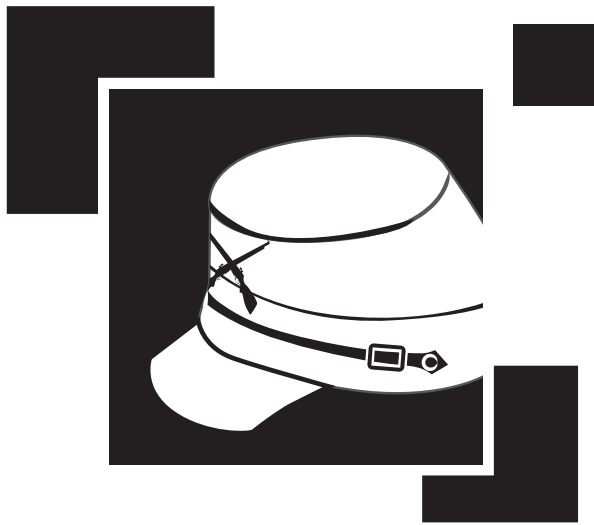


THEMED SCHOOL FIELD TRIPS

CIVIL WAR IN INDIANA





CIVIL WAR IN INDIANA

Q: In the Hoosier Way gallery on the second floor of the Indiana State Museum, spend a few minutes looking at the Civil War camp exhibit. What do you think happened there? Imagine what it would have been like to be a soldier or an officer during the Civil War. Write a short story below.



CIVIL WAR IN INDIANA

If you were to meet a Civil War soldier today, you might have a hard time understanding him. Young men and women in the 1860s used slang terms just like we do today.

Activity:

Read the fictional letter below and see if you can decipher the Civil War slang terms. Now it's your turn! Pretend you are a soldier writing a letter or journal entry. Try to use as many slang words as you can.

Dearest Mother

*I hope this letter finds you well. I know it has been many days since you last received a letter from your son, nearly a month I **reckon**. **To acknowledge the corn**, the days and nights run together here in camp. Last week we got some **fresh fish** again. None of them seem to have any **grit**. **Not by a jug full**. We heard on the **grapevine** that the **boss dogs** might be **opening the ball** soon. The **veal** all began to **wake snakes**. Now, you know I wasn't **born in the woods to be scared by an owl**. But the thought of finally seeing some action has me a bit **puny feeling**. I'm no **hospital rat** though. I'll **toe the mark**. The **vittles** here have been lacking in variety. I dream of your delicious **sinkers** and **johnnycake**.*

Yours Truly,

Edward

Dictionary of Slang on next page.>

CIVIL WAR IN INDIANA cont'd

Civil War Slang Terms

Acknowledge the Corn	To admit the truth, to acknowledge a personal flaw
Boss Dog	The person in charge
Draw your furrow straighter	Tell the truth
Fresh Fish	New recruits
Get your dander up	Angry, irritated
Goober/ Goober Pea	Peanut
Grapevine	Telegraph wire
Grit	Courage/ Toughness
Hospital Rat	Someone who fakes illness to get out of duty
Johnnycake	Corn meal cake
Keep your britches on!	Don't be so impatient
Lucifer	Match
Not born in the woods to be scared by an owl	Someone who is experienced and unafraid
Not by a jug full	Not at all
Opening the ball	Starting the battle
Peacock about	Strut around
Pig sticker	Bayonet
Puny List	Sick call
Puny Feelin'	Sick
Reckon	To guess or to think
Right smart	Great in quality or quantity
Sawbones	Surgeon
Shanks Mare	On Foot
Sinkers	Biscuits
Sockdologer	A powerful punch or blow
Spondulix	Money
Swimmy-headed	Disoriented, dizzy, confused
That dog won't hunt	That idea won't work
Toad-strangler	A very heavy rain, an amazing or intense thing
Toad stabber	Sword or bayonet
Toe the mark	Do as told, follow orders
Veal	New recruits
Vittles	Food
Wake snakes	To raise a ruckus
Worth a goober	Something that amounts to a lot

CIVIL WAR IN INDIANA

Before WWI, each regiment would receive two flags, a national flag and a regimental flag. Individual regiments in both the Union and Confederate armies could be identified by their regimental or battle flags. The regimental flag often told the story of the unit with symbols, dates, and names of battles. Flags were a rallying point for soldiers on the field, and made it easier for units to stay together during the chaos of battle.



By looking at flags on the battlefield, commanders could see if troops were advancing or falling back, and if they needed additional support. The flag allowed a commander to identify each regiment, but it was also a symbol to the men who fought under it.

Seeing the regimental colors during battle would improve soldiers' morale. Flags were symbols of pride and honor. Seeing the flag fall would severely demoralize a regiment, it was a disgrace for the unit. The opposite was true as well. Capturing an enemy flag would increase morale and spirit. Flags were so important during battle that flag bearers could receive the Medal of Honor for flag related actions, such as courageously defending their flag, or capturing an enemy flag.

Flag bearers were members of the color company, or color guard. Their responsibilities were to carry the flag into battle, and to protect it with their lives. Flag bearers were chosen based on their courage and steadfastness in battle. The flag was carried by an unarmed color sergeant, and protected by armed color corporals. The color corporals were not allowed to engage in combat unless the flag was threatened.

Did you know?

A regiment is the basic unit of soldiers in the Civil War. There were between 1,000 and 1,500 men in each regiment. Regiments were identified by state and number, such as the 11th Indiana regiment.

¹<http://www.in.gov/iwm/2339.htm>

continued on the next page.>



CIVIL WAR IN INDIANA cont'd

Activity:

Have students read or listen to the history of regimental flags during the Civil War. For a more dramatic interpretation, read the firsthand account of the Union color guard during the battle at Gettysburg. In groups or individually, have students brainstorm about symbols they would place on their own regimental battle flag. For inspiration, show students images of Indiana regimental battle flags (available from the Indiana War Memorial website.)¹ Other possible ideas for inspiration could include the state flag, state seal, cardinal, peony, and additional Indiana symbols. Instruct students to draw and color their regimental flag.

Firsthand account of a Union color company at the battle of Gettysburg:²

"...Color-Bearer Abel G. Peck, a tall, straight, handsome man, and as brave a soldier as ever gave up his life for his country.

He was instantly killed almost at the beginning of the famous charge of the Iron Brigade. The flag was then seized by Private Thomas B. Ballou, who was desperately wounded immediately after, and died a few weeks later. The flag was then carried by Private August Ernst, who was instantly killed. Corporal Andrew Wagner then took the colors and carried them until shot through the breast, from the effects of which he died about a year after the close of the war.

When Corporal Wagner fell, Colonel Henry A. Morrill took the flag, and gallantly attempted to rally the few survivors of the regiment. But Private William Kelly insisted on carrying it, saying to Colonel Morrill, "You shall not carry the flag while I am alive." The gallant fellow held it aloft and almost instantly fell, shot through the heart. Private L. Spaulding then took the flag from the hands of Kelly, and carried it until he was himself badly wounded. Colonel Morrill again seized the flag, and was soon after shot in the head and carried from the field.

After the fall of Colonel Morrill, the flag was carried by a soldier whose name has never been ascertained. He was seen by Captain Edwards – who was now in command of the regiment – lying upon the ground badly wounded, grasping the flag in his hands. Captain Edwards took the flag from him and carried it himself until the few men left of the regiment fell back and reached Culp's Hill. Captain Edwards is the only man who is known to have carried the flag that day, who was not killed or wounded."

²<http://www.americancivilwarstory.com/civil-war-battle-flags.html>