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Abstract

This research project uses primary sources such as regimental histories, records kept by the Adjutant General of Illinois, reporting from the *Chicago Tribune*, and the published and unpublished memoirs, diaries, and letters of both soldiers and civilians to examine the role communities played in military mobilization in Chicago during the Civil War. An urban environment like Chicago had many such communities, including religious denominations, professional and commercial organizations, militia units, immigrant communities, and political organizations. These communities strongly impacted the mobilization process in Chicago by organizing and supporting certain units, and individual Chicagoans were influenced by their community affiliations when deciding whether to enlist and in which units. In addition to shedding light on how the Civil War was experienced in Chicago, this research has further implications for future research on both military mobilization and Civil War soldiers' motivations.

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Introduction

In the early morning hours of April 22, 1861, a middle-aged man carrying a double-barreled shotgun strode across a wooden railroad bridge four miles north of Carbondale, Illinois. It was evident that he had not meant to be roused at this hour: he was in his shirtsleeves, with his suspenders dangling at his sides, and only the moonlight illuminated the brown waters of the Big Muddy River rolling past below his feet.¹ Judging from appearances, one would not be able to guess that this man was Richard Kellogg Swift, a wealthy Chicago banker, and on this occasion, the commanding general of the largest militia force in Illinois. Swift was accompanied on his walk across the bridge by members of his staff, which included such dignitaries as the president of the Illinois Central Railroad, a former Chicago alderman, and a number of prominent Chicago merchants.² Having reached the end of the bridge, General Swift and his staff returned to the train that had brought them there, informing the wary engineers that the bridge had not been sabotaged and was safe to cross. Given the secretive and important nature of their cargo, the engineers' paranoia was warranted. Their train carried four bronze cannons strapped to platform cars and a motley force of about 400 militiamen and volunteers, armed with a variety of hunting rifles, shotguns, and antique pistols.³ When the train had left Chicago the previous night, its official destination had been the state capital of Springfield, but Governor Richard Yates had secretly ordered Swift to instead occupy Cairo, a small town at the southern end of Illinois that overlooked the vitally important confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. Within forty-eight hours of leaving Chicago, Swift's Cairo Expedition had secured the town for the Union.⁴

¹ Henry Haynie, *The Nineteenth Illinois: A Memoir of a Regiment of Volunteer Infantry Famous in the Civil War of Fifty Years Ago for Its Drill, Bravery, and Distinguished Services* (Chicago: M.A. Donohue & Co., 1912), 58.

² Jasper N. Reece, *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Illinois*, vol. 1 (Springfield, IL: Phillips Bros., 1900), 249.

³ Mabel McIlvaine, *Reminiscences of Chicago During the Civil War* (Chicago: The Lakeside Press, 1914), 54.

⁴ Reece, *Report of the Adjutant General*, vol. 1, 8.

Although Swift's unopposed occupation of Cairo would ultimately prove to be a minor incident in the course of the Civil War, it is also indicative of Chicago's participation in the war. Chicago contributed heavily to Illinois's outsized impact on the Civil War: notwithstanding Illinois's connections to Abraham Lincoln and Ulysses S. Grant, Illinois contributed 256,297 men to the Union forces.⁵ When compared to Illinois's population from the 1860 census of 1,711,951, Illinois contributed the most men per capita of any Union state.⁶ In addition, the vast majority of Illinois's troops were volunteers, as the enthusiasm with which the state responded to President Lincoln's calls for troops meant that only 3,538 Illinoisans were drafted during the war.⁷ Troop contributions within Illinois were measured at the county level, and Cook County clearly played its part in supporting the Union, as its contribution of 22,436 men made up 8.8 percent of Illinois's total from a county representing 8.4 percent of the state population.⁸ Of course, numbers alone do not tell the full story. The Cairo Expedition saw the involvement of wealthy Chicago businessmen, antebellum militia units, German and Hungarian immigrant groups, and Chicagoans who had swiftly volunteered for military service.⁹ It is this complex mixture of organizations and communities from within Chicago's population, not just the scale of Chicago's response to the war, that makes Chicago's early-war experiences with mobilization especially worthy of historical study.

Despite the importance of military mobilization to the Civil War, the amount of research done on this topic in recent years has been limited. This is not to say that mobilization has not

⁵ Reece, *Report of the Adjutant General*, vol. 1, 216.

⁶ Joseph Kennedy, *Population of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1864), iv; Mark Flotow, *In Their Letters, In Their Words: Illinois Civil War Soldiers Write Home* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2019), ix.

⁷ Victor Hicken, *Illinois in the Civil War* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1966), 4.

⁸ *Illinois Military Units in the Civil War* (Springfield: Civil War Centennial Commission of Illinois, 1962), 7; Kennedy, *Population of the United States in 1860*, 79.

⁹ Reece, *Report of the Adjutant General*, vol. 1, 229.

been recognized as significant. In a recent monograph, *A Savage War: A Military History of the Civil War*, Williamson Murray and Wayne Wei-siang Hsieh assert that the Union's combination of "industrial power with the mobilization of manpower" not only enabled them to win the war but also represented a great "military-social revolution" that foreshadowed the mobilization to take place in World War I.¹⁰ The first two academic works to focus specifically on Civil War mobilization were A. Howard Meneely's *The War Department, 1861* and Fred A. Shannon's Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Organization and Administration of the Union Army, 1861-1865*, both released in 1928.¹¹ These were rather straightforward works that used governmental and military records in order to examine mobilization at the national level, although Meneely in particular had a significant focus on exposing what he saw as Secretary of War Simon Cameron's failures early in the war. This presents a contrast with the only twenty-first century monograph to examine Civil War mobilization, Mark Wilson's economic history *The Business of Civil War*. Wilson breaks from earlier historiography on mobilization by examining how mobilization processes led to a massive and lasting expansion of the federal government and by noting the effectiveness with which professional officers and quartermasters within the War Department responded to the crisis.¹² However, while Wilson's work is significant in understanding mobilization and logistical processes at the national level, such large-scale studies are simply too broad to examine the impact of mobilization at the local and state levels.

In comparison, the study of mobilization at the local or community level has seen increased attention in recent years. These works can be distinguished by their focus on a

¹⁰ Williamson Murray and Wayne Wei-siang Hsieh, *A Savage War: A Military History of the Civil War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 5.

¹¹ A. Howard Meneely, *The War Department, 1861; A Study in Mobilization and Administration* (New York: AMS Press, 1970); Fred A. Shannon, *The Organization and Administration of the Union Army, 1861-1865* (Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1928).

¹² Mark Wilson, *The Business of Civil War: Military Mobilization and the State, 1861-1865* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 191; Wilson, *The Business of Civil War*, 37.

particular city or county, as well as their usage of sources such as regimental histories, census data, local newspapers, and diaries or memoirs of common soldiers and civilians. Rather than studying the nuances of logistics or how the state and federal governments developed mobilization, these works use a “community-level analysis” that is better able to determine how the mobilization process took place at the local level.¹³ These studies are therefore capable of studying aspects of mobilization that are otherwise neglected in large-scale studies, such as unit formation and the factors that impacted mobilization in these communities. One such study of mobilization in Dubuque, Iowa, attempts to use the example of Dubuque to investigate whether the Civil War was a “rich man’s war” but a “poor man’s fight,” and partially supports this characterization by showing that soldiers with lower property values were more likely to be enticed to serve by enlistment bounties.¹⁴ Another study, this one focused on Franklin County, Pennsylvania, similarly uses census data to assert that volunteers under the age of eighteen increasingly came from lower-income families as the war progressed.¹⁵ This study additionally suggests that youths were more likely to enlist in majority-Republican areas early in the war, as Republicans were the most supportive of the war effort.¹⁶ While these works represent only a portion of the studies of community-level mobilization now in existence, they are representative of the fact that focusing on mobilization at the local level allows for the incorporation of factors such as class status and political affiliation.

Despite the increased interest in research on mobilization at the local level, this research to date has only focused on rural areas or small towns. Mobilization can be regarded as a simpler

¹³ Russell L. Johnson, “‘Volunteer While You May’: Manpower Mobilization in Dubuque, Iowa,” in *Union Soldiers and the Northern Home Front: Wartime Experiences, Postwar Adjustments*, ed. Paul Cimballa and Randall Miller (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002), 33.

¹⁴ Johnson, “‘Volunteer While You May,’” 66.

¹⁵ Kathleen Shaw, “‘Johnny Has Gone for a Soldier’: Youth Enlistment in a Northern County,” *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 135, no. 4 (2011): 433.

¹⁶ Shaw, “‘Johnny Has Gone for a Soldier,’” 428.

task in these locales, as young men from small towns often banded together as a company or a part of a company. This was the case with some communities in Cook County, as well. In Lemont, sixty-four of the village's 400 inhabitants formed the "Lemont Guards," and in Blue Island, a war meeting resulted in the creation of a company that later joined the 13th Illinois.¹⁷

Mobilization in an urban area like Chicago, whose 1860 population of 109,260 made it the ninth-largest city in the nation, would by necessity have taken a different course than what occurred in rural areas.¹⁸ While rural towns were comprised mainly of farmers, urban dwellers were employed in a greater variety of professions and in greater numbers, including lawyers, railroad workers, bankers, clerks, machinists, merchants, and meatpackers. Immigrants also made up a greater portion of the population in cities, and Chicago was no exception. The 1860 census indicates that 54,624 Chicagoans were foreign-born, with the greatest representation being found among German (22,230) and Irish (19,889) immigrants.¹⁹ Based on these differences in demographics, it is reasonable to assume that residents of urban areas responded to mobilization in a distinct manner from those living in rural areas, and a study of mobilization in Chicago can therefore reveal what factors influenced the mobilization process in both that city and urban areas in general.

This research is based upon a wide variety of sources pertaining to Chicago during the Civil War, including regimental histories, records kept by the Adjutant General of Illinois, reporting from the *Chicago Tribune*, and the published and unpublished memoirs, diaries, journals, and letters of soldiers and community leaders. When taken in sum, these sources

¹⁷ "The Uprising," *Chicago Tribune*, April 26, 1861; *Military History and Reminiscences of the Thirteenth Regiment of Illinois Volunteer Infantry in the Civil War in the United States, 1861-1865* (Chicago: Woman's Temperance Publishing Association, 1892), 560.

¹⁸ Kennedy, *Population of the United States in 1860*, xxxi.

¹⁹ Kennedy, *Population of the United States in 1860*, xxxi.

indicate that the most important factor influencing the mobilization process in Chicago was the active engagement of organizations and communities that embraced the Union war effort and the mobilization of military units. These include preexisting militia units, religious congregations, political parties, immigrant communities, and commercial organizations or professions. The urban landscape of Chicago presented a massive population that could be mobilized against the Confederacy, and Chicagoans turned to the organizations with which they had already been involved to assist in organizing mobilization and civilian support for the war effort. Just as these groups influenced what units were created during the mobilization process, their presence also played a role in individuals' thinking when deciding whether to enlist and in which units. It can therefore be said that the communities present in Chicago exercised a profound impact upon both the city's mobilization as a whole and how this mobilization was experienced by individual Chicagoans.

In order to examine the role played by Chicago communities in influencing the mobilization process, this essay will investigate five distinct categories of communities. The first section will consider the militia units that existed in Chicago before the Civil War, as some units had been founded years before the war, while others were created in response to the increase in sectional tensions between North and South. The essay will then examine religious denominations and church bodies, as individuals from these communities sometimes enlisted in units alongside one another and even elected their religious leaders as officers. The third section investigates the role political affiliation and political organizations played in the creation of units and the selection of officers. The essay will then assess the various immigrant communities in Chicago, as a wide variety of the city's immigrants banded together to form their own military units. A final section will explore the commercial organizations and occupational groups that

powered Chicago's economy and answered the call to war by either sponsoring units or forming their own. Although Chicago's communities did not always influence the mobilization process in the same ways, all of the groups included in these five categories were instrumental in shaping the city's early contributions to the war.

1. Militia Units

Although several different militia organizations existed within Chicago in the antebellum period, an examination of these groups reveals that they were not well prepared for active military service. In the years leading up to the war, the decreasing likelihood of attacks from foreign powers or Native Americans meant that militias in Chicago and throughout the nation were not treated as having actual military importance.²⁰ Instead, American militia companies increasingly became "highly selective social clubs" in which prominent members of the community had the opportunity to dress in uniform and display their patriotism to the public.²¹ Such was the case in Chicago as well: after Richard K. Swift initiated the organization of the Chicago Hussars and Light Artillery in 1847, the unit's first action was to parade through the city.²² The social nature of other Chicago militia units can be clearly seen in the advertisements they placed in the local papers, as the Chicago Light Guard announced that they would be organizing "cotillion parties" throughout the winter season in 1857, and the Chicago Dragoons later hosted a "grand Soiree" in 1859.²³ Militia units that regularly presented themselves to the public naturally wished to do so in an impressive manner, and the Highland Guards consequently

²⁰ Ricardo A. Herrera, "Self-Governance and the American Citizen as Soldier, 1775-1861," *The Journal of Military History* 65, no. 1 (2001): 25.

²¹ Herrera, "Self-Governance and the American Citizen as Soldier," 26.

²² Charles B. Kimbell, *History of Battery "A," First Illinois Light Artillery Volunteers* (Chicago: Cushing Printing Company, 1899), 9.

²³ "Light Guard Band Parties," *Chicago Tribune*, December 3, 1857; "Chicago Dragoons Soiree," *Chicago Tribune*, March 25, 1859.

outfitted themselves with kilts, broadswords, and ostrich-feathered caps, prompting the *Chicago Tribune* to describe them as the “most showy and attractive company in the city.”²⁴ It is clear that while a number of militia units coexisted in the city before the Civil War, these organizations were far more qualified to host a social gathering than they were to put down a rebellion.

In contrast to the militia units that seemed to prioritize socialization over military preparedness, Elmer Ellsworth’s United States Zouave Cadets stand out for both their commitment to military drill and their national impact. Ellsworth modeled the Cadets after the North African “zouaves” employed by the French Army, and the Cadets wore “bright, picturesque uniforms and baggy trousers” that helped attract recruits to the unit.²⁵ Potential Cadets were held to a high standard and had to agree to abstain from drinking, gambling, entering “houses of ill-fame,” and playing billiards, the excitement of which would “naturally lead to drinking.”²⁶ Ellsworth also drilled his Cadets relentlessly, and after the Cadets had prevailed in drill competitions against other Illinois militia units, Ellsworth published newspaper advertisements throughout the country indicating that the Cadets would accept challenges from any militia company in the United States or Canada.²⁷ Ellsworth’s challenge prompted a national tour that took him and his Zouaves throughout the nation, with the Cadets giving drill exhibitions witnessed by tens of thousands of spectators.²⁸ This tour elevated the Cadets to national prominence and evidently had a significant impact on the Civil War: there were dozens of Zouave units created in both the North and the South, and when the already-famous Ellsworth was killed shortly after the war began, he was mourned as a martyr throughout the Union.²⁹

²⁴ “The Highland Guard,” *Chicago Tribune*, November 3, 1855.

²⁵ James Fenton, *Civil War Diary (1861-1864)*, James Fenton Papers, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library.

²⁶ Charles Ingraham, *Elmer E. Ellsworth and the Zouaves of '61* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1925), 28.

²⁷ Ingraham, *Elmer E. Ellsworth and the Zouaves of '61*, 60.

²⁸ Ingraham, *Elmer E. Ellsworth and the Zouaves of '61*, 97.

²⁹ Timothy Marr, “The American Zouaves: Mania and Mystique,” *Military Images* 34, no. 4 (Autumn 2016): 25.

Although their gaudy uniforms would have fit amongst any of the other Chicago militia units, the strict professionalism of the Cadets enabled them to influence the perceptions of militia units in both Chicago and the nation.

Beyond the socially-oriented militias and the Cadets, Chicago could also boast of militia units that had been created as a direct response to the widening sectional divisions between North and South. The immigrant communities of Chicago were active in creating such units, as prominent Hungarian community leader Julian Kune recalled that the election of Abraham Lincoln prompted some immigrants to begin organizing and drilling new militia companies.³⁰ This was the case with the Lincoln Rifles, which was composed of “Hungarians and Bohemians” who supported the new administration.³¹ Another militia unit created during this period was the Turner Union Cadets, composed of Germans who similarly supported Lincoln and the Union.³² This latter group was associated with the Chicago Turnverein, a social and gymnastics club for German immigrants, and seems to have been a new incarnation of the Rifle Company the Turnverein had created during the prewar years.³³ These newer militia units ultimately joined together with older units such as the Highland Guards to form the Washington Independent Regiment, which was at that time the largest militia unit in Chicago.³⁴ As with the other militia units, the men who comprised these newer organizations were enthusiastic volunteers rather than trained soldiers, but the circumstances of their creation and their evident ideological motivations indicate that they were willing to fight for the Union if and when they were called upon to take up arms.

³⁰ Julian Kune, *Reminiscences of an Octogenarian Hungarian Exile* (Chicago: Julian Kune, 1911), 91.

³¹ Kune, *Reminiscences of an Octogenarian Hungarian Exile*, 92.

³² Kune, *Reminiscences of an Octogenarian Hungarian Exile*, 94.

³³ “Independence Day,” *Chicago Tribune*, July 2, 1858.

³⁴ Horace Wardner, “Reminisces of a Surgeon,” in *Military Essays and Recollections: Papers Read Before the Commandery of the State of Illinois, Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States*, vol. 3 (Chicago: The Dial Press, 1899), 173.

Although Chicago's militia forces made up only a small fraction of the forces Chicago contributed to the Union, they played an instrumental role in creating new units and attracting volunteers to these units. The Chicago Light Artillery, two companies of Chicago Zouaves, the Turner Union Cadets, and the Lincoln Rifles were fully organized in time to participate in the aforementioned Cairo Expedition, and upon their return, they sought to fill out their ranks in order to create full batteries and regiments.³⁵ This proved to be an easy task, given the existing reputation of these units and the added esteem gained from newspaper coverage of the Expedition. The Chicago Light Artillery proved themselves to be "a ready nucleus for forming a first-class battery," and less than twenty-four hours after they began enlisting recruits, Battery A of the 1st Illinois Light Artillery was full.³⁶ In fact, there were more volunteers than Battery A was able to accept, and former Chicago Light Artillery members were able to fill Battery B in June of 1861.³⁷ Former militia units similarly lent a certain prestige to infantry regiments, which helped to ensure that these regiments were quickly filled. After the Highland Guards became a part of the 12th Illinois, this regiment became known as the "First Scotch Regiment," and multiple extant photographs indicate that soldiers of the regiment wore tam o' shanters, a kind of cap traditionally associated with Scotland.³⁸ The inclusion of the two companies of Chicago Zouaves in the 19th Illinois had a similar effect upon that regiment.³⁹ The men of the 19th were

³⁵ Reece, *Report of the Adjutant General*, vol. 1, 8.

³⁶ Kimbell, *History of Battery "A,"* 13.

³⁷ Boos and White, "Civil War Diary of Patrick H. White," 641.

³⁸ Wardner, "Reminiscences of a Surgeon," 173; "[Unidentified soldier of "First Scotch Regiment," 12th Illinois Infantry Regiment, in sack coat and Tam o' Shanter cap in front of painted backdrop showing weapons and American flag at Benton Barracks, Saint Louis, Missouri]," 1861-1865, from Library of Congress: *Liljenquist Family Collection of Civil War Photographs*; "[Captain Norton W. Campbell of Co. G, 12th Illinois Infantry Regiment and 110th U.S. Colored Troops (USCT) Infantry Regiment in uniform]," 1861-1865, from Library of Congress: *Liljenquist Family Collection of Civil War Photographs*; "[Unidentified soldier of the 12th Illinois Volunteers, "The First Scotch Regiment" in greatcoat and tamoshanter cap]," 1861-1865, from Library of Congress: *Liljenquist Family Collection of Civil War Photographs*.

³⁹ Haynie, *The Nineteenth Illinois*, 45.

clearly proud of their association with the famous Zouaves, as they established a regimental newspaper called the *Zouave Gazette* and founded a “Zouave Glee Club” in their winter quarters.⁴⁰ Just as men were eager to join militia units before the war, volunteers also flocked to the volunteers units associated with these organizations.

In addition to attracting new recruits to their units, it is clear that former members of the militia felt strong social and peer pressure to join these new volunteer units. This can be seen in the example of Patrick H. White, a former member of the Chicago Light Artillery who left behind an unpublished diary that can be used to gauge his motivations for enlisting. When the Light Artillery left for Cairo, White did not join them, as his mother had recently died, and his sister feared that White’s departure would “leave the younger portion of our family scattered.”⁴¹ This was a common dilemma for men facing the decision to enlist, as although they felt called to support their country, their manhood was also based upon their “responsibilities as husbands, fathers, and breadwinners” for their families.⁴² While he initially honored this obligation, he clearly felt ashamed about not having joined his former comrades, noting that he kept to the back streets to avoid being seen.⁴³ The tipping point for him came when he heard a young woman ridiculing the men who had served in the militias but “hid their uniforms and themselves too” once the war had begun. White “could stand it no longer” and soon visited his former armory to assist in drilling new recruits, leading to his being commissioned as a second lieutenant in Battery B of the 1st Illinois Light Artillery. The social pressure that White felt to enlist aligns closely with James McPherson’s assertion that many Civil War soldiers enlisted in order to

⁴⁰ *Zouave Gazette*, Civil War Soldier Newspapers, Chicago History Museum.

⁴¹ Boos and White, “Civil War Diary of Patrick H. White,” 641.

⁴² James M. McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 134.

⁴³ Boos and White, “Civil War Diary of Patrick H. White,” 641.

protect their honor, defined as “one’s public reputation” and “one’s image in the eyes of his peers.”⁴⁴ In the case of former militia members, men who were willing to parade with the militias but unwilling to fight risked being seen by their peers as lacking honor, and men like Patrick often chose to enlist rather than risk being seen as dishonorable.

As Chicagoans rushed to join the new volunteer military units being created, they also often turned to men who had been in militias to fill officer positions in these units. The former members of Ellsworth’s Zouaves were particularly successful in this regard. Of the fifty Cadets who participated in the national tour, eleven became officers in Illinois volunteer infantry regiments, including three colonels and four captains.⁴⁵ These opportunities were not limited to former Zouaves, as John McArthur, the prewar commander of the Highland Guards, was elected as colonel of the 12th Illinois and eventually brevetted as a major general.⁴⁶ A similar situation occurred in the 24th Illinois, which elected Geza Mihalotzy as lieutenant colonel after Mihalotzy’s Lincoln Rifles had joined the regiment.⁴⁷ Furthermore, Chicago militia officers proved themselves able to secure officer positions in regiments mainly composed of men from other parts of the state, as John B. Wyman of the Chicago Light Guard was elected colonel of the 13th Illinois despite the fact only one of the regiment’s ten companies was from Cook County.⁴⁸ Evidently, even those men from the militia units that were primarily social in nature had enough credibility from their militia experiences for new recruits to turn to them as leaders during the mobilization process.

⁴⁴ McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades*, 23.

⁴⁵ Ingraham, *Elmer E. Ellsworth and the Zouaves of '61*, 66; “Illinois Civil War Muster and Descriptive Rolls,” Office of the Illinois Secretary of State, <https://apps.ilsos.gov/isaveterans/civilmustersrch.jsp>.

⁴⁶ Wardner, “Reminisces of a Surgeon,” 174.

⁴⁷ Kune, *Reminiscences of an Octogenarian Hungarian Exile*, 101.

⁴⁸ *Military History and Reminiscences of the Thirteenth Regiment*, 6.

2. Religious Denominations and Communities

At the beginning of the Civil War, Chicago had a relatively diverse religious makeup, with a number of denominations represented among its citizens. Christianity was dominant, with Baptist, Methodist, Unitarian, Catholic, Lutheran, and Episcopalian churches being built throughout the city in the first half of the nineteenth century.⁴⁹ Judaism was also represented, as the city's first synagogue was established in 1851. This religious diversity was certainly helped by Chicago's immigrant population, as the Irish and some Germans patronized Catholic churches, and many Germans were Lutherans. It is natural for religious individuals to turn toward their religion in times of trouble, and during the Civil War, many Chicagoans relied upon their religious communities as they coalesced into new military units.

During the course of unit formation, men of the same religion or religious denomination gravitated toward one another due to a natural desire to group themselves with individuals who shared their religious beliefs. This could sometimes be for reasons of familiarity, as men who enlisted in the all-Jewish company in the 82nd Illinois would have had more in common with their fellow soldiers than if they had enlisted in a non-Jewish unit.⁵⁰ A desire for commonality is also why the majority-Catholic 90th Illinois made it clear that their colonel should be "of the Catholic faith," although they did accept a Protestant lieutenant colonel.⁵¹ Recruits did not have to be in the same denomination as their fellow soldiers to find them religiously similar, either, as shared devotion to Christianity also brought men together. One young man found that while his father was already willing to give a "reluctant consent" to his decision to enlist, he also urged his

⁴⁹ Lowell W. Livezey and Mark Bouman, "Religious Geography," *Encyclopedia of Chicago*, <http://encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/1059.html>.

⁵⁰ Joseph R. Reinhart, *Yankee Dutchmen Under Fire: Civil War Letters from the 82nd Illinois Infantry* (Kent, Ohio: The Kent State University Press, 2013), 24.

⁵¹ George H. Woodruff, *Fifteen Years Ago: or the Patriotism of Will County* (Joliet, IL: Joliet Republican Book and Job Steam Printing House, 1876), 362.

son to join a company that he heard had been recruited by a minister and was made up of “Christian young men.”⁵² William Cross Hazelton, the devout son of a preacher, similarly helped to assuage his future wife’s worries about his decision to enlist by assuring her that the company that he selected was composed of men “nearly all of excellent moral character” and commanded by “a fine Christian man.”⁵³ The Chicago Dragoons as a unit seemed to have prided themselves on their religious devotion, as they amassed a “choicely selected Religious Library of 200 volumes,” attended church together, and had their uniforms designed with special pockets to hold a Bible over their hearts.⁵⁴ Whether they were formed due to the preferences of the recruits or in order to help ease family’s concerns about their loved ones’ departure, units composed of those with similar religious beliefs proved appealing to the men who shared these beliefs.

In addition to religious units being formed because of their appeal to potential recruits, religious leaders sometimes aided the formation of these units by encouraging their fellow believers to join specific units. A historian of the 90th Illinois, also known as the Irish Legion, later noted that the unit’s organization was largely due to the efforts of the “Catholic Vicar General of the Diocese of Chicago” in urging Irish Catholics to enlist in that unit.⁵⁵ In general, however, religious leaders more often raised companies than regiments. One such company was raised by the appropriately-named Reverend William Slaughter, who appealed to his own Methodist congregation but was also willing to accept any volunteers who shared his “piety, patriotism, and resolution.”⁵⁶ This company became a part of the 39th Illinois and was known as the “Preacher’s Company,” both because of Slaughter’s involvement and the fact that “its rank

⁵² Charles M. Clark, *The History of the Thirty-Ninth Regiment Illinois Volunteer Veteran Infantry (Yates Phalanx)* (Chicago: 39th Illinois Veteran Association, 1889), 491.

⁵³ Winfield S. Hall, *The Captain: An Eighth Illinois Trooper* (Riverside, IL: n.p., 1994), 14.

⁵⁴ “Capt. Barker’s Dragoons,” *Chicago Tribune*, April 22, 1861; “The Bible and the Soldiers,” *Chicago Tribune*, April 23, 1861.

⁵⁵ Woodruff, *Fifteen Years Ago*, 362.

⁵⁶ “A New Rifle Corps,” *Chicago Tribune*, April 26, 1861.

and file had pretensions to more morality” than the other men of the regiment, as evidenced by their aversion to cursing on the march.⁵⁷ The Jewish company of the 82nd Illinois in turn was organized partly due to the efforts of Henry Greenebaum. Greenebaum was not a member of the clergy, but he was still a prominent Jewish leader who had been the first president of Chicago’s Hebrew Relief Association.⁵⁸ Greenebaum reminded his audience at a war meeting that they had received religious freedoms in America that had never been available to them in Europe, and that they therefore must support the Union in order to repay the nation for these freedoms.⁵⁹ Based on the fact that all of these aforementioned units were successfully filled for service, religious leaders were evidently able to persuade those that already trusted them to enlist in the military units these leaders supported.

In addition to encouraging their followers to enlist, some religious leaders capitalized upon their influence in order to become officers, although this was a rare occurrence. In the 39th Illinois, Reverend Slaughter quickly became Captain Slaughter, as the Methodists he had recruited for the company elected him as their commander.⁶⁰ The 90th Illinois nearly had a similar situation when Vicar General Dennis Dunne was offered the colonelcy by Governor Yates, but Dunne declined it, as it was understood that the commander should be a “practical and experienced military man.”⁶¹ However, there was another reason provided for why Dunne would not serve as the regiment’s colonel; an officer position like this one was seen as “inconsistent with his holy office.” This speaks to a larger trend of religious leadership being seen as incompatible with military leadership roles. A former sergeant in the 13th Illinois who had been

⁵⁷ Clark, *The History of the Thirty-Ninth Regiment*, 482.

⁵⁸ “Hebrew Relief Association,” *Chicago Tribune*, December 5, 1859.

⁵⁹ Reinhart, *Yankee Dutchmen Under Fire*, 24.

⁶⁰ Clark, *The History of the Thirty-Ninth Regiment*, 480.

⁶¹ Woodruff, *Fifteen Years Ago*, 362.

seen as “a candidate for the ministry” later wrote that some of his fellow soldiers “seemed to imagine that the profession of religion, and especially candidacy for the ministry, would render an individual very submissive” and thus unfit to be an officer.⁶² In the case of this individual, the situation was resolved when he forcefully asserted his authority and thus earned his comrades’ respect. While some clergymen like Reverend Slaughter were able to transition into military leadership, the idea that religious leaders were not suited for the military seems to have limited the occurrences of such a transition.

3. Political Parties and Organizations

As the nation moved toward the 1860 presidential election, two of the major candidates in the race had personal connections to Chicago. Abraham Lincoln was nominated at the Republican National Convention and owed his candidacy to the fact that the convention was held in Chicago, where he enjoyed raucous support from Illinois Republicans.⁶³ Representing the Northern Democrats was Stephen A. Douglas, a Chicago resident who was hugely popular with the city’s Democrats. After months of hard campaigning, Lincoln won Chicago’s vote in the 1860 election, carrying the city with 10,697 votes to Douglas’s 8,094 votes.⁶⁴ However, while the mayoral election in 1861 went to the Republicans, the Democrats were eventually able to retake the city, with Francis C. Sherman winning election in 1862 and serving until the final days of the war.⁶⁵ With this fairly even representation, it is unsurprising that both Republicans and Democrats would prove influential in Chicago’s mobilization.

⁶² *Military History and Reminiscences of the Thirteenth Regiment*, 455.

⁶³ Theodore J. Karamanski, *Rally ‘Round the Flag: Chicago and the Civil War* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1993), 14.

⁶⁴ Karamanski, *Rally ‘Round the Flag*, 50.

⁶⁵ “Chicago Mayors, 1837-2007,” *Encyclopedia of Chicago*, <http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/1443.html>.

Although units were never monolithic in terms of political affiliation, there were instances of men from one political party joining together during the mobilization process. The Republicans benefited in this regard due to the existence of the Wide Awakes, societies of young men who supported the Lincoln campaign. The Wide Awakes were created with the intent of being able to respond to a sectional crisis like the Civil War, with one advertisement in January of 1861 informing the North Side's Wide Awakes that "it may not be long before we are called upon to protect the dearest rights of our country."⁶⁶ The West Side Wide Awakes accordingly voted unanimously to disband themselves within a week of the Battle of Fort Sumter in order to allow their members to fight for the Union.⁶⁷ Another group of Wide Awakes formed Company B of the Chicago Zouaves, participated in the Cairo Expedition, and eventually became a company in the 19th Illinois.⁶⁸

The Wide Awakes' Democratic counterparts, the Douglas Invincibles, seem to have not involved themselves in mobilization. Stephen Douglas's supporters did however help in the creation of new military units, as "ardent war-democrat" and Chicago lawyer David Stuart's christening of the two regiments he raised as the Douglas Brigade surely appealed to like-minded Democrats.⁶⁹ While the new volunteer units being formed in 1861 would not have turned down recruits with whom they had political disagreements, it does appear that units found success in recruiting groups of men who had already been bound together by their support for a common presidential candidate.

⁶⁶ "North Side Wide Awakes Attention," *Chicago Tribune*, January 4, 1861.

⁶⁷ "Wide Awakes Disbanded – Patriots Enrolled," *Chicago Tribune*, April 19, 1861.

⁶⁸ Haynie, *The Nineteenth Illinois*, 53.

⁶⁹ *The Story of the Fifty-Fifth Regiment Illinois Volunteer Infantry in the Civil War, 1861-1865* (Clinton, MA: W.J. Coulter, 1887), 19.

Political affiliation also proved to be an important factor in determining which men became officers, but was more significant in regiments where officers were appointed rather than elected. One would certainly expect that politics would factor into officer elections, which were a common occurrence during the beginnings of mobilization. Officer elections during the Civil War allowed citizen-soldiers to engage in the democratic processes they felt they were owed, and these elections were frequently connected to politics in the prewar militias, as potential officers often had aspirations for some political office.⁷⁰ However, while the regimental histories of the Chicago volunteer units contain numerous examples of officer elections, political affiliation is rarely addressed as a factor in these elections. In the case of the 37th Illinois, the regiment was organized by a Republican politician named Julius White, who named the regiment the “Fremont Rifles” in reference to the Republican Party’s first presidential candidate.⁷¹ Despite White’s Republicanism, there is no mention of politics as a factor in his election as colonel, with the regimental historian noting only that it was a “foregone conclusion” that White would be the regiment’s colonel due to his efforts to organize the regiment and advertise on its behalf.⁷² Politics did play a role in officer selections, as Governor Yates removed native Virginian and former Democratic elector Thomas Shirley from his position as colonel of the 12th Illinois due to “strong suspicions” that Shirley supported the Confederacy.⁷³ In contrast, Yates appointed Democrat Francis T. Sherman as colonel of the 88th Illinois despite objections from within the regiment.⁷⁴ This seems to have been a savvy political move, as Sherman’s father was elected mayor of Chicago that same year. Although politically-charged decisions regarding officers were

⁷⁰ Herrera, “Self-Governance and the American Citizen as Soldier,” 41.

⁷¹ Michael A. Mullins, *The Fremont Rifles: A History of the 37th Illinois Veteran Volunteer Infantry* (Wilmington, NC: Broadfoot Publishing Company, 1990), 1.

⁷² Mullins, *The Fremont Rifles*, 7.

⁷³ “National Democratic State Convention,” *Illinois State Journal* (Springfield), October 5, 1859; Wardner, “Reminiscences of a Surgeon,” 174.

⁷⁴ McIlvaine, *Reminiscences of Chicago During the Civil War*, 117.

infrequent, they appear to have been more common than officer elections being determined by political affiliation.

While political influence only went so far in helping men to attain officer positions, some potential officers drew upon political connections in order to try to secure their units' acceptance into the military. The men of the 39th Illinois were evidently eager to join the war effort, as although the vast majority were from Illinois, they appealed to the Governor of Missouri to be accepted as a regiment of that state once Illinois's quota of troops had been filled.⁷⁵ When that failed, the regiment began calling themselves the "Yates Phalanx" and called upon Governor Yates to petition the federal government on their behalf. Yates did so, sending "strong commendatory letters to the President and Secretary of War," but the 39th Illinois were ultimately forced to wait until later in 1861 before they were accepted. Julian Kune of the 24th Illinois, a prominent immigrant leader and member of Chicago's pro-Republican Cameron and Lincoln Club, experienced more success. As he had already been acquainted with Lincoln, Kune proceeded to Washington, where he met first with Secretary of War Simon Cameron and then the president. While Secretary Cameron informed Kune that he could not accept the regiment, Kune eventually managed to secure a meeting with Lincoln and persuaded the president to order that the unit be accepted.⁷⁶ The negotiations and pleading associated with securing the acceptance of a regiment reflected the fact that Illinois received far more volunteers than they were able to organize into regiments, with the federal government giving Illinois an initial quota of only 6,000 men.⁷⁷ Under these circumstances, it is unsurprising that some men turned to political allies in order to push for their units' acceptance.

⁷⁵ Clark, *The History of the Thirty-Ninth Regiment*, 2.

⁷⁶ Kune, *Reminiscences of an Octogenarian Hungarian Exile*, 96-99.

⁷⁷ Hicken, *Illinois in the Civil War*, 1.

4. Immigrant Communities

Given that immigrants were such a major facet of Chicago in the nineteenth century, it is clear that any major action undertaken by the city would feature participation by immigrant communities. The 1860 census indicated that 49.99 percent of Chicago's population were immigrants, a rate only surpassed by St. Louis and the smaller cities of Milwaukee and San Francisco.⁷⁸ The majority of these were Germans and Irish, but Chicago was also home to thousands of recent immigrants from England and Scotland, as well as smaller groups from France, the Scandinavian nations, and other parts of Europe. With such a massive portion of Chicagoans belonging to immigrant communities, the city and its immigrants simply cannot be separated, and immigrant communities proved themselves to be tremendously influential in providing Chicago with both units and officer candidates during the mobilization process.

Units formed from within Chicago's immigrant communities typically owed their existence to these communities' desire to express their patriotism by supporting the Union. This is evidenced by the advertisements placed in the newspapers by immigrant leaders in the days after the beginning of the war. In the *Chicago Tribune* on April 20, a reader could find both an advertisement calling on Scandinavians to join together "in defence of the laws and honor of our adopted country" and an advertisement from James Mulligan asking for Irishmen to "sustain the Government of the United States in and through the present war."⁷⁹ These advertisements proved successful, with the Scandinavians forming Battery G of the 2nd Illinois Light Artillery and Mulligan raising the majority-Irish 23rd Illinois. For the Germans of Chicago, similar appeals were made in the German-language *Illinois Staats-Zeitung*. An editorial in this paper declared

⁷⁸ Kennedy, *Population of the United States in 1860*, xxxi.

⁷⁹ "The War Era in Chicago," *Chicago Tribune*, April 20, 1861.

that since Germans have enjoyed “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” in the United States, they must be willing to “offer our money, our property, and even our life in the service of the Union.”⁸⁰ Calls for Germans to serve their adopted country also appeared in the *Illinois Staats-Zeitung* in 1862, when the German 82nd Illinois was being organized. One member of the Chicago Turnverein told his countrymen in an open letter that although they were facing a “fearsome enemy,” they must join together “in the battle for the Republic and for freedom.”⁸¹ These varied appeals show that immigrant communities often tapped into the feelings of patriotism that dominated the early war period when forming units composed of men from their communities.

Beyond just showing their patriotism, however, immigrant communities also organized military units in order to favorably represent their respective communities. While he was in Washington to secure the acceptance of the 23rd Illinois, James Mulligan noted in his diary that he believed the war presented “an opening for a splendid record for the Western Irishman.”⁸² In the case of the other predominantly Irish unit, the 90th Illinois, its organizers were partially motivated by “a desire to disprove the charge, sometimes made, that the Irish Catholic element was disloyal.”⁸³ For the Germans of the 82nd Illinois, their service was meant both to show that they were “not inferior” to those Germans enlisted in the 24th Illinois, and to show “the Rebels what German blows are.”⁸⁴ Other immigrant communities besides the Irish and Germans similarly sought to promote the reputation of their nationalities through mobilization. In a letter, the organizer of the Lincoln Rifles asked that they be provided with “good arms,” as since they

⁸⁰ Theodore J. Karamanski and Eileen M. McMahons, eds., *Civil War Chicago: Eyewitness to History* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2014), 57.

⁸¹ Reinhart, *Yankee Dutchmen Under Fire*, 21.

⁸² James A. Mulligan, *Diary (1862-1863)*, James A. Mulligan Papers, Chicago History Museum.

⁸³ Woodruff, *Fifteen Years Ago*, 361.

⁸⁴ Reinhart, *Yankee Dutchmen Under Fire*, 19.

were the first Hungarian unit formed in the United States, they wished to “do honor to the country of our birth.”⁸⁵ The formation of these immigrant units evidently aggrieved those immigrant communities that did not take a similar course of action, with one Englishman writing in the *Chicago Tribune* that he was jealous to see “representatives of every nation but my own forming companies, regiments and brigades.”⁸⁶ Immigrant communities can therefore be seen as competing with one another in order to promote their reputations, as if they were not represented among the Union forces, this could cause others to view them as less loyal or patriotic than other immigrant communities that had contributed men to the Union cause.

Aside from wishing to win plaudits for their communities, immigrants also formed units with one another in hopes of attaining some future goal in their native lands. This motivation is most well-known among the Irish, who desired independence from the British and felt that military experience could aid them in securing an independent Ireland. One particularly vocal group in this regard was the Fenians, Irish nationalists who established militias in the United States in the years before the Civil War and were “willing to sacrifice their lives for an independent Ireland.”⁸⁷ The Fenians were well-represented among the leadership of the 23rd Illinois, as James Mulligan and other officers of the 23rd had either served in Fenian militias or been otherwise involved with the Fenian movement.⁸⁸ As such, the “opening” Mulligan discusses in his diary seemingly indicates Mulligan’s belief that “a real Irish Brigade” composed of men with experience from fighting the Confederacy could one day help in the struggle for Irish independence.⁸⁹ Although this anticipation of future change in one’s homeland as a result of

⁸⁵ Kune, *Reminiscences of an Octogenarian Hungarian Exile*, 94.

⁸⁶ “To the English American Citizens of Chicago,” *Chicago Tribune*, July 27, 1861.

⁸⁷ Keating, *Shades of Green*, 5.

⁸⁸ Keating, *Shades of Green*, 31.

⁸⁹ Mulligan, *Diary*, Chicago History Museum.

the Civil War is primarily associated with the Irish, there is evidence that certain Germans held a similar wish. A report in the *Illinois Staats-Zeitung* warned the “German American freedom fighter” that they must first focus on preserving the Union, as once this goal had been accomplished, they could return to the German states “in order to wrest away the tyranny and aristocracy there forever.”⁹⁰ For some Irish and German Chicagoans serving alongside their fellow immigrants, their fight for the Union would ideally be a stepping stone on the path to greater freedom in their respective native countries.

Beyond ideological reasons, immigrants also sought to serve in majority-immigrant units because it would keep them in contact with the languages and cultures they were already familiar with in their communities. This was evidently seen as a boon for morale, as one soldier in the 82nd noted with pride that the men were “exclusively German” and that the unit’s “camaraderie could not be better.”⁹¹ The draw of fighting and marching with men of the same nationality also explains why immigrants from elsewhere in the state gravitated toward the units formed primarily by Chicago’s immigrant communities, with a company of Irish immigrants from Waukegan traveling to join the 23rd Illinois.⁹² A common language, rather than a common nationality, could also prove as a unifier for men who came from relatively small immigrant communities. This can be seen in an advertisement for the French Battalion, which noted that the “French Canadians, Belgians and Swiss” would also be invited to join the new unit.⁹³ Ultimately, the 24th Illinois would include a Swiss company and a company created from the Hungarian Lincoln Rifles, as these communities were simply too small to create regiments of their own.⁹⁴

⁹⁰ Reinhart, *Yankee Dutchmen Under Fire*, 43.

⁹¹ Reinhart, *Yankee Dutchmen Under Fire*, 22.

⁹² “The War Spirit in Chicago,” *Chicago Tribune*, April 24, 1861.

⁹³ “Attention French Battalion,” *Chicago Tribune*, April 23, 1861.

⁹⁴ “The New German Regiment,” *Chicago Tribune*, May 21, 1861.

The composition of these units indicates that immigrants preferred serving alongside men from their nationality, those with whom they shared a fellow language, or even other immigrants from a different nationality, and they accordingly enlisted in the units put forth by Chicago's immigrant communities.

In addition to creating volunteer military units, immigrant communities within Chicago also proved influential in the mobilization process by providing men with European military experience to serve as officers in the new units. Naturally, some of these officers commanded majority-immigrant units. Geza Mihalotzy had previously served in the army of Austria-Hungary, which surely bolstered his reputation while he first organized the Lincoln Rifles and then became lieutenant colonel of the 24th Illinois.⁹⁵ Another European veteran with ties to the 24th Illinois was Charles Knobelsdorf, a "retired soldier of the Schleswig-Holstein army" who helped to organize the regiment.⁹⁶ When Knobelsdorf was not elected lieutenant colonel as he had expected, he left to form the 44th Illinois and in turn became the colonel of that regiment.⁹⁷ However, European veterans also found themselves in officer positions in non-immigrant units. For the position of lieutenant colonel, the 55th Illinois elected Oscar Malmberg, who could boast of an education from the Swedish Military Academy and years of service in the Swedish army.⁹⁸ Although the 55th's regimental history noted that Malmberg was initially unpopular with the men due to his temper and focus on drill, he "had some tactical knowledge, then a rare acquirement," and ultimately rose to become the regiment's colonel.⁹⁹ The 19th Illinois's Russian colonel, Ivan Turchin, followed a similar path: he was educated at the Imperial Military

⁹⁵ Kune, *Reminiscences of an Octogenarian Hungarian Exile*, 91.

⁹⁶ Kune, *Reminiscences of an Octogenarian Hungarian Exile*, 94.

⁹⁷ Reece, *Report of the Adjutant General*, vol. 3, 296.

⁹⁸ "Departure of the 59th Regiment," *Chicago Tribune*, December 10, 1861.

⁹⁹ *The Story of the Fifty-Fifth Regiment*, 21.

School in St. Petersburg, served in the “Czar’s Army” for a number of years, and eventually immigrated to America.¹⁰⁰ Men like Turchin and Knobelsdorf who had prior European military experience evidently impressed recruits, as they were able to attain leading officer positions in immigrant and non-immigrant units alike.

5. Commercial Organizations and Professions

The final category of communities includes those that were formed through the social connections produced by commercial and economic interactions within Chicago. Some of these communities were based upon actual organizations, such as the Chicago Board of Trade and the Chicago Mercantile Association, which brought together businessmen and merchants to promote their common interests. In contrast, while men of certain professions typically did not belong to an organization created for their profession, the various trades and professions of the city were clearly seen as communities by both those that belonged to them and outsiders. As such, the involvement of commercial or economic communities in mobilization not only shows the impact these groups had on the creation of new units, but also indicates that these groups functioned as communities for their members and were treated as such.

As the mobilization process began, Chicago’s trade organizations provided crucial fundraising and financial support for many of the units being raised in the city. A history of the Chicago Board of Trade during this period notes that although the Board was committed to avoiding “all participation in political, religious or social movements,” it ultimately decided that supporting the Union was a matter of patriotism and not politics.¹⁰¹ The Board of Trade quickly moved to put their financial backing to use in mobilization. At an early meeting, it was proposed

¹⁰⁰ Haynie, *The Nineteenth Illinois*, 131.

¹⁰¹ *The Board of Trade of the City of Chicago in the Civil War* (Chicago: The Franklin Company, 1912), 3.

that the Board contribute \$500 to a fund being created to pay for military equipment and the soldiers' families, only for the proposal to be raised to \$5,000 and "carried with a whirlwind of applause."¹⁰² The members of the Board of Trade also took it upon themselves to support the organization of the 23rd Illinois, as they sent a petition to the city government asking that the city provide funding such that the regiment could be equipped for service.¹⁰³ The Chicago Mercantile Association was similarly active in fundraising, and at times the Board of Trade and Mercantile Association engaged in cooperative efforts. Providing equipment for Chicago's units was still a major concern in November of 1861, and the Board of Trade and Mercantile Association agreed that a committee of men from the latter organization should proceed to Washington to "induce the location of an Armory and Arsenal" in Chicago.¹⁰⁴ Although the massive financial burden of equipping the Union troops would primarily fall upon the federal government, the financial backing of organizations like the Board of Trade and the Mercantile Association was surely appreciated by those units that benefited from it.

These commercial organizations did not limit themselves to supporting existing units, however, as they also utilized both their wealth and their reputations to raise units of their own in 1862. The Chicago Board of Trade first raised \$15,000 in order to create the Chicago Board of Trade Battery and then outdid themselves by raising a further \$55,000, resulting in the creation of the 72nd, 88th, and 113th Illinois regiments as the First, Second, and Third Board of Trade Regiments.¹⁰⁵ The Mercantile Association likewise engaged in fundraising in order to raise the Chicago Mercantile Battery, but their funding did not stop upon its organization; one member of the battery wrote to his mother that the Mercantile Association was creating a "special Sanitary

¹⁰² "Noble Action of the Board of Trade," *Chicago Tribune*, April 20, 1861.

¹⁰³ "Meeting In Behalf of the Irish Brigade," *Chicago Tribune*, May 27, 1861.

¹⁰⁴ "Meeting of the Mercantile Association," *Chicago Tribune*, November 22, 1861.

¹⁰⁵ *The Board of Trade*, 12-14.

Commission for the Battery” to ensure that “the men will be looked after and cared for to the greatest possible extent.”¹⁰⁶ The promise of such support from the Mercantile Association seems to have been an inducement for men to enlist that otherwise may not have. This same member declared that the members of the Battery were “the best class Chicago affords -- merchants, bookkeepers, clerks, lawyers, etc.”¹⁰⁷ Since these were also men that had not volunteered at the war’s beginning, the prestige and wealth of the Mercantile Association evidently made the Battery an attractive enough prospect for them to finally join the war effort. The creation of the Board of Trade Battery was met with a similar enthusiasm: 180 men, more than were needed, had signed the muster roll within two days, and men waiting to enlist were turned away once the roster had filled.¹⁰⁸ During the Civil War and in the preceding years, the Board of Trade and the Mercantile Association were seen as affluent, distinguished organizations, and by giving both their money and their names to new units, these organizations continued their existing support of mobilization in an even more impactful manner.

While the organization of units by commercial organizations may be regarded as “top-down” unit creation, the involvement of individual professions in the mobilization process can be seen as a “bottom-up” process, as men of the same profession joined together in order to either form their own units or attach themselves to existing units. One such profession whose workers engaged in mobilization was that of railroad workers. The *Chicago Tribune* remarked soon after the war had begun that the “call of the country found no class of our young men more prompt and ready, than the employees of our railroads,” as sixty men from the Galena and Chicago Railway Company and thirty from the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy left their respective

¹⁰⁶ Chase Hall Dickinson to his mother, 23 August 1862, folder 3, Chase Hall Dickinson Papers, Newberry Library.

¹⁰⁷ Chase Hall Dickinson to his mother, 20 August 1862, folder 3, Chase Hall Dickinson Papers, Newberry Library.

¹⁰⁸ *Historical Sketch of the Chicago Board of Trade Battery* (Chicago: Henneberry Company Printers, 1902), 18.

companies in order to enlist.¹⁰⁹ This was repeated on a larger scale in 1862, when employees from the Illinois Central Railroad, the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy, the Galena & Chicago, the Pittsburgh, Fort Wayne & Chicago, and three other railroads formed the 89th Illinois, which was to be known as the “Railroad Regiment.”¹¹⁰ However, the railroad employees were not alone in this regard. The early days of the war also featured the formation of a Military Fire Brigade composed of Chicago firefighters, seventy of whom enlisted at an early meeting to discuss such a possibility.¹¹¹ An advertisement in the *Tribune* two days later appealed to “members of the Chicago Bar” to join “Company E,” which had already enlisted fifty lawyers.¹¹² It appears that this group would eventually join Company A of the 58th Illinois, which included a number of Chicago lawyers and clerks in its ranks.¹¹³ The involvement of men of the same occupation in organizing units was thus a repeat occurrence, and certainly not limited to a particular trade.

While men of some professions enlisted alongside one another for reasons of familiarity, professions such as engineers and carpenters were specifically recruited for units to be used for military engineering and construction projects. One such unit was the short-lived “Mechanics’ Fusiliers,” which was composed of carpenters and mechanics and was engaged in building barracks at Camp Douglas in Chicago before they were eventually disbanded.¹¹⁴ Civil engineer Arthur C. Ducat placed an advertisement in the paper in an attempt to organize a unit of “Engineers, Sappers and Miners,” with a note that only “military and civil engineers and mechanics” would be accepted.¹¹⁵ At the same time that Ducat was attempting to organize his

¹⁰⁹ “The Railroad Boys and the War,” *Chicago Tribune*, April 25, 1861.

¹¹⁰ “The Chicago Railroad Regiment,” *Chicago Tribune*, August 7, 1862.

¹¹¹ “The War Spirit in Chicago,” *Chicago Tribune*, April 24, 1861.

¹¹² “Attention, Company E!,” *Chicago Tribune*, April 26, 1861.

¹¹³ “Illinois Civil War Muster and Descriptive Rolls,” Office of the Illinois Secretary of State.

¹¹⁴ Francis T. Sherman, *Quest for a Star: The Civil War Letters and Diaries of Colonel Francis T. Sherman of the 88th Illinois*, edited by C. Knight Aldrich (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999), 5.

¹¹⁵ “Attention! Engineers, Sappers and Miners,” *Chicago Tribune*, April 22, 1861.

unit, the Yates Phalanx was also in search of engineers, as the men of the unit wished to have “a corps of sappers and miners” attached to the regiment.¹¹⁶ Of course, the creation of such units was bound to result in disappointment for some enlistees. Abram J. Davids recruited his own unit of sappers with the intention of joining “Bissell’s Engineer Regiment of the West,” only for the men to instead become a regular company of the 59th Illinois.¹¹⁷ This was to be a common fate for those who dreamed of joining prestigious units of mechanics or engineers. While such units were advertised and organized with some frequency in the first months of the war, they were simply not needed, and these units’ volunteers either declined to serve or settled for another unit.

Conclusion

Three days after the Civil War began with the firing on Fort Sumter, the *Chicago Tribune* had this to say to the “Tories and lickspittles” in Chicago who supported secession: “You must keep your venom sealed, or *go down!* There is a Republic! The gates of Janus are open; the storm is on us.”¹¹⁸ The reference to the gates of the Temple of Janus, which were kept closed when the Romans were at peace and opened when they went to war, makes it apparent that the “storm” the editors of the *Chicago Tribune* were referring to was the imminent civil war. If the Civil War was indeed a storm to be weathered, then the people of Chicago turned to their communities in order to make it through this turbulent period. Men grouped themselves together with those they knew from church, their coworkers, and fellow immigrants so that they would not be going off to war with strangers. Community leaders such as clergymen, wealthy merchants, and politicians rallied their communities to support certain units, and immigrants with

¹¹⁶ “The Yates Phalanx,” *Chicago Tribune*, April 24, 1861.

¹¹⁷ George W. Herr, *Episodes of the Civil War: Nine Campaigns in Nine States* (San Francisco: The Bancroft Company, 1890), 26.

¹¹⁸ “Every Man’s Duty – Read!,” *Chicago Tribune*, April 15, 1861.

military experience and militiamen were frequently elected or chosen as officers. Commercial organizations like the Chicago Board of Trade and Chicago's various militias also assisted in organizing units, and it seems that men often enlisted in these units because of their association with these well-known institutions. Some communities also saw the war as an opportunity, as the pro-Union militias and the Republican Wide Awakes sought to support the Lincoln administration through their military service, and immigrant communities bolstered their reputation by sponsoring units composed of their countrymen. It is clear, then, that communities were a crucial determining factor when it came to which units were organized and accepted for service, as well as in encouraging the men in a community to join particular units.

While it is evident that community affiliations must have factored into individuals' decisions to volunteer for military service, the specific reasons that men chose to enlist and to join units populated by others from their communities must often be inferred. It is rare to have so straightforward an example as that of Patrick White, the prewar member of the Chicago Light Artillery who initially promised his sister that he would stay home only to be so ashamed that he joined an artillery battery and assisted in its organization. Nineteenth-century notions of concepts such as honor and masculinity surely played a role in the decision to enlist, as peer pressure meant that men who did not volunteer could be seen by those in their communities as lacking these qualities. Once the decision to enlist was made, men could have been drawn to units in which their communities were well-represented for a number of reasons. Military service obviously brought with it the possibility of death, and Victorian notions of "the good death" emphasized that soldiers should not go unburied and that families should know their loved ones' last words.¹¹⁹ By enlisting in a unit with those they already knew, men increased the chances that

¹¹⁹ Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008), 62; Faust, *This Republic of Suffering*, 23.

their fellow soldiers would bury them or carry their last words to their families, as one is more likely to do this for a friend than a stranger. As such, men could very well have been comforted by serving alongside others from their community, as the presence of these friends and acquaintances would have helped to offset the many unknowns associated with military service. However, the sources consulted for this research do not directly mention these possibilities, and more research would be needed in order to determine which of these factors were most influential for community members.

In addition to shedding light on how communities shaped the mobilization process in Chicago, this research suggests that further research should be done on mobilization in urban areas. Many of the communities influencing mobilization in Chicago were present because Chicago was a large city; small towns and rural counties simply do not have the same presence of militia units, large immigrant communities, communities composed of men of the same profession, and major commercial organizations. As such, research on mobilization in cities such as New York and St. Louis would allow for a better understanding of how communities shape urban mobilization, in addition to contextualizing Chicago's mobilization within a broader pattern. The findings of this research also indicate that the topic of Civil War soldiers' motivations should be studied within the context of these soldiers' communities. Civil War soldiers are often researched as individuals, but introducing the community aspect into this field would contribute to the debate on what factors caused men to enlist and help to explain the importance of communities to these men. Chicago communities evidently played a pivotal role in determining how the mobilization process evolved and was experienced, and these findings are significant not only for Chicago and Illinois, but for the history of Civil War mobilization as a whole.

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Appendix

The Organization of United States Volunteer Units

At the beginning of the Civil War, the United States Regular Army was comprised of less than 20,000 officers and men. Although the Regular Army was expanded during the course of the war, the vast majority of Union troops instead served in the United States Volunteers. Units of U.S. Volunteers were created by the individual Union states and tendered to the federal government for the purpose of supplementing the U.S. Regulars.

The organization of volunteer infantry units began with the organization of a company, comprised of about one hundred men that were typically from the same county. Once enough men assembled to form a company, they would vote to elect their officers. Companies were commanded by a captain, who was supported by a first lieutenant, a second lieutenant, and a number of sergeants and corporals. Organized companies would then proceed to a “place of rendezvous,” which in the case of Illinois would be either Springfield or Chicago, in order to be formed into regiments. A regiment was composed of ten companies and was commanded by a colonel, who was supported by a lieutenant colonel and a major. These officers were typically elected during the first two years of the war, but officer elections gradually became less common in the Union Army as the war progressed, and it was possible for the state government to intervene in the officer selection process. Once regiments were accepted into federal service, they were grouped together into brigades, which could be composed of anywhere from two to six regiments and were commanded by brigadier generals. Brigades were in turn grouped into divisions, which were commanded by major generals, divisions were grouped into corps, and corps were combined to form an army. The organization of cavalry and artillery units proceeded similarly, although artillerymen were organized into batteries rather than companies.