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Abstract

In 1862 many citizens in Cincinnati feared an oncoming Confederate invasion after their successes in Kentucky. Although the siege never happened, it revealed major fault lines in the city's social and political makeup. The call for forces included both whites with rural roots, the "squirrel hunters," and the city's African American men, the "black brigade." Although the commanding Union General, Lew Wallace, welcomed all 95,000 volunteers who wished to fight for the defense of Cincinnati, Democratic Mayor George Hatch took a dim view of African American participation. The creation of fear propelled Cincinnati into action to build a defense against the Confederate invasion. This article offers an opportunity to look at the intersection of race and politics amid the Union Army's quest to secure one of the North's manufacturing and transportation hubs in the Ohio River Valley.

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