

## Diversity and Identity during the Civil War in Wisconsin

### Essential Question : In what ways did a person's Identity impact their experience during the Civil War?

**Directions:** View and read each document carefully, including the background information before each primary source. Using evidence from the document, answer each question that follows each source.

#### **Document 1: Nurses in the Civil War**

*During the Civil War, many women from Wisconsin participated in many different ways. Some women went to the frontlines as nurses. Other women stayed in Wisconsin and advocated for more hospitals and resources for injured and returning soldiers. Finally, at least two women from Wisconsin fought in the Civil, passing as male soldiers. Pictured below is Cordelia Harvery, and Wisconsin Civil War Nurse and health advocate for returning soldiers. Also below, there is an excerpt from a Wisconsin Civil War Nurse's journal, describing the conditions of the war's frontlines*



“I was awakened on the sabbath morning by the roar of cannon and musketry, and in a few moments the operations of my toilet were accelerated double-quick by the groans of the wounded. The log-cabin was speedily filled with bleeding, suffering humanity, and Mrs. Turner and myself soon realized, though not for the first time, that women have a more serious mission than haranguing public assemblies, and with all their wrongs a few rights perhaps. It was: "Oh! Mrs. T., Oh! Miss H. How glad we are you are here" and as one and another blood stained countenance brightened at our approach, we thanked heaven we were here. So through the dreadful days we soothed and encouraged, hoped and prayed, for the enemy's shells burst within twenty yards of our boat. I was as calm as at this moment, and never doubted we should whip them at last. I fear I horrify you, but I do not think I have grown hard hearted, though I can now write of scenes from which I should once have run with closed

eyes,”

Source: Wisconsin Historical Society, Image I.D: 36009 and *Wisconsin Women in the War Between the States* (112).

1: Based on this source, what kind of role or roles did women play in the Civil War?

2: Using evidence from the Nurse's diary entry, describe her experience on the frontlines of the Civil War

**Document 2: Civil War Recruitment Poster in German**

*Due to immigration patterns to Wisconsin in the 1800s, many neighborhoods in cities like Milwaukee were dominated by specific ethnicities. Many times, entire neighborhoods of German or Irish immigrants would sign up to fight in the Civil War together. Pictured below is a Union army recruitment poster for the Wisconsin 5th Regiment printed in the German language to be displayed in predominantly German neighborhoods*



Recruitment Poster in G

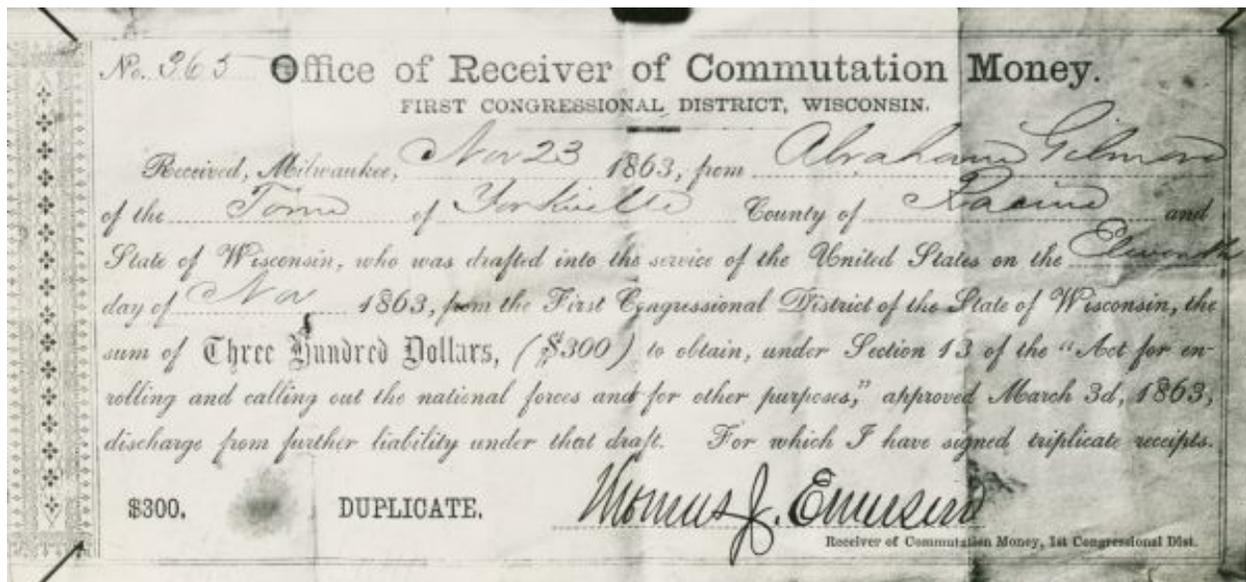
Source: Wisconsin Historical Society, Image I.D 49792

1: What does this source tell you about who the Union army was trying to recruit?

2: What might be possible motivations for newly arrived immigrants in Wisconsin to enlist in the Union army?

### Document 3: Offer of Receiver of Commutation Money

During the Civil War, the Union held drafts in order to increase the size of the Union army. Every man of appropriate age was eligible to be drafted and serve in the military. However, a man could pay a sum of money to the Union army in order to avoid being drafted. Pictured below is a receipt made out to Abraham Gilman of Milwaukee for the money he paid to avoid serving his draft duty.



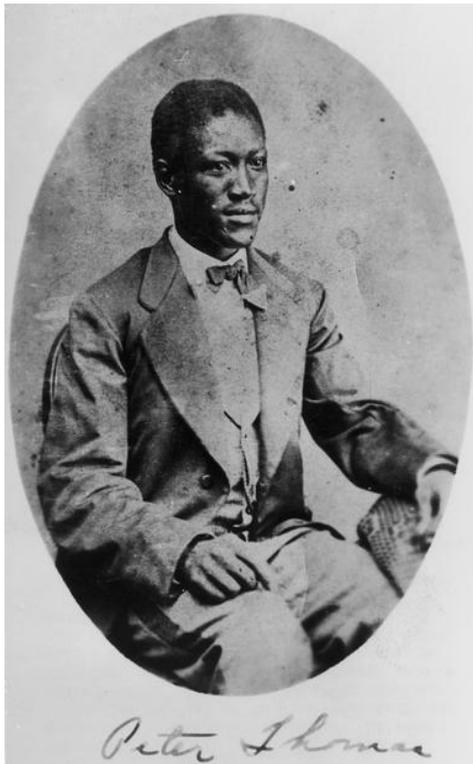
Source: Wisconsin Historical Society, Image I.D 71927

1: According to the document above, how much money did Abraham Gillam pay to avoid his draft duty?

2: What kind of person did the Union Army's policy of paying to avoid draft duty benefit, and what kind of person did this policy disadvantage? What possible consequences might come out of a policy like this?

**Document 4: Former enslaved person, turned Union Soldier Peter Thomas**

*Below is a modified excerpt from a Racine newspaper article about Peter Thomas, a former enslaved person who was freed during the Civil War. He then moved to Wisconsin and enlisted in the Union army. Also included below is a picture of Peter Thomas.*



“Mr. Thomas was born in Slavery on April 8th, 1847, at Tiptonville, Tennessee.....[Mr. Thomas Speaking] “After the capture of all of the forts the Yankees came on our plantation and told us we were all free as they were and we could go where we pleased....At this time they were not enlisting colored men in the army so I went with Captain Charles B. Nelson, Company G. 15th Wisconsin Infantry as his servant. We were in the battles of Chickamauga, Mission Ridge, Dalton, Reseca, and Dallas. Nelson was wounded at the last named place and I took him home to Beloit and went to work on his farm. Several months later a soldier came home on furlough and said to me, ‘Why don’t you enlist?’ I told him I had tried but that they would not accept me. He told me they were enlisting colored men. ‘We can lick those fellows down there’ said he, ‘but if you colored men help, we can do it much sooner. If they should happen to lick us then you would not be free, they would come up here and get you and put you back in slavery... I enlisted the next day and was sent to Camp Randall in Madison”

Source: Wisconsin Historical Society, Image I.D 3399 and *The Racine Journal* (2/22/1922)

1: According to the text, what appeared to be Peter Thomas's motivation for enlisting in the Union Army?

2: According to the text, how did the white soldier feel about African American's enlisting in the Union Army?

**Document 5: Swearing-In Native American Civil War Recruits**

*Pictured below: Thomas Bigford (in cap, on left) and another official swearing-in two Native American Civil War recruits. Thomas Bigford (1815-1890) of Taycheedah, Wisconsin, was a farmer who served as a local recruiting officer during the war. According to Bigford, the recruit on right may be Adam Scherf of Stockbridge, who was said to have served in the same regiment with Thomas Bigford's son Royal.*



Source: Wisconsin Historical Society, Image I.D 1909

1: Which group of people's involvement in the Civil War does this document support?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

2: Based on this document and the last, what claim can you make about the racial diversity within the Union Army?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Synthesis**

**Directions:** Using cited and direct evidence from the documents above, answer the given prompt in a complete paragraph or more.

***In what ways did a person's identity impact their experience during the Civil War?***