

ESSENTIAL CIVIL WAR CURRICULUM

Women and Soldiers' Aid Societies

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Resources

If you can read only one book

Author	<i>Title</i> . City: Publisher, Year.
Frank, Lisa Tendrich, ed.	<i>Women in the American Civil War</i> , 2 vols. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC CLIO, 2008.

Books and Articles

Author	<i>Title</i> . City: Publisher, Year. "Title," in <i>Journal</i> ##, no. # (Date): #.
Attie, Jeanie	<i>Patriotic Toil: Northern Women and the American Civil War</i> . Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998.
Boccardi, Megan	"Southern Women," in Lisa Tendrich Frank, ed., <i>Women in the American Civil War</i> , 2 vols. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC CLIO, 2008, 1:67-73.
Cox, Karen L.	"Aid Societies," in Lisa Tendrich Frank, ed., <i>Women in the American Civil War</i> , 2 vols. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC CLIO, 2008, 1:96-97.
_____.	"Ladies' Memorial Associations," in Lisa Tendrich Frank, ed., <i>Women in the American Civil War</i> , 2 vols. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC CLIO, 2008, 2:367-8.
Faust, Drew Gilpin	<i>Mothers of Invention: Women of the slaveholding South in the American Civil War</i> . Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996.

Forbes, Ella	<i>African American Women During the Civil War</i> . New York: Garland Publishing, 1998.
Foroughi, Andrea R.	“Moral,” in Lisa Tendrich Frank, ed., <i>Women in the American Civil War</i> , 2 vols. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC CLIO, 2008, 2:397-400.
Gallman, J. Matthew	“Voluntarism in Wartime: Philadelphia's Great Central Fair,” in Maris A. Vinovskis, <i>Toward a Social History of the American Civil War: Exploratory Essays</i> . New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990, 93-116.
Giesberg, Judith	<i>Army at Home: Women and the Civil War on the Northern Home Front</i> . Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008.
Kehoe, Karen A.	“Wounded, Visits to,” in Lisa Tendrich Frank, ed., <i>Women in the American Civil War</i> , 2 vols. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC CLIO, 2008, 2:597-9.
Neely, Mark	<i>The Civil War and the Limits of Destruction</i> . Boston: Harvard University Press, 2007.
Peterson, Lindsey R.	“‘Iowa Excelled Them All’: Iowa Local Ladies' Aid Societies on the Civil War Frontier, 1861-1865,” <i>The Middle West Review: An Interdisciplinary Journal about the American Midwest</i> 3(1) Fall 2016: 49-70.
Richard, Patricia	“Union Homefront,” in Lisa Tendrich Frank, ed., <i>Women in the American Civil War</i> , 2 vols. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC CLIO, 2008, 1:74-79.
Schoeberlein, Robert W.	“A Fair to Remember: Maryland Women in Aid of the Union,” <i>Maryland Historical Society</i> 90, no.4 (Winter 1995): 467-88.
Scott, Anne Firor	<i>Natural Allies: Women's Associations in American History</i> . Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992.
Smith, Lisa M.	“Northern Women,” in Lisa Tendrich Frank, ed., <i>Women in the American Civil War</i> , 2 vols. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC CLIO, 2008, 1:41-47.

Streater, Kristen	“Civilian Life,” in Lisa Tendrich Frank, ed., <i>Women in the American Civil War</i> , 2 vols. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC CLIO, 2008, 2:170-4.
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Organizations

Web Resources

URL	Name and description
https://case.edu/ech/articles/s/soldiers-aid-society-of-northern-ohio/	“Soldier's Aid Society of Northern Ohio” is an entry describing the history of this soldiers’ aid society published by Encyclopedia of Cleveland History, at Case Western Reserve University.
https://clevelandhistorical.org/items/show/264#.WTAzZMa-LOQ	“Soldier's Aid Society” describes the history of the Soldier’s aid Society of Northern Ohio published by Cleveland Historical an application developed by the Center for Public History +Digital Humanities at Cleveland State University.
http://civilwar.lib.niu.edu/islandora/object/niu-civil%3A15167	“First Annual Report of the Ladies' Springfield Soldiers Aid Society” reproduces their 1862 annual report published by Illinois During the Civil War, at Northern Illinois University.
https://hsp.org/collections/catalogs-research-tools/subject-guides/women-during-the-civil-war	Kristin Leahy, “Women During the Civil War, 1860-1864,” in Historical Society of Pennsylvania, December 2012.
http://users.stlcc.edu/mfuller/luas/	“Ladies Union Aid Society” provides a brief history of the Ladies Union Aid Society of St. Louis Missouri Published by St. Louis Community College.
http://www.scencyclopedia.org/sce/entries/female-benevolent-societies/	Catherine Fitzgerald, “Female Benevolent Societies” is an entry in the South Carolina Encyclopedia published by South Carolina Humanities and a variety of other organizations.

https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/turningpoints/tp-024/?action=more_essay	“The Civil War Homefront” is an entry published by the Wisconsin Historical Society.
https://connecticuthistory.org/crisis-management-during-the-american-civil-war-the-hartford-soldiers-aid-society/	Nick Streifel, "Crisis Management during the American Civil War: The Hartford Soldiers' Aid Society" published by Connecticut History.Org.
http://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/civil-war-sanitary-fairs/	Kerry L. Bryan, “Civil War Sanitary Fairs” is an entry in the Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia published by the Mid-Atlantic Regional Center for the Humanities at Rutgers University-Camden.

Other Sources

Scholars

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Topic Précis

In both the North and South women created support groups generally called Soldiers’ Aid Societies or Ladies’ Aid Societies. Over three months before the first shots rang out at Fort Sumter, southern women came together through their existing organizations to roll bandages, and a month after the fighting began, they were making cartridges and preparing sandbags for military use. Two days after the fighting began, northern women joined the war efforts as well. Their organized efforts began when the women of Bridgeport, Connecticut founded the first official soldiers’ aid society on April 15, 1861. In the North in the early years of the war, black women joined white women’s societies, but once black men were allowed to enlist, black women began to form societies of their own to focus specifically on the needs of black men. In the North women set up as many as 20,000 aid organizations. In the South, where record keeping was poor, nearly every town and village had a society so there were likely as many such organization as in the North. The function of the societies was similar in both regions. First and foremost was to gather supplies and get them to the soldiers—food, tents, clothing, blankets, bandages and in the South cartridges. These were made or purchased using funds from donations. The societies also supported soldiers’ families on the home front, donating food and necessities to poorer families. Donations were raised by social events such as concerts, tableaux, dinners, and dances. While all these activities fitted the traditional domestic sphere in which women of

the time were expected to operate, the societies expanded women's roles from supplying and supporting soldiers to helping to heal them. In particular, women began to take on a role in nursing, until that time an exclusively male preserve. In the North this change led eventually to the creation of the US Sanitary Commission and the Central Association for Relief which actively recruited and trained women to become nurses. This development was not as extensive in the South which did not create such organizations, but which did see women entering into nursing as well. In addition, in the North many aid societies also made common cause with abolitionist organizations pushing for the abolition of slavery as a war aim. After the war the North and South continued on divergent courses. In the North, many of the societies transformed into mutual relief agencies that worked to help veterans and their families apply for pensions and readjust to civilian life. They helped provide for disabled soldiers and their families in many cases, especially when war-related disabilities prevented the soldiers from returning to their jobs. Many of the women who had served in the aid societies went on to join suffrage societies and using their legacy of sacrifice and leadership to continue to leave the domestic sphere and to engage in politics. In the South women largely returned to the traditional domestic sphere and transformed their aid societies into memorial associations, creating Confederate cemeteries, erecting monuments and salving the emotional wounds of the men who had suffered defeat. Historians disagree on the extent to which women's efforts during the Civil War changed their lives in the long run. After the war, most willingly returned to their domestic sphere, if they had actually left it at all, but on both sides, women had honed organization and political skills. They had displayed patriotism and loyalty and expected to be recognized for it. Whether they stepped out of the domestic sphere or not, returned to it or not it is clear that women had done things they had never done before and that they were not going to go backwards from that.
