

tinued to grow, but at a slower rate than northern and central counties. The southern area in 1860 contained 45 per cent of the total population of the state, but five years after the close of the war the percentage had declined to 39 per cent.

On the positive side, the prosperity that accompanied the war and the rise of the new industrial order paved the way for the acceptance of the changes. During the war the Republican administration had enacted the National Banking Act of February 25, 1863, and repeatedly raised the tariff. Aided by war contracts, the tariff, and railroad transportation, a new economy in which manufacturing assumed an increasingly important role began to achieve significance. The new national banks, some of which replaced former state banks, also became a part of the new order. Railroads enlarged the markets that were available for Indiana farmers, while the feeding of the soldiers required vast quantities of supplies from western states. High prices raised considerably the standard of living in rural areas and small towns, where many new houses were built. These homes were in part made possible by the prices received from raising wheat. Whatever remained of frontier self-sufficiency disappeared along navigable streams and railroads. A less frugal way of life developed. Labor, too, gained, for recruitment of men for the armies produced a shortage of manpower. Towns and cities grew more rapidly.

Although Indianapolis, Indiana's largest city, was not typical of other communities, its growth illustrates the forces which were at work. Property values increased so rapidly as to astonish the people of that time. Although business buildings and many houses were constructed, housing seemed difficult for newcomers to find. By the end of 1862 a vast inflation had occurred. Prices were higher than the elder citizens could remember, but they were to rise still more. Coins passed out of circulation; "shin plasters" and greenbacks became current money.

The general condition of the country as well as the depreciation in the value of the currency had by now [the end of 1862] vastly increased the cost of living. Prices had risen to unheard of figures and the question of living [costs] had become a very serious matter to the most of the people. Business men who were making more money than ever before might stand it, but there were scores and hundreds whose

means had not increased much or were fixed. On these fell a burden that could not be lightened and they were forced to economies that often amounted to privation.⁵⁶

Nevertheless, luxurious living and ostentation increased. The theater was packed nightly. Great joy over the victories at Gettysburg and Vicksburg was expressed in bonfires, fireworks, and speeches. The city was often brilliantly illuminated. The street railway was started by the spring of 1865; "the first street-car . . . 'with cushioned seats affording ample room for sixteen passengers'" began to serve the public in August. Kingan & Company, packers and millers, founded in July, 1863, gave added employment opportunities to the laborers of the city.

Although Evansville was an important port on the Ohio River in the trade between North and South, business "came to a virtual standstill and men were out of work" shortly after the beginning of the war. Lack of the southern market and the closure of the Mississippi seemed to be chiefly responsible. Recovery came quickly with the advance of the Union armies, the letting of government contracts, and the use of the steamboats by the armed forces. Braxton Bragg's invasion of Kentucky was possibly a more serious blow to business than to the military. From early in 1863 to the end of the war, however, steamboat traffic on the Ohio River was flourishing, great fortunes were made by wholesale merchants, the trade area of Evansville tripled, and steamboat interests doubled. The experiences of other cities showed local variations, but at the end of the war Indiana was less a rural state than at the beginning.

A conflict which lasted four years and involved so many people, either directly as members of the armed forces or indirectly as civilians who supported the armies, could not possibly have left the nation unchanged. The early promises, demanded by the Democrats and so readily given by the Republicans, that the nation should be preserved as it was appeared at the end of the war to resemble the early notion that

⁵⁶ John H. Holliday, *Indianapolis and the Civil War (Indiana Historical Society Publications, Vol. IV, No. 9; Indianapolis, Ind., 1911), 523-596, see 576 for quotation; Jeannette C. Nolan, Hoosier City: The Story of Indianapolis (New York, 1943), 138-166.*

the conflict would last only a few weeks. In addition to the casualties, the handicap placed upon the Democratic party, the growth of cities, the increase in manufacturing, and sectional fears and animosities had effected a breach in the mental and spiritual life of the nation that could not be healed quickly. The Union had been preserved, but at a terrible price! The questions of the nature of the Union and the right of secession had been answered. Although the guns became silent and the soldiers came home, politicians were unable to make peace with defeated fellow citizens for ten additional years. The reconstruction which followed the fighting was not a separate process, but the time required to check the forces released by the firing on Fort Sumter.

SUGGESTED READINGS IN CIVIL WAR HISTORY

The following is a list of general references on the Civil War. While they constitute a mere sampling of books offered on this period, they would make an excellent beginning for a Civil War collection, either private or in a school library.

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- Wiley, Bell Irvin, *The Common Soldier in the Civil War*, Grossett, 1958.
- Williams, Kenneth P., *Lincoln Finds a General*, 5 vols., Macmillan, 1956.
- Williams, T. Harry, *Lincoln and His Generals*, Knopf, 1952.

The following Civil War letters are true and accurate copies of letters which are on microfilm in the Indiana Historical Society Library. These letters have been printed in their original wording, spelling, and punctuation to maintain as much of the flavor and style of the period as possible. It is hoped that these letters will illustrate the feeling and devotion of the men who served in the Union army from Indiana. It is also hoped that the reading of these letters will encourage more people to search their attics and basements to see if they have Civil War letters which should be added to the files of the Indiana Historical Society. The letters printed here were loaned to the Indiana Civil War Centennial Commission that they might be microfilmed for the Indiana Historical Society and they are now in the Society library for the use of historians of today and tomorrow.

The first letter was written by Sylvester C. Bishop who later served in Company F of the 11th Indiana Regiment. At the time this letter was written, May 19, 1861, Sylvester Bishop had not yet enlisted in the service of the United States but was waiting to join the service. This letter gives a description of the feeling in Indiana at the beginning of the Civil War. It also offers a word picture of the military camp at Terre Haute, Indiana.

The second is an excerpt of a letter written by Benjamin Fry who had enlisted in Company H of the 2nd New York (Harris Light Cavalry). Benjamin Fry was an Indiana boy who had enlisted in this New York regiment. He was writing to Miss Martha McFeely, Hillsboro, Indiana. The letter describes camp life and is particularly descriptive of the physical hardships and the prevalence of disease in the armies during the Civil War. It is interesting to note that following the Civil War Benjamin Fry returned to Indiana and married Martha McFeeley.

Letter of

SYLVESTER C. BISHOP
Co. F, 11th Indiana Regiment
May 19, 1861, to his Mother

Sunday May the 19

Dear Mother:

I again sit down to pen you a few lines. I am still sojourning at Newburgh or rather I am working for Mr. Ringo. I still continue well the folks are all well about here as far as I know. We received a letter from Bill this week he is well but very impatient to leave Camp Morton. they have not yet received their uniforms. There has been a number of soldiers passing through here the past week, some moving east and some west The war spirit still continues unabated about here The people have formed themselves into home guards and I frequently hear the sound of martial music at two or more places at the same time where they are drilling. I went to see Ves Wingham last Monday but he was not home. Spenny's folks were going to Terrehaute to see Harrison. So I just went on to Terrehaute with them We got there just as the Putnam State Guards were marching out to Camp Vigo about 2½ miles . . . from Terrehaute. So we journeyed with them to the camp which is the Fair Ground. After the company marched in we asked permission to enter which was granted. After going through the gate we walked to the quarters of the Putnam County Boys. It is situated in the southwestern part of the ground in the midst of a beautiful grove of trees. It is a long board building used for the display of the products of the soil, mechanical implements and various other things. it is the best place in the camp After taking some refreshments I surveyed the encampment and its inhabitants. It is a large square of ground containing 30 or 40 acres of land inclosed on the north, east and west by a high board fence and on the south by the Wabash River It has stalls on the north and south sides for stock which are now occupied by soldiers. They have formed an upper story to them which is filled with straw for them to sleep on. the lower being used for the bestowal of their cooking utensils. Nearly all of them have there quarters named some have the Astor house some the Fremont and some the Buntin house and various

other names which I cannot now recollect. They were just preparing for dinner. Some were seen busy cooking meat some cooking beans others making coffee. While others were carrying provisions to the soldiers on a large board borne by six or eight men. While the more idle ones were performing various gymnastic exercises While a few raw Irishmen were drilling by random on there own hook and a very sorry appearance they made indeed A little farther on was a company of Dutchmen jabbering there nix for stay and all seemed to enjoy themselves well They all had plenty to eat as far as I could see After seeing all I wished to see I wandered back to the quarters of the Putnam company they had in the meantime received two waggons loads of straw which was soon stored away They are the best looking company on the ground and the most intelligent they are composed of the former Asbury guards with a few recruits . . . they are the best drilled company in the state. John Mahan is captain and all the company speak well of him The company are going to vote the use of cards out of their company Fishing I suppose will be their amusement I saw them preparing their rods for their future use. We stayed until one oclock and the boys were just called into ranks to mess off so they could get some dinner so we bid them adieu and departed from the ground Nothing of special interest occured on our journey home we met a few Soldier[s] who had been up to town and had evidently taken a little too much of what threw dad into the mud, we stopped at Terrills a little while . . . Patty said she believed she would . . . go south and kill Jeff Davis. I cant get any money from old Pettitt and dont [know] whether I ever will. I wish you would write soon and let me know whether you are going to come down. I dont know when I shall get any money If you are out of wood I have another load in the woods. get John Clappsadle to haul it and I will pay for it. No more at present But I remain yours,

SYLVESTER C. BISHOP

Letter of

BENJAMIN FRY

Co. H, 2nd New York (Harris Light Cavalry)
to Martha McFeeley, Hillsboro, Indiana

November 8, 1861

EXCERPT

Now if anybody tells you again how hard we have [to] live, please tell them for me that they do not know anything about it . . . it is true that we see a harder time then we did when we was at home, but we expected it before we started a soldiers life is a hard life to live. for we are not allowed any privelidge at all. or we can not say that our life is our own. I am sure (and so is all the rest) that we are kept a good deal closer then any other regiment. we can find out all these things for there are some soldiers of other Regiments in our camp every day. we have enough to eat and drink and plenty of clothing more then we can take care of as we should do and plenty of blankets we all have three blankets apiece The 19th Ind Regiment is encamped a mile from our camp and the 2d 7th 11th Wisconsin Regiments are encamped 1/2 mile from us and the 14th Mass Regiment 1/2 mile all infantry every afternoon all those Regiments come together for drill on our parade ground and our Regiment goes out in the same field and it is one of the nicest sights that any body can look at . . . I wish sometimes that you could be here to see us all together. I forgot to tell you in my last letter that the morning before [we] left camp Sussex one man of our Regiment got killed by a horse a kicking him on the forehead and he died in a few minuets afterwards, he belonged to one of the N.Y. companys. We only staid in camp Harmony about two [days?] then we pulled up stakes and moved to camp Palmer on Arlington Hights on General Lees farm 1/4 of a mile from General McDowels quarters. the old General has his head quarters in Gen Lees dwelling house. all of his [Lee's] property is confiscated . . . there are a good many negroes a living on his farm that says that they belonged to Lee some of them comes to camp nearly every day . . . I got kicked a few weeks ago by a horse on my leg and came very near geting it broke a little below the knee. it pained me so that I could hardly walk on it for a few days. and I am afraid that I will have [a] sore leg of it yet. for it

is a breaking out in sores all around. There are a good many of our boys got kicked . . . There are a good many of our company on the sick list. There is 21 I believe on the list and six of them is in the Hospital at Washington. Three of them has got the measles one of them is Joseph Shoemaker a brother to Isaac one of the Robins and one of the Watson boys those thre has got the measles the rest have got the feaver John and David Cooper are both sick but they are both a getting better. They have been sick for about two weeks. The rest of our mess are all well as for myself I never felt better in my life then I do at presant or have ever since my last illness. Wm Compton and myself can eat more then four common men we have appetites like a sawmill. well as I can not finish on this sheet I will be obliged to commence on another one.