

The Forgotten Women Who Saved the Union: Lucinda Burbank Morton and the Establishment  
of the U.S. Sanitary Commission in Indiana

Addy McKown

Butler University Junior

Critical Communication & Media Studies and Organizational Communication Double Major

German Linguistics Minor

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amckown@buler.edu | 765-591-2838

History has an infamous tendency to leave out women who were just as imperative- if not more so- than their male counterparts. Zelda Fitzgerald was said to have written the very words

that made her husband, F. Scott Fitzgerald, world renown. Coretta Scott King stepped up to lead the American Civil Rights Movement after her husband was assassinated, seeing it through to the very end of the Jim-Crow age. From the backbone of the Apollo Mission, Margaret Hamilton, to the likes of the 1990s' social reformer and punk rock frontman, Kathleen Hanna, the list of women who have been all but forgotten goes on and on.

The same kind of historical disrememberment of the aforementioned female figures is also applicable to Lucinda Burbank Morton. Known most commonly as the 14th Governor of Indiana's wife, Morton was a woman of "rare intelligence and refinement"<sup>1</sup>, serving as an influential part of the Midwest abolition movement and in the relief effort for the American Civil War with endeavors such as the Ladies Patriotic Association and the Indiana division of the U.S. Sanitary Commission. She worked prominently to help develop the young city of Indianapolis and push Indiana through its early years of statehood. Despite her tremendous contributions, Morton's place in history is only marked by her marriage. The role of the first lady is a major tenure, but what she gave to her state and, consequently, her country is worth much more than an ambiguous title. Through examining her aforementioned contributions and the results thereof as well as the modern effects of women like Morton, it becomes evident that the way history is written is not always the most accurate representation of the entirety of the parties involved.

Before the United States of America even became a country, slavery was prevalent throughout the New World. Whether they were deemed indentured servants, slaves, or bondsman, people all across the colonies were putting in countless hours of work with little to no

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<sup>1</sup> Winslow, Hattie L. "Camp Morton." Butler University Digital Commons. April 12, 2011. <https://digitalcommons.butler.edu/grtheses/218>. This selection was pulled from Butler University's Graduate Thesis Collection.

compensation since 1501.<sup>2</sup> During the American Revolution, slaves fought on both sides of the war; those bearing arms for the British were promised freedom and land, although very few received either or after the Redcoats' retreat.<sup>3</sup> On the Colonists' side, both free blacks and slaves fought alongside each other in revolt against King George III. General George Washington had such a mixture of men amongst his troops that one French officer referred to the infantry as "speckled".<sup>4</sup> Slaves were there before, during, and after the Revolution; they gave their own lives for a country that had little to no intention of ever repaying their sacrifices. They were an integral part in making America, America, yet their moment for freedom did not come for another century.

In the years following the American Revolution, the United States made strides in furthering its development. The young country pushed its borders further West in seek of national expansion and continued to create a place for itself amongst world powers. The issue of slavery, however, remained a hot topic in the political scene and at the dinner table. In March of 1807, Congress passed the law that banned slave trade within the United States. It gave slave traders nine months to shut down their operations and thus, effective in 1808, the African Slave Trade was deemed illegal nationwide. This prohibited the import of any enslaved peoples to the States, backed by fines up to \$20,00 for those caught violating the new law, but it did not, however, tackle the issue of those currently held within bondage.<sup>5</sup> It had no regulation over slave

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<sup>2</sup> National Geographic Society. "A History of Slavery in the United States." National Geographic Society. August 28, 2018. <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/interactive/slavery-united-states/>.

<sup>3</sup> Dobyns, Lloyd. "Fighting... Maybe for Freedom, but Probably Not." *Terms of Estrangement: Who Were the Sons of Liberty?* : The Colonial Williamsburg Official History & Citizenship Site. Autumn 2017. <http://www.history.org/foundation/journal/autumn07/slaves.cfm>.

<sup>4</sup> Dobyns, Lloyd. 2017.

<sup>5</sup> DuBois, W. E. B. "The Suppression of the African Slave-Trade". Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1896.

owners nor plantations of the time, leaving hundreds of thousands of people still held in captivity.

In the years following the ban of the Slave Trade, tensions continued to rise. In 1819, another congressional order was passed that authorized the president to send "armed vessels of the United States, to be employed to cruise on any of the coasts of the United States ... or the coast of Africa" to debar slave traders.<sup>6</sup> The Missouri Compromise added to the regulation of slavery yet the government continued to tread lightly around abolition altogether. As the Republican Party put it, it sought not to abolish slavery, but to stop its expansion in order to preserve the nation.<sup>7</sup> The Dred Scott Decision, however, overruled the Missouri Compromise and made slavery legal in all U.S. territories, invoking uproar throughout the North. The political scene of the mid-nineteenth century was in a constant state of disarray over the issue of slavery, and everyday citizens on the homefront were plagued with a certain sense of agitation and restlessness that could only foreshadow major upheaval.

The aforementioned upheaval finally occurred with the election of Abraham Lincoln on November 6, 1860.<sup>8</sup> Lincoln trounced Democrat Stephen A. Douglas, Southerner John C. Breckinridge and Constitutional Union candidate John Bell for the President-elect nomination. Before Lincoln could be nominated the following March, however, seven Southern states announced their secession, beginning with South Carolina in December of 1860.<sup>9</sup> Although Lincoln personally denounced slavery, he knew his actions within in the Oval Office were

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<sup>6</sup> "The Abolition of The Slave Trade." U.S. Constitution and Acts. 2007. [http://abolition.nypl.org/print/us\\_constitution/](http://abolition.nypl.org/print/us_constitution/).

<sup>7</sup> History.com Editors. "Slavery Abolished in America." History. A&E Television Networks. August 21, 2018. <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/slavery-abolished-in-america>

<sup>8</sup> Levy, Michael. "United States Presidential Election of 1860." Encyclopædia Britannica. October 30, 2018. <https://www.britannica.com/event/United-States-presidential-election-of-1860>.

<sup>9</sup> Levy, Michael. 2018.

critical in preserving the unity of the country. Abolition would have to be approached with caution, despite the rapid succession that was occurring and the creation of the Confederate States of America that resulted thereof. One month into Lincoln's first term, however, the tensions and unrest that had encapsulated the United States for nearly six decades turned violent as Confederate troops fired upon Union forces in the early morning of April 12, 1861, at Fort Sumter.<sup>10</sup> This marked the beginning of the end, so to speak, as the United States of America entered its civil war.

Both the North and the South began asking for enlistments on a large-scale following the altercation at Fort Sumter, despite the fact that neither side lost a single man.<sup>11</sup> One Union state that was more than ready to answer Lincoln's calls was Indiana. As all things abolitionist escalated on the national scale, Governor Oliver P. Morton made it clear that Indiana would full-heartedly support the Union, no questions asked. Governor Morton and Lucinda Burbank Morton were fierce advocates for abolitionism and even stronger supporters of Abraham Lincoln. Morton quickly became known as one of the most outspoken yet determined Union leaders of the time, described by Indiana historian, Kenneth Stampp, as:

“ . . . an extremely capable executive, but he [Morton] was blunt, pugnacious, ruthless, and completely lacking in a sense of humor. He refused to tolerate opposition, and he often harassed his critics to complete distraction. The men associated with him ranked only as subordinates in his entourage.”<sup>12</sup>

Leading such a relentless administration was beneficial in war times, but it also placed a harsh stigma on the Morton family, especially on the work of Lucinda Burbank Morton. There was an unspoken pressure placed on Morton to be all the more pleasant and even more active in

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<sup>10</sup> "Battle of Fort Sumter Facts & Summary." American Battlefield Trust. April 13, 2018. <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/civil-war/battles/fort-sumter>.

<sup>11</sup> "Battle of Fort Sumter Facts & Summary." 2018.

<sup>12</sup> Stampp, Kenneth M. "Indiana Politics in the Civil War." Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978.

the community because of the overall astringency of her husband. She worked to prompt social change within Indianapolis before the country went to war and sought to unify women in support of Lincoln and abolition after the Confederacy was established. She began enlisting help for the war effort and supporters for abolitionism and opened her home to many leaders of the aforementioned causes. As the Civil War progressed, Lucinda Morton's work eventually spiraled into something much bigger, especially in consideration of the very men fighting the great war that divided her country.

Lucinda Morton looked at soldiers as people first and foremost, whether they be of Union or Confederate affiliation. As soon as the news of Fort Sumter had reached Indianapolis, Governor Morton delegated Adjutant General, Lew Wallace, to oversee the creation of a POW camp; the North was going to war against the South, and, as a central location, Indianapolis would need to be ready for enemies that fell captive to Union forces.<sup>13</sup> As a result, Camp Morton was born, named after the war-time governor himself. Despite the fact that Confederate troops were imprisoned here, Lucinda Morton took over in providing for the camp, creating the Ladies Patriotic Association in the latter half of 1862.<sup>14</sup>

The Ladies Patriotic Association was a group of prominent women of political and/or social prominence in Indianapolis and beyond. The women would meet in the Governor's Mansion to create and make whatever goods the prisoners of Camp Morton were in need of at the time. For example, at one particular meeting, over 200 dollars worth of flannel was made into hats, mittens, scarves, and coats for the Confederate prisoners in preparation for the harsh Indiana winter.<sup>15</sup> They made so many pieces of clothing that Governor Morton had to step in and politely decline any more donations of the sort for the time being. Lucinda and the women also

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<sup>13</sup> Winslow, Hattie L. 2011.

<sup>14</sup> Winslow, Hattie L. 2011.

<sup>15</sup> Winslow, Hattie L. 2011.

banded together to help replace blankets, pillows, and towels when an outbreak of measles plagued the camp as Spring transitioned into Summer the following year. They helped get donations of salt pork and beer, candles and soap, and dried fruits to feed the imprisoned men. It was said that the soldiers in the early days of Camp Morton had to be reminded they were prisoners because of how comfortably they lived with the luxurious donation from the Ladies Patriotic Association.<sup>16</sup>

As the Ladies Patriotic Association worked diligently within in Indiana, President Lincoln sought out relief for the war effort from across the Union. A wave of patriotism swept over the North as more and more troops were sent off to war against the Confederacy. These men had left behind daughters, wives, and mothers who wanted nothing more than to help aid the Union, too. On April 25, 1861, a meeting of the likes of the aforementioned women was held in New York in order to better organize the relief efforts of the Union; the Women's Central Association of Relief (WCAR) was born as result thereof.<sup>17</sup> Some of these women learned about WCAR through friends and family members; others were apart of the same sewing circle or taught alongside each other at primary schools. No matter the connection, they all had the same goal in mind- to contribute as much, if not more, to the war effort as their male counterparts.<sup>18</sup>

One woman of prevalence in attendance at that initial meeting was Elizabeth Blackwell, M.D. Blackwell was the first female physician in the United States of America and also served as the backbone in the creation of WCAR.<sup>19</sup> She helped to train nurses to send into Union Camps and tend to the injured. Blackwell also organized the collection of supplies from the homefront,

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<sup>16</sup> Winslow, Hattie L. 2011.

<sup>17</sup> Thompson, H. "U.S. Sanitary Commission: 1861." Social Welfare History Project. April 09, 2015. <https://socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/programs/health-nutrition/u-s-sanitary-commission-1861/>.

<sup>18</sup> McGrath, Jane. "How Ladies' Aid Associations Worked." How Stuff Works. June 04, 2009. <https://money.howstuffworks.com/economics/volunteer/organizations/ladies-aid-society2.htm>

<sup>19</sup> McGrath, Jane. 2009.

cash donations, and social fundraisers, but, perhaps most importantly, she and other WCAR leaders put pressure on Lincoln and his administration to form some sort of national outreach program that could go beyond the government's reigns in providing relief to the frontline.<sup>20</sup>

The United States Sanitary Commission was President Abraham Lincoln's response to Blackwell and the Women's Central Association of Relief's need for a national relief effort. The National Sanitary Commission was a private relief agency created on June 18, 1861, to support U.S. Army soldiers during the American Civil War.<sup>21</sup> It operated across the North, raising nearly \$25 million in supplies and monetary funds to help support Union forces during the war. The government could only do so much in providing for its troops; the USSC allowed concerned civilians to make up for any administrative shortcomings.<sup>22</sup>

With Lincoln's establishment of the U.S. Sanitary Commission, individual states began creating their own sectors in compliance with the need for infantry relief. Indiana Governor Oliver P. Morton ordered the Indiana division of the Sanitary Commission in 1862, a foundation that seeks to render proper goods and provide adequate services to Union soldiers in training, on the battlefield, and in hospitals. It helped to balance out the hardships of war for many Indiana troops. This commission was thought to be derived from the compassion, intelligence, and master-mindedness of Lucinda Burbank Morton herself, especially in consideration of her outreach work in the years before the Sanitary Commission's initial creation and the mission of the Ladies Patriotic Association.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> McGrath, Jane. 2009.

<sup>21</sup> Thompson, H. 2015.

<sup>22</sup> "Sanitary Commission Pennant Proclaimed Improved Conditions." American Civil War.com. 2017. [https://www.americancivilwar.com/sanitary\\_commission.html](https://www.americancivilwar.com/sanitary_commission.html).

<sup>23</sup> Reed, Sheila. "Oliver P. Morton, Indiana's Civil War Governor ." University of Southern Indiana, USI Publication Archives. 2016. [www.usi.edu/media/2939400/Oliver-Morton-Reed.PDF](http://www.usi.edu/media/2939400/Oliver-Morton-Reed.PDF).



The Indiana Sanitary Commission began its career of aid and relief after the battle of Fort Donaldson on the Kentucky-Tennessee border in February of 1862.<sup>24</sup> Between February of 1862 to December of 1864, approximately \$97,035.22 of cash contributions were collected from the Indiana home front. Over 300,000 more dollars worth of goods and supplies were also donated, totaling nearly \$469,402.11 in overall aid.<sup>25</sup> The Office of the Indiana Sanitary Commission wrote of these contributions in the Report of Indiana Sanitary Commission made to the Governor as:

“The people of Indiana read in this report not of what we [the government], but they have done. We point to the commission as work of their hands, assured that the increasing demands steadily made upon it will be abundantly supplied by the same generous hearts to which it owes its origins and growth, all of which is respectfully submitted.”<sup>26</sup>

Both the citizens of Indiana and the Indiana government were keenly aware of the contributions they were making to the war effort. The report made to Governor Morton also includes lists of influential members of the Commission, including special sanitary agents, collection agents, special surgeons, and female nurses. Of these notable entries, the female nurses had the most names compiled within its periphery. Twenty-five ladies operated under the eye of Mr. George Merritt, traveling to Nashville and beyond.<sup>27</sup> One woman, Mrs. E. E. George worked alongside General William Tecumseh Sherman and his troops during the March to the Sea.<sup>28</sup> She worked chiefly with the 15th Army Corps Hospital from Indiana to Atlanta and was

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<sup>24</sup> Holloway, W.R. “Report of the Indiana Sanitary Commission Made to the Governor, January 2, 1865”. Indiana Sanitary Commission. 1865. Indianapolis.

<sup>25</sup> Holloway, W.R. 1865.

<sup>26</sup> Holloway, W.R. 1865.

<sup>27</sup> Holloway, W.R. 1865.

<sup>28</sup> Holloway, W.R. 1865.

described by her fellow male soldiers as being “always on duty, a mother to all, and universally beloved, as an earnest, useful Christian Lady.”<sup>29</sup>

The superintendent of female nurses, Miss C. Annette Buckel, brought over 35 nurses to work in the Jeffersonville, Indiana and Louisville, Kentucky hospitals. Her address, experience, and administrative qualities were spoken of in the Commission Report to the Governor, citing that Buckel was a woman whose devotion the Union was deserving of the “utmost praise” from the Commission, her soldiers, and, consequently, her country.<sup>30</sup> Additionally, Miss Hannah Powell and Miss Arsinoe Martin of Goshen, Indiana gave their lives serving in the Union Hospital of Memphis, Tennessee in 1863. Their humanitarian contributions and patriotic sacrifices rang strong to those around them. Their legacies were pronounced as:

“Highly valued in the family and in society, they were not less loved and appreciated in their patient unobtrusive usefulness among the brave men, for whose service, in sickness and wounds, they had sacrificed so much. Lives so occupied, accord the highest assurance of peaceful and happy death; and they died triumphing in the faith of their Redeemer, exulting and grateful that they had devoted themselves to their suffering countrymen. Their memories, precious to every generous soul, will be long cherished by many a brave man and their example of self-denial and patriotic love and kindness, will be echoed in the lives of others who shall tread the same path.”<sup>31</sup>

For the first time in the history of the United States of America, women were seen as more than just mothers and wives; they were strong, they were competent, and they were contributing just as much as the Union men to the American Civil War. These testaments were not words of romance or attempts of courtship. They were professional expressions of admiration for their work on the frontline. The ultimate sacrifice was made by woman all across the North, and their patriotism was seen with a new light, not one marked by centuries of traditional marginalization

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<sup>29</sup> Holloway, W.R. 1865.

<sup>30</sup> Holloway, W.R. 1865.

<sup>31</sup> Holloway, W.R. 1865.

Following the creation of the Indiana Sanitary Commission, a convention was held on March 2, 1864, in which the Commission's delegates from all over the state met to discuss the furtherment of the ISC.<sup>32</sup> Governor Morton and the delegates moved to create a Committee on Finance and Committee on Reports to further guarantee the future success of the Indiana Sanitary Commission.<sup>33</sup> Reverend J. C. Reed, a friend of Lucinda Burbank Morton's, gave an address to notable members of the Commission, one that was later dispersed to his fellow Hoosiers, encouraging them to continue to uphold the relief effort for the war.<sup>34</sup>

At the convention, the likes of The Soldiers' Home and The Ladies' Home were also discussed. The Soldiers' Home Served as a depot in downtown Indianapolis for those men sick, injured, or wounded and trying to return to their homes after being dismissed from duty as a result of their said incapacitations.<sup>35</sup> The Home eventually turned into a rehabilitation center of sorts with nurses and relief efforts being sent to help aid Indiana soldiers. It served over 160, 790 men in their journeys back to their loved ones.<sup>36</sup>

The Ladies' Home was an ally to The Soldiers' Home, commonly referred to as the "Home for Soldiers' Wives."<sup>37</sup> It was an establishment created for the wives, mothers, daughters, and sisters of soldiers that were either passing through on their way to deployment or to find their battlefield friends, or for those women who were aiding or in search of their loved ones injured in battle.<sup>38</sup> The Ladies' Home provided warm meals and safe beds for the heart-stricken, Hoosier women trying to keep up with the effects of war. Lieutenant Greenwalt and his wife

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<sup>32</sup> Indiana Sanitary Convention. "Proceedings of the Indiana Sanitary Convention: held in Indianapolis, Indiana, March 2, 1864." Indianapolis: Indianapolis Journal Co. Printers. 1864.

<sup>33</sup> Indiana Sanitary Convention. 1864.

<sup>34</sup> Indiana Sanitary Convention. 1864.

<sup>35</sup> Indiana Sanitary Convention. 1864.

<sup>36</sup> Indiana Sanitary Convention. 1864.

<sup>37</sup> Indiana Sanitary Convention. 1864.

<sup>38</sup> Indiana Sanitary Convention. 1864.

watched after both the Soldiers' Home and the Ladies' Home; the couple was a dynamic duo of sorts, serving those who had suffered the greatest of losses with compassion and patriotism.<sup>39</sup>

The couple was also close friends with Governor Morton and Lucinda Burbank Morton. Lucinda Morton was often seen volunteering at the Ladies' Home, encouraging the cause and uplifting the broken spirits amongst those who were seeking shelter within the home.<sup>40</sup>

The Convention also gave note to the German Ladies' Aid Society of Madison, Indiana<sup>41</sup>. Lead by President Barbara Gautzschier and Secretary Susannah Muller, this division of female relief efforts was responsible for furnishing the entirety of the General Hospital in Madison. Located on the Ohio River, this hospital was often a primary destination for those sick and injured soldiers returning home from battle.<sup>42</sup> These ladies collected donations ranging from pillows to shoes to yards upon yards of calico. Despite the fact that the articles procured by German Ladies' Aid Society of Madison, Indiana did not go to the frontline of the Civil War, this establishment was critical in saving the lives of Hoosier soldiers.

Amongst other influential Hoosier women of the American Civil War such as Mrs. Greenwalt and Lucinda Burbank Morton was Dr. Mary F. Thomas. Thomas studied medicine in Wabash County and graduated from Penn's Medical College for Women in Philadelphia in 1854.<sup>43</sup> Thomas practiced in medical establishments in Richmond and Fort Wayne, Indiana, and she also worked with the Indiana Sanitary Commission during the Civil War. She treated soldiers on the frontline who had been wounded in the Battle of Vicksburg. Thomas also dispersed supplies amongst other doctors and nurses in various Union camps as she traveled alongside

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<sup>39</sup> Holloway, W.R. 1865.

<sup>40</sup> Indiana Sanitary Convention. 1864.

<sup>41</sup> Indiana Sanitary Convention. 1864.

<sup>42</sup> Indiana Sanitary Convention. 1864.

<sup>43</sup> Mitchell, Dawn. "Hoosier Women Aided Civil War Soldiers." The Indianapolis Star. March 23, 2015.

Indiana Infantries.<sup>44</sup> After the American Civil War ended, Thomas served as president of the Indiana Woman Suffrage Association and then went on to also serve one term as the president of the American Woman Suffrage Association. When Thomas died in 1888, she had four white, female suffrage leaders and two African-American women serve as her pallbearers, representing her fight for equality both in race and gender even after her death.<sup>45</sup>

Lovina McCarthy Streight was another prominent woman from Indiana who served the Union during the American Civil War. Her husband, Abel, was the commander of the 51st Indiana Volunteer Infantry, and when he and his troops were sent off to war, Streight and the couple's 5-year-old son went right along with the regiment.<sup>46</sup> Streight nursed the 51st Volunteer wounded men with dedication and compassion, earning her the title of "The Mother of the 51st."<sup>47</sup> Confederate troops captured Streight three times as wherever her husband and his men went, she followed, too, right up to the frontline of battles deep within the Confederacy. She was exchanged for Confederate Prisoners of War the first two times she was captured but, on the third time, Streight pulled a gun out of a layer in her petticoat.<sup>48</sup> She, consequently, escaped her capture and returned to her husband and son and the rest of the 51st Indiana Volunteer Infantry. In 1910, Streight passed away and received full military honors at her funeral in Crown Hill Cemetery which was attended by approximately 5,000 people, including 64 survivors of the 51st Volunteer Infantry.<sup>49</sup>

Governor Morton had requested, shortly after the outbreak of the American Civil War, for the help of the Sisters of the Holy Cross in South Bend, Indiana. He asked these women to

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<sup>44</sup> Mitchell, Dawn. 2015.

<sup>45</sup> Mitchell, Dawn. 2015.

<sup>46</sup> Meeker, Mary Jane. "Lovina Streight Research Files." The Indiana Historical Society Library. 1988.

<sup>47</sup> Meeker, Mary Jane. 1988.

<sup>48</sup> Mitchell, Dawn. 2015.

<sup>49</sup> Mitchell, Dawn. 2015.

serve as nurses for injured Indiana troops across the state border in Kentucky.<sup>50</sup> None of these women had any professional training as nurses yet, despite that, six sisters and Mother M. Angela made the journey to the South, per Morton's request. These sisters had no idea of the impact that they would make when, on December 24th of 1862, three of the women boarded the Union Navy's first hospital ship known as the Red Rover.<sup>51</sup> The South Bend Sisters of the Holy Cross would be the very women who served as the predecessor of the United States Navy Nurse Corps.<sup>52</sup>

As the American Civil War progressed, the issue of Confederate Refugees slowly began to arise. Women and children from the South were showing up within Indiana's state lines, fleeing their war-torn homes. They came to the Union in "conditions of extreme destitution" and without anything but the clothes on their backs.<sup>53</sup> The city of Indianapolis stepped up to take these refugees in, lead by members of the church and Lucinda Burbank Morton, herself. The Commission's report to the Governor in 1864 described the situation as:

"Humanity demanded that something should be done; and there seemed to be no agency at hand but the Commission to do anything, we therefore distributed to these sufferers small sums of money, and occasionally provisions, and we sent them, when they desired it, to places where they found employment and wages. These were acts of mercy not strictly within the scope of our charity; but seeing these persons lying about the depot [Ladies' and Soldiers' Homes] destitute, often sick and sometimes dying, we knew that the people, who with such enlarged and noble generosity have made us their treasures, would justify us in modern measures of relief."<sup>54</sup>

As more and more refugees continued to appear, a building was eventually put together to house and rehabilitate the sick and desperate women and children fleeing the Confederacy. Miss Mary

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<sup>50</sup> Mitchell, Dawn. 2015.

<sup>51</sup> Mitchell, Dawn. 2015.

<sup>52</sup> Mitchell, Dawn. 2015.

<sup>53</sup> Holloway, W.R. 1865.

<sup>54</sup> Holloway, W.R. 1865.

Venyard from Terre Haute, Indiana had served as a Union field nurse in Natchez, Mississippi for over a year when she was commissioned to return to Indiana and manage the refugee home.<sup>55</sup>

Female leaders of the American Civil War, including Lucinda Burbank Morton, Dr. Mary F. Thomas, and Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell, realized that not only was supporting the Union and the abolition movement detrimental to the preservation of the United States of America, but it was also important in their fight for equality. Many of the previously mentioned aid societies as well as a variety of the aforementioned women used their service in the American Civil War as a way to prove themselves and gather further support for women's rights. They used their patriotism as a tool to help the Union win the war, but these women also recognized that the leadership positions, administrative duties, frontline experience, and overall courage of every single female who contributed to the Union war effort meant something more than just the Civil War; it meant that they were worthy, and that, in and of itself, fueled the fire to further the American suffrage movement.

History has a habitual rapport of neglecting the influential women that both built and furthered society since the very early days of its creation. It, simply, leaves out the women who were just as imperative as their male counterparts because of the blatant fact that the idea of a patriarchal society is considered normal; female oppression, misrepresentation, and overall lack of remembrance is innately ingrained into the psyches of the everyday people of this world. Women have historically received such limited attention that the effects of the work of females from all over the world and from all parts of history are seen regularly in everyday life yet we do not actively know the names of those in need of thanks for their travails.

Lucinda Burbank Morton is a wondrous example of the historical disrememberment of women that plagues this world. Morton is most commonly known for being a governor's wife yet she

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<sup>55</sup> Holloway, W.R. 1865.

was personally responsible for endeavors of Union relief efforts in the American Civil War such as the Ladies Patriotic Association and the Indiana division of the U.S. Sanitary Commission. She worked prominently to help develop the young city of Indianapolis and push Indiana through its early years of statehood while, all the while, unapologetically serving President Abraham Lincoln and his Union in addition to fiercely supported the abolition movement.

Morton was not alone, however, in going unnoticed for her work in preserving the Union. Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell and the ladies of the Women's Central Association of Relief were the sole factors in pushing Lincoln and his administration to create the U.S. Sanitary Commission. Indiana's own Mrs. E. E. George marched with General Sherman to Savannah, saving those men wounded along the way. Fellow Hoosier native Miss C. Annette Buckel organized and oversaw over 35 nurses within Union hospitals while Miss Hannah Powell and Miss Arsinoe Martin gave the ultimate sacrifice for their country, only after saving hundreds of men. Mrs. Greenwalt, Barbara Gautzschier, and Susannah Muller all put in countless hours of work, organizing supplies and people to ensure the quality of care and comfortability of Union soldiers. Dr. Mary F. Thomas treated soldiers on the frontline of the Battle of Vicksburg; Lovina McCarthy Streight pulled a gun on her Confederate captures so that she could return to the 5th Indiana Volunteer Infantry and tend to her sick and injured men. The Sisters of the Holy Cross from South Bend, Indiana pathed the way for the U.S. Naval Nurse Corps, and Miss Mary Venyard of Terre Haute, Indiana oversaw hundreds of desperate women and children refugees fleeing the war-torn South.

These women saved the Union and created the United States of America as it is now known, but history has left them out of its story, banishing them to the scarce fine-print of specialized reports and one out of every hundred American Civil War accounts. They are forgotten not because their actions and contribution were of anything less, but because they were



women. Indiana is Indiana as a result of the lives of these aforementioned females- and many more whom were not included- yet their names are not remembered. Hoosier historiography has, indeed, neglected the legacies of many influential women and their crucial impacts, but that does not mean they are forgotten for the rest of time. They are understudied, yes, but by examining the stories, contributions, and modern effects of women like Lucinda Burbank Morton, their lives and legacies have the opportunity to enter the well-deserved limelight. The way history is written is not always the most accurate representation of the entirety of the parties involved yet in spite of that, reexamining the facts and dates and hidden details allow for a rewrite, one that gives credit where the credit is truly due.

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