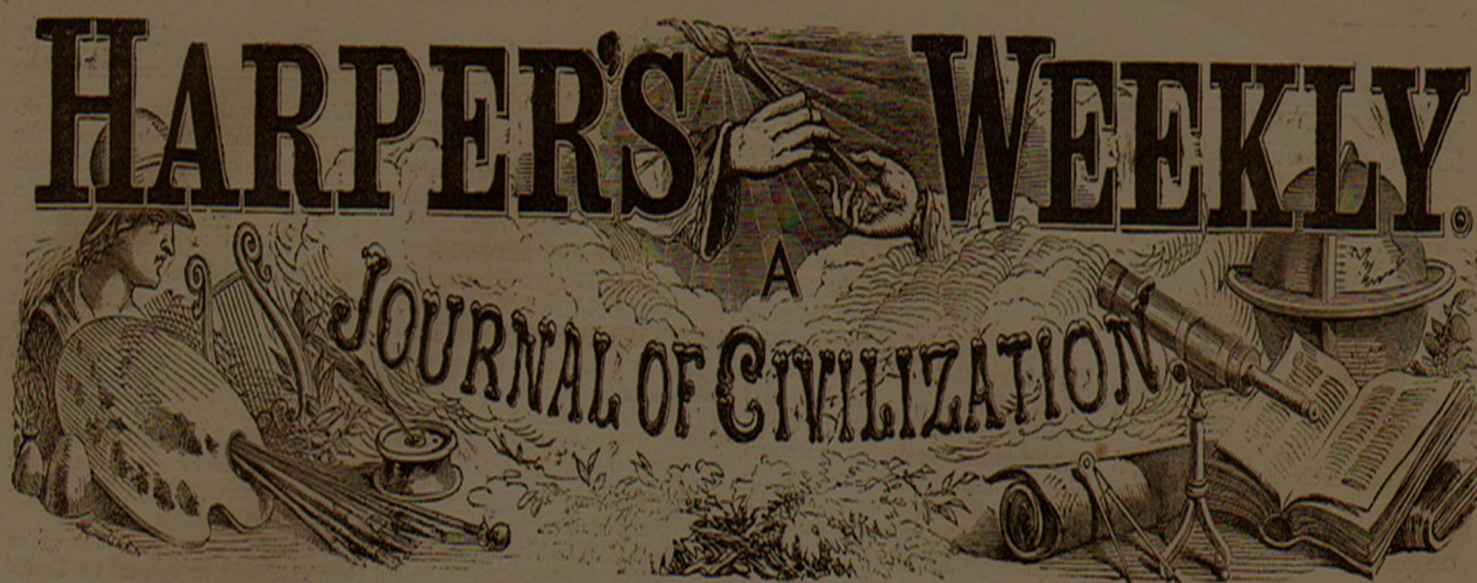


HARPER'S WEEKLY

A JOURNAL OF CIVILIZATION



The Civil War was fought in 10,000 places, from Valverde, New Mexico, and Tullahoma, Tennessee, to St. Albans, Vermont, and Fernandina on the Florida coast. More than 3 million Americans fought in it, and over 600,000 men, 2 percent of the population, died in it.

American homes became headquarters, American churches and schoolhouses sheltered the dying, and huge foraging armies swept across American farms and burned American towns. Americans slaughtered one another wholesale, right here in America in their own cornfields and peach orchards, along familiar roads and by waters with old American names.

In two days at Shiloh, on the banks of the Tennessee River, more American men fell than in all the previous American wars combined. At Cold Harbor, some 7,000 Americans fell in twenty minutes. Men who had never strayed twenty miles from their own front doors now found themselves soldiers in great armies, fighting epic battles hundreds of miles from home. They knew they were making history, and it was the greatest adventure of their lives.

The Civil War has been given many names: the War Between the States, the War Against Northern Aggression, the Second American Revolution, the Lost Cause, the War of the Rebellion, the Brothers' War, the Late Unpleasantness. Walt Whitman called it the War of Attempted Secession. Confederate General Joseph Johnston called it the War Against the States. By whatever name, it was unquestionably the most important event in the life of the nation. It saw the end of slavery and the downfall of a southern planter aristocracy. It was the watershed of a new political and economic order, and the beginning of big industry, big business, big government. It was the first modern war and, for Americans, the costliest, yielding the most American fatalities and the greatest domestic suffering, spiritually and physically. It was the most horrible, necessary, intimate, acrimonious, mean-spirited, and heroic conflict the nation has ever known.

Inevitably, we grasp the war through such hyperbole. In so doing, we tend to blur the fact that real people lived through it and were changed by the event. One hundred eighty-five thousand black Americans fought to free their people. Fishermen and storekeepers from Deer Isle, Maine, served bravely and died miserably in strange places like Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and Fredericksburg, Virginia. There was scarcely a family in the South that did not lose a son or brother or father.

As with any civil strife, the war was marked by excruciating ironies. Robert E. Lee became a legend in the Confederate army only after turning down an offer to command the entire Union force. Four of Lincoln's own brothers-in-law fought on the Confederate side, and one was killed. The little town of Winchester, Virginia, changed hands seventy-two times during the war, and the state of Missouri sent thirty-nine regiments to fight in the siege of Vicksburg: seventeen to the Confederacy and twenty-two to the Union.

Between 1861 and 1865, Americans made war on each other and killed each other in great numbers — if only to become the kind of country that could no longer conceive of how that was possible. What began as a bitter dispute over Union and States' Rights, ended as a struggle over the meaning of freedom in America. At Gettysburg in 1863, Abraham Lincoln said perhaps more than he knew. The war was about a "new birth of freedom."

1. Please post an *initial* response to these questions of at least 150 words
2. Reply (2 or 3 sentences) to at least 3 other students' initial postings.

If you are unsure how to use Discussion Board, click the "Tools" tab on your left to access the User Manual.