

UNWANTED

in a

WHITE MAN'S WAR

The Civil War Service of the Green Bay Tribes

By Russell Horton

Company F was a big part Indian, and good skirmishers.” So wrote Elisha Stockwell Jr. about a unique component of the 14th Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry Regiment in his memoirs some sixty years after the Civil War. Composed largely of members of the Oneida nation, the company saw action throughout the South, including the siege of Atlanta under General William T. Sherman. The fact that many of the men were Native Americans so impressed Stockwell, a private in Company I of the same regiment, that he prefaced every mention of Company F in his memoirs with a statement about the number of Indians in the group. Stockwell’s memoirs, written in 1927 and published in 1958, are one of the few known primary sources to mention specifically the role of Wisconsin’s Indians in the Civil War.

Company F’s story, however, is but one part of the larger story of the hundreds of Wisconsin Indians who participated in the Civil War. An estimated five to six hundred Native Americans from the Badger State, out of a total Native population of nine thousand, joined the Union army during the war. While Native men in Wisconsin had taken part in other armed conflicts during the antebellum era, both as allies and enemies of the government, the struggle between Union and Confederate armies represented a unique situation because the Civil War was the first major armed conflict in the United States after the federal government instituted its “Indian pol-

icy.” This official policy had consisted largely of taking land from Native peoples, pushing them further west, and attempting to “civilize” them through formal education and the imposition of European agricultural practices.¹

Each of the seven Native American nations residing in Wisconsin during the Civil War era had experienced massive land loss due to these government policies. Due to their proximity to Green Bay and other white settlements, the Menominee, Oneida, and Stockbridge-Munsee nations in particular had been pressured by government officials to abandon many of their traditional ways, particularly their customs of warfare. Yet in spite of this treatment by the government, these three tribes provided a total of almost three hundred volunteers—over eight and a half percent of their combined populations. The service these men offered prompts the question: why would these people risk their lives on behalf of the very government responsible for their increasing loss of land, traditions, and overall way of life?²

There is no all-encompassing answer to this question. Rather, a variety of circumstances and occurrences led the Oneida, Stockbridge-Munsee, and Menominee nations, often called “the Green Bay tribes,” to join the Union effort. To begin with, they hoped to keep the Wisconsin land that they currently occupied. The Oneida and Stockbridge-Munsee had only started to arrive in Wisconsin from eastern North Amer-

Oshkosh Wis. May 8/61
His Excellency A.W. Kaudall
Com: in Chief &c.

Two hundred
Menominee war-
riors under my
command tender
their services to your
excellency during
the present troubles.

They are all well
armed with rifles
some out forty rods
& anxious to serve
under the stars &
stripes. An imme-
diate answer will
oblige

Yours &c.
Robt. Grignon

Although William Dole, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, acknowledged that the Menominee's service "attest[ed] to the lifelong loyalty of the tribe," Menominee soldiers like the unidentified men in the two photos here received minimal recognition, especially when compared with the celebration of soldiers from other ethnic groups.



Neville Public Museum of Brown County



Neville Public Museum of Brown County

WHS Series 49, Box 8

Robert Grignon's offer of "Two hundred Menominee warriors" combined a show of loyalty for the Union with an assertion of the traditional role of Native men as warriors and protectors. No answer from Governor Randall appears in any military documentation.

ica in the 1820s, after controlling several million acres of territory in the New York state area following the American Revolution. The Menominee, for their part, had ceded huge tracts out of their millions of acres in the northeastern quarter of the present-day state of Wisconsin. By 1860 all three peoples found themselves on reservations—the Menominee had 230,400 acres, the Oneida 61,000, and the Stockbridge-Munsee 46,000. As tides of white settlers arrived in Wisconsin, even these comparatively tiny parcels of land were at risk of being wrested away from the tribes, and the native people themselves removed to lands west of the Mississippi. Tribal leaders hoped that a show of loyalty as the state prepared for war would influence the United States government to let them remain in Wisconsin.³

Next, enlistment and substitution bonuses offered a strong incentive to serve in the military. Although government agents encouraged all tribal members to farm, the Menominee and Stockbridge-Munsee lived on some of the worst farmland in the state, a fact acknowledged by their agent. Many families left the reservations to seek seasonal work in nearby white communities. Those remaining on the reservation grew increasingly dependent on government annuities. Faced with such bleak economic situations, Native men could see joining the army as a means to help their families.

Although reservation life had produced a constant state of economic hardship, the determination to remain in that location had led to a

growing number of interactions between Native and white families. This caused members of the Green Bay tribes to feel a strong connection to the United States and its citizens, and this community connection was yet another circumstance that supported the men of the various tribes to want to support the Union cause.⁴

Finally, the participation of Native men provided a way to continue traditions of warfare and honor that all three tribes valued. As European nations had arrived on the continent, the Oneida, Stockbridge-Munsee, and Menominee had each formed strong alliances with the newcomers and supported them in their conflicts. Reservation life, however, emphasized peaceful agriculture and education, thereby presenting little opportunity to fulfill traditions involving warfare.

These traditions varied with the tribes themselves, of course, but some elements apply to all three. Warriors were always men, although Oneida and Mohican communities were matrilineal in structure, so women made decisions that affected war's timing and practices. For the Menominee, warfare was not common until the mid-seventeenth century, but for the Mohicans, constant conflict with the Iroquois had been a way of life before European contact. Europeans also brought a new way of fighting, large-scale battles using close-ranked groups of soldiers. Traditional native warfare, by contrast, often consisted of a series of quick raids, with man-to-man fight-

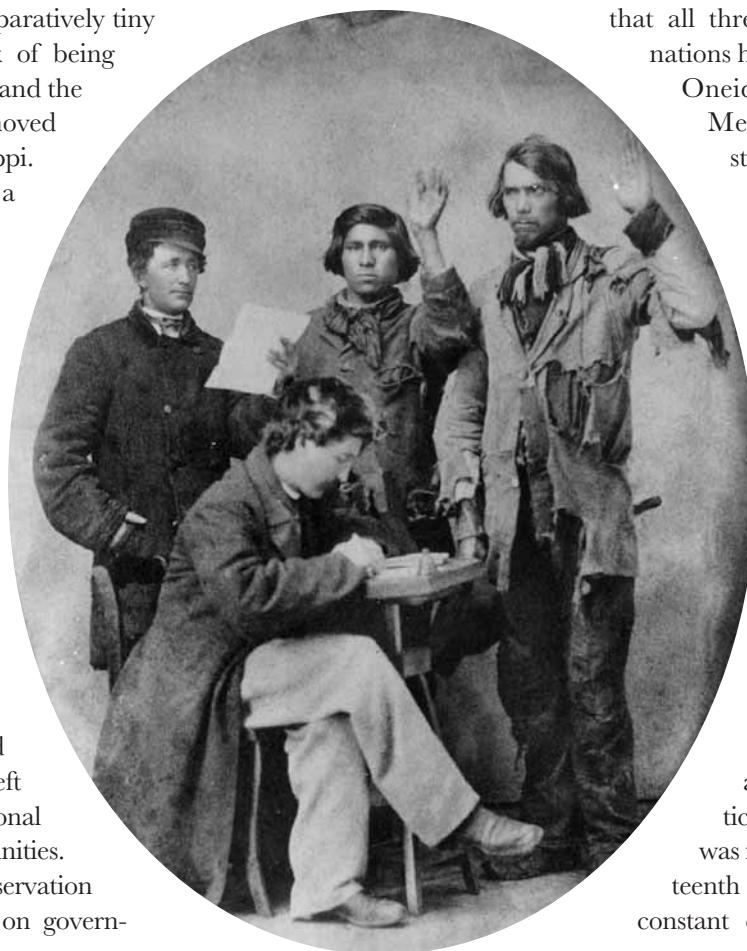


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Thomas Bigford, at left in cap, and another government official, seated, swear in two Union recruits. The man on the right may be Adam Scherf of Stockbridge. The state of the Native men's clothing underscores one of the primary reasons tribal men volunteered—the bleak economic crisis on the state's reservations.

with which I desire only to say, as before that I believe his propositions in good faith of the propriety of using Indians in the present contest with our brethren, so long as there are so many volunteers from civilization, there may be some doubt. My

WHS Series 49, Box 8

In a letter dated May 16, 1861, Augustus Gaylord expresses his concerns about using Native men as soldiers.

ing. In some traditions, the warrior's primary role was protector; in others, warriors experienced visions and acquired special knowledge to enable them to face death, in either taking a life or in relinquishing their own. The spiritual growth and elevated tribal status associated with warfare were part of the warrior traditions in many tribes. None of these ends sanitize the acts of violence, which included bloodshed, terror, and sometimes torture and cruelty. Yet in both practice and consequence these traditions shared much with analogous European customs, being seen as necessary, and as a coming-of-age experience for youth. Whether this final reason for serving in the Union army was the most important or not, it was arguably the most personal, and as such, perhaps the strongest. When combined, all of the traditional and practical elements of participation indicate that the Civil War presented the Menominee, Oneida, and Stockbridge-Munsee with important opportunities to improve their lives.⁵

Swept up in a war fever, Wisconsin responded with alacrity to the federal government's call to arms in 1861. Thousands of men volunteered for the Union army in the war's early years, including many recent immigrants of foreign birth. Wisconsin's volunteer regiments had among their number several units that identified strongly with a particular ethnicity: the 9th and 26th Wisconsin were known for their large number of Germans; the "Scandinavian Regiment" was the 15th, which had many Norwegian and Swedish troops; while the 17th Wisconsin was predominantly Irish and sported company names like "Mulligan Guards." Although members of the Menominee, Oneida, and Stockbridge-Munsee tribes were among the first to volunteer for service, they received a very different response from the welcome that other ethnic groups enjoyed.

In the months following Fort Sumter, Wisconsin governor Alexander W. Randall received scores of letters from men offering their services in the War. One of the more interesting of these letters came from the city of Oshkosh, penned by Robert Grignon, a descendant of Pierre Grignon, a trader who came to Wisconsin in the late eighteenth century. Over the years, the Grignon family became influential among Wisconsin's Indian populations, and Robert was part Menominee. In the letter, dated May 8, 1861, Grignon wrote, "Two hundred Menomonee [*sic*] warriors under my command tender their services to your Excellency during the present trouble. They are all well armed with rifles, sure at forty rods and anxious to serve under the stars and stripes. An immediate answer will oblige." Instead of readily accepting the offer of loyal men, though, Randall apparently ignored the letter, as no reply appears in the official correspondence, or among the private papers.⁶

Another letter, dated May 16, 1861, from Augustus Gaylord, Randall's choice for Wisconsin's Adjutant General, to Military Secretary William Watson may explain why. Regarding the possibility of Natives' serving in the army, Gay-

lord observed, "Of the *propriety* of using *Indians* in the present contest with our brothers, so long as there are so many volunteers from civilization, there may be some doubt." The problem did not arise in Wisconsin early in the War, because there was no lack of white volunteers. The state had begun to raise about twenty regiments of infantry, three of cavalry, five of artillery, and one company of sharpshooters. Clearly, the governor and other state officials could pick and choose whom they wanted or did not want in their regiments, and they did not want Grignon's two hundred Menominee, nor any other Indians.⁷

Governor Alexander Randall's choice to not seek re-election in 1862 spared him further contemplation of the Native soldier issue, and his successor, Louis P. Harvey, died tragically in April 1862, fewer than four months after taking office. Edward Salomon, who became governor as a result, faced a problem that his predecessors had not foreseen. As it became apparent that the war would be a lengthy affair, enthusiasm in the state began to wane and the number of white volunteers plummeted. By the beginning of August 1862, the federal government threatened a draft if Wisconsin could not meet its quota of troops. Knowing that a draft could cause major morale problems, Governor Salomon sought ways to find men for the army and avoid conscription.⁸

On August 5, 1862, he sent a telegraph to Secretary of War Edwin Stanton stating, "I am applied to by parties who offer to raise a battalion or more of friendly Indians in this State . . . Can any encouragement be given them?" The answer, sent the very next day, was blunt: "The President declines to receive Indians . . . as troops." With that, the state of Wisconsin underwent its first military draft in November 1862. Native Americans as non-citizens were exempt.⁹



WHI (X3) 17938

Adjutant General Augustus Gaylord (right), left no doubt that as long as enough white men were willing to fight, the army was not interested in Native men as soldiers. This would change as the war dragged on.

Yet in the year that had passed between Grignon's rejected offer and Governor Salomon's reflecting on the service of Native men, more than a score of Oneida, Stockbridge-Munsee, and Menominee warriors had already enlisted in the Union army. Why would Salomon ask about the appropriateness of allowing Native Americans in the army when the state had already accepted a small number of them as soldiers? The answer lies in how most Native men enlisted in the war's early years. While the majority of whites joined in large groups, alongside friends and others from the same community, the Native men who enlisted in 1861 and 1862 did so individually or in very small groups. Thus the scattered Native men escaped the attention of state officials.

When Wisconsin regiments went off to war, it was customary to commemorate the occasion with parades, speeches, and the presentation of regimental colors. As reported by the *Wisconsin State Journal*, on February 22, 1862, in Madison, Governor Harvey remarked during the ceremonies that "The Norsemen and the Celt have invaded our soil [and]. . . . The ranks of our army are filled no less promptly by the alien and the native born."¹⁰ Nearly every ethnic community, even the newest to these shores, was celebrated for the contribution of its particular troops.

No celebrations were recorded for the *most* native born of all, however. Five Mohican men were among the first Natives to enlist in the state of Wisconsin. On June 15, 1861, Alexander Abrams, Henry and John Davids, Jefferson Fiddler, and Jeremiah Welch enlisted at Fond du Lac and were mustered into Company A of the 3rd Volunteer Infantry Regiment. Averaging twenty years of age, these men participated in the battles at Antietam, Chancellorsville, and Gettysburg, and later joined General Sherman's march through the South. Their frequent appearances on the casualty list attest to their bravery in combat. Fiddler, discharged with a disability after being wounded at Cedar Mountain, rejoined the regiment and died while fighting in Georgia, in May 1864. Henry Davids received wounds at Antietam, Chancellorsville, and Resaca.¹¹

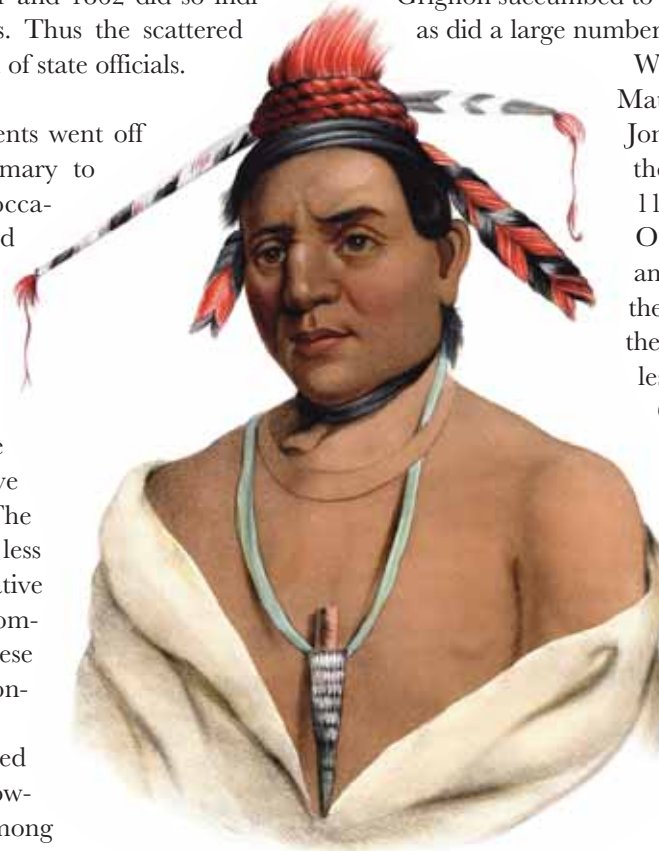
Six of the roughly twenty Menominee men who served in Company K of the 17th Volunteer Infantry Regiment enlisted early in 1862. Joseph Antoine, Jackson Corn, Charles Grignon, Alexander and John Kitson, and John Law served in the Western theater of the War. They participated in the October 1862 battle of Corinth and the historic siege of Vicksburg. The regiment also served in the South under Sherman later in the war. John Kitson, who sustained wounds in the assault upon Vicksburg, chose to reenlist at the beginning of 1864, along with Law, Corn, and Alexander Kitson. Antoine and Grignon succumbed to disease in the course of their service, as did a large number of Civil War soldiers.¹²

William Hill, Daniel and Joseph Matoxin, James Otter, Louis Peters, Jonathon Smith, and Henry Webster of the Oneida nation enlisted in the 11th Volunteer Infantry Regiment in October 1862 and were divided among three different companies. Like the 17th Regiment, these men fought in the West, though they participated in less well-known battles like Bayou Cache before being called to Vicksburg. Following the Union victory there, the regiment traveled to Louisiana and remained in the western theater for the duration of the War. Desertion, like disease, was a common occurrence in the Union army and tribal members were not immune to it: James Otter deserted in August 1863.¹³

While these men were not the only members of their respective tribes to enlist during the War's first three years, their experiences demonstrate that Native men in Wisconsin regiments experienced the war much as white soldiers did. Members of all three Green Bay tribes were wounded and killed in battle, and suffered from diseases. As the war continued and men grew tired of its hardships, some decided to renege on their commitment to the army and return home. Overall, in companies of about one hundred

men and regiments of close to one thousand, small groups of Stockbridge-Munsee, Menominee, and Oneida attracted little notice from state officials and citizens.

While the men in service fought in obscurity, the Green Bay tribal members who had stayed at home found themselves



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"Mar-Ko-Me-Te, a Menomene Brave" is the title given to this image of a traditional warrior by the artist Thomas L. McKenny in his book, History of the Indian Tribes of North America. The desire to reclaim the cultural traditions of warfare and merge ancient customs with modern war was one of the most important reasons why young Native men chose to enlist in the Union army.

under the scrutiny of their Wisconsin neighbors. In neighboring Minnesota, members of the Dakota Sioux nation killed more than four hundred white settlers between August 17 and 24, 1862. This event sent shockwaves through the region. Beginning in the western portion of Wisconsin, an intense fear of Indian attacks spread eastward. At first, the most feared tribes were the Ojibwe and Ho-Chunk, who had brethren in Minnesota. Though the U.S.-Dakota Conflict did not spark atrocities in Wisconsin, many cities near the three reservations suffered varying degrees of alarm in 1862, including Green Bay, Appleton, Fond du Lac, and Milwaukee.¹⁴

At a time when any suspicious event could be blamed on the Confederates, this isolated event brought loyalties into question. The Green Bay tribes had done nothing to bring such suspicions upon themselves, but continuing to do nothing, and hoping that the whites would realize that they intended no harm, was not enough. They needed to take positive action to allay the unfounded fears of their neighbors.

They received some support from their government agent, Moses Davis, who wrote, "I do not think that there are any good reasons for such apprehensions [of an 'uprising' in Wisconsin]. The Indians who have the rights of home in this State are thoroughly loyal." The Menominee reportedly held a special council in 1862 "for the purpose of expressing their loyalty to the federal government." The following year the tribe petitioned their agent to inform the president that they refused to follow the example of "his bad red children." This particular response, while showing quite clearly the anxiety that the Menominee felt, failed to achieve its goal. White Wisconsinites, swept up by the panic, chose not to hear or not to believe the Menominee and their agent, and they continued to fear all Native Americans.¹⁵

Enlisting in the Union army was the most effective way for the Green Bay tribes to attempt to prove their loyalty to the federal government and avoid repercussions from the panic around them. Although the decision they had made to avoid notice by enlisting as individuals or in small groups had allowed them to serve, they now needed to advertise their service in order to improve general misconceptions about them as potential traitors. Indeed, it was two weeks *before* the Sioux uprising in Minnesota that Governor Salomon was informed that the government would continue its no-Indian-soldier policy. It should be no surprise that the policy became more resolute after the violence in Minnesota.

Yet changes came in March 1863, when the federal government passed the Conscription Act. The new legislation provided a system for a military draft but stipulated that a drafted man could choose to hire a substitute to serve for him. Wanting to avoid another draft at all costs, Governor Salomon had the enlistment bonus raised from \$100 to \$302 to encourage volunteers. While the increased bounty encouraged many more Wisconsinites to volunteer, the federal government's continuing calls for more men led to another draft in the state.¹⁶

The Conscription Act of 1863 directly affected the Green Bay tribes in several ways. The increased enlistment bonus drew additional individuals and small groups of Natives to the Union army. By taking the place of a white draftee, a Native man received the enlistment bounty and, sometimes, an additional monetary bonus. As the federal government continued to demand troops, the state found it harder and harder to meet its quotas, and state officials searched for ways to avoid further drafts. They would again turn their attention to the state's Native populations.

The federal government granted the states permission to enlist "colored" troops in 1863. While it seems that this authorization referred specifically to African Americans, by the beginning of 1864 Wisconsin had begun actively recruiting Native Americans as well. Like whites at the beginning of the War, members of the Green Bay tribes now enlisted together in large groups, often over a period of several days. As bounties and

bonuses rose, Natives also continued to substitute for conscripted men in the ongoing federal drafts. More Oneida, Stockbridge-Munsee, and Menominee men enlisted by far in the last year and a half of the war than in the first three years, due to the continuing effects of the Conscription Act of 1863 and the government's active recruitment of Natives.¹⁷

Misconceptions about Native soldiers soon surfaced as their numbers visibly increased. Elisha Stockwell's memoir of the Civil War and his comments on Native service (cited at the beginning of this article and below), provide an apt example on several levels. While all of his remarks pertained to the Oneida men in Company F of the 14th Volunteer Infantry Regiment, the author himself never recognized a tribal affiliation, never differentiated between tribes or among individuals.

The most common stereotype had two parts: while consigning members of the Green Bay tribes to the roles of master woodsman, scout, and sharpshooter, it held that they



WHS Name File

Dr. Horace O. Crane, in portrait here, examined recruits from the Green Bay area and commented that the Native men were generally fit to serve, although he questioned their ability to participate in traditional battle.



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Boarding schools served to pressure Native people to abandon cultural traditions and assimilate into white culture. The Oneida girls shown here are Celia Okimife[?], Lizzie Morgan, Adele Quinney, Maggie Melotte, Josette Kinea, and Nettie Schooner. The boys names were not documented.

disliked traditional, Western-style pitched battles. The report of a doctor named Horace O. Crane is an example of military perceptions of the role that Oneida, Stockbridge-Munsee, and Menominee men played in the war. Crane examined over one hundred of Wisconsin's Native Americans in the Green Bay area in order to determine whether or not they were fit for the army. After writing that he generally found them to be in good shape, he noted that "officers commanding these men [said] that they were good soldiers, being unsurpassed for scouting or picket duty, but quite unable to stand a charge or artillery fire." Crane readily accepted this second-hand information that about Native men's tendencies in battle, yet the doctor was in Green Bay, examining recruits, who were not yet battle-tested. The officers who relayed the information to him may have had some previous experience with other Native soldiers, but only as individuals since no large numbers of tribal men joined with any recognition of their identity until the final two years of the war.¹⁸

Stockwell of course was a comrade, not an observer, but he also related incidents that endorse the image of Native men as master woodsmen, sharpshooters, and scouts. One incident occurred while the regiment marched toward Atlanta with General Sherman. During some light skirmishing, a Confederate soldier, using discarded railroad ties as cover, had pinned an Oneida man behind a large stone some distance

away. While the Confederate was waiting for him to come out, "the Indian's gun came over the end of the rails and there was nothing to do but surrender. [The Confederate soldier] asked the Indian if he was the one that went behind the stone. The Indian said he was, but wouldn't tell the Reb how he got out without being seen. The Reb said he had read of the Indians doing such things, but didn't believe such yarns, but had to believe it this time . . . The Indian just laughed at him as did the rest of us."

Stockwell amply demonstrates both the Confederate soldier's and his own willingness to believe that the Oneida man's almost mythical stealth was derived only from his being "Indian." He also reveals that the stereotypes about Natives were present in the south as well.¹⁹

Indeed it seems that Union officers believed these stereotypes, and because of these beliefs often assigned members of the Green Bay tribes to scouting duties. While describing the march of Sherman's army through Georgia, Stockwell states that Company F stayed ahead of the rest of the regiment as skirmishers, commenting, "They were mostly Indians." For him the ethnic background of Company F was a sufficient reason for them to have served as scouts.²⁰

Skirmishers played a far more visible, and dangerous, role than scouts. *Hardee's Tactics*, the soldier's bible during the war, describes them as follows:

... Skirmishers will be thrown out to clear the way for, and to cover the movements of, the main corps to which they appertain; accordingly, they may be thrown out to the front, to a flank, to the rear, or in the several directions, as may be deemed necessary. . . . They will render their movements subordinate to those of the main corps, so as constantly to cover it in the direction they were thrown. . . . The movements of a body of skirmishers, though made in loose files, require to be systematized, in order to give their commander the means of directing them according to his views, and with the greatest promptitude.²¹

So when Stockwell wrote, "The Indians were good skirmishers, but didn't like the open country or pitched battle," it was a strong testament to their courage and abilities in battle. He made his assertion that Native men had a preference for skirmishing after relating an incident in which a "Company F Indian" had been placed on guard duty in a relatively open area. When Stockwell tried to find him later, the Oneida man "had gone down the road some forty rods to the woods" to acquire some cover.²² It certainly may be that Stockwell's Oneida comrades did show a stronger preference for skirmishing, but it is equally viable that the Native men were regularly assigned to skirmishing duties because the preconceived notions of their abilities, present from the day of their recruitment physicals, allowed for few other assignments.

According to infantry records, Oneida, Mohican, and Menominee men performed well in heavy fighting too. In fact, early Native enlistees had taken part in two of the bloodiest battles in the War: Antietam and Gettysburg. But the most apt example came from the 37th Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry Regiment's Company K, with its many Menominee soldiers. In May and June of 1864 at least forty Menominee men enlisted into the new regiment. They generally joined in groups rather than individually, including over twenty between May 14 and 20, showing a trend of mass enlistments similar to that of whites at the beginning of the War.²³

Company K joined General Ulysses S. Grant and the Army of the Potomac in their siege of Petersburg, Virginia on July 23. Exactly one week later they participated in one of the

War's most unusual and unsuccessful assaults: the Battle of the Crater, also referred to as the Petersburg Mine. Union soldiers dug a 510-foot-long underground tunnel from behind the Northern army's lines to just below the Confederates' defenses, where they planted explosives, which went off on the morning of July 30. Company K rushed the startled Confederate lines, and the Menominee men paid dearly. At least seventeen received wounds, became prisoners of war, died, or were listed as missing as a result of the battle.²⁴

Company K saw further action, and sustained additional casualties, at Weldon Railroad in Virginia. They stayed with the Army of the Potomac for the duration of the War, taking part in the final storming of Petersburg in April 1865. After Lee's surrender, they traveled to Washington, D.C. and participated in the Grand Review before their final muster out of service. These Menominee men represented the largest concentration of Native American soldiers in any of Wisconsin's Civil War companies, yet no primary sources recognize their efforts as an ethnic group loyal to the Union. The sources list the apparently Native American names of Menominee casualties, but offer no celebration of the group as such, or of the community that produced these heroes.²⁵

The Oneida of the 14th Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry hold the distinction of being the largest concentration of Native American soldiers in a Wisconsin regiment. About forty Oneida served in Company F of the 14th, while at least ten more belonged to Company G. These men helped to replace the killed and wounded of the veteran regiment. Most enlisted in December 1863 and January 1864 in large groups, like the Menominee of the 37th Regiment. Historian Laurence M. Hauptman has noted that, because of this pattern of

mass enlistment, fighting in the Civil War could be viewed as a kind of societal event through which Native American men, in this case Oneida, fought beside friends and kinsmen.²⁶

Arriving at Union-held Vicksburg in March 1864, the Oneida in Companies F and G soon became a part of Sherman's Army of the Tennessee and took part in the Atlanta campaign. As the War drew to a close, the 14th traveled west and saw action in Tennessee, Arkansas, and Alabama before being mustered out in October 1865. Close to twenty of the



Green Bay Advocate

An insurrection by the Dakota Sioux in Minnesota brought panic to the neighboring state of Wisconsin, and tribal communities, even those with men serving as soldiers, fell under suspicion. The Green Bay Advocate's article of September 11, 1862, "Menominee Indians in Council," supported the tribe, but alarm still reigned throughout the Green Bay region.

Oneida men in these two companies were wounded, died, or became seriously ill as a result of their service in the War. Although the Oneida of Companies F and G did serve as scouts and sharpshooters, as observed by Stockwell, they also took part in the Battles of Atlanta and Nashville, as well as less well-known conflicts at Tupelo and Spanish Fort. Like the Menominee in the 37th, they challenged popular stereotypes while fighting, and dying, for the Union.²⁷

The sacrifices of the Green Bay tribes during the Civil War, almost completely unnoticed by whites at the beginning of the War, garnered some attention in the conflict's final years. As mentioned above, Dr. Crane and Elisha Stockwell noted that Wisconsin's Native American population contributed men to the Union effort. In addition, the Indian agent of the Green Bay tribes, M.M. Davis, brought attention to this fact. In September 1863 he wrote in his annual report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs that "some twelve or fifteen members of [the Stockbridge-Munsee] tribe... have enlisted in our volunteer regiments now in the field." The following year William Dole, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, reported that Menominee participation in the War "attest[ed] to the life-long loyalty of the tribe." Continuing his commendation of the tribe, he wrote that Menominee men "make brave and enduring soldiers, coming easily under discipline."²⁸

Agent Davis also forwarded the figures for enlistment among the Green Bay tribes in his 1864 and 1865 reports. According to his count, one hundred and twenty-five Menominee, one hundred and eleven Oneida, and forty-three Mohicans served in the Union army. With the combined population of the three tribes totaling 3,281, they had a participation rate of eight and one-half percent. That compares quite favorably with the general Wisconsin participation rate of about ten percent. Historian M. M. Quaipe aptly asserted that the Green Bay tribes' "record for loyalty in the Civil War was one to put many a white community to shame. . . . induced by no fear of conscription, they furnished a surprising number of volunteers . . ."²⁹

Although no written primary sources specifically address why these men chose to fight, tribal oral histories agree with official histories produced largely by European Americans, in suggesting relevant factors. Dorothy Davids, a Stockbridge-Munsee historian, pointed to enlistment bounties as a major

reason that Mohicans enlisted in the Union army. Laurence M. Hauptman, in his written account of the Oneida of the 14th Regiment, saw the same factor at work: "Oneida youth were enticed by large monetary payments to become loyal recruits for the Union."³⁰

Menominee oral history suggests an additional reason for participating in the Civil War. Tribal historian David Grignon spoke of a feeling of being bound to the United States by the Treaty of 1854, which established the Menominee reservation. He said that the tribe saw their participation in the Civil War as a symbolic "sealing" of the treaty, assuring the Menominee of a permanent home in the territory of their ancestors. Robert Grignon's offer of Menominee soldiers, tendered a mere month after the War began, supports David Grignon's analysis. Anxious to affirm the recent treaty, Menominee men were quick to aid the Union. The Oneida and Stockbridge-Munsee had also recently signed treaties granting them reservations in the state after being moved to Wisconsin from the East Coast. A desire to avoid further displacement probably contributed to their participation, as well.³¹

Yet white settlers continued to populate the surrounding area and encroach on reservation lands, and in 1887 the government passed the General Allotment Act (also known as the Dawes Act), which "provided for the allotment of Indian Reservation lands . . . to tribal members with their consent." Rather than continue the communal life of the reservation, a certain amount of land would be given to each tribal member, and the federal government would sell any remaining land.³² The Oneida and Stockbridge-Munsee had their land allotted, and several decades passed before they regained their reservation status. The Menominee resisted intense government efforts to follow suit, and the tribe avoided allotment. The Dawes Act clearly showed that the government did not view the Green Bay tribes' participation in the Civil War as "sealing" the treaties that guaranteed them reservations in the state.³³

The plethora of works covering the American Civil War forces modern scholars to constantly search for previously unexplored topics of study. The field of Native American history, by contrast, is largely unexplored, but popular trends in scholarship call for raised awareness of Native contributions to American culture and society. Interest in the Civil War looms



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Although the Ojibwe are not one of the "Green Bay Tribes," their treaties with the government, like those of the Menominee, tried to guarantee the maintenance of reservation land. The Ojibwe presented this pipe at the Council of 1844 to James Duane Doty, the prominent frontier leader.



WHI(X3)40387

In the aftermath of the Civil War, GAR posts sprang up throughout the northern states, providing Union veterans with financial and community support, as well as the camaraderie of fellow veterans. Above are twelve Oneida members of the GAR, ca. 1907, standing in front of Parish Hall in Oneida, Wisconsin.

large in both academic and popular history, but although several books cover the topic of Native participation in the Civil War, Wisconsin's Native men receive passing mention at best.³⁴ Work that attempts to combine Civil War history and Native American history can fill important gaps in both disciplines. Indeed there is an interest in and work being developed on the Menominee GAR post, as well as greater exploration of the connections between traditional warrior culture and modern military service. The involvement of Native Americans in the Civil War is an unwritten chapter in the history of specific tribes and regions, and such studies can show the role played by American Indians in one of the most important events in American history. ❧

Notes

- ¹ Byron R. Abernethy (ed.), *Private Elisha Stockwell, Jr. Sees the Civil War* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958), p. 32; Frank L. Klement, *Wisconsin in the Civil War* (Madison, WI: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1997), p. 34.
- ² *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1865* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1866), p. 576. Hereafter known as RCIA, and year.
- ³ *RCIA, 1862*, pp. 329–330, 353; *Ibid.*, 1863, p. 346; *Ibid.*, 1864, p. 42; *Ibid.*, 1865, pp. 51–52.
- ⁴ *RCIA, 1860*, p. 35; *Ibid.*, 1861, p. 211; *Ibid.*, 1862, pp. 329–331, 353; *Ibid.*, 1863, p. 502; *Ibid.*, 1864, pp. 435–436, 487; *Ibid.*, 1865, pp. 52, 443–444; *Ibid.*, 1866, p. 288.
- ⁵ Loretta Metoxen, Oneida Tribal Historian, Personal Interview (Oneida, WI), February 18, 2000; Dorothy Davids, Stockbridge-Munsee Historian, Telephone Interview, April 7, 2000; David Grignon, Menominee Tribal Historian, Personal Interview (Keshena, WI), February 18, 2000; "Warfare and Defense of Community" Indian Country of Wisconsin Web Page, Milwaukee Public Museum, <http://www.mpm.edu/wirp/ICW-35.html>.
- ⁶ Robt. Grignon to A.W. Randall, May 8, 1861, in Wisconsin Governors' Military Correspondence MSS.
- ⁷ Aug. Gaylord to W. H. Watson, May 16, 1861, in Wisconsin Governor's Military Correspondence MSS, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, underlining is Gaylord's; Charles E. Estabrook (ed.), *Annual Reports of the Adjutant General of the State of Wisconsin For the Years 1860, 1861, 1862, 1863, 1864* (reprinted: Madison, 1912), pp. 21–87; Richard N. Current, *The History of Wisconsin*, Vol. II, *The Civil War Era, 1848–1873* (Madison, WI: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1976), pp. 296–306.
- ⁸ Current, *The History of Wisconsin*, pp. 309–313.
- ⁹ *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* Series III, Volume II (Washington, DC: GPO, 1884), pp. 297, 314; Current, *The History of Wisconsin*, pp. 312–317.
- ¹⁰ Current, *The History of Wisconsin*, p. 336; Wisconsin Adjutant General's Office, *Regimental Muster and Descriptive Rolls (Red Books)*.
- ¹¹ List of Stockbridge-Munsee Mohicans in the Civil War located at Arvid E. Miller Memorial Library Museum, Bowler, WI; *Regimental Muster and Descriptive Rolls (Red Books), 1861–1865*, hereafter referred to as *Red Books*, for 3rd Volunteer Infantry Reg-

- iment, State Historical Society of Wisconsin; William DeLoss Love, *Wisconsin in the War of the Rebellion: A History of all the Regiments and Batteries the State Has Sent to the Field* (Chicago: Church and Goodman, 1866), pp. 242–259; E. B. Quiner, *The Military History of Wisconsin: A Record of the Civil and Military Patriotism of the State in the War for the Union* (Chicago: Clarke & Co., 1866), pp. 483–497.
- ¹² List of Menominee in the Civil War located at Historic Preservation Department, Keshena, WI; *Red Books* for 17th Volunteer Infantry Regiment; Ourada, *Menominee Indians: A History* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1979) pp. 138–139; Quiner, *The Military History of Wisconsin*, pp. 644–655.
- ¹³ List of Oneida in the Civil War found in Holy Apostles Episcopal Church (Oneida, WI) Records Microfilm, Wisconsin Historical Society, pp. 713–716; *Red Books* for 11th Volunteer Infantry Regiment; Charles E. Estabrook, ed., *Records and Sketches of Military Organizations, Population, Legislation, Election and Other Statistics Relating to Wisconsin in the Period of the Civil War* (Madison, WI: Adjutant General's Department, 1914), pp. 131–132; Quiner, *The Military History of Wisconsin*, pp. 559–573.
- ¹⁴ Klement, *Wisconsin in the Civil War*, p. 31; M. M. Quaife, "The Panic of 1862 in Wisconsin" in *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 4 (Winter 1920): pp. 177–195.
- ¹⁵ *RCIA, 1862*, pp. 333–334; *Ibid.*, 1863, pp. 368–369; Quaife, "The Panic of 1862," pp. 177–195.
- ¹⁶ Quiner, *The Military History of Wisconsin*, pp. 155–157; Current, *The History of Wisconsin*, pp. 324–327.
- ¹⁷ Current, *The History of Wisconsin*, pp. 330–331.
- ¹⁸ Peter T. Harstad (ed.), "A Civil War Examiner: The Report of Dr. Horace O. Crane" in *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, 48, (Spring 1965): pp. 230–231.
- ¹⁹ Abernethy, *Private Elisha Stockwell, Jr.*, p. 32, 79–80.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 88; Laurence M. Hauptman *Between Two Fires: American Indians in the Civil War* (New York: Free Press, 1995), p. 80; Current, *The History of Wisconsin*, p. 366; Laurence M. Hauptman, *The Iroquois in the Civil War: From Battlefield to Reservation* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1993), p. 80.
- ²¹ W. J. Hardee, *Rifle and Light Infantry Tactics: For the Exercise and Maneuvers of Troops When Acting as Light Infantry or Riflemen*, (Washington, DC: War Department, 1855).
- ²² Hauptman, *The Iroquois in the Civil War*, pp. 74–75.
- ²³ *Red Books* for 37th Volunteer Infantry Regiment.
- ²⁴ Love, *Wisconsin in the War of the Rebellion*, pp. 947–950; Quiner, *The Military History of Wisconsin*, pp. 838–840; Hauptman, *Between Two Fires*, pp. 152–155; R. C. Eden, *The Sword and the Gun: A History of the 37th Wis. Volunteer Infantry From Its First Organization to Its Final Muster Out* (Madison, WI, 1865), pp. 29–32. See Appendix 1 for further information on Menominee casualties.
- ²⁵ Quiner, *The Military History of Wisconsin*, pp. 840–841; Eden, *The Sword and the Gun*, pp. 64–65.
- ²⁶ *Red Books* for 14th Volunteer Infantry Regiment; Hauptman, *Iroquois in the Civil War*, pp. 4, 72–73.
- ²⁷ *Red Books* for 14th Volunteer Infantry Regiment; Quiner, pp. 607–612; Hauptman, *Iroquois in the Civil War*, pp. 73, 79–82.
- ²⁸ *RCIA, 1863*, p. 346; *Ibid.*, 1864, p. 43.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, 1865, pp. 51–52, 435–436, 438; Current, *The History of Wisconsin*, p. 335; Quaife, "The Panic of 1862," p. 171.
- ³⁰ Davids interview, 4/7/00; Hauptman, *Iroquois in the Civil War*, p. 68.
- ³¹ Grignon interview, 2/18/00.
- ³² Current, *The History of Wisconsin*, p. 556; *Menominee Tribal History Guide*, p. 65.
- ³³ Arlinda Locklear, "The Allotment of the Oneida Reservation and Its Legal Ramifications" in Campisi and Hauptman, pp. 83–86; "Brief History of the Mohican Nation Stockbridge-Munsee Band" (Bowler, WI, 1996), p. 6; *Menominee Tribal History Guide*, pp. 65, 73.
- ³⁴ Annie Heloise Abel *The American Indian in the Civil War, 1862–1865* (Cleveland, OH: A. H. Clark, 1919); Hauptman *Between Two Fires*; Hauptman *The Iroquois in the Civil War*.

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