nation’s civil war into their daily lives. Often, the hours were passed in mundane ways and lacked drama despite the national crisis. Albert Farley captured the reality of their isolation from immediate physical harm in his January 7, 1864, entry: “Nothing wonderful has happened today. Nothing is expected and consequently there is no disappointment.” Because daily life at the University of Michigan offered this combination of normalcy and the ability to shape and express one’s grasp of worldly affairs in an academic setting, students who attended this Ann Arbor campus had the unique opportunity of being intellectually and emotionally engaged in the Civil War, while being effectively sheltered from its military aspects. This distinct combination of elements significantly affected their home front experience.\footnote{Palladium, 1865. January 7, 1864, Albert William Farley diary, 1864-1865, Bentley Historical Library. Another Michigan student expressed a similar sentiment in December 1862: “We are jogging on here always as usual; nothing wonderful or strange to interrupt the even tenor of our ways…” December 7, 1862, Allen to Cox, Allen letters. Michigan alumni from the class of 1861 remembered that one of their favorite college pastimes was leap-frog. Utley and Cutcheon recalled, “It was no unusual spectacle to see future college professors and presidents, congressmen, and clergymen, progressing from the University toward the post-office by means of this exhilarating, if not dignified, game.” The students also played practical jokes on each other or took part in pranks between the undergraduate classes. In one instance, the sophomores thought it good sport to go around pulling freshmen out of their beds during the night. A week later, the freshmen responded by piling benches in front of the classroom in which the sophomores were doing recitations, and then pulling them down the stairwell once there were a number of students trying to}
Ultimately, because of their seclusion from the battlefield in the northern part of the Midwest and because of the increasing prestige of the university they attended, most Michigan students came to declare loyalty to both their nation and their college in equal measure. University of Michigan students took such pride in their institution that often their patriotism, their understanding of their role in shaping the nation’s course during this war, was indistinguishable from their understanding of what it meant to be a student on that campus. They characterized patriotism within a narrow spectrum of their contemporary experience, effectively enabling them to justify their continued presence in Ann Arbor. Rather than literally engaging in martial combat to save the country, these students considered themselves patriots by their intellectual contributions at the university and dedication to education in general. Staying in school became the equivalent of fighting the rebels. Michigan students embraced gendered rhetoric to highlight the manly qualities of obtaining an education and they benefited from this altered portrait of the university experience. As the war turned from months into years, talk of entering the army instead of getting a degree lessened. As a result, these students felt that they performed their patriotic duty by helping the university thrive and by intentionally participating in the prosperity of their immediate home front.

climb over the barricade. There were the usual course of fist-fights, and groups of students routinely stole the campus bell that announced the changing of classes. Like others, John Hinchman reveled in the social opportunities of the surrounding community. “I am enjoying myself more than usual,” he wrote in 1864 to his mother, “Ann Arbor will be very gay this winter, as each church has a social once in two weeks. College goes on about as usual...” Utley and Cutcheon, 38. William H. Boardman to Father, November 20, 1864, November 27, 1864, Boardman Family Papers, 1864-1865, Bentley Historical Library. John Marshall Hinchman to Mother, October 25, 1863, October 24, 1864, John Marshall Hinchman letters, 1861-1864, Bentley Historical Library.
The students’ focus on their future contributions to the nation’s reconstruction period was also crucial to the home front experience at the University of Michigan. This emphasis helped to mold their ideas about patriotism and duty. Yes, they were currently not offering their lives on the battlefield, but in their minds, their education was just as important, because soon after the war, they would take seats next to the most important local and national politicians, lawyers, and clergymen to help influence the way the country moved forward. Those students who disagreed with the Lincoln administration earned valuable experience in being the voice of opposition during this period, although largely overshadowed in the end by those who pledged their loyalties to the president’s agenda. These years in Ann Arbor were more than class pranks or reciting Greek; the students actively engaged and took charge of how they developed their individual characters with the intention of being informed and contributing citizens in the postwar era. They mobilized their extracurricular organizations around questions of wartime policy, including all aspects of political, economic, military, and intellectual issues. In both verbal and written forms, these students sharpened their debating skills, practiced articulating their emotions and opinions in poems or speeches, and learned to hear, respect, and consider the beliefs of others. The University of Michigan continued to grant degrees during the Civil War, with perhaps one of the most impressive records in higher education given the circumstances. More than this though, the young men who took advantage of the opportunities associated with the institution came of age in a time when they may have faced criticism in order to be there, and yet defiantly sought fulfillment of the role they deemed was their destiny.
CHAPTER FIVE:

RESPECT AS PATRIOTISM

“…let us resolve to do our duty as well as they are now doing theirs.”  
Edward G. Miller, University of Wisconsin, 1862

John D. Alexander, an 1861 graduate, wrote in a 1921 letter to the Indiana Alumnus magazine that every graduate of Indiana University during the Civil War era “expected [to] be President or Senator and of course never any thing less than a Representative in Congress.” Political leadership represented one of the most esteemed callings in nineteenth century America, and ambitious young men saw higher education as one of the most direct paths to that profession. The Civil War presented a challenge to that tradition, as the young men who remained in school realized that perhaps military glory would present more fruitful opportunities. Unable or unwilling, however, to join in the fray, university students in the Midwest asserted their belief that by obtaining a college degree they were serving their country in its time of need and would continue to be prominent candidates in the pipeline of future leaders for the nation. Circumstances at the University of Wisconsin and Indiana University influenced the nature of this ideology in different ways than that experienced in Ann Arbor, yet students in Madison and

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218 May 9, 1862, Miller sketch.
Bloomington also adapted their educations to address the changing priorities of a country at war.219

The Civil War offered the University of Wisconsin an opportunity to increase the strength of the bond between itself and the Madison community. The university often functioned on the margins of Madison society because it was located within the state’s capital and struggled for survival early in its existence. The students and faculty both worked tirelessly during the war years to propel their status and visibility within the community to a position that ensured the university’s perpetuation and maximized the opportunities for the students to prepare themselves for leadership roles following their time at the institution. Unlike the University of Michigan, which saw rising enrollment, the University of Wisconsin suffered terribly for students during the national crisis, and that reality colored the wartime experience of the students who did remain at the school. They did not consider the war’s consequences on their futures from a place of security, from within a healthy, thriving institution, unlike students in Michigan. Therefore, at the University of Wisconsin, the students intellectually engaged with the home front in numerous ways in their attempts to shine in a city that sometimes overshadowed the nascent university.

Indiana University students were in a similar predicament. Rather than attending an institution that viewed the war from afar and with the confidence of swelling classroom numbers, the students in Bloomington experienced the Civil War within a town that was wrought with political factions, sectional tensions, and often-violent

219 Alexander letter.
interactions between its residents. The Civil War on more than one occasion threatened to come to the university’s doors. Indiana’s state politics were by far the most hostile and turbulent of the three states in this study during the war years. The environment in which these young men attempted to gain their degrees reflected the depths of how the Civil War’s issues could affect a society. Likewise, students at Indiana University acted out their own civil war on campus. In a string of episodes, Indiana students stood up to faculty and trustees who attempted to reign in the politically vocal student body. Through various methods of intimidation, censorship, and blatant threats to end their educational pursuits, the faculty managed to gain the upper hand, but as the Union’s fortunes seemed to spin out of control, so too did affairs on the Bloomington campus.

In both of these states, on both of these campuses, the students who remained in school did so with some question as to whether the universities would even continue operation during the Civil War. The budding scholars embraced opportunities to develop and demonstrate their growing maturity and leadership skills, just as did the students at the University of Michigan. However, they did so not within a realm that allowed them to spend much time or energy concentrating on ideas about patriotism or to reflect philosophically about what it meant to be a student rather than a soldier. Instead, students at the University of Wisconsin and Indiana University faced obstacles that caused their wartime experiences to be more tenuous and more strained than their counterparts in Ann Arbor. Despite these differences, both of the student bodies at Wisconsin and Indiana maximized the opportunities found on the home front to demonstrate their patriotism and to develop themselves as citizens and future community and possibly national leaders.
This chapter will examine the nature of the Civil War years in Madison and Bloomington and demonstrate how those two groups of students related to the war from their home fronts.

*University of Wisconsin*

The University of Wisconsin largely operated on the periphery of Madison society before and during the Civil War. There was not the same level of local dependence for livelihood on the university as there was in Bloomington or Ann Arbor. The university’s success was surely important to residents, but diaries and letters of residents as well as the multitude of area newspapers mentioned little about the goings on of the institution. Generally, only the one week or so during commencement each June caught their eye. Occasionally a public lecture attracted attention but in reality the school remained a novel experiment that existed as just one more element in the bustle of Madison. Faculty and students struggled to break into the public eye when the public in which they resided had so many other possible foci for their attention. Nevertheless, the university did not mirror the lack of engagement from the community. The young men enrolled in the University of Wisconsin capitalized on their presence in the state capital by inserting themselves into the city’s field of vision whenever possible. Additionally, they exploited the war’s opportunities to enhance their education despite the constant unsteadiness produced by the conflict within their campus halls. These students remained on the cutting edge of politics throughout the war and took every advantage available to them to immerse themselves into the workings of a war.
The start of the war quickly captured the imagination of the student body at the University of Wisconsin. Compounding the already intense nature of the national crisis, these students confronted the challenge of focusing on their studies at a university that was located in the state capital. Thus, the energy directed toward the war mobilization efforts of the state, such as the mustering into companies and regiments of large numbers of newly-enlisted soldiers, surrounded them daily. James L. High, a freshman when the war broke out in April 1861, later described the impact of the war years on the college students in Madison. “Glistening bayonets and marching columns daily before our eyes,” High recalled, “war bulletins filling every newspaper; the stirring letters received from brethren in the field, all these were hardly conducive to the successful handling of Greek roots or problems in the differential calculus.”

The young men whose destiny did not include military service persisted in their studies despite the constant distractions associated with the opening of hostilities. This situation was much worse earlier in the war, when romantic notions of war’s glory inspired imaginations. The breathless thrill with which they contemplated the war further exaggerated the dry and methodical nature of collegiate learning in the era. High stated, “We who were left behind were painfully struggling… through the story of classic wars twenty centuries gone by; while here in our own time was a Titanic struggle for the unity of the great republic, and we were living, moving, breathing in a heroic age.” The war plunged the country into a state of affairs that was anything but routine, yet the school day remained predictable. In the first months of war, the contrast between the rituals of

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220 High address, 195.
university life and the variable and exciting nature of the national predicament tested the dedication of even the most assiduous student.221

Students at the University of Wisconsin faced the additional stress of attempting to pursue their studies while in the shadow of Camp Randall. Only one half-mile from campus, the massive camp was one of Wisconsin’s military organizational and training posts. Regiments gathered, drilled, ate and slept in its barracks for almost the entire Civil War period. When not housing out-going troops, it welcomed back soldiers for discharge, held Confederate prisoners, and acted as a military hospital. It was a busy place and had a substantial effect on the way Madison residents, including students at the University of Wisconsin, came to understand the nature of the war. Camp Randall was open to all Madison residents and its close proximity enveloped the student body in imagination and reality. “Just yonder, in sight of our recitation rooms, was Camp Randall,” recalled James L. High, “filled with eager regiments preparing for the front, each of which took from among us our bravest and best.” Like at the University of Michigan, the students who remained behind in Madison intermittently expressed self-consciousness regarding their decision. High’s description of those who left to fight as “our bravest and best” implies that he, at least, considered those who served as soldiers to be superior to those who remained behind.222

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221 Ibid.
222 In late April 1862, more than 1,100 Confederate soldiers of the First Alabama Volunteer Infantry, Confederate States of America, arrived at Camp Randall as prisoners. The death rate among these men was incredibly high, often more than ten per day perished despite the best efforts of Camp Randall staff, Madison residents, and other helpful locals. The dead were buried in the Forest Hill Cemetery in Madison, Wisconsin, to remain forever in northern soil. William A. Titus, “A Wisconsin Burial Place of Confederate Prisoners of War,” Wisconsin Magazine of History Vol. 36, No. 3 (Spring 1953), 192-194. See also Carolyn Mattern, Soldiers When They Go: The Story of Camp Randall, 1861-1865 (Madison: State
The faculty also recognized the potential distraction Camp Randall posed to the students, as it served over the course of the war as the departing point for seventy thousand Wisconsin soldiers. Nevertheless, they felt that the students benefited from its nearby location. In their report to the Board of Regents in 1862, the faculty stated, “the daily outlook on the manoeuvres in the camp has seemed to stimulate all to a corresponding self-denial and energy in their own field of duty.” Students and faculty alike saw educational achievements as the responsibility of the remaining students during the war. Charles Vilas, an 1865 graduate of the University of Wisconsin, recalled that of the thirty-seven students who began with him in his freshman class, only five received degrees after the prescribed four-year period. In a 1915 essay for the alumni magazine, Vilas depicted what living near the military training ground was like for him and his classmates whose college years (1861-1865) coincided almost exactly with the entire period of the American Civil War. The students “had with more or less fidelity pursued their studies to the accompaniment of the rattling drum and shrieking fife wafted from the neighboring Camp Randall.” Thus, as the young men who remained on campus felt self-conscious about the shrinking number of their cohort, they continually faced the spectacle of a war in which they did not participate.²²³

Both the activity and meaning of Camp Randall drew students to its gates. John Muir visited often in order to spend time with former classmates who had enlisted. He also offered religious advice and guidance to soldiers about to leave for the front.

University of Wisconsin students interacted with those at Camp Randall by inviting encamped soldiers to the campus for programs. In May 1861, the Hesperian Literary Society agreed to call upon student-soldiers from Beloit College then barracked in Camp Randall to attend the society’s event the following evening. In their attempt to represent both the university and Madison, the students who remained at the school during the war felt responsible for taking an active part in helping with the war in any way they could. They sought to make themselves visible in order to both contribute to and absorb as much of the war effort as possible on their home front.224

University of Wisconsin students also had opportunities to exhibit their patriotism and growing leadership abilities due to their close proximity to the state capital in Madison. In May 1862, Governor Louis P. Harvey died on his trip to visit soldiers in the South and the students held a prominent position in the funeral procession. They acted upon the belief that they were a part of the state’s apparatus, as students of the state’s university, and therefore related to the functioning of the state government. Thus, Wisconsin students who remained in school attempted to contribute to their immediate home front as a way to make their patriotism evident and to demonstrate their significance to Madison’s home front.225

Students at the University of Wisconsin regularly attended state legislative meetings in the capitol building. This exposed them to a multitude of political interactions and made them more familiar with the nature of political life and the qualities

225 Hindes, 27.
required of political leaders. During the early months of the war, when the excitement was so intense, hearing lectures on esoteric topics at the university could not compare to the thrill of governmental debates. Harvey Reid, the freshman with strong opinions against war in general, acknowledged in a letter home to friends in Union Grove, “I hardly blame you for thinking if I spend so much time at the camp & Capitol, I must neglect my studies.” Reid insisted, however, that his education was not suffering due to the attention he paid to these other venues. In his diary, Reid described his almost daily trek either to Camp Randall or to the Assembly to witness the activities of the state legislature. George W. Stoner, a Madison resident and student in the Commercial Department, illustrated the seamless way in which young men weaved together their education and wartime mobilization of the local government. Stoner often did secretarial work for local businessmen or legislators and regularly spent time within the city’s government buildings. His diary recorded the balance he struck between educational pursuits and the demands for his skill and time from the bureaucracy, alternating between the two as necessary. Thus, students at the University of Wisconsin complemented their classroom studies with broader experiences that included witnessing the functioning of a state government.226

Wisconsin students regularly demonstrated their grasp of the pivotal issues of the day. Their exposure to the most pressing debates within the state taught them how to interpret and shape a perspective on national questions as well. In January 1864, the

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Hesperian Literary Society recorded a position of support for a recent proposition by Wisconsin senator Timothy O. Howe. Howe suggested raising one million men “for the purpose of taking Richmond and thereby releasing our prisoners there.” The students at the University of Wisconsin, so clearly tuned in to local, state, and national politics, quickly sought to articulate their perspective on what they considered a worthy idea. Their vote on the matter, occurring in January 1864, proved their commitment to seeing the war through to the end and employing the vast resources of the North to move the conflict quickly forward.227

Within the halls of the university, the students also negotiated their relationship with the meaning of the war. When faced with the departure of three of its members immediately after the fall of Fort Sumter, the Hesperian Literary Society resolved “to assure them of our respect and esteem, and that we shall ever cherish them as Patriots and an honor to their country, whose Government they are about to vindicate and sustain.” These young men so valued their friendships that they found it necessary to approve the decisions of army-bound classmates. James High later described the departing students as “heroes…to our admiring eyes as they marched away to the front…that little band of volunteers, the first of her sons offered by the mother college to the motherland.” As Wisconsin students watched the new enlistees leave for the front, they believed that their friends “should come back to us crowned with laurels of victory, amid the acclamations of a nation saved by their valor.” They reassured the student-soldiers, and themselves,

227 January 22, 1864, Hesperia Bill of Exercises.
that this change of course would not break the bonds formed during their days in school.\textsuperscript{228}

Their conscious expressions of support did not come without some tension, largely on the part of the students who did not enlist. Pliny Norcross, the first University of Wisconsin student to enlist, entered the Hesperian Literary Society hall during a meeting in April 1861. Harvey Reid wrote home that “[Norcross was] received with the most tremendous cheering, which lasted about five minutes.” The new soldier addressed the group and expressed his belief about the cause for which he was about to possibly sacrifice his life. In following the gendered rhetoric so frequently appearing in these early days of war, Norcross lastly said that his main goal was “to avoid being shot in the back.” The new soldier assured his listeners that he was manly enough to face the enemy. Not to be outdone, those students who had not yet enlisted followed Norcross’s speech with several more of their own; Reid said they “‘ventilated their patriotism’ in the most patriotic speeches possible.”\textsuperscript{229}

This was intriguing; the remaining students were not willing to allow the new soldiers to steal their stage. Although happy to hear their patriotic invectives and heartily cheer them off to war, the leaders in the society reclaimed the podium after the enlisted men concluded and put forth their interpretation of the country’s plight. The speakers gave no indication that they also planned to enlist. Their insistence on having the last word regarding the national situation during the literary society meeting signified their intention on keeping the university sphere special and separate from what was going on.

\textsuperscript{228} April 19, 1861, Hesperia Bill of Exercises. High address, 155-56.
\textsuperscript{229} April 20, 1861, Reid Papers.
outside of the campus walls. Reid illustrated this by writing to his parents, “there was one thing I noticed, the best educated boys, or those of the best intellectuality, seemed[sic] that the North was not entirely blameless in this war, but all said that now, since [war] has commenced they are in favor of carrying it through.” Even though the students left the impression on Reid that he should also support the war, they did not give specific examples of how they would “carry it through”; they did not explicitly endorse enlisting. At least initially, the concern on the part of the remaining students regarding others’ perception of their continued presence on campus did not consume them. Along with the rest of the country, they assumed that the Union war effort would be short and successful.230

As the war turned from weeks into months, Wisconsin students occasionally considered the nature of their role on the home front. Edward Miller, who enlisted in the first days of the war but then returned to his studies after his initial three-month service in the army, emphasized upon his homecoming the distance that separated university students from soldiers. In addressing the Athenaean Literary Society about the role of University of Wisconsin students in the war, Miller argued,

    Our service to our country is in the future; there is much that we should do to balance what we do not do now. It behooves us then to prepare ourselves for the work before us…let us resolve to do our duty as well as [soldiers] are now doing theirs.

Miller articulated some of the same ideas regarding the responsibilities of the home front as what students at the University of Michigan developed during the war. Based on

230 Ibid.
personal experience in battle, Miller understood that learning and soldiering differed but confirmed the idea, as understood miles away in Ann Arbor, that both groups of youth contributed greatly to the country’s imminent prospects. Miller ultimately could not re-engage with his studies and returned to the ranks in 1862.231

The University of Wisconsin experienced a different kind of change in 1863 than those recorded in Bloomington or Ann Arbor. As will be discussed further in Chapter 7, the Board of Regents decided to admit women to the university to offset the war’s negative impact on enrollment. The male and female students occupied separate spheres for the first year of this new arrangement, as the women felt unwelcome by a male student population largely hostile to their arrival. James High, a junior in 1863, in a later talk to the Alumni Association revealed the depth of the reaction of the male students to the new Normal Department, and especially to its female students. It is worth quoting at length.

Little did we suspect, callow and unfledged youth that we were, what a Pandora's box of evils lay hidden in this simple announcement. To the average undergraduate, a normal department seemed a simple and harmless thing, masculine as to gender, and little likely disturb the even tenor of our college life. We did not dream that it was a cunningly devised engine for the overthrow of the established order of things, or that it heralded the approach of an insidious and cruel enemy, more terrible in their coming than the armies contending against our brethren in the field, and who should make equal havoc with the college curriculum, and with our young and virgin affections. But in due time came the 16th of March, in the year of grace, 1863: and with it came, alas, the normals! They came like an army with banners, conquering and to conquer; they came with bewitching curls, and dimpled

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231 May 9, 1862, Miller sketch.
cheeks, and flowing robes, and all the panoply of feminine adornment; and worst of all, they came to stay. I need not pause to depict the indignation with which the new order of things was received. The feeling of hostility was exceedingly intense and bitter...the anathemas heaped upon the Regents were loud and deep.

Even the passage of years did not dull for James High the emotions associated with the commencement of the Normal Department at the University of Wisconsin. He did not empathize with the plight of the Regents, nor recognize the dire position of the university by that point in the war, but instead recalled the events with the naivety, idealism and the selfishness of youth. Clearly, the young men who remained on the campus in Madison felt insulted by the Regents’ pronouncement and were not easily reconciled to its reality.232

One female student remembered that she was “quite surprised, when [she] entered the University, to find that the men students who still remained felt humiliated over the presence of girls in the University and that some of the professors, even, did not entirely approve of the new plan.” Yet, she recalled, “most of the faculty...did everything in their power to make it pleasant for the girls.” For a long time, however, the male students “did not recognize our presence and we were just as oblivious of theirs.”233

Within the first year, female students formed their own literary society, the Castalian, and in February 1864, they invited the male students to an exhibition. It was the first time that the two sexes interacted outside of the classroom. The Castalians called their performance “The Great Rebellion” and had a female student represent each of the

232 High address, 198-199.
states in the country. In remembering the event, one female graduate summed it up concisely:

South Carolina seceded and the other southern states followed. New York and Mass and other northern states remonstrated and after much consultation, argument and compulsion the seceding states all came back, the Union was preserved, and the Star Spangled Banner waved in triumph over a united nation. The Castalians thus accomplished in one evening what took the United States four years of time and a vast sacrifice of money and human life to do.

There was a social hour following the society exhibition where the male and female students “had a pleasant time.” The relationship between men and women on the Madison campus clearly improved as the war continued. By January 1865, the members of the Hesperian Literary Society – a men-only organization on campus – formally invited the women of the Normal Department to attend their debates after realizing that the women “had been refused permission to attend because there had not been an invitation extended.”

Eventually, the women of the Normal Department gained acceptance by their male counterparts on campus by engaging themselves politically with the pivotal subjects of the day. They demonstrated an understanding of the priorities of the male student body with regard to the topics that they discussed within their literary society and illustrated a firm grasp of the important themes. This event helped propel the relationship between both sexes at Wisconsin into a more collaborative and respectful place. In that sense, the presence of the women at the university began to shape the wartime experience of the

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male students in a more positive manner by the end of the conflict; rather than continuing to despise the perceived imposition of these female students, male students began to respect their presence by the end of the war.

The debates of the Hesperian Society during the war also revealed how these young Wisconsin students grappled with the most imperative questions of the day in their quest to prepare themselves to be the country’s leaders. In November 1861, seven months into the war, Hesperian Literary Society members agreed, “the policy of the present government towards the Southern confederacy is good.” Even though they initially did not approve of coercing the southern states through war to abandon secession, eventually these students approved of military action. Later, these students deemed “the war policy of the present administration… constitutional and justifiable.” In measuring the effectiveness of Lincoln’s efforts during the war, Wisconsin students regularly utilized qualifiers such as “constitutional,” “justifiable,” and “just.” These adjectives encompassed the most important qualities that these students considered regarding the prosecution of the war.235

One matter in which Hesperian members frequently invoked these terms of evaluation was regarding Lincoln’s civil rights policies. In January 1862, as increasing criticism of Lincoln’s war policies began to crystallize the opposition, Wisconsin students supported his suspension of the writ of habeus corpus, calling it “justifiable and constitutional.” In this first consideration of the issue, these practicing leaders gave the

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235 April 12, 1861, November 22, 1861, January 8, 1864, Hesperian Record Book. See, for example, June 3, 1864, September 1, 1865, January 10, 1862, September 19, 1862, and September 25, 1863, Hesperian Record Book.
president the benefit of the doubt. However, within the year following this initial
decision, the Hesperian Society twice decided that Lincoln’s suspension of habeus corpus
was outside of his authority.” In September 1863, as the country faced tremendous
pressure from Copperheads regarding Lincoln’s attempts to contain vocal opponents of
the war, the Hesperians decided that the suppression of the Chicago Times was illegal.
They also reaffirmed their position that Lincoln’s habeus corpus policies were
“unconstitutional and unjust.” Their assessment of his right to suppress some civil rights
in a time of war was clearly not in his favor by the nadir of the Union war effort in early
1863. This change also coincided with the height of the Copperhead movement; perhaps
the growing popularity of Peace Democrat positions gained some support among
Wisconsin students during this period of the war.236

Their regular attention to this civil rights question was fascinating; neither the
University of Michigan nor the Indiana University students debated Lincoln’s use of
habeus corpus with such frequency. It seemed that their attitude toward the war and the
administration was beginning to sour, especially in light of their May 1863 affirmation of
the statement “the people of the US are incapable of self-government.” During the 1864-
1865 academic year, they continued to find Lincoln’s civil rights infringements
abominable. Hesperian students criticized men who made decisions based more on “civil
law” rather than “moral law.” In their view, Lincoln should rise above the gains possible
from the Habeas Corpus Suspension Act of 1863 because it potentially breached the civil

236 January 10, 1862, Hesperian Record Book. September 18, 1863, September 25, 1863, Hesperia Bill of
Exercises.
liberties of the American people. They particularly targeted his actions regarding the freedom of press, which they felt “should not be restricted in times of war.”

Regarding other elements of Lincoln’s prosecution of the war, Wisconsin students offered more support. In November 1863, they consented to Lincoln’s removal of McClellan, confirmed again in March 1864. On military matters, these students were in harmony with the president. The next month, the students decided that they did not want negotiators sent to meet with the Confederate government in Richmond. They wished for the war to continue to its natural conclusion, which they assumed would favor the Union.

On most political issues outside of their disagreement over habeus corpus policies, Wisconsin students more consistently supported the direction of the Republican incumbents. They held the traditional old-Whig position against the constitutionality of annexing Texas in 1845, agreeing that it was purely a political move, and ceded no ground on their original stance that the United States ought not to “recognize the ‘Southern Confederacy.’”

Repeatedly on the cutting edge of contemporary debates, Wisconsin students addressed the nature of the postwar period early in the war. Assuming that the North would be victorious, Hesperian members foreshadowed later political debates regarding reconstruction as early as April 1862. They then considered whether the government should treat seceded southern states as territories “when they shall have been subdued.” Their conclusion was in the affirmative. These young students did not plan to welcome

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the rebels back into the Union without punishment. Secession as a political tool also continued to receive the criticism of the Hesperians. In a discussion in May 1862, they discussed the Hartford Convention, where New England secessionists gathered during the War of 1812. The Hesperians could not agree that the Hartford Convention was justifiable, signaling their concurrence with Republican arguments that secession was unconstitutional. Wisconsin’s Hesperian Literary Society flipped their position on one previous debate. By October 1863, when again considering the reconstruction of the nation, they did not find turning the former Confederate states into territories to be the most suitable or effective method of reuniting the country. Their regular attention to the needs of the coming postwar period allowed them to develop further the ideologies with which they believed they would lead the country.239

Their perspectives on the country’s situation shifted over the course of the war as national leaders altered the nature of the war through military and political means. In early 1864, following the issuance of Lincoln’s Amnesty Proclamation, the students considered the future with new political information. After debating the merits of Lincoln’s plan, the group found it acceptable and declared it constitutional and fair. While their positions became clarified through time, they continued to use the same measurements of justness and constitutionality as their sticks by which to assess the progress of the country. Later that year, Hesperian members reinforced their belief regarding war versus a negotiated peace by agreeing in October 1864 that the North should not hold a meeting of all the states with the intention of pursuing a “cessation of

239 April 25, 1862, October 9, 1863, Hesperia Bill of Exercises. May 23, 1862, Hesperian Record Book.
hostilities." Any Copperhead tendencies demonstrated during the height of that movement also quieted down on this Madison campus by the election season of 1864.\textsuperscript{240}

Also, just as the war wrapped up, the society apparently found some level of forgiveness towards the secessionists. In February, they decided that the Hartford Convention “was justifiable,” thus finally accepting the idea that discussing secession was not in itself a traitorous act. In keeping with that theme, they even expressed some support of nullification, when in late April 1865, they agreed that citizens had the right to defy “a law of his country, which is morally wrong.” In a telling turn of opinion from previous discussions of Reconstruction, the Hesperians decided in November 1865 that the southern states that had formed the Confederacy still maintained all the rights and privileges which they possessed as states prior to secession.” This might explain why they felt that Congress acted outside of its authority in granting state status to West Virginia in debates held in May and September 1865. Gone was the determination to strip the eleven seceded states from positions in the country or the proposal to turn them into territories. Following Lincoln’s death, Wisconsin students accepted his more magnanimous terms of amnesty and reconstruction towards the Confederacy.\textsuperscript{241}

As the war came to an end, the students moved in synchronization with the rest of the nation in debating newly pressing issues. Late in the 1865 spring term and into that fall, Wisconsin students began to focus more attention on foreign policy, thus understanding the necessity for political leaders to understand and deal with the world

\textsuperscript{240} October 14, 1864, Hesperian Record Book. April 29, 1864, Hesperia Bill of Exercises.
\textsuperscript{241} February 17, 1865, Hesperian Record Book. April 21, 1865, November 9, 1865, May 5, 1865, September 1, 1865, Hesperia Bill of Exercises.
outside the country’s borders. Within a span of eight months, the Hesperian Literary Society held three debates regarding whether the United States should take an active role in ousting the French from Mexico, believing in March 1865 and November 1865 that the United States government should drive the French out, but in June of that year finding otherwise. The young scholars agreed as well that England had acted within the definition of neutrality during the Civil War. In looking into the recent past and to current events, they tested their acquired political acumen on topics outside the domestic realm of the country.242

Wisconsin students undertook these actions and conversations in their attempt to make the most of their time in school. As their numbers dwindled during the war and immense changes swept their campus, they held firm in their convictions about the future and their role in it. While shaping themselves into mature men who would lead the country, the students in Madison also enjoyed their youth when they had the opportunity. Because they did not find out about Robert E. Lee’s surrender at Appomattox until April 10, a full day after the event, they did not have “an opportunity to signify their feelings in a satisfactory manner,” remarked the Wisconsin State Journal. Thus, on the night of April 10, they lit a huge bonfire, set off fireworks, and serenaded the professors in their homes. “The illumination as seen from the city, was superb,” gloved the newspaper editor, “the broad fronts of the dormitory buildings and the central edifice, each containing nearly forty windows, blazed with light, while from the dome of the main building rockets scaled the heavens, and Roman candles tossed up their balls of brilliant fire.” The next

242 March 31, 1865, November 16, 1865, June 9, 1865, Hesperia Bill of Exercises. March 10, 1865, Hesperian Record Book.
morning, the Professors took their turn, “patriotically [addressing]” the students and giving the young scholars the day off from their books and recitations. The community noticed both of these responses to the war – the professional development of these promising scholars and the zeal with which they reacted to momentous events.²⁴³

Although the University of Wisconsin students who remained in school did so in a physical location quite far from the throes of battle, they integrated themselves thoroughly with the Civil War’s impact on their era. They recognized that the war would have a lasting effect in their own locale, on their country, and on themselves and altered their education to embrace its opportunities. They could not attain glory as soldiers but they could achieve prominence in their classrooms and in their communities. Wisconsin students tried to position themselves so that their momentum would keep them moving up the social and political ladders when the soldiers returned home. Despite the distractions of the state capital, Camp Randall, and the arrival of female students, Wisconsin students nurtured their wartime educational experience through their relationships with their professors, the state, and each other.

Indiana University

Unlike the University of Wisconsin, which struggled to gain attention in its busy and boisterous environment, the wellbeing of Indiana University consumed much of the interest of the Bloomington community prior to the Civil War. The town and the university were intertwined in myriad ways. They thrived off each other’s progress and shared the pain of each other’s setbacks. This symbiotic relationship shaped the way that

²⁴³ Wisconsin State Journal, April 10, 1865, April 11, 1865.
Indiana University students came to experience the Civil War. When they disagreed with their professors, they sought solace and protection within the structures of the town and from the residents. Political conflict came to their doorsteps on the university campus. In times of celebration and mourning they joined with townspeople to perform the ceremonies necessary to commemorate both types of moments. Indiana University students dedicated time and attention to their role on the home front and to the pressing issues of the war, but a specific series of events ultimately shaped the nature of their wartime experience.

The Civil War immediately affected the college experience of those who remained behind at Indiana University. The Greek fraternity Phi Delta Theta held no meetings during the spring term in 1861 “on account of the war and the consequent volunteering of a number of our members.” A rival fraternity, Beta Theta Pi, had similar issues. In May 1861, junior Curran DeBruler wrote to his brothers in another chapter about the state of the fraternity during the war. He was concerned about the future of the brotherhood at Indiana University, where graduation and the war looked to deplete most of the membership. He acknowledged that the situation was similar in most other collegiate chapters of Beta Theta Pi with which he had corresponded, including southern chapters supporting the Confederacy. DeBruler hoped that the Civil War “may leave uninjured the ties of brotherly love that bind together the great family of Greeks.” Following a detailed discussion of the strength of the fraternity, its campus rivals, and the character of its members, DeBruler assessed the consequences of war generally on the student body of Indiana University, stating, “The war excitement was so intense here for
a time that students almost entirely neglected their studies. But the excitement has passed away...”244

That shift occurred once students who remained on campus reconciled themselves to their fate. They realized that the war could significantly affect the nature of their education. Whereas students at Wisconsin and Michigan found much common ground on political issues during the war and only experienced brief periods of dissent from the mainstream Republican line, Indiana University students were not a politically coherent group. This reality influenced the topics that they chose to debate in their literary societies, the way they interacted with the public at large, and the nature of their relationship with the faculty. Athenian Literary Society records revealed that their political diversity plagued many debate sessions. This did not ultimately hinder their continued engagement with the pivotal questions surrounding the war. They tackled the most sensitive topics of the era such as Lincoln’s successes and failures as a leader, whether the Union should allow emancipated blacks to serve in the army, and if the South “displayed sufficient qualities to carry on a government.” On these and many other subjects throughout the war, the Athenians failed to come to a consensus but they did not shy away from suggesting such contentious topics for debate.245

Split decisions driven by political discord in 1863 and 1864 included a debate over whether Lincoln was a “usurper” and whether Ohio and Illinois should leave the union. Local talk about the possibilities of states or portions of the Old Northwest seceding from the Union themselves during the war caught the attention of these young

244 Palmer, 221. Fischer, 40.
245 May 6, 1864, Athenian minutes.
students. In fact, at one point, they considered “whether the country should be divided into three parts,” but they did not record their vote on this matter. Their voting patterns revealed numerous examples of occasions when the Jury and the House each were split in their vote tallies and additionally did not agree with each other in their outcomes. Regardless of the inconsistency in their voting patterns, the students at Indiana University did not shrink from addressing controversial themes of the day. They used such debates to shape and adapt their education to national conditions.246

Like students in Madison and Ann Arbor, Indiana University students engaged in debates regarding military matters. Students in all three locales understood that political leaders heavily influenced the direction of military affairs; therefore, they consistently tried their hand at assessing contemporary military strategy. At Indiana University though, even these debates highlighted the group’s ideological diversity. Following the outbreak of hostilities, Athenians contemplated whether “the policy pursued by Lincoln concerning the surrender of Ft. Sumter [was] calculated to secure the greatest benefit to the Union.” Members voted on this particular topic in the affirmative, mirroring the rally to the flag effect of the first months of the war. By the fall of 1861, however, after their first encounter with the deaths of fellow students, their logbook exposes growing ambivalence regarding topics related to the country’s crisis. They twice could not come to agreement in debates regarding the responsibility of the Republican party “for the present troubles in the United States.” In October 1861, the Athenian Literary Society recorded a motion to make newly appointed General George B. McClellan an honorary

246 October 16, 1863, November 9, 1863, Athenian minutes.
member of the organization. For reasons unknown, the group postponed the vote one week and then tallied a 14-6 vote count against the motion. Much later in the war, the Athenian Society members showed less ambivalence about the qualities of General Ulysses S. Grant. In March 1864, they voted to make Grant an honorary member of the society, marking his promotion to commanding general of the Union forces.\footnote{Grant and the Union army were still in winter quarters in March but the Athenians must have been reacting to his appointment as General-in-Chief over all of the Union armed forces. They obviously concurred with Lincoln’s decision to put this successful soldier in charge of the Union’s fate. Grant had been named to the position after a series of impressive victories in the western theater of war. April 26, 1861, February 21, 1862, Oct. 17, 1862, October 12, 1861, March 18, 1864, Athenian minutes.}

Indiana students quickly learned that the military decisions about which they theorized were truly matters of life and death to their newly enlisted classmates. Death found some of Indiana University’s student-soldiers within a few months of their departure for the front. On November 9, 1861, residents read the following headline and article in the \textit{Bloomington Republican}: “Death of Volunteers – The telegraph this week brings us the painful intelligence of the death (by sickness) of three young men, of this place, who enlisted in different companies that went from here during the past season.”

Samuel Wylie Dodds, class of 1861, enlisted in the 18\textsuperscript{th} Indiana the summer following graduation. Later that fall, family members requested that the army allow Dodds to go take care of his relative, Professor Wylie’s son Richard, who was dying at an army hospital in St. Louis. The young Wylie passed away and Dodds contracted an illness while tending to him and died in November 1861. John C. Cox, a freshman at Indiana University from Paoli, Indiana, left school in 1861 and served in the 14\textsuperscript{th} Indiana, a three-
year unit containing one company organized in Bloomington. He died at the front in Virginia also in November 1861.\textsuperscript{248}

In response to the initial news of the deaths of Cox and Wylie, junior John Hood chaired a committee formed at a campus-wide meeting to salute their fallen friends. Five resolutions resulted from that gathering, and the students published them in the \textit{Bloomington Republican} and the \textit{Paoli Eagle} of Cox’s hometown as a “Tribute of Respect.” In their words, Cox was “a talented and industrious student; a noble and generous companion [who served] the Country [as] a ready and brave defender.” The students also extended their sympathy to their “beloved professor, [Theophilus] Wylie” on the death of his son. Subsequently, the Philomathean Literary Society held a meeting at which members passed and published similar resolutions regarding Cox’s death. Their admiration of his service to his country and its impact on their own lives back at the university was apparent. “Cox,” they wrote, “actuated by the highest motives of patriotism, forsook home, friends and [Philomatheans], and went forth to encounter the dangers and privations of the battlefield.” The students who remained and participated in their literary society as a part of their daily home front viewed Cox’s membership with the Philomathean Society as equal in significance to his relationships with family and friends. In their perception, his decision to leave for war endangered the hearts not only of his loved ones, but those in his literary society as well. He was to those who remained at Indiana University a student first. They continued to dwell on the sadness of his death

at such an early age, submitting that Cox “has fallen in the noontide of his usefulness, while thus nobly battling for his country, liberty and humanity.”

Upon receiving news of Samuel Dodds’ death a few days later, the Athenian Literary Society submitted five resolutions for publication in the town newspaper. The second was especially poignant:

Resolved, That the Athenian Society has lost one who, while with us, was ever true to her interests and an ornament to her cause, and whose noble qualities of mind and heart had endeared him to all her members; and also that this community has lost an honored and beloved citizen, and the country a brave and gallant defender.

In their eyes, Dodds represented not only his country and the Bloomington community but also his literary society at Indiana University. The Athenians adjourned for the evening after passing these resolutions and suspended that week’s planned debate session. It was remarkable how much responsibility these literary societies felt towards their fellow members, even the ones who had departed the campus for the army. When the Athenians learned of Dodds’ death, they decided that if the militia did not serve as the pallbearers at Dodd’s funeral, the literary society would choose from among its own members to perform that function. Indiana University students would yield their positions.

249 Bloomington Republican, November 9, 1861. Parents also fostered the belief in their children that their continuing in school would contribute to their “usefulness” in society. As historian Kenneth Wheeler discusses in his study of antebellum Ohio colleges, higher education fostered a “culture of usefulness…through productivity, practicality, and piety.” This ideology, which was “hostile to the emphasis on the self, retained great power within Old Northwest higher education” and encouraged aspiring intellectuals to pursue academics for the benefit of greater society. Wheeler, “How Colleges Shaped a Public Culture of Usefulness,” 105-106. Wisconsin student Joseph Hall’s father illustrated this in his April 1861 letter, trying to convince his son that “It seems wrong for young men who are improving their minds and preparing themselves for usefulness in the world should drop all and go to the army when there are thousands who have nothing on hand, read to go.” April 28, 1861, Hall, M. letters, WHS. As mentioned in Chapter 4, historian Drew Gilpin Faust provides insight into the ways that civilians reacted to Civil War deaths in her book. Faust, 144, 153, 163-5.
in Dodds’ life to the militia, but beyond that they deemed themselves most deserving to
carry the young student-soldier to his final resting place.  

As these losses tempered their feelings of excitement regarding the war, Indiana
students shifted their attention to more local issues in an effort to deal with other aspects
of the conflict. During an Athenian Society meeting in February 1862, members
discussed the resolutions of a Democratic convention held in Indianapolis the previous
month. Several of Governor Oliver Morton’s enemies in Indiana, who also had close ties
to the South and the Confederate government, led the meeting in the state’s capital.
Indiana Democrats accused Republicans of being a sectional party bent on destroying the
southern labor system and consequently eliminating profitable markets for western
goods. The convention further contended that the Republicans were running the
government using unconstitutional methods with a flagrant indifference for the needs of
the people and argued emphatically against Lincoln’s call for the emancipation of the
slaves. The tone of the related Athenian debate question was sharper than usual,
suggesting that a member with Republican leanings drafted it. “Resolved,” the secretary
recorded, “that the proceedings of the so called Democratic Convention held in
Indianapolis on the 8th day of January should not be tolerated.” However, both the Jury
and the House voted negative, signaling that they would tolerate the Democrats’
resolutions. This served as a sure rebuke and reflection of the rest of the membership’s
feelings on the subject.

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250 Bloomington Republican, November 9, 1861. November 8, 1861, Athenian minutes.
251 William Dudley Foulke, Life of Oliver P. Morton: Including His Important Speeches, (Indianapolis,
It seemed that there were limits to the loyalty of Athenian members to the Democratic party. In March 1862, this group of students demonstrated that their support of the Union cause would ultimately supersede their affiliation with Democrats. The specific event that drew this reaction was the expulsion of Indiana Senator Jesse D. Bright from Congress. Republicans in Congress accused Bright of being a Confederate sympathizer, based on a confiscated letter in which Bright allegedly offered to trade firearms to Jefferson Davis. The affair disgraced Bright, thereby ruining his reputation as the leading Democrat in Indiana where he had been a political force in state and national politics for decades. He moved to Kentucky after losing his home to the Union army, who turned it into a military hospital. This affair did not go unnoticed by Indiana University’s young scholars. The Athenians debated whether Bright had been “justly expelled from the United States Senate” and voted on the matter in the affirmative. Clearly, they felt that in offering to help the Confederacy and by recognizing Jefferson Davis as the President of a legitimate nation, rather than the leader of a rebellion, Bright had overstepped the bounds appropriate even for a Democrat.  

Coincidentally, debates such as this one regarding Bright and others held in the war-torn months prior to March 1862 contributed to the student response to an event on their own campus. While the University of Michigan students practiced their leadership skills and formulated their beliefs regarding patriotism among a supportive faculty and a largely coherent student body, students at Indiana University gained first-hand experience

with ideological conflict during the Civil War. However, instead of earning that experience on the battlefield, they fought against the school’s faculty, Board of Trustees, and among themselves. As mentioned in Chapter One, Indiana University’s faculty members recorded a resolution in October 1860 requiring “original performances” of the literary societies’ annual public exhibitions to be “restricted to the Senior and Junior classes, and that all speeches and essays, original and selected, should be submitted to the supervision of the Professor of English Literature.” There was no evidence that the faculty communicated this resolution to the student body at that time. While the faculty announced other decisions during the chapel hour in the morning, there was no record that the faculty ever transmitted this particular resolution to the students. Their literary societies did not record its existence or a receipt of its particulars. Further, its origin and motivation remain a mystery. The faculty recorded no reason for its passage in October, nor were there any references to the necessity of such a rule in the year prior to its inclusion into the faculty minutes. Regardless, the faculty did not enforce this rule in 1860, 1861, or 1862.253

In the spring of 1862, following their first confrontation with the cost of war and the growing discussion in the region regarding civil rights during a war, the tone of student/faculty relations on campus took a decided turn for the worse. Martin L. Prather, a junior from Jeffersonville, Indiana, received a notice in March 1862 that the faculty had charged him with improper and disorderly conduct. He initially apologized, although in a rather cheeky manner that included saying he did not know that he would attempt to

253 October 29, 1860, IU Faculty minutes.
improve his behavior. A few days later, the faculty received a letter in which Prather asked “permission to withdraw all explanations, concessions and promises made by myself at our last interview.” When pressed for an explanation of his change in attitude, Prather said he would not provide any further defense and instead would await the punishment of the faculty. The faculty, pressed to a wall and not understanding the stubbornness of Prather’s actions, dismissed him from Indiana University on April 28. Considering that Prather immediately enlisted in the army following his dismissal, it could be suggested that he saw this situation as his way out of school and into the military.²⁵⁴

Prather left campus after possibly fulfilling his own agenda and that could have been the end of the situation. Surely, it was not the first or the last time that the faculty at Indiana University dismissed a student for disorderly conduct. However, the remaining students did not accept the decision quietly. Within days, the Philomathean Society submitted six resolutions to the faculty and sent them to Prather’s parents. The document was angrily entitled, “THE STUDENTS’ DECLARATION, OR THE VINDICATION OF A MARTYR.” The literary society’s criticism was harsh. “We…feel called upon to express our strongest disapprobation of the ungenerous and unchristian manner in which [the faculty] have treated [Prather],” the first resolution read. The students described the faculty’s actions as showing “a spirit of tyranny and persecution unworthy [of] the honor of our noble Institution” and accused them of refusing to give Prather a “fair and impartial hearing.” This failure, the students contended, was “a dangerous innovation

²⁵⁴ March 4, 1862, March 5, 1862, April 25, 1862, April 28, 1862, IU Faculty minutes.
upon our rights; and if successfully carried out, will tend to the total subversion of our most sacred prerogatives.” These students invoked the discourse and prose of their nation’s conflict. Although the Lincoln administration ended the suspension of the writ of habeus corpus in February 1862, the knowledge of its impact, especially in Maryland early in the war, was a widespread topic of controversy throughout the North.  

The hostile political situation in Indiana intensified the students’ awareness of the stakes of the civil rights debates occurring in the country. The spring of 1862 saw the Democratic party gaining power and support throughout the state and poised to regain control of the state legislature. The students assumed responsibility to speak out against abuses of their civil rights at Indiana University, using the Prather incident to articulate the developing ideologies of future national leaders. In calling the faculty tyrannical, they also identified with the increasing masses that were beginning to criticize Lincoln’s and Governor Morton’s administrations for their heavy-handed approach to dealing with opponents of the war or the party. In fact, the Athenian Society at Indiana University, had decided just weeks earlier that “the Republican party [was] the cause of this war.” During this upheaval, many Indiana students did not look favorably upon the incumbent administration. 


The Philomathean Society continued their resolutions by arguing that Prather’s “untarnished reputation and unflinching integrity…[and] superior education and abilities entitle him to the confidence and respect of all honorable people.” Thus, the literary society members implied that the faculty lacked honor and ultimately, in their sixth and final resolution, stated that the faculty “have brought upon themselves, in a great measure, the disrespect of us all.” In a time when the country’s leaders debated the issue of respect regarding the demanded rights of its sections, Indiana students invoked this same wording to express their frustration and disapproval of the faculty’s actions.257

The faculty met these statements in an equally forceful way, labeling them in their meeting minutes as “highly impertinent in tone, as well as grossly erroneous in their statements.” They demanded that the Philomatheans withdraw the resolutions, either individually or as a group, and then agreed to interview the remaining students in order to obtain explanations and retractions. The students who refused to apologize and discredit the resolutions faced dishonorable dismissal. This push for retractions occurred throughout May and early June and appeared to have concluded prior to commencement later that month. The summer break came and went but the faculty did not forget, nor does it seem they forgave, the uprising of the student body that spring.258

In early September, just after the new academic year began, the Board of Trustees sent a memorandum to the literary societies outlining six resolutions that essentially reinforced the original faculty guideline regarding speeches from 1860. This event went

257 M.L. Prather: The Students’ Declaration or the Vindication of a Martyr, April 30, 1862, IU University Archives.
258 May 2, 1862, May 22, 1862, May 30, 1862, June 4, 1862, IU Faculty minutes.
unnoticed in the faculty minutes. Maybe they requested the Board to bolster their position by seconding the demand or perhaps the faculty wanted the Board to become involved so that the faculty could direct student anger away from themselves. It seems unlikely that the Board resolutions, coming so quickly on the heels of that spring’s altercation, could be considered a coincidence. The six points reminded students that “university buildings including halls for literary purposes and campus shall be under control of faculty,” and required that the faculty approve nominations by the societies for outside speakers who would appear on campus in public events prior to issuing invitations to said speakers. Additionally, all members of the faculty were now “ex-officio” members of literary societies and had the right to come and go as they pleased during meetings and events. The Board of Trustees also forbade the literary societies from meeting past midnight, banned non-students from membership, and prohibited smoking in university buildings. Buried within these edicts laid a slightly revised version of the 1860 faculty resolution, then worded:

All speeches & compositions essays dialogues and other literary productions prepared by the students and intended for public occasions connected with the university shall be subject to the supervision and revision of the Faculty before they are spoken or read.

Whether this was the intended heart of the six resolutions and the others were included as both punishment or smokescreen was not clear. It was also possible that the Board included this particular resolution as an afterthought, based on suggestion by the faculty.259

259 See September 19, 1862, January 8, 1864, Athenian minutes.
In any case, the Board and the faculty attempted to remind the students of their subordinate position at the university and to restrain further an increasingly activist student body. The politically divided and surely not wholly Republican political outlook of the students at Indiana University by the fall of 1862 doubtlessly caused a moment’s pause to the largely pro-Union, Republican faculty. The students did not, at this point, react. The Athenians recorded the Board’s resolutions into their minute book on September 19, 1862, without comment or much attention. It was just another letter read and entered as received. A few weeks later, the Athenians formed a committee to decide what they should do with or about the ordinances. The three-member group reported that the society should “disregard” the resolutions and should not schedule the types of public exhibitions that would provoke the faculty to enforce the rules.  

Nothing additional occurred for several months and perhaps both sides calmed down a bit. The faculty then decided to remind the students about the resolution regarding publicly read essays in March 1863, just prior to the annual literary society exhibition. For the first time since its original adoption in 1860, the faculty chose to enforce their position on original compositions. They agreed on March 20, 1863, that the President “be instructed to remind the speakers of said requirement, and of the danger they may incur by disregarding it.” Upon receipt of this notice, students of both the Athenian and Philomathean societies met and “resolved to have no more public exhibitions until the Board would rescind said resolution.” They prohibited those students who had planned to give speeches from submitting their work to the faculty and

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260 September 19, 1862, October 3, 1862, Athenian minutes.
threatened to expel any who did from their literary society. It appeared that the exhibition
did not occur but the faculty recorded no reaction to this turn of events beyond noting the
decision of the literary societies to skip its usual showcase.261

The faculty did not record a discussion of potential reactions to the students’
decision. Clearly though, some contemplation of the issue occurred because in September
1863, the Athenians entered a memo into their minute book received from the Board of
Trustees. This communication from the Board to the literary societies gave notice that
they repealed the resolution requiring revision of original speeches and essays but in
exchange gave the faculty the power to suspend students from both the university and the
literary society. The faculty obviously felt that it needed more control over the
membership rosters of these groups. The two societies had begun inviting non-students
into their ranks and the faculty did not approve of such measures. Thus, while the
students successfully campaigned to remove the censorship over their annual exhibitions,
the faculty attempted to rein them in through other means.262

This sequence of events empowered the students. They continued to lose respect
for a faculty who seemed desperate to control an extracurricular activity that the students
deemed outside their realm of responsibility. What began as a disagreement regarding the
dismissal of one student led the students to believe that they had the task of holding the
faculty accountable for oppressive decisions. In a charged national environment in which
rights of individuals and groups were being fought for literally with blood, Indiana
University students exhibited their understanding of the ideology of the country by

261 March 20, 1863, March 26, 1863, IU Faculty minutes.
262 April 1, 1863, September 26, 1863, Athenian minutes.
standing up for their rights on campus. Once the faculty apparently caved on the revision requirement, the students declared war. They acted out at the institution the methods of disagreement that they witnessed occurring in their own nation. While they could have let the matter drop, been grateful for the repeal of the speech and essay resolution, and dutifully followed the rest of the Board’s 1862 rules, they instead decided later that same autumn to test yet another of the aforementioned decrees.

In November, two months after the Board’s rescinding of the revision requirement, the students began discussing nominations for their next commencement speaker. These decisions took time; it was a long process to contact the invited guest and wait for an acceptance before commencement the following June. Henry Meredith, a freshman from Cambridge City, Indiana, wrote in his diary that the discussion regarding nominees became “a loud time” on November 7, 1863. The two societies eventually settled on William M. Daily, disgraced ex-president of Indiana University. Daily, whose term as president spanned 1853 through January 1859, resigned after withstanding a long trial by the Board of Trustees on charges of immorality, adultery, incompetence as a professor, and plagiarism. Although ultimately cleared of most of these charges, Daily removed himself from the university to prevent further injury to the institution’s reputation.263

Not even five years later, the faculty reacted with alarm and disgust at the literary society’s choice, which they interpreted as a malicious test of their mettle. Not only did

263 November 7, 1863, Henry C Meredith diary 1863 in Solomon Meredith collection Henry Clay Meredith, Solomon Meredith papers 1812-1875, IHS. Woodburn, History of Indiana University, 252-253, Clark, 92-93.
the students disregard the Board resolution requiring the literary societies to present a list of possible invited speakers to the faculty for approval, the students also increased the incendiary nature of the situation by wanting to bring such a polemical speaker to campus. Professor Theophilus Wylie, writing in his diary eight days later, “felt almost exhausted by labor & anxiety & indisposition. We hear some rumbling forebodings of a college storm.” In attempting to prod the students into obedience and avoid possible conflict, the faculty sent a note to the literary societies on December 11 reminding them that the faculty must pre-approve all speakers prior to the extension of an invitation.

Then, when the answer received from the two groups was vague and unsatisfactory, the faculty undertook a complete examination of each individual member, asking each whether he would submit to the Board’s resolutions and enforce their commands within their literary societies.²⁶⁴

It was clear during this interrogation process that the students failed to present a united front and that the faculty continued to dwell upon the Prather incident as being the catalyst for the students’ more recent violations. Faculty meeting minutes did not record the questions asked of each young man, but they logged the answers. The latter suggested that the faculty asked questions regarding how each literary society reacted to the Board’s resolutions, whether the literary societies intended to abide by the ordinances, whether each student believed that the Board’s authority was superior to the literary societies, and whether the student promised to abide by the Board’s rules in the future. The faculty did not always ask the same questions to every student but at least the first interviewee gave

²⁶⁴ November 15, 1863, Wylie diary. December 11, 1863, December 12, 1863, IU Faculty minutes.
an answer that was recorded as, “thinks the society ought to have been punished for their conduct in the case of Mr. Prather,” revealing that the faculty attempted to get to the core of this upheaval and believed the Prather incident may have been the cause.265

Many students held firm during these rounds of questioning. Some declined, for example, “to answer whether [they] can promise to use [their] influence in favor of submitting to the ordinances of the Board.” Several more “[doubted] the authority of the Board over the society.” Others “heartily [promised] obedience to the ordinances of the Board” and agreed that they would support “changing the constitution [of the literary society] so as to conform to the resolutions of the Board.” The students hearkened back to their training as citizens and potential leaders of the country by vehemently defending their literary society charters and constitutions. Earlier students formed these groups as extracurricular activities, outside the purview of the faculty. Across the country, literary societies followed this model. However, as they used campus buildings for their meeting places, and stood as representatives of the university when in public settings, the faculty at Indiana University sought to control the nature of these organizations. As the students who chose to fight against these Board resolutions solidified their argument, they used ones most familiar to them during their own era: constitutional rights and nullification.

The students argued that they had the right to nullify rules of the faculty and the Board that conflicted with their foundational documents, especially when outsiders passed those rules without input or authorization from the literary societies. With this in mind, the students at Indiana University prepared for their own civil war, for their own secession.

265 December 14, 1863 (Mr. Weed), IU Faculty minutes.
They adopted the stance and tone of a victimized group and argued in the same manner as the southerners had for decades leading up to Fort Sumter.\footnote{December 14, 1863 (Mr. Monks, Mr. Weed, Mr. Hatfield), December 15, 1863 (Mr. Givan), IU Faculty minutes. Kenneth Roger Sager notes in his dissertation on higher education during the Civil War that the conflict “was a stirring time intellectually. …In some institutions there was a question of whether or not freedom of thought would prevail.” Sager, 92.}

Student after student told faculty members that they had “not considered the society under the control of the University.” Henry Meredith wrote in his diary on December 16 following his interview with the professors that he “was examined in regard to some resolutions of the Board of Trustees they coaxed very hard and tried[sic] to get me to vote for them but [I] would not promise.” By December 18, it became clear to the leaders of the literary societies that they were divided between those who easily acquiesced to the demands of the faculty and those who wanted to aggressively support a growing ideology that the university faculty and Board of Trustees had no right to attempt to alter their societies. The Philomathean Society reached out to the Athenians and requested a meeting of all members “on the state of the University”; the Athenians accepted.\footnote{December 15, 1863 (Mr. Spink), IU Faculty minutes. December 16, 1863, Henry C Meredith diary 1863 in Solomon Meredith collection Henry Clay Meredith, Solomon Meredith papers 1812-1875, IHS. See all interviews December 14, 1863 through December 16, 1863, IU Faculty minutes. December 18, 1863, Athenian minutes.}

The faculty met that same night after receiving resolutions from the joint meeting. The document, signed only by the corresponding secretary of the Philomathean Society, demonstrated that those students in favor of opposing the efforts of the Board and faculty to alter their societies won the day. Beginning with a preamble reminding the faculty, “the Legislature of the State of Indiana has granted us a perpetual charter…authorizing
us…to make our own constitution and by-laws,” the students then offered four resolutions. They argued, “nobody has the right to annul or violate said charter….or to deprive us of the right to alter or amend according to our own free will.” The students wrote about respect, about demanding to be respected and have their rights respected, in exchange for considering requests made by the faculty and Board. Ultimately, they informed the faculty that they were rejecting the resolutions of the Board and asked the faculty to withhold punishment until the students could meet directly with the Board and plead their case.268

The faculty composed and read their own preamble and resolutions the next morning in chapel. They conceded that the students believed their charter and constitution to be inviolable but maintained that the literary societies “cannot admit that any charter ever was designed in spirit to conflict with the powers originally vested in the Trustees or Faculty.” The students were incorrect, argued the faculty, to believe that the literary societies stood outside of the responsibility and jurisdiction of university officials. What followed was a fast lesson for the students in their true position on the Indiana University campus. The faculty swore to “sever the connection between themselves and such students as consider their society’s charter and constitution paramount to the University charter.” Only students who could “pledge themselves as gentlemen to submit” in another round of upcoming interviews would be eligible to return to the classrooms and continue their educations. These firm words, thus aired just before the term’s week of exams commenced, meant that each student had to make a decision and

268 December 18, 1863, IU Faculty minutes.
communicate that to the faculty quickly and clearly. Students also had the option of withdrawing from the literary societies if they did not want to submit to the Board’s ordinances. By the end of the exam period, Professor Wylie felt “much vexed & perhaps will be more vexed, by the insubordination of the Societies.” This announcement foreshadowed the strong response adopted by the faculty in light of these events.269

The faculty began by interviewing the Philomathean Society members. Following this process, they suspended six of its members on January 8, 1864. The affected students revealed no demographic pattern regarding the motivation of the students on this issue. Four hailed from the southern part of the state, one from east central, and one from an unknown place. They were a mix of sophomores and juniors, with one senior. None of the six names appeared on the petitions filed by students in the Prather affair. The only thing in common among them was that none of them appeared in the university catalogue the following year. Upon the announcement of this action, the Athenians revolted. They went back to the two communications from the Board of Trustees entered into their minute book (September 18, 1862 and September 25, 1863) and ordered that they “be stricken from the journal.” Thus, someone drew huge black crosses on those pages across the wording. Faculty interviews with the Athenian members began immediately to determine which members led the charge to oppose the Board’s ordinances in that organization. The Athenians appeared split in their interviews just as were the Philomatheans. Many easily submitted to the Board’s demands, while others remained obstinate. The faculty, plainly still irked by the William M. Daily election, hammered

269 December 18, 1863, IU Faculty minutes. December 27, 1863. Wylie diary.
home questions regarding the students’ snub of the Board’s resolution on such matters, which they believed was intentional.  

At this point, members of the Athenian Society took this issue to the next level. On January 22, 1864, five students wrote a letter directly to the Board of Trustees requesting a meeting. They appealed to the Board using rhetoric borrowed from the nation’s contemporaneous conflict. “No necessity ever existed sufficient to justify the authorities of the University in interfering with our Society affairs,” the missive began, and insisted the Board recognize that “scarcely subordinate to literary culture in the design of our organization is the cultivation of habits of self-government.” These young men realized and wanted to protect the venue within which they developed and shaped themselves as future leaders of the country. The success of its goals depended on freedom from the imposing structures of the university professors. “By [the Board’s resolutions] you came into our miniature republic and say ‘you are not capable of governing here…we will dictate, your only duty will be to obey,’” continued the letter passionately. Describing themselves as a “miniature republic” revealed the high degree to which these students associated the attacks on their literary society with the dangers to the nation. 

After conceding that they did not believe the Board acted with malicious intent, the students argued that the officials’ desire to act within the best interests of the university damaged student morale, as many young men recently resigned from

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270 Suspended students: Givan, Moffat, Monks, Sheeks, Spink, and Turner, January 8, 1864, IU Faculty minutes. January 8, 1864, September 18, 1862, September 25, 1863, Athenian minutes. January 21, 1864 – January 25, 1864, IU Faculty minutes.

271 The letter was drafted on January 22 and officially dated January 26. Committee of Athenian Society Letter to Board of Trustees, Indiana University, January 26, 1864, IU University Archives.
membership in the literary societies. In its closing, the Athenian committee took a strong stand:

We deny that our society is rebellious or insubordinate, and is unwilling to render obedience to all rightful authority, and we are equally willing to affirm that when it considers itself wronged it will take, as it considers it is now taking, any measure to redress its wrongs that it considers lawful and right.

The students got their wish and gained an audience with the Board in early February. A letter from one of the students at the meeting called their efforts “hopless [sic] & of no avail.” The Board remained entrenched in their position; the Athenian representative charged “[the Board] are making an political consurn[sic] of it.” As far as the students were concerned, their last remaining option was to appeal to the Indiana legislature to “obtain justice.” This committee of Athenian members failed to persuade university officials that their rights within the literary society existed independently of the governance of the institution.272

Their attempt also demonstrated how they continued to utilize the nation’s ideological debates to shape and direct the manner in which they prepared themselves during their college years. Rather than seeking a compromise or complying peacefully with the ordinances, these students perceived their rights trampled and their domain invaded. They responded how they had heard and seen political leaders do likewise. By doing so, they tested their ideas about individual and groups rights, the infallibility of

constitutions, and the relationship between power classes within the microcosm of their university campus.

While the Athenian committee prepared for the meeting with the Board of Trustees, they also formed a committee in late January to inquire with the faculty as to the possibility of moving the literary society meetings off campus. They presumed that the largest impetus to the faculty and Board believing they had input into the literary societies functions was due to holding their meetings on campus. If the literary societies removed themselves in body, then the separation between students and the university during literary society events and meetings would be complete. Thus, in their minds they would be free from the Board’s resolutions. The Athenian committee met with the faculty on February 5 to ask about such a proposal and intended to hedge their bet by threatening to disband and sell all of their property should the answer be no. They asked the faculty to allow a local judge to offer his opinion on the case as an unbiased third party but the faculty agreed only to allow the Board of Trustees to have the final say. On February 7, the answer came from the Board in response to their meeting with the Athenians: all resolutions reaffirmed.\textsuperscript{273}

The question, however, regarding moving the societies into town gained momentum during the rest of February and the Athenians held a number of meetings on the topic. The idea caused a significant amount of disagreement within the literary society, including a brawl between two students when one who opposed changing the group’s constitution called another student who supported the adjustments a coward. In a

\textsuperscript{273} January 29, 1864, Athenian minutes. February 5, 1864, IU Faculty minutes, February 7, 1864, Wylie diary.
final confrontation the students in favor of closing the hall and disbanding threatened violence against the ones who preferred to submit to the will of the faculty and Board of Trustees. During this chaos, the faculty dismissed one Athenian leader and senior student Joseph Dufour from the university. Melville Cox Robertson, another senior and Athenian member, left voluntarily in February and joined Dufour in enlisting in the military. The conflict succeeded in driving at least two promising and almost graduated students from the institution and into the army. By the middle of February, the Athenians degenerated into disarray, illustrated by the filing of a lawsuit by those who intended to shut down the society and form a debating club in town against other students who continued to meet in the Athenian Hall on campus. Senior James H. Foster sued his classmates for malicious trespass, forcible entry and riot. Thus, when not all members of the group agreed to secede from the university, those wishing to sever ties turned to the legal system for resolution. Within days of the lawsuit’s filing, the faculty began marching Athenian members into their offices for interviews. 274

Most of the students who participated in the plan to remove the Athenian Society from Indiana University and reform as another organization in Bloomington remained defiant. They individually agreed that they would rather see the literary society defunct than consent to make the changes required by the Board of Trustees. One student, William B. Wilson, even exclaimed that he would rather be expelled than submit. However, within one week, the instigator of the lawsuit signed a pledge to the faculty promising to resign from the Athenian Society and avoid “in my intercourse anything
which could be construed as instigating students to a disobedience of the Ordinances of
the Board.” Foster also agreed to refrain from treating with disrespect those who
supported submitting to the Board. He graduated from Indiana University that June after
narrowly escaping dismissal in his senior year.275

In early March, the weakened body of Athenians, fewer in number due to forced
and voluntary resignations, met to respond per the faculty’s wishes to the ordinances of
the Board. As promised in their interviews, they rescinded the act of expunging the
Board’s resolutions from their minutes and began the discussion regarding making the
requirements a permanent part of Athenian Society bylaws. On Friday, March 11, 1864,
Foster withdrew the lawsuit. All might have been quiet at this point, but the students,
unwilling to be fully acquiescent, provoked the professors again with one final action.
Along with the still-stewing Philomathean Society, they submitted a request to the faculty
to approve Daily as the invited speaker for commencement that summer. The faculty
members, who were exhausted and annoyed after so many months of this wrangling,

responded that they will not prevent it since he had already been invited but that in the future, in accordance with the
Board of Trustees ordinances, the societies must submit the name before giving notice and they consider it would be yet
better and would save all parties trouble if [the societies] would hand in a list of names for approval before
proceeding to election [within their own groups].

Then the record falls silent with this type of conflict. No further mention of the
ordinances in either the faculty minutes or the literary society minutes. Spring turned into

275 February 24, 1864, February 26, 1864, IU Faculty minutes.
summer and then into fall and no additional conflicts arose between the faculty and the
students regarding this matter.\textsuperscript{276}

It was possible that these episodes at Indiana University were symptomatic of the
state and national events that were bringing emotions and tensions to a zenith in Indiana.
The correlation was highly suggestive. Just as the Democrats regained power in the state
and Copperheads gained popularity in Bloomington and throughout the Midwest, this
situation at Indiana University exploded and kept the faculty and students at odds with
one another for nearly two years. When it was over, after another commencement had
passed and another fall semester began, the national scene had changed. By September
1864, General William T. Sherman had taken Atlanta, turning the momentum of the
presidential election in favor of Abraham Lincoln. All eyes followed that momentous
occasion as the faculty members gained confidence in the Republican victory at the polls
and the country began to regain hope in a Union victory on the battlefield.

While the country’s outlook had plummeted in 1862 and fallen to discouraging
levels through the first half of 1863, the strain of the times played out in Bloomington,
Indiana, in a pseudo-civil war between faculty and students. Forced to yield to the
faculty’s application of power and position, the students quietly resumed their places with
the knowledge that their attempt at secession and the acquisition of increased power had
failed. Through these affairs and experiences, however, the students tested their abilities
to articulate their beliefs regarding life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. They
practiced their leadership and citizenship skills, not just through vague imaginary

\textsuperscript{276} March 4, 1864, March 11, 1864, Athenian minutes. March 11, 1864, March 18, 1864, IU Faculty
minutes.
situational debates, but also in a real-life conflict that risked more than just embarrassment on the society hall floor. Indiana’s rebellious students gambled with dishonorable dismissal from the university and the end of their pursuit of education. Just as their surrounding city, county, and state all played with fire during the Civil War due to the diverse nature of their allegiances and political ideologies, the students at Indiana University lived through an intense few years on that campus. During this period, they experienced pressure in more ways than academically.

Despite this extended conflict with their professors, it was clear that Indiana University students remained connected to the course and outcome of the war from the Bloomington campus. Literary societies provided them with a vehicle through which to explore their perceptions of the nation’s most significant questions and allowed them to feel intimately connected with a conflict hundreds of miles away. Although their studies restricted them to this form of participation, Athenians at Indiana University stayed abreast of current developments and reflected the political and social tensions of their state and section. The revolt of a portion of the student body between 1862 and 1864 underscored the depth to which these students understood and identified with the issues at stake in the Civil War.

Students at the University of Wisconsin, the University of Michigan, and Indiana University moved steadily forward toward their educational goals during the war years and capitalized on their opportunities. Their involvement with these schools shaped their wartime experiences and their memories of the Civil War forever intersected with this
period in their lives. These university students spent those years away from home and not yet settled into a profession. Instead, they were among like-minded peers and in an intellectual environment that molded their understanding of patriotism, their ambitions for the future, and their engagement with the political and social ideologies of the era.

Remaining a student at one of these three state universities during the Civil War was a major decision. Some young men grappled with it during the entire war. Many hurried to enlist following their graduation, but many more never did. The students who remained in school learned how to weave their university life in with the new realities of a wartime home front. “I get plenty of exercise now days,” John Hinchman wrote to his mother in 1863, “between drilling and base-ball.”277 War became another aspect of their education, another potential responsibility of the educated man. Those who earned their degrees during the Civil War retained the nineteenth century belief in the link between education and political potential. They embraced the nation’s conflict as another opportunity to propel themselves into the elite strata of American leadership. Along the way, however, ideological conflicts threatened their success.

277 Hinchman to mother, May 3, 1863, John Marshall Hinchman letters, 1861-1864, Bentley Historical Library.
CHAPTER SIX:

POINTS OF OPPOSITION

“Slavery is hard, but war and disunion are a thousand times worse.”
Gideon Winan Allen, University of Michigan, 1863

While students at the University of Michigan, the University of Wisconsin, and Indiana University dealt with the changes wrought on their college experiences by the Civil War in a variety of ways, several specific issues caused notable contention and angst during this period. Opinion regarding emancipation and conscription, two controversial topics during the Civil War, offer lenses through which to examine examples of ideological conflict that divided the student bodies at these three Midwestern universities. One response embraced by some students was to identify themselves as Copperheads, a growing faction of the Democratic party that demanded an immediate end to the war. The students did not live in a vacuum; northern political discourse infiltrated these three campuses, causing conflicts in a few cases, but mainly resulted in additional subject matter on which these budding scholars and leaders could focus their attention.

278 Gideon Winan Allen to Annie Cox, December 30, 1863, Allen papers.
Almost immediately after the Civil War began, university students chimed in with the rest of the nation regarding the role of slavery in causing the war and the potential impact of the conflict on the southern institution. The very notion of emancipation caused Americans to form unflappable opinions in favor or against the possibility and most shared their perspectives vocally and emotionally. Perhaps it was not surprising that the students at Indiana University found it difficult to reach any agreement during the war, and their literary society debates revealed more friction and dissonance than a real pattern of political support for one party or the other. Their location immersed them in the vehement and often violent realities of northern ideological conflict. Regular attention to the issues that divided the local society did not drive Indiana students to distraction from their own personal agendas. They focused less on participating in the chaos around them and more on isolating themselves within their own war with the faculty on campus.

The campus conflict that occurred at the University of Michigan was more unexpected. A raucous segment of the student population there felt emboldened by 1862 to align themselves with the Copperheads and in doing so provoked confrontations on campus that threatened to permanently divide the student body. In Wisconsin, university students witnessed the impact of the draft on the nature of their home front and regularly questioned the propriety of emancipation. Far away from the realities of the southern institution, they saw instead the economic impact of the war on their state and later moved in consonance with the Republican positions articulated in their part of the country. This chapter will explore how students expressed their perspectives regarding
these topics of contention, both privately and publically, and how the existence of these divergent views shaped the nature of their home front experience.

The University of Michigan housed some of the most devoted Republican followers during the election of 1860, many of whom held increasingly anti-slavery positions as the war commenced. When northern calls for the emancipation of southern slaves grew louder in the days after Fort Sumter, those in Michigan who feared such a result from the Civil War dug in for an aggressive and strident battle against their political foes. Instead of retreating quietly to the wings, students at the University of Michigan strode directly into the fray. Its location in the northern part of the Midwest isolated this university from the physical destruction of the Civil War. The state did not, however, escape the region’s notorious political and ideological conflicts between those loyal to the government and the raucous opposition of local Copperheads. Michigan residents and by extension the students at its state university were not immune to the turmoil that occurred in surrounding states like Ohio and Indiana. But, the pro-southern posture that held sway in much of lower Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois did not permeate its boundaries. Emancipation, the draft, and the election of 1864 crystallized the perspectives of Lincoln’s enemies and students who fell in line with their ideology did so energetically as the war got underway.  

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It is important to distinguish between being “pro-southern” and being an adherent of the conservative wing of the Democratic party who were labeled Copperheads during the Civil War. In characterizing Copperheads, Jennifer L. Weber argues that they, “were consistent, and constant in their demand for an immediate peace settlement. At times they were willing to trade victory for peace…[It] remains unclear to this day how they expected the nation to return to the status quo ante bellum …[The] peace wing never acknowledged Confederate wishes [for independence.]…Besides the desire for peace, the
The Emancipation Proclamation of January 1, 1863, captured the interest of Ann Arbor as it did most northern cities at that time. Every newspaper in the town chimed in with a variety of reactions to all of which the students were exposed. Some editors supported the measure, expecting it to reveal the true patriots of the nation and praising it as a worthy war policy. Others railed against its potential effects, its constitutionality, and its impact on the reputation of the President. “The rebels can be conquered only by powder and ball…never by statutes,” bemoaned the *Ann Arbor Journal*, in one of the more moderate criticisms of the edict. The harshest detractors called the Proclamation “a very hazardous and dangerous experiment,” which would “prove a mere delusion to the northern fanatics and radicals.” University of Michigan faculty contributed their perspectives regarding Lincoln’s declaration. In a Thanksgiving Day sermon later that year, new university president Erastus O. Haven attempted to answer the question: “Should the Nation be thankful?” The Emancipation Proclamation numbered among the blessings that he identified: “There is the miracle of the President’s Proclamation of Emancipation!” Haven gave full credit to Lincoln, “our Moses,” for being God’s actor in common denominator for all conservatives was their concern about personal liberties. Peace men were strict constructionists about the constitution…Peace Democrats universally supported slavery, believing it to be the best situation for a degraded race…Many conservatives blamed the abolitionists for starting the war. Southerners, by this account, were the innocent victims.” Weber continues by arguing, “For their many faults, though, most Copperheads were not traitors. Though some made no bones about their Southern sympathies, most were genuinely committed to the well-being of the nation…the vast majority were loyal to the Union…They did not want the Confederacy to win or the Union to split.” When considering the pro-southern actions and posturing of many communities in the southern Ohio River border regions of Ohio, Indiana and Illinois during the Civil War, it is clear that the Copperhead activity of Michigan generally falls short of being overtly pro-southern. Weber’s work, as just one example, illustrates the range of Copperhead activity in the North and does not identify Michigan as being among the most virulent states in its support of either the Copperhead agenda or pro-southern activities. Weber, 3-7.
freeing the slaves. The disparity of opinions in the community quickly reached the halls of the university.280

From the records of the University of Michigan’s extracurricular organizations, we can gain a glimpse into how the students at that institution considered war-related topics and how they prioritized the issues that required debate. Groups like the Student Lecture Association (SLA) and Greek fraternities such as Beta Theta Pi participated in assessing the impact of emancipation. In November 1862, the SLA brought abolitionist Cassius M. Clay to Ann Arbor to speak about the Emancipation Proclamation. “Give him a full house,” commanded the local Ann Arbor Journal. The fraternity’s debate regarding the Proclamation considered whether it would “fail to accomplish the ends for which it was designed.” Michigan’s students used the multiple venues available to them to engage with their home front and the intense ideological questions of the war including the significance of slavery. The literary societies epitomized this argument as both the Alpha Nu and Literary Adelphi tackled emancipation on numerous occasions.281

The Alpha Nu Literary Society at the University of Michigan addressed the role of slavery in the war shortly after the attack on Fort Sumter. The young scholars considered whether Congress should pass legislation to abolish slavery. First, it was interesting that they focused on whether Congress had the authority to affect such a change. Their conception of how emancipation might work did not place the power of

280 James H. Young, “The Editorial Attitudes of Ann Arbor Newspapers Toward Lincoln and the Civil War, 1856-1865,” Michigan, Univ. Dept. of Hist. Student Papers, Box 6, Folder 198, Chapter 2, 8, Bentley Historical Library. E.O. Haven, Should the Nation be thankful? A Sermon delivered before the Baptist, Congregational, Methodist, and Presbyterian societies in Ann Arbor, Michigan, on Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 26, 1863 (Ann Arbor: C.G. Clerk, Jr., 1863), 16.

281 Ann Arbor Journal, November 5, 1862. February 7, 1863, Beta Theta Pi, Lambda Chapter (University of Michigan) records, 1845-1931, Box 1, 1st Folder, Bentley Historical Library.
such an action with the president. Second, the resolution considered ending slavery as “the only means of bringing about a speedy termination of the war” (emphasis added). Even at this early stage, the students could envision the potential impact of such an action, but despite “quite a spirited discussion,” the resolution lost. Alpha Nu members were not yet ready to take such a drastic step in their theoretical prosecution of the war. However, just a few weeks later, they deemed the government’s treatment of General John C. Frémont, who declared the first military order describing slaves as contraband of war, “uncalled for and unjust.” Widespread emancipation for military purposes may have been beyond the scope of these young men in philosophy, but when faced with the reality of its achievements in battle, they could see its redeeming qualities.282

As Lincoln moved ever closer to adopting a plan for emancipation, the students at the University of Michigan considered a range of ideas put forth in national discourse. Their position on slavery held the Republican line in 1862. In February, they argued that perhaps colonizing blacks in South America might be the best course of action. The Republican party had long supported various methods of colonization, many of which were often espoused by Lincoln himself. Once the battle of Antietam prompted the president to issue his preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, Alpha Nu members agreed that the decision “was demanded by the exigencies of the times.” In December 1862, they decided that separation from the South was better than a Union with slavery. As the first

282 October 25, 1861, November 22, 1861, Alpha Nu minutes.
year of the war melded into the second, the members of Alpha Nu continued to support the Lincoln administration.\textsuperscript{283}

In April 1863, Alpha Nu reassessed the role of slavery in the war in light of the official Emancipation Proclamation. For reasons unknown, the students took a vote without holding a debate on the following question: “Resolved, that the unjust agitation of the slavery question was the sole cause of the war.” The resolution lost. While slavery represented a crucial element of the war to these young men, they also respected other factors in the country’s spiral into armed conflict. In an essay for their literary society magazine *Sibyl*, one Alpha Nu student honored those men who fell at the battles of Antietam and Gettysburg. He crafted a portrayal of the northern land and its homesteads being invaded by rebels, whom he described as “the most loathesome\textsuperscript{sic} specimens of humanity…scattering disease & pollution on their route.” Not only were the invading forces depicted as “the vilest – the meanest – the most ignorant – [and] the lousiest,” but this student’s vision of southerners included his belief that they were “too mean ever to win the respect of the African and impelled by the most ungenerous of passions to fight madly under the black banner of Slavery.” The Confederates went to war, argued this Michigan student, due to his “fiendish habit of wielding the lash over the cowering & powerless slave.” He contrasted this representation with the Union soldier, who “rushed into the mortal combat to repel the invader…from a sublime sense of duty – from devotion to social order – from the noblest instincts of Justice.” Literary society members recognized the role of slavery as a major factor in not only the outbreak of the war but

\textsuperscript{283} February 28, 1862, November 14, 1862, December 12, 1862, Alpha Nu minutes.
also in the nature of how the war unfolded. While they did not blame the entirety of the war’s existence on the peculiar institution, one student’s emotional invective against the nature of slaveholders revealed how some Michigan students saw slavery as the catalyst for the Confederacy’s military tactics.\textsuperscript{284}

Slavery and emancipation attracted scholarly debate in the University of Michigan’s second literary society as well. In 1861, one Literary Adelphi student outlined “our nation’s duty” in his persuasive commentary on the need for immediate emancipation. He called slavery a “heaven-closing and man-degrading institution” and identified it as the cause of the war. These views were already somewhat ahead of the general opinion regarding abolition so early in the war, but the student leapt in front of popular discourse when he insisted, “emancipate every negro and if need be put arms into their hands.” His tone was confident, his demands clear, and his awareness of historical and current political exigencies exhibited how some students in the university saw slavery as inextricably tied with not only the cause of the war but its outcome as well.\textsuperscript{285}

That same literary society voted in April 1862 prior to the pronouncement of the Emancipation Proclamation that the government should amend the constitution “as to entirely exclude slavery within its limits.” After the Emancipation Proclamation took effect on January 1, 1863, Literary Adelphi members wanted to push its reach even further, agreeing, “slavery ought immediately to be abolished in all the states.” They were expressing the opinion of many Radical Republicans in the North who wished that

\textsuperscript{284} April 10, 1863, Alpha Nu minutes. April 15, 1864, Alpha Nu, \textit{The Sibyl}.

\textsuperscript{285} December 6, 1861, Literary Adelphi, Hesperian. For more information on how support for emancipation and arming blacks developed in the Midwest during the war, see Victor Jacque Voegeli, \textit{Free But Not Equal: The Midwest and the Negro during the Civil War} (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967).
Lincoln had emancipated the slaves in the border states as well. Later that fall, the students determined that a successful conclusion of the war needed to include southern acquiescence to the abolition of slavery. They clarified that position three weeks later by foreshadowing Lincoln’s forthcoming Amnesty Proclamation in their decision that the Union should readmit southern states regardless of whether they had emancipated their slaves. Emancipation remained a desired consequence of the war for these students, but not necessarily a political stratagem. They made other decisions that spoke to their perception of the relationship and the status of blacks in the country. In March 1864, the students contended that the Union should exchange prisoners with the Confederacy “without regard to colored troops.”

As the war ended, Michigan’s literary societies spent time discussing the place of blacks in the postwar society. In February 1865, Alpha Nu students did not deem it necessary to grant blacks the right to vote. African Americans should not “enjoy the privilege of the elective franchise,” according to these young men. As discussed in Chapter Four, this group tended more towards the conservative wing of the Republican party by the end of the war. Their opinion regarding black voting rights held firm later that fall, even as veterans joined the ranks of the Alpha Nu. “That the right of the franchise should be immediately extended to the negro” could not find solid support in the halls of this literary society. Their classmates in the Literary Adelphi Society also acknowledged that one of the most pressing political and social questions of the postwar era related to suffrage and the free blacks. They decided just after the surrender in April

286 April 25, 1862, April 17, 1863, October 28, 1863, November 13, 1863, March 11, 1864, Literary Adelphi minutes, 1857-1891.
1865, “the right of suffrage should be granted to the negro,” and confirmed that position in November 1865. Whereas the Alpha Nu tended to view slavery as one of many elements of the nature of the war, Literary Adelphi members addressed issues related to slavery and emancipation with more emphasis and a more liberal outlook.\textsuperscript{287}

Individual voices also highlighted the diversity of opinion that existed on the Ann Arbor campus. In February 1865, one Quaker student in the medical school at Michigan wrote to a friend regarding his feelings about slavery and the end of the war. “For my part I’m glad that slavery is becoming extinct,” Francis Thomas stated. He would have preferred its demise not to come at the cost of human life, but understood that emancipation’s benefits would be plentiful. “It has been partly the fault of our race that colored people are in their present predicament,” acknowledged this young man, “and we owe them much to compensate for so many years of ignorance & misery.” Despite these expressions of support, Thomas strongly criticized “the fanatical proposition to make the colored people citizens.” He said that “truly patriotic people” would understand that “it is out of the question to place [blacks] on an equality with us socially…and political equality is undesireable[sic] or at least inadvisable.” He deemed them “unregenerated[sic] creatures” and felt that they lacked the civilization and “intellectual faculties” to participate in the democracy.\textsuperscript{288}

Gideon Winan Allen, a law student at the University of Michigan in early 1863, wrote a long political diatribe to his fiancée once the Emancipation Proclamation had

\textsuperscript{287} February 17, 1865, September 29, 1865, Alpha Nu minutes. April 21, 1865, November 24, 1865, Literary Adelphi minutes, 1857-1891.

\textsuperscript{288} Francis Thomas to Beulah L Haines, February 19, 1865, Francis Thomas Letters, 1864-1865, Bentley Historical Library.
gone into effect. His perspective on the issue clearly rested upon his ideological identification with the Democratic party and disapproval of the Republicans. “There were reasons which lay deeper than those on which Republicans groom their faith,” he explained, and those grounds pushed him further in the direction of the opposing party. He held up the Democratic, and expressly Copperhead, position regarding his condemnation of the war by arguing that Republicans pushed the country into a war for the incorrect purpose of freeing the slaves. He feared that the Civil War might achieve the positive goal of ending slavery but that its costs far outweighed those benefits. “It is a false philanthropy,” Allen insisted, “which seeks the good of four millions of negroes, at the expense of the peace and happiness of twenty-five millions of white people.” He maintained that there was no way that the war guaranteed the end of slavery, and therefore this generation of Americans would fail in their attempt to eradicate the institution, just as had the forefathers of the country. The ongoing efforts of soldiers in this civil war would result in lives lost, both “fruitless” and “in vain.” Therefore, he concluded, the North had the responsibility to continue to compromise with slaveholders for the purpose of ensuring the continuance of the Union. While he did not believe his position to be treasonous, he believed it to be the truth. Ultimately, “if slavery be a sin,” stated Allen, “[slaveholders] alone are answerable for it.” This position epitomized the Copperhead ideology at the height of their popularity and Allen articulated it with clarity.289

289 Allen to Annie Cox, February 10, 1863, Allen papers.
In 1863, about thirty-five students went to Windsor, Canada, to see Clement L. Vallandigham, the notorious Copperhead leader from Ohio. William M. Hayes of Pennsylvania, who was a junior in the law department, identified the group as being part of the “democratic-copperhead school” and wrote home about the reaction the incident received from the rest of the student body. “[T]he democratic papers throughout this and other western states have published that the students of the University of Michigan visited [Vallandigham],” Hayes noted, “and to counteract this impression the opposition held a meeting yesterday forenoon. It was attended by several hundred of the students and strong resolutions were passed condemning these actions.” Hayes commented that from his perspective it seemed as though the law department was experiencing “more bitterness of political feeling” than other areas of the university because “most of them take an active part in politics on one side or the other.” Gideon Winan Allen wrote about the affair. In describing the students’ visit to Vallandigham, which he did not attend, Allen insisted that it was “conducted in a modest unostentatious way” and that “it was nobody’s business but their own.” A student named Henry, in a letter to his mother regarding the same event, wrote regretfully, “…nothing on earth but poverty hindered my going [to see Vallandigham].”

290 William M. Hayes to Parents, December 6, 1863, William Mordecai Hayes papers, 1862-1864, Bentley Historical Library. Allen to Annie Cox, December 12, 1863, Allen papers. Henry to mother, Anonymous letter, November 14, 1863, Bentley Historical Library. Clement L. Vallandigham was an Ohio politician during the war who led the Copperhead movement in the Midwest. In May 1863, he was arrested and sent behind Confederate lines. He then escaped to Canada and led a failed attempt to win the gubernatorial seat in Ohio from exile. He continued to cause trouble for the Lincoln administration and serve as an inspiration to Copperheads until the decline of the movement after the 1864 election. Vallandigham returned to Ohio after the war and continued to practice law until his death in 1871. For more information, see Frank Klement, The Limits of Dissent: Clement L. Vallandigham and the Civil War. University president, Erastus O. Haven, kept a scrapbook into which he pasted cut newspaper articles related to various topics. For very few of the articles did he note the source or the date. One such clipping,
When “loyal students” called a meeting at the university in response, Allen invited his fellow student Democrats to hold their own gathering in order to articulate their position to the public. The faculty tried to suppress the rising tensions by forbidding student political meetings on campus, but that only forced the determined students into a hall in Ann Arbor, where they had a rousing few hours of speeches, music, and resolutions. The zealous Copperheads, which Allen counted at around 300, then formed a procession, marched through the town and the campus chanting and cheering for the Union and Vallandigham. Joseph Quarles also relayed news of these events to his mother in December 1863. After the Copperhead students’ excursion to see Vallandigham, “the college has been in a ferment of excitement,” wrote Quarles. He personally participated in the responding Union meeting and saw one of his fellow Wisconsin natives demonstrating with the Copperhead students outside. “Be assumed,” asserted Quarles, “I felt like addressing him with some stern arguments in posteriore.”

entitled “The Copperheads in the University,” confirms this account generally, numbers the Unionist students who met to respond to the Vallandigham visit at “near 800 in all,” and supports Haven’s refusal to allow the Copperhead meeting to occur on campus. The article attends to the events of the conflict on campus in detail and ends with this statement: “It is our advice, now that both sides have been heard, this political excitement in the University be permitted to subside.” Apparently the residents in the community were tiring of the political agitation occurring between university students. Erastus O. Haven papers, 1838-1873, Teal Scrapbook, Bentley Historical Library.

291 Allen to Annie Cox, December 12, 1863, Allen papers. Copperheads on the University of Michigan campus most likely felt very comfortable by 1863 expressing their views because the county surrounding the school swayed in that direction politically during the middle of the war. While in 1860, Washtenaw county voted across the board for Republican candidates, by 1862 Democrats won the county’s support in every major political contest, including governor and sheriff. These results did little to offset the rest of the state that still continued to support the Republican incumbents, like governor Austin Blair, but they do reveal political discord on the home front. This movement climaxed in 1864 when the county gave the Democratic presidential candidate, George B. McClellan, their majority over Lincoln by more than 200 votes. Again, they tried but failed to replace the Republican governor with the Democratic candidate who won their voting support in that contest. Chapman, 255-256. Joseph Quarles to his mother, December 13, 1863, Joseph V. Quarles Papers, 1843-1911, Box 2, Folder Correspondence 1860-62, WHS. The other student was William Story of Waukesa, Wisconsin; Quarles was from Kenosha, Wisconsin. See also “The
This Copperhead presence on campus was a significant threat to the unity of the students in the development of their wartime ideology of education as patriotism. At points during the war, actions such as this student-led pilgrimage to see a noted Copperhead leader endangered their joint promotion and defense of their enrollment at the university and its growing prestige. As their idea of patriotism grew more intertwined with the prestige of the university, there was great concern among the students that they properly represent the institution. They felt that their role as students contributed an essential element to what made the school “the third institution of learning in our land” by the middle of the war. The editor of the Alpha Nu Literary Society semi-weekly journal, *The Sibyl*, noted that the class of 1863 graduated “to join in the good work of those who have preceded them, to do as we trust no dishonor but win laurels for their Alma Mater.” As these young men pursued their education, they were protective of their individual reputation and proud to link their names as a group to the University of Michigan. They were quick to defend their school’s unique characteristics and vigilant in monitoring the actions of classmates.292

Conditions became so tense during the height of Copperhead activism in the Midwest that at one point, Allen believed that some students with opposing political views would eventually challenge him to a duel. He recorded numerous heated confrontations between himself and other students and town residents in his letters. “A man can hardly go to a lecture, or…church, without being insulted,” he wrote to his

Copperheads in the University,” Erastus O. Haven papers, 1838-1873, Teal Scrapbook, Bentley Historical Library.

fiancée in January 1863. Nonetheless, Unionist student reaction to the Copperhead outcry on campus was not always purely emotional. The young men who took offense to what they perceived as disloyalty mostly did so using the same outlets of academic life in which they analyzed the war overall. In a journal of the Literary Adelphi Society in January 1864, one student wrote an essay criticizing foreign intervention in the Civil War. As a part of his discussion, he asserted, “we shall never again see the nation as it was, The nation, as a whole is passing through a revolution, Revolutions never go backwards.” He called those who demanded “The Union as it was” “short sighted conservatives utterly unread in the progress of human events.” Slavery and freedom, the two cornerstones of the republic, were incompatible and were “as explosive as gunpowder and fire.” “Thank God such a Union is gone, gone forever,” exclaimed this ardent literary society member, “though we cannot have the old one we will have a better.” Students who criticized Copperheads often cited the latter group’s inability to understand the country’s circumstances as being a part of the natural direction of revolutionary change. Historian Jennifer L. Weber confirms this argument in her assertion that it “remains unclear to this day how [Copperheads] expected the nation to return to the status quo ante bellum.”

Gideon Allen provided immense insight on the link between the emancipation issue and the Copperhead movement from the perspective of a University of Michigan student. In a letter to his fiancée soon after the January 1863 promulgation of the

293 See, for example, letters from Allen to Annie between April and November 1863, Allen correspondence. Allen to Annie Cox, January 30, 1863, Allen papers. “Foreign Intervention,” January 15, 1864, Literary Adelphi, Box 1, Records, Bentley Historical Library. Weber, 4.
Emancipation Proclamation, Allen sought to outline his argument for the Copperhead position.

If we will lay aside our prejudices, we cannot doubt that there are men who believe slavery right, and who desire its continuance. Now, who is to determine this question of right and wrong? If we were directly, or even remotely, responsible for slavery, it might be a question for us to determine. But such is not the case; we are in nowise responsible for its existence; nor have we any right or power to control it.

Allen continued by saying that the founding fathers had given the right to regulate slavery to local and state authorities, holding only for themselves a voice regarding fugitive slaves and the end of the international slave trade in 1808. Thus, the current government was beyond its constitutional power to interfere in the southern institution. Additionally, he argued that anyone who believed that individual northerners should attempt to convince southerners to emancipate their slaves had every right to attempt to engage the latter group into a discussion about it, but had to respect the fact that the right to free speech included the right of southerners to decline participating in such a conversation.

“Well what now? simply mind our own business, and let them alone,” Allen concluded, “and I tell you if we had observed this little piece of advice, we should have avoided all our difficulties, and the peace and prosperity of our nation would have been secure.”

In his letters, Allen articulated many of the significant issues that anti-war Democrats had with the Lincoln administration. He expressed the notions of a growing portion of the North at the time that began to criticize the growing intrusion of the government into individual lives by attaching the disagreement about slavery to an

294 Allen to Annie Cox, February 10, 1863, Allen papers.
ideology regarding civil rights. He maintained that compromise was the essential tool and course for securing the Union and felt that any attempt to act outside of these boundaries broke the original agreements of the founders. The forceful opinion, “We must learn to be respectful and tolerant of the opinions of others, if we would enjoy the fruits of wisdom and the blessings of free government,” ended this passionate letter to his beloved.295

As his fiancée’s responses were pro-Republican in all aspects and equally as emotional, the couple continued back and forth with some hostility throughout 1863; in December, each of these young Americans held their ground firmly. “The war is a great wrong,” wrote Allen, “Are the Southern people alone at fault? We provoked them…we ask to humiliate them.” He insisted that the government should end the war immediately and seek a compromised treaty, arguing, “Have we not had war enough?” Allen routinely asserted that the southern people would have no objections to “the restoration of the Union as it was,” but will continue to resist as long as the North pursued the emancipation of the slaves. To this young man, the solution appeared obvious and straightforward. Saving the Union should be every patriotic American’s first priority and the country should achieve that goal by whatever means was necessary in order to avoid war and the potential breakup of that Union. He never understood, nor comprehended, what many northerners felt so vehemently against slavery, that they would rather not have a Union than have one with the South’s peculiar institution. In his mind, there was never a question of possible civil rights for blacks or raising them to a position of equality. While he claimed to deplore slavery, he loathed the idea of disunion more, and

295 Ibid.
this fundamental difference of priorities was what continued to set Copperheads astray from the majority of northerners during the Civil War.\footnote{Allen to Annie Cox, December 26, 1863, Allen papers.}

Those in Bloomington and at Indiana University discussed the role of slavery in the war and whether emancipation should factor into the strategy of the war on a regular basis. The local newspaper, \textit{Bloomington Republican}, conveyed the conservative nature of the Republican party in Indiana. In November 1861, following General Frémont’s order regarding the acceptance of runaway slaves as contraband of war, the newspaper argued that General Hunter should replace Frémont, who should be removed for his actions. The editor dismissed the concern that Frémont’s soldiers would break ranks if their leader lost his position and contended that the army should not be used as “nigger-catchers.” “We say,” it concluded, “let the traitors take care of their own slaves, if they run away; we have no use for them.” In the fall of 1861, the young men of the Athenian Literary Society debated the right of Major General John C. Frémont to declare the slaves of rebels free, but could not come to agreement on the issue. The three-person jury voted based on the speeches heard that Frémont made his decision correctly, while the rest of the members (the “House”) voted against the resolution. Indiana’s students demonstrated the conflicted nature of their political position early in the war.\footnote{\textit{Bloomington Republican}, November 9, 1861. October 2, 1861, Athenian minutes.}

Before the war, the Athenian Society found little to criticize about southern slavery. While awaiting word of Lincoln’s election in 1860, these young men disagreed that slavery was inherently evil. However, by April 1862, Athenian members changed their perception of slavery by voting in the affirmative that “slavery [is] a sin in itself.”
Voting patterns regarding issues related to slavery continued to be unpredictable and changing. Students found little common ground on whether the Emancipation Proclamation was “unnecessary and unconstitutional” even as late as 1864, but decided that blacks should “be allowed to take up arms against the rebellion.” As the political discourse in the state and in the Bloomington community saw ever-shifting fortunes for the Democratic and Republican parties, Indiana University students exhibited an equally variable temperament regarding the role of slavery, emancipation, and blacks in their understanding of the Civil War.298

The students’ debates reflected statewide conflicts of the mid-war years. As the 1862 election season loomed ahead and Governor Oliver Morton of Indiana knew that Republican candidates faced serious opposition throughout the state, he attempted to quell his state’s uproar by focusing on the proclamation’s military necessity and avoiding discussing its moral arguments. However, the 1862 elections saw the Democrats triumphant in state elections, largely due to the reaction to the Emancipation Proclamation. Subsequently, Democrats attempted to reign in Morton’s power. In 1863, Democrats proposed legislation designed to limit the governor’s role in the supply and enlistments of the army and turn control of the state’s war effort over to a Democratic-run commission. The Republican members of the legislature refused to appear for the vote, thus preventing a quorum. Following this showdown, Morton circumvented all need for legislative approval of his action by distancing himself from the Democratic-controlled government. Morton ran the state independently until the end of the war. He raised

298 April 23, 1862, April 22, 1864, June 10, 1864, Athenian minutes.
money and paid for state military expenses out of a safe located in his own office, thereby avoiding the need to justify his spending decisions.299

Similar political conflicts plagued the Bloomington community as the war progressed. Copperhead movements gained momentum across the region and tensions between those townspeople who supported the war and those who opposed it led to quite a few clashes. Many Bloomington residents, along with others throughout the Union, wore butternut badges or pins to denote their disagreement with the war. Secret anti-war societies such as the Knights of the Golden Circle formed in Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. Bloomington experienced its share of their provocations. Indiana University student John Herschel Lemon witnessed the aftermath of Copperhead activities in the town in 1863. One morning, Lemon recounted, town residents woke up to find black crosses in the front yards of vocal Union supporters, attempting to embarrass them for their defense of emancipation. Other efforts to undermine the war effort included smuggling medicine and supplies out of town and south to the Confederate army. The frequency of these episodes increased as Copperheads gained popularity in the North in early 1863.300

When Union General Nathan Kimball stopped in the town on March 1, 1863, to encourage enlistments, Lemon recalled that “‘secesh’ girls in Bloomington, who had a piano, played in a frenzy, ‘O the bonnie blue flag That bears the single star’ or ‘In

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300 Dr. John Herschel Lemon, “‘Butternut’ Badges Were Worn by ‘Copperheads’ In Civil War,” The Indiana Alumnus (Nov. 28, 1932): 3.
Dixieland, I take my stand To live and die in Dixieland.” They were not afraid to vocally associate with the rebels. In another incident, two men, one a Union soldier home on furlough, got into an argument because the soldier ripped a butternut pin from the clothing of the other man’s girlfriend. In the ensuing fight, the Union soldier shot the Copperhead man. In June, eighty armed men forcibly stole the roll of recently enlisted soldiers from an enlistment officer and promised to make sure none of them could join the army. Conflict due to these highly contentious points of political and ideological conflict plagued Bloomington on a regular basis midway through the war.  

At the height of Copperhead momentum in Indiana in 1863, those opposed to the war gathered in Bloomington for several vociferous meetings. In January, a large crowd of Copperheads met at the courthouse to denounce the administration, cursing Lincoln and openly cheering in support of Jefferson Davis. This represented a degree of Copperheadism that differed from that seen in Wisconsin and Michigan. While the latter two states’ opposition focused mainly on criticism of the president’s decisions regarding civil liberties and demanding a faster peace, in Indiana the tone was often blatantly pro-southern and pro-Confederacy. As historian Thomas D. Clark noted, “the Bloomington community was distinctly borderland, geographically and sentimentally.” At no time was this as apparent and the cause of as much tension as during the Civil War.

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302 Clark, 104. J. Matthew Gallman also argues that the “loudest Copperhead voices” were located during the war in Indiana, Illinois and Ohio. All three were in the southern portion of the Midwest and bordered the Ohio River, which served as the natural divider between the North and South. Gallman, 52. Blanchard, 426.
One historian of Monroe county argued in the late 19th century that citizens wrote letters to soldiers “urging them to desert, and promising them secretion and protection from arrest.” There were also accusations that some Bloomington residents discouraged men from enlisting in order to derail Lincoln’s attempts to increase the size of his army. In September 1864, Professor Wylie remarked in his diary that “a number of ill favored men professing to be rebel deserters passed thro’ here. More than a dozen got off here & were soon found with copperheads.” If these lines alone were not an indication of Wylie’s distrust of those Bloomington residents who were outwardly opposing the war, he then concluded his comments on this day by stating, none too subtly, “Several robberies have taken place since their arrival.” Bloomington residents reported that “sesesh” Democrats held meetings in town “for the purpose of seseding[sic] [Indiana] from the union.” These events included hoisting a Confederate flag and armed Union men standing guard to prevent the demonstrations from getting out of hand. This was the environment within which Indiana University students came to understand the war.303

Granted, Bloomington’s Union men did not back down from such vocal badgering. One soldier who traveled through Bloomington in the summer of 1863 recalled that Bloomington citizens crowded around the railroad station when the soldiers arrived and took them home to feed them; he referred to them, in fact, as “hospitable people.” Copperhead vehemence in the area did not prevent Union supporters from being similarly overt in expressing their loyalties. Unionists defended their beliefs with equal venom, in one case beating a man who spoke against the northern war effort and in

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303 Blanchard, 435. September 4, 1864, Wylie diary. Julius D. Fee to James Frank Fee, January 22, 1863, James Frank Fee papers, SC567, IHS.
another case driving a man out of town who openly supported the South. In March 1863, Bloomington residents had the option to attend a Unionist meeting at the courthouse. Professor Wylie recorded later that evening in his diary that a speech by General Nathan Kimball opposing “the Butternut Copperheads” had a “telling effect” upon the audience.304

The next fall, Wylie commented in his diary about a “Great Union picnic” that occurred in the town after word was received of General Phillip Sheridan’s victories in the Shenandoah Valley. There were two speakers who “both skinned the copperhead & cracked the butternuts admirably.” In an 1863 letter to his son, John Ketcham, a retired Army colonel from the War of 1812, proclaimed his hope that the war would soon end. “Oh, at the winding up of our troubles,” Ketcham exclaimed, “I do hope that Slavery will be doomed to die – it being the Original cause of all our troubles now upon us.”

Townspeople continued to air these private views in public during the war. Bloomington may have hosted a large and vocal Copperhead population, but its Unionist residents met the challenge with their own boisterous invective and displays of support for the war effort.305

Intense political wrangling throughout the state remained the norm as the 1864 election approached. Morton and the Republican-War Democrat coalition ran for re-election that fall under the heading of the Union party. They were doubtful of a successful outcome given the dire position of the Union armies at the time and the extent

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305 October 9, 1864, Wylie diary. John Ketcham to John Lewis Ketcham, September 5, 1863, John Lewis Ketcham Collection, IHS.
of economic and political discouragement across the state. Historian Jennifer Weber argued that in the summer of 1864, “Indiana remained in a state of near anarchy.” Democrats were not the only source of political opposition for the incumbent administration. Radical Republicans in the state were growing stronger by 1864, fueled by increasing support for the Emancipation Proclamation and frustration with Lincoln’s conciliatory reconstruction proposal. Radicals in Indiana began to campaign for Ohio Governor Salomon P. Chase for the Republican presidential nomination in early 1864; their actions caused discord within the party and challenged Morton to present a united political front to the populace. Thus, in an attempt to shore up his constituency and take the limelight away from the fractions within his own party, Morton and his colleagues invoked partisan propaganda to rail against Democrats as traitors to the patriotism of the country and claimed to overthrow a Copperhead conspiracy to stir insurrection and form a Northwest Confederacy. These tactics propelled Morton and other Union candidates back into political power in 1864, despite the fact that Democrats had blocked Republican attempts to legalize the soldiers to vote from their camps. Indiana University students, located as they were near southern hotbeds of Copperhead influence, certainly were aware of the political grapple for authority in the state. 306

As rumors of northern treachery reached military camps, soldiers consulted those at home about their truth and admonished loved ones to stem the tide of Copperheadism. For departed university students on the battlefield, one source of wisdom existed in the

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form of their former professors. John Hood, an Indiana University graduate, wrote back to Professor James Woodburn in February 1863, “Prof it seems to me as if times are rather gloomy just now, but I hope a change will soon take place for the better.” He continued, “I am very sory[sic] to see the maner[sic] in which some of the Northern traitors are striveing[sic] to carry on affairs. I think you should rise in mass and wipe the last one of them out.” Frustration with Copperheads within Union military camps spilled into the relationships between student-soldiers and those who had shaped them back on campus. Hood, like so many other soldiers watching this political discord from afar, grew aggravated with northerners opposed to the war and encouraged his former professor, literally or figuratively, to fight back against Copperheads’ growing influence in the region.  

This concern about the Copperhead movement attracted much debate on the Indiana University campus as well. Highly attuned to issues of civil rights, Indiana students frankly discussed the impact of Ohio Copperhead politician Clement L. Vallandigham and the power of the two major political parties. In late 1863, as the Copperhead presence began to weaken across the North, the Athenian Literary Society considered whether Lincoln was a “greater statesman than Vallandigham.” They could not come to an agreement on the matter, signaling that a great respect for the Copperhead leader existed on the Bloomington campus. Vallandigham found enough support among the Athenians at Indiana that they failed to find common ground on his talents as compared to the president. However, during that same term, members voted in the

affirmative that Vallandigham was a traitor. They may have felt that the Copperhead’s actions were not in the best interest of the nation, but they did not consistently support Lincoln’s decisions either. Interestingly, before the successful military campaigns of late 1864 that ensured Republicans a secure handle on political power, Athenians voted in the negative that it would be in “the interest of the government [to] demand the restoration to power of the democratic party.” This contrasted with their decision one month earlier that Lincoln did not deserve reelection. As Copperheadism waned in southern Indiana, Indiana University students remained as politically divided and unable to find a consensus as they had at the start of the war. This truly was an illustration of the impact of their home front on their wartime experience.  

The faculty did not likely share in their students’ political indecisiveness. Professor Wylie recorded his own thoughts on the 1864 presidential election, calling it “perhaps the most important election day that the country will ever see. Elect [Democratic presidential candidate, George] McClellan, all the deeds of the last four years are thrown away. – The Rebels conquer. – And anarchy & disunion follow, unless God signally interpose. Elect Lincoln & (as it seems to me). Rebs will be conquered, slavery exterminated, union restored & a new era of unexampled prosperity commence.” Wylie clearly held a more concrete outlook for the consequences of the election than did his students. This inconsistency in the political perspectives of students and faculty contributed to the unsettled nature of relations between the two groups at Indiana University. Whereas the faculty came to the institution from outside of the state, the

308 November 27, 1863, October 23, 1863, June 17, 1864, May 13, 1864, Athenian minutes.
students represented communities across Indiana and did not embrace and adopt the political moors of their professors with the ease of students in Michigan, for example.\footnote{Wylie’s side note in parentheses was written in Latin in the original text. November 6, 1864, Wylie diary.}

The Emancipation Proclamation caused rifts in the support for the war in Wisconsin as well. In Madison, students who associated more closely with the political ideology of the Democrats early in the war did not have to go far to find a clear and concise statement of position regarding slavery and emancipation. The local newspaper, \textit{Argus and Democrat}, conceded in June 1861, that “this war is caused in great measure by slavery,” but insisted that “its aim is not abolition; and if in the midst of carnage and confusion slaves are let at liberty it will be, we fear, a misfortune rather than a desideratum of the war.” Wisconsin students were slower to embrace these arguments. In September 1861, when the prospect of a long, bloody war looked more possible, the students in the Hesperian Literary Society still did not believe that the “government should abolish slavery.” Nor did they change their opinion the following March. The spring of 1862 saw the students in Madison united in their belief that the United States should not “proclaim Emancipation to the slaves as a military necessity.” Additionally, just before the announcement of the Emancipation Proclamation in September 1862, the students of the Hesperian Literary Society spoke emphatically that the government should not “arm the Negroes to assist in suppressing this rebellion.” Clearly in tune with the war’s discourse, they sought to elucidate their own position on the controversial topic of turning the war for union into a war for abolition.\footnote{\textit{Argus and Democrat}, June 26, 1861. September 13, 1861, March 7, 1862, Hesperia Bill of Exercises. September 5, 1862, Hesperian Record Book.}
Following the official pronouncement of the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, support for the war in Madison declined. James Flower, an 1856 University of Wisconsin graduate, wrote to Lucius Fairchild, a local resident off fighting in the Union army, in March 1863 regarding the resurgence of the Democratic party in their state that spring. “You are undoubtedly aware that many of the acts of the Administration, especially the Emancipation Proclamation, have been seized upon by a certain class of people here at home, as factors for opposing the Administration in every act,” stated Flower. The effects of this, Flower feared, were that any further attempts to execute a draft in Wisconsin might be met with such vehement opposition that bloodshed might break out in the state.\footnote{311}

Opposition to the Republican direction of the war developed in Wisconsin mainly along economic fault lines. Historian Frank Klement stated that Wisconsin Copperheads “believed that the Lincoln administration had sold its soul to New York capitalists and New England manufacturers.” During 1861 and into early 1862, the upper Mississippi valley, including Wisconsin, experienced a deep recession that closed banks, plummeted prices, and quickly stemmed the patriotic waves of support for the Union war effort that had sprung up organically following the attack on Fort Sumter. While insecurity about the source of their next meal persisted in the first year of the war, Copperheads gathered fierce and numerous supporters throughout the state. As Klement puts it, “Patriotism lost its appeal when avenues of profit disappeared.”\footnote{312}

\footnote{311} James Flower to Lucius Fairchild, March 9, 1863, Box 12, April 1863, Fairchild papers. \footnote{312} Frank Klement, “Copperheads and Copperheadism in Wisconsin: Democratic Opposition to the Lincoln Administration,” \textit{Wisconsin Magazine of History} Vol. 42, No. 3 (Spring 1959), 182, 184.
In January 1863, the situation still looked grim. Madison resident Willet S. Main exclaimed in his diary, “the war drags along Democrats becoming traitors & the country going to the [Devil].” “The violence & threats of the Anti-Administration party frighten,” wrote another local man to a soldier, “and it begins to look as though Civil War were approaching the thresh-holds of every Northern home.” In a later letter, the resident again referred to ideological shifts in the community. “The word ‘copperhead’ which was for sometime spoken with a great deal of hesitation here, is getting into frequent use, and there are men here,” he divulged, “who boldly proclaim themselves to be such, and wear a badge.” There was even talk around the town that the Knights of the Golden Circle had set up a lodge and began to organize.313

Students in Madison understood these clear statements regarding the threat of Copperheads in their state and in the nation. While still the Republican nominee for governor in October 1863, James T. Lewis expressed his best partisan invective against the Copperheads in his state. To the men who demanded an end to the war and an immediate start to negotiation with the Confederacy, he asked “What would you have us cowardly buy our peace, would you have twenty millions of free men, so far sink their manhood as to buy or beg a few thousand slave holders rights to which they are already entitled…”? In his mind there was only “one way out of this rebellion and that is directly through it.” Lewis abhorred how Copperheads cheered at Union defeats on the battlefield and appeared depressed regarding victories, how they actively sought ways to undermine the government and the war, and find ways to aid the rebels. He attacked them with

313 January 10, 1863, Main diary, 1863. James Flower to Lucius Fairchild, January 28, 1863, Box 12 January 1863; March 26, 1863, Box 12 April 1863, Fairchild papers.
gendered language that linked their quest for peace with cowardice and a lack of manhood.\textsuperscript{314}

Republicans faced the battle, Lewis argued, while Copperheads wished to cave to the demands of the Confederacy. Responding to Copperhead demands to return the Union to the way it was, he pushed them to explain how such a goal could be accomplished. “Would they make Washington again a slave pen and the District of Columbia again a slave territory?...Would they reenslave those noble soldiers who are now fighting the battles of freedom, fighting to defend your honor and mine?” The Union the way it was contended Lewis included returning Jefferson Davis to a national leadership position and somehow returning those who had died in battle to their homes, lives in tact. Lewis asserted that these things were impossible as was the foundation of the Copperhead argument.\textsuperscript{315}

After his election, Governor Lewis acknowledged in his second message to the state in January 1865 that the opposition claimed the Emancipation Proclamation was “the rock on which we split.” As a Republican, he staunchly defended the Proclamation and reminded listeners that “Washington, Jackson, Grant and many other great and good men fought beside [black men], and did not consider themselves dishonored.” Those men who refused to fight in the war because they might have to serve next to a freed slave or a free black man will be “found wanting in the day of trial and fail to serve his country under any circumstances.” If the Copperheads in the state were not fully discredited

\textsuperscript{314} October 1863, James T. Lewis papers, 1838-1904, Box 1, Folder Speeches 1849, 1863-1866, n.d. WHS.

\textsuperscript{315} Ibid.
already, Lewis made it clear that he would not tolerate their excuses or their opposition during his term as governor. Following the more successful military summer of 1863, Republicans in the North began to articulate their support for the Emancipation Proclamation from an ideological perspective rather than as sheer military necessity. In doing so, they chipped away at the political foundation of the Copperhead movement.\footnote{James T. Lewis, \textit{Annual Message of James T. Lewis, Governor of the State of Wisconsin, January 12, 1865} (Madison: Atwood & Rublee, 1865), 17-18.}

In addition to emancipation, conscription gained Lincoln’s prosecution of the war much opposition at these three university communities. However, unlike emancipation, which placed students more clearly into either Republican or Copperhead camps, the draft was a topic that tested the notions of patriotism for many Midwestern students. Conscription created a predicament for them; whatever their reasons, students seemed to dread the draft. It began to decide the fate of students whose ambivalence or dedication to their education had kept them out of the armed forces. For the remainder of the war, conscription was a threat that the students met with mixed reactions. Students on all three campuses dealt with the first military draft in 1863. Northern state recruitment offices closed in April 1862. Officials believed at that time that the 630,000 men in the Union army would be sufficient to end the rebellion. By the end of the summer it was apparent that more soldiers would be needed, but recruiting had all but ended in most northern states and men were concentrating on their usual professions. In addition, the planting season that year decreased the number of available men for enlistment as most tried to
wait until after the harvest in September. President Lincoln, however, could not wait for the harvest and turned to conscription to fill the ranks.317

In April 1863, freshman John Hinchman of Detroit wrote to his mother about the students who had recently formed a battalion “for the purpose of learning the drill, in case we should all be drafted.” He estimated that five hundred students participated in the one-hour practices four nights per week. President Tappan remarked that this renewed endeavor by the students “caused no diversion from study, but [took] the place of recreation and questionable indulgences.” It was telling that these students prepared to be drafted, but did not enlist of their own free will. However, by May, Hinchman told to his mother, “Most of the fellows here have made up their minds to go into the army if they are drafted.” Again, if they were drafted, but not otherwise. A resident of Ann Arbor wrote to a friend in July 1864 “times are here about as usual only that students are not quite so thick – all are excited about a draft and about every one is sure that he will have to go.” Members of the Alpha Nu even proposed a debate in 1863 regarding whether university students should be exempted from the draft but never took a vote on the issue.

317 The draft in 1863 only targeted men over the age of twenty. Plus, anyone selected in the draft could pay $300 to hire a substitute in their place, or find a substitute on their own. Peckham, 55. Wisconsin and Michigan were two of the four states with the highest rates of draft evasion during the early period of conscription during the war. J. Matthew Gallman attributes this mainly to dense pockets of immigrant, Catholic, and/or non-Republican citizens in those two states (along with New York and Pennsylvania). As the war continued and subsequent drafts occurred, “broadening dissatisfaction” with the war itself directly affected growing illegal evasion of the draft across wider spectrums of the populace. Gallman, 70. Lynn Ira Schoonover, A History of the Civil War Draft in Wisconsin (unpublished Masters of Philosophy Thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1915), 4. Northern volunteerism for the military had waned significantly following the Union’s Peninsula campaign in the summer of 1862. Congress therefore found it necessary to pass the first draft law in 1863, called the Enrolment Act of 1863. With this first attempt at conscription, a young man could avoid service either by paying $300 or by finding a substitute. Eugene C. Murdock, One Million Men: The Civil War Draft in the North (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1971), 6-7.
They continued to prepare for the possibility of military service. In May 1863, the Literary Adelphi added three more books related to the conduct of war to their library.\textsuperscript{318}

Especially by the middle part of the war when conscription threatened to remove unwilling students from classrooms and place them on the front lines, correspondence between the young men and their loved ones revealed a desire to remain apart from the conflict. Sometimes this was due to political ideology. Henry, the young man who expressed such deep disappointment at not being able to journey with his classmates to see Vallandigham, wrote to reassure his mother, “I don't worry about [the draft], as I have about come to the conclusion that God Almighty never intended that I should fight for the 'poor nigger.’” Gideon Winan Allen, the Copperhead law student, received letters during this period from his fiancée, Annie, about her fear that he would be called in the upcoming draft. “Suppose you should be one of the fated,” she wondered, “I will not think of it.” In addition to her pleas that his serving in the war would be too hard on her, Annie also told him she did not believe him to be “strong enough for camp life.” Later that year, her mother even expressed panic to Allen about the issue, writing “Do anything, everything to prevent it [being drafted] except that which is dishonorable…I could not give up my darling boy!...No, it cannot, must not be.”\textsuperscript{319}


\textsuperscript{319} Henry to mother, Anonymous letter, November 14, 1863, Bentley Historical Library. Annie Cox to Gideon Winan Allen, March 1, 1863, June 16, 1863; CJ Cox to Allen, November 12, 1863, Allen papers.
Allen took a hard stance towards the draft. After his name was collected during the conscription enrollment process, he wrote to Annie in June 1863,

> If I am drafted you may be sure of one thing, there will be a battle soon after. Perhaps, though, I'll just make a speech denouncing the administration and the war…I'll be arrested, have a mock trial, make myself notorious, be sent South, refuse to take the oath of allegiance to the Confederacy, and be sent back, a lá Vallandigham.

Allen did not support the draft nor sympathize with its intentions. He was content with his political views and did not hesitate to express them. “This much I think I may venture to say,” he concluded with vigor, “at all events, that this war is an abomination in sight of God and honest men; and that our government is in the hands of either fools or traitors.” Although a staunch Republican, Annie agreed with his revulsion of the draft. She could not help, however, but to point out to Allen that “if all had been united there had never been a need of draft.” Her concern continued through the summer and fall as various conscription acts pulled more young men from the North. Allen assured her that he would buy an exemption if drafted, mainly because his feelings were too strong against the war. The draft “is not among my troubles,” he promised Annie in September 1863, “and I hope you will think of it no more.” Though faced with the prospect of conscription several times during the war, Allen did not receive a summons to serve.\(^{320}\)

Another University of Michigan student epitomized the opposite standpoint. Rather than attempting to avoid the draft because of deep-rooted political differences with the current administration, William M. Hayes, a junior in the law department from

\(^{320}\) Allen to Annie Cox, June 9, 1863, September 20, 1863; Annie Cox to Allen, June 16, 1863, Allen papers.
Pennsylvania, struggled with his reaction to the draft due to his sincere support for the war. He wrote home in late 1863 about his dilemma, “Of course it would not be pleasant or convenient for me to go home to enter the army at the present time.” Hayes asked his parents for their input should he be drafted, explaining that he could not oppose the draft because he “insist[s] on a prosecution of the war until…every slave is free.” He did not trust himself to make the decision because he could not seem to reconcile his ideologies about the purpose of the war with the sacrifice that military service would require of his current academic pursuits. Hayes did not serve his country. By choice or by fate, he returned to Pennsylvania after graduation in 1864 to become a lawyer.\textsuperscript{321}

Not all the students were as pensive on the subject. University of Michigan law student Charles B. Howell from Pontiac wrote to his brother, “I suppose the draft which commences to-day will ‘gobble’ me up, and then I shall perhaps wish I had got insured for exemption.” Howell guessed right, he was drafted, but the next month he returned to Ann Arbor after having arranged for a substitute. By early 1864, Howell seemed carefree, declaring to his brother “I am in the most excellent health, and the world moves here pretty much in consonance with my wishes.” Students could have chosen to return home to enlist in their local regiment or join Ann Arbor residents in attempting to fulfill the community’s soldier quota and avoid a draft. Yet despite Ann Arbor’s offers of bounties for this purpose, many students stayed in school. If drafted, it appeared that some found ways, probably through their parents, to pay for a substitute. The rest did not find the

\textsuperscript{321} William M. Hayes to Parents, sister, and cousin, December 27, 1863, William Mordecai Hayes papers, 1862-1864, Bentley Historical Library.
country’s apparent need for more soldiers in the field compelling enough to leave what they increasingly considered their own patriotic work as university students.\(^{322}\)

Other students viewed conscription with dread because they had already served a term in the army and were in no hurry to return to the trenches. Joseph Quarles, the University of Michigan student who had so determinedly begged his mother to enlist early in the war, served in a Hundred Days regiment in the summer of 1864. As his term was ending, Quarles decided not to re-enlist and instead to return to school. In a letter to his mother, the young man wrote disdainfully about the draft, remarking that it would be “just my fortune” to have to serve under those circumstances. He feared that the chances of finding a substitute were hopeless, causing “a poor fellow [to] ‘tote’ a musket.” Disillusionment with the idea of soldiering plagued students on the home front equally to other northerners by the end of the war.\(^{323}\)

The draft caused an especially difficult situation in the state of Indiana. Historian Jennifer Weber argues that “Indiana was the most tense and violent state” during the forced enrollment of all men between the ages of twenty and forty-five for possible conscription into the Union army in 1863. Indiana faced constant turmoil in its efforts to fulfill the administration’s demands for additional men. Strong feelings about slavery and the Emancipation Proclamation was a strong driving force in the opposition to the war

\(^{322}\) Charles B. Howell to Brother, October 27, 1863, January 26, 1864, Howell Family Papers, 1856-1884, Bentley Historical Library. Students made their decisions about the personal implications of the draft in an environment that did not fully support the conscription measures. In August 1862, the *Ann Arbor Journal* criticized the “large numbers of the ‘courageous’ young men” in Michigan who had “suddenly been seized with a great desire for travel,” and headed north in Canada to avoid the draft. The author of the segment scolded the men for “romantically idling away their time at the great cataract of Niagara, when their country and their homes are imperiled.” “Let them volunteer,” demanded the newspaper, “or stand their draft like true men.” *Ann Arbor Journal*, August 12, 1862.

\(^{323}\) Joseph Quarles to mother, August 4, 1864, Joseph V. Quarles Papers, 1843-1911, Box 2, Folder Correspondence 1863-64, WHS.
and ultimately to the draft in Indiana. After its announcement in 1862, desertions increased and recruiting became nearly impossible in the state. However, by the end of the war it seems as though even those in Bloomington had become immune to the threat of the draft. In September 1864, Professor Wylie remarked that there was “no excitement” in Bloomington regarding the next day’s draft in the state. Eventually, just as the campus uprising had settled as the tide turned for the Union fortunes of war, hostile factions in Bloomington also receded into the background as the war ended.  

While those in Bloomington faced a hostile Copperhead faction in the community who tried to convince them to stay out of the war, students in Madison had the opposite problem. One female resident described the efforts of the town to entice young men to enlist during the early months of the war. “They were urged and coaxed and persuaded and driven and ridiculed if they wouldn't go,” she wrote in her recollection of the home front experience in Madison, “Bounties were offered, cows and many other things besides, as well as good money, if the boys would only go – go and enlist, go at once.” These entreaties successfully tempted numerous students from college classrooms but the pleas for additional enlistees also fell upon resistant ears of others. Wisconsin had a difficult time both organizing the first draft and enforcing the results of it. By the spring of 1863, it was clear that another draft would be necessary. In response, University of Wisconsin students quickly formed a new company to practice drill and learn battle tactics. These young men intended to stay in school but, in case they received the summons from the Union army they wanted to be competitive for officer positions.

324 September 4, 1864, Wylie diary. Weber, 105. McMurtry, 16; Stampp, Indiana Politics during the Civil War, 163.
Young men who stood firm in their desire to obtain an education did not allow conscription to railroad them into the Union army.\textsuperscript{325}

The draft was as unpopular in Wisconsin as it was across the rest of the north, but the large immigrant population especially opposed it in the state’s largest cities. Significant pockets of German immigrants supported Copperhead opposition to the draft. Also, the state was only just emerging from its frontier period and there were still vast portions of the state unsettled. Thus, the draft difficult to execute as those wishing to avoid conscription easily evaded detection in the wilderness or by traveling north to Canada. Historian Lynn Ira Schoonover contends that a prevailing sentiment in the state “took no interest in war whatsoever except in so far as it affected their escape from the draft.” As news of anti-draft riots spread throughout the north, one soldier barracked in Madison’s Camp Randall wrote home to his wife that if those who spent so much time violently fighting against the draft “would just now turn out promptly and cheerfully and help us, it seems we have a sure thing of it. If we are defeated the Northern Pro-Slavery democracy will alone be responsible.”\textsuperscript{326}

Twice the students of the Hesperian Literary Society at the University of Wisconsin debated the constitutionality of the draft and whether it was “just.” In October 1863, ten months after its implementation, the students found conscription acceptable. Posing the question in the negative form, “Resolved, that the Conscription law is

\textsuperscript{325} Smith, “My Recollections of Civil War Days,” 30. Schoonover, 98, 2-25. Schoonover found that of the 1,325 men drafted in total across all drafts attempted in Wisconsin during the war, 1140 found substitutes. History of Military Activities at the University of Wisconsin, UW Archives, 1.

unconstitutional and unjust,” Hesperian members voted in the negative, thus consenting to the measure. However, just eight months later, they rejected the constitutionality and fairness of conscription. Instead, they reflected the general mood of the state with their distaste for the draft by June 1864. Coming on the heels of virtually the entire senior class enlisting in the Hundred Days regiments and leaving in May for the front, the remaining students that summer aimed their ambivalence about the war and their role on the home front at the necessity of conscription.327

The draft also affected how the students at the University of Wisconsin perceived Camp Randall. Historian and archivist Carolyn Mattern’s history of Camp Randall notes that by 1863 “watching the soldiers at Camp Randall no longer held much appeal for the citizens of Madison.” As larger portions of the men gathering there were doing so following a draft, its nature changed. “The romance was gone…war was no longer a game,” Mattern argued. Madison residents became more wary of wandering soldiers through town, as crime and disrespectful events became increasingly common. These episodes in some way tainted the thrill of war for those in Madison. Mentions of daily treks out to visit the regiments and observe preparations for war ceased in the diaries and letters of Wisconsin students as the drafts commenced. They remained either on campus or around Madison’s governmental activities during the later part of the war, focused on obtaining their degrees and leaving a place that was changing so quickly and dramatically.328

327 October 2, 1863, June 3, 1864, Hesperian Record Book.
328 Mattern, 98.
Copperheadism and draft opposition both faded as the war came to a close. By January 1865, Literary Adelphi members at the University of Michigan measured the ultimate credibility of the Copperhead movement. After their debate, they came to the agreement that “the arrest and banishment of C.L. Vallandigham was justifiable.” With only a brief gap between themselves at that moment and the height of the Copperhead faction, these students found little defendable in the opposition’s course during the war. The next month, Anna Dickinson came to Ann Arbor to talk about the recent presidential election. She spent a good part of her speech railing against the Copperheads. As one student recalled, “she lectured in a church, full to the doors. As the lecture proceeded, she became more and more fiery…At last she said that hell fire was too cold for any American who stood not ready to lay down his life rather than that a single star should be blotted from the azure of our flag.” Then, as she said that she was specifically criticizing Copperheads, “a score or more of people arose and rather noisily walked out of the church. She paused dramatically at the first movement, and held her silence until the last footfall died away.”

As the war was wrapping up, the Athenians at Indiana University recorded two more debates. They first addressed a question that resembled those from the early days of the war, debating whether, “abolitionism is the cause of the present war.” On this point in January 1865, the Athenians split their vote with the Jury voting in the affirmative and the House voting in the negative. Although it looked like students at Indiana University still did not agree over the causes of the war, their final debate of the war years recorded

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329 January 27, 1865, Literary Adelphi minutes, 1857-1891. Hill, 172.
on March 10, 1865, found them more in harmony. Both the Jury and House concluded that Congress did have the right to pass a constitutional amendment abolishing slavery.\footnote{January 27, 1865, March 10, 1865, Athenian minutes.}

The scars of political clashes remained in the community into the early postwar era. As news of Lincoln’s assassination trickled into Bloomington in April 1865, citizens, faculty, and students came together in the town square to mourn the fallen leader. President Nutt delivered some opening remarks, highlighting his position as one of the elder statesmen in the community. One resident’s diary revealed that not everyone in Bloomington grieved over Lincoln’s death. “Some [of] the hateful butternuts were rejoicing,” Maggie Wylie recorded later that evening. Those who once cheered for Jefferson Davis in the streets of Bloomington once again appeared to voice their pleasure at the downfall of the leader who they blamed for the war that freed the slaves and drafted unwilling men into the military.\footnote{Blanchard, 439. Margaret Wylie Mellette, Maggie: The Civil War diary of Margaret Wylie Mellette (Watertown, S.D.: Codington County Historical Society Inc., Kameska Heritage Museum, 1983), 19.}

In Madison, economic fortunes began to turn and by late 1863 war prosperity began to appear. As pocketbooks became fuller, Copperheadism disappeared dramatically in Wisconsin. “You will hardly know Madison,” resident Annie Cox wrote to her fiancé Gideon Winan Allen at the University of Michigan in April 1863, “there is so much building going on and tearing down.” Growth and progress had returned to the state capital. The location of Camp Randall in Madison also continued to improve the financial situation in the city. In March 1864, a Sun Prairie, Wisconsin resident who worked in Madison wrote home to his son, “the Streets of Madison are thronged with
Soldiers and the Saloons’ and Stores are doing a good business Money plenty with the Soldier and the soldiers are careless of it.” “Our little town is quite gay with parties and church festivals,” wrote one local resident to his fiancée. The Copperhead threat to Madison, which caused tension and confrontations in the community, relieved by early 1864 and the town freely socialized again.332

Along with it, support for the war became more popular and Unionists became more vocal. “The ‘union league’ in Madison is taking the city by storm,” wrote Annie to Allen in May 1863, “Everyone who does not belong is a copperheadess…they carry the matter to ridiculous lengths.” That fall, the newspaper posted a call for a “Young Men’s Convention” to convene in Madison. The group would campaign for Union candidates in upcoming elections and demonstrate that “they have no faith in those men who are not firm, unaltering loyalists.” It was the counterpart to the women’s societies in Madison and encouraged men to perform their patriotism by both vigorously promoting the incumbent administration and vehemently condemning those who “exert themselves ever to find fault with every act of the administration.”333

After the war ended, members of Wisconsin’s Hesperian Literary Society focused mainly on constitutional issues related to Reconstruction and foreign policy. Only once during the early years of Reconstruction did these young scholars discuss the war’s


impact on African Americans. Unlike Indiana and Michigan students, who several times debated whether to give blacks the right to vote, Wisconsin students did not address this question until January 1866. They shaped the question specifically to ask whether all blacks in the former Confederacy including newly freed slaves should receive the right to vote. Their inquiry did not therefore include the blacks living in the North. They decided this matter in the affirmative, thus foreshadowing the support that suffrage regardless of color would receive during Radical Reconstruction. The students stood ahead of their state in this issue, as the people of Wisconsin had voted against giving African Americans suffrage in 1849, 1857, and 1865. Not missing a beat, university students moved seamlessly from addressing war issues such as the draft and Copperheads to debating subjects regarding the political direction of the postwar era. In all cases, Wisconsin university students as well as those at Indiana and Michigan demonstrated their coherence of American imperatives and attempted to capitalize on the educational opportunities related to those national questions.  

Several elements of the Civil War turned significant portions of the northern population against Lincoln and the Union war effort. Immediately after the firing on Fort Sumter, theories and rumors abounded about whether the administration would attempt to emancipate the slaves as part of their war strategy. No one could agree on whether its

334 January 12, 1866, Hesperia Bill of Exercises. It was later ruled (Gillespie v. Palmer, 1866) that the 1849 law to allow blacks to vote had passed by a majority of voters. Originally it was believed to have failed because the number of voters who cast ballots did not constitute a majority of the state. Therefore, no one in the state acknowledged their right to vote until after 1866. In early 1866, students at the University of Wisconsin would have only seen that the state legislature continued to pass laws attempting to grant suffrage to blacks but were voted down at the polls on such measures. Joseph A. Ranney, Wisconsin’s Legal History (Madison: Wisconsin Supreme Court, 1997), 9.
motives would be moral or tactical but this debate paled in comparison to the more stark constitutional debate regarding the abolition of slavery. This subject, coupled with unpopular decisions made by the White House such as conscription in 1862, pushed many dissatisfied northerners into political action. Their opposition gathered steam during 1862 and 1863 in the form of the Copperhead wing of the Democratic party. Students at these three Midwestern universities witnessed all of these ideological conflicts and felt the impact of their strain on their campuses and in the surrounding communities. As these points of disagreement threatened to split the North and potentially aid the Confederacy in gaining its freedom, young men at the University of Michigan, Indiana University, and the University of Wisconsin used the outlets available to them in order to weigh in on these topics.

While University of Wisconsin students were distracted by the upheaval at their own institution during this period, they turned inward, ignored public pressure, and began to separate themselves from the implementation of war on their home front. However, they did not ignore the significant political and social changes occurring around them. Indiana University students similarly remained aloof from the intense and often violent political conflicts around them. Instead of joining in the brawls occurring at political meetings in Bloomington, the young men on campus diligently pursued their education and addressed the pivotal concerns of the national conflict by fueling their own civil war against the faculty. Their continual pattern of non-consensus regarding emancipation and slavery demonstrated the divided nature of their student body. This lack of political cohesion flavored the nature of their home front. The University of Michigan students
experienced the most dramatic uprising of Copperhead sentiment among a segment of the student body. The upheaval resulting from Copperhead actions on campus and in Ann Arbor threatened to drag students into physical fights and turn the community against the university. Faculty quickly drew a line between political factions and their right to agitate on campus and attempted to reign in their feisty students. Eventually, conditions settled at all three of these schools, mirroring the political downfall of the Copperheads across the North. As their political fortunes fell by the elections of 1864 and draft resistance lessened, students at these three universities returned their focus to their studies and to their futures. Their professors as well shifted their attention from restraining their students towards building their institutions for a postwar era.
CHAPTER SEVEN:

PULLING AHEAD

“Every citizen of Indiana has a life interest, for himself and his descendants, in the State University. It belongs to the whole people.”

President Cyrus Nutt, Indiana University, 1864.

In June 1864, Madison, Wisconsin, had little reason to celebrate. Despite the economic upturn that had allowed the city to make the best of the previous winter, the Civil War was dragging on and claiming lives from among their father, sons, brothers and husbands. Earlier that year, President Lincoln’s call for more troops for one hundred days’ service drained the senior class at the University of Wisconsin. The town did not prepare to rejoice at the scholarly accomplishments of a fresh group of university graduates that spring and early summer. Instead, the situation forced school officials to cancel commencement altogether, thus denying the residents in Wisconsin’s capital city from enjoying their usual festivities. The absence of graduation and its week of speeches, parties, and ceremonies only further emphasized the consequences of the nation’s crisis on the university and its surrounding community.

This chapter will examine the proactive adjustments made by the faculty and communities related to the University of Michigan, the University of Wisconsin, and Indiana University during the latter years of the Civil War. As discussed in Chapter 3, the

335 “Synopsis of Lecture delivered by President Nutt, in Fifteen Counties of Central and Southern Indiana, in the Summer of 1864,” IU Catalogue, 1865-1866, 31.
administrations of these three schools reacted to changing circumstances early in the war, largely with the goal of retaining as many students at their institutions as possible. However, faculty and townspeople also cooperated on a number of significant adjustments and changes designed in order to ensure the survival of the institutions, and grow and position the universities for expanded success in the future. Assuredly, not all constituents agreed on the direction the universities should take to respond to the exigencies of the times and this chapter will discuss a few events of discord among the interested parties.

Overall though, the response of the universities and their communities in the later years of the war was calculated, strategic, and went well beyond a simple attempt to survive. As students at these three universities put down their books and picked up muskets instead, their professors took proactive steps to ensure the survival of their institutions. They were not alone in their efforts. The people of Bloomington, Ann Arbor, and Madison recognized the damage that the war might cause and acted swiftly in concert with the institutional leaders. All those who earned their livelihood from these three Midwestern state universities took definitive steps to ensure that their schools would not follow that same path. The Morrill Act was one of the opportunities presented to these three universities during the Civil War. But before they could focus their attention on obtaining these funds, these universities faced challenging obstacles that further shaped the nature of their wartime experience on the home front.

Along the way, their decisions affected the home front experience of their students and influenced the way that students and residents came to value the universities
in a time of war. While the opening months of the war saw the faculty focused on the students who left for war, the later years of the conflict revealed their concentration more on the students who remained behind. The faculty realized that their own futures and the future of their institutions rested on the sustainability of programs for the young men who chose to continue their education. Rather than obsess over the loss of each student who chose to put down his books and march in a regiment, the faculty and leaders of these schools and communities sought ways to enhance the war years for the students who stayed on campus.

Of the three universities in this study, the University of Wisconsin experienced the sharpest decrease in enrollment during the war, especially in their collegiate department. It is nearly impossible to tell from their annual catalogue that much was wrong at all because the university regularly listed students as active in their classes when they were in fact away at war. Enrollment in the collegiate department appeared steady from the fall semester of 1862 through the fall of 1865, at just over forty students per year, but even this consistency contained some disturbing trends. The number of freshman beginning their education each fall hovered in the low twenties, thus constituting about half of the total collegiate enrollment. However, beginning in 1863, the number of sophomores was in the single digits, meaning that the University of Wisconsin was failing at retaining students. For example, from the fall of 1863 to the fall of 1864, the university lost 78% of its freshman class.  

\[336\] UW Catalogue, 1863, 1864, 1865, 1866.
The university masked these trends as much as possible by making several significant changes. Clearly the most revolutionary adjustment adopted by the Board of Regents and faculty at the University of Wisconsin was the creation of a Normal Department in the spring of 1863 and the admission of women into the new department. The University of Michigan and Indiana University took no such step during the war; Indiana enrolled females in 1867 and Michigan followed later in 1870. As Merle Curti points out, these changes were obviously “the results of expediency rather than educational philosophy.” Regardless, those responsible for its future made the decision based on the imperatives of the time and initiated sweeping changes into the underlying structure of the school. They made these choices because they wanted to convince the state and the legislature of their belief in the promise of the university. The Board of Regents expressed these notions in 1863:

When the final triumph of the government and the conclusive suppression of rebellion shall again give peace to the country, there is reason to believe that multitudes of young men now in the army will be found seeking the benefits of a liberal education. It will be the duty and the aim of the Board, in the mean time, to place and keep the University in such a condition as will enable it to do its part of the work which will then devolve upon the higher institutions of learning.

The Board fought tirelessly to propel the university through the challenges of the war era, and felt that opening the school to women was a necessary means to that end. Additionally, they considered that critics of the state university’s secular position might
increase their support of an institution that included (assumedly) religious women to guide the potentially misguided men.  

Female university enrollment was not new to the University of Wisconsin. In 1857, the Board of Regents announced the opening of the campus to female students “to meet the wishes of those parents who desire university culture for their daughters.” Young women enrolled in classes at the university through the summer of 1860. It is unclear why that practice ended. Students remained aware of its possibility in the following years. At the end of May 1861, the members of the Hesperian Literary Society came to the conclusion after their weekly debate that “the same course of study ought to be pursued with ladies and gentlemen.” However, when faced with that idea becoming a reality two years later, the thought of sharing the classroom with females seemed almost an abhorred idea to the young men of the University of Wisconsin. Even the Regents admitted in 1864 that there was “a strong feeling of opposition to the [Normal] Department, mainly on the ground of its bringing females into the University.” But they insisted, “no reason whatever has yet existed for this apprehension.” The Board of Regents expected the University of Wisconsin students to coexist with their female counterparts and continue their collegiate work without distraction. Still, historian Richard Current described the remaining male students as “a humiliated minority.” They

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were the most skeptical of the new arrangement; the male students were, quite apparently to all, outnumbered by the ladies who roamed the hallways and pathways. Initially, the concern over the admission of female students centered around the idea that their presence might lower “the standard of culture.”

The first semester that campus doors in Madison opened to women, 75 young ladies registered for classes. That number dipped into the 60s in the next two years, but soared to 80 in the fall of 1865. In a letter to a recent graduate, Professor Sterling confided that although there were approximately 90 women in the Normal Department as of May 1863, he was unsure of the ultimate impact of the latest undertaking at the university. “What will be the result of the new department, I do not know,” admitted Sterling, “I hope for the best, though I have some fears.” These wartime measures were distinctly unfamiliar to Wisconsin’s faculty and the haste with which the Regents had to make decisions regarding ways to shore up the school’s status frightened even the most senior faculty members. The university also experimented with allowing women in the Preparatory Department, where over 50 registered the first fall they were welcomed in 1864. Females counted among those attending the school on an irregular basis as well. Wisconsin refused to sit still and just weather the storm of war while watching dwindling numbers of young men attend its collegiate course. These actions allowed the faculty to assure the Regents in 1865 that “the institution had nevertheless made some progress during the war period.” Mutual respect that developed between the sexes during

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Thwaites, 80. May 31, 1861, Hesperia Record Book. A similar debate by the University of Michigan’s Alpha Nu Literary Society in November 1862, during which they considered whether their school should admit women, failed to find support for that notion. November 21, 1862, Alpha Nu minutes. Current, 400. Board of Regents Annual Report, for the year ending 1865, UW Archives.
interactions in their literary societies finally cemented a cooperative relationship between male and female students on campus. The Board of Regents could rest easy by the end of the war, knowing that their questionable experiment had brought prosperity not turmoil to the university.\(^{339}\)

The University of Wisconsin also sought to solidify its place and significance to the state during the Civil War. There was an overt emphasis on the relationship of the institution to the state and frequent reiteration regarding the value of the university to the state’s well-being and future. In June 1862, alumni, faculty, regents and others gathered in Madison for the first alumni dinner during commencement week. The Alumni Association formed only the year before, just two months after the opening of the war. The first toast offered by those in attendance saluted “Our country and our Flag. May our banner soon wave over a land united as of old; the emblem and realization of the power and splendor of a free people.” Their orientation during a personal and local gathering was first towards their nation and its conflict. It was not, however, until the eighteenth toast that their focused returned to the war, when they commemorated “Our Representatives in the Army of the Union. We are proud of the representation; may they be returned in safety and honor.” Letters from soldiers in the field were read aloud in response. The distance from the battlefield was evident as the home front recognized the absence of the soldiers but remained more connected with the people and events closer to their doorsteps.\(^{340}\)

\(^{339}\) Thwaites, 78. *UW Catalogue*, 1864, 1865, 1866. Sterling to Stewart, May 20, 1863, Isaac & Mary Stewart Papers, Box 1 Folder 2 1837-1869, WHS.

\(^{340}\) Thwaites, 261.
In between these two nods to the country’s plight and the effect it had on their fellow student-soldiers, the attendees at the Alumni dinner heaped praise upon the university. “Our Alma Mater,” they celebrated, “Long may she live and flourish the pride and ornament of State, an honour to herself and the cause of education. May her memory be fresh in the hearts of her foster sons.” They toasted the commencement festivities, the Board of Regents, the Faculty, and various graduating classes. The two most recent classes to receive their degrees, in 1861 and 1862, heard responses to their calls by graduates from those years. James D. Parkinson addressed the toast to the class of 1861, “our Nursing mother’s biggest brood,” while Michael Leahy, fresh out of his own commencement gown, responded to the toast for the class of 1862. “Welcome to the Ranks,” the new graduates were cheered. The university itself received an ornate remembrance: “May it ever prove a nursery of learning to the State, scattering its choicest scions over her soil…”

This link between the institution and the state bears further mention. At the University of Wisconsin, they strove to improve their connection with the state and saw positive results from those efforts during the war years. Certainly they made more progress than the tenuous position of Indiana University and even more than the tension-fraught relationship in Michigan between that government and its pinnacle institution. By 1862, university officials in Wisconsin began to emphasize their goal of enhancing town/gown relations. In his commencement address that year, Professor Butler articulated the symbiotic relationship that those associated with the school believed to exist between

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341 Ibid.
the university and the state. Butler contended that as long as those responsible for the University of Wisconsin worked diligently to ensure its success, then longevity would follow. It would become thus “an institution living as long as the State, indeed helping the State to live longer.” His words epitomized the efforts of university leaders to emphasize the benefits of the school to those in Wisconsin.\footnote{Wisconsin State Journal, June 24, 1862.}

Luckily for those at the University of Wisconsin, Governor James T. Lewis was a steadfast supporter of higher education. In his second annual message to the state legislature in January 1865, Lewis outlined the state’s contribution to the war effort, focusing largely on manpower quantities supplied to the government. Then, he next concentrated on the significance of education for the future of the state. “There is no subject of more vital importance to the interests of the State and Nation than the subject of Education,” he asserted, “As no people can be enslaved with it, so no people can become great and powerful without it.” Lewis argued that the southern people suffered from a severe lack of education in their region and labeled that as “a prominent reason why they are now endeavoring to subvert this Government.” It was education, Lewis believed, that created good citizens and “increases the strength of free governments.”\footnote{James T. Lewis, Annual Message of James T. Lewis, Governor of the State of Wisconsin, January 12, 1865 (Madison: Atwood & Rublee, 1865), 10-11.}

With that as the foundation for his argument, Lewis addressed the condition of the University of Wisconsin, praising it as “entirely free from debt,” with an outstanding faculty and campus. These things all spoke very highly of its usefulness to the state and its residents. His endorsement of the university’s position and accomplishments
illustrated how despite the challenges brought on by the war, the Republican administration in Wisconsin expressed support of its state university by the end of the Civil War and urged residents to recognize its value.\textsuperscript{344}

As the war continued and became a regular part of daily life, those associated with the University of Wisconsin immersed themselves into Madison’s involvement with the war. They tried vigorously to demonstrate that the institution was a vital component of the state’s contributions to the war. When the local Ladies’ Aid Society and the Union League wanted to hold a large picnic for soldiers of the 30\textsuperscript{th} Regiment on July 4, 1863, the university opened its campus to host the affair. “The picnic…went off most admirably,” wrote the editor of the \textit{State Journal} a few days later. His praise for the campus location was high, calling it, “the most beautiful spot in the world for such an occasion.” The university also demonstrated its determination to remain intellectually useful to the community. In 1865, it held three public lectures in the Madison Baptist Church to benefit the families of soldiers. Professor Ezra S. Carr, who taught chemistry and natural history, offered the lectures on practical chemistry. Newspapers encouraged residents to attend. Those devoted to the success of the university took steps to ensure that the institution did not lose visibility during the nation’s conflict.\textsuperscript{345}

Usefulness to the state was not necessarily the most important question on the minds of leaders at the University of Michigan at the midpoint of the war. Instead, the Board of Regents struggled during this period for control of the institution, as the vibrant

\textsuperscript{344} Ibid.
and forceful President Tappan rubbed many people the wrong way. At their wits end, the Board fired Tappan following the June 1863 commencement ceremony. This action came in the midst of fierce competition with denominational schools across the state and with the existing agricultural school in Lansing. Tappan’s aggressive demands to the legislature regarding their decisions about the Morrill Act funds contributed to a long list of reasons that prompted the Board of Regents to go in another direction for the presidency of the institution. Tappan’s removal plummeted the university and the community into a sandstorm of protest that some within the university and some without believed might weaken the school.

At the time of his firing, Tappan had served ten years at the head of the university. The students were boundlessly devoted to him, but by the late 1850s he had begun to test the patience of both the Regents and some members of the faculty. Historians have uncovered a plethora of reasons why some in the university community, within Ann Arbor, and throughout the state disapproved of Henry Tappan and approved of his dismissal. Elizabeth M. Farrand, who compiled an early institutional history of the University of Michigan, believed that the hard feelings stemmed in part from Tappan’s decision to attend church services of all of the local denominations, thus spurring, in some people’s eyes, his Presbyterian background. She contends that Tappan “thought the president of the University should be undenominational,” but this policy eventually lost him the favor of several churches in town in addition to the Presbyterian church, all of whom found his lack of dedication to one congregation insulting. His tendency to serve wine with dinner in a community that largely supported the temperance movement also
caused the distaste of some residents. The Regents accused Tappan of not collecting dues from all of the students and generally became frustrated with the strong hand he attempted to employ in running the school. The decision to change the man at the helm of the university came after years of power struggles between the Board and Tappan.346

It is clear from the sources that a portion of the faculty supported Tappan’s removal. A handful of professors disapproved of Tappan’s familiar nature with the students. Law Professor Thomas Cooley wrote to history professor Andrew D. White, who was then overseas, in July 1863 following Tappan’s dismissal. “Some people would pull the institution down about our ears for very spite,” he exclaimed, “but I think we shall all survive [the impact of the firing],” for “any shock the University will receive will…leave us stronger than ever in a year or two.” One month later, Cooley chided to his colleague, “I suppose you will rejoice at having been absent from Ann Arbor during the recent Revolution.” “I have no idea what your views are of the propriety of the action taken by the Regents,” admitted Cooley, “but I presume you have felt [despite faculty frustrations with Tappan]…there was still great danger in his removal.” Another faculty member wrote to White in March 1864, “Everything is moving on pleasantly. It is truly refreshing to breathe an atmosphere not loaded with arrogance & unfriendly gossip. You will find us all I think...in better mood than ever before.” Even a Board member chimed in with his relief in Tappan’s release, arguing that it subsequently allowed for “that manly freedom which had so long been desired” by the professors.347

346 Farrand, 156. Bald, 25.
347 Thomas Cooley to Andrew White, July 12, 1863, August 17, 1863, Thomas Cooley papers, 1850-1898, Box 1, Folder 1853-1862: 1863-1864, Bentley Historical Library. James Boise to Andrew D. White, March 23, 1864; Donald McIntyre to Andrew D. White, April 1, 1864, White papers.
While most faculty members approved of Tappan’s removal, students and most Ann Arbor residents were incensed. Current students, alumni, and townspeople met and passed resolutions demanding Tappan’s reinstatement and later submitted petitions to the Board of Regents requesting the same. One Ann Arbor resident likened the Regents’ decision to “jackasses kicking at a lion.” Former students serving in the military held “an indignation meeting” at their camp near Vicksburg. Tappan’s successor, Erastus O. Haven, a Methodist minister and former professor at Michigan, acknowledged that when he arrived in Ann Arbor to accept his position, “Many of the citizens would not even greet me personally. It was soon rumored that I was intemperate, and all kinds of slanders were hinted at. The newspapers opposed had much more to say than those favorable.”

Haven’s arrival in Ann Arbor to replace Tappan failed to calm the heckles of a portion of Michigan’s student body. A student wrote home to his mother that fall “I got my first impressions of Mr. Haven in chapel Thursday morning and I must say I do not think much of him.” The next week the students all walked out of chapel after some comments by Haven regarding the death of a student that were considered “so heartless and out of place.” “If I ever had any respect for the man it is all gone now,” declared freshman John Marshall Hinchman. Joseph Quarles informed his father in January 1864, “Much of my interest in the University will be lost if [Haven] is continued by the new board.” “Dr. Tappan is, in my opinion, one of the great & good men of the age,” argued Quarles, “and his loss is irreparable.” Quarles acted on his frustration by then leaving the university a few months later to serve in an Hundred Days regiment. As discussed in

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Chapter Six, he did return after his term of service, perhaps having worked out his express disappointment regarding the university’s upheaval.349

Tappan’s firing rocked the security of the student body. While already involved in negotiating the political disconnects among themselves as the Republican and Copperhead students clashed on campus, the news following the 1863 graduation events rattled the young men. As they returned to campus in the fall, Tappan’s removal forced them to clarify their beliefs about their role in their community, and thus on the wartime home front. The episode reinforced the shifting ideology on the part of the students, which was increasingly treating the university the main beneficiary of their affection and honor. The war was almost temporarily forgotten that fall, amid the uproar caused by the unexpected change in university leadership, and the students offered only a passing comment about the war in their annual fraternity publication. Even then, their brief acknowledgment of the national situation was immersed in rhetoric about the college’s greatness. The Palladium’s editors likened the “mighty upheavals” of the formerly calm “University sea” to a “clap of thunder from a clear sky,” and attributed the frenzy of the prior year in equal parts to Tappan’s removal and the “great commotion and turmoil in the great body politic of the nation.”350

The young men of Alpha Nu wrote an emotional editorial in their society journal about the Board’s action, reflecting the general perspective of the student body. Interestingly, the irate students chose distinctly martial language to express their

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349 John Marshall Hinchman to mother, October 14, 1863, October 25, 1863, John Marshall Hinchman letters, 1861-1864, Bentley Historical Library. Joseph Quarles to father, January 10, 1864, Joseph V. Quarles Papers, 1843-1911, Box 2, Folder Correspondence 1863-64, WHS.

350 Palladium, 1864.
displeasure. This choice of prose indicated that the students had adapted to living in a world surrounded by references to war, and by 1863 found it suitable to appropriate that vocabulary in order to explain their own daily lives. The Alpha Nu piece warned returning students that the “realm of [their] miniature world has been invaded.” As change threatened to alter the sense of security offered by the university, the students reacted by defending the institution and its honor, which they associated with Henry Tappan. Their numerous petitions to the Board of Regents demanding a reversal of the decision and Tappan’s reinstatement were met with hostility and condescension. The personal war undertaken in Ann Arbor between the students and the Board ended in disappointment, as the Board told the students to “attend to our books like good boys.” Like in Indiana, when the students characterized their own collisions with the faculty in terms of words and actions that they saw playing out in the national conflict, these students at the University of Michigan articulated their pain regarding Tappan’s firing by mobilizing wartime rhetoric learned on the home front.\footnote{November 6, 1863, Alpha Nu, \textit{The Sibyl Palladium}, 1865.}

The faculty managed to maintain confidence in the decision of the Board during the students’ commotion because closer examination of the temperature of the situation revealed that the loudest young scholars were not necessarily speaking for the majority of the student body. In December 1863, faculty were alarmed by the circulation of a student petition to restore Tappan, but quickly assessed that “less than half” of the enrolled students signed it. Seniors, doubtless the most emotionally invested in Tappan’s leadership, constituted the majority of names on the list. Furthermore, “it appeared that
some signed the paper because they were told it was designed but as a compliment to Dr. Tappan, & was not expected to accomplish anything.” It took the rest of 1863 and much of 1864 for the tension in town and on campus to settle. After many failed attempts to force a reversal of the decision, the students and residents resigned themselves to the change and began to accept Haven as their president. Tappan retired to Europe and never returned to the United States.352

One group of students did not feel as emotionally wrought as those discussed above. Lester O. Goddard, who graduated with the class of 1867, began at the University of Michigan in the fall of 1863 coinciding with President Haven’s investiture. Goddard recalled that he quickly realized how much the older students had admired Tappan but that the new scholars of his class “could see no good reason for joining the upper-class men in their warlike demonstrations.” The newly enrolled freshman supported Haven, despite being in an environment that Goddard described as “the smoke of daily battle during the whole year [following Tappan’s dismissal].” “We often deemed it necessary to push [Haven] to the front,” Goddard stated, so that both the university and the community had opportunities to welcome the school’s new leader. Time and students such as these eventually healed the wounds associated with Tappan’s forced departure and allowed Haven to earn the respect of the faculty, residents, and students.353

By the end of the war, it was clear that Haven had assumed his position as the head of the university and a leader in the community. Abraham Lincoln’s assassination

352 Thomas Cooley to Andrew White, December 22, 1863, Thomas Cooley papers, 1850-1898, Box 1, Folder 1853-1862; 1863-1864, Bentley Historical Library. Perry, 335.
353 Lester O. Goddard, “When the Class of ‘67 were Freshmen,” Michigan Alumnus Vol VIII, No. 4 (Jan. 1902), 173-175.
brought Ann Arbor’s residents and university faculty and students into the town square. Just as in April 1861, when Tappan led the Union mass meeting following the attack on Fort Sumter, the people of Ann Arbor once again looked to the scholars of the university for inspiration and reassurance. President Haven was one of a handful of men who made speeches at the impromptu gathering. Ann Arbor shut down on the following Wednesday for church services to mark Lincoln’s funeral. A committee of the town council and other citizens selected Haven to give the eulogy. Haven’s address begins: “Mr. Mayor and Fellow Citizens: We are assembled as citizens of Ann Arbor…” His eulogy thus seeks to unite the community by defining them as one, rather than as a community so divided by Tappan’s firing and by the political discords of the Civil War.\footnote{Bald, 30; E.O. Haven, \textit{Memorial Proceedings in honor of the lamented President of the United States, Abraham Lincoln, held in Ann Arbor, Michigan; with the Address of Rev. E. O. Haven, D.D., LL.D., President of the University of Michigan.} (Ann Arbor: Printed at the “Peninsular Courier” Office, 1865).}

Jeannette Dawson lived in Ann Arbor at the time because her husband was a law student at the university. She observed that the university students participated in the processional to the church prior to Haven’s eulogy. They were one of only four groups who walked in the procession, joined by representatives of civic organizations, firemen, and city officials. University student Albert Farley also noted in his diary that he and other university men took part in the processional. This further demonstrated the level of respect held by townspeople for the university students that they were included in the events of that day in such a significant manner. Thus, on the day in which the community would honor the martyred president, the students held a prominent place in the ceremony,
beside Haven, who gave words of comfort to the grief-stricken Midwestern college town.\footnote{Jeanette Dawson to her mother, April 23, 1865, Jeannette M. Dawson papers, 1864-1866, Bentley Historical Library.}

Despite this potential setback, the University of Michigan made fantastic strides into the postwar era. Ann Arbor proved a pivotal partner for the University of Michigan as the school’s fortunes began to soar during the war. Local newspapers regularly discussed events regarding the institution, including offering suggestions in the fall of 1863 about how the university should handle the impact of increased enrollment that term. When, the next February, the Board of Regents asked the town for ten thousand dollars to add more classroom space to the Medical school, the editor of the \textit{Michigan Argus} encouraged his neighbors to vote for the levy. “The University has done and is doing much for Ann Arbor, and Ann Arbor can afford to do liberally by the University,” he asserted. The students provided income to local businesses and in other ways contributed to the economic prosperity of the community. “We reap its local benefits,” the editor reminded his readers, and “…we of Ann Arbor have a special interest in its upbuilding.” They also collected money in 1864 to send five medical students to volunteer in Union military hospitals. Residents clearly understood the importance of developing and supporting the relationship between the town and the university, especially during such precarious times.\footnote{\textit{Michigan Argus}, October 9, 1863, February 26, 1864. Bald, 28. Another way that the Ann Arbor community sought to strengthen its relationship with the university was by encouraging students to attend church regularly. For example, in October 1863, St. Andrews’ Episcopal Church invited students to join their congregation and offered to give them assigned pew seatings in the sanctuary. This arrangement did not always fulfill the church’s hopes, as they sometimes had to chastise the young men for not attending consistently and thereby taking up a possible pew of another member. Regardless, it is clear that the...}
On Thanksgiving Day 1863, Haven took to the pulpit to give a sermon to Ann Arbor residents. Haven addressed his audience on the topic “Should the Nation be thankful?” Among the many reasons he offered to bolster the mood of the people on a dreary November day after a long year of hard military setbacks, Haven specifically reminded them about the benefits that they enjoyed because of the location of the university in their midst. The University of Michigan was:

a constant home of many intelligent and enterprising young men, from all parts of the country, where, you may say without boasting, the best advantages for thorough literary and mental culture that the country can secure are enjoyed. Have you not reason for yourselves and your children to be thankful?

He also challenged them to focus on the potential of the university for even greater improvement and notoriety. He said that the university “ought to be the pride of the State,” and reminded the already active Ann Arbor residents to direct their energies towards advancing the institution.357

Community leaders worked with faculty members and the Board of Regents throughout the dramatic weeks and months following Tappan’s removal because all parties understood the significance of obtaining the Morrill Act funds for the university. They could not afford to lose sight of that goal and potentially fail to capture its financial

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357 In this same sermon, Haven compares the Confederate secession movement to the trial and crucifixion of Jesus Christ. He argues that the secession movement was an example of “popular excitement” becoming “epidemic” just as what happened in Jerusalem when friends and followers of Jesus started to turn on him when the general feeling towards him turned negative. “The prayer on the cross was not hyperbolical nor poetical,” Haven admonished, “‘Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.’” Haven, Should the nation be thankful?, 6, 19.
windfall. In Michigan, the faculty and Board of Regents faced a unique set of circumstances following the announcement of the Morrill Act as compared with the other two universities in this study. Specifically, the state of Michigan had already opened an agricultural college in Lansing in 1855 (it would eventually become Michigan State University), and therefore leaders of the University of Michigan had to compete for the Morrill Act funds against an existing institution. Originally, Tappan approved of the state housing its agricultural program away from Ann Arbor, as the goals associated with teaching future farmers did not appeal to his sense of a classical liberal arts education. However, once the Morrill Act money became available, Tappan changed his tune. He not only then fought strenuously to obtain the new funds, but he also campaigned to move the struggling agricultural school from Lansing and attach it to Ann Arbor. “I have strong hopes of success,” Tappan wrote to Professor Andrew D. White in February 1863. If he could facilitate the “strong movement to bring the Agricultural College from Lansing to Ann Arbor...then 240,000 acres of land granted by Congress will then be ours.” Andrew D. White called the Morrill Act a “glorious law,” for it would allow universities to address the educational needs of more of the population. In his eyes, this in turn would make society and by extension the nation stronger.358

Following Tappan’s firing, Haven resumed the call for the legislature to appropriate the Morrill funds for the university. Friends of the agricultural school in

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358 Eddy, Jr., 16; Kuhn, 7-8. Henry Tappan to Andrew White, February 2, 1863, White papers. Alan Creutz, From college Teacher to University Scholar: The evolution and professionalization of academics at the University of Michigan, 1841-1900 (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1981), 460-461. As Creutz notes, the University of Michigan was not originally a land-grant university and was “not tied to the commitments of a land-grant mentality” [ie. service to the state]. The school was, Creutz argues, “at the nexus of the new intellectualism of Harvard and the popular ideology of the Old Northwest.” Creutz, 11.
Lansing held enough sway in the state government that they were able to postpone that decision for many years. In the meantime, a new president took over at the Lansing institution and began to make changes in order to prove to the legislature that his school was poised to make the most of the Morrill funds. The two schools continued the struggle well past the end of the war, when the university in Ann Arbor finally acquiesced. They came to understand that accepting the Morrill money and creating an agricultural school would open them up to having to cater to the farming industry, which the Board of Regents ultimately did not feel was something reconcilable with the goals of the university. In 1869, the matter ended, and Lansing gained the Morrill Act designation as the state’s mechanical arts and agricultural institution.359

Wisconsin also considered many options in dispersing their Morrill Act funds. In his January 1864 address to the state legislature, Governor Lewis spoke of the significance of the measure to Wisconsin residents. “Five-sixths of our population are engaged in agricultural pursuits,” he began, which constituted the majority of the state’s income. Lewis argued that it made sense then that the people should desire additional education in that field, not only to continue the state’s success in that endeavor but also so as to continue to encourage the state’s youth to choose agriculture as their future profession. Military instruction was also crucial for the state’s young men, as “the events of the last two years” proved to Lewis. He suggested including a mandatory level of military skills and knowledge included in every student’s requirements for graduation.360

359 Kuhn, 76-81.
The improving relationship between the university and the state by the later years of the war benefited the institution supremely during the quest for the Morrill Act funds. Ultimately, Wisconsin political leaders decided to funnel all Morrill Act funds into the University of Wisconsin. Whereas the state of Michigan created a separate agricultural institution apart from the classically-focused University of Michigan, Wisconsin poured its financial resources into strengthening the school located in Madison. Surely the university’s location within the heart of the state’s capital helped with this determination. University leaders’ constant hammering to state officials about the value of the institution helped them to win this pivotal prize. Unlike in Ann Arbor, where the university constantly fought for the attention of its state legislature and competed with other communities around the state who felt threatened by its potential power, Wisconsin leaders saw the positive impact of the university in the state while attending to business in Madison.361

Indiana University attempted to follow suit many miles to the south of both Madison and Ann Arbor. As a part of Nutt’s tireless efforts to improve the reputation of Indiana University, he continued to promote education overall throughout the state. In late 1862, he presided over the annual meeting of the State Teacher’s Association, standing as the representative of the state’s capstone institution in education. Lasting two full days and evenings and welcoming important national speakers such as the superintendent of the Chicago public school system, the conference gathered over 100 teachers from the state and was open to the public. These efforts by Nutt demonstrated

the methods by which Indiana University leaders attempted to win the favor of the legislature. One of his most frequent arguments stemmed from his belief in the Bloomington region to be overflowing with benefits for potential students. In May 1863, the president of Pennsylvania State University wrote to Cyrus Nutt to discuss the institutions’ prospects of obtaining the Morrill Act funds. In describing the current state of his university, Nutt made significant reference to Bloomington, further emphasizing the close nature of the relationship between the two. “In point of morals, cheapness of living, and healthy climate, it is favorably located for the purpose of education,” wrote Nutt. He described the town’s population of two thousands residents as “moral and intelligent, and well calculated to exert a salutary influence on the youth.”

Distracting the faculty from quickly pursuing the Morrill Act funds was the seemingly never-ending struggle with their own students during the middle years of the war. The faculty at Indiana University, more than at the other two schools, took harsher steps to restrain their students during this pivotal conflict in the nation’s history. Perhaps it was the strain of state political events or the possible Democratic leaning of the students during their literary society debates that worried the professors. Regardless, the students’ invitation to disgraced former university president William M. Daily prompted the faculty to act. They quickly invoked their own previously unenforced rule, later a Board of Trustees resolution, in 1863 amid the height of Copperhead activities in Indiana. The rule required literary society members to submit original speeches to professors for review. The faculty’s actions regarding this matter, discussed in depth in Chapter 4,

reflected the anxiety of the political situation in Indiana and illustrated how the faculty members sought to minimize risk while preparing their campaign for the Morrill Act money. Not wanting to increase further the already weak perceptions of the institution, the faculty worked to prevent additional criticism around the state regarding the usefulness and propriety of a public university.

Apparently during these feuds, the faculty at Indiana did not heed the words of their former president Andrew Wylie who, in 1830, warned that “too much government is always injurious, a maxim which rulers are slow to learn.” In an effort to emphasize the value of higher education to the state during a speech to the legislature, Wylie argued that “the society of a college ought to be a family, in which the Faculty is the parent, and the pupils the children.” That relationship, Wylie contended, would produce educated men who would lead by example and leave the “rich inheritance of their example and their good works” in the state long after their educations were complete. During the Civil War the faculty struggled to allow the level of independence to their students that the latter group was accustomed to and for which they obviously yearned. When Thomas D. Clark wrote his institutional history of Indiana University in 1970, he concluded that there was “very little concern that the Civil War was in progress” amongst the faculty and students. On a superficial level, the faculty minutes confirm these statements; there are few mentions of the war’s events. However, when you consider the context within which the interactions between faculty and students occurred during these years, it is clear that the war shaped the tone and concerns of both groups. The faculty struggled to impose its
largely conservatively Republican values on a rowdy group of students who were surrounded by a hostile environment.\textsuperscript{363}

Kenneth M. Stampp described these types of reactions by Indiana residents during these volatile years as a “war psychosis” that created an environment in which “intellectual tolerance was not the order of the day.” Even Clark recognized that the “unwashed masses” in the town were participating in “courthouse square brawling.” The students were not isolated from these events and attitudes. And in a state in which even the Republicans viewed the war through a conservative lens, the faculty feared a student body that became too radical in one direction or the other. Any negative insinuations against the morals or ideologies of the students would reflect poorly on the institution and the faculty fought tirelessly to prevent that possibility. Unfortunately, in the process, they alienated a large portion of their student population.\textsuperscript{364}

Once tensions eased with the students in 1864, Indiana University leaders finally created a two-person committee to campaign for available funds. The newly hired Richard Owen joined President Nutt in appealing to the state government, both legislative and executive, to secure the Morrill funds for the Bloomington institution. That summer, the two men made several rounds throughout the state to garner support for the university. Bloomington residents encouraged Indiana University to push for the attachment of the new land-grant school, promising to support an experimental farm, “equal in value to any that may be tendered by any other locality.” As the faculty of

\textsuperscript{363} Wylie, 21. Clark, 106.
Indiana University had long been aware that many state residents failed to understand the relevance or value of their state university, Owen and Nutt initiated their campaign by attempting to convince their listeners of its significance. “Every citizen of Indiana has a life interest, for himself and his descendants, in the State University. It belongs to the whole people,” Nutt began. He outlined five “advantages of education:

1. It promotes individual happiness, affording intellectual and moral pleasures of the purest and highest order allotted[sic] to humanity.
2. It imparts power over matter and the elements. It gives power to its possessor in society - in the [State].
3. Its value and blessings are imperishable, lasting as the mind itself.
4. It promotes national greatness and happiness.
5. It is the safeguard of civil liberty.”

While Nutt may have garnered support to this point, he revealed the narrow perspective through which he understood the larger situation when he then argued, “No more important subject can claim the attention of the citizens of Indiana, than the disposal of the munificent grant made by Congress, for the endowment of Agricultural Colleges in each of the States.” Three years into a civil war that affected their households, their businesses, and their sense of security, the people of Indiana assuredly had concerns greater than the Morrill Grant. He may well have achieved more had he found a way to impart to his listeners how and why his priorities related to those of their own homes.365

Nutt addressed three proposals for the funds within Indiana. The first, that they be distributed among five institutions equally with a central research facility in Indianapolis, Nutt criticized as too costly. He felt that spreading the money among the many

denominational colleges was “impracticable” and argued that the state should not dole out money to institutions that were not truly under the control of the state. He feared that if the religious colleges later chose to discontinue instruction in their agricultural schools, the state would have no way to protest because the denominations controlled those institutions. “The fund,” claimed Nutt, “should by all means, be kept together. To distribute it would be to throw it away.” Concerning Indianapolis being the possible location of a new university, Nutt belittled the idea. “Great cities are no place for institutions of higher learning,” he insisted, “and least of all, for an agricultural one.” Nutt called Bloomington “one of the most healthy points in Indiana” and continued to insist on the merits of the locale. His promotion of Indiana University as the receiver of the Morrill Funds covered both qualitative and quantitative points. Nutt outlined the financial situation of the university, insisting that it already offered a significant portion of the assets necessary for an agricultural college, which would save both the state and the taxpaying population money. He also pointed out that Indiana University offered free tuition, essentially allowing all students to attend on scholarship, while a newly-formed institution would most likely have to charge enrollment fees.\(^\text{366}\)

According to Nutt’s vision, Richard Owen, already being established in a professorship at Indiana University, could step easily into the role of professor of military tactics, thus relieving the state of having to furnish someone for such a position. “None better qualified can be found in the country,” Nutt contended, “[Owen] is a regular graduate of a military college in Europe, was a Captain in the Mexican war, Colonel of

the Sixtieth Indiana Volunteers, and commanded a brigade for more than a year [in the Civil War].” The crux of Nutt’s argument, the point that surely he and the other faculty at Indiana University would cherish the most, came just before he concluded his speech. “An Agricultural and Industrial College cannot succeed by itself,” Nutt asserted, “Agricultural science and mechanics cannot be pursued, except by those who have a high degree of scientific and literary culture.” Essentially, Nutt insisted that the agricultural college must be joined with an institution that taught the foundations of science and literature in order to foster a more well-rounded student. He did not believe that a student could truly comprehend their mechanical or agricultural studies if he did not have a solid preparation in more elemental subjects such as chemistry and philosophy. He referenced Michigan’s struggles in sustaining their agricultural college in Lansing, which on the eve of the war had reduced its curriculum to two years and enrolled under seventy students. At Indiana University, where the faculty had been fighting against requests to alter their classical curriculum for years, Nutt still maintained that the more traditional education was a requisite complement to these new pursuits funded by the Morrill Act.367

For his part, Professor Owen also gave remarks in several locales regarding Indiana University quest to obtain the Morrill Act monies. He contended that the secular state university allowed young men to receive an education steeped in “the highest grade of morality and religion” from the many various religious orders in Bloomington, without giving preference to any one denomination “until the mind is capable of judging from dispassionate examination.” This allowed the students to learn and mature in an

environment shaped by religious principles but yet independent of one particular
doctrine. Owen believed that Indiana University offered the same type of experience with
regard to politics. Students were not inundated with the political positions of a certain
religious denomination when they attended the secular state university, but instead were
instilled with “the highest tone of patriotism, with a spirit of toleration, and a sense of
justice.” These values, claimed to be infused into the young men enrolled at Indiana
University, then combined, according to Owen, to “insure acquiescence in the fully
ascertained will of the majority of the qualified voters.”

Where Nutt emphasized the need to underpin agricultural and industrial courses
on the classical curriculum, Professor Owen, new to the faculty, promoted the
Agricultural College as “the most favorable form of college for the education of the
masses…because it develops equally the physical, mental, and moral faculties.” Owen
focused less on what Indiana University could contribute to an agricultural college and
more on what the agricultural college could offer the young men of the state. He argued
that “the professions [were] overfilled” and that students must become experts in “the
cultivation of the soil, in practical science, and in mechanic arts…so as to keep pace with
other nations.” However, in a state that had not yet experienced an overflowing number
of teachers, lawyers, or an educated elite, Indiana residents failed to support the faculty’s
calls to enhance the state university for the purposes of competing globally. The
perspective of Hoosiers in 1864 was only then growing to encompass the priorities of the

368 “Synopsis of Lecture on Education. Delivered during vacation of 1864, in the southern counties
of Indiana, by Professor R. Owen,” *IU Catalogue*, 1864-65.
nation, very different from the antebellum localism and regionalism prevalent in this recent frontier state.369

In the years following the war, Indiana faculty members continued their passionate attempts to obtain the Morrill funds from the legislature. The state considered a number of different plans and could not seem to make a decision. Party politics and personal relationships caused the entire affair to be mired in confusion, losing sight at times of the impact on the state’s educational prospects. Finally, a generous offer from a businessman named John Purdue enticed state leaders to split their state university system, thereby creating the agricultural and mechanical arts school in Lafayette, Indiana, located just over 100 miles north of Bloomington. The second university opened its doors in 1874. Although Indiana University failed to garner the land-grant for the establishment of an agricultural school, its efforts demonstrated how the leaders of the university worked tirelessly to expand the institution despite the national crisis.370

During this flurry of activity on the Bloomington campus, faculty members closely monitored the enrollment situation at the university. Changes early in the war provoked some of their curriculum adjustments and encouraged their activism towards the Morrill Act. Clearly, they had to find ways to attract new students. The Civil War depleted enrollment at Indiana to a low point during the 1862-1863 school year, when only 144 students registered for classes. Of those, just 67 represented the undergraduate program, the rest comprised the preparatory department and the small law school. However, the following year brought more hope. In September 1863, Professor Wylie

369 Ibid.
370 Clark, 112-116; Thornbrough, 711.
recorded in his diary that there were “more students than usual” arriving in town for the opening of the university term. That influx raised the total number of students on campus to 171, with 80 filling the collegiate program. That level held about firm the following year, with an additional 28% increase in the preparatory department that boosted overall enrollment. By the fall of 1865, with the war behind them, Indiana’s faculty welcomed 228 students into the classrooms, 50 of them new freshman. Both the preparatory department and the law school saw over 20% increases in their enrollments as well.\textsuperscript{371}

In their most fretful moments, however, Indiana’s Board of Regents did not seriously consider a plan such as that employed in Wisconsin to enroll female students to bolster numbers, or of that implemented in Michigan, the removal of the president to head in a new direction. Instead, Indiana University faculty members carried on, determined to both enforce their position as disciplinarians in the paternal sense, and aimed at progressing the nature of student opportunities to embrace the very best available in higher education. Their course was neither smooth nor predictable but the postwar era hustled them quickly into the forefront of university development, attributable to the strength with which they maintained their institution during the challenges of the war years.

Neither of the two disputes experienced at the University of Michigan – Tappan’s removal nor the in-state quarrel over the Morrill Act - slowed its progress. During the height of the war, the lowest enrollment in the collegiate departments came during the 1862-1863 school years, when the freshman class dropped by almost 23% from the year

\textsuperscript{371} September 20, 1863, Wylie diary. \textit{IU Catalogue}, 1862-1863; 1863-1864; 1864-1865; 1865-1866.
before and all classes failed to retain their full number of students. Continual increases in the medical and law schools offset any concerns university officials may have had regarding challenging numbers in the undergraduate courses. In the fall of 1863, 88 additional students registered for the Medical Department as compared to one year earlier and by the fall of 1864, the Law Department enrolled almost 70% more students than it had in the fall of 1861. By the fall of 1865, when the guns of the war had quieted and young men came home to determine their next step, the collegiate classes soared past the 350 mark and record enrollments in both the Medical and Law Departments tipped the total university enrollment over 1,200 young men. The postwar era saw the University of Michigan leading the way nationally in terms of cutting-edge curriculum, increasing prestige, and impressive enrollment figures. Changing horses midstream proved only a hiccup in their progress.372

Wisconsin as well continued to take strides towards a brighter future. After the war ended in the spring of 1865, the university graduated only three students, the lowest amount since the nadir in 1862 before the arrival of the female students. That fall, it looked as though enrollment was moving in the right direction. The total student body numbered 331, an 8% increase from the previous year. Although they again lost a large portion of the freshman class heading into sophomore year, the higher three classes retained their numbers. Higher numbers of male students enlisted in the Preparatory Department and in the Select Course, a non-degree set of classes available to professional students. The Normal Department also boasted increased enrollment of female students.

372 UM Catalogue, 1863, 1864, 1865, 1866.
that fall. If the higher numbers in the Preparatory Department could later filter more
students into the collegiate course, and the Normal school continued to grow, the
University of Wisconsin seemed to have weathered the storm of the war with success.\textsuperscript{373}

Wisconsin alumni James L. High attributed the survival and achievements of the
University of Wisconsin during the Civil War to “the self-denial and untiring devotion
which from first to last characterized the labors of the Faculty…though few in numbers,
they were indomitable in spirit, and stood at their posts under circumstances the most
disheartening.” A complete examination of the student experience at these three
universities cannot be executed without understanding the role, input, and consequences
of the men who sought to shape them and send them off into a bright future. Once the
professors stopped reacting to the sudden and potentially dramatic changes brought about
by the war’s commencement, they were able to address the war’s circumstances and
consequences more proactively. This included more of a focus on the remaining students
whose presence in their classrooms meant their own job security for the future.
University leaders lessened their attention on those young men who chose to leave for the
war and instead took strides to augment the experience for those who stayed. Because
their treatment of their institutions during the war was eventually forward-looking, rather
than trapped in the plans of the past, each of these three universities propelled towards the
twentieth century with incredible momentum.\textsuperscript{374}

\textsuperscript{373} \textit{UW Catalogue}, 1863, 1864, 1865, 1866.
\textsuperscript{374} High address, 196.
Students at Michigan surely experienced their share of turmoil during the Civil War including the loss of their favorite university president. These unexpected changes caused much upheaval and concern about the future of the institution. However, because the university was more stable than Indiana or Wisconsin before the war, it was able to weather the storm of Tappan’s firing and progress steadily during the war years. Thus, the students felt secure and confident overall and had the freedom then to develop such an intricate ideological viewpoint regarding themselves as patriots and their role on the home front. Such was not the case at Indiana University or the University of Wisconsin. While Indiana University had the longest heritage of the two schools and slightly better foundations on which to brave the challenges wrought by the Civil War, the University of Wisconsin barely functioned on the eve of the war.

Students at these two schools then, unlike the University of Michigan, could not necessarily rally behind established programs and faculties based on a solid tradition of growing excellence. The war years at Indiana University were marred by internal strife, as disagreements between the faculty and the students ruffled the feathers of even the most determined student. The student body itself was also politically diverse and demonstrated their ambivalence about the war, politics, and the country throughout the semesters in their literary societies. University of Wisconsin students watched the majority of their classmates head to war, depleting their ranks so far that the Board of Regents and faculty decided in 1863 to admit women. The remaining students met this action with express hostility. Turning points filled these years, when the fate of these three institutions could have turned downhill. The universities and communities that
surrounded them held firm to their goals, dug in their heels, and refused to allow student opinion to sway them. Their determination shaped the nature of the student experience on the Midwestern home front.
EPILOGUE

“The GREAT DIVIDE”

“The lovely morning breaks at last, to call us from our painful dream.”

Bloomington Republican, June 24, 1865

Edward G. Miller, who left his studies at the University of Wisconsin twice to enlist in the Union army, returned to Madison on July 31, 1865, with his military company. He confided in his diary that evening that his company “signed the pay rolls and went home – never to be drummed together again as Company ‘G.’” Two days later, Miller “[left] Camp Randall for good,” returned home the next day and “went to work in the harvest field, took Jennie’s place on the reaper.” The girl, most likely his sister, was relieved of her farming duties when Edward arrived to reclaim his responsibilities. He did not, however, enroll again at the University of Wisconsin to finish his degree. His association with the school had already experienced its final chapter.

Just as faculty members and community residents had waited with baited breath when Abraham Lincoln first called for troops in 1861, now they again waited to see whether the war’s end would encourage young men to enroll in their emerging

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375 Alexander letter.
376 Bloomington Republican, June 24, 1865.
universities. New students, who would no longer have to choose whether to fight or learn, and returning veterans, wondering about their future, were recruited and welcomed on campus. Enrollment was a primary concern, as it had been prior to and during the war. University of Wisconsin officials, in particular, had spent the war years attempting to convince the state that many of the young men in the army would have chosen to spend those years at the university under other circumstances. They also hoped to regain students from those who had left to enlist.

Nonetheless, University of Wisconsin officials viewed the future with high hopes. In the Board of Regents report to the state in 1865, the faculty wrote that “indications from letters of inquiry and other information” confirmed their beliefs that enrollment would quickly increase. One soldier who had arrived at Camp Randall in Madison following his enlistment “looked up on the hill and saw some buildings that seemed to me very big. I asked what they were. I was told they were the buildings of the University.” This sight made a deep impression on the young man in his first journey more than “five miles from [his] father’s cabin,” and he did not know at the time “what a university was...but I held my tongue and managed to find out, and I decided to save my pay and go to that University when I should come back from the war.” He did just that, becoming an example of others who would follow a similar path.\(^{378}\)

In light of this potential boon, the faculty and Regents continued to pressure the state for financial assistance. Using the Morrill Act as evidence of federal belief in the

importance of higher education in the country, university leaders implored the state to complement the national mission with a financial commitment of their own. The faculty wrote in 1865, “We are to bear in mind that the University is for all time, and it is not to be questioned, that the state will sooner or later furnish the means of adequate support.” Governor James T. Lewis of Wisconsin, who had so vocally supported the need for education in his speeches, seemed to be a willing ally. Even in his October 1865 Thanksgiving proclamation to the state, he included “the privileges of education” as one of the blessings of Wisconsin’s people. The state legislature finally answered faculty and Regent requests in 1867 with the first financial appropriation to the university. Regular financial assistance followed in subsequent years. This momentous occasion occurred at the University of Michigan and Indiana University as well in 1867. All three universities received acknowledgement from their legislatures in the form of continued financial backing beginning in the immediate postwar period.379

These shifts in support for the universities highlighted the ways in which the states themselves changed after the war. Kenneth M. Stampp argues that “the war experience…[transformed] every aspect of Hoosier society.” Emerson David Fite found that the war did indeed alter the nature of the North’s social and economic infrastructure and he emphasized the positive consequences of such adjustments, especially as they related to higher education. Fite recognizes the new institutions that opened during the Civil War, the swell in private endowments, and the increased enrollments of

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379 October 28, 1865, Thanksgiving Proclamation, James T. Lewis papers, 1838-1904, Box 1, Autobiographical journal, Volume 1 1819-1866, WHS. Board of Regents report for the year ending 1865, UW Archives. Thwaites, 175; Current, 505. Thornbrough, 508; Richard Rees Price. The Financial Support of the University of Michigan: Its Origin and Development (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1923), 32.
professional schools as offsetting the challenges of the war period. “Education did not materially suffer by the war,” Fite concluded. He believed that “war was a stimulus to intellectual life.” Kenneth Roger Sager found that the “new industrialism” of the war and postwar period “acted in concert” with the war itself to affect higher education in the United States and “[shape] America economically, socially, culturally, and politically.” As the wealth of these states grew along with the amplified industrialization of the North and Midwest following the war, dedication to state universities manifested itself through a sharing of these new funds.  

Despite the decisive benchmark of financial support, Indiana University struggled to find solid footing during the late 19th century. The school’s failure to secure the Morrill Act money marked a significant blow. After the Civil War, the Hoosier school showed important progress, as enrollment increased dramatically, the course curriculum expanded, and female students joined their male counterparts on campus for the first time in 1867. However, historian Emma Lou Thornbrough argues that the institution remained “a small struggling liberal arts college, a university only in name,” as of 1880. This was not entirely surprising, however, given that in 1883, University of Kansas Chancellor Joshua Lippincott “admitted that no one knew yet what a state university was except that it did not teach theology.” But, Bloomington and Indiana University swelled with an air of development and improvement heading into the twentieth century. Early in the 1900s,
plans and efforts commenced to form a medical school. In 1915, as World War I raged in Europe, Professor James A. Woodburn, son of Civil War-era professor James Woodburn, offered the first history course on the Civil War era at Indiana University. By the eve of World War II, it seemed that a music school was on the horizon.\(^{381}\)

The Civil War tested the resolve and determination of the entire University of Michigan community as well. To remain competitive, the university and Ann Arbor did not just sustain their institution through the war, but propelled it forward. As the Morrill Act and the rise of state universities in the late nineteenth century changed the nature of higher education, the University of Michigan’s wartime experience put it in a position to lead the transition. Among other accomplishments, the school opened the first university-owned hospital in the country in 1869 and was the first in the nation to admit students directly from high school. Alumni raised money in the early twentieth century to build an Alumni Memorial Hall, dedicated to Michigan students who fought in the Civil and Spanish-American Wars, and right after World War II, the university opened its own radio station, WUOM.\(^{382}\)

After a tenuous start, the University of Wisconsin developed into a model institution over the next several decades. In 1866, the university received a tremendous boost from a reorganization of its administrative selection process and succeeded in landing an effective president, Paul Chadbourne. The university moved forward with the establishment of its agricultural college and implemented its Morrill Act-required


\(^{382}\) Peckham, 111, 163.
engineering programs by the turn of the century, although both were unsteady ventures for many years. Early in the twentieth century, the agricultural school led the nation in breakthrough research. A thriving medical school developed by the World War II era and Wisconsin finally had a state-wide educational system that funneled into a public, state university, which was competitive nationally for students.383

In all three schools, the changing nature of higher education in the post-Civil War era also prompted these shifts. By the 1880s, students viewed their college education as “preparation for a career” and retreated from involvement in public life. The value of classical curricula declined when the Morrill Act and the subsequent founding of additional land-grant colleges emphasized vocational and professional programs. It was true that most state universities that existed prior to the Morrill Act had already demonstrated interest in expanding their offerings to include “practical fields of study,” thus highlighting that the initial impetus for these programs came from the local level. However, it took federal and later state support and funding to turn these ideas into realities. William O. Thompson, the president of The Ohio State University, which was a Morrill Act land-grant institution founded in 1870, recognized the significance of this shift in educational philosophy to the direction of the nation. In 1912, he argued,

I am disposed therefore to believe that the government’s entrance into the cause of education has resulted in making it more humane, more just, less to be feared and more to be loved. I know of no agency that has done more to unite the North and South, the East and the West, in a bond of common patriotism than the activities of the government arising out of the organization of the Department of

383 Current, 504; Curti and Carstensen, 421, 445, 496.
Agriculture, the land grant colleges and the experiment stations.

Thus, at least by the early twentieth century, promoters of education were even identifying its progress with the reconciliation of the country following the Civil War.\textsuperscript{384}

This shift also marked the decline of the denominational liberal arts colleges in the United States. Following the Civil War, the most successful colleges and universities became the ones that received state and federal support, both in the form of financial and promotional aid. As such, thriving institutions depended less on their surrounding communities. Small denominational colleges had only insufficient national denominational financial support and the contributions of the local community in which they were located. Consequently, they often struggled to compete in this environment. When curricula at land-grant and state universities differentiated themselves more clearly from denominational liberal arts colleges, the states themselves offered support to the institutions which they believed more directly addressed the needs of their citizens for vocational and professional programs. Finally it became possible for state legislatures to justify financial support for their state institution instead of the liberal arts schools in the state because they could tell the difference between them. This played a part in the rise of state universities in the Midwest and contributed to the growing perception after the Civil War that “the Midwest [was] the preeminent region of the nation.” As their region “best exemplified the United States” following its national conflict, so too did Midwestern state

universities increase their reputation for academic excellence and democratic educations.  

The universities may have stepped up their momentum following the war, but the students had a harder time discerning the conflict’s impact on their futures. Students at all three universities could find conflicting rhetoric after the war regarding their contributions to the Union victory. On the one hand, their efforts of the war period to prepare themselves for national leadership were confirmed in the 1866 Baccalaureate address of the Reverend Thomas M. Eddy at Indiana University. He spoke regarding “What America expects, at this time, of her Educated Young Men.” “Affairs of our Government” took center stage in his discussion, calling it “a heavy duty… upon the up rising generation” to determine what to do about the freed people of the country. The local *Bloomington Republican* summarized his message succinctly: “In short, every interest of the country, political and religious, call loudly for the best talent of our land, to be exerted in directing its course in the future.” That talent, Eddy declared, came directly from the institutions of higher education. Then James T. Mellette, a member of the Athenian Society, stood to give the Master’s Oration. He described the events of the Civil War and emphasized how “every member of the community [did] his duty,” thus clearly arguing that those young men who chose schooling over fighting still contributed to the war effort.  

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386 *Bloomington Republican*, June 30, 1866.
Those Indiana students who began their course of study in 1864 may well have been present at the 1868 commencement, when Indiana governor Conrad Baker addressed the graduating seniors regarding “A TRUE MANHOOD.” He told the young scholars that “the fact that [they were] here as students, attests that [they] appreciate the importance of an educated manhood,” which he defined as “[seeking] to develop[sic], strengthen, and discipline all the faculties and powers of his physical, intellectual and moral nature to the highest attainable point.” After contrasting manhood with “womanly nature,” Baker told the students to “let [their manhood] be a sturdy Republican or American manhood. Let it be the natural outgrowth of popular institutions.” In the postwar era, therefore, Indiana state officials recognized the significance of higher education and directly linked notions of gender to intellectual achievements. From Baker’s words, Indiana students could deduce that their educations during the war did in fact characterize them as patriots and men, vital to the future of the American republic.387

However, other public discourse highlighted only the bravery and merit of the soldiers, and surely caused those who chose not to serve to doubt that their accomplishments would be recognized. University of Michigan students, for example, might have struggled a little more to find reassurance for their wartime decision to remain in school. Although they continued to play a significant role on the home front, signaled by their prime position in Ann Arbor’s procession on the day set aside for Lincoln’s funeral, they also would have read the words of former university president, Henry Tappan, who gave a eulogy for Lincoln in Berlin, Germany. Tappan, who called the

387 Conrad Baker, “Address of Conrad Baker,” July 6, 1868, IHS.
United States a “nation of orphans” following the loss of Lincoln, pronounced “the true soldiers of a free people” as “the people themselves, who go from the plough to the battle field, and return from the battle field to the plough.” The once highly-esteemed leader, who had implored Michigan students in 1861 to wait until after graduation to enlist, spoke of soldiers, not scholars, and may very well have ruffled the feathers of those students in Ann Arbor who believed themselves to be significant contributors to the strength of the nation.\(^{388}\)

Politician and Union veteran Lucius Fairchild concurred with Tappan in a July 4, 1866, speech in Madison, Wisconsin. In speaking of the victorious soldiers, Fairchild said, “The cause of freedom and of free institutions depended on your arms….you did not fail…Your success has saved your country.” While students surely would not have argued with the fact that soldiers fought successfully for their country, it may have been a cause for concern for those who feared being perceived as weak, cowardly, or unpatriotic. As George Fredrickson shows, the difference in experience between soldiers and non-soldiers did affect self-image in the postwar period. William James, brother of renowned 19\(^{\text{th}}\) century author Henry James, felt “aggravated” by his belief that he was “an inactive member of an active generation” and “had trouble reconciling his life when compared with others who did fight.” Celebratory occasions during Reconstruction that emphasized the valor of soldiers succinctly placed the contributions of those on the home front in a secondary position.\(^{389}\)


\(^{389}\) July 4, 1866 Speech, Box 55, Fairchild papers. Fredrickson, 160.
Despite these statements of outsiders that may have fostered self-consciousness on the part of students or recent graduates, these men continued to look positively toward the future. In November 1865, Joseph Quarles, then a Michigan senior, wrote to his mother reflectively, “I can look back upon my connection with the University without feeling that I’ve squandered my time.” He had not, in fact, as Quarles went on to serve as a United States senator from Wisconsin from 1899-1905 and then a United States district judge until 1911. In 1903, Quarles returned to his alma mater and gave the commencement address. “After a long and toilsome journey through the highways of life,” Quarles used his accumulated wisdom to advise the graduates to remain modest and make careful decisions. He emphasized the changing nature of the world into which they were striding eagerly. “The twentieth century will be instinct with energy,” Quarles declared, “but intellect, not muscle, will be the dominating force…The scholar is about to displace the adventurer…thought will be the touchstone of success.”

Quarles remained convinced of the importance of education as he stressed to the new graduates, “brains never before commanded so high a premium, and the educated man never had so many avenues open to him outside the learned professions.” Quarles also believed that intellectual advancement would propel men in the early twentieth century into positions to utilize their “patriotic motives” “in the generous rivalry among the nations to make the twentieth century illustrious…” As one who served in the Union

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army briefly but chose to return to school rather than re-enlist, Quarles could relate to those students who remained in school during the war and spoke as one of them to students of a later generation.\footnote{Quarles, “The Old and the New,” 9.}

The students’ fulfillment of their quest to achieve national prominence following the Civil War merits acknowledgment. Conclusively, the majority of graduates of these three universities went on to careers other than politics. Many became teachers, professors, school principals, superintendants, ministers, lawyers, doctors, farmers, merchants, insurance agents, bankers, and engineers. A number served as local judges or clerks, political convention representatives, or one-term legislators. Henry Meredith, one of the embattled Athenians at Indiana University, served in the Indiana House of Representatives in 1881. Walter Scott Perry, an Alpha Nu member at Michigan and 1861 graduate, became the superintendant of Ann Arbor schools for twenty-seven years. Levi Barbour, also an Alpha Nu member at Michigan, served as a member of the state’s constitutional convention in 1907-1908. William John English, Michigan class of 1867, was president of the Chicago Bar Association. Perhaps these men had neither the talent nor the aspiration to continue into national politics, but these experiences signaled leadership qualities recognized by their communities and professional organizations.\footnote{UM register, 1911, 50, 53, 56.}

However, there were also those university graduates whose experiences at the University of Michigan, the University of Wisconsin, and Indiana University propelled them into positions of national leadership. In many cases, those who rose in the political ranks also had army service on their resumes. John C. Spooner was one of the students...
who left Madison in May 1864 with the Hundred Days company that emptied the senior
class. Following his term in the Union army that summer, he chose to re-enlist for three
more years. Mustered out after the war in late 1865, he began to work as a lawyer in
Madison while completing a Master’s degree at the University of Madison. Wisconsin
residents elected him to the state assembly, where he served several terms before being
appointed to the United States Senate. Spooner earned his name in national
politics by
submitting the Spooner Act of 1902, which authorized President Theodore Roosevelt to
make the financial arrangements necessary in Panama for a canal.393

Arthur Calvin Mellette, the Indiana graduate who enlisted as his brother’s
substitute at the end of the war, was elected to the Indiana state legislature from 1872-
1874 before moving to the Dakota territory. He eventually served as the first governor of
South Dakota. Indiana alum John D. Alexander was both a prosecuting attorney and state
legislator following his time in the service. Ohio native and 1862 Michigan graduate
Ridgley Ceylon Powers was brevetted Lieutenant Colonel of the United States army in
1865 and went on to become a governor of Mississippi in the 1870s. During his time at
the university, he was a class officer and the president of Literary Adelphi. Shubael Fish
White, an Alpha Nu member and 1864 Michigan graduate, served in the army until 1866
and then went on to become a judge and senator. Wisconsin alumni James L. High
followed up his military service by becoming an assistant district attorney in Utah.394

393 Thwaites, 638. Dorothy Ganfield Fowler, John Coit Spooner: Defender of Presidents (New
York: University Publishers, 1961), 277-278; Dwight Carroll Miner, The Fight for the Panama Route: The
Notable state and national leaders did rise from the ranks of these student bodies without military experience. Former Alpha Nu president, Alpha Delta Phi brother, and class officer Edwin Fuller Uhl graduated from Michigan in 1862. His political career included terms as the Assistant Secretary of State and the Ambassador to Germany. Orville William Coolidge, an 1863 Michigan graduate and officer of both his class and Alpha Nu, sat as a judge of the Second Michigan Circuit Court from 1894-1912. University of Wisconsin alumni Levi Vilas went on to become a district attorney, mayor, and district court judge. Rufus Ramsey, Indiana University class of 1864, submitted the following to the university about his career:

Occupation and position, attorney at law, for seven years. Banker since 1871. Member of the Educational Board for six years. (1880). County Clerk eight years and Presiding Officer of the borough of Carlyle. Mr. Ramsay has taken great interest in local politics, participating in all Congressional, State and County conventions; was the centennial orator in 1876.

In keeping with the expectations of what his university education should have afforded him, Ramsey highlighted his elected and appointed positions and emphasized his continued dedication to political activism.395

Several graduates became leaders of their professional organizations, including religious groups, or held high positions in other capacities. Charles H. Vilas, Wisconsin class of 1868, gained prominence as the Dean of the Faculty and Senior Professor of Ophthalmology and Otology at Chicago’s Hahnemann Medical College. Isaac Stephen

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395 Wylie, Indiana University, 236. UM register, 1911, 52, 53. David B. Frankenburger, comp., General Catalogue of the Officers and Graduates of the University of Wisconsin, 1849-1897 (Madison: Democrat Printing Company, 1897), 44.
Levitt, class of 1868 at Wisconsin, went on to become the president of New Orleans University, a Freedman’s Aid Society school for African American youth that opened in 1874. Noah Monroe Givan, an 1862 graduate of Indiana University, became the Grand Master of Masons in Missouri in 1878. Samuel Bell Wakefield, Indiana class of 1868, became the president of the San Francisco Stock Exchange Board. A number of alumni of all three universities served their alma maters as regents or trustees in subsequent years.⁴⁹⁶

That graduates from these three universities went on to fulfill aspirations and shape careers of notable acclaim is hardly arguable. The achievements that fill the graduate registers from alumni of the Civil War era at these schools demonstrates the heights to which higher education thrust young men in the 19th century. The evidence would also confirm students’ fears that missing out on military service might hinder their political ambitions, although a number of men with both military and educational experience succeeded in politics. What is clear is that despite the struggles of these institutions during this tumultuous time, they managed to train and teach men who became leaders and active community contributors.

The efforts of the Civil War generation were not forgotten on these Midwestern university campuses. In May 1961, Indiana University official Claude Rich forwarded a memorandum to president Herman B. Wells regarding an upcoming pilgrimage to the grave of John D. Alexander. Alexander, who fought at Vicksburg, Missionary Ridge, and Atlanta, became the chosen symbol for Indiana’s commemoration of their alumni who

⁴⁹⁶ Wylie, *Indiana University*, 231, 236, 244. Frankenburger, 44-45.
served in the Civil War. Part of Alexander’s appeal came from his status as the “Oldest Living Alumnus” of Indiana University until his death in 1931. In his recollections to Indiana Alumnus magazine in 1921, Alexander had these final thoughts regarding his experiences at the school a full century before Indiana’s centennial celebration of the Civil War: “The class of 1861 had 22 members. Time, disease and the Civil War have only left five remaining. We all loved the University and were fond of each other and those who remain are as loyal as ever to our Alma Mater and cherish the memory of those of our class who have crossed ‘The Great Divide.’”

While Alexander intended “The Great Divide” to mean that line from life to death, it also could have referenced the Civil War, which so clearly influenced the futures of the young men in school during those pivotal years. Their educational journeys affected the nature of their subsequent successes. The Civil War as well changed the tide for higher education in the Midwest and specifically at the University of Michigan, the University of Wisconsin, and Indiana University. As this dissertation has shown, students, faculty, and community residents alike had to make significant adjustments to the course of these institutions during the Civil War. Many students chose glory on the battlefield over formal training in classrooms, but took the youthful spirit of their university affiliations with them into their fight for the Union cause. Other students stayed on campus, increasingly convinced that obtaining a diploma would catapult them into high positions within the social and political scaffolding of the changing nation.

Institutional historians insufficiently represented the efforts of the men involved in keeping university doors open during the Civil War. Not only did the University of Michigan, the University of Wisconsin, and Indiana University make noteworthy efforts to expand and improve themselves throughout the Civil War era, but faculty and students strengthened the schools’ relationship with their surrounding communities. University students reacted to the war in ways that suggested that they considered their input to the home front experience meaningful and felt connected to events on the national stage. More than Thomas D. Clark’s description of the Indiana students’ wartime days as just a “daily routine of reciting, misbehaving, cutting classes, and being censured,” students at all three schools were aware of the conflict’s progression and emotionally and intellectually involved in the country’s turmoil. Bloomington offered support and encouragement to Indiana University both economically and emotionally even as it struggled to maintain its balance among those groups promoting political discord on its streets. This type of unified response characterized the experience in Ann Arbor as well. In Wisconsin, the university received support to a lesser degree, but the school’s relentless progress during the war eventually netted rewards from the state.\(^398\)

The war brought unparalleled challenges to these three universities, including decreased enrollment, concern about political expression on campus, changing curriculum demands in a transformative age, and financial difficulty. But the aspiring institutions labored through war years filled with the antics of students eager to prove their loyalty to the country and earn their degrees. These universities emerged from the

Civil War poised to take their places among the leading institutions of the Midwest and the country.

Higher education was already understood by the mid-19th century to advance young men into an elite segment of the population. Civil War military service served to compete with the esteem earned through education, but students at these three Midwestern universities persevered and maximized their time at school to both fulfill their educational requirements and enhance their home front experience by connecting with and absorbing the most pivotal and dramatic questions of the day. Through literary society debates, interactions with friends and faculty, drilling with campus companies, and a host of other methods, these young men optimized their circumstances, contributed as they could to their home fronts, and strove to make themselves valuable to the country following the war. Along the way they obtained the variety of life experiences and contacts that allowed them to find their way in the postwar United States, articulate their own notions of patriotism and direction for the country, and as some had hoped, lead.
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