

THE WOMAN'S RELIEF CORPS: "MISSIONARIES OF THE FLAG,"

1893-1918

Stephanie Marie Schulze

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Master's Thesis Committee

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Anita Morgan, Ph.D., Chair

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Nancy Marie Robertson, Ph.D.

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Jane E. Schultz, Ph.D.

## Acknowledgements

Growing up I never thought much about the American Flag and saying the Pledge of Allegiance every morning in school. As a Girl Scout I was frequently in the flag honor guard, but never really understood why there was an honor guard. By the time I was in sixth grade I was asked to put up and take down the flag outside of my grade school almost everyday. After September 11, 2001, I realized that the American flag had become more important than I remembered it being prior to the horrible day. Unknowingly, for my entire life the flag and patriotic education have intrigued me and I only realized this when I began looking for a topic for my master's thesis in August 2013 and I was told about the Woman's Relief Corps and discovered that they were behind the daily rituals I participated in at school.

This project would not have been possible without the help of many people. Thank you to Nicholas Sacco who made me aware that the Woman's Relief Corps even existed. If it were not for him I might have never discovered this organization of fascinating women. I could not have completed this thesis without the help of my thesis committee, which willingly read draft after draft, provided support, edits, and patience when my writing stalled. Dr. Anita Morgan's suggestions, edits, guidance and constant support helped to focus and clarify this project. Dr. Nancy Robertson and Dr. Jane Schultz offered ideas and posed questions that challenged me and helped to strengthen and narrow the scope of the thesis. The kindness, generosity, enthusiasm, and compassion of this committee have inspired me as I wrote this thesis and I cannot find the words to thank them for everything they have done for me.

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I would like to dedicate this thesis to my grandfathers, Lawrence A. Schuetz and Richard H. Schulze, who both died while I was writing this thesis. They always supported me and wanted for me to succeed no matter the obstacles. While I wish they were here today to read this work, I know that they have watched me complete this continual process of researching and writing. This thesis is a labor of love for them.

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## Introduction

Today, Memorial Day is a beloved three-day weekend. What many fail to realize is that Memorial Day, originally Decoration Day, came about as a means to honor those who died during the Civil War.<sup>1</sup> Shortly after the Woman's Relief Corps (WRC) was recognized as the official auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) in 1883, the WRC took up the cause of Memorial Day. The creation of Memorial Day celebrations denotes the beginning of the WRC's patriotic education movement. According to Cecilia O'Leary, "The WRC made Memorial Day into a school for the nation's children in which the lessons of patriotism could be 'instilled in the hearts of those who will fill our place in the future.'"<sup>2</sup> Imagine on Memorial Day, 8,000 children, according to the counts, laying flowers and wreaths on the graves of the deceased, known and unknown.<sup>3</sup> Through active participation, the children learned patriotism and how to be good citizens outside the confines of the classroom.

Women's roles are sometimes easily overlooked. The historical record clearly tells us the histories of men, young and old, who fought in the Civil War. At the same time, women on the home front were organizing "Christian Commissions,' 'Sanitary Commissions,' and other relief societies, to render such assistance as to well merit the

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<sup>1</sup> Caroline E. Janney, *Remembering the Civil War: Reunion and the Limits of Reconciliation*

<sup>2</sup> Cecelia Elizabeth O'Leary, *To Die For: The Paradox of American Patriotism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 101.

<sup>3</sup> Woman's Relief Corps, *Proceedings of the Third National Convention, Woman's Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Portland, Maine, June 24, 25, and 26, 1885* (Toledo: Montgomery and Vrooman, Printers, 1885), 57; O'Leary, *To Die For*, 106; Woman's Relief Corps, *Journal of the Eighth Annual Convention of the Woman's Relief Corps, Department of Indiana, April 11, 1891* (Unknown), 49. Cecilia O'Leary, the National WRC and Indiana WRC all discuss different components of the activities the women were involved with on Memorial Day.

title of auxiliary.”<sup>4</sup> After the Civil War, as veteran’s organizations became popular, women followed suit. “All over the land ‘Ladies’ League,’ ‘Loyal Ladies,’ ‘Relief Corps,’ and other auxiliaries were established, all working in the interest of the soldiers, rendering valuable assistance to the Comrades in their work of aiding the unfortunates reverently, in true fraternity.”<sup>5</sup> The Woman’s Relief Corps was one of these organizations. Much of the story of the Corps has been lost to history, along with its impact on patriotic education.

Why do we fly the flag over schools every day? Why do students say the Pledge of Allegiance every morning at school? Why is it so important to be good citizens? These questions might not be asked today if it were not for the Woman’s Relief Corps. The WRC left behind an undeniable legacy – patriotic education. Who can say if the daily rituals that occur in school classrooms across the country would happen if it were not for this organization?

The Grand Army of the Republic recognized the Woman’s Relief Corps as its official auxiliary in 1883.<sup>6</sup> Prior to its recognition by the GAR, a group of women in Massachusetts had met in 1879 and “formed ‘a secret association’ for which ‘all loyal women’ would be eligible.”<sup>7</sup> The Massachusetts women named their organization the

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<sup>4</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Woman’s Relief Corps at Denver, CO July 25 and 26, 1883, and Proceedings of the Second National Convention Woman’s Relief Corps, Minneapolis, MN, July 23, 24, and 25, 1884* (Boston, Mass.: Griffith-Stillings Press, 1903), 10.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>6</sup> The GAR was founded in Illinois in 1866 and the membership was limited to men who were Union veterans of the Civil War. The organization was originally created for camaraderie and later on for political power. Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, “Grand Army of the Republic History,” [www.suvcw.org/?page\\_id=167](http://www.suvcw.org/?page_id=167) (accessed June 10, 2016). For the GAR in Indiana see Nicholas Sacco’s thesis. Nicholas W. Sacco, “Kindling the Fires of Patriotism: The Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, 1866-1949,” Master’s Thesis, Indiana University, 2015.

<sup>7</sup> Janney, *Remembering the Civil War*, 123.



Woman's Relief Corps and over the next several years, women across the country joined the organization.<sup>8</sup> According to Caroline Janney, the members of the GAR accepted the WRC as its auxiliary and allowed the women to participate in Memorial Day, but maintained that the men of the GAR were the keepers of memory of the Civil War.<sup>9</sup> It was unusual that the GAR regarded themselves as the keepers of the memory in the North because this role usually fell upon women. In the South, the women of the United Daughters of the Confederacy were the keepers of Southern memory because the men failed to win the Civil War, thus the women needed to bolster the view of the South. In the North, the GAR was able to maintain this role because they were successful in the Civil War and did not need the women to speak for them. I argue that the members of the WRC were equally, if not more, important in keeping the memory of the Civil War alive through the use of patriotic education.

The *Rules and Regulations for the Government of the Woman's Relief Corps* were published in 1894 and stipulated the objectives of the organization.<sup>10</sup> The objectives were “to specially aid and assist the Grand Army of the Republic and to perpetuate the memory of the heroic dead,” to assist Union veterans and “their widows and orphans” including finding homes and jobs for them, “to cherish and emulate the deeds of our army nurses and of all loyal women” who provided service, and to “maintain true allegiance to

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid. According to Janney, when the Grand Army of the Republic accepted the Woman's Relief Corps as its official auxiliary, each Corps was to be affiliated with a GAR Post. Being the official auxiliary to the GAR limited the WRC. The WRC was not allowed to do anything that went against GAR rules and regulations despite being an otherwise autonomous organization.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> *Woman's Relief Corps, Rules and Regulations for the Government of the Woman's Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic* (Boston: E.B. Stillings and Co., Printers, 1894), 3.

the United States of America” and to teach patriotism and “love of country.”<sup>11</sup> Based on the organization’s name, the primary purpose of the Woman’s Relief Corps was to provide aid and relief to veterans and their families. Chapter V, Article X of the *Rules and Regulations* established a relief fund to assist Union veterans, families, orphans, and widows.<sup>12</sup> Article XI of the same chapter stated, “the National Convention hereby ordains the observance of Memorial Day, on the 30<sup>th</sup> of May, enjoining its members to aid and assist the men of the Grand Army of the Republic in commemorating the deeds of their fallen comrades, and that they do all in their power to bring about a proper recognition of the day and its sacred customs.”<sup>13</sup> The majority of the early goals and emphasis was placed on supporting Union veterans and their families, as well as honoring the deceased.

The Woman’s Relief Corps, unlike the Grand Army of the Republic, had fairly lenient eligibility requirements.<sup>14</sup> In the 1890s, Union and Confederate soldiers began to move towards sectional reconciliation, but the WRC was opposed to this and this is reflected in the fact that Confederate relief workers were barred by definition from

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Hereditary organizations were created in the period after the Civil War ended. Each had different rules and regulations defining who could join and what the organizations were allowed to do. The United Daughters of the Confederacy, established in 1894, was a hereditary white women’s organization. The Daughters of the American Revolution, established in 1890, was another organization that was based on heredity and was composed of white women of the middle and upper classes. The Ladies of the Grand Army of the Republic was founded in 1886 and members were female family and descendants of Union veterans. The Sons of the Revolutionary Sires created in 1875, and the Sons of the Revolution created in 1883, were male organizations that required one’s hereditary lineage to be connected to someone who fought in the Revolutionary War. The United Confederate Veterans, founded in 1889, and the Sons of Confederate Veterans, founded in 1896, were male only organizations whose members were veterans and descendants of Confederate veterans. Francesca Morgan, *Women and Patriotism in Jim Crow America*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 10, 11, 28, 38, 42-43; United Daughters of the Confederacy, “History of the UDC,” [www.hqudc.org/history-of-the-united-daughters-of-the-confederacy/](http://www.hqudc.org/history-of-the-united-daughters-of-the-confederacy/) (accessed June 10, 2016); National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, “DAR History,” [www.dar.org/national-society/about-dar/dar-history](http://www.dar.org/national-society/about-dar/dar-history) (accessed June 10, 2016).

becoming members of the WRC.<sup>15</sup> In Chapter I, Article IV of *Rules and Regulations*, “Women of good moral character and correct deportment, who have not given aid and comfort to the enemies of the Union, who would perpetuate the principles to which this association stands pledged and who have attained the age of sixteen years” could join the WRC.<sup>16</sup> Members of the WRC could be related to members of the GAR or have no connection to them at all. By having more relaxed membership requirements, the WRC outlived the GAR and other organizations that required their members to have a direct connection to the Civil War. Every woman who applied to join the WRC had to fill out an application and pay a fee; the application needed to be “recommended by two members,” and was then carefully scrutinized.<sup>17</sup> If the application was found to be satisfactory, members considered whether to approve application and a vote was taken.<sup>18</sup> The applicant was either accepted and initiated or denied and refunded the application fee and had to wait six months before applying again.<sup>19</sup>

The WRC was a multiracial organization. There were white, African American, and even Native American women who were members of the WRC. They came from all over the country, including the South.<sup>20</sup> According to Francesca Morgan, “With local corps in every state and continental territory, save Alabama, by 1894, the organization was strongest in New England and in the upper Midwest, with white women from those

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<sup>15</sup> Janney, *Remembering the Civil War*, 234.

<sup>16</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Rules and Regulations for the Government of the Woman’s Relief Corps*, 4.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 5-6.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> Morgan, *Women and Patriotism in Jim Crow America*, 38; Nina Silber, *Daughters of the Union: Northern Women Fight the Civil War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 270-272. One does not get a sense of this diversity when reading the records of the organization.

areas dominating the national leadership.”<sup>21</sup> This geographic scope would be reflected in the patriotic education movement. The driving influence behind patriotic education came from Indiana and the areas that were most successful were the Midwest and New England while the WRC struggled to establish itself in the South.

In many respects, the members of the Woman’s Relief Corps conformed to prescribed Victorian traditions. According to Catherine Clinton, women of the nineteenth century “were expected to fulfill the dictates of their domestic roles as well as provide the family with unimpeachable moral example.”<sup>22</sup> Many of the members of the WRC who were well known and active in the organization were born in the 1840s and were raised with the strong sense that the woman’s place was in the home.<sup>23</sup> Elizabeth Leonard found that pre-Civil War Victorians found “middle- and upper-class women, [to be] characterized as ‘weak,’ ‘passionless,’ and overwhelmingly emotional, [and] midcentury ideology assigned [them] all responsibilities in the ‘private,’ safer realm of the home.”<sup>24</sup> By the 1880s and 1890s many different women became more vocal and “political” and joined organizations like the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union and demanded the vote. Leonard argues that “generations of women after the [Civil War] would grow up in the context of a revised gender system that reflected the impact of the Civil War by assuming their capacity for and allowing them broader access to professional labor in nursing and institutional charity.”<sup>25</sup> By the time the members of the Woman’s Relief Corps began their patriotic work, they were working somewhere between the pre-Civil

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Catherine Clinton, *The Other Civil War: American Women in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1984), 148.

<sup>23</sup> Janney, *Remembering the Civil War*, 245.

<sup>24</sup> Elizabeth D. Leonard, *Yankee Women: Gender Battles in the Civil War* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1994), xxi-xxii.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 196-197.

War Victorian ideologies of where a woman belonged and the post-Civil War beliefs that permitted women more freedom outside the home.

The earliest work done by the Woman's Relief Corps centered on caring for Union veterans, families of deceased soldiers, and army nurses.<sup>26</sup> The pension system for Civil War nurses was difficult to navigate. It left many women who deserved pensions without one. Union veterans received a pension if they had served for ninety days. Widows and orphans received pensions if they were a dependent of a soldier who died, or was seriously wounded or ill.<sup>27</sup> Nurses, however, had to demonstrate that they had served for a minimum of six months.<sup>28</sup> The Woman's Relief Corps created a better system for acquiring Civil War nurses' pensions. In 1892, the Army Nurses' Pension Act was signed.<sup>29</sup>

Almost as soon the WRC began to fight for nurses' pensions, it began to depart from its original goals. Not only did the WRC fight for nurses' benefits, it fought for women's right to be heard in the political sphere. Success regarding nurses' pensions then catapulted the WRC into the patriotic education movement where it had a great impact on generations of Americans and perpetuated the WRC's ideas of patriotism and nationalism. The transition from fighting for pensions to promoting patriotic education provided the Woman's Relief Corps the opportunity to step into a world where its influence grew considerably as Union veterans died and GAR influence naturally waned.

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<sup>26</sup> Theda Skocpol, "America's First Social Security System: The Expansion of Benefits for Civil War Veterans," *Political Science Quarterly* 108, no. 1(April, 1993): 97.

<sup>27</sup> Mercedes Graf, "For Pity's Sake: Civil War Nurses and the Pension System," *Prologue: The Journal of the National Archives* 40, no. 2 (2008), 29-30.

<sup>28</sup> Jane E. Schultz, *Women at the Front: Hospital Workers in Civil War America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 187.

<sup>29</sup> Schultz, *Women at the Front*, 186-188, 191-192; Graf, "For Pity's Sake," 29-30.

The evolution of the WRC's patriotic education program allowed northern memory of the Civil War, specifically the memory of the GAR and WRC, to live on as well.

The secondary literature on the subject of the Woman's Relief Corps is very limited. Unlike the Grand Army of the Republic, the Woman's Relief Corps has not been examined closely by scholars. Most of the secondary literature that does exist examines the GAR and how the WRC assisted the GAR. There is not a piece of secondary literature that is devoted entirely to the WRC or its work for patriotic education. This lack of secondary literature might be the result of the WRC and other female organizations associated with the Grand Army of the Republic, such as the Ladies of the Grand Army of the Republic, being categorized as assistants to the GAR rather than recognized as independent organizations.

While scholars have differing opinions and some would argue that other groups started the patriotic education movement, GAR and WRC records suggest otherwise. Scot Guenter argued that the patriotic education movement and the creation of the "cult of the flag" were bound to happen as the country reunified following the Civil War.<sup>30</sup> Rather than minimizing the role of the WRC in spreading patriotic education across the nation, this study demonstrates that the WRC's involvement was anything but trivial. While in many respects patriotic education and the various components that were involved with the creation of the movement were a team effort and influenced by different types of people, the basis of bringing patriotic education to children in the classroom started with the Grand Army of the Republic and the Woman's Relief Corps.

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<sup>30</sup> Scot M. Guenter, *The American Flag, 1777-1924: Cultural Shifts from Creation to Codification* (London and Toronto: Associated University Press, 1990), 103.

The literature on Civil War memorialization and remembrance is vast when studying broad concepts, but limited when looking at Memorial Day and women's activities. What has been written about women's involvement in Memorial Day is at times contradictory. William Petersen, former Superintendent of the State Historical Society of Iowa and the editor of *The Palimpsest*, wrote a piece "Centennial of Memorial Day" to celebrate the centennial of Memorial Day.<sup>31</sup> While the article concentrated on Iowa, Petersen provided a thorough history of the creation and practices of Memorial Day. The parades, children dressing up and spreading flowers, and the decoration of the graves of Civil War soldiers were supported by the GAR, but the WRC bought the decorations and organized the events.<sup>32</sup> Petersen claimed that Southern women had began decorating the graves of all Civil War soldiers beginning in 1863, and that the GAR in 1866 began the tradition in the North.<sup>33</sup> Petersen's article, though dated, provides insight into the establishment and early years of honoring Civil War veterans on Memorial Day.

Cecilia Elizabeth O'Leary's *To Die For: The Paradox of American Patriotism* gives the Woman's Relief Corps complete credit for the creation and celebration of Memorial Day. O'Leary argues that "out of personal rituals of remembrance, the WRC created the most important new national holiday of the twentieth century, Memorial Day."<sup>34</sup> She argues that the WRC converted "Memorial Day from a holiday into a holy day" and that the celebrations connected local communities to the national history.<sup>35</sup> Rather than dividing credit between the GAR and the WRC as co-creators of Memorial Day, O'Leary's analysis of her sources leads her to give primary credit to the WRC.

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<sup>31</sup> William Petersen, "Centennial of Memorial Day," *The Palimpsest* 49, no 5 (1968): 161.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 166-167.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 161-162.

<sup>34</sup> O'Leary, *To Die For*, 91.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

Conversely, in *A History of Memorial Day: Unity, Discord and the Pursuit of Happiness*, Richard Harmond and Thomas Curran cover Memorial Day from its inception as a national day of unity to the present holiday from work. Harmond and Curran claim that the Woman's Relief Corps' primary purpose at Memorial Day celebrations was to "prepare a post-parade meal for the hungry marchers."<sup>36</sup> The role of women, argue Harmond and Curran, was a secondary one during Memorial Day celebrations and services.<sup>37</sup>

In "Decoration Days: The Origins of Memorial Day in North and South" David Blight argues that African Americans founded Memorial Day as a ritual of remembrance.<sup>38</sup> Blight argues that defining the meaning of Memorial Day was a struggle between white northerners, blacks, and white southerners. He claims that the WRC found itself as the keeper of the Union memory and as the guide to ensure that Memorial Day remained a day of sorrow and loss rather than one of leisure.<sup>39</sup> Memorial Day was just one instance for people to show their patriotism shortly after the Civil War and over time new avenues of patriotism emerged.

Patriotism in post-Civil War America was ingrained into the national consciousness to the degree that it is a strong part of American values today. Looking at the significance of the Pledge of Allegiance and the education of children and immigrants in public schools are two of the most important areas of research to understand post-war patriotism. Wallace Evan Davies's *Patriotism on Parade: The Story of Veterans' and*

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<sup>36</sup> Richard P. Harmond, *A History of Memorial Day: Unity, Discord and the Pursuit of Happiness* (New York: P. Land, 2002), 29.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> David W. Blight, "Decoration Days: The Origins of Memorial Day in North and South," in *The Memory of the Civil War in American Culture*, ed. Alice Fahs and Joan Waugh (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004): 98.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 100.



*Hereditary Organizations in America 1783-1900*, argued that once patriotic teaching was well established in public schools, the GAR and WRC turned their attention to adult immigrants.<sup>40</sup> The GAR and WRC wrote lectures to teach the history of the United States and then translated the lectures into different languages.<sup>41</sup>

Stuart McConnell argues in *Glorious Contentment: The Grand Army of the Republic, 1865-1900*, that the GAR was a very influential organization at the end of the nineteenth century and held onto a preservationist version of nationalism that allowed it to ignore the large and uncomfortable problems of the time.<sup>42</sup> McConnell states that although “the flag was an important symbol before 1890, it was only in the last decade of the century that the national banner acquired semi sacred trappings .... For Union veterans, especially, what had been a banner carrying particularistic associations of battle became a universal symbol of American nationality.”<sup>43</sup> The flag became the universal symbol for nationalism as a result of the country once again being unified by one flag. The flag rituals that were taught by the GAR and the WRC were also practiced by both organizations. At the opening of ceremonies and organization meetings, it became commonplace for the presentation of the flag and for people to stand as it entered a room.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Wallace Evan Davies, *Patriotism on Parade: The Story of Veterans' and Hereditary Organizations in America, 1783-1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955), 298.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Stuart McConnell, *Glorious Contentment: The Grand Army of the Republic, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992).

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 230.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 229.

Similarly, Cecilia O’Leary and Tony Platt wrote “Pledging Allegiance: The Revival of Prescriptive Patriotism” shortly after September 11, 2001.<sup>45</sup> O’Leary and Platt argue that prior to 9/11, patriotism in the United States dated back to the Civil War and World War I. After 9/11, it returned to the forefront of American attitudes. The authors explain that the Pledge of Allegiance was instituted in schools by the GAR and WRC to instill patriotism in children. To help enforce the significance of the early teachings of patriotism, the authors explored how patriotism expanded after each war in which the United States took part. O’Leary and Platt found that in 1890, a school primer was published and modeled like a catechism to ensure that children understood and memorized it.<sup>46</sup>

Upon the insistence of organizations such as the GAR and WRC, the pledge and flag were brought into public school classrooms, which led to patriotic education. Through the teaching of children, the WRC found itself teaching patriotic education to immigrants. Both Nina Silber’s *Gender and the Sectional Conflict* and Cecilia O’Leary’s “Patriotic Acts: This Isn’t the First Time” argue that the WRC concentrated less on Union memory and more on patriotic education of children and immigrants.<sup>47</sup> Silber emphasized that by “distributing flags, sponsoring essay contests, and promoting a recently composed ‘pledge of allegiance’ to the U.S. flag,” the WRC indoctrinated children and immigrants to ensure that their nationalist sentiments would outweigh the

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<sup>45</sup> Cecilia Elizabeth O’Leary and Tony Platt, “Pledging Allegiance: The Revival of Prescriptive Patriotism,” *Social Justice* 28, no 3 (Fall, 2001): 41-44.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>47</sup> Nina Silber, *Gender and the Sectional Conflict* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008). Cecilia Elizabeth O’Leary, “Patriotic Acts: This Isn’t the First Time,” in *Pledging Allegiance: The Politics of Patriotism in America’s Schools*, edited by Joel Westheimer, 153-163 (New York: Teachers College Press, 2007).

appeal of internal conflict or influences from other countries.<sup>48</sup> O’Leary claims that the GAR and WRC laid the groundwork for patriotic education, but nationalist sentiments did not take effect until national newspapers emphasized teaching nationalism.<sup>49</sup> Silber and O’Leary both agree upon the fact that the best way to teach patriotism was within the classroom.

The history of the Pledge of Allegiance is masterfully provided in Jeffery Owen Jones and Peter Meyer’s book, *The Pledge: A History of the Pledge of Allegiance*. One of the more recent books written about the Pledge of Allegiance, *The Pledge* provides the historical context for the initial intent regarding the writing of the pledge as well as concerns surrounding the pledge such as the phrase “one nation under God.”<sup>50</sup> Jones and Meyer argue that Francis Bellamy wrote the pledge as a means to convey “‘intelligent patriotism’ – not only love of country but, just as important, awareness of the nation’s ideals.”<sup>51</sup> The pledge was written in 1892 to announce a strong sense of “national unity” since the Civil War was still a painful memory to many Americans.<sup>52</sup> Jones and Meyer, like Richard Ellis, argue that the GAR and WRC were strong advocates for bringing the flag and the pledge into schools, and since the WRC made this a significant part of community involvement, the GAR willingly supported them.<sup>53</sup>

The patriotic education of immigrants is best addressed by Jeffery E. Mirel’s *Patriotic Pluralism: Americanization Education and European Immigrants*. Mirel

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<sup>48</sup> Silber, *Gender and the Sectional Conflict*, 93-94.

<sup>49</sup> O’Leary, “Patriotic Acts: This Isn’t the First Time,” 159.

<sup>50</sup> Jeffery Owen Jones and Peter Meyer, *The Pledge: The History of the Pledge of Allegiance* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books/St. Martin’s Press, 2010).

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*; “The Pledge of Allegiance,” [www.ushistory.org/documents/pledge.htm](http://www.ushistory.org/documents/pledge.htm) (accessed June 10, 2016).

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 86-87; Richard Ellis, *To the Flag: The Unlikely History of the Pledge of Allegiance* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2005), 30, 56.

analyzes the Americanization of immigrants in his chapter “Americanization and the Public Schools, 1890-1930.” He concludes that from the time children were in kindergarten, English, “patriotic thought,” and “good citizenship” were taught and through the children, the lessons were taught to parents.<sup>54</sup> By teaching patriotism at a young age, schools and organizations could instill patriotism in all children.

Like O’Leary and Silber, Caroline Janney argues that by choosing to center its attention on patriotic education, the WRC removed itself from being remembered for anything more than patriotic education and loyalty. In her book, *Remembering the Civil War: Reunion and the Limits of Reconciliation*, Janney analyzes the concerns and reasoning behind the WRC and patriotic teaching.<sup>55</sup> Not only did the WRC instill patriotism in children, Janney argues that patriotism was taught to combat the education children in the South received from the WRC’s southern counterpart, the United Daughters of the Confederacy.<sup>56</sup>

Secondary literature on the American educational system also provides a necessary component in the overall understanding of the WRC’s patriotic education movement. Carl Bankston and Stephen Caldas argue in their book, *Public Education America’s Civil Religion: A Social History*, that the common school movement that began in the 1830s can be linked to schooling after the Civil War and the Union ideas that “the image of schools as pillars of democracy and ‘citadels of freedom’ made popular education one of the symbols of the republic.”<sup>57</sup> They also argue that public

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<sup>54</sup> Jeffery Mirel, *Patriotic Pluralism: Americanization Education and European Immigrants* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 55.

<sup>55</sup> Janney, *Remembering the Civil War*.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 247.

<sup>57</sup> Carl L. Bankston III and Stephen J. Caldas, *Public Education America’s Civil Religion: A Social History* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2009), 27, 38.

education became universal and this allowed most children to receive a formal education.<sup>58</sup> Lastly, they argue that “public schools became the institutionalized temples of American civic faith, containing and expressing beliefs that drew on earlier politico-theological traditions and reshaped those traditions in response to historical experiences of the nation.”<sup>59</sup> The Civil War directly impacted the future of public education, and the WRC took the opportunity to implement patriotic education.

Benjamin Justice argues in his article “Education at the End of a Gun: The Origins of American Imperial Education in the Philippines” that the implementation of American education in imperial holdings was a way to get those on the fringes of the empire to be educated and become full members.<sup>60</sup> He continues, “American policy makers market schools to subjected peoples, and market their subjugation to those already inside the empire, based on the promise of schools to provide prosperity for all.”<sup>61</sup> By educating those who were new to the empire, the United States could ensure that they were being educated in ways that complied with what American society wanted and expected of them.

The Woman’s Relief Corps was just one of a myriad of women’s organizations that formed after the Civil War. Many of the other women’s organizations did similar work or picked up the work that was begun by the WRC. While the GAR was also involved in patriotic education this thesis does not focus on that organization’s work

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 40.

<sup>60</sup> Benjamin Justice, “Education at the End of a Gun: The Origins of American Imperial Education in the Philippines,” in *American Post-Conflict Educational Reform From the Spanish-American War to Iraq* ed. Noah W. Sobe (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 20-21.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 22-23.

because the overwhelming majority of the work regarding patriotic education was thought of and implemented by the WRC only to have the GAR join in after the fact.

Patriotic education began when the Woman's Relief Corps was established. The earliest patriotic education was done on Memorial Day rather than on a daily basis in the schoolroom. The WRC's plan for patriotic education went into full gear in 1893. The history of the Woman's Relief Corps and the implementation of patriotic education is a fascinating one that shows how a conservative organization of women implemented a regimented daily routine that today shows more about the women and their beliefs than one might expect. As time passed after the Civil War, more and more Union veterans died leaving the legacy to keep the memory of the War alive to the WRC. Patriotic education provided a perfect avenue to keep that memory alive as well as to inculcate the students with patriotism and how to be good citizens. As patriotic education evolved and grew, there was a pattern of changing rhetoric among educators and the WRC. This is visible when one looks at the discussions amongst the members of the WRC during and immediately after a war. Generally, during a war, the women of the WRC would step back into a supportive role of American military and then immediately after a war would take advantage of the patriotic fervor to further expand patriotic education.

Originally it was my intent to research and write up until the U.S. entered World War I in 1917. This was not possible because in order to get the records for all of 1917 I had to do research in the 1918 convention record. This is because the annual conventions were usually held in the spring or summer, meaning that the other half of the year would not be reported on until the next convention. As a result of doing research until 1918, the story of how WWI affected patriotic education during the war begins to appear. The

research done does not allow me to draw conclusions as to how the rest of the war impacted patriotic education or how patriotic education evolved after the war. This research stops with the 1918 Annual Convention rather than continuing on through the end of the war.

While this thesis does look at the National Woman's Relief Corps, more focus is placed looking specifically at Indiana. When one considers that the GAR was founded in Illinois and that in Indiana it was incredibly important, it is not surprising that the WRC was successful in the Midwest and specifically in Indiana. One must ask why patriotic education was started in Indiana of all places. The obvious reason is that the creator of the patriotic education movement was from Indiana and offered his ideas to the Indiana Woman's Relief Corps, which took up the movement. A less obvious reason for patriotic education in Indiana might be that during the Civil War Indiana was divided between supporting the North and the South. Implementing patriotic education in Indiana might have been a way to try and reunify the division within Indiana.

This thesis focuses on how and why the Woman's Relief Corps felt there was a need for patriotic education and how the women of the WRC turned this idea into a national campaign. The overall purpose of this thesis is to study how the WRC created patriotic education for use in the public schools across the United States and specifically in Indiana. Chapter 1 looks at the national Woman's Relief Corps to understand how patriotic education was implemented and played out across the country. The evolution of the movement will be traced over time to see the subtle and not so subtle changes that occurred within the movement. Chapter 2 focuses on the Indiana Woman's Relief Corps. The patriotic education movement began in Indiana. Therefore it is fitting that the second

chapter focuses specifically on Indiana. The Conclusion looks at the overall success and impact of the WRC and what happened to the organization.

The views and opinions presented in this thesis are not those of all women of the Progressive Era or even of all those who were members of the Woman's Relief Corps. The views and opinions here were the prevailing ones and thus became the signature of the WRC. Since there were hundreds of thousands of women in the WRC, any dissent from conventional wisdom was drowned out.



## Chapter 1: The Woman's Relief Corps: Patriotic Education, the "Pledge of Allegiance," and the Flag

The Woman's Relief Corps is one of the largest patriotic organizations of our Country. It has an enrollment of 170,000 members. Since its organizations thirty years ago it has expended for relief over four million dollars and many hundred of thousands of patriotic work, and the special feature of this propaganda, this patriotic propaganda, is the placing of the United States flag over every public school. One of the objects of education of effective citizenship, and one of the factors of good citizenship is patriotism, and one of the symbols is the United States flag.

- Mrs. Millspaugh, Presentation of Lincoln Memorial Tablet, State House, May 6, 1914<sup>62</sup>

Every morning students across the United States stand, salute, and recite the "Pledge of Allegiance" to flags hanging in their classrooms. What many students today consider a rote and meaningless gesture was originally adopted by the Grand Army of the Republic in 1891 and subsequently endorsed by the Woman's Relief Corps in 1893 as a means to teach children love of and fidelity to one's country. By promoting patriotism in children, the Grand Army of the Republic and the Woman's Relief Corps believed that the United States would be made safe from any future internal wars.<sup>63</sup> Beginning in the 1890s, patriotic education spread across the country and surrounded children's everyday lives from school to Sunday school and from Memorial Day to Flag Day.

Patriotism, as defined by the Woman's Relief Corps in 1914, meant "loyalty to our highest ideals of love of humanity."<sup>64</sup> Wallace Foster, member of the GAR and

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<sup>62</sup> Woman's Relief Corps, *Journal of the Thirty-First Annual Convention, Department of Indiana Woman's Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Indianapolis, Indiana, May 6, 7, and 8, 1914* (n.p., n.d.), 30.

<sup>63</sup> Woman's Relief Corps, *Journal of the Twenty-Eight National Convention of the Woman's Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic at Atlantic City, New Jersey, September 21, 22, 23, 1910* (Boston: Griffith-Stillings Press, 1910), 182.

<sup>64</sup> Woman's Relief Corps, *Journal of the Thirty-Second National Convention of the Woman's Relief Corps, Detroit, Michigan, September 2, 3, 4, 1914* (Boston: Griffith-Stillings Press, 1914), 150.

“father and creator” of patriotic education said, “Patriotism is not the mere holding of our flag unfurled, but making it [the country] the goodliest, grandest, and greatest in the world.”<sup>65</sup> An analysis of the WRC’s goal to “maintain true allegiance to the United States of America” and teach patriotism and “love of country” is the basis for this chapter.<sup>66</sup> Events, such as the Spanish American War, and other organizations, such as the United Daughters of the Confederacy, Daughters of the American Revolution, and the National Council of Women, influenced and changed the Woman’s Relief Corps’ patriotic teaching movement.

Focusing on twenty-five years of the WRC makes clear the direct and continuing impact of the Civil War on organizations formed after the war as a whole, and specifically, the development of the patriotic education movement through the use of the “cult of the flag.”<sup>67</sup> While WRC members also feared immigrants and “threatening” political views, that fear did not attract much attention until World War I.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Wallace Foster, *Patriotic Primer for the Little Citizen: Auxiliary in Teaching the Youth of Our Country the True Principles of American Citizenship* (Indianapolis: Levey Brothers and Co., Printers and Binders, 1898), 49.

<sup>66</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Rules and Regulations*, 3.

<sup>67</sup> The cult of the flag according to Wallace Evan Davies and John Higham was an extreme focus on the flag. The cult of the flag came into existence in the 1880s and grew throughout the 1890s, becoming “securely entrenched by the turn of the century.” Guenter, *The American Flag, 1777-1924*, 103.

<sup>68</sup> By the end of the Spanish American War and World War I, national fears of immigrants as well as Bolshevism and other differing political ideologies were becoming a “threat” to democracy and American ideologies. The following predate WWI: Patriotic educational materials were sent to places like Puerto Rico, Panama, Hawaii, and the Philippines as a means to Americanize people who could supposedly pose a threat to the United States. It is not completely clear if it was Americans influencing foreign leaders or if the foreign leaders requested materials of their own accord. Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Nineteenth National Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Cleveland, Ohio, September 12 and 13, 1901* (Boston: E.B. Stillings Press, 1901), 319; Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Twenty-First National Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, San Francisco, Cal., August 21, 22, 23, 1903* (Boston: Griffith-Stillings Press, 1903), 55, 56, 338, 339; Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Twenty-Second National Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Boston, Mass., August 17 and 18, 1904* (Boston: Griffith-Stillings Press, 1904), 191; Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Twenty-Third National*

Stuart McConnell argues that although “the flag was an important symbol before 1890, it was only in the last decade of the century that the national banner acquired semi sacred trappings. . . . For Union veterans, especially, what had been a banner carrying particularistic associations of battle became a universal symbol of American nationality.”<sup>69</sup> In his in-depth history of the pledge and the political tensions associated with the creation of it, he argued that the pledge was written in 1892 at the conclusion of the Civil War to create a national identity.<sup>70</sup> Ellis described the work done by the Grand Army of the Republic and the Woman’s Relief Corps as proselytizing to adults and children alike.<sup>71</sup> Jones and Meyer argued that Francis Bellamy wrote the pledge as a means to convey “‘intelligent patriotism’ – not only love of country but, just as important, awareness of the nation’s ideals” and to proclaim a strong sense of “national unity” since the Civil War was still a painful memory.<sup>72</sup> They, like Ellis, argued that the GAR and WRC were effective advocates for bringing the flag and the pledge into schools, and since the WRC made doing so a significant part of the organization’s community involvement, the GAR supported it.<sup>73</sup>

Historian Caroline Janney analyzes the concerns and reasoning behind the WRC and patriotic teaching. She argues that not only did the WRC instill patriotism in children, but that patriotism was taught to combat the education that Southern children received from the Woman’s Relief Corps’ southern counterpart, the United Daughters of the

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*Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Denver, Colorado, September 7 and 8, 1905* (Boston: Griffith-Stillings Press, 1905), 176; *Woman’s Relief Corps, Journal of the Thirty-First National Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Chattanooga, TN., September 17, 18, 19, 1913* (Boston: Griffith-Stillings Press, 1913), 177.

<sup>69</sup> McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 230.

<sup>70</sup> Ellis, *To the Flag*, 24-25.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>72</sup> Jones and Meyer, *The Pledge*, 3.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 86-87.

Confederacy (UDC).<sup>74</sup> Janney argued that by choosing to center attention on patriotic education, the WRC removed itself from being remembered for anything more than its support of patriotic education and loyalty, and implied that patriotic education was not memorable. I argue that the work of the women of the WRC deserves to be remembered and respected. Installing patriotic education in schools across the country was an undeniably difficult task and Janney makes it seem minuscule and mundane as if the WRC was destined for bigger and greater things. Helping to spur a national educational movement was a notable achievement for an organization to be known for and there is no need to minimize it.

Prior to the use of patriotic education in the classrooms, the Woman's Relief Corps used Memorial Day as a means to teach patriotism to children. From the inception of the Woman's Relief Corps in 1883, it was the responsibility of the members to decorate the graves of Union soldiers and army nurses on Memorial Day.<sup>75</sup> The importance of Memorial Day to the Woman's Relief Corps is revealed by examining the "Memorial Day Blank" that each corps submitted every year.<sup>76</sup> In 1896, the Indiana

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<sup>74</sup> Janney, *Remembering the Civil War*, 247.

<sup>75</sup> According to a study from 1889 by William F. Fox and Thomas Leonard Livermore, approximately 620,000 soldiers died from combat, accident, starvation, and disease. A more recent study by Dr. J. David Hacker lists Civil War casualties between 650,000 and 850,000. Civil War Trust, "Should the number be higher? The changing cost of war," [www.civilwar.org/education/higher-number.html](http://www.civilwar.org/education/higher-number.html) (accessed June 10, 2016). It has been estimated that 3,211,067 soldiers fought in the Civil War. Civil War Trust, "Civil War Facts: Answers to Your Questions," [www.civilwar.org/education/history/faq/](http://www.civilwar.org/education/history/faq/) (accessed June 10, 2016).

<sup>76</sup> The local corps Patriotic Instructor first filled out the "Memorial Day Blanks" and submitted them to the State Patriotic Instructor. The State Patriotic Instructor collected all of the local corps Memorial Day Blanks and constructed a state report that was sent to the National Patriotic Instructor. Upon receiving all the state reports, the National Patriotic Instructor wrote a report for the National Convention. At the Third National Convention in 1885, the use of the Memorial Day Blank was instituted. The blank was to be filled out and immediately returned to the Department Chaplain. The sections that were: "1) Membership of Corps. 2) Members taking part in Memorial

Department Chaplain reported, “From all over the state come the most enthusiastic reports of Memorial Day, containing material enough to fill a large volume, showing an interest and zeal heretofore unknown.”<sup>77</sup> The “Memorial Day Blank” consisted of statements or questions that each corps completed and returned to that National Patriotic Instructor.<sup>78</sup> The Blank required local corps to indicate how many members they had and how many participated in Memorial Day services.<sup>79</sup> It was the responsibility of each corps to prepare everything for Memorial Day, from the food to the flowers. If only a small fraction of a corps were present at the services, it reflected poorly on the WRC. Another suggested question listed on the Blank was “Did the children take part and what number?”<sup>80</sup> The involvement of children in Memorial Day services was deemed essential. They assisted the Woman’s Relief Corps in honoring the dead and decorating the graves.

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Day Services. 3) Give the title of Committees, and number of ladies on each one. 4) Did the Corps as a body attend Memorial Services? 5) Did the children take part, and what number? 6) What expense was incurred? 7) Were refreshments provided for Post? 8) Were flowers furnished Post, by purchase, (to what amount) or by contribution? 9) Did they prepare a Memorial for the Unknown Dead, and those who sleep on Southern battle-fields [sic]? 10) Any other facts that may be suggested.” Woman’s Relief Corps, *Proceedings of the Third National Convention, Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Portland, Maine, June 24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>, 1885* (Toledo: Montgomery and Vrooman, Printers, 1885), 120.

<sup>77</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Thirteenth Annual Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, South Bend, Indiana, May 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, 1896* (Greensburg, IN: Willoughby and Donnell, Printers, 1896), 71.

<sup>78</sup> The National Patriotic Instructor was responsible for reporting all the work done by State Patriotic Instructors, and Corps Patriotic Instructors. The National Instructor traveled the country assessing the work being done as well as provides new publications, and guide all the patriotic work for the year in which she was elected.

<sup>79</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Proceedings of the Third National Convention, Portland, Maine, June 24, 25, and 26, 1885* (Boston: Griffith-Stillings Press, 1908), 120.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

Children played roles in the ceremonies and often little girls, dressed in white, represented the states.<sup>81</sup> They carried flags and flowers through the procession to the graves.<sup>82</sup> Young girls and boys assisted in decorating the graves as a subtle means of teaching a lesson about the history of the Civil War.<sup>83</sup> When the history and memories of the Union soldiers and the Civil War were spoken about, they were discussed in an awe-inspiring manner.<sup>84</sup> Constantly repeating the stories to children year after year was thought to keep the memories of the Civil War and history alive, so that the children would want the country to never face those horrors again. Time, however, marched on; in 1915, the National President of the Woman's Relief Corps had to address the waning significance of Memorial Day in her speech: "to teach the young that Memorial Day was created to keep alive the memory and achievements of the veterans of the Civil War. That it is a holy day and not a holiday."<sup>85</sup> Memorial Day was considered to be a holy day by the GAR and WRC because it was a day of remembrance and a day to honor all those who died as a result of the Civil War. It was equally important to teach those same sentiments in the classroom. In national convention records, the transition from Memorial Day as the primary means to patriotic education to patriotic education being taught in schools appears seamless.

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<sup>81</sup> Woman's Relief Corps, *Proceedings of the Third National Convention, Portland, Maine, June 24, 25, and 26, 1885* (Boston: Griffith-Stillings Press, 1908), 110.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Woman's Relief Corps, *Proceedings of the Third National Convention, Portland, Maine, June 24, 25, and 26, 1885* (Boston: Griffith-Stillings Press, 1908), 205.

<sup>84</sup> Woman's Relief Corps, *Journal of the Twenty-Eight National Convention of the Woman's Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic at Atlantic City, New Jersey, September 21, 22, 23, 1910* (Boston: Griffith-Stillings Press, 1910), 181.

<sup>85</sup> Woman's Relief Corps, *Journal of the Thirty-Third National Convention of the Woman's Relief Corps, Washington, D.C., September 29, 30, October 1, 1915* (Boston: Griffith-Stillings Press, 1915), 77.

In 1892, one year prior to the Woman's Relief Corps' beginning its patriotic education movement, the WRC was made up of forty-five departments, provisional departments, and detached corps of various regions and states.<sup>86</sup> There was a combined total of 2,797 corps (chapters) across the country.<sup>87</sup> The Woman's Relief Corps also had an astounding 98,209 members in 1892.<sup>88</sup> The WRC thought it had enough members to create an unstoppable force for good, as the women of the WRC viewed it, to spread patriotic education.

Captain Wallace Foster, an Indianapolis native, created patriotic education materials for the Grand Army of the Republic and the Woman's Relief Corps in the early 1890s. He also supplied flags, flag stands, *The Patriotic Primer for the Little Citizen*, and many other things to the Woman's Relief Corps at little to no cost to the organization. In a speech given by Foster at the Woman's Relief Corps National Convention in 1914, he said that he had taken his idea to the Grand Army of the Republic in 1891 and was told that they would think about it; by 1892 nothing had come of his idea, so in 1893 he approached the Department of Indiana Woman's Relief Corps annual meeting where the idea was adopted. Later that year, it was adopted by the national WRC.<sup>89</sup>

By putting what patriotic education was into a few sentences, illustrated on the following page, the members of the Woman's Relief Corps simplified a complex system to make the case for patriotic education easier for people to understand. The next step

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<sup>86</sup> Woman's Relief Corps, *Journal of the Tenth Annual Convention of the Woman's Relief Corps, Washington, D.C., September 21, 22, 23, 24, 1892* (Boston: E. B. Stillings and Co., 1892), 507-511.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Woman's Relief Corps, *Journal of the Thirty-Second National Convention of the Woman's Relief Corps, Detroit, Michigan, September 2, 3, 4, 1914* (Boston: Griffith-Stillings Press, 1914), 253-254.

after breaking down and simplifying patriotic education's definition was to determine at what age it was most effective to start teaching these tenets. Another significant and easily overlooked factor was how the WRC got permission to enter schools and teach children and teachers alike when they had no political or legal authority to do so.



The laws of war award to spies the punishment of death. It would therefore be difficult to assign a reason why Major Andre should have been exempted from that fate.

[Execution of Andre, Saturday, October 2, 1780.]

All I request of you, gentlemen, is that, while I acknowledge the propriety of my sentence, you will bear me witness that I die like a brave man.—Andre's Last Words

Columbia, my country, thy stars are unfurled,  
Mild beaming with peace o'er a jarring world;  
And well may we joy that Atlantic's broad ocean  
Doth roll between thee and old Europe's commotion.  
Thy broad-spreading empire, oh, long may it be  
The home of the patriot, the land of the free!

—M. S. S.

Treachery, though at first very cautious, in the end betrays itself.  
—Livy.

To-day beneath our Nation's flag,  
The old red, white and blue,  
A band of noble women work  
In a cause both just and true:  
To aid and succor those who fought  
To save our honored land,  
For home and freedom, God and right,  
Those earnest women stand.

—Geo. C. Davis.

Our Country. In her intercourse with foreign nations, may she always be in the right, but our Country right or wrong.—Decatur.

The first lesson of patriotism should be taught at the mother's knee where the innocent lips are taught to lip "Our Father, who art in Heaven." Teach the children to love the word "country." Teach them that the noblest act of a noble life is to die, if need be, in its defense. Then insist that the lessons at the school be befitting the children of American citizens.—Mrs. Julia S. Conklin, Ind.

"Then staggered by the shot, we saw their serried columns reel,  
And fall as falls the bearded grain beneath the reaper's steel."

"Those heroes  
Around whose memory clings  
The glory of King's Mountain,  
Cowpens and Eutaw Springs."

The noble Nation is before my soul's vision. Giant in stature, comely in feature, buoyant in the freshness of morning youth, matronly in prudent stepping, the ethereal breezes of liberty waving with loving touch her tresses, she is, no one seeing her doubts, the queen, the conqueror, the mistress, the teacher of coming ages.

To her keeping the Creator has entrusted a great continent, whose shores two oceans lave, rich in nature's gifts, inclosing useful and precious minerals, fertile in soil, salubrious in air, beauteous in vesture. For long centuries He held in reserve this region of His predilection, awaiting a propitious moment in humanity's evolutions to bestow it upon man, when man was ready to receive it. Her children have come from all countries, bearing with them the ripest fruit of thought, labor and experience. Adding thereto high aspirations and generous impulses, they have built up a new world of humanity. This world embraces the

**Figure 1.** Page 60 from Wallace Foster's 1898 edition of *The Patriotic Primer for the Little Citizen*. Wallace Foster, *The Patriotic Primer for the Little Citizen* (Indianapolis, IN: Levey Brothers and Co., 1898). Photo courtesy of The Library of Congress and Archive.org.

<https://archive.org/details/patrioticprimerf00balc>.

It was apparent to the Woman's Relief Corps that the best and most effective way to teach patriotism to children was to start at the earliest age possible. In the *Patriotic Primer for Little Citizens*, Mrs. Julia S. Coaklin, a member of an Indiana corps, stated that "The first lesson of patriotism should be taught at the mother's knee where the innocent lips are taught to lisp 'Our Father, who art in Heaven.' Teach the children to love the word 'country.' Teach them that the noblest act of a noble life is to die, if need be, in its defense."<sup>90</sup> In teaching these ideas from an early age, the love of country and patriotism would be stronger, the WRC thought, than any desire to ever attempt to divide the country again.

After the home and family, schools were an obvious setting for patriotic education. It became a primary strategy of the WRC to befriend teachers and superintendents and get them to teach patriotic education without forcing the issue. Wallace Foster found that there were a subsection of teachers who did not see the necessity of teaching patriotic education in their classrooms. These teachers felt that if patriotic education had not been taught before the Civil War, there was no need for them to teach it after the war. In response, Foster argued, "had patriotic principles been instilled into the hearts of the youth before the War of the Rebellion, there would have been no strife between the North and South."<sup>91</sup> While overly optimistic, he was of the opinion that in order to be a unified country, the unification must start at the youngest age possible.

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<sup>90</sup> Foster, *Patriotic Primer*, 60.

<sup>91</sup> Woman's Relief Corps, *Journal of the Fifteenth National Convention of the Woman's Relief Corps, Buffalo, N.Y., August 26 and 27, 1897* (Boston: E.B. Stillings Press, 1897), 275.

As the years progressed, more and more teachers and officials allowed patriotic education into classrooms.<sup>92</sup> Teachers and officials had to be comfortable with the material and with letting outsiders into their classrooms. In addressing this issue, the New York Woman's Relief Corps warned:

Be careful in your inquiries not to give the impression to teachers and superintendents in schools, that you are demanding these things to be done, or that you hold a rod of correction if they are omitted . . . . but be sure you have them understand that the WRC is deeply interested in the good work of teaching children patriotism and reverence for our flag and stand ready to furnish flags, charts, and patriotic primers to help them.<sup>93</sup>

Even when teachers willingly opened their classroom doors, there was a delicate game to be played. Teachers or superintendents could not feel threatened. The WRC would rather gently make them realize that this additional area of education would only benefit their students. Lastly, the Woman's Relief Corps used free teaching materials to make teaching an additional subject to students more palatable.

Not all teachers were comfortable allowing patriotic education in their classrooms. Historian Wallace Evan Davies noted, "Other educators were rather cool, feeling that students already had enough to keep them occupied."<sup>94</sup> If teachers were not willing to teach patriotic education in their classrooms, the Woman's Relief Corps had to accept this resistance and find other ways to teach children. Allowing this program into

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<sup>92</sup> Woman's Relief Corps, *Journal of the Twenty-Fifth National Convention of the Woman's Relief Corps, Saratoga Springs, NY, September 12 and 13, 1907* (Boston: Griffith-Stillings Press, 1907), 199; Woman's Relief Corps, *Journal of the Twenty-Third National Convention of the Woman's Relief Corps, Denver, Colorado, September 7 and 8, 1905* (Boston: Griffith-Stillings Press, 1905), 270. At the 1895 National Convention, the Committee on Patriotic Teaching reported that several State Superintendents of Public Instruction "officially" endorsed the movement, while others hired women to go to teachers meetings and educate teachers on how to teach patriotic education. Woman's Relief Corps, *Journal of the Thirteenth Annual Convention of the Woman's Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Louisville, KY September 12, 13, and 14th* (Boston: E.B. Stillings & Co., 1895), 293.

<sup>93</sup> Department of New York, Woman's Relief Corps, *Journal of the Seventeenth Annual Convention 1900* (n.p., n.d.), 86, quoted in *Patriotism on Parade*, 244.

<sup>94</sup> Davies, *Patriotism on Parade*, 244.

classrooms meant limiting time spent on other areas of study. There was, however, little concern about the cost of patriotic education schoolbooks because the WRC provided free books and other supplies to schools that agreed to teach it.

Patriotic instructors, as the WRC called these elected women at the national and local levels, went to regular and training schools and “address[ed] teachers’ institutes, teachers’ associations, summer schools and Grange meetings” as a means to instructing teachers.<sup>95</sup> Ultimately, the teachers became as important as the members of the WRC in spreading and teaching patriotism across the country. By 1906, Wallace Foster estimated that there were over 600,000 women, including teachers, whom the Woman’s Relief Corps had involved in teaching patriotic education.<sup>96</sup>

Despite the Woman’s Relief Corps’ best efforts, bringing patriotic education to the former Confederate states took considerably longer than in the former Union. There is limited evidence to confirm any success of the WRC in that region of the country. Receiving flags and books was much more than simply adding a new lesson to the school day in the South; it was an acknowledgment of being coerced back into the United States and an acceptance of Northern understanding of history and the country. It would seem that the WRC believed that the former belligerents could be unified through using Union ideologies and the WRC’s version of patriotism and being a good citizen.<sup>97</sup> Rather than reconciling the once divided country, it became a battle of wills when promoting patriotic education. According to Janney, in 1911 at the national convention, it was reported “five

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<sup>95</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Twenty-Seventh National Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Salt Lake City, Utah, August 12 and 13, 1909* (Boston: Griffith-Stillings Press, 1909), 171.

<sup>96</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Twenty-Fourth National Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Minneapolis, Minn., August 16 and 17, 1906* (Boston: Griffith-Stillings Press, 1906), 228.

<sup>97</sup> Janney, *Remembering the Civil War*, 247.

Southern states had designated the birthdays of Lee and Davis as legal holidays.”<sup>98</sup>

Southern states and organizations continued to resist the WRC even after nearly twenty years of promoting patriotic education in the South.

There is little sense that the WRC and the United Daughters of the Confederacy wanted to heal the rift between the former North and South. Janney argues that even though the WRC tried to impart patriotic education to the children of the South, there was little success because the women of the South failed to accept the WRC’s “American patriotism” and saluted the American Flag alongside the flag of the Confederacy.”<sup>99</sup> Teachers in the South met with a variety of obstacles that teachers in the North, by comparison, quickly overcame.

While the National Woman’s Relief Corps received letters from women who were members of detached corps in the South and West who requested that flags and other materials for distribution often to specific schools and churches, most of the discussion at the national conventions focused on the hostility and other barriers that were in the way of success in the South.<sup>100</sup> In 1901, the National Chaplain received reports from the South stating: “Our Corps is holding fast, but it is hard to work against so much apathy and indifference” and “the great lack here is patriotic teaching. All the patronage of the wealthy and the whole State government are antagonistic to the spirit of our

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<sup>98</sup> Janney, *Remembering the Civil War*, 248.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>100</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Thirty-Third National Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Washington, D.C., September 29, 30, October 1, 1915* (Boston: Griffith-Stillings Press, 1915), 366; Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Twenty-First National Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, San Francisco, Cal., August 21, 22, 23, 1903* (Boston: Griffith-Stillings Press, 1903), 161. A detached corps is a corps in a state that either has not received approval from the national organization or the detached corps did not have enough members to qualify as a provisional department or department.

organization.”<sup>101</sup> As long as white Southerners remained hostile, there was little chance for the Woman’s Relief Corps to have much success in the South. However, despite the lack of success with white communities in the South and West, the WRC may have found some success with at least one “colored” Sunday school. The 1906 National Convention decided to send “eight set of cotton flags, with gilt eagle on top of standards” to that Sunday school.<sup>102</sup>

While the WRC only saw limited success in implementing patriotic education in the South, the success in the North was palpable. While the fight in the South for patriotic education continued, in the North the growing importance of the flag in patriotic education and daily life was undeniable. The GAR and WRC, among other organizations, put such emphasis on the flag that the flag’s symbolism, importance, and influence grew in immeasurable strength.

The Woman’s Relief Corps, along with the Grand Army of the Republic and other organizations such as the DAR, ushered in the era of the “cult of the flag.” Historian Wallace Evan Davies argued, “The most extensive patriotic ritualism centered about the cult of the flag. This emerged in the late [eighteen] eighties and gained strength throughout the nineties. The banner became worshipped as the symbol of everything that was worthy of reverence in the American tradition.”<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Nineteenth National Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Cleveland, Ohio, September 12 and 13, 1901* (Boston: E.B. Stillings Press, 1901), 117.

<sup>102</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Twenty-Fourth National Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Minneapolis, Minn., August 16 and 17, 1906* (Boston: Griffith-Stillings Press, 1906), 361. The Woman’s Relief Corps was an organization made up of white as well as African American women. This can easily be overlooked when reading the National Convention records because there is little to no differentiation between white and black corps in the records.

<sup>103</sup> Davies, *Patriotism on Parade*, 218.



Hence, the teaching of patriotic education quickly became entwined with the growing prominence of the flag. It was not enough for flags to be introduced and accepted through good will; through mandating the use of the flag, people and organizations who opposed the Woman's Relief Corps' actions would have little to no way to fight the growing movement. By 1914, an unspecified group of people in the South had bestowed upon the women of the Woman's Relief Corps the moniker "Missionaries of the Flag."<sup>104</sup> The members of the Woman's Relief Corps rightly earned this name. In just one year, from 1898 to 1899, over 36,789 public schools were given flags by the Woman's Relief Corps.<sup>105</sup> The WRC also fought for the passage of laws in each state to require the placement of the flag at all schools and public buildings.<sup>106</sup>

Flags were given out to schools and students.<sup>107</sup> Providing flags to schools for students to see on a daily basis was meant to inspire students and also to work subliminally for patriotism.<sup>108</sup> Early on, the Woman's Relief Corps realized that by also giving children their own individual flags, the sense of ownership would make them prize

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<sup>104</sup> Woman's Relief Corps, *Journal of the Thirty-Second National Convention of the Woman's Relief Corps, Detroit, Michigan, September 2, 3, 4, 1914* (Boston: Griffith-Stillings Press, 1914), 148.

<sup>105</sup> Woman's Relief Corps, *Journal of the Seventeenth National Convention of the Woman's Relief Corps, Philadelphia, PA, September 6 and 7, 1899* (Boston: E.B. Stillings and Co., 1899), 151.

<sup>106</sup> Woman's Relief Corps, *Journal of the Thirteenth Annual Convention of the Woman's Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Louisville, KY September 12, 13, and 14th* (Boston: E.B. Stillings & Co., 1895), 293.

<sup>107</sup> Woman's Relief Corps, *Journal of the Twentieth National Convention of the Woman's Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Washington, D.C., October 9 and 10, 1902* (Boston: Griffith-Stillings Press, 1902), 171.

<sup>108</sup> Woman's Relief Corps, *Journal of the Twenty-Eight National Convention of the Woman's Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic at Atlantic City, New Jersey, September 21, 22, 23, 1910* (Boston: Griffith-Stillings Press, 1910), 167, 180.

and value the flag in a different and more profound way than by merely seeing it at school.<sup>109</sup>

Elaborate flag drills were also created and published for teachers to integrate into the classroom. Flag drills involved boys and girls marching in specific formations, reciting the “Pledge of Allegiance,” and singing the “Star Spangled Banner.”<sup>110</sup> The pomp and ceremony allowed the children to participate in teaching themselves and their fellow classmates about the flag. They were meant to give them an important role to play in keeping loyalty and nationalism alive. There was a daily ceremony for the raising and lowering of the flag at the beginning and end of every school day. According to Wallace Foster, “The flag should be raised over the schoolhouse or grounds every school day at the morning hour, ten minutes before the bell rings for the scholars to assemble in their respective classrooms, and lowered when the school is dismissed in the afternoon.”<sup>111</sup>

As if honoring the flag every day was not a good enough way to teach children patriotism and loyalty, the Woman’s Relief Corps also took education to even greater extremes. In 1906, a report at the National Convention announced that there were several instances of children forming living flags.<sup>112</sup> Living flags required hundreds if not

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<sup>109</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Fourteenth National Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, September 3, 4, 1896* (Boston: E.B. Stillings Press, 1896), 186. The WRC also sponsored patriotic competitions for children of all ages to write papers on specific patriotic topics in American history and the winner received a pin while the others received American flags. This was a means to see how much children had learned as well as to inspire a competitive nature in children. Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Twenty-Eight National Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic at Atlantic City, New Jersey, September 21, 22, 23, 1910* (Boston: Griffith-Stillings Press, 1910), 180.

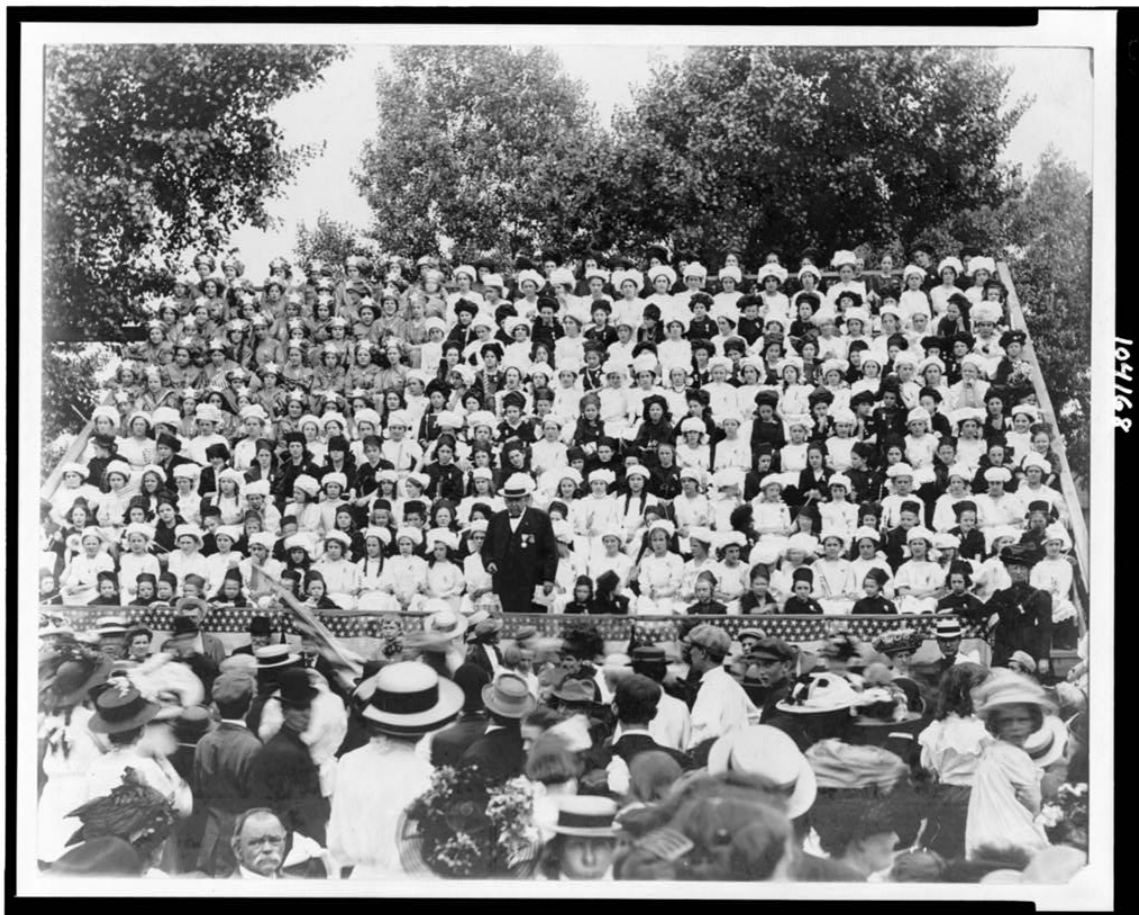
<sup>110</sup> North, *Patriotic Selections*, 32-33.

<sup>111</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Twenty-Eight National Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic at Atlantic City, New Jersey, September 21, 22, 23, 1910* (Boston: Griffith-Stillings Press, 1910), 253-254.

<sup>112</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Twenty-Fourth National Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Minneapolis, Minn., August 16 and 17, 1906* (Boston: Griffith-Stillings Press, 1906), 193.



thousands of children dressed in color appropriate clothing and lined up in order to create gigantic American flags. This living artwork of children was meant to honor the flag as well as those members of the GAR who still lived and were able to see the work meant to keep their sacrifices alive.



**Figure 2.** *Living Flag - Soldiers' Monument Dedication, May 30, 1911.* C, 1911. It was common on Memorial Day and for other major patriotic events to have children dress in the specific colors of the flag to create a living flag. This was meant to foster patriotism amongst children and allow them to participate in the event. Courtesy of the Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/item/91783899>.

The WRC also wanted to honor the flag outside of the classroom. Flag Day became another national holiday to perpetuate “the cult of the flag” as well as to promote the continual growth of patriotic education. Flag Day was established in 1895 with the American Flag Day Association leading the push and organizations such as the WRC joining in and endorsing the day. The WRC supported making Flag Day a national holiday as early as the 1890s, but the GAR resisted the creation of the holiday fearing that it was too close to Memorial Day and Independence Day and would take attention away from those holidays.<sup>113</sup> The WRC believed that Flag Day was a necessary holiday to pay proper honor and respect to the American flag.<sup>114</sup> Every year the women of the WRC were to “visit stores, factories, and public buildings where heretofore the flag has not been displayed, and request that it be thrown to the breeze. Make a request through the papers that housekeepers also hand out the flag upon that day.”<sup>115</sup> Flags were to wave over every school, building, and house, and the mere sight of a flag was supposed to be a lesson in patriotism.

Prevention of the desecration of the flag also became a major part of the Woman’s Relief Corps. Desecration of the flag, aside from burning and walking on it, meant using the flag for commercial means and any other way in which the flag was shown disrespect. The Woman’s Relief Corps, as well as many other fraternal and charitable organizations,

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<sup>113</sup> Davies, *Patriotism on Parade*, 218-219.

<sup>114</sup> Flag Day did not become an official holiday until 1949 when it received presidential sanction. Marc Leepson, *Flag: An American Biography* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2005), 4.

<sup>115</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Twenty-Eight National Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic at Atlantic City, New Jersey, September 21, 22, 23, 1910* (Boston: Griffith-Stillings Press, 1910), 182.

such as the Grand Army of the Republic and Daughters of the American Revolution, felt that to burn, misuse, or show disrespect to the flag was to do the same to the country.<sup>116</sup>

In addition to giving flags to schools, churches, students, and businesses across the country, the cult of the flag promoted various creeds, pledges, salutes, oaths, and songs that children and adults alike were taught to say to the flag on a daily basis as a means of stating one's loyalty to the United States. The GAR and WRC used the "American Patriotic Salute" at the opening of each meeting. The children said in unison, while saluting the flag: "We give our hands and our hearts to God and our Country – one Country, one Language, one Flag."<sup>117</sup> The statement of "one Country, one Language, one Flag" essentially denied the growing diversity of the United States. Unifying the country under the same language and flag would ensure loyalty by all, in theory, while still allowing freedoms and liberties.

By the turn of the century, the "Pledge of Allegiance" had become a very significant aspect of patriotic education. The pledge that was endorsed by the Grand Army of the Republic and Woman's Relief Corps was: "I pledge allegiance to my Flag and to the Republic for which it stands: One Nation indivisible, with Liberty and Justice for All."<sup>118</sup> While many may see the pledge and its words as simply a means to pledge loyalty to one's country, the undertones of the pledge are much more revealing. In 1892, when it was written, there were growing tensions and fears in the U.S. revolving around race and ethnicity which played out in the words of the pledge. The pledge became a

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<sup>116</sup> Leepson, *Flag*, 156-159.

<sup>117</sup> Woman's Relief Corps, *Journal of the Thirteenth Annual Convention of the Woman's Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Louisville, KY, September 12, 13, and 14th* (Boston: E.B. Stillings & Co., 1895), 118.

<sup>118</sup> Jones and Meyer, *The Pledge*, 88.

means to unite, to announce patriotic loyalty, and to show patriotism in all those who spoke the words every day.

At this time, the fear of immigrants was developing, and the WRC believed that by educating immigrants and the children of immigrants they would become American and let go their prior ethnic and political beliefs. “The grand total of immigration from September 30, 1820, up to and including the past fiscal year [1909 or 1910] is given as 26,852,723. Our work is especially needed among the aliens who bring their peculiar ‘isms’ to this land of the free.”<sup>119</sup> The WRC determined that the ultimate goal was to meet immigrants as they arrived in the United States to greet them, and to give them educational materials. If it was not possible to greet new immigrants, the WRC believed that by educating child immigrants and the American-born children of immigrants, nationalism and love of the United States would remove any hostile ideologies. According to Herbert Kliebard, the early twentieth century brought a growing “concern about an undesirable class of immigrants on the rise.” Thus “it was to the schools generally and to the social studies in particular that American leaders turned as the most efficacious way of introducing American institutions and inculcating American norms and values.”<sup>120</sup>

Another patriotic educational tool was the “American’s Creed.” The “American’s Creed” was written by William Tyler Page and was similar to the “Pledge of Allegiance” in that those who said it professed their love of and loyalty to the United States. The “American’s Creed” reads:

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<sup>119</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Twenty-Eighth National Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, at Atlantic City, New Jersey, September 21, 22, 23, 1910* (Boston: Griffith-Stillings Press, 1910), 178.

<sup>120</sup> Herbert M. Kliebard, *The Struggle for the American Curriculum: 1893-1958* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 108.

I believe in the United States of America as a government of the people, by the people, for the people; whose just powers are derived from the consent of the governed; a democracy in a republic; a sovereign nation of many sovereign states; a perfect Union, one and inseparable; established upon those principles of freedom, equality, justice, and humanity for which American patriots sacrificed their lives and fortunes. I therefore believe it is my duty to my country to love it; to support its Constitution; to obey its laws; to respect its flags; and to defend against all enemies.<sup>121</sup>

The “American’s Creed” was first printed in April 1918 after a national contest to write a national creed.<sup>122</sup> The creation of the American’s Creed was timely with the U.S. involvement in World War I. The creed was a statement of American principles, therefore it would have acted as a reminder of what the United States was and what the citizens believed. The creed combined “passages and phrases from the Declaration of Independence, the Preamble to the Constitution, Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address, and Daniel Webster’s reply to Robert Y. Hayne in the Senate in 1830.”<sup>123</sup> The creed was used alongside the “Pledge of Allegiance” and the “American Patriotic Salute.” The “American’s Creed” was more than just another thing for children to say to declare their loyalty to the United States. The “Creed” combined some of the most politically and socially significant works published in the United States such as the Declaration of Independence, Constitution, and Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address.

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<sup>121</sup> The American’s Creed, Morton Woman’s Relief Corps No.11, Vigo County Library, Box 4, Folder 1.

<sup>122</sup> “The American’s Creed,” <http://www.usflag.org/american.creed.html> (accessed December 16, 2014); Duane Streufert, “The Pledge of Allegiance,” <http://www.usflag.org> (accessed December 16, 2014). According to the website “Over three thousand entries were received, and William Tyler Page was declared to be the winner. The Speaker of the House of Representatives and the commissioner of education of the state of New York accepted the Creed for the United States, and the proceedings relating to the award were printed in the *Congressional Record* of April 13, 1918. It was a time when patriotic sentiments were very much in vogue. The United States had been a participant in World War I only a little over a year at the time the Creed was adopted.”

<sup>123</sup> “The American’s Creed,” <http://www.usflag.org/american.creed.html> (accessed December 16, 2014); Streufert, “The Pledge of Allegiance,” <http://www.usflag.org> (accessed December 16, 2014).

Supplies such as flags were seen as very important for the teaching of patriotism in schools, but one of the most significant items was the primer used to teach children. Wallace Foster rewrote Balch's *Patriotic Primer for the Little Citizen*, which became the main textbook used by the Woman's Relief Corps throughout the country. In 1907, at the Twenty-Fifth National Convention, it was reported that Wallace Foster had given "without cost to this Order, to Corps, schools and individuals, personally paying postage transportation, over 1,000 copies of the *Patriotic Primer*, Origin and History of the Stars and Stripes and facsimile of the Declaration of Independence and more than 600 flags of different qualities."<sup>124</sup> Large donations such as these allowed more students to receive the book and begin their patriotic studies. Foster remained a lifelong supporter of the work of the WRC and as a result donated his book and other teaching materials many times at no cost to the Woman's Relief Corps.

The *Patriotic Primer for the Little Citizen* covered a vast array of subjects that taught young children patriotism. The textbook contained pages of quotes by famous and influential people such as Oliver Wendell Holmes, John Adams, Benjamin Harris, Kate Brownlee Sherwood, Grover Cleveland, Annie Wittenmyer, and U.S. Grant.<sup>125</sup> It addressed each important patriotic holiday and anniversary. The book concluded with a short biography about each of the presidents of the United States. The book was in no way subtle in its hope to fully immerse students in patriotism. In essence, the primer more or less became the bible of patriotic education.

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<sup>124</sup> Woman's Relief Corps, *Journal of the Twenty-Fifth National Convention of the Woman's Relief Corps, Saratoga Springs, NY, September 12 and 13, 1907* (Boston: Griffith-Stillings Press, 1907), 123.

<sup>125</sup> Foster, *Patriotic Primer*, 46, 47, 48, 51, 53, 54, 57.



The primer's first section was about the United States. It used a question-and-answer format that was meant to cover all the general questions that children might have. One of the most important and revealing questions was "why is an education necessary in a Republic?"<sup>126</sup> The book answered,

in this country, where the people govern, it is of the highest importance, not only that the people should be intelligent, but that their intelligence should be educated. Ignorance is the most dangerous of enemies in a government of the people. If the people are without knowledge and are unable to avail themselves of the experience of the past, they can never govern either wisely or well.<sup>127</sup>

It was apparent that residual fears from the Civil War had permeated patriotic education with the implication that those who were uneducated had fought against the nation rather than supported it. When answering the question regarding what children must learn, Foster wrote, "we must learn in order that when we grow up we may be the MOST INTELLIGENT, THE MOST LAW-RESPECTING AND THE MOST PATRIOTIC OF AMERICAN CITIZENS."<sup>128</sup> It was not enough to simply say these words; Foster believed that they needed to jump off the page. Through intelligence, lawfulness, and patriotism, there would be little concern that the Civil War would repeat itself.

The primer went through many editions and was a major success. In 1896, only three years into the WRC's patriotic education movement, the Committee on Patriotic Teaching reported, "the primer is being used and recommended by some of the most noted educators and professional men and women in the country, upon its merit as a means of teaching American citizenship." The demand for the primer and other teaching materials grew and, by the time the U.S. entered World War I, the WRC was hard pressed

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<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Foster, *Patriotic Primer*, 15. The capitalization of the entire phrase was done by Foster.



to keep the educational materials in stock. By 1920, the WRC had been out of primers for two years because the books were in such high demand.<sup>129</sup>

The WRC published many of its own works as well as distributed works published by other companies and organizations. The American Flag Manufacturing Company of Easton, Pennsylvania, gave 500,000 “Rituals for Teaching Patriotism” to the WRC “free of cost.”<sup>130</sup> While the company’s actions might appear to be selfless, the reality was that the WRC bought vast quantities of flags from the company to distribute across the country and having the WRC distribute its products was another way for the company to get its name out to more people. Patriotic education became a booming business in the United States and companies could make large amounts of money for little effort, while the WRC did all the work.<sup>131</sup>

The Woman’s Relief Corps did not solely rely on publications written by others. In 1909, Mary M. North, the National Patriotic Instructor, wrote *Patriotic Selections for Memorial Day, Flag Day and other Patriotic Anniversaries*. The publication was divided into four sections: “Our Country,” “Memorial Day,” “Our Flag,” and “Miscellaneous.”<sup>132</sup> Each section contained songs, poems, and speeches for the specified subject. The last section, “Miscellaneous,” contained diagram of the flag drill and concise instructions for

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<sup>129</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Fourteenth National Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, September 3, 4, 1896* (Boston: E.B. Stillings Press, 1896), 185; Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Thirty-Fifth National Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Boston, Mass., August 21, 22, 23, 1917* (Washington, D.C.: The National Tribune Company, 1917), 173; Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Thirty-Eighth National Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Indianapolis, IN, September 21, 22, 23, 24* (Washington D.C.: National Tribune Co., 1920), 369. The Committee on Patriotic Teaching was the precursor the National Patriotic Instructor, Department Patriotic Instructor, and Corps Patriotic Instructor.

<sup>130</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Thirteenth Annual Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Louisville, KY September 12, 13, and 14th* (Boston: E.B. Stillings & Co., 1895), 295.

<sup>131</sup> Jones and Meyer, *The Pledge*, 86; Ellis, *To the Flag*, 55.

<sup>132</sup> North, *Patriotic Selections*, table of contents.

the flag drill.<sup>133</sup> The poems, songs, and speeches spoke volumes in regards to what the WRC felt about the United States, as well as all their hopes being placed on future generations of Americans.

The publications used and printed by the WRC were a key to the widespread use of patriotic education methods until around 1920. By the end of World War I, probably every child and parent had a flag, was taught the WRC's version of patriotism and loyalty, and most likely knew many of the patriotic songs, poems, and speeches published in the materials that were distributed by the WRC.

The Woman's Relief Corps had been involved in the patriotic education movement at the national level for decades. While this chapter provides a holistic look at the general work being done by the members of the WRC, one does not get a full in-depth account on how everything fell into motion and worked. The next chapter focuses on the Indiana Woman's Relief Corps and how a large patriotic education movement was grounded in and began within the state of Indiana. Studying Indiana specifically allows one to see how and why patriotic education began and how it spread across the country and was affected by social and political changes. Patriotic education was not an instant success, but rather an effort that started as a grassroots movement and gained success and attention over a span of time, eventually resulting in a sweeping patriotic education movement.

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<sup>133</sup> North, *Patriotic Selections*, 31-32.

## Chapter 2: Indiana Woman's Relief Corps: The Patriotic Women Who Brought Patriotism into the Classroom

As the physician with finger on the pulse of the patient notes the number and tone of the heartbeats as his prime factor in making a diagnosis of the case, we may watch from year to year this sure index of an unwavering loyalty, and of fidelity to the memory of the Union Soldiers and the cause for which they suffered.

- Abigail D. Hawkins, Department Chaplain, 1889<sup>134</sup>

This chapter focuses on the founders of patriotic education – the Woman's Relief Corps in Indiana.<sup>135</sup> Indiana is an ideal case study to see how the Woman's Relief Corps' involvement in patriotic education began, was sustained, and was changed by time and specifically by the Spanish-American War, 1898, and World War I, 1914-1918. While these changes were subtler on the national scale, they are quite apparent when focusing on Indiana. The Indiana records also allow us to see interactions between school officials, teachers, the government, and the WRC in regards to patriotic education. The influence of Captain Wallace Foster, the creator of the patriotic education movement, is evident. He was a member of the Grand Army of the Republic and when it came to patriotic education he agreed with the WRC and was a critical voice in the work of Indiana women.

The Indiana Woman's Relief Corps (IWRC) was not among the corps that were organized and represented at the first National Convention of the Woman's Relief Corps

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<sup>134</sup> Woman's Relief Corps, *Journal of the Sixth Annual Convention Department of Indiana Woman's Relief Corps, Held at Indianapolis, In, March 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, 1889, Volume VI* (Indianapolis: Baker and Randolph, Printers and Binders, 1889), 32.

<sup>135</sup> Woman's Relief Corps, *Journal of the Thirteenth Annual Convention of the Woman's Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, South Bend, Ind., May 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, 1896* (Greensburg, IN: Willoughby and Donnell, Printers, 1896), 34.

in 1883.<sup>136</sup> The founders of the Indiana WRC formed the Department of Indiana in 1884, a few days prior to the second National Convention, which allowed them to be noted in the National Convention record.<sup>137</sup> The IWRC grew rapidly. At its Fourth Annual Convention, Department President Alice E. Griffin noted that when she began her term there were 168 members in Indiana and by the time she left office there were 1810 members.<sup>138</sup> Even more impressive were the numbers that the Department Secretary, Flora Wulschner, reported at the Sixth Annual Convention in 1889. Wulschner reported that “at the Fifth Annual Convention ... [in] 1888, South Bend Division reported twenty-four corps with a membership of 944; Indianapolis Division reported eighty corps with a membership of 2,309; total number of corps, 104; total membership, 3,253.”<sup>139</sup> As with all other Departments of the Woman’s Relief Corps across the country, the IWRC had to comply with national rules and regulations. In the beginning, work in Indiana was similar to that of most of the Departments across the country. They gave “aid to soldiers and

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<sup>136</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, Department of Indiana, *History of the Department of Indiana Woman’s Relief Corps Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, 1884-1933* (n.p., 1933), 3, Indiana State Library.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid. The *History of the Department of Indiana Woman’s Relief Corps Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, 1884-1933* makes special mention of the fact that “the first Department Journals were only the printed reports of officers and committees, and it was not until 1893 that the first stenographer was appointed and since that time the Department has had a complete report printed of Convention proceedings.” From the time the first Department Journal was published until the addition of a stenographer in 1893, the Journals only provide a limited set of voices in the state organization and therefore limit the scope and understanding of the members. Therefore there is a lack of discourse and a lack of understanding of how the organization operated and how the conventions were run.

<sup>138</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Convention, Woman’s Relief Corps, Department of Indiana, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, South Bend, Ind., March 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>, 1887*, (Elkhart, IN: Review Printing Company, 1887), 10. Based on what Alice E. Griffin noted in her report as Department President at the Fourth Annual Convention it is difficult to determine when she became Department President and what length of time her comments cover.

<sup>139</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Sixth Annual Convention Department of Indiana Woman’s Relief Corps, Held at Indianapolis, In, March 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, 1889, Volume VI* (Indianapolis: Baker and Randolph, Printers and Binders, 1889), 19. The term division refers to geographic areas of the state.

their dependent ones.”<sup>140</sup> Also early on, much of the work done by the IWRC focused on Memorial Day. Memorial Day was the earliest means to teach patriotism to children. As early as March 1888, in General Order No. 1 issued by the Indiana WRC, the purpose of the organization included:

To inculcate lessons of patriotism and love of country among our children and in the communities in which we live; to maintain true allegiance to the United States of America; to discountenance whatever tends to weaken loyalty and to encourage the spread of universal liberty and equality to all men.<sup>141</sup>

Teaching patriotism was a means by which the WRC believed it could ensure the loyalty of children. In choosing to teach patriotism on Memorial Day, “the Nation’s Sabbath,” the WRC created a day saturated with patriotic emotions and memories.<sup>142</sup> WRC members saw Memorial Day as an essential component of their work.<sup>143</sup> Every member of the Indiana WRC participated.

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<sup>140</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Thirty-Second Annual Convention, Department of Indiana Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Marion, Indiana, May 26, 27, and 28, 1915* (n.p., n.d.), 27.

<sup>141</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps. *Journal of the Sixth Annual Convention Department of Indiana Woman’s Relief Corps, Held at Indianapolis, In, March 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, 1889, Volume VI* (Indianapolis: Baker and Randolph, Printers and Binders, 1889), 92.

<sup>142</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Twentieth Annual Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Anderson, May 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, 1903* (Noblesville, IN: The Butler Printing House, 1903), 33. Phrases such as “the Nation’s Sabbath” were common.

<sup>143</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps. *Journal of the Sixth Annual Convention Department of Indiana Woman’s Relief Corps, Held at Indianapolis, In, March 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, 1889, Volume VI* (Indianapolis: Baker and Randolph, Printers and Binders, 1889), 32. Not only were Memorial Day celebrations and memorials a labor of love, but as the Department President, Eliza J. Crisler described it in 1896, the Woman’s Relief Corps saw patriotic work as one that required “each one [to] buckle on a new armour [sic] of faith.” The women who were a part of the WRC saw the need to teach patriotism as a war for which they needed to prepare emotionally and with faith. Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Thirteenth Annual Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, South Bend, Ind., May 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, 1896* (Greensburg, IN: Willoughby and Donnell, Printers, 1896), 37.

Children were encouraged to lay wreaths and flowers on graves and participate in memorial services.<sup>144</sup> The members of the Grand Army of the Republic, who were among those remembered on Memorial Day, were “Grand object lessons and speak volumes to coming generations.”<sup>145</sup> The WRC believed that the best and most effective way to teach patriotism to children was to allow children to hear the firsthand stories about the war. What better way to get a child to learn than to hear a veteran tell war stories? While that may be an over simplification, the WRC knew that the members of the GAR would only be available to tell their stories only for a limited number of years.<sup>146</sup> Children turned out in large numbers every year to participate in the day’s events.<sup>147</sup> Even though teaching patriotism on Memorial Day was successful, the WRC quickly shifted its focus to teaching patriotism in the public school classrooms.

In order to teach patriotism, one must define patriotism. From 1889 to 1918, the WRC’s definition/interpretation changed many times, but this did not seem to affect what was taught in schools.<sup>148</sup> The first definition of patriotism provided by a member of the IWRC came in 1889 and emphasized the sacrifices of both women and men who had lost

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<sup>144</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Eighth Annual Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Department of Indiana, April 11, 1891* (n.p., n.d.), 49.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 163.

<sup>146</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Thirteenth Annual Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, South Bend, Ind., May 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, 1896* (Greensburg, IN: Willoughby and Donnell, Printers, 1896), 37.

<sup>147</sup> In 1891, it was reported that over 8,000 children had participated in the day’s events. Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Eighth Annual Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Department of Indiana, April 11, 1891* (n.p., n.d.), 49. Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Thirteenth Annual Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, South Bend, Ind., May 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, 1896* (Greensburg, IN: Willoughby and Donnell, Printers, 1896), 71.

<sup>148</sup> The constant changes in defining and interpreting patriotism might be a result of the WRC figuring what they needed patriotism to represent. These changes might also be the result of the leadership in the Indiana WRC or even a new president every year. One can surmise that, if the previous definition or interpretation no longer fitted with what they needed it to, the members would change the definition of patriotism so that it would work for whatever was at hand.

family members in the war.<sup>149</sup> From 1896 to 1915, patriotism was defined with the underlying themes of good citizenship and loyalty.<sup>150</sup> In 1896 Samantha West Miller, Chairman of the Committee on Patriotic Teaching, said, “Patriotism and good citizenship means intelligence, prosperity, and permanent peace.”<sup>151</sup> Department President Laura S. Burr gave the clearest definition of patriotism in 1901 when she said, “Patriotism has been defined as love of country, loyalty to its cause.”<sup>152</sup> Captain Wallace Foster defined another type of patriotism, “emotional patriotism,” in 1910. He said:

Emotional patriotism may be defined in the action of the mind or soul alone, that tender emotion which inspires and pleases the eye, the ear, and the heart; that pure emotion which touches the most delicate tendrils of the heart strings and wins the child over to the right principles, which is formed in early life; that delicate emotion which pleases it the most and impresses upon its tender mind the good and true qualities that are formed in childhood from patriotic instructions.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Sixth Annual Convention Department of Indiana Woman’s Relief Corps, Held at Indianapolis, Indiana, March 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, 1889, Volume VI* (Indianapolis: Baker and Randolph, Printers and Binders, 1889), 89.

<sup>150</sup> In 1904, Captain Wallace Foster said, “a true patriot is a loyal citizen whom no one can defile and whom you can trust and depend upon in time of peace or war.” It was not enough to just teach patriotism, but the women of the WRC also had to teach students how to be good patriots. Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Twenty-First Annual Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, Warsaw and Winona, June 14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup>, 1904* (Rockville, IN: The Rockville Tribune, 1904), 76. In 1910, Foster came back to the annual convention and defined loyalty to the women of the WRC. Foster said, “‘Loyalty’ is a sentiment endowed with a love that means self-sacrifice to enrich and make pure in all that makes God, home, country, and flag the highest virtues of citizenship.” Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Twenty-Seventh Annual Convention, Department of Indiana Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Terre Haute, Indiana, May 25, 26, and 27, 1910* (n.p., n.d.), 108.

<sup>151</sup> Department of Indiana Woman’s Relief Corps, Committee on Patriotic Teaching, Samantha West Miller, Chairman, Emma Mont McRae, Lafayette, Alice Waugh, Tipton, July 14, 1896, Box 1, Folder 3, Elizabeth Jane Miller Hack Papers, Indiana Historical Society.

<sup>152</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Eighteenth Annual Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, Logansport, May 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>, 1901* (Anderson, IN: Herald Print, 1901), 31.

<sup>153</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Twenty-Seventh Annual Convention, Department of Indiana Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Terre Haute, Indiana, May 25, 26, and 27, 1910* (n.p., n.d.), 108.



The combinations of the various definitions of patriotism and emotional patriotism were woven throughout the work done by the WRC in bringing patriotic education to public schools across Indiana.

In addition to adding to the WRC definition of patriotism, Wallace Foster laid out a set of educational principles in 1899 for the WRC to follow. According to the first principle, “in the United States the distinct object and purpose of the public school is to prepare the child for the duties and responsibilities of American citizenship.” The second principle stated, “That in order that children may acquire knowledge in any form, it is indispensable that their interest in the subject under consideration should be thoroughly aroused and excited.” In other words, if you tried to teach children something without making the subject interesting, the effort would be for naught, but if you found ways to make it interesting the children would be more receptive. The third principle suggested that “[education] commences at the very beginning of the child’s conscious existence, at the cradle. Hence, that this education may progress in the right rather than in the wrong direction, we must carefully control and formulate the earlier forms of knowledge gained, so that every new acquisition may contribute its proper share in building up a noble, rather than an ignoble character.” It was clear that the best way to teach children patriotism was to start them off as early as possible. The fourth principle stated “that up to about the tenth year of childhood, education is largely the result of the process of observation and the effort of impressions, therefore at this age the interest of the child can be best excited through its emotional nature.”<sup>154</sup> The women of the WRC took this as a

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<sup>154</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Sixteenth Annual Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, Terre Haute, Indiana, May 24 and 25, 1899* (Danville, IN: Fred. E. Warner, Printer, 1899), 117.



suggestion to use songs, speeches, flags, and other such things to excite and engage young children. The fifth and final principle was:

Patriotic instruction in its truest meaning being a quality more susceptible of high cultivation and broad development in a republic than under any form of government, so is it also a more indispensable element in the character of the citizen of any other government . . . . Hence the earlier in life that we begin to familiarize the child with the symbols of patriotism, the deeper and more permanent will be the impression produced, and the more readily will it comprehend the great and yet simple political principles upon which the government of the United States is founded.<sup>155</sup>

With this final principle it becomes obvious that Foster and the WRC intended to use patriotic education to teach citizenship and government as well as patriotism. It would seem that by teaching all three, they would make what they understood to be well-rounded, respectable citizens for the future of the country. When taken together, Foster's five educational principles were more or less the blueprint for how the Woman's Relief Corps implemented and taught patriotic education.

The patriotic education movement in the Woman's Relief Corps began with the Indiana Woman's Relief Corps, but patriotic education was not the brainchild of the WRC. According to Foster, Colonel George T. Balch was the originator of patriotic education in schools in the United States and was the first to write the *Patriotic Primer*.<sup>156</sup> Upon Balch's death in 1894, Foster took up patriotic education, and as early as

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<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid. According to Scot Guenter, the American Patriotic Salute was "the first known organized flag salute designed for use in American public schools." Guenter, *The American Flag, 1777-1924*, 117. According to Morris Sica, "Col. George T. Balch, auditor of the New York City Board of Education, developed patriotic exercises primarily for children of immigrants that did indeed require their active participation." Morris G. Sica, "The School Flag Movement: Origin and Influence," *Social Education* 54, no. 6 (October, 1990): 380. Cecelia O'Leary argues that in 1890 when Balch wrote *Methods for Teaching Patriotism in the Public Schools*, which was quickly adopted by teachers to teach flag rituals, that Balch "argued that even though children did not understand the word 'nation,' patriotic teachers could predispose children to feelings of love and duty for their country." Balch saw the need for patriotic education as more than a means to

1891 Foster appealed to the Grand Army of the Republic to pick up and support the cause of patriotic education.<sup>157</sup> The GAR's response to Foster's 1891 appeal was to "take steps for raising the flag over schools, in the fall of each year, with appropriate ceremonies."<sup>158</sup> Foster declared that this was not what he wanted. His idea of patriotic education was "to have the flag saluted, every morning, in the opening exercises of the school and unfurled from the school-house flag staff .... I contended that emotional patriotism excited by reverence for the flag, would pave the way for intellectual patriotism, so that heads, as well as hearts, would be devoted to our country, our language and our flag."<sup>159</sup> In the early years, the GAR was not interested in the patriotic education movement as proposed by Foster.

So in 1893, Foster appealed to the Tenth Annual Convention of the Indiana Woman's Relief Corps to pick up his cause of patriotic education and the Indiana Department did so. The Indiana Department took an even greater step in "recommending that a series of resolutions offered on the subject of patriotic education be introduced into the Eleventh National Convention .... 1893."<sup>160</sup> The National Convention unanimously passed the resolutions proposed by Indiana and the patriotic education movement got

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teach the children of immigrants, he saw it as a way to teach love of country and patriotism at a very young age. O'Leary, "Patriot Acts: This Isn't the First Time," in *Pledging Allegiance*, 158-159.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 108-109.

<sup>158</sup> Woman's Relief Corps, *Journal of the Seventeenth Annual Convention of the Woman's Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, Indianapolis, May 16 and 17, 1900* (Logansport, IN: Smith Stat'y Co., 1900), 109; Sica, "The School Flag Movement," 380, 382.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid. While referencing the events of 1893, this was part of Foster's speech entitled "The Origin and History of Teaching Patriotism in the Public and Private School" at the Seventeenth Annual Convention in 1900.

underway.<sup>161</sup> In 1895, “American Patriotic Salute” was published by the American Flag Manufacturing Company of Easton, Pennsylvania, and given to Indiana Corps for free distribution to schools across the state. Foster’s *Patriotic Primer for the Little Citizen* was endorsed and enlarged; a revised version of the *Patriotic Primer for the Little Citizen* was endorsed and replaced Balch’s book, and schools received facsimiles of the Declaration of Independence.<sup>162</sup> The major teaching tools were all endorsed by or presented for use within a very short amount of time. The efforts of women across the country were noticeable and the patriotic education movement gained traction.

In Indiana the earliest reference to the work and growth of patriotic education was from the Thirteenth Annual Convention in 1896.<sup>163</sup> In 1896, Indiana Department President Eliza J. Crisler announced, “Only a little over three years ago was this work undertaken with fear and trembling. And today, from Maine to California, from Lakes to Gulf, ‘Old Glory’ floats from our school houses, and 10,000,000 school children are saluting our flag and being taught to honor and revere the emblem of our liberty. Proud,

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<sup>161</sup> Ibid. This is also from Foster’s speech from the Annual Convention in 1900 talking about the origins of patriotic education. Foster also noted that “within three months the chairman of the National Patriotic Committee issued her first patriotic order, and the great flow of patriotic instruction commenced in good earnest. Thousands of the ritual of the ‘American Patriotic Salute’ to the flag were issued by the American Flag Manufacturing Company of Easton, Pennsylvania, for gratuitous distribution, and the schools of our country echoed with patriotic music and the salute to the flag.” It is significant how quickly the Woman’s Relief Corps began to do work with patriotic education almost as soon as they possibly could and getting help from Foster as well as a major flag manufacturer. Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Seventeenth Annual Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, Indianapolis, May 16 and 17, 1900* (Logansport, IN: Smith Stat’y Co., 1900), 110.

<sup>162</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Seventeenth Annual Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, Indianapolis, May 16 and 17, 1900* (Logansport, IN: Smith Stat’y Co., 1900), 110-111.

<sup>163</sup> No records found for 1893-1895.

indeed, are we that Indiana was the first state to recognize this great obligation.”<sup>164</sup> This sense of pride was apparent throughout many years of annual conventions.

The women of the Indiana WRC understood the importance of working with teachers and school officials. If a teacher did not want to teach the WRC’s version of patriotism and good citizenship in her classroom, the WRC had no means to force her to do so. The WRC realized that if school officials agreed, the officials could make patriotic education a requirement in their schools. As a result, patriotic instructors constantly asked for endorsements from officials and teachers.<sup>165</sup> The earliest record covering patriotic education found, the Report of the Committee on Patriotic Teaching in 1896, made an effort to note any Corps in the state that worked with teachers and officials to implement patriotic education. The Committee found that, “No. 9, Sanderson, New Albany, ‘Every school building in Floyd County displays the flag furnished by the School Board.’”<sup>166</sup> It was also reported that “No. 23 Greencastle, ‘The patriotic movement has been endorsed by the School Trustees and County Superintendent.’”<sup>167</sup> While the successes in working with teachers and officials were reported, the failures were also mentioned, such as “No. 54 William Smith, Sheridan ‘Committee made an effort to interest the School Board in patriotic teaching, and hope to succeed in another year.’”<sup>168</sup> Meetings with teachers and superintendents to tell them about patriotic teaching were key to getting them on board.

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<sup>164</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Thirteenth Annual Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, South Bend, Ind., May 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, 1896* (Greensburg, IN: Willoughby and Donnell, Printers, 1896), 34.

<sup>165</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Thirteenth Annual Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, South Bend, Ind., May 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, 1896* (Greensburg, IN: Willoughby and Donnell, Printers, 1896), 202.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

<sup>167</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Thirteenth Annual Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, South Bend, Ind., May 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, 1896* (Greensburg, IN: Willoughby and Donnell, Printers, 1896), 93.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

Some of the most effective ways to meet and speak with teachers were to visit teachers' institutes and attend education meetings.<sup>169</sup>

It was also imperative that schools of all different financial means be treated the same. Wallace Foster, the constant supporter, suggested that the WRC "point out to teachers how this grand purpose can be accomplished under the most diverse education and social conditions, no matter how broad or how narrow their field of labor, how large or how insignificant their schools, or how abundant or how slender the pecuniary resources of the teachers of the pupils."<sup>170</sup> The wealth of the teacher or school should not make a difference.

There was also an effort to try to influence teachers on how to teach patriotism. In June 1897, Samantha West Miller, the Committee Chair of the Patriotic Teaching Committee, sent to all patriotic teaching committees the instructions for approaching teachers who used patriotic education materials. Miller wrote:

Urge [teachers] to give at least one hour – twelve minutes each day – of the school week to this most important subject. The following programme [sic] might be suggested: Monday – The Constitution; Tuesday – The Declaration of Independence; Wednesday – The Origin and Authorship of Our National Songs; Thursday – The History of the American Flag; Friday – The Story of All Who Have Faced Death in Defense of that Flag.<sup>171</sup>

While this forced a teacher into a specific time frame and order, we get a good idea of what was taught in the early years of the patriotic education movement. The emphasis

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<sup>169</sup> Woman's Relief Corps, *Journal of the Fifteenth Annual Convention, Woman's Relief Corps, Department of Indiana, Columbus, Ind., 1898* (n.p., n.d.), 154. Teachers' Institutes and education meetings were annual workshops and meetings held to impart new information and teaching techniques to teachers.

<sup>170</sup> Woman's Relief Corps, *Journal of the Sixteenth Annual Convention of the Woman's Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, Terre Haute, May 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>, 1899* (Danville, IN: Fred E. Warner, Printer, 1899), 119, St. Joseph County Public Library.

<sup>171</sup> Woman's Relief Corps, *Journal of the Fifteenth Annual Convention, Woman's Relief Corps, Department of Indiana, Columbus, Ind., 1898* (n.p., n.d.), 154.

was clearly placed on the history of the United States, Civil War history, and the most obvious modes through which to show and teach patriotism: songs and the flag.

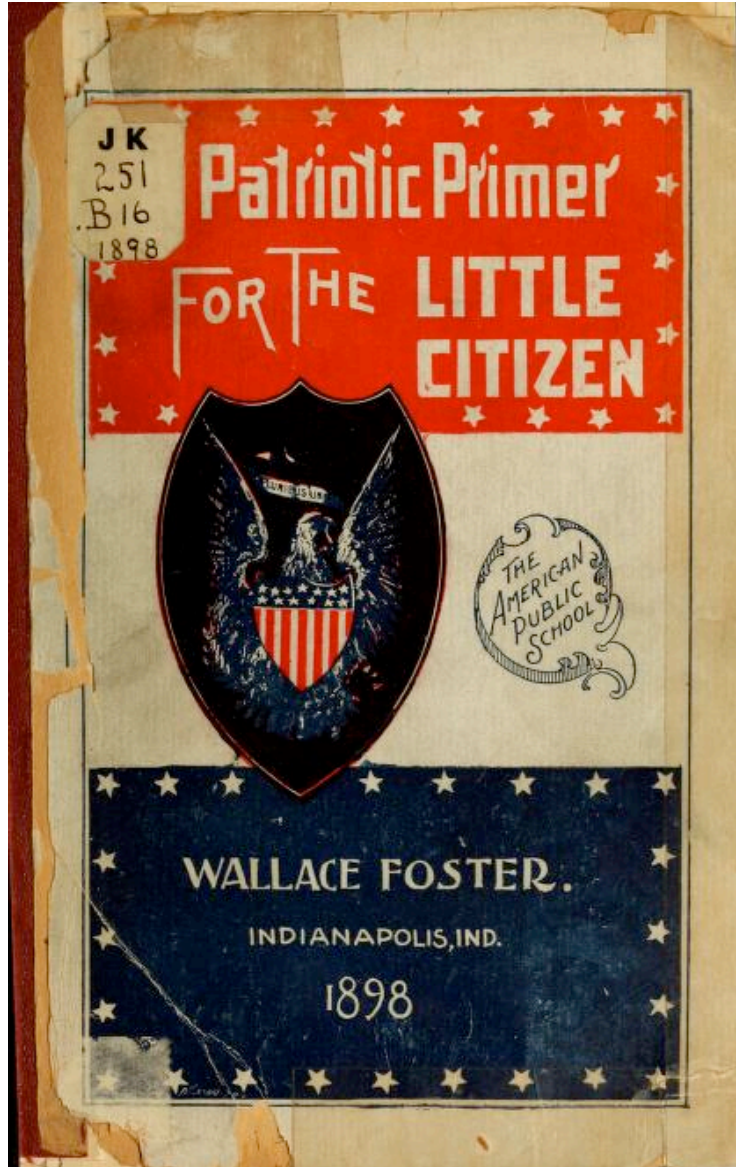
An absence of reports from early Corps Patriotic Instructors led to a lack of information to report to the Annual Convention.<sup>172</sup> The only example of a successful collaboration with teachers and officials in the early years came in 1899. Patriotic Instructor Samantha West Miller reported, “The banner county of the State this year is St. Joseph County. Mrs. Martha M. Smith was appointed among the first of my assistants, and when school opened last fall, every teacher in the county was supplied with the Primer and the American Flag Drill Manual. Every schoolroom displayed the Independence Chart beautifully framed by the trustees, and every school flies the flag supplied by the trustees.”<sup>173</sup> These elements were the key components to patriotic education, and to have the teachers and trustees so involved showed that the patriotic work that the WRC set out to do was entirely possible as long as everyone agreed to work together.

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<sup>172</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Thirteenth Annual Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, South Bend, Ind., May 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, 1896* (Greensburg, IN: Willoughby and Donnell, Printers, 1896), 34.

<sup>173</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Sixteenth Annual Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, Terre Haute, May 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>, 1899* (Danville, IN: Fred E. Warner, Printer, 1899), 94.





**Figure 3.** Cover of Wallace Foster's 1898 edition of *The Patriotic Primer for the Little Citizen*. Wallace Foster, *The Patriotic Primer for the Little Citizen* (Indianapolis, IN: Levey Brothers and Co., 1898). Photo courtesy of The Library of Congress and Archive.org. <https://archive.org/details/patrioticprimerf00balc>.

Patriotic education was still in its early years when the Spanish-American War began in April 1898. The war meant the WRC's focus moved away from patriotic education toward the war effort. In 1898, Department President Mary D. Travis called the Indiana Woman's Relief Corps to patriotic duty. Travis said that the National President told the President of the United States that the WRC would care for those fighting under the American Flag and the family members left behind.<sup>174</sup> In essence, the women of the WRC fell back into the roles they had served after the Civil War and shortly after the WRC was formed. Any thought of patriotic education disappeared and women returned to the work they had done prior to introducing patriotic education supporting the soldiers who were fighting and those who returned home.

On May 16, 1898, the women of the Indiana WRC took time to discuss the bravery and patriotism that the mothers of young soldiers displayed by allowing their sons to be deployed. According to one story, a mother, "told him, 'I have taught you all your life to be patriotic, to be devoted to the flag, I give you now to your country and I promise you that I will let you go without shedding a tear, believing you are doing your duty in going and I in giving you to your country.'"<sup>175</sup> Another example was Mrs. McBride who said that same year, "My boy went. I have given him to God and his country. If he never comes back, God will care for him, and I trust that He will give me strength to bear it."<sup>176</sup> Mothers who sent their sons to war spoke as if their sons were

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<sup>174</sup> Woman's Relief Corps, *Journal of the Fifteenth Annual Convention, Woman's Relief Corps, Department of Indiana, Columbus, Ind., 1898* (n.p., n.d.), 36.

<sup>175</sup> Woman's Relief Corps, *Journal of the Fifteenth Annual Convention, Woman's Relief Corps, Department of Indiana, Columbus, Ind., 1898* (n.p., n.d.), 91.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, 117. It would seem that Mrs. McBride was alluding to a difference in opinion regarding the war. She seemed to suggest that many of the women were opposed to the idea of the United States going to war with Spain and that those women who opposed either did not have sons who fought or did not have sons at all. Woman's Relief Corps, *Journal of the Thirteenth Annual*



sacrifices to God and to the country. For them, real patriotism meant allowing one's son to die for the good of the country and fully believing that was his purpose.

At the 1899 annual convention, it became apparent that patriotic education did not have to disappear from the workload of the WRC, but could be done in tandem with supporting the war.<sup>177</sup> Patriotism exploded as a result of the war, which in turn, resulted in more corps formed across the state, thus allowing more women to participate in the war effort and patriotic education.<sup>178</sup> The war provided the Woman's Relief Corps an opportunity to exploit the patriotic fervor of the public and the deeds of the soldiers. This opportunity was still hampered by the war since the WRC could only do what the members agreed to do. If members wanted to focus more on supporting the war effort, that was where the attention went, but while a small number continued to push patriotic education.<sup>179</sup>

As a result of the Spanish-American War, there were more people under the American Flag that the WRC felt needed to be educated. Indiana Department President

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*Convention of the Woman's Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, South Bend, Ind., May 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, 1896* (Greensburg, IN: Willoughby and Donnell, Printers, 1896), 92. It is also important to recognize the meaning behind the words of Department President Maria L. Schlater. Schlater said, "We are placing in the hands of our boys and girls in the schools, the instruments that will tend to the making of soldierly men and patriotic women." It became apparent that the women of the WRC still fully supported the division of roles and saw that it would be the woman at home who would be patriotic while men showed their patriotism through risking their lives. Woman's Relief Corps, *Journal of the Seventeenth Annual Convention of the Woman's Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, Indianapolis, May 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>, 1900* (Logansport, IN: Smith Stat'y Co., 1900), 36.

<sup>177</sup> The Spanish-American War was technically over in 1898, but the declaration of peace was not signed until 1899. Even though the war was over by the time of the 1899 IWRC convention, the women were still discussing the war because the yearly convention covered what happened from June 1898 to the time of the convention in May 1899. As a result the events of the war that happened after May of 1898 would not be discussed until the following spring.

<sup>178</sup> Woman's Relief Corps, *Journal of the Sixteenth Annual Convention of the Woman's Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, Terre Haute, May 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>, 1899* (Danville, IN: Fred E. Warner, Printer, 1899), 30-31.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.

Laura S. Burr said, “The flag of our country, the flag of Washington and Lincoln has been consecrated upon many battlefields, from Lexington to Appomattox, from Cuba to the Philippines and the Orient. Under its folds all are free.”<sup>180</sup> Great emphasis was placed on the fact that the American flag had been planted on the Philippines, Cuba, and Puerto Rico as well as officially raised in Hawaii in 1898. The Indiana Woman’s Relief Corps “sent one thousand patriotic primers and five hundred oleographs to the Commissioner of Education in San Juan, Porto [sic] Rico, for distribution in their schools [in 1903]. This year [1904] one thousand primers and five hundred oleographs were sent to Honolulu.”<sup>181</sup> All those who lived under the American flag needed patriotic education, the WRC thought, in order to become patriotic, well-informed citizens.

The work of patriotic education swung back into full force at home by 1902. Despite being the “Home of Patriotic Teaching,” Eliza J. Crisler announced at the 1902 Annual Convention that “[Indiana] is lagging behind, but let it be ‘Patriotism first, last and always; Patriotism in the History; in the reading lessons; in the general exercises; and

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<sup>180</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Eighteenth Annual Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, Logansport, May 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>, 1901* (Anderson, IN: Herald Print, 1901), 31.

<sup>181</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Twenty-first Annual Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, Warsaw and Winona, June 14-16, 1904* (Rockville, IN: Rockville Tribune Print, 1904), 103-104. It is difficult to tell if the Commissioner of Education in Puerto Rico was an American-held position or if a Puerto Rican held it. It is also unclear if the Indiana WRC women were filling a request for materials or if they sent it of their own accord. It is clear that the women of the Indiana Woman’s Relief Corps were extremely proud of the fact that they sent materials to Puerto Rico and Honolulu. The numbers quoted above were spoken of again in 1905 and written about in the *History of the Department of Indiana Woman’s Relief Corps Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, 1884-1933*. This greatly emphasizes the importance of the Spanish-American War and spreading patriotic education beyond the continental boundaries of the United States. This is also the beginning of Americanization in newly acquired territories. Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Twenty-Second Annual Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, Madison, June 14-16, 1905* (Westville, IN: Westville Indicator Print, 1905), 107, Indiana State Library. Woman’s Relief Corps, Department of Indiana, *History of the Department of Indiana Woman’s Relief Corps Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, 1884-1933*, N.P., 1933, p 12, Indiana State Library.

in the flags that adorn our rooms.”<sup>182</sup> It appeared that the best way to elevate Indiana’s position as well as to further educate children with patriotic sentiment was to inundate every lesson of the day with patriotism and make it impossible to avoid. Apparently the strategy worked because by 1906, Department President Nettie E. Wink said, “The Department of Indiana was reported at the Denver Convention as a ‘leader in Patriotic Instruction.’”<sup>183</sup> Indiana had regained national leadership in patriotic education and the women were determined to stay on the top.<sup>184</sup> Department Patriotic Instructor Alice E. Waugh acknowledged that “The field is broad, and the sowing of the seed so complex, that we would urge our workers not to yield their prestige in the great cause, but to put forth more aggressive efforts in this special line of work.”<sup>185</sup>

After the war, the opinions and desires of teachers, superintendents, and officials became more important than they had been in the past. In 1903, Captain Wallace Foster

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<sup>182</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Nineteenth Annual Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, Indianapolis, May 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, 1902* (Richmond, IN: Nicholson Printing and MFG. Co., 1902), 83. Unfortunately, statistics were not provided to support the claim that the Indiana WRC was falling behind so it is hard to determine if the Indiana WRC was falling behind or if this was more of a tactic to create an emotional response to help grow the patriotic education movement in Indiana.

<sup>183</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Twenty-Third Annual Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, Lafayette, May 22-24, 1906* (Knightstown, IN: Press of the Banner, 1906), 32.

<sup>184</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Twenty-Third Annual Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, Lafayette, May 22-24, 1906* (Knightstown, IN: Press of the Banner, 1906), 32.

<sup>185</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Twenty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary of the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, Fort Wayne, May 22-24, 1907* (Tipton, IN: Press of the Advocate, 1907), 34. The analogy of the children being taught patriotism and good citizenship as crops waiting to be harvested was common. Through this analogy, the women of the WRC acknowledge that patriotic teaching is a long, slow, drawn-out process that will take many years to come to fruition. Teaching patriotism did not produce instant results as Wallace Foster suggested in his “The Origin and History of Teaching Patriotism in the Public and Private Schools.” Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Sixteenth Annual Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, Terre Haute, Indiana, May 24 and 25, 1899* (Danville, IN: Fred. E. Warner, Printer, 1899), 117.

reported to the Annual Convention, “I find a great increase in the inquiries for patriotic literature, and for school room flags, etc. This increase is not confined to the Woman’s Relief Corps alone, but comes from teachers, educators, and private citizens who are awakening from their long sleep of indifference to the good influence of patriotic teaching and are intensely interested in your successful work.”<sup>186</sup>

Annual Convention records show that from 1900-1913 the depth and breadth of the work done by the Indiana WRC, teachers, and school officials. It became common practice to ask county superintendents, “What suggestions can you make to advance the work of Patriotic Instruction?” The answers that followed were always interesting and insightful.<sup>187</sup> In 1902 one of the responses was, “I encourage the work when visiting schools and Institutes; if the teachers know the Superintendent wants it done, they will generally do it. As the Superintendent; so is the teacher, and consequently the school.”<sup>188</sup> That same year another responded, “Furnish me with suitable programs for patriotic days by May 1, and I’ll have them published in my County Manual for next winter, they will then be in the hands of all the teachers in the county.”<sup>189</sup> In 1903 the most insightful answer was, “I think it would be a good idea to have an instructor on this subject at our County Institutes.”<sup>190</sup> It is unclear if this superintendent meant that the instructor at the

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<sup>186</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Twentieth Annual Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, Anderson, May 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, 1903* (Noblesville, IN: The Butler Printing House, 1903), 41.

<sup>187</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Nineteenth Annual Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, Indianapolis, May 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, 1902* (Richmond, IN: Nicholson Printing and Mfg. Co., 1902), 82, Indiana State Library.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

<sup>190</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Twentieth Annual Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, Anderson, May 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, 1903* (Noblesville, IN: The Butler Printing House, 1903), 89.

County Institute was to be there to teach patriotic education, to be a guide, or WRC member. In 1904 there was a response that shows how important patriotic education had become. The response was, “Let some legislative action be taken requiring school officers to place such charts and other material in the school room that will inspire pupils and teachers, and incorporate the same in our course of study that the teachers will be required to teach patriotism.”<sup>191</sup> It was no longer enough, according to this man, to rely on the good graces of teachers and superintendents, but rather it was time to make patriotic education a requirement under the law.

It was a common practice to send a member of the Indiana WRC to the State Teachers’ Association meeting in order to talk to teachers and superintendents about patriotic education and get their input on how patriotic education was working in the schools. At the 1903 Annual Convention, Mary E. Swain spoke about her experience at the State Teachers’ Association. She said that she brought 250 *Patriotic Primers* to be distributed to teachers and superintendents. The books were in such demand that after Swain ran out, she continued to be asked to find a way to get more and wished she had brought thousands to distribute.<sup>192</sup> A decade after patriotic education began, the demand for materials was greater than the Indiana WRC could have imagined. To see such a high demand for the *Primers* at one time shows how many more teachers there were to still reach.

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<sup>191</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Twenty-First Annual Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, Warsaw and Winona, June 14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup>, 1904* (Rockville, IN: The Rockville Tribune Print, 1904), 60.

<sup>192</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Twentieth Annual Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, Anderson, May 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, 1903* (Noblesville, IN: The Butler Printing House, 1903), 110.

While the IWRC made connections with county superintendents and teachers, it also made a connection with possibly the most important person in the state regarding patriotic education, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. In 1904, Crisler, Department Patriotic Instructor, read a note from Prof. F. A. Cotton, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, that said, “The Woman’s Relief Corps has done much to inspire patriotism and better citizenship among the pupils of the Indiana public schools, and all superintendents and teachers will take pleasure in assisting this organization in every way possible.”<sup>193</sup> The next year, the IWRC received further support from Prof. Cotton. “He kindly agreed to send any literature we desired, with what he was sending the teachers. Accordingly I [Eliza J. Crisler, Department Patriotic Instructor] had 15,000 circulars printed and distributed this way. The result was far beyond my expectations. I was deluged with inquiries from teachers and superintendents for Flag Salutes, Flag Drills, Programs for Flag and Memorial Day”<sup>194</sup> Clearly, the direct mailing from the State Superintendent was the most effective way to reach teachers and superintendents. In 1910, Professor Robert J. Aley, the new State Superintendent of Public Instruction, provided these words:

The best patriotism is caught, not taught. All the work of the school should be of such character that the pupils get the spirit of patriotism. This spirit should be given frequent opportunities to manifest itself through special programs in commemoration of great men and great deeds. No school can afford to omit such celebrations. The Woman’s Relief Corps is doing

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<sup>193</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Twenty-First Annual Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, Warsaw and Winona, June 14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup>, 1904* (Rockville, IN: The Rockville Tribune Print, 1904), 61.

<sup>194</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Twenty-Second Annual Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, Madison, June 14-16, 1905* (Westville, IN: Westville Indicator Print, 1905), 58.

splendid work by furnishing material for such celebrations and by keeping the duty of patriotism fresh in the minds of the people.<sup>195</sup>

The acknowledgment of the many accomplishments of the WRC in beginning the patriotic education movement as well as the need for the continuous influence is quite apparent. To have the support of the State Superintendent of Public Education over multiple years shows how far patriotic education had come since it briefly dwindled during the Spanish-American War.

After the Spanish-American War, a great many subtopics in patriotic education were brought up for the first time, which suggested that they were possibly the direct result of it. The introduction of patriotic education publications, the growing importance of the flag, the flag salute, fear of immigrants, looking into the quality of textbooks in schools, and the brief acknowledgment of “colored schools” and “mountain schools” came about after the Spanish-American War. While these topics might not appear to necessarily result from the war, patriotic education had just begun when the Spanish-American War broke out so the influences of the war on American society and patriotism greatly influenced the direction of patriotic education, thus making all the various major changes a result of the war’s influence. As mentioned before, the definition of patriotism changed as a result of the Spanish-American War. Prior to the war in 1896, patriotism was defined as “intelligence, prosperity, and permanent peace.”<sup>196</sup> In 1901, after the war, the definition was changed to “Patriotism has been defined as love of country, loyalty to

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<sup>195</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Twenty-Seventh Annual Convention, Department of Indiana Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Terre Haute, Indiana, May 25, 26, and 27, 1910* (n.p., n.d.), 96.

<sup>196</sup> Department of Indiana Woman’s Relief Corps, Committee on Patriotic Teaching, Samantha West Miller, Chairman, Emma Mont McRae, Lafayette, Alice Waugh, Tipton, July 14, 1896, Box 1, Folder 3, Elizabeth Jane Miller Hack Papers, Indiana Historical Society.



its cause.”<sup>197</sup> The new, simpler definition reflects the end of the war and refocusing of goals and opinions.

Central to teaching patriotic education were the publication and distribution of the *Patriotic Primer*, the flag oleograph, and the independence chart. While the publication and distribution of the *Patriotic Primer* began shortly before the Spanish-American War, the full use and importance of the publication appeared during and immediately after the war. The *Patriotic Primer* proved to be the essential source of information for the WRC’s version of patriotism and good citizenship. In 1895, Circular Letter No. 3 from the Office of the Chairman on Patriotic Teaching said that the *Patriotic Primer* and Independence Chart could be purchased from Foster for 25 cents per primer and 30 cents per chart.<sup>198</sup> Even though the WRC purchased the educational materials from Foster, he always claimed that he did not make a profit. Foster apparently put whatever money he had into writing and publishing as a means of support for the WRC.<sup>199</sup>

The *Patriotic Primer* was a symbol of the hopes the members of the Indiana WRC had for patriotic education. They wanted the *Patriotic Primer* and other publications to be a part of every school’s educational materials, but until that was feasible, the Indiana WRC purchased and supplied the primers to teachers.<sup>200</sup> It became essential for corps to

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<sup>197</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Eighteenth Annual Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, Logansport, May 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>, 1901* (Anderson, IN: Herald Print, 1901), 31.

<sup>198</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Thirteenth Annual Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, South Bend, Ind., May 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, 1896* (Greensburg, IN: Willoughby and Donnell, Printers, 1896), 201-202.

<sup>199</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Sixteenth Annual Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, Terre Haute, May 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>, 1899* (Danville, IN: Fred E. Warner, Printer, 1899), 96.

<sup>200</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Thirteenth Annual Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, South Bend, Ind., May 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, 1896* (Greensburg, IN: Willoughby and Donnell, Printers, 1896), 202.



allocate funds to purchase and supply teachers with the primers so the WRC's patriotism could be taught to students.<sup>201</sup> In 1899, there was a growing fear that while 779 primers were distributed, at any moment state educational leaders might not allow *Patriotic Primers* to be distributed to the schools.<sup>202</sup>

A nearly invisible, but important issue surrounding the *Patriotic Primer* regarded the question of whether the book was a textbook or a teaching supplement. In 1899, Wallace Foster described the *Patriotic Primer* as a book, but failed to specify if it was meant to be a textbook for students or a reference guide for teachers. The Office of the Chairman of the Committee on Patriotic Teaching on June 28, 1897, said, "these are not text-books, but, in the hands of a patriotic teacher, they suggest a course of study in good citizenship, far beyond anything now in use in our schools."<sup>203</sup> The Chairman and the rest of the committee clearly viewed the *Patriotic Primer* as a resource for teachers to use in order to teach patriotism and good citizenship, but they were not to be given to students. At the 1895 National Convention, the National Committee on Patriotic Teaching reported that several state institutions recommended using the *Patriotic Primer*.<sup>204</sup> It was never clarified in the records as to whether the primer was used as a textbook by students or as a guide for teachers.

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<sup>201</sup> Woman's Relief Corps, *Journal of the Fifteenth Annual Convention, Woman's Relief Corps, Department of Indiana, Columbus, Ind., 1898* (n.p., n.d.), 89.

<sup>202</sup> Woman's Relief Corps, *Journal of the Sixteenth Annual Convention of the Woman's Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, Terre Haute, May 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>, 1899* (Danville, IN: Fred E. Warner, Printer, 1899), 94.

<sup>203</sup> Woman's Relief Corps, *Journal of the Fifteenth Annual Convention, Woman's Relief Corps, Department of Indiana, Columbus, Ind., 1898* (n.p., n.d.), 153.

<sup>204</sup> Woman's Relief Corps, *Journal of the Fourteenth National Convention of the Woman's Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, St. Paul, Minn., September 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, 1896* (Boston: E.B. Stillings and Co., 1896), 185.

While the *Patriotic Primer* and other publications were part of the foundation of patriotic education, the American flag was also central to teaching patriotism and good citizenship to children across the state. The earliest reference to the importance of the American Flag was in 1891 at the Fourth Annual Convention. Department President Melissa Caylor said, “Let us be active in strengthening this means of loyalty by placing the stars and stripes on every school house in our State. It will create a sentiment in this country, that will save it, by keeping alive the great fact that our institutions cost something; that the Union cost something; that the old flag with all the stars cost something.”<sup>205</sup> The idea of using the flag to strengthen loyalty and patriotism and to act as a reminder of the past became the common outcry when talking about the importance of the flag in relation to children.<sup>206</sup> When patriotic education began, a goal of the WRC was to have a flag floating over each schoolhouse as a relatively simple way to begin to teach patriotism.<sup>207</sup> By 1914, Indiana enacted a state law “obligating the Trustee or

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<sup>205</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Eighth Annual Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Department of Indiana, April 11, 1891* (n.p., n.d.), 52.

<sup>206</sup> In 1904, Eliza J. Crisler said, “This is the one hundred and twenty-seventh birthday and in all these years it has floated over our country a symbol of freedom and protection and led on to victory of the soldiers of the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, the Mexican War, the great Civil War and last of all, those of the Spanish-American War.” To invoke the memory of all those who fell under the flag to serve their country added another level of patriotic teaching. The flag was not just a national emblem, but was the physical manifestation of bloodshed and death in this history of the country. Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Twenty-First Annual Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, Warsaw and Winona, June 14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup>, 1904* (Rockville, IN: The Rockville Tribune Print, 1904), 104.

<sup>207</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Thirteenth Annual Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, South Bend, Ind., May 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, 1896* (Greensburg, IN: Willoughby and Donnell, Printers, 1896), 110, 201.

Commissioners to provide a large flag for each school under their supervision, upon the petition of a majority of the patrons of said school.”<sup>208</sup>

With the use of the flag came the introduction of the flag salute. In the beginning, the flag salute was meant to be “an introductory step and not as the prime object.”<sup>209</sup> This flag salute was known as the Balch Salute, after Colonel Balch who created it.<sup>210</sup> The Balch Salute was more commonly called the American Patriotic Salute because that was what the WRC called it.<sup>211</sup> To fully grasp the importance of the flag salute one can look at the circular sent in 1897 by Samantha West Miller, the Chairman of the Patriotic Teaching Committee. She wrote, “You may also instruct your committee to impress upon the teachers and patrons alike that the flag salute is not mere form, it is the first step in a

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<sup>208</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Thirty-First Annual Convention, Department of Indiana Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Indianapolis, IN, May 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>, 1914* (n.p., n.d.), 82.

<sup>209</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Thirteenth Annual Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, South Bend, Ind., May 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, 1896* (Greensburg, IN: Willoughby and Donnell, Printers, 1896), 201.

<sup>210</sup> When Balch died in 1894, Wallace Foster and the WRC continued with his patriotic education work, specifically the flag salute and the publication and adaptation of his *Patriotic Primer*. While Balch wrote the *Patriotic Primer*, in its original form, the version that the WRC used was edited and rewritten by Foster. While these organizations continued with Balch’s work, his belief that “voluntarism was essential to prevent the flag salute and other patriotic activities from becoming rote or mechanical” did not continue. Ellis, *To the Flag*, 53.

<sup>211</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Sixteenth Annual Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, Terre Haute, May 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>, 1899* (Danville, IN: Fred E. Warner, Printer, 1899), 96, 98-99. In 1904, the Indiana WRC provided the exact history of the flag salute. The Indiana WRC stated “The American Patriotic Flag Salute to the flag, commonly called the Balch Salute, was introduced by the late Col. Geo. T. Balch, Auditor of the Board of Education, New York City, in the Children’s Aid Society of New York in 1889 and by the Woman’s Relief Corps in the public schools in 1893.” Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Twenty-First Annual Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, Warsaw and Winona, June 14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup>, 1904* (Rockville, IN: The Rockville Tribune Print, 1904), 93. The popularity of the Balch salute as well as his primer grew because of the “proselytizing work of the GAR and especially the WRC, and ironically, very little to those who actually created the salutes.” The WRC and GAR were such large and influential organizations that once they voiced their support for the salute that it was quickly adopted by many across the country. Ellis, *To the Flag*, 56.

stupendous plan for elevating the standard of American citizenship.”<sup>212</sup> This area of patriotic education in Indiana highlights conflicts between the WRC and the GAR in regards to the flag salute and patriotic education in general. A strong disagreement arose in 1899 regarding the flag salute. The Woman’s Relief Corps supported and promoted the American Patriotic Salute and believed that “the introduction of any other form of salute to the flag would be confusing, and would undo much of the work that has been accomplished by the Woman’s Relief Corps.”<sup>213</sup> On the other side of the argument were Comrade Allen C. Bakewell, “special aide to the Commander-in-Chief, in charge of Military Instruction in the public schools,” and the majority of the GAR members who wanted to institute the Youth’s Companion Salute in schools as a replacement for the American Patriotic Salute.<sup>214</sup> In 1904 it was reported that

in all the ten years where the salute has been in use there has been no interference or changes made or asked for by the Woman’s Relief Corps from its original form, wording, gestures and inspiration. Ninety percent of the teachers have adopted the original salute without amendment and at least six million children in our public schools have been using it in the opening exercises of the school by classes, collectively and in unison.<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>212</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Fifteenth Annual Convention, Woman’s Relief Corps, Department of Indiana, Columbus, Ind., 1898* (n.p., n.d.), 154.

<sup>213</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Sixteenth Annual Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, Terre Haute, May 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>, 1899* (Danville, IN: Fred E. Warner, Printer, 1899), 99.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid.; Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Nineteenth Annual Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, Indianapolis, May 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, 1902* (Richmond, IN: Nicholson Printing and Mfg. Co., 1902), 98. While the GAR officially endorsed the flag salute in 1899, the organization recommended two different salutes. The lower grades were to use the Balch salute while the upper grades were to use the Bellamy pledge. Ellis, *To the Flag*, 55-56.

<sup>215</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Twenty-First Annual Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, Warsaw and Winona, June 14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup>, 1904* (Rockville, IN: The Rockville Tribune Print, 1904), 93.

With such a great success rate in using the original salute in the classrooms and the number of students saying the original, it seemed that there was no need to change the salute. While this maybe true, Richard Ellis argues in *To the Flag* that

In 1895, the WRC officially endorsed the use of Balch's flag salute, though to placate others who favored Bellamy's pledge its Committee on Flag Salutes encouraged use of all patriotic salutes, including Bellamy's. When the American Flag Manufacturing Company produced a short booklet around the same time entitled, *Ritual for Teaching Patriotism in the Public School*, it included ceremonies using both Bellamy and Balch Salutes. One hundred thousand copies were given to the WRC Committee on Patriotic Teaching for distribution in the public schools.<sup>216</sup>

While the WRC only wanted to make everyone happy, by encouraging the use of all patriotic salutes and distributing booklets with both ceremonies, the organization helped create the situation. That same year at the annual convention, it was resolved that those who used a bastardized version of the American Patriotic Salute were required to return to using the original and that those in the WRC and GAR who drifted away from the original should not do so again.<sup>217</sup>

This heated debate was not just between the GAR and WRC. Over many years it became obvious that Balch's salute and recitation and Bellamy's salute and pledge were in competition with each other. Cecilia O'Leary argues that Balch and Bellamy "articulated radically different versions of American society, Balch standing for competitive individualism, while Bellamy promoted the vision of a social citizenry."<sup>218</sup> The Balch Salute or The American Patriotic Salute was fairly simple. When giving the salute, "students touched first their foreheads, then their hearts, reciting together 'We give our Heads! – and our Hearts! – to God! And Our Country!' Then, apparently with

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<sup>216</sup> Ellis, *To the Flag*, 55.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid.

<sup>218</sup> O'Leary, *To Die For*, 192.

their right arms out stretched and slightly elevated, palm down, in the direction of the flag, they completed the salute: ‘One Country! One Language! One Flag!’”<sup>219</sup> The specificity of “One Language” is interesting because it implies that nationalism is synonymous with English. The “One Country! One Language! One Flag!” is aimed at the fears of immigration and the need for a unified country in every way. Bellamy’s salute was very different from Balch’s partly because Bellamy believed that Balch’s was “too juvenile,” that the words were “constricting,” and that the salute should be more dignified.<sup>220</sup> In 1892 Bellamy wrote his first version of The Pledge: “I pledge allegiance to my Flag and to the Republic for which it stands – one Nation indivisible with Liberty and Justice for all.”<sup>221</sup> Bellamy’s pledge also had a salute that first debuted at the Columbia Day Ceremony on September 8, 1892. The salute was:

At the principal’s direction, the students of the school, ‘in ordered ranks, hands to the side,’ were then to face the flag. In unison the students were then to give the military salute to the flag – ‘right hand lifted, palm downward, to align [sic] with the forehead, and close to it.’ Still saluting the students were then slowly to recite Bellamy’s Pledge of Allegiance. And at the word ‘to my Flag,’ . . . the students were to ‘gracefully’ extend their right arm, ‘palm upward, toward the Flag.’ Upon completion of the ‘affirmation’ all hands were to ‘immediately drop to the side’<sup>222</sup>

One can see that there is a significant difference between the salutes and recitations that caused part of the confusion and disagreement between the WRC and GAR. Balch’s salute and the words that went with the salute were very simple and clearly easier for younger children to do. On the other hand, Bellamy’s Pledge and salute was more complicated. Students did both salutes, but ultimately the Bellamy salute and Pledge

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<sup>219</sup> Guenter, *The American Flag, 1777*, 117. Guenter asserts that this salute was changed in 1942 because of the similarity to the Nazi salute. Ibid.

<sup>220</sup> Jones and Meyer, *The Pledge* 71.

<sup>221</sup> Ellis, *To the Flag*, 1-2.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid., 19-20.

became part of the National Flag Code, the Federal flag regulations for displaying the American flag.<sup>223</sup>

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<sup>223</sup> Guenter, *The American Flag, 1777-1924*, 131-132.





**Figure 4.** Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, 8<sup>th</sup> Division, photographer Frances Benjamin, circa, 1899. The children in this picture are doing the Balch salute as they say, “We give our Heads! – and our Hearts! – to God! And Our Country!” Frances Benjamin Johnston, photographer. [*Pledge of allegiance to the flag, 8th Division*]. [?, 1899] Courtesy of the Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2001703605>.





**Figure 5.** Ralph Amdursky, photographer, Rochester, New York, Earl Babcock's School Day Begins with the Salute to the Flag, March 1943. The children above are saying the Pledge and giving the Bellamy salute. It is clear that this is the Bellamy salute and not the Balch because the children have their arms raised with the palms facing upward rather than downward. Ralph Amdursky, photographer. Rochester, New York. Earl Babcock's school day begins with the salute to the flag. March, 1943. Courtesy of the Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/item/owi2001023079/PP>.

The WRC and GAR argued about more than the flag salute. On a national and state level, the GAR either interfered with the work done by the WRC or stood back and let the women do all the work. In 1905, Wallace Foster addressed the Indiana WRC annual convention not as he had every other year, but as the Chairman of Committee in Charge of Military Instruction and Patriotic Teaching in the Public Schools, Department of Indiana, Grand Army of the Republic.<sup>224</sup> Foster pointed out that Indiana GAR members allowed Indiana WRC members to do all the work regarding patriotic teaching, but then got upset when the women received overt praise for their work.<sup>225</sup> The GAR felt that the WRC was not supposed to outshine the men. The work the women did was essential to both groups and so popular with the public, there was no possible way for them to hide in the shadows.<sup>226</sup>

There were several less significant areas of patriotic education that surfaced after the Spanish-American War that were clearly influenced by the changing opinions, beliefs, and daily life of the era. Educating the children of immigrants in American patriotism and good citizenship had begun just prior to the Spanish-American War, but did not fully develop until after the war.<sup>227</sup> Women of the WRC believed that immigrants were prejudiced against the government and the core beliefs of the country and the only way to ensure that they would not do any harm to the country was to Americanize the

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<sup>224</sup> Woman's Relief Corps, *Journal of the Twenty-Second Annual Convention of the Woman's Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, Madison, June 14-16, 1905* (Westville, IN: Westville Indicator Print, 1905), 71-72.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid., 71-73.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid.

<sup>227</sup> Woman's Relief Corps, *Journal of the Thirteenth Annual Convention of the Woman's Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, South Bend, Ind., May 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, 1896* (Greensburg, IN: Willoughby and Donnell, Printers, 1896), 92.

children as soon as they entered school.<sup>228</sup> From the Spanish-American War up to World War I, there was a perceived need to educate immigrants about American patriotism, loyalty, citizenship, and honor as a means to protect the country from the undesirable ideas and beliefs.<sup>229</sup> The IWRC as well as Wallace Foster sounded as if they were more concerned about the disruption to daily life they thought that immigrants would bring rather than concerned with helping them assimilate into American culture while keeping some remnants of their native cultures.<sup>230</sup> Some in the WRC viewed immigrants as sinful and degrading to the Republic.<sup>231</sup> There was also fear of immigrants' loyalty to the flags of their homelands and not learning English or the customs, laws and government of the United States.<sup>232</sup>

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<sup>228</sup> Woman's Relief Corps, *Journal of the Nineteenth Annual Convention of the Woman's Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, Indianapolis, May 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, 1902* (Richmond, IN: Nicholson Printing and Mfg. Co., 1902), 82.

<sup>229</sup> In 1904 Wallace Foster spoke at the WRC meeting and said, "The little foreigner on reaching our country should first be instructed in the pure American language and to speak and understand it, as well as our customs, laws, and the meaning of one country, one language, one flag and the allegiance they owe to them. They should be taught the true meaning of patriotic citizenship in all that will benefit them and their future prosperity and happiness." Woman's Relief Corps, *Journal of the Twenty-First Annual Convention of the Woman's Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, Warsaw and Winona, June 14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup>, 1904* (Rockville, IN: The Rockville Tribune Print, 1904), 75; Woman's Relief Corps, *Journal of the Twenty-Second Annual Convention of the Woman's Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, Madison, June 14-16, 1905* (Westville, IN: Westville Indicator Print, 1905), 78-79; Woman's Relief Corps, *Journal of the Twenty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Woman's Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, Fort Wayne, May 22-24, 1907* (Tipton, IN: Press of the Advocate, 1907), 34; Woman's Relief Corps, *Journal of the Twenty-Eighth Annual Convention, Department of Indiana Woman's Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Richmond, IN, May 17, 18, and 19, 1911* (N.P., N.D.), 156.

<sup>230</sup> Woman's Relief Corps, *Journal of the Thirty-Fifth Annual Convention, Department of Indiana Woman's Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Logansport, Indiana, June 5, 6, and 7, 1918* (N.P., N.D.), 118.

<sup>231</sup> Woman's Relief Corps, *Journal of the Twenty-First Annual Convention of the Woman's Relief Corps Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, Warsaw and Winona, June 14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup>, 1904* (Rockville, IN: The Rockville Tribune Print, 1904), 75.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid.; Woman's Relief Corps, *Journal of the Twenty-Eighth Annual Convention Department of Indiana Woman's Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Richmond, Indiana, May 17, 18, and 19, 1911* (N.P., N.D.), 156.

In 1917, the Woman's Relief Corps was asked to participate in the "American First" campaign run by the Bureau of Education of the U.S. Department of the Interior. The Bureau "solicits the co-operation of women's organizations in its endeavor to teach foreign immigrants American principles. Corps members are urged to induce non-English speaking immigrants to attend night schools, where there are such, or to organize classes where the English language may be taught. It is desired to eliminate 'hyphenism' [sic] as a factor in American citizenship."<sup>233</sup> It is unclear if the WRC followed through on this request, but considering how focused the WRC was on Americanizing immigrants one can deduce that it probably did.

Another priority of the Woman's Relief Corps to look into the quality of history textbooks. Members agreed that standards needed to be met to ensure that students learned the "proper" history of the United States. At the fifteenth annual convention in 1898, Mary D. Travis, Department President, said the GAR was opposed to some of the history books in the schools because those books did not teach "patriotism and love of Country to our children, nor even truthfully record the important facts of the war for the Union."<sup>234</sup> The WRC believed that by teaching patriotism in the classroom and outside it that the objectionable histories such as the UDC version of the Civil War could be counteracted.<sup>235</sup> The GAR and the WRC wanted schools to use history textbooks that taught the "right" history of the Civil War. This did not necessarily mean the historically accurate history of the Civil War, but the Northern history of the war as they experienced

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<sup>233</sup> Woman's Relief Corps, *Journal of the Thirty-Fifth Annual Convention, Department of Indiana Woman's Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Logansport, Indiana, June 5, 6, and 7, 1918* (N.P., N.D.), 118.

<sup>234</sup> Woman's Relief Corps, *Journal of the Fifteenth Annual Convention, Woman's Relief Corps, Department of Indiana, Columbus, Ind., 1898* (N.P., N.D.), 34.

<sup>235</sup> Woman's Relief Corps, *Journal of the Fifteenth Annual Convention, Woman's Relief Corps, Department of Indiana, Columbus, Ind., 1898* (N.P., N.D.), 34.

and believed it happened. This continued divide was a result of differing ideologies that remained from the Civil War.

In 1911 there seemed to be a consensus that “our histories are not calculated to stimulate much patriotism.”<sup>236</sup> The desire to replace textbooks met the reality that replacing them was a slow, time-consuming battle that involved not only school officials, but also publishing companies.<sup>237</sup> In 1913, after working for some time with school officials on the city and state levels, Edna Pauley asked, “Will it be possible for us to have a book completed and adopted by our public school in Indiana.”<sup>238</sup> The response was yes to the possibility of adopting new textbooks in the schools.<sup>239</sup> While the answer was vague, it prompted hope in the women of the Indiana WRC that their fight for new textbooks was worthwhile. The answer allowed for hope for new textbooks, but there was not a specified date to say when new books would be available or what that cost would be.

Possibly the biggest hurdle in terms of getting new textbooks in Indiana as well as all the other states was the Commissioner of Education of the United States. In 1912, the Department Patriotic Instructor Flora Millspaugh reported:

I called at the Office of State Superintendent of Public Instruction for information upon different versions of the history of the Civil War, recorded in the authorized text-books of the public schools, both North and South, and was told that the Commissioner of Education of the United States, who is a Southern man, and his subordinate committees were

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<sup>236</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Twenty-Eighth Annual Convention, Department of Indiana Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Richmond, IN, May 17, 18, and 19, 1911* (N.P., N.D.), 85.

<sup>237</sup> Ibid.

<sup>238</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Thirtieth Annual Convention, Department of Indiana Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Indianapolis, IN, May 21, 22, and 23, 1913* (N.P., N.D.), 39, 118.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid.

exerting an effort to obliterate sectional animosity in behalf of a better and united public school system.<sup>240</sup>

It would appear that despite a Southern government official to unify Civil War history, in 1913 the North and South still wanted to teach separate versions of the Civil War, each believing that theirs was the accurate account. The idea that the Commissioner of Education of the United States, Dr. Philander P. Claxton, wanted to remove “sectional animosity” from Civil War history would have been horrifying for the women of the WRC.<sup>241</sup> Rather than finding an ally in their move to get new textbooks that told the history of the Civil War from a northern perspective it appears they found that this Southern man wanted to make peace.

Noticeably absent from the discussion of patriotic teaching year after year were discussions regarding African American schools, schools in the South, and “mountain schools.” Little is recorded and talked about in terms of these groups because they were neglected by the WRC.

There was never a clear discussion about African American schools. There was one interaction with an African American school in 1916 that was recorded in the annual convention record. In 1916, a flag was presented to Clark High School, which was

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<sup>240</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Twenty-Ninth Annual Convention, Department of Indiana Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, South Bend, Indiana, May 21, 22, and 23, 1912* (Warsaw, Indiana: Reub, Williams and Sons Printers and Publishers, N.D.), 74.

<sup>241</sup> Dr. Philander P. Claxton was born in Bedford County, Tennessee, on September 28, 1862, and he was appointed Commissioner on July 1, 1911. Specifics are not given as to his feelings toward the issues of the textbooks in the North versus the South, but it was recorded that he was concerned with inaugurating specialized studies like “home gardening, industrial education, homemaking and domestic education, etc.” Henry Ridgeway, “The National Bureau of Education,” in *The New Age Magazine* 23, no. 3 (September, 1915), 128-129.

specifically noted as “colored” in the record.<sup>242</sup> Rather than speaking to the students as if they were patriotic and proud of the country, Alice E. Waugh, the Department Patriotic Instructor, demeaned the students. Waugh asked, “Do you think of what this country has done for you; do you think of what the Civil War Veterans have brought to you?”<sup>243</sup> Waugh assumed that the students were not patriotic. To make this belief clear she said, “to inherit this kind of a country, to build up this country you must be noble, upright, law abiding citizens – you must be what we call today the patriots of civil righteousness, the patriots of peace.”<sup>244</sup> Waugh zealously pushed racial tensions even further when she said, “Another thing I want to say to you is that not more than one thousand boys who graduated are in the penitentiaries or penal institutions – in the correctional institutions. Another thing, a very essential thing to self-respect is cleanliness.”<sup>245</sup> One can assume that this was a punitive speech for those students who listened to it. There is a sense of racial superiority that might have been common in the 1910s.

Since the Indiana WRC sent volumes of material to Hawaii and Puerto Rico, it seems natural that they also would have put a great deal of time and effort into introducing patriotic education into the Southern states, but the South was only discussed twice in all the records that were studied. In 1904, Eliza J. Crisler reported, “[Last year, 1903] five hundred primers and two hundred and fifty oleographs were sent to the

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<sup>242</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Thirty-Third Annual Convention, Department of Indiana Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Evansville, Indiana, May 9, 10, and 11, 1916* (n.p., n.d.), 36.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid., 37.



schools in the South.”<sup>246</sup> There is no information provided to say if someone requested these materials or to show where they were sent. It is strange that there was only one mention of sending patriotic education materials to the South in all the records that were available.

The year 1913 was the only other year that the South was discussed in regards to patriotic education. Form President Mrs. McBride stated, “I have heard a few who have objected to the work that the Woman’s Relief Corps is taking up among the mountain people. I have made two trips South myself, and while there looked into the matter just a bit.”<sup>247</sup> McBride implied that there have been discussions about schools in the South, but no evidence outside of this quote could be found. It is interesting that she said she was going to visit the “mountain people.” It is safe to assume she referred to those who live in Appalachia and she made an effort to point out how poor these schools were and how uneducated the people of the mountains were.<sup>248</sup> Mrs. McBride told the story of a woman she came across in her travels, an “old maid” who worked for twenty years in order to save enough money to travel a matter of miles to go to school.<sup>249</sup> While in school she was taught patriotism through songs and the flag, and when she left the school she returned home and established her own school where she could teach academic courses as well as patriotism.<sup>250</sup> It is important to note that when the “mountain people” were taught WRC

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<sup>246</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Twenty-Second Annual Convention of the Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, Warsaw and Winona, June 14-16, 1904* (Rockville, IN: The Rockville Tribune Print, 1904), 104.

<sup>247</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Thirtieth Annual Convention, Department of Indiana Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Indianapolis, IN, May 21, 22, and 23, 1913* (N.P., N.D.), 119.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid.



patriotism, the students absorbed it and proceeded to spread that knowledge to other mountain communities.<sup>251</sup>

The last and possibly most surprising thing that McBride said about her trip was, “I met veterans among those Tennessee Mountains who told me they served four years under Old Glory and never had seen it. Had never seen a flag until they were mustered out of service.”<sup>252</sup> If Civil War soldiers had never seen the flag they had fought under until they left the service, it should not be all that surprising that patriotic education barely made progress in the “mountain schools.” The people’s isolation uniquely challenged the WRC.

By 1915, World War I had begun in Europe and while the United States was not directly involved, there were clear shifts in the views and discussions of the women in the Indiana WRC in regards to patriotism and patriotic education. Alice E. Waugh, the Department Patriotic Instructor, sent out circular letter No. 1 on February 9, 1915, stating, “Patriotism means peace and good citizenship.”<sup>253</sup> Adding peace to the definition of patriotism is significant. Waugh said in her report, “Real patriotism, I want to repeat, is good citizenship, and the principles taught by our Great Teacher, that of peace and good will to men.”<sup>254</sup> Waugh had begun to fear the possibility of the United States entering the

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<sup>251</sup> Ibid. Mrs. McBride does mention that the National Convention gave away three scholarships to mountain schools. What these scholarships entailed remains unknown. *Woman’s Relief Corps, Journal of the Thirtieth Annual Convention, Department of Indiana Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Indianapolis, IN, May 21, 22, and 23, 1913* (n.p., n.d.), 120.

<sup>252</sup> *Woman’s Relief Corps, Journal of the Thirtieth Annual Convention, Department of Indiana Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Indianapolis, IN, May 21, 22, and 23, 1913* (n.p., n.d.), 120.

<sup>253</sup> *Woman’s Relief Corps, Journal of the Thirty-Second Annual Convention, Department of Indiana Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Marion, Indiana, May 26, 27, and 28, 1915* (n.p., n.d.), 92.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid., 91.

war. Upon US entry into World War I, patriotism was once again redefined. In August 1917, a Circular Letter read, “A patriotism that is more than sentiment – that is associated with no creed or party, but may be summed up in the one word ‘Service.’ Universal service for humanity.”<sup>255</sup>

It was no secret that the United States took an isolationist stance towards World War I. Capt. Foster, a Civil War veteran, said, “I don’t want to see our boys go to war again. They are too precious. They are too happy, and I want to state here that we don’t want any war, we are doing good.”<sup>256</sup> The next year Waugh said, “We need only to study the history of these war-faring nations to learn the cause of it all, so it behooves us to wisely consider the ways and means to preserve the honor and peace of our own Country, to prevent such great calamities coming to us.”<sup>257</sup>

Patriotic education began to take on Foster’s tone of isolationism and how to bring about peace without entering the war. In a circular letter dated September 5, 1915, Waugh said, “Let us educate our boys and girls in the arts of peace, instead of war. Let us teach them to obey and uphold the laws of our country.”<sup>258</sup> Attempting to teach students

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<sup>255</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Thirty-Fifth Annual Convention, Department of Indiana Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Logansport, Indiana, June 5, 6, and 7, 1918* (n.p., n.d.), 117.

<sup>256</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Thirty-Second Annual Convention, Department of Indiana Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Marion, Indiana, May 26, 27, and 28, 1915* (n.p., n.d.), 31.

<sup>257</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Thirty-Third Annual Convention, Department of Indiana Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Evansville, Indiana, May 9, 10, and 11, 1916* (n.p., n.d.), 28.

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*, 87. In 1915, Mrs. Millspaugh presented a flag to Marion High School when she said, “We are now passing through another cycle of time and the question arises what phase of character will be most particularly developed in our future citizenship. Will it be one of high moral and practical education, or will it be that of muscle and brawn.” Many of the young men in the audience would fight in WWI thus those future citizens’ characters would be that of “muscle and brawn.” The younger students who would not see action might still develop the same mindset as their older counterparts, but they would still be taught morals and practical education. Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Thirty-Second Annual Convention, Department of Indiana*

ways to bring about peace through the study of obedience, laws, good citizenship, reverence, and justice became common practice for the Woman's Relief Corps before the war.<sup>259</sup>

Upon the United States' entry into World War I in April 1917, however, the Indiana WRC's focus on patriotic education drastically changed. Just as during and after the Spanish-American War, the changes appeared almost immediately after the U.S. began to fight. The tools of patriotic education remained much the same as they had been before the war. By May 1917, Department Patriotic Instructor Mollie L. Bradley reported that \$1,043.89 had been expended on patriotic work and patriotic teaching.<sup>260</sup> It was noted by Department President Genevive Gray Frantz that the amount spent on patriotic teaching and patriotism was because "patriotism was running high."<sup>261</sup> The war also prompted other organizations to begin to pick up the work of patriotic education. The IWRC fully supported this because they thought it was important during a time of war to teach patriotism to children. The National President Ida K. Martin told the Indiana WRC, "We cannot teach too much patriotism to the youth, we cannot teach people to be too patriotic."<sup>262</sup> The women of the WRC rode this high tide. According to circular letter no. 1 August 28, 1917, "Twenty-three and a half million persons, or 24 percent of our county's

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*Woman's Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Marion, Indiana, May 26, 27, and 28, 1915 (n.p., n.d.), 28-29.*

<sup>259</sup> *Woman's Relief Corps, Journal of the Thirty-Third Annual Convention, Department of Indiana Woman's Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Evansville, Indiana, May 9, 10, and 11, 1916 (n.p., n.d.), 87.*

<sup>260</sup> *Woman's Relief Corps, Journal of the Thirty-Fourth Annual Convention, Department of Indiana Woman's Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Indianapolis, Indiana, May 9, 10, and 11, 1917 (n.p., n.d.), 76.*

<sup>261</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>262</sup> *Woman's Relief Corps, Journal of the Thirty-Fourth Annual Convention, Department of Indiana Woman's Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Indianapolis, Indiana, May 9, 10, and 11, 1917 (n.p., n.d.), 115.*

population are going to school. One of the objects of education is efficient citizenship. One of the functions of good citizenship is patriotism. One of the symbols of patriotism is the United States Flag. Place a National Flag over every Public School building in Indiana.”<sup>263</sup> The First World War forced the Woman’s Relief Corps of Indiana to clearly verbalize how citizenship, patriotism, the flag, and schools depended upon one another. Without one, the others would not work effectively in teaching patriotism and living a patriotic life as a good citizen.

Heavy demands were brought upon women during WWI. At the 1918 convention, Maria L. Schlater said, “In Red Cross work, in the Council of Defense, and in every patriotic movement, in field, in factory, and in shops broad an assertion [sic] when I say she will be as great a factor in the winning of this war as the men behind the gun. It has been generally conceded that man is woman’s superior, but that time is long past, and if ever woman was proving it a fallacy, it is today.”<sup>264</sup> Women were essential to the war effort and as a result they could enter fields that had never been open to them before allowing for new freedoms and experiences. The women of the Indiana WRC became involved in writing letters to the soldiers in France as well as being involved with the YWCA, YMCA, War Liberty, French Relief Funds, and Liberty Bonds.<sup>265</sup>

While patriotism abounded, there was a growing concern about the use of the American flag. It would seem that the WRC would be overjoyed to see how important the American flag had become. The country was united under the flag and the flag was used

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<sup>263</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Thirty-Fifth Annual Convention, Department of Indiana Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Logansport, Indiana, June 5, 6, and 7, 1918* (n.p., n.d.), 118.

<sup>264</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Thirty-Fifth Annual Convention, Department of Indiana Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Logansport, Indiana, June 5, 6, and 7, 1918* (n.p., n.d.), 35.

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*, 115, 119.

to rally support. There did not seem to be any intent to abuse the flag or make it too common. The women of the WRC should have seen the prominence of the flag as the end result of all their patriotic education work. After all, their intention was to have the flag honored from a very early age and the flag was the first way children were taught how to be patriotic and to be good citizens so it would seem that this was a physical manifestation of the success of the patriotic education movement.

## Conclusion

The end of the Civil War led to the founding of the GAR and the WRC, both prominent organizations with enough power and influence to institute holidays and modes of education of lasting effect in the years to come. Memorial Day was the direct result of the Civil War, providing the earliest means of patriotic education. Working alongside the Woman's Relief Corps, children were taught about the sacrifices Union veterans had made for them; laying flowers on the graves provided a physical link to the need to protect memory of the Civil War and emphasized an urgent need to create patriotic and nationalist citizens. School primers were also a result of the Civil War. It was not enough for parents to teach children how to be patriotic; nor was it sufficient for patriotism to be promoted only on national holidays. By supporting the production and printing of patriotic primers, the Woman's Relief Corps was ensuring that children were receiving an approved curriculum every day. Teaching children patriotism from an early age was thought to prevent any future civil wars in the United States.

The WRC used the American flag, the Pledge of Allegiance, the American's Creed, school primers and holidays, such as Memorial Day and Flag Day, to teach patriotism. The Civil War, Spanish-American War, and World War I each played significant roles in the development and changes of the WRC's patriotic education. The WRC and GAR latched onto each of the above as a means to teach children the importance of their organizations' versions of nationalism and love of one's country.

While a generation had been taught patriotism and good citizenship, the numbers of war veterans and WRC members dwindled. In 1918, Maria L. Schlater said, "When the survivors of this present war come marching home with our Flag still unsullied, we

must pledge ourselves anew in our labor of love, and be as loyal to the boys in Brown as we have been to the boys in Blue.”<sup>266</sup> The WRC refocused on the newer veterans, ensuring that the organization survived and continued its work. Pledging their support to the veterans of WWI was not enough. The women of the WRC “must fill up our ranks with younger women – the older ones are fast slipping away, and their places must be filled, greater interest and zeal should be the slogan of every member of our beloved Order.”<sup>267</sup> This project primarily deals with the aftermath of the Civil War and the era of the Spanish-American War and World War I is not the primary focus.

After World War I, the WRC’s patriotic education program was solidified. The women of the Woman’s Relief Corps had not been content after the Civil War to merely take care of veterans and their families. Instead, they fought for the northern memory of the Civil War and redefined how patriotism was viewed and used. Gary Nash, Charlotte Crabtree, and Ross E. Dunn argued that “the past we choose to remember defines in large measure our national character, transmits the values and self-images we hold dear, and preserves the events, glorious and shameful.”<sup>268</sup> This is true of the WRC and the GAR. The GAR and WRC found a way to memorialize the Union version of the Civil War and by teaching it to generations of children both organizations in essence chose which past was to be remembered. Nash, Crabtree, and Dunn also argued that people “require a usable past because historical memory is a key to self-identity.”<sup>269</sup> This “self-identity” was secured by the WRC because the organization made sure that only the WRC’s

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<sup>266</sup> Woman’s Relief Corps, *Journal of the Thirty-Fifth Annual Convention, Department of Indiana Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Logansport, Indiana, June 5, 6, and 7, 1918* (n.p., n.d.), 35.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid.

<sup>268</sup> Gary B. Nash, Charlotte Crabtree, and Ross E. Dunn, *History on Trial: Culture Wars and the Teaching of the Past* (New York: Vintage Books, 2000), xxi.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid., 8.

patriotism was taught along with the Northern version of the Civil War to students across the North. In a similar way Bankston argued, “public schools became the institutionalized temples of American civil faith.”<sup>270</sup> If the public schools were the temples of American civil faith then it was the continued responsibility of the WRC to bring patriotic education to each one.

The Woman’s Relief Corps successfully did so long after the members of the GAR died. The patriotic education program grew in influence and success over several decades and America’s youth became patriotic citizens who protected the memory of the Civil War and kept the United States united throughout many trying periods. The Woman’s Relief Corps did not end with World War I, but continued as an organization and continued to be involved with patriotic education for decades to follow.<sup>271</sup>

Today the Woman’s Relief Corps still exists. On September 7, 1962, the WRC was incorporated by Public Act of the 87<sup>th</sup> Congress.<sup>272</sup> The current mission is broken into three parts. Part one is “to perpetuate the memory of the Grand Army of the Republic and its heroic dead; to assist in every practicable way in preserving and making available for research, documents and records pertaining to the GAR and its members.”<sup>273</sup> The second part of the mission is “to assist such Veterans of all wars of the United States of America as need our help and protection, to extend needful aid to their widows and

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<sup>270</sup> Bankston, *Public Education America’s Civil Religion*, 40.

<sup>271</sup> WRC National Woman's Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Inc, "WRC National Woman's Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Inc." <http://suvchw.org/WRC/index.htm> (accessed April 9, 2016).

<sup>272</sup> National Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Inc., “The National Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic,” [www.suvchw.org/WRC/index.htm](http://www.suvchw.org/WRC/index.htm) (accessed June 10, 2016).

<sup>273</sup> National Woman’s Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, Inc., “Mission,” [www.suvchw.org/WRC/mission.htm](http://www.suvchw.org/WRC/mission.htm) (accessed June 10, 2016).



orphans, and to assure them of sympathy and friends.”<sup>274</sup> The final part of the mission is “to maintain true allegiance to the United States of America; inculcate lessons of patriotism and love of country among our children and in the communities in which we live; and encourage the spread of universal liberty and equal rights of all.”<sup>275</sup> While the mission has been modernized it reflects the original mission written in 1883. Today the WRC is a nonprofit organization and there are application available online to apply to become a member.

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<sup>274</sup> Ibid.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid.

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**Curriculum Vitae**  
**Stephanie Marie Schulze**

**Education**

**Indiana University - Purdue University Indianapolis**

Master of Arts, History, Concentration in Public History, August 2016

**Loras College**, *Magna Cum Laude*, Bachelor of Arts – History; Minors: Archaeology and Culture Heritage Management, Ancient Greek and Roman Studies, and International Studies, May 2013

**Professional Experience**

Indiana Medical History Museum, Graduate Intern, August 2015 – May 2016

Indiana Historical Society, Press Intern, August 2014 – July 2015

Indiana Historical Society, Exhibition Intern, August 2013 – May 2014

National Hellenic Museum, Collections Intern, June 2012 – August 2012

Center for Dubuque History and Loras College Archives, Volunteer Intern, Spring 2010 – Spring 2013

Center for Dubuque History and Loras College Archives, Grant Research Assistant, Spring 2012

Galena History Museum, Intern, Fall 2011

Mount Prospect Historical Society, Summer Intern, Summer 2009

**Awards and Honors**

Phi Alpha Theta, National History Honor Society – March 2016

Service Learning Assistant Scholarship, IUPUI – Fall 2015

Professor Joan S. Skurnowicz Endowed Scholarship, 2013 – 2014

Provost Top 20 in Loras College Graduating Class, 2013

Presented to the Board of Regents of Loras College ASIANetwork and Freeman Fellowship Research, 2013

Delta Epsilon Sigma, Catholic University Honors Society, Fall 2012 – Present

Loras College Deans List, Fall 2009 – Spring 2013

Loras College Merit Award, 2009-2013

Loras College Catholic School Grant, 2009-2013

**Professional Affiliations**

Organization of American Historians, 2015 – Present

National Council on Public History, 2014 – Present

American Historical Association, 2014 – Present

American Association for State and Local History, 2015 – Present