This paper studies Madison, Wisconsin during the Civil War and analyzes how it served as a “homefront” during the conflict. It examines how the media, government, soldier interaction, and involvement of women created an atmosphere that led to the mobilization of people in Madison. In a limited war, civilians whose relatives enlist in the military are those who have a high motivation to fight for the war effort at home. The mobilization of the entire citizenry of Madison supports that contention that the American Civil War was, in contrast, a “total war.” This study supports this argument through the use of a variety of primary sources, including newspapers, political proclamations, and memoirs of the war. Madison, Wisconsin was on the U.S. frontier in the 1860s and thus completely separated from the battlefront. The arguments in this paper can thus be extrapolated to suggest that communities throughout the Union served similar functions in the Civil War. This project thus contributes a new perspective regarding the historical debate on the status of the Civil War as a total war.
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Introduction

The Civil War was a defining moment in the history of the United States. At home and on the battlefield, Americans clarified who they were on a fundamental level. From 1861 to 1865, the country that had been growing rapidly for over eighty years was split in two. It is an event that has been romanticized and commercialized since its conclusion. To the general public, the conflict consisted of great battles like Gettysburg and Antietam. Tens of thousands of men were led by great leaders like Abraham Lincoln and Robert E. Lee. However, there are many aspects about the Civil War that garner historical significance beyond the great battles and leaders. The study of cities during the war which were not located on the battlefront have been relatively neglected. Out of the thirty-one million Americans who were counted by the 1860 census, some scholars estimate around twenty-eight million Americans did not serve in the military.1,2 These people made up another front outside the military battle fields. The cities all over the United States made up a homefront which changed the lives of the people. The time, money, and resources spent on the war effort created a homefront that had not been seen up to that point. People at home were concerned about the war, almost everyone had an opinion one way or the other. Not only were soldiers and their families focused on the war, entire cities rallied behind the war effort. Men and women who had no direct connection to soldiers on the battlefield still had the motivation to help win the war.

With the argument that cities in the United States developed into a homefront, a component of “total war” is satisfied. Total war is a military theory that defines war as “a war to which all resources and the whole population are committed; loosely, a war conducted without any scruple or limitations.”³ Many Civil War historians have taken definitions like this and have tried to analyze whether the war constitutes a total war or not. While some would argue that the Civil War had not grown to a modern total war, others would say features of total war were developed. Historians like James McPherson have argued that the Civil War became a total war once the North realized it needed to completely destroy the systems of the South, its people, and all its resources.⁴ Alongside the battlefield component of total war, the homefront has to be engaged as well. The military has to be positively supported by the homefront from which it berths. The citizenry is the life-force of the military. The homefront gives the military motivation and encouragement for a successful conclusion. In the Civil War, cities accomplished this aspect of total war.

There are multiple ways to study the homefront; aspects that measure the motivation and focus of the people. Studying how the citizenry spent their time, effort, and resources on the war shows their dedication to the cause. When people are fully supporting the war by giving themselves and what they have, a homefront is established. One aspect of how the homefront can be studied is through the media. As the primary source for information, newspapers created a knowledgeable citizenry that learned about the war they were engaged in. The media explained to the people the motivations for the war, the progress on the

battlefield, and how they could help with the war effort. Another component of the homefront is the involvement of government officials, specifically governors. These politicians had great responsibility in raising soldiers for the war effort and focused most of their administrations on the war. Interactions between soldiers and civilians also impacted how cities became a homefront. Cities acted as mobilization points for companies and created relationships between civilians and the military. Forts and camps became a place for people to see the soldiers before they went off to war. Cities became a place for soldiers to visit to get one last memory of what home was like. The involvement of women was another aspect of the homefront. In the 1860s, women were not allowed to join the military. Because of this, a majority of the people on the homefront were women. Their actions and interests drove the motivations and focus of the entire homefront. They are the most important aspect of the homefront because in a sense, they became the homefront. When studying the homefront in the Civil War, the media, government, soldier interaction, and the involvement of women are essential components to consider.

When studies are published about cities in the Civil War, the locations that are discussed are primarily set on or near the battlefront. Towns and villages are usually studied when the two armies meet nearby. While it is important to look at these cities diligently, towns on the frontier should also be realized as an important part of the homefront during the war. Cities which are located far away from the battlefront, such as those in the Midwest, become a homefront because of the people of the city. An outside agent did not force the cities to enter the conflict. The cities on the frontier become a homefront once they were willing to give their time, energy, and resources to a war effort that was far away. By studying these towns and
discovering aspects of a homefront, a larger assumption that the nation itself can be considered a homefront. If people are willing to give to the war effort without the influence of the battlefield, the argument can be made that the nation became a homefront. This paper focuses on the homefront aspects of Madison, Wisconsin. Madison satisfies the geographical criteria because of its distance from Washington, D.C. and much of the battlefront. Madison, the capital of Wisconsin, is an example of how the Civil War engaged the full effort of the citizenry into the conflict. The people of Madison made up a homefront through the media, government, soldier interaction, and the involvement of women. Madison displays components of a homefront and gives support to the argument that the Civil War is a total war.

As one of the most popular concepts to study in United States history, relatively little literature has been purposed to study the Civil War and argue it as a total war. The most notable resource that studied this was the anthology *On the Road to Total War / The American Civil War and the German Wars of Unification, 1861-1871* by Stig Förster and Jörg Nagler. This monograph consists of articles written by historians that deal with the American Civil War and German Wars of Unification. They argue whether the

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wars were examples of total war or limited war. Arguments from famous historians like Mark E. Neely Jr., James McPherson, and Edward Hagerman are made studying the Civil War. These studies and books like John B. Walters’ Merchant of Terror: General Sherman and Total War, focus their arguments on the battlefront. While not many studies have specifically targeted frontier cities in the respects of a homefront, there have been many studies on Wisconsin during the Civil War. Wisconsinites have considered the study of the state in the Civil War as a significant time in the narration of Wisconsin and its people. The History of Wisconsin series, done by the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, issued a book focusing on the Civil War entitled Volume II: The Civil War Era, 1848-1873. Written by Richard N. Current, the study added to the field of history by examining the war on the battlefront and even explored some events in Wisconsin during the war. While the monograph did not argue that Wisconsin became a homefront, it can be used to study civilian life, the economy, and government. From there, larger assumptions and arguments can be formed. Another source that studies Wisconsin during the war is Wisconsin Women in the War Between the States by Ethel Hurn. She wrote this monograph in attempt to narrate the lives of “the average woman, who with cheerfulness and fidelity approaching the heroic, met and grappled with the problems forced upon her by the War.” Hurn’s work on women narrates a huge component of a homefront. Since most women stayed in their hometowns during the war, they made up most of the

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6 Mark E. Neely Jr., “Was the Civil War a Total War?” in On the Road to Total War. James McPherson, “From Limited War to Total War in America,” in On the Road to Total War. Edward Hagerman, “Union Generalship, Political Leadership, and Total War Strategy,” in On the Road to Total War.

7 John B. Walters, General William Tecumseh Sherman and Total War (Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill, 1973).


9 Ethel Alice Hurn, Wisconsin Women in the War Between the States (Madison, WI: The Wisconsin History Commission, 1911).

10 Hurn, xvii.
homefront. Another study on Wisconsin during the Civil War is *Soldiers When They Go: The Story of Camp Randall, 1861-1865* by Carolyn J. Mattern.\(^\text{11}\) Through this monograph, the story of the interaction between soldiers and civilians is told. Mattern’s work narrates the presence of the military as they trained and passed through Madison. Sources such as those written by Current, Hurn, and Mattern have studied Wisconsin’s role in the Civil War and have greatly added to the narration of the war and has greatly assisted this study.

Along with sources written by historians on Madison and the Civil War, this paper used many primary sources to make its argument. Articles from the Madison newspaper *Wisconsin Daily State Journal* were used to connect many aspects of the city to the idea of a homefront. The *Journal* discussed what was happening on the battlefront and in Washington, D.C. It also informed citizens of events in Madison dealing with the war. Other important primary sources were proclamations and speeches given by Wisconsin governors. These public remarks display what was important to the state government at the time. During the war period, many speeches were given on the war and how it affected Wisconsinites. This study also focused on letters and reminisces of individuals who lived in or came through Madison during the Civil War. These sources are great pieces to show the realism and humanity of the stories from the past. The people who wrote these resources wrote about what was important to them at that time. It can be seen through these works that the war effort was of primary concern to the people of Madison. These are some primary sources this study uses to prove Madison was a homefront during the Civil War.

This paper will examine Madison first by studying the media, most notably newspapers. After observing how the media informed the citizenry of the war effort, this paper will study the work of the Wisconsin governors and how they focused on the war. Next, the interaction between soldiers and civilians at Camp Randall and in the city of Madison will be studied. Finally, the involvement of women will be examined. Making up most of the homefront, this will be an essential component to Madison being considered a total war.

Media
During the Civil War, newspapers and photographs became the primary mediums of journalism and communication. Unlike in today’s world, the people living in the United States were not able to receive information from long distances instantly. Television, radio, and the internet are only recent additions to the media in our history. In the 1860s, information had to travel by messenger, boat, and in later years, by telegraph. The media gained its information through these sources and came to the general public in the form of newspapers and photographs. Newspapers acted as a way for citizens to gain knowledge about the war effort on the battlefront and the homefront.

In order to have a more clear idea of how the media was influenced by the Civil War being a total war, it is effective to speculate what it would look like in a limited war. In this scenario, people who’s loved ones were fighting on the battlefront would be the primary demographic who were focused on the war. These people would have a high motivation to fight the war on the homefront. Other people in Madison might only care about the war due to principles or convictions they held dealing with the political system. Since the media is focused
on making profit, newspapers and photographers would focus their efforts on what most people in Madison cared about. The limited war would cause most people to be half-hearted when it came to giving up their time, service, and resources to the war effort. Articles and photographs would most likely be about Madison and other local news events. The media was changed by the Civil War being a total war. Most of the civilian populace was concerned about the war and gave what they could in an effort to fight for the Union.

For the people of Madison, their lives were changed by the media. They received a constant barrage of information on the war and how they could serve on the homefront. All citizens were affected by newspapers. Those who could read were being informed of the war and its progress. Illiterate people most likely spent time with those who could read newspapers through work, family, or interactions around the city. They were then updated of news through other people who were influenced by newspapers. Newspapers helped to focus people on the war effort and gave them information on the war they were supporting. Alongside newspapers, photographs also changed the lives of people living during the Civil War. A relatively new technology, photography was used to visually tell the story of the Civil War in a way civilians had never seen before. Gruesome images depicting death and carnage on the battlefield both gave people on the homefront a chance to realize that war was not something to be romanticized or enjoyable. Photographs of soldiers who were wounded or killed in action brought the war to the homefront in a way citizens had never experienced. Images made everyone who saw them realize the seriousness of the conflict and influenced people to focus on the war effort. The media, made up of newspapers and photographs, was an essential component to making Madison a homefront. It gave information on the war, it provided
transparency in the battlefront and homefront, and were agents in themselves which convinced people of views of the writer or photographer.

An important newspaper based in Madison during the Civil War was the Wisconsin Daily State Journal. It is an example of what newspapers were like during the 1860s and show how the media adds to the argument that Madison was a homefront. This publication was widely read by literate citizens of Madison since its creation. The editors of the newspaper declared it as “The Official State Paper.” To live up to such a claim, the newspaper relied on two components, articles and advertisements. Any organization or business could buy one insertion good for a year for twelve dollars. For the first couple of pages articles narrate local events, political occurrences in Washington, and progress on the battlefront. The paper primarily relies on the power of words to convey their message; images on the front page were very unlikely. With no editorial page, it is somewhat difficult to see the explicit opinion of the editors. However, the amount of information that praised any efforts on the homefront or battlefront that supported the war would indicate that the editors advocated for the preservation of the Union. If a person was educated enough to read through the material, they would undoubtedly be up to date on the war effort in Madison, Washington, and on the battlefront. It is not known how the Journal received all its information. It can be assumed that most local news was gathered by field reporters stationed in Madison. For news from other parts of the country, the Journal typically cites its sources as “BY TELEGRAPH” and that the news is

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“reported expressly for the Wisconsin State Journal.” The *Journal* continually received news from the battlefront and Washington throughout the war.

The *Wisconsin Daily State Journal* was a catalyst for politicians to call for volunteers among the public. Once these citizens joined the military and went to fight, the newspaper would follow the action with detailed reports on battles and its outcome. Editors often kept track of local soldiers when they went off to war and would publish information on them if they were killed or wounded while away. The *Journal* also wrote articles on the political happenings in Washington, D.C. This would promote propaganda and give citizens the reasons why the country is at war. The paper also published the time and locations of war rallies that supported

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14 *Wisconsin Daily State Journal*, September 18, 1862.
military units. Through these examples, newspapers such as the Wisconsin Daily State Journal affected the citizenry and their support of the war leading to Madison, WI becoming a homefront.

**Raising Volunteers**

After Confederate forces fired on Fort Sumter in April of 1860, President Abraham Lincoln decided to call for forty-two thousand volunteers to fight the rebellion. With no national draft, the responsibility of raising the troops fell solely on the states and its governors until the National Conscription Act was passed in March of 1863. Throughout the war, the national government requested certain numbers of men from each state to fight for the Union. In order to fill enlistment quotas, gatherings were held to raise troops. One such meeting met on August 11, 1862 to meet the quota that was set for Dane County. An advertisement for the event told citizens that 124 men needed to enlist from the county; otherwise a special draft would be enacted. The people of Wisconsin were able to read about the quota in the Journal and were warned of the consequences that would occur if not enough men enlisted. People were informed of the methods the government was using to raise volunteers. The ad asked that if one was not able to enlist that they would “contribute to enable others to go.” Only two days after this advertisement was published, Governor Edward Salomon received word from the War Department that 5,904 men from Wisconsin were required to enlist. Through

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18 “Meeting at the Capitol.”
newspapers, people were able to read about and answer the continuous calls for more volunteers. The media influenced citizens to enlist in the military and to support others into joining the army. Newspapers seem to have worked well to get the information to the public quickly. Another meeting was held at Madison later that month; this time only asking for thirty more volunteers.\(^2\) These rallies were continually held throughout the war to gain support and to raise troops. Newspapers affected the people of Madison by making it easier for them to hear the call for troops. Without newspapers, word of mouth would be the primary way for this information to get around.

In October of 1862, the *Journal* published an article entitled “The Pride and Glory of Wisconsin.”\(^2\) The piece begins by praising the patriotism of the people and their willingness to serve in the military. The article claims that forty thousand men had volunteered from Wisconsin up to that point. It goes on to say that these men were the “noblest and best of our people.” Pride in Wisconsin is very clear in this article which says that no regiment from Wisconsin has flinched or hesitated. With an article like this, people of Madison gained a sense of patriotism and pride for the state. This led to many people acting out to serve the war effort in any way they could. Articles helped to promote the war and gave civilians on the homefront reasons to support the war.

**Progress on the Battlefront and Washington, D.C.**

After soldiers enlisted in volunteer regiments, they were shortly moved to the battlefront to fight the war. These men were fathers, sons, brothers, and cousins to many.

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civilians who did not join the military. For these citizens who wanted to keep track of their loved ones, the local newspaper was a valuable resource to learn about the progress of the army. Using faster modes of transportation, like the steamboat and telegraph lines, information could be quickly moved from the battlefront to the homefront. Compared to previous wars, the process of bringing news to the frontier, including Madison, was relatively quicker. Usually, only one or two days separated the battle and the frontier knowing about the battle. The Journal typically had a separate column just for information from the battlefield; the editors named this section “This Morning’s Dispatches.” On September 18, 1862, information about the Battle of Antietam covered the front page with headlines describing, “The Greatest Slaughter of the Whole War.” Citizens became informed of what happened on the East Coast through these articles. Writers tried to convey the brutality of the engagement by writing that Sharpsburg, MD was the location of the “fiercest and most sanguinary battle of the whole war” and that casualties were most likely very high. Even with the probability of many losses due to the battle, many civilians most likely felt hopeful for the rest of the war.

After major defeats at the Battle of Bull Run, the Peninsula Campaign, and the large amounts of casualties at places like Shiloh, seeing good news and optimism in the newspapers must have been comforting. More headlines described a battle in which the enemy’s escape was cut off, that James Longstreet lost six of his artillery batteries, and how Union general Ambrose Burnside had retaken Harper’s Ferry, West Virginia. The newspapers that were sold in Madison during the Civil War were an influence on the public’s perception of the war. Citizens

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22 “This Morning’s Dispatches,” Wisconsin Daily State Journal, September 18, 1862.
23 “This Morning’s Dispatches.”
were able to follow the armies as they moved from one battlefield to another. People from Madison could become familiar with distant cities such as Sharpsburg, Chickamauga, Chancellorsville, and Gettysburg. Throughout all these battles, reporters followed the army and wrote what happened. Citizens at home were able to receive intelligence from the front lines detailing the movements of regiments, casualties, and outcomes of battles. However, this system of reporting was not well received by everyone. The amount of information that was transferred from the battle front to the home front left room for enemy spies to intercept the information. The diligence of news men was a frustration felt by many military officials. In one battle when three Bohemian reporters were said to be killed, Sherman responded, “That’s good! We’ll have dispatches now from Hell before breakfast!”

Even though the reporters were considered annoying by some, their actions led to the citizenry gaining more knowledge of what was really happening on the battle front.

Newspapers also informed the people of Madison of the events of the war from a more personal aspect. For many civilians, newspapers were the primary mode to learn about the death or wounding of a loved one. The federal government did not have a solid method to inform the families of the dead during the Civil War. Later wars would use companies like Western Union to pass on this information. This organized process was not feasible in the 1860s, especially in the frontier states. On February 15, 1862, the Journal published a list of three men who died in a field hospital at Corinth, MS. The names of dead Wisconsinites brings a humanistic light to the war in the paper. The war was not only fought by famous

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generals with only strangers dying. Newspapers could inform whole towns of the deaths of local soldiers. Listing the names of the dead most likely brought on feelings of emotion that can only be felt along with familiarity. These newspapers could be left in public places and read by many. Death lists that were sometimes posted on municipal buildings were undoubtedly a source for newspapers. The media through newspapers gave citizens of Madison the chance to follow the war as if they were on the fields of battle themselves. With the citizenry up to date with the progress of the battlefront, their concerns and motivations would become affected by the war.

Along with news from the battlefront, newspapers informed civilians of national politics dealing with the war. Papers wrote articles narrating elections, outlined proclamations and declarations, and gave the implicit editor’s bias on all happenings in Washington. On September 23, 1862, only six days after the Battle of Antietam, a direct effect of the battle was highlighted in the *Journal*. The paper tracked President Lincoln’s policies by printing the first portion of the Emancipation Proclamation. The writer commented on the move by writing, “the President now gives something over three months notice to the rebellious districts that [slavery] is to end with the close of the present year.”27 By informing citizens of federal moves in Washington, the people were able to learn more about the rationales for fighting the war. Through newspapers, citizens could follow the changes in motivations of the war as it transformed from preserving the Union to the abolition of slavery. Newspapers gave the people of Madison an opportunity to learn daily about events in Washington that in decades

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past would have taken weeks. A homefront must be up to date with the battlefront; newspapers helped accomplish this component by informing the citizens of national politics.

Local News

Not only was the media a tool for Wisconsinites to learn about events beyond their borders, but was also used to inform the people about the homefront itself. When societies gathered people together to support the war, newspapers were used to advertise their events, ask for support, and were given praise for their efforts. The Ladies’ Aid Society which was organized to raise supplies for the Wisconsin regiments out on the battlefield used the Wisconsin Daily State Journal to help promote their endeavors. The organization used an article to ask citizens to donate shirts, sheets, rags, and money to be later distributed to soldiers.28 Along with necessities for the Wisconsinites on the battlefield, the Ladies’ Aid Society also held gatherings for people to donate what would be a luxury for soldiers; a “first-class dinner.”29 Events like this were continually held throughout the war and were written about in the Wisconsin Daily State Journal. In June of 1862, the editor wrote that the society “seem[ed] to be doing substantial efforts by their efforts.”30 The Journal gave credit where it was due and praised the society for the work it was doing. Newspapers such as this one, promoting the war and whoever supported the Northern efforts. Through this practice, supporting the war was idealized and glamorized.

The newspapers also published articles asking citizens to attend other events related to the war. In some towns, including Madison, gatherings called Historic Committees were

created to encourage enlistments, assure the soldiers of home sympathies, and to sustain him in the hardships of the camps and field.\(^{31}\) These meetings brought people together to record letters and other publications from war into a centralized location. It was used to promote the values of American History and Biography. The accounts would be placed in archives for later generations to read and learn. The Historic Committee and other meetings like it were promoted often by the *Wisconsin Daily State Journal*. Through newspapers, citizens were more likely to know about war rallies and other meetings that supported the war.

Along with the promotion of war rallies, the media also wrote about the presence of the military in Madison. In August of 1862, the *Journal* wrote about the Twentieth Volunteer Regiment that was drilling at Camp Randall. Having just filled its quota for men, reporters went out to observe the newly formed regiment. The writers commented that the regiment “appeared remarkably well” and that with more drilling will become a “first class body of men.”\(^{32}\) This article surely gave the citizens of Madison some comfort. The regiment was mustered in Madison, which most likely meant that many civilians had friends or relatives in the 20\(^{th}\) Reg. The article also listed the times of the camp’s general order for those who wanted to visit and watch the regiment. Civilians knew that to watch the entire company drill, they would have to be at Camp Randall from four to five o’clock p.m.\(^{33}\) This communication between the military presence and citizenry shows that the general public was interested in the war effort. Articles like “Matters at the Camp” gave people a reason to be interested in the army and would help them to be more likely to support the war.

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\(^{33}\) “Matters at the Camp.”
Photography

As a relatively new form of media, photography brought a transparency to war the country had never seen before. Many photographs were taken of people during the 1860s; most photographers stayed away from the battlefront. When the medium began to pour onto the battlefields, the Civil War became a “living room war.” For the first time in the history of the United States, people living on the homefront could see the macabre nature of war.

One of the first, and most popular, photographers that brought the war to the homefront was Matthew Brady. Working with the E. & H. T. Anthony Company in the beginning of the war, Brady became involved with the production and reproduction of war photographs. One of his first mainstream successes was the “Illustrations of Camp Life” series. People could see how soldiers lived on the battlefront. This most likely gave many worried people a peace of mind knowing what camp life was like. Galleries would be organized by Brady and the Anthony Company to display these images. Many people came out to view the galleries which resulted in the populace seeing beyond the homefront. Compared to what they would see later in the war, they had seen nothing.

After the Battle of Antietam in September of 1862, a young photographer named Alexander Gardner began taking photographs of the dead. Working for Matthew Brady, Gardner captured images that would remain in the country’s mind for the rest of the war. He

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took “gritty images, the first American photographs of battle dead.” His images were later placed in Brady’s New York gallery. On October 20th of that year, the New York Times wrote:

We recognize the battle-field as a reality . . . Mr. Brady has done something to bring home to us the terrible reality and earnestness of war. If he has not brought bodies and laid them in our dooryards and along the streets, he has done something very like it . . . there is a terrible fascination about it that draws one near these pictures, and makes him loth to leave them.

Viewers could see the Union and Confederate dead. The expressions and blood on the men were clearly seen. Soldiers were bloated and lifeless; one can see the clothes torn aside from the impact of the bullet. People across the country viewed the thousands of photographs that were being printed every day. It helped to create a homefront by bringing the battlefront into the living room of America. Civilians were exposed to the horrors of war that had never been seen before. These photographs “allowed viewers to establish emotional connections to the event of the recent past and to each other.” The initial shock of seeing the violence of the battlefront is one that has not been felt before or since the Civil War. Photography changed the lives of people on the homefront and influenced the citizenry to support the war. The faster the war would be won, the sooner loved ones would be able to leave the horrific battlefront and return home. The photograph helped create a homefront in cities like Madison all over the North.

Communication about the war efforts is crucial to the definition of a homefront. The media, specifically newspapers and photography, communicated to the citizens of Madison

36 Davis, 183.
39 Davis, 205.
giving them more knowledge and understanding about the war. They were able to learn about the battlefront, political front, and homefront through the media. This information helped to mobilize the citizenry in their support for the war. Through these mediums, people of Madison were able to know how they could give their time, effort, and resources for the war. Without newspapers, it would be difficult for people to be well informed. Not only were the families of soldiers impacted by the war, most of the citizenry would be able to receive information on the war. The medium of photography also helped to create a homefront. It generated an emotional response from those who saw them. It played a critical role in bringing transparency to the war. With this type of media, the citizens were more visually informed than they had ever been before. Through the media, many people made decisions to support the war and act on it.

**Government**

The state government in Wisconsin experienced a rather tumultuous four years during the Civil War. From the beginning of the war in 1861 to the surrender of the last Confederate troops in 1865, four men were appointed as Governor of the state of Wisconsin. Alexander Randall experienced the beginning of the war and the responsibilities that came with it. The administrations of Louis Harvey and Edward Salomon were completely defined by war. Lastly, James Lewis saw the end of the war and worked to bring the state back to a peaceful normality.

These four governors had many commonalities. All four men were a part of the Republican Party, in order to conform to the political pressure of the time. This gave them a connection with Lincoln which let people assume the governor was working for the war effort
alongside the President. All of these men governed in a way that would best serve the civilian and soldier population of Wisconsin. Raising up regiments of volunteers was a priority for the state government throughout the war. As the war progressed, each governor focused on the well-being of Wisconsin soldiers. With all four politicians governing in a way to better the welfare of the people during the war, the state government becomes a part of the homefront in Madison. The actions of the Wisconsin state government reflects the focus of the Wisconsin citizenry. Like all politicians, many of the practices employed by the governors were done to make their constituents happy. While supporting the war, governors made citizens aware that the state of Wisconsin was focused on the war effort. Their words and actions were manifestations of the ideology and opinion of the state as a whole. During the war, the state government was a leader in the war effort to preserve the Union. Governors worked to support the national government and Lincoln. Their support would often convince the citizenry to advocate for the president and his policies. The state government is an essential part to making Madison a homefront. Without the support of the government, the people would be acting without a formal leader. It would be difficult for the state to send any volunteers to fight on the battlefront or to organize a homefront in Madison.

A government fighting a limited war is very different compared to one that is fighting a total war. In a limited war, the state government would undoubtedly work hard to fight for the best interests of Wisconsin. However, this fight would not be as publicized compared to if it was a total war. In a Republican style of government, politicians speak and act on the issues that are most significant to the people. In an effort to gain political support, governors would focus on issues in Madison and would not necessarily put much effort on the war. It is not as
though they would ignore the war altogether, but it would not be an issue the governor saw as a number one priority. However, with this war being a total war, governors did see the importance of focusing on the war effort and doing all they could to protecting their constituents.

**Alexander Randall (Republican, 1858-1861)**

During the Civil War, politicians were faced with an issue none of them have faced before. A political movement in the United States led to a secession of thirteen states from the country. It was realized that this concern would envelop all political discussion and movements until the conflict was over. Some politicians tried to focus the efforts of their colleagues by making sure they were focused on the war. In a speech to the State Legislature, Governor Randall stated “it is a time when party politics sink into insignificance, and when the patriotism of Legislators and of the people must be manifested by works.”

This could be done through partisan work that brings time, effort, and resources to the people of Wisconsin and the war.

In his first year of office, Governor Alexander Randall began to prepare for the possibility of hostilities. The inevitability of war stemmed from the question of slavery and states’ rights. It would be impossible for an American who lived in 1858 to imagine the

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40 Alexander Randall, “To the Honorable the Legislature,” April 15, 1861, in Thwaites, 47.
magnitude of the conflict that would later tear apart the country. Aggression was expected by people like Randall and was met with some preparation.

During the Joint Convention of the Wisconsin Legislature of 1858, Randall spoke on the state’s organized militia. At the time, any state military force was largely unimpressive. They lacked adequate supplies and training. Randall asked the Senate and Assembly for “more adequate provision . . . for the organization of the militia system of the State.”41 Wisconsin had the ability to arm their militia with high-powered rifles and to train the men in new military tactics. Randall saw the use for this and thought the state could appropriate $24,000 worth of rifles for the militia.42 Randall did all he could to protect his state and to make sure his men were prepared for a possible war over the question of slavery and states’ rights. In his speech, Randall quoted Wisconsin Law saying, “It shall be the duty of the Governor, and of all the subordinate officers of the State to maintain and defend its sovereignty and jurisdiction.”43 The governor’s position was to uphold the Constitution, preserve the Union, and protect Wisconsin citizens. The possibility of war was an issue that was important to the state government stationed in Madison.

Request for Troops

On April 15, 1861, Abraham Lincoln requested forty-two thousand volunteers to join the military to fight the Southern rebellion. Lincoln specifically asked for one regiment from the

43 Randall, “Annual Message,” Jan. 15, 1858, quoting Wisconsin Revised Statutes, 1849, Chap. 1, Sec. 3; Thwaites, 13.
state of Wisconsin. The day after the president’s proclamation, Governor Randall issued his own call for volunteers. He explained how the military would protect the people and property of the United States and preserve the union. Randall stated, “A demand made upon Wisconsin by the President of the United States for aid to sustain the Federal arm, must meet with a prompt response.” The Wisconsin government took the responsibility of raising troops upon itself. Governor Randall’s focus during his administration turned to the war effort and raising troops to fight for the Union. Only five days after his initial proclamation, Randall praised the men of Wisconsin for the high numbers of volunteers. In that time, twenty-nine companies were formed around Wisconsin, two of which were from Madison. The amount of men that volunteered for service actually surpassed the initial quota set for the state of Wisconsin by the federal government. Ten companies were formed into the 1st Wisconsin Infantry Volunteers Regiment. Randall asked the rest of the men to be patient and ready for the call for more troops. Raising troops was a very important aspect of Randall’s administration. Organizing and motivating the men of Wisconsin to fight in war was a common theme throughout the war. It was a burden the Government of Wisconsin had to undertake during the Civil War. A standing army was not gathered on the frontier in the United States until this time.

**Concern for Safety of State**

At the end of April 1861, a growing concern for the Government of Wisconsin was the safety of its people. The state was only allowed to raise one regiment according to the War Department. Randall believed that the people of Wisconsin would begin to create their own

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46 Alexander Randall, “To the Patriotic People of Wisconsin,” April 22, 1861, in Thwaites, 50.
militias because of their impatience. To him, the people would not be content with only one regiment. Randall believed it was important to raise more troops to protect the border states and the Northwestern states. Opinions in the North believed that business and commerce along the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers were vulnerable to attacks from Southern military forces. Even on the frontier, the Wisconsin Government was concerned with the safety and welfare of its people. On May 3, representatives from seven states met on this issue; Wisconsin sent Governor Randall. After the conference, Randall was delegated to write to Lincoln explaining the concerns of the westerly states. In a letter to Lincoln, Randall asked for an additional 300,000 men, otherwise the citizenry would “act for themselves.” Lincoln anticipated the conference and called for forty more regiments of volunteers. For a time, this would give Randall and the other governors some comfort.

The State Legislature was involved with the raising of volunteers alongside Randall. At the 1861 annual session of the Legislature, an act authorized Governor Randall to raise troops. The soldiers were to “aid in maintaining the Union and the supremacy of the laws, or to suppress rebellion or insurrection, or to repel invasion within the United States.” The State Senate and Assembly created acts that were purposed to give the Wisconsin Government more authority and agency in the raising of soldiers. Many new laws were enacted that would not have happened if the state was not concerned about the war.

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49 Current, 300-01.
At the close of his second term, Alexander Randall decided he had had enough of being the leader of the state of Wisconsin. After his administration ended in January of 1862, Abraham Lincoln appointed Randall as minister-resident in Rome, Italy. Randall returned to the United States later that year and held different civic-service positions to the end of his life when he died in 1872.

**Louis P. Harvey (Republican, Jan. 6, 1862-Apr. 19, 1862)**

When Harvey began his administration in January of 1862, he made it clear that the war was the most important issue to Wisconsin. He purposed the people of Wisconsin to “meet and crush the greatest, and . . . the most causeless and wicked rebellion the world has seen.”

During his administration, Congress levied a tax to pay for the war effort. Harvey worked actively to use tax money to offset the state’s claims. Governor Harvey was also very concerned with Wisconsin troops on the battlefield. Unfortunately, this would lead to his death. After the Battle of Shiloh, Harvey went to the battlefield bringing medical supplies and surgeons to aid the Wisconsin soldiers. On April 19, only four months into his administration, Harvey slipped in between two riverboats and fell into the river. Eventually, his body was found sixty-

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51 Thwaites, 3.
53 Current, 310.
five miles downstream. If it was not for the war, a tragedy like this would most likely not have happened. Governor Harvey took a risk by entering the battlefield in order to help Wisconsinites. He gave his life in service of his state and country.

**Edward Salomon (Republican, 1862-1864)**

Edward Salomon emigrated from his home country, Germany, to Wisconsin in 1849 and began his path towards the governorship of Wisconsin. He studied law in Milwaukee and aligned himself with the Republican Party when public opinion of the North began to swing to the right. In 1861, he was elected as the Lieutenant Governor in the Harvey administration. With the drowning of Harvey in 1862, Salomon was swiftly sworn in as the eighth Governor of Wisconsin. Salomon’s entire administration was defined by war. At his inauguration, Wisconsin was fully involved in the war; the idea that the war would end soon were forgotten. The war had been raging on for almost a year and there looked to be no end in sight. Salomon would continue the work of previous administrations and would see the growing numbers of casualties that no one thought possible prior to the war.

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54 Current, 310.
Volunteers from Madison

Salomon continued the call for more volunteers throughout his administration. Answering the call of the federal government was a very important part of the governorship during the war. He asked the people of Wisconsin to “remain united and true to our flag, our government and our constitution.”\textsuperscript{55} Only two days after he became governor, Salomon passed on a proclamation from President Lincoln about raising more troops. Twenty-four thousand Wisconsinites had already volunteered for service. To help organize the Twentieth Regiment, Salomon proclaimed:

Men of Wisconsin! I appeal to you to come forward and rally around the flag of our country, for its aids and support and for the aid and support of our brothers now in arms against the fierce and desperate battalions of the enemy.\textsuperscript{56}

Personal appeals were often met with great volunteer turnouts. Men of Wisconsin did respond well to Salomon’s plead and organized into the Twentieth Wisconsin Infantry Regiment. Over the course of the war, fifty-three infantry regiments would be mobilized from Wisconsin.\textsuperscript{57}

The government was also visible during the war in the eyes of the public. After the Twentieth Wisconsin Infantry Volunteers Regiment was organized in Madison, Governor Salomon attended a parade put on by the newly formed unit. The regiment presented him with the Flag of Wisconsin. In a display of patriotism or encouragement, the colonel of the Twentieth Regiment gave three cheers for Governor Salomon. Salomon responded by giving three cheers for the Union. According to the \textit{Wisconsin Daily State Journal}, the event was

\textsuperscript{56} Edward Salomon, “AN APPEAL FOR VOLUNTEERS,” May 24, 1862, in Thwaites, 117.
attended by a “large concourse of people.” Salomon joined the rest of the citizenry in sending off this regiment which would leave for St. Louis the next morning. Through an event like this, Salomon became more recognizable and transparent to the general populace. To a normal observer, it would seem like the governor cared about the war and more importantly, the people who were going to fight in it.

**Aid for Families of Soldiers**

The government was also very concerned with the citizenry on the homefront. In March of 1863, Salomon had realized the pain and suffering of many people living in Wisconsin. Widows and families of soldiers who were on the battlefront or had been killed in action were in desperate need of assistance. Many of these women and children were dependent on the man to provide for the family. He asked that five dollars a month should be given to widows and families of soldiers who died for six months after the death or until a pension from the Federal Government came in. The state government and its officials cared about the people of Wisconsin and the effects of war on the citizenry. The legislature agreed with Salomon and passed Chapter 264 on April 4, which appropriated money to assist the grieving desperate families.

**Commander-in-Chief**

As the Governor of Wisconsin, Salomon had the added responsibility of being the State’s Commander-in-Chief. Section 4, Article 5 of the Wisconsin Constitution enumerates the powers

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59 Edward Salomon, “To the Hon. the Senate and Assembly,” March 14, 1863, in Thwaites, 117.
of the governor by stating that he shall be “commander in chief of the military and naval forces of the state.” When Salomon took the job in 1862, he took on the responsibility of directing the military on the homefront. The people of Wisconsin expected the governor to become the Commander-in-Chief and protect the state. The gubernatorial position transformed with the Civil War and brought the military into a focus of the government and people. This helped to transform Madison into a homefront. Governor Salomon influenced the city by using his power to appoint military officers and to appeal for movements of men and material around the state.

In November of 1862, Salomon wrote a letter to Captain J. Fartand who was stationed in Milwaukee. He ordered Fartand to bring cannons and ammunition from Milwaukee to Camp Randall in Madison. Salomon signed the letter “By order of the Com-in-Chief.” Salomon took interest in the military and acted on it by ordering officers to carry out his agenda. His actions were a response to the war coming to Wisconsin through the creation of the homefront.

Governor Salomon helped cultivate the homefront concept in Wisconsin throughout his administration. However, his effort to help the people of Wisconsin did not earn him a second term; the Republican Party actually chose another candidate during the primaries. The Wisconsin historian, Reuben Thwaites, pointed to Salomon’s policies of appointing men with military experience as officers as a primary reason for losing the election. Political leaders in Wisconsin wanted to be placed as officers themselves. After the election, Salomon retired into private life, returned to Germany, and died in 1909.

61 W.I. Constitution, art. 5, sec. 4
62 Letter from Edward Salomon to Capt. J. Fartand, Nov. 21, 1862, Wis Mss Fk.
63 Thwaites, 115.
James Taylor Lewis (Republican, 1864-1866)

James Lewis, born in New York in 1819, came to Wisconsin and worked as a county judge, district attorney, and was a member of the Wisconsin’s Second Constitutional Convention. In 1863, the Republican Party nominated him as their candidate in the gubernatorial election in place of the incumbent Salomon. Lewis’ administration continued Salomon’s work of raising troops for the war effort and taking care of the soldiers who were mobilized on the homefront and battlefront. Along with the other governors during the war, Lewis’ actions speak to the importance of the war effort to the people in Wisconsin.

National Cemetery at Gettysburg

The first three days of July 1863 saw one of the deadliest battles the United States would ever be a part of. At the Battle of Gettysburg, the Army of the Potomac suffered more than 22,000 casualties. In response to this national tragedy, the United States created a National Cemetery just outside of Gettysburg. Abraham Lincoln delivered his famous Gettysburg Address here in November 1863. Having lost men in the battle, people from the state of Wisconsin wanted to assist in the payment and maintenance of the cemetery. Early in 1864, Governor Lewis called for the organization of a committee purposed to appropriate funds

64 Thwaites, 199-200.
to pay for Wisconsin’s share of a National Cemetery at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.\textsuperscript{66} The legislature approved of the plan and raised $2,523 for the cemetery.\textsuperscript{67} The war effort brought a small town in Pennsylvania into the focus of Madison. The war influenced people to care about the battlefront and to memorialize the soldiers who fought on it.

**Surrender of Lee**

After four years of bloody conflict, Wisconsinites saw the glorious result of the Civil War. On April 9, 1865, Robert E. Lee surrendered the Army of Northern Virginia to Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox Court House, Virginia. In that month, all hostilities would end between Northern and Southern military units. Over the course of the war, 3,802 Wisconsin soldiers were killed in action.\textsuperscript{68} People living in cities like Madison organized parades, parties, and galas to celebrate the end of the war. Governor Lewis sent a proclamation to the people of Wisconsin writing, “I am permitted to transmit to you the official intelligence . . . of the surrender of General Lee and his army . . . Let us rejoice and thank the Ruler of the Universe for victory and the prospect of an honorable peace.”\textsuperscript{69} Lewis continued his policy of caring for troops as they came back to Madison. He was an advocate for orphan’s homes of those whose parents died during the war. After his term expired, Lewis decided to retire to private life and not attempt to win a second term.

From 1861 to 1865, the governors of the State of Wisconsin worked their administrations around the Civil War. Their speech and actions were focused on the war effort.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[66] James T. Lewis, “To the Honorable the State and Assembly,” Feb. 18, 1864, in Thwaites, 214-15.
\item[67] Reuben Gold Thwaites, *Civil War Messages and Proclamations of Wisconsin War Governors* (Madison: Wisconsin History Commission, 1912), 215n.
\item[69] James T. Lewis, “To the Honorable the Legislature,” Apr. 10, 1865, in Thwaites, 247.
\end{footnotes}
They gave their time, effort, and resources to the mobilization of the homefront. This reflects the value of the war of the Wisconsin citizenry. Governors acted to please the people who wanted the war to succeed and also worked to convince the entire state that it was important to fight for the war effort. Without the drive that the state government could give, it would be very difficult for the homefront to become organized and focused on how to best fight the war from home. Government involvement is an essential part of making Madison a homefront.

**Camp Randall and Soldier Interaction**

While Madison was a place which was very distant from the battlefront, there was a large military presence in the city. Madison acted as a hub for the many companies and regiments that would leave Wisconsin to fight the war. Men marched in file on roads lined with delighted civilians. For most military units, the state training grounds just outside of Madison was a first step to leaving the state. These training grounds were called Camp Randall and would be the place where over 70,000 soldiers were mustered. With a military camp right next to Madison, the interaction between soldiers and the civilian populace helped to create a homefront. Many citizens would travel to Camp Randall to see camp life or a company practicing drill. This acted as a glimpse for the civilians of Madison to see what the military was like. Soldiers also visited the civilians in the city often. Men would receive passes from their officers and would spend the day or night in town. Those who either did not want to or could not visit Camp Randall still experienced some interaction with the military. Through the interaction between civilians and military, the people of Madison regarded the war as a higher

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priority. Not only were the people with family members in the military concerned with the war. Everyone in Madison cared because they were talking, seeing, and doing business with soldiers. It helped to inform the citizenry about companies and regiments that would go to fight on the battlefront. Civilians in Madison were given more motivation to support the war through the interaction with soldiers. This rise in motivation is evidence that shows the city was a homefront. The people cared more about the war and the soldiers who fought in it compared to if Camp Randall was not in Madison. The communication that the military presence opened helped to inform the citizenry and give the military more transparency.

If the war would have been defined as a limited war, the relationship between the civilian populace and military personnel would have been very different. Only family members and close friends would visit forts and camps. The rest of the population would be focused on their city, family, and job. Parades would be more of a novelty for people instead of an event that generated a feeling of pride for country. In a limited war, there would be much less direct

“Old Camp Randall, Madison, Wisconsin” by John Gaddis. 1861
http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/whi/fullRecord.asp?id=5601
interaction between the two sides. Few soldiers would visit the city of Madison; if they did, their presence would relatively go unnoticed. Since this war was a total war, the civilian population was influenced by soldier interaction and developed a motivation to fight for the war on the homefront.

**Creation of Camp**

Soon after Wisconsin began raising regiments to fight, the state government realized there needed to be a camp around Madison for soldiers. This camp would be used as a launching point before regiments were mobilized and left for the battlefront. It would also be used as training grounds for companies before they left for war. In late April 1861, Governor Randall appointed S. Park Coon as colonel of the 2nd Wis. Vols. Regiment. One of his first duties as colonel was to inspect fairgrounds offered by the Wisconsin Agricultural Society as a possible camp for military use. Only a mile and a half west of Madison, Coon found the ten acres to be an efficient site for a camp. He requested that the land should be used as a training ground. Randall agreed and proudly named the new camp after himself.\(^7^1\) The site would be utilized throughout the war as a hub for the movement of troops. It acted as a place where soldiers and citizens interacted that would not have been in place if the camp was not located there.

**Visits from Citizens**

While still preparing the area for the hundreds of soldiers that would come through, members of the 2nd Wis. Vols. Regiment arrived on the Camp Randall premises on May 1, 1861. Knowing soldiers would be coming, many citizens of Madison came to watch the companies pour in. For many Wisconsinites, this would be the largest collection of soldiers they had seen

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\(^7^1\) Mattern, 3; *Wisconsin Argus and Democrat*, April 25, 1861.
up to this point. Before the war, not as many soldiers were involved in the militia; they were much less organized compared to a regular infantry regiment. It would truly be a sight to see for the citizenry. Seeing the soldiers for the first time most likely gave the people a patriotic spirit and possibly a feeling of invincibility. The Wisconsin pride ran deep in the feelings of the civilians.

When soldiers began training at Camp Randall, citizens were often invited to watch drill ceremonies. It was very common to see civilians observing and visiting in the camp.\textsuperscript{72} Citizens came in droves to watch the daily dress parades. These events would invoke patriotism, bravery, and pride into the hearts of the people. In August of 1862, the \textit{Wisconsin Daily State Journal} published an article about the 20\textsuperscript{th} Wis. Vols. stationed at Camp Randall. The editor writes that he visited the previous night and thought the regiment “appeared remarkably well.”\textsuperscript{73} The article went on detailing the schedule of events at camp. The people of Madison had many drills to choose from including the Squad Drills at 6:00 in the morning to the Dress Parade at 6:00 in the afternoon. Oliver W. Norton, a Pennsylvanian soldier, described the soldier’s life at camp well in a letter to a friend. He wrote, “The first thing in the morning is drill. Then drill, then drill again. Then drill, drill, a little more drill. Then drill, and lastly drill. Between drills, we drill and sometimes stop to eat a little and have roll-call.”\textsuperscript{74} Norton’s observations about camp life would have been very similar to conditions at Camp Randall. The relationship between citizens and Camp Randall seems to have been strong considering the amount of visits the camp received from the civilian population.

\textsuperscript{72} Mattern, 13.
\textsuperscript{73} “Matters at the Camp,” \textit{Wisconsin Daily State Journal}, August 22, 1862.
\textsuperscript{74} Oliver W. Norton, letter, October 9, 1861; quoted in James I. Robertson, \textit{Soldiers Blue and Gray} (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1988), 48.
Soldiers in Madison

In addition to civilians visiting Camp Randall, some soldiers would take the opportunity to visit Madison. Although it was not the most exciting city in the United States, many soldiers held a generally positive view on the city. One soldier claimed the city was dull but also wrote that “you might travel hundreds of miles and not find a handsomer location for a city.”\textsuperscript{75} Soldiers could interact with the civilians by securing passes to go downtown to supplement their rations, visit breweries and other places that small farm towns would not have.

The many interactions that the military and civilian population had during the war led to some conflicts. Soldiers tended to become rowdy when they came into town and drank. There were some cases of drunken soldiers destroying property and hurting civilians. On June 13, the newspaper \textit{Wisconsin Argus and Democrat} argued that citizens could no longer walk the streets without fear of being attacked by soldiers who were drinking.\textsuperscript{76} The \textit{Madison Evening Patriot} wrote that soldiers came in large groups to events like the local theater and acted poorly.\textsuperscript{77}

Before regiments could be mobilized onto the battlefront, people in Madison liked to do as much as they could for the parting soldiers. Local companies and businesses would often host special luncheons and suppers for regiments prior to leaving Wisconsin. Companies used women to furnish most of the food for these events. In July 1861, one such meeting was held at the Assembly Hall in the Capitol Building to entertain the 4\textsuperscript{th} and 5\textsuperscript{th} Volunteer Infantry Regiments.\textsuperscript{78} For this event, women were needed to feed the six thousand citizens who

\begin{footnotes}
\item[75] Mattern, 5; Aured Larke MSS, Archives Division, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, June 5, 1861.
\item[76] Mattern, 10.
\item[77] Mattern, 12; \textit{Madison Evening Patriot}, May 10, 1861.
\item[78] \textit{Correspondence of Wisconsin Volunteers}, collected by E. B. Quiner, 211.
\end{footnotes}
attended; most came from surrounding towns and villages. People from Madison wanted to honor the soldiers stationed at Camp Randall and show them they cared about them. Prior to this meeting, soldiers grew tired of poor rations. The dinner was purposed to show appreciation for the soldiers from the citizenry. One soldier wrote later in life that this particular event changed many attitudes of soldiers. He wrote that his regiment developed a “warm spot” for the people in Madison who sponsored the dinner.\textsuperscript{79} The people of Madison used these events to show the Wisconsin soldiers that they were behind them in their efforts.

By 1863, fewer events were planned for soldiers when they left Madison. The city began to get used to the mustering of regiments leaving to fight for the war. However, loved ones still attended the send-offs. In a letter to his sister, Chauncey Cooke wrote that “the sweethearts and wives of the boys from all parts of the state swarmed about the station to say good bye.”\textsuperscript{80} As civilians grew more tired of war and hoped for a resolution, less patriotism was displayed in the mustering of regiments.

**Confederate POWs**

In addition to being a site for training Union soldiers before they left for battle, Camp Randall was also used as a hospital for wounded and sick Confederate prisoners of war. In April 1862, the first group of Confederates arrived and was met by a large audience of Madison civilians. Members of the 15\textsuperscript{th} Wis. Vols. Regiment escorted the sick and weary prisoners to Camp Randall. Their presence defied some citizen’s predictions which stated that the

\textsuperscript{79} Mattern, 22; Philip Cheek, *History of Sauk County Riflemen, Known as Company A 6\textsuperscript{th} Wisconsin* (Madison: Democrat Printing Co., 1909), 15ff.

Confederates would look alien-like.\textsuperscript{81} Many civilians around Madison came to the camp to observe the enemy. George Paddock described the 1,500 prisoners who came to Camp Randall as “the darndest looking set of men that you ever set your eyes on.”\textsuperscript{82} He also claimed that it would be worth it for any person living around Madison to come to Camp Randall, if only just to see the Southerners. In comparison to the march from the battlefront to Madison, conditions of the camp seemed to be favorable to the Confederates. Prisoners could write letters home, were given reading material, food, and had access to a medical facility.\textsuperscript{83} On May 19, the Confederate prisoners were sent to Camp Douglas located in Illinois. Only 150 would be too sick to move and stayed at Camp Randall.\textsuperscript{84} Paddock later described the prisoners as reluctant to leave Camp Randall and were said to be in “fine spirits” leaving the city.\textsuperscript{85} According to the Wisconsin Weekly Argus, one hundred prisoners died by May 27.\textsuperscript{86} Despite the seemingly healthy place that Camp Randall was for prisoners, many continued to die from sickness and battle wounds. Paddock once wrote that the Confederates “dye off like rotten sheep.”\textsuperscript{87} When prisoners died at Camp Randall, they were buried outside of camp at Forest Hill Cemetery.

Here, one hundred and thirty-five Confederate prisoners would be buried in a section named “Confederate Rest.”\textsuperscript{88} The Confederate soldiers who stayed in Camp Randall in 1861 influenced the civilian population by showing them who the enemy was. Many preconceived notions were

\textsuperscript{81} Mattern, 62-63.
\textsuperscript{82} Mattern, 63; George Paddock MSS, April 27, 1862.
\textsuperscript{83} Mattern, 64.
\textsuperscript{84} Mattern, 67.
\textsuperscript{85} Mattern, 68; Paddock MSS, May 5, 1862.
\textsuperscript{86} Mattern, 67; Wisconsin Weekly Argus, May 21, 1862.
\textsuperscript{87} Mattern, 65; Paddock MSS, May 5, 1862.
overturned through interaction and watching the prisoners. The southerners helped Madison to have a clearer perspective on the war.

Camp Randall affected the people living in Madison in a number of ways. They gained a larger understanding of who made up the Confederate States of America and the soldiers that fought against the Union. Civilians also interacted with soldiers from Wisconsin who gave a level of transparency to the military that would not be seen in a limited war. Soldiers came into Madison and developed positive and some negative relationships with civilians. These people gained a higher sense of patriotism and motivation to support the war through the interactions with soldiers. Camp Randall was essential in the foundation and cultivation of the relationship between civilians in Madison and soldiers who were passing through. Madison became a homefront through Camp Randall and the soldier-civilian interaction that came from it.

Involvement of Women

The most important aspect of the homefront in Madison was the involvement and mobilization of women. Most able-bodied men of age either volunteered or were eventually drafted to fight in the military. The vast majority of citizens who were left in Madison during the war were women. For a city to be considered a homefront, women have to be involved in the war effort. The motivation and objectives of women had to be focused on the war. If women were not involved in the war as a whole, it would be very difficult for organizations, relief rallies, and support services to operate. Women fell in line with a feeling of patriotism and mobilized themselves to do what they could. Many women did their part by doing what was best for the war effort. This could include donating fabric, making meals for soldiers, or
building a military hospital. Much of the success and comfort of men on the battlefront came from the efforts of women. Women sent letters and supplies that helped encourage many soldiers. This essential part of the citizenry was motivated in the war to support the state’s effort. They helped create a homefront in Madison and are the most essential component of what makes up a homefront.

Women would have had a very different role in Madison if the Civil War had been a limited war. Only family members would have the motivation to give their time, energy, and resources to the war effort. They would not have the motivation to organize themselves into social societies that would give money and services to soldiers and families. There would be very few stories of exceptional women who gave back to their state and country. Since the Civil War was a total war, these women were mobilized in Madison and helped to create a homefront. In this city, women fought the war from their homes, at meeting places, and even left the state to serve the country outside Wisconsin borders.

**Gov. Randall’s Appeal to Women**

After the fall of Fort Sumter on April 13, 1861, the inevitability of war was explicitly realized. The threats, predictions, and fears of war were evident on April 15 of that year, when President Abraham Lincoln called for 42,034 volunteers to suppress the “insurrectionary combinations now existing in several States for opposing the laws of the Union.”

Men from the North volunteered admirably to fight for the Federal cause. Alongside the raising of men to fight for the country, women were also addressed on the brink of war. On April 22, 1861, Governor Alexander Randall called for women to serve their state and country. He proclaimed

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that women “can give strength and courage and warm sympathies and cheering words to those who go to do battle for all that is dear to us here.”\(^90\) For the inevitable struggle that was ahead, states wanted to use every available resource for the war effort. The support of women was a valuable resource during the war. They helped to encourage enlistments, support soldiers in the field, and became the majority in the homefront. Wisconsin women heard Randall’s proclamation and responded in force to support the war effort. Apart from asking for communicable support, Randall also asked women to give lint, bandages, blankets, and quilts to the War Department.\(^91\) Women donated many articles of linen from their own home and were not connected with any organized society. They were mobilized for the war effort and helped to create a homefront in Madison.

**Patriotism and Encouraging Enlistment**

During the 1860s, warfare in the United States was conducted primarily by males. Women were not allowed to enlist or participate in the military; except in nursing positions. It is very likely that if given the chance, women would have taken up the rifle. However, since this was suppressed for women, they openly supported the war and encouraged men to volunteer. In Ethel Hurn’s study of Wisconsin women during the war, she quoted one woman in saying, “I would almost despise my husband and would think him a sneak, if he hadn't gone.”\(^92\) Women influenced public opinion to pressure men into volunteering for the military. A man could be considered a coward if they stayed at home while his fellow countrymen were going off to fight. This essential part in the encouragement of volunteering gave women a patriotic identity which

\(^90\) Alexander Randall, “To the Patriotic Women of Wisconsin,” April 22, 1861, in Thwaites, 51.
\(^91\) Alexander Randall, “To the Ladies of Wisconsin,” April 27, 1861, in Thwaites, 52.
\(^92\) Hurn, 5.
influenced them to act as a foundation for the Union. One member of the Twelfth Wisconsin Volunteers Regiment wrote, “We all knew that, as a matter of course, every good girl was a patriotic girl.” Many men volunteered to fight in the war to impress women. Women thought supporting the men who fought on the battlefront as a duty to the country.

When regiments were organizing in Wisconsin, women assisted in the creation of the symbolic representations of the units. During the Civil War, flags were used as a marker for the placement of the regiment and as an object of identity for the men. Many banners were inscribed on the stripes with gold letters. They would have the name of the regiment and battles the unit fought in along the stripes. These flags, or colors, were sewn by hand with any red, white, and blue cloth that was available. Women took on the task to create the ceremonial and practical representation of regiments. These flags are symbols of women and their involvement in the war effort. Regiments carried flags throughout their fighting on the battlefront, which were sewn by the women of the homefront.

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Before regiments could be mobilized onto the battlefront, people in Madison liked to do as much as they could for the parting soldiers. Local companies and businesses would often host special luncheons and suppers for regiments prior to leaving Wisconsin. Companies used women to furnish most of the food for these events. In July 1861, one such meeting was held at the Assembly Hall in the Capitol Building to entertain the 4th and 5th Volunteer Infantry Regiments.95 For this event, women were needed to feed the six thousand citizens who attended; most came from surrounding towns and villages. Women were also in high demand during a dance following the supper. Out in the parade grounds, young soldiers valued dancing with women who they would most likely not see in a long time. Women promoted troop morale by cooking local foods and dancing with soldiers before they left for the homefront.

**Writing to Soldiers**

After regiments were mobilized and had arrived on the battlefront, women continued to communicate with soldiers through written letters. As a primary method of communication during the 1860s, letters helped soldiers to get a taste from home and helped women to stay in touch with loved ones. Women on the homefront were instrumental in this interaction and helped the morale of soldiers out on the field. Letters were a great way for women to find out what the lives of their loved ones were like on the battlefront. Women were comforted by the ability to communicate with fathers, brothers, and companions. They also knew that writing letters were beneficial for the soldiers. In her reminiscences of the war, Mary Livermore wrote that “Nothing gives more joy to a soldier . . . than a letter to break up the monotony of our peculiar

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95 *Correspondence of Wisconsin Volunteers*, collected by E. B. Quiner, 211.
style of life, and remind him of home and kindred spirits." Soldiers who had their name called at Mail Call were always excited to receive a letter from a loved one from home. These letters could detail events from home, movements of the grand armies, or sweet nothings designed to encourage any man. Letters were filled with anything women found relevant. One lady, named Emilie, wrote to her partner James K. Proudfit and discussed the attitude and events of Madison. In December of 1862, Emilie claimed that “the groceries [were] much high[er] than they used to be.” Women wrote of the changes Madison was going through. The many effects the war had on the city were noticeable and were considered important enough to add to a letter.

Women also sent letters to soldiers who they did not know. Writing letters was viewed as a civic duty for women. The historian Ethel Hurn cited one woman who described this feeling, “We girls felt it a patriotic duty not to leave any of the boys unsolaced by cheery and newsy letters.” Women knew the effect their letters would have on soldiers on the battlefront. These writings provided a service to the military by reminding men what they were fighting for. When men did not receive letters, many grew impatient. Mary Livermore quoted a letter from a man who signed as “E. G.” E. G. writes on the importance of letters to soldiers:

We do not get letters enough. Do the folks at home write and do the letters miscarry? or do they forget us? You can have no idea what a blessing letters from home are to the men in camp. They make us better men, better soldiers.

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96 Mary E. Livermore, My Story of the War (Hartford, CT: A. D. Worthington and Company, 1888), 646.
97 Letter from Emilie to James Proudfit, December 4, 1862, in James Kerr Proudfit, Correspondence, 1861-1865, Wis Mss 158S, MAD 4 /16/C5.
98 Hurn, 95.
E. G. and other men appreciated the letters almost to a level of dependence. Letters raised morale of those who received them and lowered the morale of those who came away with nothing from Mail Call. Women answered the call for letters. They provided a service for the soldiers on the battlefront by giving them hope. Writing letters also helped to bring the war into focus for many women who might not be as concerned with the battlefront. Women served the war effort by writing letters.

**Sanitary Commission and Women’s Organizations**

After the start of the war, it became apparent that cleanliness and sanitation was a necessity in the forts and camps of the Union Army. On June 9, 1861, Secretary of War Simon Cameron proposed the organization of a United States Sanitary Commission to facilitate and regulate the improvement of military bases. As stated by Cameron, it would be a “Commission of Inquiry of Advice in respect of the Sanitary Interests of the United States Forces.” Only three days later, President Lincoln approved the organization of the commission. The Sanitary Commission led to many societies and organizations meant to carry out the purpose of the commission. Women played a large role in the founding and meeting of these societies. Some were exclusively created for women.

One of these societies created by and for women was the Ladies’ Aid Society. Organized after the founding of the Sanitary Commission, the Ladies’ Aid Society was designed to gather women to support the war effort. Madison chapters, and others like it, aimed to do this by

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100 Simon Cameron, “Sanitary Commission Ordered by Secretary of War, and Approved by the President,” *Documents of the U.S. Sanitary Commission* 1, no. 2 (New York: The Commission, 1866), 6.

having social parties and events that gathered food and supplies. The society would later send care packages on to Wisconsin soldiers in the field.

In July of 1862, the Wisconsin Daily State Journal published numerous articles and advertisements narrating the efforts of the Ladies’ Aid Society. On July 21, the writer described entertainment that would be had at the Van Bergen’s Hall. The party’s entry fee was priced at fifty cents and asked the public to attend to provide the means to support soldiers on the field. The party aimed to gather money and supplies to pass it on to wounded soldiers on the battlefront. The Journal declared that men who do not purchase a ticket to the party are “ungallant.” It also praised the members of the Madison Ladies’ Aid Society as having “thus far rendered great service in forwarding relief to Wisconsin soldiers in hospital, and should be heartily and generously encouraged.” Parties such as this were well attended and garnered much attention in Madison. A year after this meeting, a Madison woman named Emilie wrote a letter to someone out of the state about a social party that would soon be held in the city.103 Not long after the party was held, another article was written in the Journal asking for more supplies. This article described more needs of the societies and how they could help. The article asked for shirts, sheets, rags, slippers, and a little money. Readers were directed to send the donations directly to the President of the Madison Ladies’ Aid Society, Mrs. B. F. Hopkins. She would make sure that the supplies would find wounded soldiers in an orderly and timely fashion. The author of the article writes “Let not such calls from the Patriotic Ladies go [unheeded].”104 With the support of the local newspaper and through social events, the Ladies’

103 Letter from Emilie to James Proudfit, April 5, 1863, Wis Mss 158s.
Aid Society was successful in gathering supplies throughout the war. Later on in the year, the society sent a barrel full of supplies to hospitals in Washington, $75 to the Chicago Sanitary Committee, and $50 to the St. Louis Sanitary Committee. The Madison Ladies’ Aid Society showed the willingness of women to organize themselves to fight for the cause on the homefront by supporting the military through supplies and money.

Alongside the Ladies’ Aid Society, there were also organizations designed to support people on the battlefront and homefront. One of these groups was called the Ladies’ Union League. During the war, many women came to Camp Randall in Madison to say goodbye to their loved ones. They came in from the countryside and sometimes lacked the means to move back to their homes and became stuck in Madison. The Ladies’ Union League was created with these people, and others like them, in mind. The League clothed and fed over 200 destitute families in the Madison area. Women helped each other in times of crisis. For moral support, literate women would sometimes write or read aloud letters for uneducated women.

The Ladies’ Union League also helped to provide for soldiers on the battlefront. In December 1863, the League organized a party that brought in donations of firewood and vegetables; two essential commodities during the freezing winters. Officers asked for citizens to consider donating what they could to the war effort. The Ladies’ Union League created a pamphlet with help from Governor Salomon’s wife and Mrs. Hopkins, President of the Ladies’ Aid Society, entitled “Retrenchment, the Duty of the Women of the North.” It asked for people to give up what they could. The League writes “While the national Government was

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106 Hurn, 68.
107 Hurn, 68-69.
facing such an extraordinary levy upon its funds, it was the duty of every member of the Federal family personally to assist in meeting the demand.”

Women openly participated in this assistance to the country.

The assistance was very appreciated by the soldiers in the hospitals on the battlefront. President of the Ladies’ Union League in 1863, W. A. P. Morris received numerous letters from soldiers who wrote about the importance of the items that were sent. A man named Nelson Meeker wrote to Morris on August 9th writing “I shall ever thank you for the grateful letter you have sent me.” Alongside the joy that Meeker received when he got the letter, he was also upset over thievery. Apparently, the food baskets the Ladies’ Union League were sending him were so tempting and delicious that other soldiers would intercept the packages. Even with this misfortune, Meeker and soldiers like him were very appreciative of the work women had done for them. S. E. Wilson shared his letters with other soldiers and wrote how they “were glad to know that [they] are still remembered by [their] friends at home.”

Through helping families in Madison and writing letters to men on the battlefront, the Ladies’ Union League helped fight the Civil War.

Money Given to Women

Women whose husbands left to fight on the battlefront were a large component of the homefront. Most of these women did not have an occupation. Many stayed at home, raising

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110 S.E. Wilson to W.A.P. Morris, August 12, 1863, Ladies' Union League (Madison, Wis.) / Papers, 1862-1864, University of Wisconsin Digital Collections; Online facsimile at: http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/WI.LadiesUnion, visited on: 10/7/2010.
children and keeping the home together. With the breadwinner away from home, it became very difficult for women to get along. The primary source for pay was through the husband on the battlefield. Men would keep money they needed to survive on the front and would send back as much as he could. In many cases, this was not enough. To further help families on the homefront, the Wisconsin government gave five dollars a month with an additional two dollars a month per child.\textsuperscript{111} In addition to donations from the state, hometowns also gathered to raise funds for the women in Wisconsin. Madison was one of the cities that came out in force. On April 18, 1861, a meeting was held that amounted $7,490 for families.\textsuperscript{112} The people of Madison came together as a community to help those in need. Not only were women the backbone to many funding efforts, they were also the benefactors of donations.

**Cordelia Harvey**

Amongst the many women who gave up their time and resources for the war effort, one Madison woman stands above the rest; Cordelia Harvey. Harvey came into the political light when her husband, Louis P. Harvey, became Governor of Wisconsin in 1862. Cordelia and Louis both deeply cared for Wisconsin soldiers on the battlefront. They both visited many field hospitals near battlefields. After the Battle of Shiloh when Louis Harvey went to bring supplies for wounded soldiers, Cordelia accompanied him. As described before in this study, Louis P. Harvey slipped into the river and drowned leaving Cordelia a widow. Louis Harvey’s successor, Edward Salomon, appointed Cordelia Harvey to continue on with the late Harvey’s sanitarian work. Harvey took the challenge head on and worked throughout the war to help the soldiers

\textsuperscript{111} Hurn, 63.
\textsuperscript{112} William DeLoss Love, *Wisconsin in the War of the Rebellion* (Chicago, IL: Church and Goodman, Publishers, 1866), 130 as cited in Hurn, 63.
on the battlefront. She traveled to many field hospitals which housed Wisconsin soldiers in
attempt to evaluate the physical conditions and morale of troops. Harvey would later discuss
the hospitals with Governor Salomon.\footnote{Patricia G. Harrsch, “This Noble Monument”: The Story of the Soldiers’ Orphans’ Home, Wisconsin Magazine of History 76, no. 2 (Winter 1992-1993), 83.} She found that field hospitals did not meet to her
standards and believed that wounded Wisconsin soldiers should be able to receive treatment in
Wisconsin. However, most authorities were against this idea. Officials believed it would be
easier for soldiers to desert to their homes. Harvey with an “intense feeling that something
must be done” went to Washington to get what she wanted done.\footnote{Cordelia Harvey, “A Wisconsin Woman’s Picture of President Lincoln,” Wisconsin Magazine of History 1, no. 3 (March 1918), 241.} She went to President
Lincoln to approve the creation of military hospitals in the North. Harvey had to meet with
Lincoln multiple times to convince him of the necessity of Northern hospitals. She tried to
reason with him saying, “The people [of Wisconsin] cannot understand
why their friends are left to die,
when with proper care they might
live and do good service for their
country.”\footnote{Harvey, 248.} After meetings lasting
over three days, Lincoln decided to
allow the creation of military hospitals in the
North. He offered to name the hospital after
Cordelia, but she refused. She asked that it be named after her late husband. In October 1863,
the Harvey U.S. Army General Hospital opened for wounded Wisconsin soldiers.

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Over the next two years, soldiers would come to this hospital and receive great treatment. Cordelia Harvey was a patriot who gave all she could when she had lost almost everything. After the death of her husband, she worked to save as many soldiers as she could. Harvey worked to bring troops back to Wisconsin to heal. She is a model of Wisconsin women during the war and should be given credit for her work. Harvey is a prime example of what women could accomplish for the war effort during the Civil War. She is proof that women became soldiers on the homefront.

Higher Education

In the 1860s, very few women were in upper level education. Universities were primarily reserved for men. When the Civil War broke out, many current and prospective students of the University of Wisconsin in Madison enlisted into the military. This caused a major recruitment problem for the school’s regents. In 1863, the university decided to admit young women into the Normal Department.\textsuperscript{116} In one year, women became the majority in the student body at the university.\textsuperscript{117} For the next few years, women were introduced into the higher education culture. After the war ended and men began to come back to the homefront, more men came to the university. In 1865, University President John Sterling spoke on “apprehension” of women in the school. It was a general consensus amongst alumni that coeducation would cause the “standard of culture [to] be lowered.”\textsuperscript{118} In 1867, the Normal Department was closed.

\textsuperscript{116} Smith, 30.
\textsuperscript{118} Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., \textit{The University of Wisconsin: Its History and Its Alumni} (Madison: J.N. Purcell, 1900), 80, 86 as cited in McBride, 153.
While the closing of the Normal Department was a step backward for women in Madison, attending the University of Wisconsin for even a short time was a giant step forward. The Civil War transformed the women in Madison. The war gave women the opportunity to gain new ground and further themselves in the culture. Women were empowered and for the first time in Wisconsin were able to go to a university.

The strength which women found was not only discovered by those in higher education. Women in Madison were exposed to new opportunities to be more independent and advance women’s rights. In 1862, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, a poet who was popular both in Europe and the United States, wrote a poem entitled “Parting Lovers.” Browning narrated the feelings of many women who remained home when men left for the battlefront. She wrote

Heroic males the country bears,---
But daughters give up more than sons:
Flags wave, drums beat, and unawares
You flash your souls out with the guns,
And take your Heaven at once.

But we!—we empty heart and home
Of life’s life, love! We bear to think
You’re gone,—to feel you may not come,—
To hear the door-latch stir and clink,
Yet no more you! . . nor sink.\(^\text{119}\)

Women did not stand idly by as men went to fight the war on the battlefront. They were the symbolic soldiers on the homefront. They gave all they could to the war effort through donations to soldiers and families, by organizing societies, and through countless other labors. They, in essence, became the homefront. They fought for the war with all they had. Without

the participation of women in the war effort, the homefront would not have been a devoted front. Madison became a homefront largely from the work of women.

**Conclusion**

There are a multitude of ways that show Madison, Wisconsin was a homefront during the Civil War. When studying this, it is important to realize some central concepts. First, there is only a homefront because there is a battlefront. While the city appears to be geographically separated from the battlefront, it still maintained political and emotional ties to the war. The homefront and battlefront had an interdependent relationship. Madison was focused on the war and had a high motivation to expend their resources to preserve the Union. The battlefront would not have thrived if not for the support and foundation that people on the homefront gave. It is also important to realize that not every word spoken, or thought written was concerned about the war. In the midst of a total war, there is still room for extra-military concerns. However, even when people were not speaking or writing about the war, their city was influenced or burdened by the war. To some degree, the war was a cross that everyone had to bear.

During the Civil War, there were thousands of cities across the United States. Each of these experienced their own personal war and displayed different attributes and reactions to the fighting that tore apart the country. Madison, Wisconsin is only one example out of the many. This study would argue that large suppositions can be made through proving the city was a homefront during a total war. If this city which is so far geographically removed from the battlefront, than it is possible that other cities around the North experienced similar situations.
This is a limited study on the Civil War. There are many avenues historians could study beyond what was focused on in this paper. It would be interesting to work on other local histories of cities on the frontier such as Minneapolis, Detroit, or Chicago. To further this paper, studying the economic sector of Madison would help to give a better conclusion on the city during the war. Also, it would be fascinating to study the rural areas surrounding Madison and see how the war affected small town lives. With such a large topic to cover, it is no surprise that scholars have been studying the Civil War since its end in 1865. Historians have a duty to study city histories to gain a more complete understanding of the Civil War and of the people who lived through it.

Out of the many ways define Madison as a homefront during the Civil War; the four components studied in this paper are essential. The involvement of women is a key aspect because when men go to fight on the battlefront, women make up the majority of those left at home. Their efforts worked to see a result that best helped their family, Madison, and United States. The creation of a homefront demanded a sense of responsibility on the citizens who still lived in Madison. Women took up that responsibility head on. Their work adds to the argument that Madison was a homefront. Camp Randall and soldier interactions in Madison also built a homefront. The camp acted as a place of mobilization for regiments heading off to war but also as a place in which let civilians learn about the military. The transparency of the military around Madison gave citizens more reason to be concerned and informed about the war. This interaction between soldier and civilian argues that the city was a homefront. The role of the state government also helped to support the war. Governors worked to support the war thereby protecting Wisconsin soldiers and civilians. The administrations of governors
reflected the focus of the citizenry on the war effort leading to the conclusion that the state
government helped create a homefront in Madison. Also, the media was used to build an
information base in the people of Madison. Newspapers and photographs convinced many to
support the war and then informed civilians how they could fight the war from Madison. It was
used throughout the war and added to the formation of a homefront in Madison.

These aspects show that Madison during the Civil War was a homefront. Since Madison
was completely separated from the battlefronts during the war, the city must have become a
homefront out of the will of its people. With Madison considered a homefront, it can be
assumed that other cities like it around the North and South became homefronts as well. These
many homefronts across the United States interacted with each other and worked toward the
common goal of fighting the war at home. This created a larger United States homefront
during the Civil War. With a homefront across the North and South, the homefront component
of total war is satisfied.
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