To Arms!
Civil War Recruitment in Massachusetts

How did the government of Massachusetts, and popular culture, encourage men and women to participate in the Civil War?

Sources:

1. “To arms! To arms! : Men of Massachusetts! Your country is in danger!” [Boston: 1862]  
   https://www.masshist.org/database/2170
   http://www.masshist.org/database/2213
   https://www.masshist.org/database/2171
   Smithsonian American Art Museum: http://edan.si.edu/saam/id/object/1996.63.120
5. “Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Executive Department, Boston, Aug. 23, 1862: in order to promote  
   the recruitment of the Massachusetts quota….” Boston: Printed for gratuitous distribution by Wright &  
   Potter, 1862.
   https://www.masshist.org/database/49

Sample Activities:

• Warm-up Discussion: Before examining any of the documents, ask students what might have motivated  
  men and women to participate in the Civil War? How might Northern motivations differ from Southern  
  motivations? Answers could include ideas such as patriotism, slavery, duty/honor, brotherhood, rage  
  militaire/bandwagon, adventure, financial gain, etc.
• Discussion: Compare and contrast military recruiting tactics from 1864 to present day (or other  
  conflicts/causes).
• Think/Pair/Share:
  • Think: If you were a potential military volunteer, what in this advertisement would appeal to  
    you?
  • Pair: Compare & contrast the messages you are getting from different advertisements
  • Share: Compile a list of the different ‘appeals’ and discuss which may have been most attractive  
    and why?
• Short Essay: Write a letter home explaining why you chose to join the war effort (soldier, sanitation  
  work, nurse, etc.).
• Creative Piece: Students create a broadside designed to entice persons to enlist in the military or  
  participate in war efforts on the home front.
Further Reading:


Massachusetts in the Civil War, 1861-1862, Massachusetts Historical Society: http://www.masshist.org/features/massachusetts-in-the-civil-war-1861-1862

The Valley of the Shadow: http://valley.lib.virginia.edu/

Documenting the American South: http://docsouth.unc.edu/

Virginia Memory Project http://www.virginiamemory.com/collections/
“To arms! To arms! : Men of Massachusetts! Your country is in danger!” [Boston: 1862]  
https://www.masshist.org/database/2170

TO ARMS!  
TO ARMS!  
MEN OF MASSACHUSETTS!

Your COUNTRY is in danger! She calls on you for her defence. She puts her trust in you. You will fight in a righteous cause. Will you hear her in silence? Will you permit her to raise her voice in vain? Has she erred in placing her confidence in you?

FILL UP THE REGIMENTS

then, and let not MASSACHUSETTS be behindhand in sending her quota of troops! Let it not be said that the freemen of MASSACHUSETTS have lost their valor and patriotism! Let not the system of drafting be resorted to, but show the South and the whole world that the OLD BAY STATE will send forth her sons without stint for the defence of their country!

FILL UP THE REGIMENTS then. Enlist and let the name and praise of MASSACHUSETTS be in the mouth of all!

First in sending troops for the defence of the Capital, let her be last in ceasing to send them! Think of the glorious deeds of our soldiers and let them incite you to emulate them! Where are the descendants of those who fought at Lexington and Bunker's Hill? Do not the deeds of your sires urge you to devote your lives to the preservation of the Union? Has Concord been forgotten? Do not the memories of '76 live in your hearts? Rise, then, and show that northern freemen still hold liberty as their dearest possession, and that they will give their lives and property for its maintenance! FILL UP THE REGIMENTS! ENLIST! Onward in the name of GOD, your COUNTRY and the CONSTITUTION!
Description
John Albion Andrew served as governor of Massachusetts throughout the Civil War, holding the office from January 1861 through January 1866. After taking office, Andrew began efforts to raise funds and gather troops to ensure that his state was prepared to offer assistance to the Army of the United States. Andrew was a leader among the chief executives of northern states in furthering the Union cause during the Civil War, as well as a stalwart supporter of Abraham Lincoln and his policies. Following the surrender of Fort Sumter, S.C., on April 13, 1861, Northerners rallied behind President Lincoln’s call for states to send volunteers to preserve the Union. Across Massachusetts, young men rushed to enlist. Some were abolitionists; all were Unionists wanting to serve their country and to experience the glory of combat while they could. They believed the war would be short: a battle or two and the Confederacy would fall back into the Union. As the initial rush of enthusiasm subsided, the state government faced the ongoing task of recruiting tens of thousands of soldiers to fill federal quotas. The great majority of these troops were required to serve for three years. Recruiting offices were opened in virtually every town and, over the course of 1861, recruits from Massachusetts surpassed the quotas. However, by the summer of 1862, recruiting had slowed considerably. On July 7, 1862, Andrew instituted a system whereby recruitment quotas were issued to every city and town in proportion to their population. This motivated local leaders, increasing enlistment.

Questions to Consider

1. What does the broadside suggest will happen if Massachusetts does not provide enough volunteers?
2. In what ways does this broadside use the American Revolution to encouragement enlistment?
3. In what way was Massachusetts “first in sending troops in defence of the Capital”? Research the activities of the first Massachusetts regiment that travelled to Washington, D.C. in 1861. How did they travel there, and what happened to them during their journey?
4. 
http://www.masshist.org/database/2213
Description
On June 25, 1861, the 9th Regiment, Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry paraded through the streets of Boston before boarding ships to Washington D.C., and active duty. While there were Irish companies in several Massachusetts regiments, the 9th and later the 28th were the only purely Irish regiments. When President Lincoln issued his call for volunteers in April, Colonel Thomas Cass, an Irish-born leader in the Boston community began recruiting for an Irish regiment. Patrick Donahoe, the publisher of the Boston Pilot, an Irish newspaper, led the fundraising to outfit and train the men. More than 1,700 men eventually enlisted in the 9th. Most were Boston residents, but some volunteers came from Salem, Milford, Marlboro, and Stoughton. While some were U.S. natives, most were immigrants, some having only lived in the U.S. for a few months. The Irish community in Massachusetts had very mixed feelings about the conflict between the North and South, and many did not support the Union cause. However, for many Irish, enlistment was a way to establish themselves as Americans. The regiment participated in many of the major engagements of the war, including the Peninsular Campaign, the siege of Yorktown, Antietam, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, and the Wilderness.

Questions to Consider

1. What special incentives does this broadside promise that would appeal specifically to men of Irish and Irish American descent?
2. What financial incentives does the broadside promise?
3. Who or what are Irishmen “rescuing” according to this broadside?
MAJOR GEN. BANKS'S
GRAND EXPEDITION!

CAPT. W. H. FORBES,

Wants recruits for his company in the above regiment. A preference given to light weights.

$100. United States bounty.
$50. City bounty, cash in hand.
$13. Advance pay, and state aid to families.

PAY PER MONTH.
- Buglers.
- Musician.
- Blacksmiths & Artificers.
- Gunners.
- Musicians.
- Hospital Stewards.
- Carpenters.
- All other Sergeants, each.
- Corporals.
- Privates.

Horses, Arms Ammunition, Uniforms, Clothing, Rations, and Medical Attendance all furnished by the Government.

Headquarters,
NO. 113 WASHINGTON STREET, BOSTON,
Per order, AMOS A. LAWRENCE.
Description
Civil War regiments were formed based on networks of friendships and alliances. This led to enormous camaraderie within the ranks as young men marched off to war with siblings, friends, school and work mates, but also led to equally enormous grief as the horrifying cost of the war fell heavily upon these same networks of families and friends. These young men enlisted with a sense of adventure and unquestioning patriotism, but could not have anticipated the bloody aftermath of early conflicts—the Battle of Ball's Bluff, the Peninsula Campaign, the Battle of Cedar Mountain, the Battle of Antietam—and the horrifying loss of life and optimism. Due to the high number of casualties from Massachusetts and elsewhere, the Union sought to recruit many more soldiers. On 9 August 1862, at Cedar Mountain, in Culpeper County, Virginia, Union general Nathaniel P. Banks, a former governor of Massachusetts, attempted to turn back the Confederates as they took the offensive and advanced northward. After some initial success, Banks’s command was badly defeated during a counterattack in which the 2nd Massachusetts Infantry Regiment was cut to pieces, losing 173 of less than 500 men present, including 16 of its 22 officers killed, wounded, or taken prisoner.

Questions to Consider

1. Investigate the men listed on the broadside. [Nathaniel Banks; C. R. Lowell; Caspar Crowninshield; W.H. Forbes] Who were they? Why might their names have been prominently display in a recruiting document?
2. Which position received the highest pay per month? The lowest?
3. Research the history of the 2nd Massachusetts Cavalry at the battle of Cedar Mountain. Imagine writing a letter to your family after the battle. How would you describe the experience? (For more information: http://www.masshist.org/features/1861-1862/cedar-mountain)
4. How do your friends and family influence the choices you make every day? Would your friends’ decision to join a regiment (or participate in another war-related activity) in 1862 have prompted you to take action? Why or why not?

**Description**

Massachusetts women participated in the Civil war in many different ways. Some, like Hannah Stevenson, volunteered as nurses, and saw the ravages of battle firsthand. Women on the home front often joined together to show support for the Union cause by creating care packages for the volunteers from their hometown. Throughout the war, women in Northern cities organized sewing circles, gathered and prepared medical supplies, and engaged in other activities that allowed them to support the Union cause--and their husbands, sons, and brothers--by sending packages to the front. *Harper's Weekly, A Journal of Civilization* was an American political magazine based in New York City, published from 1857 until 1916. Some of the most influential articles and illustrations from the era of the Civil War originally appeared in *Harper's*.

**Questions to Consider**

1. What services are women providing in these different scenes?
2. Why do you think Winslow Homer created this image for *Harper’s Weekly*?
3. Compare the depictions of nursing in this image to the writings of Massachusetts nurse Hannah Stevenson. ([http://www.masshist.org/database/2163](http://www.masshist.org/database/2163)) How is Stevenson’s account similar to, or different from, the scene drawn by Homer?
“Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Executive Department, Boston, Aug. 23, 1862: in order to promote the recruitment of the Massachusetts quota….”

Boston: Printed for gratuitous distribution by Wright & Potter, 1862.
By the end of 1862, Massachusetts had lost a great number of men to the war effort. As a result, President Abraham Lincoln and Gov. John A. Andrew continued to recruit for the "rescue and defense" of the country. After the Union claimed victory at Antietam in September 1862, President Lincoln, who had been waiting since July for such an opportunity, made a preliminary announcement of his Emancipation Proclamation, signifying a major shift in Northern war aims. To some degree, emancipation was a pragmatic attempt to use former slaves against the Confederacy, but the North also needed a cause of the highest moral caliber to justify the sacrifices that would be necessary as it remobilized for a longer and bloodier “hard war.”

Questions to Consider

1. Why does Governor Andrew recommend that stores close for the afternoon in August 1862?
2. What is an executive order? Can you find other examples of executive orders issued by Gov. Andrew or other politicians during the Civil War?
3. How else might Massachusetts have encouraged recruitment during the Civil War?
TO COLORED MEN.

54th REGIMENT!

MASSACHUSETTS VOLUNTEERS,

OF AFRICAN DESCENT!

$100 BOUNTY!

At the expiration of the term of service.

PAY, $13 A MONTH!

AND

STATE AID TO FAMILIES.

RECRUITING OFFICE,

Cor. Cambridge & North Russell Sts., Boston.

Lieut. J. W. M. APPLETON, Recruiting Officer.

J. E. FARWELL & Co., Steam Job Printers, No. 37 Congress Street, Boston.
Description
This advertisement appeared in the *Boston Journal* on 16 February 1863. The Massachusetts 54th Infantry Regiment was the first military unit consisting of black soldiers to be raised in the North during the Civil War. The adoption of the Emancipation Proclamation in December of 1862 provided the impetus for the use of free black men as soldiers and Massachusetts was the first to respond. Twenty-five men enlisted quickly, however, the arrival of men at the recruiting stations and at Camp Meigs, Readville, soon slowed down. Massachusetts did not have enough eligible black men to fill a regiment, so recruiters were sent to states throughout the North and South, and into Canada, producing volunteers from New York, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Canada. Few of the men were former slaves; most were freemen working as seamen, farmers, laborers, or carpenters. By May 1863, the regiment was full with 1000 enlisted men and a full complement of white officers. The question of pay to the volunteers became an important issue, even before the regiment's departure from Boston.

Questions to Consider

1. Which words appear mostly prominently on the recruiting poster? Why do you think this is so?
2. How does this poster compare to other recruiting broadsides in terms of incentives or overall tone?
3. When Governor Andrew first proposed the idea of an African American regiment to Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of War, Andrew was assured that the men would be paid, clothed, and treated in the same way as white troops. That did not happen. How much were black soldiers paid? How was this pay difference justified? Did the troops ever receive their full pay?