



# Discovering Civil War Writings of Wisconsin Women

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Jo Ann Carr  
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# My retirement plan....

1. Revisit favorite cities.
2. Ireland, New Zealand.....
3. Riverboat voyage down the Mississippi.
4. Road trips: Great River Road, Oregon Trail, Route 66, Pacific Coast Highway.....
5. Tour Alaska.
6. Tour all Presidential Libraries.





# Post War Histories.....



## ✦ Wisconsin Men

### ✦ Quiner Scrapbooks: Correspondence of the Wisconsin Volunteers

✦ 10 volumes

✦ 10,000 letters

✦ 3,793 pages

✦ Quiner, E.B. *The Military History of Wisconsin: a record of the civil and military patriotism of the state, in the war for the union, with a history of the campaigns in which Wisconsin soldiers have been conspicuous--regimental histories--sketches of distinguished officer— roll of the illustrious dead— movements of the Legislature and state officers, etc.* Chicago: Clarke & Company, 1866.

✦ 1,022 pages

Unable to include “what the women of Wisconsin have done to sustain the government in the recent war...”.

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Quiner, E.B. *Military History of Wisconsin: A Record of the Civil and Military Patriotism of the State* . Chicago: Clarke & Co., 1866. (329)

# Post War History



✦ Wisconsin women

✦ *A History of Wisconsin Women in the War Between the States*. *Hurn, Ethel Alice*. Madison: Wisconsin History Commission, 1911.

✦ 233 pages

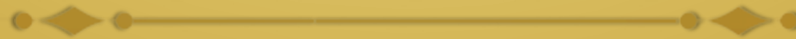
✦ 64 women named in the text

“Since women are presumed to be  
absent from war, they are presumed to  
have no story to tell.”


Lynne Hanley. *Writing War: Fiction, Gender, and Memory*. Amherst: University  
of Massachusetts Press, 1991. (7)




“In giving support or withholding it, at home or directly participating in bloody battles, women played active roles in the conflict, shaped it and in the end were shaped by it.”



Teresa McDevitt. *Women and the American Civil War: An annotated bibliography*. Westport Connecticut: Praeger, 2003. (2).



Once again I asked:  
“Where are the women?”



# North Versus South



- ✦ “Most of the Civil War women diarists were Southerners and, of course, most were among the well-to-do planter class. These were the women who had the time and the education to write.” Culpepper, Marilyn Mayer. *Trials and Triumphs: the women of the American Civil War*. Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1991. (3)
- ✦ The deprivations and societal changes experienced by the South overshadowed the deprivations and societal changes experienced by the North.

# Where are the Women???



## ✦ Secondary sources:

✦ Annie Cox and Mary Burwell (Culpepper, Marilyn Mayer)

✦ Emily Quiner (Bunkers, Susannah. *Diaries of Girls and Women: A Midwestern American Sampler*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2001.)

## ✦ Primary sources:

✦ WorldCat 2800+ records

✦ 17 more Wisconsin women

# Presenting: Wisconsin Women



- ✦ Hannah Aldrich
- ✦ Sarah E. Andrews
- ✦ Rosabella Arnold
- ✦ Susan Brown
- ✦ Mary Burwell
- ✦ Esther Claflin
- ✦ Mary & Elizabeth Clark
- ✦ Henrietta Colt
- ✦ Annie Cox
- ✦ Annie Haw Henry
- ✦ Rosa Kellner
- ✦ Laura Lathrop
- ✦ Adelia C. Lyon
- ✦ Mary McDougall
- ✦ Emily Melissa Saxton Saville
- ✦ Margaret Patchin
- ✦ Sarah Powers
- ✦ Emily Quiner
- ✦ Henrietta Thompson
- ✦ Ann Waldo

# Why so few letters from women?



- ✦ Difference in volume written.
- ✦ Priority in being delivered.
- ✦ Destruction



Time to Edit!!!



# *Such Anxious Hours: Wisconsin Women's Voices from the Civil War*



✦ Rosabella Arnold

✦ Margaret Patchin

✦ Susan Brown

✦ Sarah Powers

✦ Mary Burwell

✦ Emily Quiner

✦ Annie Cox

✦ Ann Waldo

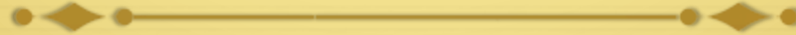


# Emily Quiner



- ✦ Lived in Madison
- ✦ 21 years old
- ✦ Daughter of Edwin Quiner, Clerk to State Legislature
- ✦ School teacher, student, diarist

# View from the Old Jefferson School



- ✦ Image not available on UWRA web. Please see at Wisconsin Historical Society, Image 35009. Viewed online  
<https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Image/IM35009>.

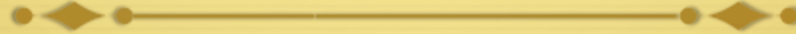
# Annie Cox



- ✦ Also from Madison
- ✦ Also 21 years old
- ✦ Step-daughter of an itinerant carpenter
- ✦ Aspiring artist
- ✦ Avid abolitionist

# Lake Mendota Shoreline

(Allen, Gideon W. Allen Family Papers, 1862–1964. Box 1, folders 2–8. Newberry Library Chicago)



# Sisters Ann Waldo and Susan Brown

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## ✦ Ann:

- ✦ 28 years old
- ✦ Married to  
Morris Waldo
- ✦ Daughter Della
- ✦ Vivacious and  
flirtatious

## ✦ Susan

- ✦ 33 years old
- ✦ Married to  
Waldo Brown
- ✦ Sons: Edward  
and William
- ✦ Responsible and  
ambitious

*“I suppose if I would take a peep at you today, I should see you strutting about in your new uniform. I should be very happy to see you even without anything on, though I’ll hope you will not be driven to that extremity.”*

(Waldo-Henderson Family

Papers, 1829–1979. Box 2, folder 6. Wisconsin Historical Society, Division of Library, Archives, and Museum Collections)

*“About 14 remained in the class until the close, and when the case was summoned up the 2nd afternoon it stood something like this—1st S.M. Brown having been marked 4 10’s, 1 eight and 1 seven; 2nd—Mr. Lester having 1 ten—I don’t know the rest. 3rd—William Robertson (elder’s son): had 1 nine, none higher; 4th Birch Ellis; 5th Sarah Brown; 6th Mrs. Harrington; 7th Delia Specs; Miss Gibbs so low her score was under consideration, . . . .”*

(Susan Brown to Ann Waldo. April 1862, Waldo-Henderson Family Papers, 1829–1979. Box 2, folder 6. Wisconsin Historical Society, Division of Library, Archives, and Museum Collections.)

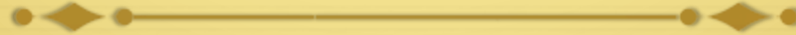
# Margaret McNish Patchin



- ✦ Farmer, lived near Wyocena Wisconsin.
- ✦ 43 years of age
- ✦ Pregnant with her 8<sup>th</sup> child.
- ✦ Husband and eldest son both went to war.
- ✦ Uneducated, innovative, painfully shy



"I plucked up courage and went [to Portage]



- ✦ Image not available at UWRA. Please go to Wisconsin Historical Society, Image 23562. Viewed online <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Image/IM23562>.

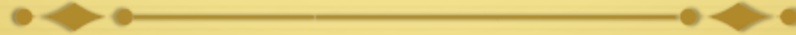
# Sarah Jane Powers



- ✦ Twenty-seven years old
- ✦ Married to Norman
- ✦ Mother of Milton (4) and Adelaide (2)
- ✦ Moved from Fox Lake to Fond du Lac
- ✦ Farmer, well-loved and respected

# Norman G. Dunning to Sarah J. Powers

(Powers, Norman. *The Civil War Letters of Norman Powers of Fox Lake, Dodge Co. Wisconsin and Other Related Family Letters*. Letters owned by Jean Selden Bastian of Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin, transcribed by Jackie Selden Riley, December 1982. 56.)



*Mrs. Sarah Jane Powers:*

*It is with sorrow that I inform you of the death of your husband, Norman Powers....he had good care and all that could be done for him was done.*


*Enclosed in this letter is one dollar and ninety cents. That is all the money he had when he died.*

*His napsack and uniforms ....was sent to the headquarters of this Hospital....I expect they will be sent home.*

# Mary Burwell



- ✦ 21 years old
- ✦ Newly married to Andrew Burwell
- ✦ Doting mother to Lucy
- ✦ Farmer, cook, poet



*I miss you so in our cottage home*

*When the daylight care are over*

*As I sit and watch the stars come out*

*Where we often sat before*

*And I listen in vain for thy welcome step*

*How I long to hear it once more.*

(Mary Burwell to Andrew Burwell February 18, 1865. McCain Library and Archives, University of Southern Mississippi. )

# Rosabella Augusta Arnold Sleeper



- ✦ Age 17 in 1861
- ✦ Typesetter in Berlin Wisconsin
- ✦ Lived with mother
- ✦ Lively, full of gossip and local news

*“...but the discourse afflicted me deeply, and the multitude of questions, asked out of idle curiosity, which I was compelled to answer before I would get egress from the Church, jarred terribly on the cords of my heart. It is so hard for me to keep up a stern exterior. Then there are those who think, “Mrs. Sleeper does not care for her husband.”*

(Belle Arnold Sleeper to Charles Bennett Palmer, March 25, 1865. Charles Bennett Palmer Papers, 1862–1900. Box 1, folders 7–8. Wisconsin Historical Society, Division of Library, Archives, and Museum Collections. )

# The Aftermath of War



*“The sun’s rays spread softly across cities, towns, and farms of Wisconsin as the women of Wisconsin awoke to futures changed both by national events and by their wartime experiences.”*

(Carr, Jo Ann Daly. *Such Anxious Hours: Wisconsin Women’s Voices from the Civil War*.

University of Wisconsin Press, [in press].)



# The Aftermath of War



- ✦ Women as civic leaders.
- ✦ Women as the educated and educators.
- ✦ The impacts of absence.
- ✦ Coping with loss

# Women as Civic Leaders



- ✦ Women learned the value of working together.
- ✦ Women changed focus from local to national.
- ✦ War work begat the women's suffrage movement.
- ✦ War work begat state-wide women's clubs.

# Women as Civic Leaders

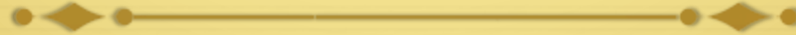


Henrietta Colt:

*“I know now that love of country is the strongest love, next to the love of God, given to man.”*

(Kehoe, Karen. “Not a Moment for Delay,” Order No. 3116855, Marquette University, 2003. Ann Arbor: ProQuest. 138.)

# Women as the educated and as educators



- ✦ Opening of University of Wisconsin to women.
- ✦ Passage of the Morrill Act.

# The impacts of absence



✦ Agriculture


✦ Transportation

# Coping with loss



- ✦ Marriage, widowhood, and divorce
- ✦ Death and dying

“If I live to make more  
history, I may record it.”



Brown, Susan Appleton. *Autobiography*. Unpublished, 1898. Waldo-Henderson Family Papers, 1829–1979, box 1, folder 1. Wisconsin Historical Society, Division of Library, Archives, and Museum Collections. (52)

“...everyone ought to have  
one pure moment in history.”



Paul LaPrad quoted in Halberstram, David. *The Children*. Fawcett Books, 1999. (129).



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- ✦ Burwell, Andrew, and Mary E. Letters. Box 1, folders 1–8. McCain Library and Archives, University of Southern Mississippi.
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<http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/wiarchives.uw-whs-mss00821>
- ✦ Patchin Family Papers and Photographs. WVM Mss 1386. Wisconsin Veterans Museum.  
<http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi/f/findaid/findaid-idx?c=wiarchives;view=reslist;subview=standard;didno=wvm-mss01386;focusrgn=bioghist;cc=wiarchives;byte=685561356>
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