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NO. 14. KALAMAZOO IN THE CIVIL WAR: THE STORY OF A CONTRIBUTION

by

Douglas W. Griffiths

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CONTEXT

The Proclamation.................................1
Description of Kalamazoo on eve of war................2
Sentiments of the people............................3
The war begins......................................5
The raising of troops................................6
The draft...........................................15
Raising the bounties................................18
Other financial contributions.........................20
The women's organizations............................22
General contributions...............................24
Morale on the home front............................25
Appendices...........................................
Bibliography........................................
KALAMAZOO IN THE CIVIL WAR

"PROCLAMATION!"

By the President of the United States.

Whereas the laws of the United States have been for some time past and now are opposed, and the execution thereof obstructed in the states of South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas by combinations too powerful to be suppressed by the ordinary course of judicial proceedings, or by the powers vested in marshals by law:

Now, therefore, I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, in virtue of the power vested in me by the constitution and laws, have thought fit to call forth, and hereby do call forth, the militia of the several states of the union to the aggregate number of seventy-five thousand, in order to suppress said combinations and to cause the laws to be duly executed. ¹

This proclamation, appearing in the Kalamazoo Gazette of April 18, 1861, brought home, with awful impact, the fact that the nation was finally at war—a war of brother against brother and a war of treason against loyalty. It was the actuality of war rather than the imminence of it that

¹Article, Kalamazoo Gazette. April 18, 1861.
shocked the citizens of this peaceful, thriving community on that fateful day.

At the beginning of the War of the Rebellion, Kalamazoo Village was a county seat of about 8,945 persons.\(^1\) The total population of the county was approximately 24,663 at this time.\(^2\) The immediate area, of beautifully rolling land, was predominantly of agricultural importance.\(^3\) In addition, the village was starting to thrive in a manufacturing and business way. In the city were factories for the manufacturing of wagons (Kalamazoo was for a long time known as the "Wagon City"); there were also factories making sashes and doors, plus flour-mills, a heavy foundry and a fanning mill. On the outskirts of the village there was a bog iron ore works. Business and private enterprises were served by one bank.\(^4\)

Nor was the village in any way isolated in location. Its communications systems included the Michigan Central Railroad, put through in 1846, a twice-daily stagecoach, a plank road to Grand Rapids, and the Detroit-Chicago territorial highway. Commercial traffic had the additional advantage of the river barges serving the village by way of the Kalamazoo River. And finally, the daily mails and the telegraph com-

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\(^1\) James M. Thomas, *Kalamazoo County Directory, 1869 and 1870*, compiled and published, Kalamazoo, 1871, p. 11.


\(^3\) The *Kalamazoo County Directory* listed 1,940 farms, totaling 137,663 acres improved—about one-half the total area.

\(^4\) *Kalamazoo Gazette*, January 24, 1937

\(^5\) Thomas, op. cit., p. 72.
pleted the link between Kalamazoo and the rest of the world.¹ This was Kalamazoo on war's eve. Perhaps it is best described in the words of a commentator of the times: "It is a pleasant sight to see our streets so full of bustle and business as they now daily present. Where all is stagnation in the East, our state is suffering comparatively little and Kalamazoo is particularly wide awake."² A visitor, Mrs. Sam Cowell, also attested to the business-like vitality of the village.³

The mementous events that preceded the President's proclamation were not ignored by the citizenry or Kalamazoo and their spirits rose and fell as these events occurred. The troubles between the southern states and the Federal Government became important enough to merit special attention early in 1861. At that time the Gazette, in its weekly issues, began to carry a column devoted to the "Progress of the Secession Movement" and continued to do so until the war actually began.⁴ Uneasiness was apparent but did not take any particular form as far as the general citizenry was concerned. The sentiment of the man on the street was very definitely for the Union and "Union and 'patriotism' were the key words of the day. In so far as the slavery question was concerned, each side of

¹ Kalamazoo Gazette, January 24, 1937
² Ibid, March 1, 1861
⁴ Kalamazoo Gazette, January 4, 1861.
the issue had its proponents, but this issue was more particularly brought up in the churches—which were divided on the question of slavery. In general, then, the early months of 1861 found the people waiting and hoping—the majority for peace, and the more venturesome for force to subdue the Secessionists. Some examples of items which swayed the feelings of the people were recorded. Volney Haskell, editor of the Gazette, wrote from Washington that Lincoln should and would be aided in preserving the union. Later, people were called upon to decide for themselves who was right; Senator Zach Chandler, when he said in effect, "The Union is worth a little blood-letting," or Lincoln, when he said: "Bloodshed is not necessary and will not be caused except in self-defense." This was indeed a period of deep distraction.

Two later events seemed to reassure the people. First, the propositions for peace expressed by the Peace Convention of 1861 were hailed as glorious news. One week later Lincoln's inaugural address evoked even stronger hopes for preventing armed rebellion. Some judgment of the temper of the populace may be made on the basis of its scornful re-

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1 Kalamazoo Gazette, January 24, 1937
2 Ibid, February 15, 1861.
3 Ibid, March 1, 1861
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
6 Ibid, March 8, 1861
pudiation of Michigan Senators Chandler and Bingham, who had loudly advised against being led by the Peace Conventionists. They were called traitors and deemed to have disgraced this honourable state.¹

However, in spite of all hopes to the contrary, the crisis began to reach its apex. The situation at Fort Sumter became the focus of a weekly article in the Gazette.² Events forged on ahead of hopes.

By the end of March, Lincoln had determined to send relief to Fort Sumter.³ On April 12, 1861, at 4:30 A. M., the first shots fell on the fort and the Civil War began.⁴ On April 15th, the President proclaimed the emergency and called forth his volunteers, as already noted.

Kalamazoons rallied quickly and strongly to the cause of the Union. There were some dissenters, of course, but they were distinctly in the minority. The few who were sympathetic towards the rebellion were awed into quietude by the patriotic attitude of the loyal majority.⁵ Kalamazoo shared the feeling of her sister communities throughout the state that "Secession was treason and treason meant war."⁶

¹Kalamazoo Gazette, March 1, 1861
²Ibid, commencing March 15, 1861
⁴Ibid.
⁵Kalamazoo County Directory, cited above, p. 88.
The President's first call was for manpower. Perhaps a view of the state and national military organization of this time is in order, to more easily understand the local efforts. The Union entered the war with sixteen thousand regular troops, and furthermore, the Federal Government was committed to the traditional policy of raising an army by state quotas; leaving the responsibility for recruiting, organizing and equipping of all volunteer regiments up to the individual states. When the call for seventy-five thousand troops went out, Michigan was in turn called upon to supply one infantry regiment, fully armed and equipped—a call to which the state responded with alacrity. Some preparations had, in fact, been made already.

A Kalamazoo man, Frederick W. Curtenius, was the adjutant general of the state militia at this time. The Michigan State Legislature had passed in January, 1861, a resolution for putting ten thousand men in the state on a war footing and at the request of that body, Curtenius proceeded at once to Lansing, to take charge of operations.

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1 Morison and Commager, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 647


3 *Ibid.*, (1) Indeed, the militia of the states responded so quickly that three weeks from the date of the proclamation, thirty five thousand troops were in, or on the way to, Washington, and twenty-five thousand additional troops were waiting for transportation.

4 *Kalamazoo Gazette*, January 18, 1861.
Official records give a high estimate of the quality of the work of Curtenius in the militia, which formed the nucleus for the war regiments. In fact, the state was more indebted to him for whatever efficiency was found in the militia at the outbreak of the war, than to the limited and meager provisions of law.¹

Kalamazoo had had, since 1859, a military company known as the Light Guards.² Although this organization was not specifically formed as a part of any general war preparations, it is significant that when the war began, the company was among the first prepared to leave.³ Elsewhere in the county, in Schoolcraft Village, a company of Light Guards had also been formed.⁴ However, in as much as the two companies totaled no more than ninety men, they could hardly be termed preparations for war, and Kalamazoo County generally reflected the state situation at the time. The county was comparatively weak militarily but strong in principle and morale.⁵

¹ Michigan in the War, p. 10.
² Kalamazoo Gazette, July 13, 1859
³ Ibid, May 13, 1861
⁴ Ibid, January 15, 1861
⁵ Ibid, (1) Governor Blair had recommended that the entire military power of the state be offered to the President. However, the military power so freely offered was not very formidable. Twenty-eight independent companies, without regimental formation, uniformed at their own expense, and only partially equipped but well armed, made up the Michigan militia. They were valuable as nuclei for Michigan's first Civil War regiments, however.
In Kalamazoo, as in every other town and county of the state, the news that Beauregard had fired his guns wrought the people to a fever pitch of excitement—and determination. Citizens were urged to do their duty and to sustain the government against attack from any quarter.\(^2\)

On a more practical basis, an impromptu citizens' meeting was held in the office of J. W. Bruce, on the second day after the fall of Fort Sumter. A special committee was appointed, whose business it was to issue a call for a general public meeting to be held at Firemen's Hall on the following day, to discuss what Kalamazoo could do to promote the general war effort. This meeting was held and was very well attended. The Reverend Joseph Miller, Jr., successfully moved the appointment of a three man committee to present resolutions expressive of the meeting.

RESOLUTION: Michigan, through its Governor, should respond to the President's call. RESOLUTION: Kalamazoo citizens pledge to each other and to all citizens of the state, their vows to uphold their obligations to the Union. RESOLUTION: The best interests of the Union shall be foremost and the war honorably concluded as quickly as possible.

All the resolutions were unanimously adopted.

Additional speeches were made by such leading citizens as Dwight S. May and C. E. Stuart. The reaction of the crowd

\(^1\)Durand, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 233-235

\(^2\)Kalamazoo Gazette, April 26, 1861.
was spontaneous and only one opinion prevailed—the rebellion must be put down by force of arms.\(^1\)

Governor Blair's proclamation in Detroit called for ten companies of volunteers and he directed his Adjutant General to accept the first ten which offered. The number responding was far in excess of the number called for.\(^2\) Kalamazoo's contribution of manpower began to emerge at once. A recruiting office for volunteers was immediately opened in the Humphrey block. Benjamen F. Orcutt began to raise a company and by four o'clock the first afternoon forty-five men had enlisted.\(^3\) He began drilling his men shortly thereafter. The first person to enlist was a seventeen year old youth named William Shakespeare. As he enrolled, the lad was heard to remark that he, "expected to serve the full time if he were not killed or wounded."

This remark served to raise some very severe comment from others present, since it was then generally supposed that three months' time would certainly be sufficient to drive the rebels into defeat: and anyone who thought differently

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\(^1\) Durand, op. cit., pp. 233-235

\(^2\) The account of Reverend Miller's resolutions is taken from the Gazette, April 26, 1861.

\(^3\) Robertson, op. cit., p. 21.

\(^4\) Durand, op. cit., pp 233-235.

\(^4\) Ibid.
was considered almost a rebel himself.¹

On April 16, 1861 Governor Blair granted authority to Charles S. May, brother of Dwight May, and then acting as prosecuting attorney for the county, to raise a company of volunteers. He soon had forty-five men enrolled, who began drilling as soon as Captain May had procured the use of rooms over Bartlett's bookstore for a drill hall and armory.² Kalamazoo was becoming saturated with martial preparations.³

Her citizens were not men to hold back—particularly the younger of them. There were great crowds around the recruiting offices, assurance that at least three companies could be quickly raised.⁴ In addition, the already active Light Guards had a notice published calling for men to fill their ranks to the required quotas, in order that the unit might respond quickly to orders of the state commander-in-chief. A procurement officer was appointed and the armory was opened from seven to nine

¹Kalamazoo Gazette, January 24, 1937. This article stated that Captains Handy and Crego had come to the village earlier in April to recruit men for the regular army. Shakespeare originally signed up with them. He later switched to the company under Orcutt, which was composed of three-months' enlistments—as were all the first volunteer units. As the war progressed the men were asked to re-enlist for longer terms, up to three years.

²Ibid. This company included twenty students and a professor from Kalamazoo College.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid, April 26, 1861.

(10)
o'clock in the evening for this purpose. The prevailing desire was to be placed in the first regiment called to defend the national honor.\(^1\) Actually the Light Guards, under Dwight May, and the Blair Guards, under Charles May, became Companies I and K, respectively, of the 2nd Regiment, Michigan Infantry.\(^2\) On April 30, 1861, the two companies left for Detroit to join their regiment—becoming the first locally organized units to leave the village.\(^3\)

The departure of the Guards was the occasion for a great farewell meeting. The booming of cannon was mingled with the cheering of the throngs; patriotic speeches brought echoes of tearful goodbyes. The spirit of war was tempered with the spirit of prayer. Some of the most promising young men of the community were included in the companies and the prayers of many fond parents went with them.\(^4\)

A particularly poignant account of the departure was written in the *Kalamazoo Telegraph* of that period.\(^5\) The account stressed the hopes and fears of all peoples in all wars and shows the bravado as well as the heartache—and there was to be an abundance of both these in the years to come. Because it covers the first departure of troops

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2. *Ibid*.
3. *Ibid*.
from the local area, the account is well worth recording and 
is given in full in Appendix A to this account.

A week later those left at home were pleased to 
hear of the high compliments paid their heroes in regard to 
appearance and intelligence. The citizens of Kalamazoo were 
certain that their men would bring honor to the reputation of 
the city.\(^1\) This feeling of pride did not diminish when, 
on May 16, 1861, the companies were moved from Detroit to 
Fort Wayne and some of the three months' volunteers were 
mustered out. The discharges were received home with good 
feeling.\(^2\)

The efforts of the city and county to supply 
troops did not stop with the departure of the first com-
panies of soldiers. Early in May, Governor Blair stated 
the need for approximately ten more regiments and on the 
24th of that month he officially authorized the formation 
of the Fifth and Sixth Regiments, Michigan Infantry.\(^3\)

Efforts had been undertaken two weeks previously to estab-
lish a cantonment for troops in this area. The grounds of 

\(^{1}\)Kalamazoo Gazette, May 3, 1861. The same article stated that 
there were about 110 men in the two companies. In the same 
issue a letter from volunteer "W. S." said that when three 
year volunteers were called for only nine Blair Guards stepped 
forth. Later ten more enlisted, "anything but a respectful showing!"

\(^{2}\)Ibid, May 23, 1861

\(^{3}\)Ibid.
the National Park, on the outskirts of the city, were suggested as an excellent locale, with the further argument that plenty of subsistence was available in "the best agricultural grounds in the state." Another strong point in favor of a local cantonment was the "Salubrity of health of the place."  

Finally, in June, Colonel Curtenius was commissioned to raise the Sixth Regiment, to begin rendezvous at the Kalamazoo National Park Grounds on August 14, 1861. In time the regiment came to number about one thousand officers and men, including the Schoolcraft Light Guards as Company C. It represented the first regiment of infantry raised in the Kalamazoo area and at the time it departed for the war front, on August 30, the entire regiment was given a grand farewell dinner attended by its friends from all parts of the state.4

The summer of 1861 saw continuous activity in the matter of raising troops. Two companies, totaling about one hundred men, were raised for the First Michigan Cavalry. Under Captain George S. Acker, the companies left Kalamazoo in September, to join the regiment in Detroit. 5

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1 Kalamazoo Gazette, May 17, 1861.
2 Ibid, June 4, 1861.
4 C. R. Tuttle, General History of the State of Michigan, Detroit, 1873.
same time other Kalamazoo area men formed a company for the Third Michigan Cavalry and left this city August 6, for the cantonment area in Grand Rapids.\(^1\) Also, in July, a recruiting office was opened to get replacement for those who were mustered out of service as three months' volunteers. In the first week twenty-six enlisted.\(^2\) At this time too, an office was opened to recruit regulars for the United States Army.\(^3\)

The Fifteenth Infantry Regiment was recruited at Kalamazoo in the fall and winter of 1861-62, using the National Park as a cantonment area. This outfit left for the seat of war on February 12, 1862, numbering over nine-hundred men, under the command of Colonel C. E. Stuart.\(^4\)

At this time—late 1861 and early 1862—there were many calls for more volunteer enlistments.\(^5\) Added to these calls were the notices of casualties at the battle of Bull Run, in which three Michigan regiments had taken part. The first specific casualty from the area was Lt. William Handy, Co. I, 2nd Michigan Infantry, who was wounded at Bull Run.\(^6\)

Other items which brought the war a little closer to home

\(^1\) Robertson, op. cit., p. 59

\(^2\) Kalamazoo Gazette, July 19, 1861

\(^3\) Ibid.


\(^5\) Kalamazoo Gazette, July 26, 1861.

\(^6\) Ibid, A later issue, dated October 6, 1861 mentioned that Edward Welch, of this village, was taken prisoner at Manasses.
were the letters of soldiers being published with each issue of the Gazette, telling of good and bad conditions, of heroics and injuries, and of homesickness. ¹

The recruiting went on and the 7th Battery, locally organized, left for the front on February 11, 1862, taking over a hundred men with it. Company I of this unit was composed entirely of area men. ²

In July, 1862, the Northern forces suffered severe reverses, resulting in a call by the President for three hundred thousand additional troops, for three year periods. ³ The state quota was fixed at 11,500. In Kalamazoo efforts were made to speed up volunteering. War meetings were called for and bounties offered. ⁴ The 25th Michigan Infantry was ordered formed in September, 1862, in Kalamazoo and a Regular Army officer, Colonel O. H. Moore, of Schoolcraft village, was placed in command. The regiment left for the front on September 29th, with nine hundred names showing on its muster sheets. ⁵

By the end of October, 1862 eight full companies of local men had gone to war and when the odd numbers of men joining non-local units were added to the totals above, the

¹ Kalamazoo Gazette, beginning June, 1861.
² Robertson, op. cit., p. 60.
⁴ Kalamazoo Gazette, July 18, 1862.
⁵ Robertson, op. cit., p. 60. This unit was ordered formed from surplus companies of several congressional districts in the state. Each district was to supply one regiment at this time.
full impact of war was felt at home. Volunteers from this area continued to enlist in other Michigan areas in other states. More units were formed in the Kalamazoo area too. As late as 1864 the 14th Battery was formed here.

Hard on the heels of repeated calls for volunteers came rumors of the draft. There is little doubt that these rumors served to spur volunteer enlistments at least through the year 1862. A Provost Marshall's office had been established in the summer but when the first draft was ordered in the fall, the Kalamazoo quota was easily filled by volunteers.

The threat of draft naturally led to some excitement as to terms and conditions of the process. The Gazette, writing that men between the ages of eighteen and forty-five, inclusive, were to be affected, listed the following classes as exempt: Ministers; judges of the supreme, district, and probate courts; state prison guards and officials; state and county government officials; teachers; and commissioned officers who had already given six years of service in the army. The first call, in August, 1862, was for three hundred men for nine months service. It was stipulated, however, that the number of volunteers enlisting at the time would

1 Kalamazoo Gazette, March 22, 1936.
2 Ibid, January 15, 1864.
3 Ibid, July 18, 1862. The young stay at homes were urged to enlist before the draft caught them.
4 Ibid, September 12, 1862.
5 Ibid. July 18, 1862. The article also stated that the general feeling was to regard the draft as necessary if quotas remained unfilled.
be deductible from the local quotas. The first call was translated for Kalamazoo area men in the form of General Order #185, of September 7, 1863, from the Adjutant General's office, which fixed the local quota at 150 men, to be filled no later than September 23rd. As noted above, this number was filled by volunteers.

The raising of troops in this area, by volunteering and by drafting, continued through early 1865 and the area continued to serve as a cantonment ground. The first draft actually held in Kalamazoo took place at the courthouse on October 27, 1863. In charge were the Provost Marshall and the board of enrollment. At the hour designated for the draft, the building was filled with interested spectators. The Telegraph reported: "It was one thing to swing the hat and cheer the volunteers, but quite another to hear your name called by Uncle Sam's appointed officers as a drafted man to fill the ranks decimated by bloody war." The last town on the drawing list and, of the six hundred men liable to the draft, was expected to furnish about forty. Under exemption laws only a small number of these could actually be taken. The first name to be drawn was that of James I. Graves. Other drafts were

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1 Kalamazoo Gazette, August 8, 1862.
2 Ibid, October 10, 1862.
3 For a list of companies raised, see Appendix B, to this account.
5 Ibid. The Gazette, of March 22, 1936, claimed 8 exemptions of 41 called.
required during the war, but Kalamazoo escaped until February 12, 1865, when the call came for sixty-five men. The caused a wave of excitement, and no small amount of scheming to escape it was performed. In the end, only a few were taken. The draft did not secure the "cream" of local manhood by this time the available supply of able-bodied men had been greatly diminished.

Thus it was, in the fashion outlined above, that troops were raised in Kalamazoo for service in the Civil War. Important as the system was, the manner in which local enlistments were stimulated certainly was an abetting factor. Foremost among such stimulants was the payment of financial bounties, that is a lump sum payment to a man at the time he enlisted. The sum varied but was usually fifty or one hundred dollars. The money was raised by popular subscription, later refunded in many cases, and by special taxes. State payment of bounties was urged to encourage enlistments and Kalamazoo citizens were urged to support them.

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2 Ibid. And the Telegraph, of September 21, 1864, reported that the last draft list found the village dilinquent by 7 men and the county by 29. A later item, dated September 29, 1864, reported an error in the figures and the village was said to have exceeded its quota by 10 to 15 men.

3 David Fisher, A Compendium History of Kalamazoo County, Chicago, 1906, p. 62. "The great Civil War affected this county, as it did in all parts of the North. The taking away of many soldiers—the young, stalwart, vigorous being usually the ones fated to fill the ranks of the Army—was seriously felt in the community, in business and industry.

4 Durand, op. cit., pp. 250-253

5 Kalamazoo Gazette, July 18, 1862.
An immense war meeting was held at the Court house, on the evening of July 2, 1862, to which the people responded with patriotic fervor. Three stirring resolutions were quickly passed: 1, The governor was called upon to proclaim a fifty dollar bounty, payable by war bonds or other sources to be determined by the Legislature; 2, It was the duty of Kalamazoo County citizens to pay at least a five dollar bounty if the state could or would not assume the responsibility. It was also the duty of local citizens to care for dependents of the volunteers while the regiments were being formed; 3, A committee was set up to collect money or pledges for a bounty fund. Amid the fanfare of speeches and band music two thousand dollars was quickly raised. Finally, as the meeting dissolved arrangements were made for another, to be held on July 30th.

Many well-known Kalamazoo men were included in the list of first contributors to the bounty fund in this county, to provide money paid to those who enlisted for service in the war.

The second meeting—much less officious—resolved that the state should levy a tax for repaying those who had already donated bounty money. The purpose expressed in this resolution was to equalize the district share in the financing of the war. About one thousand dollars was raised at this meeting. Parenthetically, the Gazette noted that the first meet-

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1 Kalamazoo Gazette, July 25, 1862.
2 Ibid, May 19, 1929. See Appendix C to this account.
3 Ibid, August 8, 1862.
ing had not substantially increased the number of enlistments, and by mid-September it seemed as though the bounty-fund activity was about to halt.  

The president and trustees of the village tried to renew activity in October by voting to again solicit funds and to pay each volunteer one hundred dollars; as long as the funds permitted. They stipulated that those who gave money for this purpose should be repaid at a later date. Up to this time, October 24, 1862, the bounty war fund for the county amounted to $8,849.25, of which the village had contributed $5,791.00.

Another attempt to stir enlistments was made in the summer of 1862, when the Gazette strongly urged that employers stress the fact that they would hold their jobs for all volunteers who wished to return to them.

In addition to sugying manpower for the purpose of quelling the rebellion, Kalamazoo Village and County made a strong financial contribution (other than bounty funds) to that effort. At the time the war clouds gathered, the state financial status was far from strong. In January, 1861, the military fund amounted to only $20,000, and the Governor called for an increased appropriation. Almost simultaneously

1 Kalamazoo Gazette, August 1, 1862.
2 Ibid, September 26, 1862.
3 Ibid, October 25, 1862.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid, July 25, 1862.
6 Ibid, January 11, 1861.
it was discovered that a large sum of money was missing from the treasury because of a defalcation on the part of a state official.

At the first call of the President, Governor Blair rushed to Detroit. There, on April 16, 1861, he announced that the state would need an estimated $100,000 to defray the cost of the first regiment formed. He explained the fact that the state was without the means to furnish this sum and appealed to the people of Detroit and the rest of the state to raise the amount immediately by voluntary contribution. The amount was soon pledged.\(^1\)

Kalamazoo had begun raising troops and was obliged to support them until such time as they were taken over by the Federal Government. To help this cause, and to supplement generally, the state financial need, a special meeting of town officials was called, the purpose of which was to discuss methods by which the village could aid the state in its obligation to the union. A committee was formed, consisting of Messrs. L. Hull, H. G. Wells, Joseph Miller, Jr., J. E. Walbridge, and Allan Potter, whose duty it was to solicit subscriptions. In addition, the sum of $406 was appropriated from the general fund to be used as a contingent fund to pay the members of the Light Guard prior to

\(^1\) Fuller, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 24

\(^2\) Silas Farmer, History of Detroit and Michigan, Detroit, 1889, p. 112. Detroit was to pledge $50,000 and the rest of the state an equal amount.
their being mustered into the service of the state. This fund was later to be repaid.¹

The State Legislature, in its session of May 14, 1861, passed a bill authorizing a million dollars war loan. By this act the counties were authorized to loan, or raise money by tax to support the families of the volunteers.²

Almost anticipating the state act, a special meeting of the Kalamazoo County Board of Supervisors was held at the Court house. Among the resolutions passed to sustain the government, was one stating that it was the duty of all citizens to support the families of those who volunteered to serve the Union. The sum of $3,000 was appropriated for this purpose and $400 was advanced by Kalamazoo Village to pay for board and other expenses of volunteer families while the soldiers were enrolling. This meeting also passed a resolution requesting the State Legislature to pass an act that would authorize each county board of supervisors to raise by tax or borrow money by county bond issue, to be called a war fund and to be expended as each county saw fit. Kalamazoo citizens had paid in a total of $4,086 on the state war loan by May 24, 1861.⁴

¹Old Village Record, vol. 3, dated April 19, 1861. This information was found in the history files of the Kalamazoo Public Library, in a scrapbook containing undated news items taken from the Kalamazoo Gazette.

²Kalamazoo Gazette, May 17, 1861.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid, May 24, 1861. This article stated that the total for the state was $71,654.
In July, 1861, it was learned that the men of the 1st and 3rd regiments had received only $5.00 each, thus far, and that the 2nd regiment, containing two companies of local men, had received no money at all—an indication of the dire financial straits of the state. A local committee under the leadership of H. G. Wells, began a drive, urging the purchase of state war bonds at once—the quota being fixed at $25,000. The drive was successful and money began to come in in a steady flow.¹

From the very beginning Kalamazoo citizens contributed their share toward the sustainment of the troops. They made a tremendous effort to raise funds for actual war costs, for war relief, and for various miscellaneous expenses. This effort was made possible by group contribution toward a general state program (as noted above) and, to an equally great extent, by purely individual contributions on a local scale.

The women of Kalamazoo did much to start the fund raising campaign for relief purposes. They began by working as individuals, but in August, 1861, a number of them formed the Ladies Soldiers' Relief Society with the idea of consolidating efforts to raise money and promote

¹Kalamazoo Gazette, May 24, 1861. Poor administration may have been the cause of such conditions, as well as lack of money. Earlier issues of the Gazette, starting with the issue of May 10, 1861, contained letters from volunteers telling of poor accommodations in general at the Detroit cantonment area. It must be borne in mind, however, that in the first months of war activity patriotic spirit far exceeded the capacity of administrative ability to handle operations smoothly.
This local organization later allied itself with the Michigan Soldiers' Relief Association and the United States Christian Commission. Among other things, the Ladies' Aid Society promoted a concert in the Spring of 1862 for the benefit of the sick and wounded. This venture brought in $200, plus quantities of papers, magazines, and sundry articles which the soldiers needed.

Perhaps the most ambitious venture of this ladies' group was the Michigan State Sanitary Fair, held at the fairgrounds, on September 20-23, 1864. In the words of the ladies, the purpose of the fair was to:

"Allow the patriotic and generous people of Kalamazoo, Michigan to contribute of their abundance in money and articles for the purpose of aiding sick and wounded soldiers of that army which fought in defense of our National Flag and Union."

The appeal was directed to all citizens but especially to the young men and women spared from the horror and sufferings of war. Many famous personages were invited, including General Lewis Cass and Governor Blair. The women worked hard to decorate the halls, the motif being to show tribute to the heroes of Michigan.

1 Kalamazoo Gazette, August 16, 1861.
2 Robertson, op. cit., p. 85
3 Kalamazoo Gazette, March 21, 1862.
4 Robertson, op. cit., p. 86. According to the Telegraph, September 21, 1864, Gen. Cass was unable to attend because of illness. He sent $100 to start the contributions.
5 Kalamazoo Daily Telegraph, September 21, 1864.
affair was an outstanding success and a total of $9300 was distributed as follows: one third through the Michigan Soldiers' Relief Association, one third through the United States Christian Commission, and one third through the Ladies' Soldiers' Aid Society of Kalamazoo.

In April, 1862, a branch of the state Soldiers' Aid Society was formed here. It worked on a more systematized basis by setting up three permanent committees for finance, hospital stores, and surgeons, nurses and transportation. These obtained immediate and gratifying results.

It can readily be seen that more than just money was given for the cause. The need for medical services and supplies became painfully apparent when the news arrived of the heavy casualties suffered by Union forces at the battle of Pittsburg Landing, April 6-7, 1862. The 13th Michigan, composed largely of local men, had taken part in this contest along with other Michigan regiments. Accounts of the battle brought out the fact that medical services and supplies at the scene were inadequate to care for the wounded. A cry at once went up for volunteer doctors and nurses and for medical supplies. Several men offered their services

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1Robertson, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

2*Kalamazoo Gazette*, April 25, 1862.

3Ibid, April 11, 18, 25, 1862.

4Robertson, *op. cit.*, p. 83. Actually the 13th did not arrive until the second day and consequently their losses were not as heavy as they appeared at first.
to the Sanitary Commission as male nurses. It was largely
the result of this battle that the special committee of the
Soldiers’ Aid Society was set up to recruit doctors and nur-
ses. Under such organization many did enlist, the first to
go being Doctors H. O. Hitchcock and J. G. Lyon.

Throughout the war, then, the citizens of the
village and county contributed money and supplies, largely
on a weekly basis, to be distributed through the various
relief agencies. One of these agencies, the Christian
Commission, had its representatives right on the march with
the soldiers. The Kalamazoo representative was Reverend
Slater, who worked with the Army of the Cumberland dis-
tributing food, clothing, and such items of comfort and
necessity as had been collected for this purpose. Earlier
the Kalamazoo County Bible Society had sent pocket-size
editions of The New Testament and The Psalms to departed
soldiers. This service was later acknowledged as a "tender
memorial of friends and homes that had been left behind."

There was also the contribution made directly
to the soldiers. Great hospitality was extended to all
troops raised or bivouaced in this area. Large amounts of

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1 Kalamazoo Gazette, April 11, 1862.
2 Ibid, April 25, 1862.
3 Ibid. Earlier Dr. C. V. Mottram had enlisted with the Sixth
   Regiment as a surgeon. Gazette, September 30, 1861.
5 Robertson, op. cit., p. 85.
6 Kalamazoo Gazette, May 31, 1861.
food were sent to the camps and women worked long hours to supply such items as blankets, gloves, underwear, havelocks, and shirts. In many cases there was an over-supply of these articles, but on at least one occasion a rush order request was promptly filled.

In other aspects of home front activity local citizens showed themselves to be solidly behind the war effort. As noted above, the mass war meetings played their part in the raising of soldiers and the means to sustain them. They were unquestionably one of the strongest morale stimulants as well. As late as October, 1864 they were still being held as the occasion warranted. By this time the people were being urged to purchase United States "7-30" war loan notes, rather than simply contributing cash, and the appeal was to business instincts as well as patriotism.

In addition to the war meetings, home front morale activities included the formation of the Silver Grays. This 46–80 years, was formed in May, 1861. Ostensibly a home guard unit, nevertheless the Silver Grays unanimously and enthusiastically voted to tender their services to the governor for defense of the Union. They were not called up, however, and

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1Kalamazoo Gazette, issues of May 12, May 17, August 8, September 23, September 30, in the year 1861.

2Ibid, December 27, 1861.

3Kalamazoo Daily Telegraph, September 29, 1864.

4Ibid.
their activities consisted mainly in taking part in the many parades held during the war years. ¹

Other activities for purely morale purposes included the raising of towering (130 feet high) "Union Poles" for the prominent display of the national flag and the "Show your colors" campaign, by which the citizens were to show their belief in law and order as opposed to anarchy and rebellion, by making a prominent display of the flag on their premises. ²

There are only a few more details with which to complete the picture of the war effort of the village of Kalamazoo.

The farmers of the area did much to help the supplying of the troops. They planted and cultivated to the full extent of their land to provide the needed quantities of food for the hungry soldiers. ³ Besides crops, Kalamazoo was known as an excellent place from which to obtain horses for the cavalry regiments. ⁴ And, finally, there was the local medical care proffered the returned soldiers.

The Michigan Asylum treated cases of war fatigue, although this had not become an established practice. ⁵

¹ *Kalamazoo Gazette*, May 3, 1861.
⁴ *Ibid*, July 26, 1861. According to a later issue, dated September 20, 1861, an agent for the government was here to purchase horses on contract. The top price was $110.
⁵ From the Records of the Michigan Asylum, pp. 24–27.
the Federal Government set up an improvised hospital in the area, and only the barest necessities were allocated, local citizens, acting on their own initiative, supplied the hospital with food, delicacies, magazines, and other articles to make life easier and more pleasant for the soldiers convalescing there. Soldiers who could come, were invited into homes and parties and dinners were given for them. Such kindnesses did much to relieve the bitterness and suffering of the invalids.  

Throughout the war the citizens of this locality kept on with their work to support the Union and its armies. It is true that there were many calls made upon them and many meetings and slogans and personal solicitations were necessary to keep the effort moving. Yet even though the speeches must have been repetitious, the band music dull, and the personal calls irksome., even the last great rallies found the people of the town and county undaunted and determined to keep on with their efforts.  

The story of Kalamazoo area activity in the War of the Rebellion is a story of courage and steadfastness. It is not a story of perfection—any more or less than the total effort of the entire Union was perfect. In this area, as in

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1 Fuller, op. cit., pp. 51-52.
2 Thomas, op. cit., p. 109.
others throughout the nation, there were the disgruntled and
the slackers. Money was plentiful and there were numerous
substitutes among those sent into battle. And there were
"bounty-jumpers" and "substitute-brokers" as well.\footnote{Durand, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 250-53.} From time
to time the newspapers felt it necessary to make strong hints
as to the line which patriotism should take, by means of the
stereotyped jokes, strongly worded letters, pointed editorials,
and terse slogans.\footnote{\textit{Kalamazoo Gazette}, issues of May 3, 1861 through December 10
1862.}

By comparison to the total national effort the local
efforts were indeed small. The important thing is that
local efforts represented the efforts of nearly all the people
in the area. When this near total effort was added to the
efforts of similar communities throughout the North, the com-
bination for victory was formed.

The same story, multiplied by the number of cities
and towns in our country has been repeated too often since
the years 1861-1865. It is, however, that same spirit and
will displayed in Kalamazoo in those years, which has made
this nation what it is today.

It is without a spirit of boastfulness or false
pride, that Kalamazoo can be proud of her efforts in the
Civil War.

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APPENDIX - A

The following is the complete text of the description of the departure of the first companies of volunteers from the Kalamazoo area, which took place on April 30, 1861. The source is History of Kalamazoo County, Michigan, by Durant, which quotes the Kalamazoo Telegraph of the time.

"The morning was clear and beautiful, the sun, as one of the speakers remarked, rivaling in splendor the sun of Austerlitz. The two companies under the command of the brothers May, were to leave on the 10:45 A.M. train. The town was a complete flutter of excitement. A little before ten o'clock Capt. D. May's company, escorted by the crowds, marched up Main Street, and took a position in front of Firemen's Hall. The streets were full of people.

In a short time the order was given and the military marched down Burdick Street to the railroad depot, led by Hubbard's Band, and followed by an immense concourse of people. Soon after the first company reached the place assigned to them in front of the speaker's stand, erected on the north side of Dudgeon's warehouse, Capt. C. S. May's company also arrived and took its place in the rear. By this time the whole of the open space between the warehouse and the depot was filled with people, while the street and every available standing-place for some distance around was occupied. It was no curiosity-seeking crowd that turned out on this occasion, but an assembly of people to testify their sympathy and appreciation for the noble and patriotic volunteers,
and the high resolve which animated them.

Speeches were made by Hon. H. G. Wells, Col. Curtenius, Hon. C. E. Stuart, and the Rev. E. Taylor, all eloquent and appropriate. And now came the last and most touching scenes. Three cars had been left for the conveyance of the volunteers, and the way being opened, the companies at once marched into them. At the same time a rush was made by the crowd to be as near to the tracks as possible, and as the noble fellows ascended the platform their hands were grasped by those outstretched on all sides, and the words 'good-bye', 'God bless you', and kindred adieus and exclamations were uttered in every key of modulation. The platforms and windows of the cars were besieged for the last look, the last farewell. Mothers were there whose only sons were just stepping from that verge which might remove them forever from their gaze. Sister sobbed a last farewell, wives tore themselves from their husbands and brothers and friends, and trembling lips and hearts stirred with deep emotions, bade a sad farewell. The waiting was not long. The western train arriving, cut short the final farewells, and the train moved off. Shout upon shout arose from the crowd and was participated in by the volunteers. Amid the noise of artillery, the shouts of the people, the swinging of hats, and the waving of handkerchiefs, the first Kalamazoo volunteers departed."
APPENDIX - B

Military organizations originating in the area of Kalamazoo, Michigan, 1861-1865.

Sixth Regiment Infantry, Mustered into the United States Service 20 August, 1861. Departed for the war area 30 August, 1861. Almost all of its service was in the extreme southern states. Major battles were: Sewell's point, Va., Vicksburg, Miss. Baton Rouge, La., Siege of Port Hudson, and siege of Mobile, Ala. Discharged 5 September, 1865, Jackson, Mich.
Total casualties, all causes, 542.


Fourteenth Battery. Mustered into the service of the United States 5 January, 1864. Departed war area 5 February, 1864. Most

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1Robertson, op. cit., pp. 99-190.
of its war duty was in forts around Washington. Discharged 5 July 1865. Casualties 9.


Primary References:

Records of the Michigan Asylum, on file at the Michigan State Hospital, Kalamazoo, Michigan.


Kalamazoo Daily Telegraph, September 21, September 29, 1864, published at Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Secondary References:


Silas Farmer, History of Detroit and Michigan, Detroit, 1889.

David Fisher, A compendium History of Kalamazoo County, Chicago, 1906.

George N. Fuller, Historic Michigan, National Historical Association, 1924, Volume 1.


Johnathon Robertson, Michigan in the War, Lansing, 1882.

James M. Thomas, Kalamazoo County Directory, 1869 and 1870, Kalamazoo, 1871.

C. R. Tuttle, General History of the State of Michigan, Detroit, 1873.

Kalamazoo Gazette, undated articles found in historical scrapbook in the files of the Kalamazoo Public Library, Kalamazoo, Michigan.
APPENDIX - G

Miscellaneous figures:

**Kalamazoo Gazette, October 18, 1925.**

Area men served in approximately 40 units, including those of other states. They served in about 20 different Michigan units

**MICHIGAN in the War.**

Approximate total of Michigan servicemen in the war was 84,406, with approximate casualties from all causes of 14,343. The figures for Kalamazoo County are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enlistments under enrollment system</td>
<td>1246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drafted</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterans re-enlisting in the field</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drafted men commuting (substituting)</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navy men</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Approximate total during war: 3221

Approximate total casualties, all causes: 389

The Kalamazoo County Directory, 1869-70 fixed the total of county servicemen at 3,111, of which slightly over 1000 were from the village.

Total Kalamazoo County war expenditures were approximately $383,416.61 on a state total approximating $8,000,000.

Total county expenditures under the state war relief program were about $119,984.78, on a state total of nearly $3,600,000.
SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS


Record of the Services of Michigan Volunteers in the Civil War, Kalamazoo, Michigan, 1865.

George N. Fuller, Michigan—A Centennial History of the State and its People, Chicago, 1939, 2 Volumes.

Charles Lanman, Red Book of Michigan, Detroit, 1871

Charles A. Weissert, An Account of Kalamazoo County, National Historical Association, Inc., 1924.