

7

Wisconsin and the Civil War

In this chapter, students focus on the upheaval brought on by the events associated with the Civil War. Brought home are questions about slavery and abolition, as well as the brutal facts of the war itself and its effects on life in Wisconsin.

Activity 7.1 *Reading a Fugitive Slave Document*

Overview

This activity gives students a chance to work with an unusual primary-source document—a newspaper notice offering a reward for the recapture of a runaway slave.

Management

Materials

- Student Activity 7.1 (Teacher Page 1; Student Pages 1–2)

Grouping

- Whole class, small group, or either supervised or unsupervised individuals

Activity 7.2 *Comparing Recruiting Posters*

Background

At the very beginning of the Civil War, the Union Army found it relatively easy to get recruits to volunteer and enlist. The United States government simply asked states to recruit volunteers, and governors put out calls for volunteers and got plenty of soldiers. As the war dragged on, however, support for the struggle lessened, especially because so many families lost their men to death, injury, or disease. Recruitment became even more difficult as people back home learned that soldiers often were short of food, clothing, and ammunition, and that medical treatment and even pay were in short supply. In order to provide the army with more troops, the federal government instituted a draft that would force able-bodied, eligible men into service. Wisconsin governors tried to stave off the draft by asking for more time to recruit more volunteers. The government also wanted to integrate these new volunteers into existing military units rather than create entirely new units. Military recruiting posters became a familiar sight—and a much-needed inspiration to those who might volunteer.

Overview

In this activity students will use the inference skills highlighted in this chapter to compare two primary-source documents—a recruiting poster previously seen on page 130 of *Wisconsin: Our State, Our Story*—and another poster specifically aimed at German-born and German-speaking volunteers.

Management

Materials

- Student Activity 7.2 (Teacher Pages 1–2; Student Pages 1–4)

Grouping

- Whole class
- Small group
- Pairs
- Individual, supervised or independent