

“All Quiet on the Muscatatuck”: Finding Information in Rural Indiana during the Civil War

Emily Lyon

On July 14th, 1863, a spy was captured and questioned in Vernon, Indiana, or so said gossip about town. A young woman, Martha E. Hutchings, wrote in her journal, “a spy was brought in this morning, or a man suspected to be one, and it was thought it was him that raised this false rumor. He acknowledged that he belonged to Morgan’s rear guard.”¹ The false rumor the spy had spread was about the return of General Morgan to the area. General Morgan, a Confederate, had ridden through Vernon in what newspapers would later call Morgan’s Raid—a pillaging trip led by the general through southern Indiana between July 11th and July 26th of 1863.² Fear and suspicion plagued those in Vernon, and those statewide. A reporter in Indianapolis wrote on July 13th, “an immense number of cavalry has been improvised within the past two days...men are pouring in, riding their own horses, and carrying their own weapons.”³ Morgan invaded, and thousands of troops were raised in response.⁴ On July 12th, Martha declared, in a worry-filled entry, “we owed all we had to [the Home Guard] for had it not been for them we should have had nothing, the rebels would have destroyed all.”⁵ Martha did more than report just the events of July 12th and the incident with the spy: she catalogued almost every day from July 1863 and provided insight into how one collected information as a woman in small town Indiana during the Civil War.

¹ Correspondence and Journal of Mrs. Martha E. Hutchings Griffith, 1863-1881, Griffith Manuscripts, Lilly Library Manuscript Collections, Indiana University. July 14, 1863.

² Ibid.

³ *Dawson’s Daily Times and Union*, “The Invasion of Indiana,” July 13, 1863.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Journal of Mrs. Martha E. Hutchings Griffith, July 12, 1863.

Martha had to rely on both public and private forms of correspondence, as well as written and oral forms of communication, to stay informed. She could look to newspapers, letters, rumors, and interpersonal interactions to learn new information. More often than not, she relied on personal contacts and oral information. These sources affected her perceptions of the war in a way that was distinct from that of her male counterparts and urban counterparts. Men, directly involved in the war effort, were much more likely to discuss war and politics than women.⁶ Those in large cities, especially those in key locations, had a constant stream of information from the presses and from individuals from which to draw conclusions.⁷ Martha, as a woman in rural Indiana, had to be more resourceful. Written sources, such as letters, were too slow to reflect contemporary happenings in the moment, and since she was in a more remote area, the information networks available in a city could not aid her. As a result, Martha was more likely to rely on oral information, which frequently fell in with gossip and rumors. Rumors, often considered an unreliable source of information, were not always inaccurate, however. Martha's entries, when compared to what the newspapers reported, contain accurate details, and she is confident in her assertions about the war. For Martha, there was no qualitative difference between the gossip about her friends and rumors about the war. Despite being a woman, despite being removed from the war front, and despite being in rural Indiana, Martha felt confident in the information she received about the war. Martha's journal, in the way that Martha presents information about town gossip and

⁶ Drew Gilpin Faust, *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

⁷ Newspapers, Civic Development, Public Libraries, 12.

about the war, provides an example of how women in rural Indiana during the war may have attempted to make sense of the world around themselves.

The spy from the incident in Vernon was taken to Seymour, Indiana—presumably to be held by General Hughes’s Union troops that were quartered there—and never was mentioned again by Martha. Although the spy disappears from the pages of her journal, the rumors do not disappear. Martha constantly provides updates about the Civil War, and writes things similar to, “we hear of [Morgan’s] ravages at Dupont he entered the town early in the morning completely sacked it.” Between sentences about her home life and her love life, Martha inserts episodes from the war. This is in part due to how the war wove itself into everyday life, but it also shows that Martha, as a seventeen-year old woman, in a semi-rural setting, had access to an amount of information about the war to allow her to declare, “nothing special from Morgan only he is well up in Ohio but running too fast to do much harm, he is getting pretty uneasy as to his position in the Northern States, he is pretty well sewed up. It is thought he will be caught before long the river is rising and he cannot cross it. His race is nearly run.”⁸ She had the same amount of confidence in her declarations about her personal life as she did in her statements about the war. Her sources of information allowed her to be confident that there was no longer a threat present to her home and that Morgan was “pretty well sewed up.” Although she may not have heard news from official sources, such as newspapers, Martha treated her information as if it were absolutely true; she knew she could trust what she heard.

⁸ Ibid, July 16, 1863.

This is a story about women during the Civil War. This is a story about rumors and small town Indiana. It is a story about how the information one receives shapes perceptions about the world. Martha's perspective, and her journal, plays an important part, but this is more than a story about one woman. This paper will explore what it was like as a woman to live in small town Indiana during a moment of upheaval, and how one made sense of the world around oneself. Through the story told by one young woman and her diary, it will investigate how that moment of turmoil and that attempt to come to terms with the world created attitudes and actions.

This paper, as it relates to Martha and her role in her community, is based in the longer historiography of gender and the Civil War. Beginning in the second half of the twentieth century, historians began to do more focused work in the field of women's history during the Civil War. For example, historians from the 1960s, such as Mary Elizabeth Massey, began to research the roles of women in war, and how they changed over the course of the American Civil War.⁹ In the 1990s, historians including Drew Gilpin Faust, Nina Silber, Catherine Clinton, and Jean V. Matthews, continued this trend and examined political loyalties, slaveholding, and how war necessitated women's reinvention of themselves.¹⁰ Many of these works are focused on a national level, or rather, on a Confederate States of America or United States of America level, and there is not a specific focus on Indiana, and small towns within it.

⁹ Mary Elizabeth Massey, *Bonnet Brigades: Women in the Civil War* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966).

¹⁰ See Drew Gilpin Faust, *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), and Catherine Clinton and Nina Silber, eds., *Divided Houses: Gender and the Civil War* (New York, 1992), and Peggy Brase Seigel, "She Went to War: Indiana Women Nurses in the Civil War," *Indiana Magazine of History*, no. 1 (1990): 1-27.

Historians have explored the history of women in the Civil War, however, large works on the history of Indiana, women, and the Civil War have been more sporadic and tangential—sporadic because articles and books on women in Indiana during the Civil War appear every couple of years or decades, and tangential because often one must rely on histories of the Midwest, or histories of Indiana’s border states, to gain information about Indiana women during the period.¹¹ Emma Lou Thornbrough was one of the most prolific Indiana historians, and although many of her works focused on race relations in the state, she was one of the first to notably investigate the political and economic shifts in Indiana before and after the Civil War.¹² More recently, historians have done work on the state during the Civil War. Works on women in Indiana during the war are more rare, and often they center on women as nurses or in hospitals. A few historians, like Thomas E. Rodgers, have analyzed what life was like for those who stayed at home.¹³ In its study of Martha, and her home of Vernon, Indiana, this paper hopes to add to work already done in these areas of gender and Indiana history during the war. Although these authors have focused on women, Indiana, and the effect of the Civil War, they have not written specifically about how sources of information affected the types of knowledge individuals received, and what effects their reactions had.

Although this paper focuses on women in rural Indiana during the war, it perhaps fits best into the work done by another group of historians that has focused on the history of

¹¹ For example, see John M Faragher, *Sugar Creek: Life on the Illinois Prairie* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), in which he explores the history of communities and families in rural Illinois in the six decades before the Civil War.

¹² See Emma Lou Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era 1850-1880*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1965). Thornbrough devotes more attention to Indiana in the aftermath of the Civil War and economic changes of the period than she does to gender or political shifts

¹³ For reference see Thomas E. Rodgers, “Hoosier Women and the Civil War Home Front,” *Indiana Magazine of History* no. 2 (2001): 105-128.

information and channels of communication. This paper hopes to contribute to this research. Since the 1980s, historians have focused on various parts of the world and worked to dispel the myth that information was previously unavailable or inferior to information systems that are present today in the “Information Age”. Much attention has been devoted to America during the Revolutionary War, or on other countries in Europe, but little has been devoted to Midwestern America during the Civil War. For example, historians such as William Warner have written histories about the different forms of communication and resistance utilized by the Whigs before the Revolutionary War.¹⁴ Other historians, like Robert Darnton, have done research on news in Europe, specifically focused on Paris during the eighteenth century.¹⁵ As a paper that explores Martha’s network of contacts, this paper hopes contribute to the history of communication and of newspapers and media as it relates to the Civil War.

In addition to these fields, this paper hopes to introduce a new figure to the historical record. No historian has done extensive work on Martha and her family, and her story is

¹⁴ See William B. William, *Protocols of Liberty: Communication, Innovation, and the American Revolution*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013). In this book, Warner explores how the Whig party anticipated and instigated revolution through legal, military, economic, postal, administrative, judicial, and financial efforts. For the purposes of this paper, the sections that are most useful are the ones in which Warner discusses communicative and intellectual networks of the Whig party, such as Chapter 3, “The Post and Newspaper in British America: A Communication System in Crisis” and Chapter 5, “A Chain of Freedom Has Been Formed: The First Continental Congress Develops into the Hub of an Intercolonial Network.”

¹⁵ See Robert Darnton, “An Early Information Society: News and Media in Eighteenth Century Paris,” *American Historical Review* no. 1 (2000): 1-35, in which he analyses the sources of information to which Parisians had access. He argues that although citizens did not use traditional media sources (such as newspapers), city-dwellers in the past were still able to access the as much information as those in the twenty-first century who are considered to live in an “Information Age”. For notable works on countries outside of Europe and America, see Qin Shao, “Tempest over Teapots: The Vilification of Teahouse Culture in Early Republican China,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 57 (November 1998): 1009-41, and João José Reis, *Slave Rebellion in Brazil: The Muslim Uprising of 1835 in Bahia*, Arthur Brakel, trans. (Baltimore, Md., 1993), and Christopher A. Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1870* (New York, 1996).

an important one.¹⁶ As a young woman who both filled and challenged societal norms, Martha and her diary will provide an example of the war's effect on women in rural Indiana, and perhaps illuminate how those in the past, despite relying on nontraditional forms of communication, became well informed.

“My First Duty Lies Here at Home”: The Life of Martha E. Hutchings

The story begins with the life of a woman who was 17 years old in 1863: Martha E. Hutchings. Born in Madison, Indiana in 1846, Martha was both exceptional and unexceptional for her time. She was fairly religious, and attended church every Sunday, sometimes even on weekdays. Martha often wondered whether the outcome of the Civil War would be the result of divine intervention. For example, on July 11th she writes, “just now we were greeted with another most glorious sight. A dense black column of men...I never felt such ecstatic joy as then, I felt as though we were saved from utter ruin....these noble soldiers would be the means provided by Providence to save us.”¹⁷ Similar to other the reflections of other individuals who stayed at home, the war sometimes appeared to consume her everyday thoughts.¹⁸ Like other young women in town, she taught Sunday school, and was friends with the local pastor, Mr. Brazelton.¹⁹ She was an obedient and practical daughter, and often wrote about her housework. In one case she could not attend

¹⁶ There is one twelve paged historical booklet that a historian has written about Martha, see James J. Barnes, “Martha Hutchings Griffith: Pioneer Physician”, Montgomery County Historical Society, 2002. There is also one book that includes a paragraph about the Griffith family, see John William Leonard, *Woman's Who's Who of America: A Biographical Dictionary of Contemporary Women of the United States of America, 1914-1915*, (New York: The American Commonwealth Company, 1914), as well as one article from a medical doctor that briefly mentions Martha, see Lucy King, “Pioneer Women Physicians in Indiana”, Ruth Lilly Medical Library, Indiana University. Most studies focus on her husband and his family, rather than Martha herself.

¹⁷ Journal of Mrs. Martha E. Hutchings Griffith, 1863-1881, July 11th, 1863.

¹⁸ Faust, *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War*, 11.

¹⁹ All biographical information for the Hutchings family was found from the U.S. Census Bureau, “1860 Census: Vernon, Indiana, pages 64-144.” United States Census Bureau. Accessed October 11, 2015. For information about Martha's daily life, and friends, see the Journal of Mrs. Martha E. Hutchings Griffith, 1863-1881. Griffith Manuscripts. Lilly Library Manuscript Collections, Indiana University.

the funeral of a child who lived in town because she “did not get the washing done in time to go.”²⁰ Martha’s mother’s name was Elizabeth, and she had three brothers, named Stephen, James, and John. Her father, John W. Hutchings, decided to enlist in the 67th Regiment of the Indiana Infantry in June of 1863.²¹ As a young woman who mentions the war consistently, with a typical family life, and with a family member directly involved in the war, Martha lived a life that did not stand out.

In many ways, however, Martha stood apart from her peers, or at least she felt as if she did. Feeling isolated on one clear, cool Saturday, she writes about a previous beau named Bob, declaring:

I must note it down that Bob G— brought Nan Johnson...must I write it, am I jealous, or why do I feel so wretched to see him with other company and company too that I know does not care a snap for him...but here I am a woman chained to her mill-stone of time which has its precise limit of space and must jog along on the same old treadwheel. I hope it will wear out some time and unfetter the hapless race of womankind if it does crush love in the fall.²²

Martha’s characterization of herself as a woman chained to her “mill-stone” that will crush love suggests a certain type of isolation. She mentions similar feelings of isolation with her friends, writing during a week in which she fell ill from diphtheria, “I am so lonesome. The youngfolks all went Black berrying today a grand party that I have been fixing for so much and it’s too bad that I have to be shut up here at home and know they are having such a good time.”²³ Martha’s comments reveal a young woman who often felt as if she was apart from the crowd.

²⁰ Journal of Mrs. Martha E. Hutchings Griffith, July 15, 1863.

²¹ United States Draft Records, “Third Congressional District of Indiana: Jennings County,” June 1863.

²² Ibid, July 18, 1863.

²³ Ibid, July 25, 1863

Martha's father also made her and her family an exception. John W. Hutchings was a businessman and merchant who frequently travelled. In 1868 he obtained a patent from the U.S. government for an "improvement in horse rakes."²⁴ He owned land in Madison, Charlestown, and Vernon, Indiana—towns that were all within fifty miles of each other. According to tax returns from 1863 and 1864, John and received about \$600 in income per year.²⁵ The 1860 census marked that Hutchings owned \$4,000 of real estate and had about \$6,000 in personal estate. Other merchants had about \$1,000 to \$2,000 in real estate and had \$1,000 or less in personal estate. These numbers, along with comparisons to other occupations, such as that of a mechanic who, on average, had no more than \$500 in real estate and personal estate, show that the Hutchings were well off.²⁶ The Hutchings's relative wealth, along with Martha's attitudes about life, defined Martha as distinctive.

Martha's education, and thirst for knowledge, made her different as well. On Monday, August 3rd, 1863, Martha wrote, "Laura Branum and Mary Vauter called this afternoon. Laura is going to the University...to school. Oh! I desired to go so bad, too, but here I must stay...I suppose my first duty lies here at home."²⁷ Martha, a schoolteacher in 1863, valued her education. Seven years after writing about university, she would attend the Women's Medical College of Pennsylvania, in Philadelphia, and graduate in 1871 with a medical degree.²⁸ In that same year, she would marry a man,

²⁴ United States Patent Office, "J.E. Voiles of Madison Indiana, Assignor to Himself and John W. Hutchings, of the Same Place: Improvement in Horse Rakes," November 10, 1968.

²⁵ United States Internal Revenue Service, "John Hutchings, 1863" and "John Hutchings, 1864, page 23", Internal Revenue Service, accessed October 20, 2015.

²⁶ 1860 Census: Vernon, Indiana, pages 64-144.

²⁷ Correspondence and Journal of Mrs. Martha E. Hutchings Griffith, 1863-1881, Griffith Manuscripts, Lilly Library Manuscript Collections, Indiana University.

²⁸ *Fifty-Ninth Annual Report of the New England Hospital for Women and Children*, (Boston: Geo H Ellis Company, 1921): 34.

Thomas Griffith, who was a physician, and together they would have a son that would grow up to be a physician as well.²⁹ Martha's story appears unusual for her time and place. Most men were farmers, and most women did housework. There were not many university students in Vernon in the 1860s, and most of these were boys. According to the census, fifteen students lived in Vernon, and about four or five of those were apprentices.³⁰ In 1863, Martha was a minority of the minority.

Martha, as a young woman, had a craving for learning, as evidenced by her desires for higher education. She wanted new information, and in her times of isolation, she wanted to be connected. Yet, she stayed at home, and in 1863, she felt as if she had a "duty" to stay home. Perhaps she remained in Vernon because in the face of uncertainty caused by the war, as the eldest sibling, she felt as if she had to help out her family, especially after her father enlisted. Martha's decision to stay in Vernon did not mean that she did not attempt to acquire new forms of knowledge. In 1863 this meant studying the Civil War.

"Marching Orders for the Boys Have Arrived": Martha Makes Sense of the War

When the war visited Indiana, Martha relied on public resources, such as newspapers, to stay informed. In 1863, newspapers were an often relied upon source for many residents. Nationwide, newspapers had increased from nearly non-existence to ubiquity. By the end of the nineteenth century, the biggest eastern newspapers had grown

²⁹ The biographical information for the Griffith family was found by looking through the information provided by the U.S. Census Bureau, "1880 Census: Franklin Township, Indiana, page 14" United States Census Bureau, accessed October 3, 2015.

³⁰ These numbers for male and female occupations, along with the number of students in town, were obtained by analyzing the census records from the documents pertaining to the 1860 Census: Vernon, Indiana, pages 64-144. According to the census, about 10.4% of 3,368 residents worked on farms, 9% did housework (all women), 0.5% were merchants, and 0.8% were mechanics. The numbers are thrown off by the high number of dependents enumerated that make up 63.2% of the population.

from five thousand subscribers to millions of subscribers, and weekly and daily publications had grown in readership.³¹ These national trends were reflected in Indiana. With the onset of the 1840s, 50s, and 60s, and with a rise in the population due to the new immigrants to the state, newspapers across Indiana began to emerge. Some towns even had two or three newspapers, and many newspapers could count 500 subscribers.³² Martha mentions newspapers a couple of times in her entries from July. For example, when describing the contemporary state of the war effort on July 13, she writes, “as the telegraphs and newspapers knew nothing of Buckner’s crossing the river and it only a flying report I can not believe it so therefore I am going to sleep tonight.”³³ When waiting to hear of General Buckner’s movements, and whether or not his appearance was a “flying report”, Martha searched for headlines and updates in the newspapers. For Martha, the papers were an important form of communication that could provide updates on events about which no one else knew.

Newspapers only tell part of the story, however. She may have looked to newspapers when she could find information nowhere else, but Martha was informed about current events much earlier than the presses could publish them. For example, due to the fear created by Morgan’s actions, newspapers from all over Indiana wrote about Morgan’s Raid, even in those parts of Indiana that were not affected by his presence.³⁴ A

³¹ John Calvin Colson, “Newspapers, Civic Development, and Public Library Development in Nineteenth Century Wisconsin,” *The Journal of Library History* no. 1 (1978): 11-36.

³² For a thorough exploration of the development and spread of Indiana newspapers, see James Hannan Butler, “Indiana Newspapers 1829-1860,” *Indiana Magazine of History* no. 3 (1926): 297-333. Butler states that in 1833 there were a total of 29 papers in the state, but by 1860 this number had grown to 172 papers, despite paper shortages and the difficulty in obtaining printing presses.

³³ Journal of Mrs. Martha E. Hutchings Griffith, July 13, 1863.

³⁴ The numbers for newspapers were obtained by looking at the online database, Newspapers.com. These numbers reflect what sources have been digitized, and do not reflect all of the newspapers that existed at the time. Many of the weeklies or daily newspapers that were published in 1863 have only been partially preserved, such as the *Vernon Banner*, of which only the years 1858 and 1859 have been digitized.

paper from Fort Wayne, call the *Dawson Daily Times*, on July 13, 1863 published an article about Morgan's invasion. The author writes, "dispatches have been received here stating that Morgan's forces have destroyed the...railroads in the vicinity of Vernon...Morgan demanded the surrender of the town. Love refused and asked thirty hours within which to remove the wounded and children."³⁵ Martha wrote about this same interaction, but on July 11, 1863. On that day, her entry said, "just now a second (Confederate) flag of truce was sent demanding a surrender or giving the women & children 30 minutes to leave town, this Gen Love answered in person telling them he would never surrender but asking an hour to remove the women & children. The hour was wanted more to get Gen Wallace and his 3,000 troops which were fast on the way here and ammunition."³⁶ Although the paper from Fort Wayne and Martha described the same event, the newspaper was two days behind. The experiences of other Hoosiers, especially earlier in the state's history, reflect Martha's experience with the speed of news via newspapers. Although the number of subscribers for some local newspapers was small, it was not unusual to subscribe to a newspaper from another city. For example, some in Indianapolis subscribed to Lawrenceburg news, a town on the Ohio River. Deliveries between the cities occurred once a week on average.³⁷ This meant that individuals who relied solely on newspapers would have to wait a week or more to hear about happenings in different parts of the state. For Martha, papers may have been an

However, the other Indiana newspapers still provide a useful account of what the speed of news was like at a statewide level. This paper uses newspapers from northern Indiana, such as those from Angola, Fort Wayne, and Huntington (*Steuben Republican*, *Dawson Daily Times*, and *The Indiana Herald*), those from central Indiana, such as from Greenfield and Indianapolis (*The Hancock Democrat* and *The Indianapolis News*), and those in southern Indiana, such as in Jasper (*The Jasper Weekly Courier*).

³⁵ *Dawson Daily Times*, July 13, 1863.

³⁶ Journal of Martha E. Hutchings Griffith, July 11, 1863.

³⁷ Butler, "Indiana Newspapers 1829-1860," 307.

important source of information, especially when she desired to stay informed of the war on a national level, however, for more current information she had to turn to private correspondence.³⁸

Martha may or may not have written letters during the war—no records exist of any correspondence in 1863. She had no occupation, and she lived at home with her family, and unless she had friends in different cities, she would have had few people to whom she could write. However, as her father travelled frequently, she may have exchanged letters with him, or at the very least, her mother may have exchanged letters with him. Although no records exist for 1863, records of correspondence exist for the years of 1867 and 1868, the years in which Martha would have begun her apprenticeship under a doctor in Indiana. In the back of her diary, Martha kept a list of dates on which she had written or received letters. If the frequency of the exchange of letters from 1867 and 1868 hold true for 1863, then it is probable that Martha relied on correspondence to stay abreast of war developments. For example, on April 9, 1867 Martha marked that she received a letter from her father, John W. Hutchings. She wrote back on April 19, and received his reply on May 3. Other letter exchanges operated at the same rate, such as the interaction in 1868 between Martha and her mother, Elizabeth. These dates reflect that Martha exchanged letters about once a week, but only received letters about every two weeks.³⁹ With these numbers in mind, it is not likely that letters served as a vital form of

³⁸ From Martha's journal, it is clear that she did read newspapers that reflected national news, or at least, she knew someone who did. For example, on Thursday, July 16 she writes, "we are just wiping out the rebellion in the South the 4th of July was celebrated by the surrender of Vicksburg with 34,000 prisoners." In her search for information, Martha not only found news about not only her own region, but also information about the war in the rest of the country.

³⁹ Journal and Correspondence of Martha E. Hutchings Griffith, 1863-1868.

information. The rate of exchange would not have been fast enough to keep informed on contemporary current events.

As both public and private forms of written communication were not fast enough to provide accurate updates on the war, Martha had to turn to oral forms of communication from personal contacts. Her father was an important figure in this regard. Martha frequently mentions her father in her journal, and these references, along with the records that still exist about her father, reveal how she may have become informed. For example, on July 11, when discussing General Morgan's raid Martha writes, "No more news until 2 o'clock when Mr. Vauter and Pa got in reporting that they had taken Paris and were fast advancing this way and their advance guard was only a few miles from town and all the rest of the scouts were supposed to be covered."⁴⁰ A few days later she writes, "Pa came from Indianapolis, no news there. Nothing can be heard from the Home Guard they left Algood yesterday morning and no one knows where they are gone".⁴¹ In her journal, Martha's father travels often. John Hutchings had joined the army only a month before, and it appears as if his regiment stayed in Indiana in July. He was able to come home and provide information about the war. As a member of the war effort, and as someone who travelled frequently and easily, Martha's father would have been an invaluable resource.

Other members of the armed forces also provided updates on the war. Martha often mentions the Home Guard, scouts, and "runners" in her journal. For example, on "another cloudy, smoky morning but one long to be remembered although three days later with time can never efface it from my memory. All quiet until 9 o'clock the runners

⁴⁰ Journal of Mrs. Martha E. Hutchings Griffith, July 11, 1863.

⁴¹ Ibid, July 15, 1863.

came in saying that Morgan was coming in force.”⁴² Figures like runners or scouts appear at different times in Martha’s reflections, and their existence demonstrates that Martha had access to them, or at least to the information they provided to Union officials.

The presence of the army in town provided Martha, as a woman, with an opportunity to collect information. With the arrival of Morgan, and hundreds of Union soldiers, the expectation to take care of the newcomers fell to Martha and other women in town. After the events of July 11th with Morgan, Martha writes, “still all quiet, with the dawn the women and children began to move cautiously about...to commence to cook breakfast for five thousand soldiers, such a day none of them ever passed before, we cooked for about two hundred, they never stopped eating.”⁴³ Working among the men, feeding them, and sheltering them, allowed Martha different and wider insights on the greater happenings of the war.

Rumors within Vernon were also an important resource for information. Martha visited other women her age often, and the rumors they discussed appear in the pages of her diary. In one episode, after the visit of some of her friends, Martha reports on the marital status of one young man, Mert Neill. She is happy that he is married and writes, “I hear a second rumor that Mert Neill is married...a sigh for Deb if it is true for...they will have a funeral on the same day. For the world knows that her attachment, her respect for him are more than artificial.”⁴⁴ There are other similar incidents of Martha’s visiting with friends, and just as the Civil War wove itself into every other sentence of Martha’s journal, it probably also wove itself into every other sentence of conversation with

⁴² Ibid, July 11, 1863.

⁴³ Ibid, July 12, 1863.

⁴⁴ Ibid, February 7, 1866.

friends. Similar to the interactions of Mert and Deb, the war played out like the latest romance drama. One Saturday Martha declared, “nothing at all going on in town today nearly wish Morgan or some other visitors would give us a call again I enjoy the excitement. All seems so dull.”⁴⁵ A week earlier, Martha had been huddled with other women and children, afraid to look outside, but by the next Saturday she was ready to live through another episode of the war.

Conclusions: Was Martha Similar to other Hoosiers?

Some of the information that Martha acquired was accessible to many individuals during the Civil War. For example, as newspapers were widely read, any information Martha gathered from their pages would have been available to other residents of Indiana who had subscriptions to papers from around the state. Individuals also had a wide array of personal contacts that could provide updates about the war. Many families, in the North and South, were directly affected by the war and had loved ones fighting. Similar to Martha, it is likely that other individuals who lived in rural Indiana also were able to rely on family members who were part of the army for news because of the number of men who participated in the war. One woman from Greencastle declared, in 1862, “we are almost manless.”⁴⁶ Hundreds of men in Indiana, in response to pleas from the government, enlisted during the war. Unlike Martha’s father, many of these individuals were young, unmarried men. Nevertheless, they were brothers and sons of many people, and they would have sent war news home if they were able. Records reflect that many

⁴⁵ Ibid, July 18, 1863

⁴⁶ Quoted by Thomas Rodgers, “Hoosier Women and the Civil War Home Front,” 110. In this article, Rodgers analyzes the number of men who left home in one county in eastern Indiana, and finds that about 70% of men, especially if they were single, left to join the war. This meant that many had a loved one with whom they had to maintain contact through mail or travel.

soldiers from Indiana, such as those from Madison, Martha's birthplace, began to send letters back to loved ones as the war escalated and the homesickness grew.⁴⁷ Martha's correspondence and interaction with her father during the war, in this case, was not unusual.

Martha's communications were different, however, than those of other individuals. The rumors one would have heard varied from region to region. During the war, Indiana was divisively split between Democratic and Republican parties, and depending on the region or town, the newspapers and individuals would have had different political allegiances.⁴⁸ For example, in the elections of 1862, the Democrats had won a majority in Indiana's legislature, while Republican governor, Oliver P Morton, remained in office. Democrats often accused Republicans in Indiana of suppressing Democratic newspapers and candidates.⁴⁹ In her journal, Martha mentions Copperheads and Butternuts, or Democrats in the northern states that opposed the war, with disdain. The way people talked about the war differed from town to town, and it would have influenced one's perceptions.

As is clear from Martha's journal, most in Vernon was allied with the Union, and her interactions would have influenced her opinions. Those in town were worried when Morgan, a confederate, came through with his troops, and many helped to capture and

⁴⁷ For a summary of archives and files held by various organizations in Indiana, see John M Glen, Stephen E Towne, Nancy K Turner, Thomas E Rodgers, and Sandra B Taylor, "Indiana in the Civil War Era," *Indiana Magazine of History* no 3 (1996) 245-273. For analysis of war letters sent home by soldiers from Madison, Indiana and other various counties, see page 261.

⁴⁸ Rodgers, "Hoosier Women and the Civil War Home Front."

⁴⁹ For a study of Oliver P. Morton and suppression of Democrat presses, see Stephen E. Towne, "Worse than Vallandigham: Governor Oliver P. Morton, Lambdin P. Milligan, and the Military Arrest and Trial of Indiana State Senator Alexander J. Douglas During the Civil War," *Indiana Magazine of History* no. 1 (2010): 1-39. In his article, Towne also explores tensions between the Democratic and Republican parties during the war.

interrogate the confederate spy. Her diary shows that she often interacted with other people her age, and often helped out in town, such as when the Union troops came to stay. This type of interaction was true for other areas. When men left for war, often people had to rely on collectivity in order to complete tasks, such as sowing fields or bringing in the harvest.⁵⁰ These types of interactions brought people in contact with each other, and during these interactions, individuals most likely discussed war news. These discussions would have influenced what individuals thought about the war.

Perhaps the most important factor that shaped the information Martha gained was her character. Just as she desired to learn and become a doctor, she was determined to know about the war, and so she found information. She worked hard on her chores and studies, and she did the same with learning about the war. She felt obligated to help her family and to help out in town with the soldiers, and she diligently fulfilled her obligation as a good citizen to stay aware of current events. As a young woman, she also enjoyed excitement and visiting with friends, and so she devoured stories and rumors about the war.

Other women were not always so involved in learning about the war. For example, in the diary of a young woman named Alice Hawks, who lived in Goshen during the Civil War, news of the war plays a much less prominent role. Like Martha, she often helped with household chores, went to church, and diligently did her schoolwork. Like Martha's father, Alice's father also traveled. Unlike Martha she commented very rarely on the war effort.⁵¹ Alice may have mentioned the war less frequently because she

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ For an annotation of Alice Hawks's diary, see Virginia Mayberry and Dawn E. Bakken, "The Civil War Home Front: Diary of a Young Girl 1862-1863," *Indiana Magazine of History* no. (1991): 24-78.

lived in the northern part of the state, in an area that was relatively untouched by the war, and because most of her journal ends before July of 1863, or the years before the panic over Morgan's Raid that heightened fears of the conflict. Alice does write, however, in a way that suggests the war was never far from the thoughts of those in town. For example, on important dates and holidays she commented on the war effort. On New Years of 1863, she writes, "Another New Year commenst and what does it bring with it. Nothing but war and rumeres of war. Yes it does."⁵² On other occasions, she writes about important battles nationwide. For example, on January 2nd of 1862 she states, "there has been another battle and Zolicofer is killed. I wish it was two or three more of these rebel generals. I hope from this time on there will be no more defeats on our side."⁵³ Felix Zollicoffer was a Confederate brigadier general and died in the Battle of Mill Springs in Kentucky. She also occasionally mentions meeting a soldier, or attending a function to raise money for soldiers. Alice had access to "rumers" of war, to news of developments around the state and country, and to soldiers in town. Alice had access to information similar to that of Martha, however, because of a difference of character and situation, Alice was less informed.

The different sources of information with which Martha interacted enabled her to be well informed. In her description of events, there is no qualitative difference between information about the war and updates about her friends. In every presentation about the war, Martha is confident in her declarations. She never claims to be uncertain of any updates, unless others in town are also uncertain. For example, when General Buckner is crossing the river towards Vernon, everyone in town waits for updates, Martha writes,

⁵² Alice Hawkes, quoted by Virginia Mayberry and Bakken, "Civil War on the Home Front," 63.

⁵³ Ibid, 35.

“this eve late a report came that Buckner was following him with 1,900 troops taking everything, that caused a terrible excitement but it was not credited as we had had no telegraph news of his crossing the river.”⁵⁴ This is the same incident in which Martha refers to updates on Buckner’s movements as “flying reports.” Martha is uncertain because everyone in town, or the “we” to whom Martha refers, was uncertain. In other situations, Martha is as confident about the war as she is about her friends. For example, when she writes about Morgan being “sewed up” in Ohio, she has no doubt about his location. In the same way, Martha has no doubt about Deb’s affections for Mert Neill. She can assert that she knows about the war because it was a part of everyday life, and potentially because she received the information in the same way.

Martha and her journal provide an example of how women in rural Indiana during the Civil War made sense of the upheavals and turmoil around themselves. She searched for news about loved ones and about the country in newspapers, letters, and stories passed about town. Most of the time, she had to rely on word of mouth to remain informed. Even though she had to trust rumors, this did not mean that she was not poorly informed, but rather, rumors provided her with important information about the war. Using the example of Martha, this paper has examined how those in rural Indiana, despite being separated from the war front, became aware of current events.

⁵⁴ Journal of Martha E. Hutchings Griffith, July 13, 1863.

Bibliography

- Account of Early Indiana by Martha E. Hutchings Griffith. Griffith Manuscripts. Lilly Library Manuscript Collections, Indiana University.
- Barnes, James J. "Martha Hutchings Griffith: Pioneer Physician." Montgomery County Historical Society, 2002.
- Bogle, Victor M. "Railroad Building in Indiana, 1850-1855." *Indiana Magazine of History* no. 3 (1962): 211-232.
- Colson, John Calvin. "Newspapers, Civic Development, and Public Library Development in Nineteenth Century Wisconsin: Some Speculations on Institutional Relationships." *The Journal of Library History* no. 1 (Winter, 1978): 11-36.
- Correspondence and Journal of Mrs. Martha E. Hutchings Griffith, 1863-1881. Griffith Manuscripts. Lilly Library Manuscript Collections, Indiana University.
- Dawson's Daily Times and Union*. "The Invasion of Indiana." July 13, 1863.
- Diary of Elvira J. Powers, 1864-1865. *The American Civil War: Letters and Diaries*, University of Chicago.
- Etcheson, Nicole. *A Generation at War: The Civil War Era in a Northern Community*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2011.
- Faragher, John M. *Sugar Creek: Life on the Illinois Prairie*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986.
- Feimster, Crystal N. "General Benjamin Butler & the Threat of Sexual Violence during the American Civil War." *Daedalus*, no. 2 (Spring 2009): 216-134.
- Fifty-Ninth Annual Report of the New England Hospital for Women and Children*. Boston: Geo H Ellis Company, 1921.
- Glen, John M, and Stephen E Towne, Nancy K Turner, Thomas E Rodgers, Sandra B Taylor, "Indiana in the Civil War Era." *Indiana Magazine of History*, no 3 (1996): 245-273.
- Haynes, April. "The Trials of Frederick Hollick: Obscenity, Sex Education, and Medical Democracy in the Antebellum United States." *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, no. 4 (Oct., 2003): 543-574.
- Journal of Mr. Thomas J. Griffith, 1858-1865. Griffith Manuscripts. Lilly Library Manuscript Collections, Indiana University.
- King, Lucy. "Pioneer Women Physicians in Indiana." Ruth Lilly Medical Library, Indiana University.
- Leonard, John William. *Woman's Who's Who of America: A Biographical Dictionary of Contemporary Women of the United States of America, 1914-1915*. New York: The American Commonwealth Company, 1914.
- Massey, Mary Elizabeth. *Bonnet Brigades: Women in the Civil War*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966.
- Roggenkamp, Karen. *Narrating the News: New Journalism and Literary Genre in Late Nineteenth Century American Newspapers and Fiction*. Kent: The Kent State University Press, 2005.
- Skinner, Carolyn. "'The Purity of Truth': Nineteenth-Century American Women Physicians Write about Delicate Topics." *Rhetoric Review*, no. 2 (2007): 103-119.
- Stueben Republican*. "Look Here Girls!" and "Recapitulation." August 8, 1863.
- Stueben Republican*. "Morgan's Chivalrous Conduct." August 1, 1863.
- The Jasper Weekly Courier*. "The Morgan Raid." July 18, 1863.
- Thornbrough, Emma L. *Indiana in the Civil War Era*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1965.
- Towne, Stephen E. *Surveillance and Spies in the Civil War: Exposing Confederate Conspiracies in America's Heartland*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2014.

- Ulrich, Laurel Thatcher. *A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812*. New York: Vintage Books, 1991.
- U.S. Census Bureau. "1860 Census: Vernon, Indiana, pages 64-144." United States Census Bureau. Accessed October 11, 2015.
- U.S. Census Bureau. "1860 Census: North Vernon, Indiana." United States Census Bureau. Accessed October 11, 2015.
- United States Draft Records. "Third Congressional District of Indiana: Jennings County." June 1863.
- United States Internal Revenue Service. "John Hutchings, 1863" and "John Hutchings, 1864, page 23". Internal Revenue Service. Accessed October 20, 2015.
- United States Patent Office. "J.E. Voiles of Madison Indiana, Assignor to Himself and John W. Hutchings, of the Same Place: Improvement in Horse Rakes." November 10, 1968.
- Wegener, Frederick. "Few Things More Womanly or Noble: Elizabeth Stuart Phelps and the Advent of the Woman Doctor in America." *Legacy*, no. 1 (2005): 1-17.