

13

Civil War

1861–1865



Library of Congress

• Union family in camp of Thirty-first Pennsylvania Infantry near Washington, D.C., 1862.

AMERICAN HISTORIES

Though born into slavery in 1818, by 1860 Frederick Douglass had become a celebrated orator, editor, and abolitionist. He ensured his fame in 1845 with publication of the *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*. In it, he described his experiences of slavery in Maryland, his defiance against his masters, and his eventual escape to New York in September 1838 with the help of Anna Murray, a free black servant.

Frederick and Anna married in New York and then moved to New Bedford, Massachusetts, and changed their last name to Douglass to avoid capture. But in 1841 Frederick began lecturing for the American Anti-Slavery Society, offering stirring accounts of his enslavement and escape. By publishing his *Narrative* four years later, Douglass made his capture even more likely, so in August 1845 he left for England, where wildly enthusiastic audiences attended his lectures and supporters raised funds to purchase his freedom. Douglass returned to Massachusetts in 1847, a truly free man.

A year later, Frederick moved to Rochester, New York, with Anna and their five children to launch his abolitionist paper, the *North Star*. Over the next decade, he became the most famous black abolitionist in the United States and an outspoken advocate of women's rights. He also broke with the Garrisonian branch of abolitionists by joining the Liberty Party and later the Free-Soil and Republican parties. He was thus well placed when war erupted in April 1861 to lobby President Lincoln to make emancipation a war aim and enlist African Americans in the Union army.

Frederick Douglass and
Rose O'Neal Greenhow



Douglass embraced electoral politics and the use of military force to end slavery. His greatest fear was that Lincoln was more committed to reconstituting the Union than to abolishing slavery. But after the president issued the Emancipation Proclamation in January 1863, Douglass spoke enthusiastically on its behalf. At the same time, he continued to believe that military service was essential for black men to demonstrate their patriotism. His stirring editorial "Men of Color, to Arms" was turned into a recruiting poster, and he urged his own sons to join the Massachusetts Fifty-fourth Colored Infantry, one of the first African American regiments. But Douglass also protested discrimination against black troops and lobbied for federal protections of black civil rights.

Like Douglass, Rose O'Neal was born on a Maryland plantation, but she was white and free. Her father was likely John O'Neal, a planter who was slain by a slave in 1817, when Rose was four years old. In early adolescence, she moved to Washington, D.C., with her older sister. They lived with an aunt who ran a fashionable boardinghouse near Capitol Hill. The boarders included John C. Calhoun, whose states' rights views Rose eagerly embraced. Intrigued by the lively political debates that marked the Jacksonian era, she was also schooled in the social graces. Charming and beautiful, Rose was welcomed into elite social circles, including invitations from Dolley Madison. In 1835 she married Robert Greenhow, a cultivated Virginian who worked for the State Department.

Rose O'Neal Greenhow quickly became a favorite Washington hostess. Like Dolley Madison, she entertained

congressmen, cabinet ministers, and foreign diplomats with a wide range of views. In the midst of this social and political whirl, Rose gave birth to four daughters. Yet she also remained deeply invested in her husband's career. She assisted Robert in the 1840s as he researched U.S. land claims in the Pacific Northwest. Ardent proslavery expansionists, the Greenhows supported efforts to acquire Cuba, and in 1850 they traveled to Mexico City to study California land claims. When Robert died in 1854, Rose moved into a smaller house in Washington but continued to entertain political leaders and sustained friendships with powerful men like President James Buchanan.

In May 1861, just as the Civil War commenced, a U.S. army captain about to join the Confederate cause recruited Greenhow to head an espionage ring in Washington, D.C. With her close ties to southern sympathizers working in government offices and her extensive social network, Greenhow gathered important intelligence on Union political and military plans. Although she initially avoided suspicion, by August Greenhow was investigated and placed under house arrest. When she continued to smuggle out letters, embarrassing Union officials, she was sent to the Old Capitol Prison in January 1862. Once again, Greenhow managed to transmit information and riled up the other prisoners. In June, she was exiled to Richmond, where Confederate president Jefferson Davis hailed her as a hero and awarded her \$2,500. •

photos: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University; image courtesy of Documenting the American South, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Libraries

THE AMERICAN HISTORIES of Frederick Douglass and Rose O'Neal Greenhow were shaped by the sectional conflict over slavery that culminated in the Civil War. Both were born on Maryland plantations, one as a slave and the other a daughter of slave owners. Both

honed their innate talents, one as an orator and a writer, the other as a hostess and gatherer of intelligence. And both embraced the Civil War as the last best hope for national salvation, one on the side of union and emancipation, the other on the side of secession and slavery. They were

among hundreds of thousands of Americans—men and women, black and white, North and South—who saw the war as a means to achieve their goals: a free nation, a haven for slavery, or a reunited country.

The Nation Goes to War

When Abraham Lincoln took office, seven states in the Lower South had already formed the Confederate States of America, and the threat of more secessions remained. Lincoln had promised not to interfere with slavery where it already existed, but many southern whites were unconvinced by such assurances. By seceding, the southern slaveholding class also proclaimed its unwillingness to become a permanent minority in the nation. Still, not all slave states were yet willing to cut their ties to the nation, and Northerners, too, disagreed about the consequences of secession and the appropriate response to it. Once fighting erupted, however, preparations for war became the primary focus in both the North and the South.

The South Embraces Secession

Confederate president Davis joined other planters in arguing that Lincoln's victory jeopardized the future of slavery and that secession was, therefore, a necessity. Advocates of secession contended that the federal government had failed to implement fully the Fugitive Slave Act and the *Dred Scott* decision. With Republicans in power, they were convinced that the administration would do even less to support southern interests. White Southerners also feared that a Republican administration might inspire a massive uprising of slaves. In the aftermath of John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry, one southern newspaper warned that the region was "slumbering over a volcano, whose smoldering fires may, at any quiet starry midnight, blacken the social sky with the smoke of desolation and death." Secession would allow whites to maintain greater control over the South's black population.

Slaveholders were also anxious about the loyalty of white Southerners who did not own slaves. "I mistrust our own people more than I fear all of the efforts of the Abolitionists," claimed a South Carolina politician in 1859. He went on to argue that by denouncing social and economic inequality, Republicans might recruit nonslaveholders to their party and thereby create a "contest for slavery . . . in the South between people of the South." Secession would effectively isolate southern yeomen from potential Republican allies.

When Lincoln was inaugurated, legislators in the Upper South still hoped a compromise could be reached. Although many Northerners believed that the secessionists needed to be punished, Lincoln sought to bring the Confederates back into the Union without using military force. Yet he also sought to demonstrate Union strength to curtail further secessions. He focused on **Fort Sumter** in South Carolina's Charleston harbor, where a small Union garrison was running low on food and medicine. On April 8, 1861, Lincoln dispatched ships to the fort but promised to use force only if the Confederates blocked his peaceful effort to send supplies.

Lincoln's action presented the Confederate government with a choice. It could attack the Union vessels and bear responsibility for starting a war, or it could permit a "foreign power" to maintain a fort in its territory. President Davis and his advisers chose the aggressive course, demanding the unconditional surrender of Fort Sumter before supplies arrived. The commanding officer refused, and on April 12 Confederate guns opened fire. Two days later, Fort Sumter surrendered. On April 15, Lincoln called for 75,000 volunteers to put down the southern insurrection.

The declaration of war led whites in the Upper South to reconsider secession. Some small farmers and landless whites in the region were drawn to Republican promises of free labor and free soil and remained suspicious of the goals and power of secessionist planters. Moreover, their land sat in the direct path of military engagement. Yet the vast majority of southern whites, rich and poor, defined their liberty in relation to black bondage. They feared that Republicans would free the slaves and introduce racial amalgamation in the South.

Explore

See Documents 13.1 and 13.2 for two sides of the secession debate in Georgia.

Fearing more secessions, Lincoln used the powers of his office to keep the border states that allowed slavery—Maryland, Delaware, Missouri, and Kentucky—in the Union. He waived the right of habeas corpus (which protects citizens against arbitrary arrest and detention), jailed secessionists, arrested state legislators, and limited freedom of the press. Despite these measures, four more slave states—North Carolina, Virginia, Tennessee, and Arkansas—seceded. Of these, Virginia was by far the most significant. It was strategically located near the nation's capital. Richmond was also home to the South's largest iron manufacturer, which could produce weapons and munitions. By June 1861, the Confederacy had moved its capital to Richmond in recognition of Virginia's importance.

DOCUMENTS 13.1 AND 13.2

Debating Secession in Georgia: Two Views

Immediately after Abraham Lincoln's election, several southern states began to discuss secession. Georgia called a special convention to debate the issue on November 13–14, 1860. Two of the principal speakers were Robert Toombs and Alexander Stephens, close friends who had met in Washington, D.C., as U.S. congressmen from Georgia. In the following selections from their speeches, Toombs argues in favor of secession, and Stephens urges a more cautious approach. In January 1861, Georgia became the fifth state to secede, two months before Lincoln took office. In February, Stephens was elected vice president of the Confederacy.

Explore

13.1 Robert Toombs |
For Secession, 1860

The stern, steady march of events has brought us in conflict with our non-slaveholding confederates upon the fundamental principles of our compact of Union. We have not sought this conflict; we have sought too long to avoid it. . . . The door of conciliation and compromise is finally closed by our adversaries, and it remains only to us to meet the conflict with the dignity and firmness of men worthy of freedom. . . .

. . . The South at all times demanded nothing but equality in the common territories, equal enjoyment of them with their property, to that extended to Northern citizens and their property—nothing more. . . . In 1790 we had less than eight hundred thousand slaves. Under our mild and humane administration of the

system they have increased above four millions. The country has expanded to meet this growing want, and Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Missouri have received this increasing tide of African labor; before the end of this century, at precisely the same rate of increase, the Africans among us in a subordinate condition will amount to eleven millions of persons. What shall be done with them? We must expand or perish. . . . The North understand it better—they have told us for twenty years that their object was to pen up slavery within its present limits—surround it with a border of free States, and like the scorpion surrounded with fire, they will make it sting itself to death.

Source: Frank Moore, ed., *The Rebellion Record: A Diary of American Events* (New York: G. P. Putnam and Henry Holt, 1864), 1362–63, 365.

When the first seven states seceded, outrage and anxiety escalated in the North. Textile manufacturers feared the permanent loss of the southern cotton crop, and bankers worried whether Confederates would repay their loans. In northeastern cities, stock prices plummeted, banks shut their doors, factories laid off workers, and unsold goods piled up on docks. But the firing on Fort Sumter prompted many Northerners to line up behind Lincoln's call for war. Manufacturers and merchants, once intent upon maintaining economic links with the South, now rushed to support the president, while northern workers, including immigrants, responded to Lincoln's call for volunteers. They assumed that the Union, with its greater resources and manpower, could

quickly set the nation right. New York editor Horace Greeley proclaimed, "Jeff Davis and Co. will be swingin' from the battlements at Washington at least by the 4th of July." A Philadelphia newspaper echoed, "This much-ado about nothing will end in a month." Greeley and his fellow journalists were sadly mistaken.

Both Sides Prepare for War

At the onset of the war, the Union held a decided advantage in resources and population. The Union states held more than 60 percent of the U.S. population, while the Confederate states held less than 40 percent. And the Confederacy included several million slaves who would not be armed for

Explore

13.2 Alexander Stephens | Against Secession, 1860

The first question that presents itself is, Shall the people of the South secede from the Union in consequence of the election of Mr. Lincoln to the Presidency of the United States? My countrymen, I tell you frankly, candidly, and earnestly, that I do not think they ought. . . . To make a point of resistance to the Government, to withdraw from it because a man has been constitutionally elected, puts us in the wrong. We are pledged to maintain the Constitution. Many of us have sworn to support it. Can we, therefore, for the mere election of a man to the Presidency, and that too in accordance with the prescribed forms of the Constitution, make a point of resistance to the Government, without becoming the breakers of that sacred instrument ourselves by withdrawing ourselves from it? Would we not be in the wrong? . . .

The Northern States, on entering into the Federal compact, pledged themselves [under the 1793 Fugitive Slave Law] to surrender such fugitives; and it is in disregard of their constitutional obligations that they have passed laws which even tend to hinder or inhibit the fulfillment of that obligation. . . . What ought we to do in view of this? . . . By the law of nations, you would have a right to demand the carrying out of this article of agreement, and I do not see that it should be otherwise with respect to the States of this Union; and in case it be not done, we would, by these principles, have the right to commit acts of reprisal on these faithless governments, and seize upon their property, or that of their citizens, wherever found. The States of this Union stand upon the same footing with foreign nations in this respect. But by the law of nations we are equally bound, before proceeding to violent measures, to set forth our grievances before the offending government, to give them an opportunity to redress the wrong. Has our State yet done this? I think not.

Source: Richard Malcolm Johnston and William Hand Browne, *Life of Alexander H. Stephens* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1878), 565–66, 575.

Interpret the Evidence

- What type of language does each man use to describe the North and the South?
- On what issues do they focus, and how do they describe the relationship of the South to the United States as a whole?

Put It in Context

Explain the importance of the issue of slavery to the arguments regarding secession that Toombs and Stephens make.

combat. The Union also outstripped the Confederacy in manufacturing and even led the South in agricultural production. The North's many miles of railroad track ensured greater ease in moving troops and supplies. And the Union could launch far more ships to blockade southern ports (Figure 13.1).

Yet Union forces were less prepared for war than were the Confederates, who had been organizing troops and gathering munitions for months. To match their efforts, Winfield Scott, general in chief of the U.S. army, told Lincoln he would need at least 300,000 men committed to serve for two or three years. But the president, who feared unnerving Northerners, asked for only 75,000 volunteers for three months. Recruits poured into state militias, and

thousands more offered their services directly to the federal government. Yet rather than forming a powerful national army led by seasoned officers, Lincoln left recruitment, organization, and training largely to the states. The result was disorganization and the appointment of new officers based more on political connections than on military expertise.

Confederate leaders also initially relied on state militia units and volunteers, but they prepared for a prolonged war from the start. Before the firing on Fort Sumter, President Davis signed up 100,000 volunteers for a year's service. The labor provided by slaves allowed a large proportion of white working-age men to volunteer for military service. And Southerners knew they were likely to be fighting mainly on

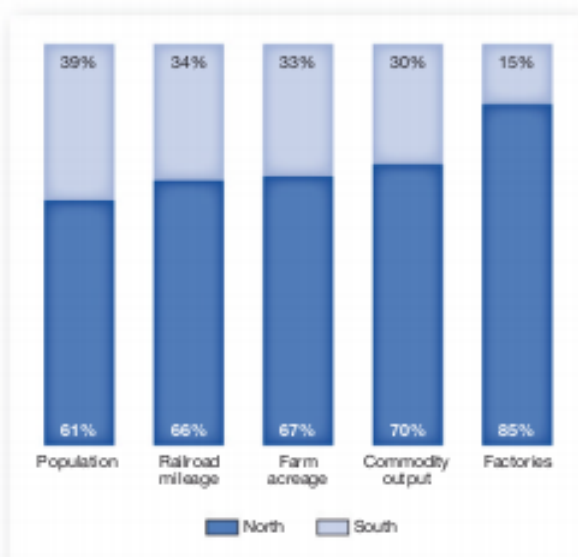


FIGURE 13.1 Economies of the North and South, 1860

This figure provides graphic testimony to the enormous advantages in resources the North held on the eve of the Civil War. Perhaps most surprisingly, the North led the South in farm acreage as well as factories and commodity output. Over four years of war, the North's significantly larger population would also prove crucial.

Source: Data from Stanley Engerman, "The Economic Impact of the Civil War," in *The Reinterpretation of American Economic History*, ed. Robert W. Fogel and Stanley Engerman (New York: Harper and Row).

home territory, where they had expert knowledge of the terrain. When the final four states joined the Confederacy, the southern army also gained important military leadership. It ultimately recruited 280 West Point graduates, including Robert E. Lee, Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson, James Longstreet, and others who had proved their mettle in the Mexican-American War.

The South's advantages were apparent in the first major battle of the war. But Confederate troops were also aided by information on Union plans sent by Rose Greenhow. Confederate forces were thus well prepared when 30,000 Union troops marched on northern Virginia on July 21, 1861. At the Battle of Bull Run (or Manassas), 22,000 Confederates repelled the Union attack. During the fighting, 800 men lost their lives, giving Americans their first taste of the carnage that lay ahead. Civilians from Washington who traveled to the battle site to view the combat had to flee for their lives to escape Confederate artillery.

Despite Union defeats at Bull Run and Wilson's Creek, Missouri, in August 1861, the Confederate army did not follow up with major strikes against Union forces. Meanwhile the Union navy began blockading the South's deepwater ports. When the armies settled into winter camps in 1861–1862, both sides recognized that the war was likely to be a long struggle demanding a far greater commitment of men and resources than anyone had imagined just months earlier.



Battle of Wilson's Creek

This illustration depicts the First Iowa Regiment, led by General Nathaniel Lyon, charging Confederate forces at the Battle of Wilson's Creek, near Springfield, Missouri, on August 10, 1861. Lyon was shot in the head and killed, becoming the first Union general to die in the war. The Confederates won the battle, marking their second victory together with Bull Run. Library of Congress

REVIEW & RELATE

What steps did Lincoln take to prevent war? Why were they ineffective?

What advantages and disadvantages did each side have at the onset of the war?

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Fighting for Union or against Slavery?

The Union and the Confederacy faced very different tasks in the war. The South had to defend its territory and force the federal government to halt military action. The North had to bring the Confederacy to its knees by invading the South and isolating it from potential allies abroad. While most northern leaders believed that the nation could be reunited without challenging the institution of slavery, enslaved Southerners immediately looked for ways to loosen their bonds. Meanwhile northern abolitionists worked to convince Lincoln and Congress that only emancipation could resolve the problems that had led to war.

Debating the Role of African Americans

The outbreak of war intensified debates over abolition. Some 225,000 African Americans lived in the free states, and many offered their services in the hopes that victory would lead to the emancipation of southern slaves. At a recruitment meeting in Cleveland, African American leaders proclaimed, "Today, as in the times of '76, we are ready to go forth and do battle in the common cause of our country." But Secretary of War Simon Cameron had no intention of calling up black soldiers, and some local officials prohibited African American recruitment meetings.

Northern optimism about a quick victory contributed to the rejection of black soldiers. Union leaders also feared that whites would not enlist if they had to serve alongside blacks. In addition, Lincoln and his advisers were initially wary of letting a war to preserve the Union become a war against slavery, and they feared that any further threat to slavery might drive the four slave states that remained in the Union into the Confederacy. African Americans and their supporters nevertheless believed that the war opened a door to freedom and that continued pressure might convince Union leaders to change their minds. As activist Amy Post proclaimed, "The abolitionists surely have a job to do now in influencing and directing the bloody struggle, that it may end in Emancipation."

For their part, southern slaves quickly realized that the presence of Union troops made freedom a distinct possibility. Enslaved workers living near battle sites circulated information on Union troop movements. Then, as slaveholders in Virginia began to send male slaves to more distant plantations for fear of losing them, some slaves chose to flee. Those who could headed to Union camps, where they provided labor as well as knowledge of the local terrain and the location of Confederate forces. Slave owners, in turn, followed fugitives into Union camps and demanded their return. Some Union commanders denied slaves entrance or returned them to their masters, but a few Union officers saw the value of embracing these fugitives.

On the night of May 23, 1861, for example, three Virginia slaves paddled upriver to the Union outpost at Fort Monroe, requesting sanctuary from General Benjamin Butler. Butler was no abolitionist, but he realized that slaves were valuable assets to the Union cause and so offered them military protection. He claimed fugitive slaves as **contraband** of war: property forfeited by the act of rebellion. As news of Butler's decision spread, more runaways sought refuge at Fort Monroe. Within four days, another sixty-seven slaves had arrived at "Freedom Fort."

Explore

See Document 13.3 for an account of life among freedpeople on the Sea Islands.

Lincoln endorsed Butler's policy as a legitimate tactic of war because it allowed the Union to strike at the institution of slavery without proclaiming a general emancipation that might prompt the border states with slaves to secede. Congress expanded Butler's policy. On August 6, 1861, it passed a confiscation act, proclaiming that any slave owner whose bondsmen were used by the Confederate army would lose all claim to those slaves. Although it was far from a clear-cut declaration of freedom, the act spurred the hopes of abolitionists.

Fighting for the Right to Fight

From the start, the Union army recruited a wide array of Americans. Indeed, nearly every ethnic and racial group served in Union ranks except African Americans. German and Irish immigrants; Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish Americans; native-born whites from the Northeast and Midwest; and Mexican American soldiers in the West all fought with the Union army. In an effort to eliminate this one exception, abolitionists had long argued that African Americans would make excellent soldiers, and Radical

DOCUMENT 13.3

Charlotte Forten | Life on the Sea Islands, 1864

As Union forces began receiving former slaves as “contraband,” many were settled in the Sea Islands of South Carolina, which were controlled by the Union army. Northern abolitionists sent teachers to these camps to help educate the former slaves. Charlotte Forten, who came from a prominent free African American family in Philadelphia, was a well-known abolitionist and the first black teacher to arrive in the camps in 1864. Forten’s impressions of the newly freed slaves appeared in an article she wrote for the *Atlantic Monthly*, a progressive literary and cultural magazine.

Explore

It was on the afternoon of a warm, murky day late in October that our steamer, the *United States*, touched the landing at Hilton Head. A motley assemblage had collected on the wharf—officers, soldiers, and “contrabands” of every size and hue: black was, however, the prevailing color. . . .

Little colored children of every hue were playing about the streets, looking as merry and happy as children ought to look—now that the evil shadow of Slavery no longer hangs over them. . . .

. . . The school was opened in September. Many of the children had, however, received instruction during the summer. It was evident that they had made very rapid improvement, and we noticed with pleasure how bright and eager to learn many of them seemed. . . .

These people are exceedingly polite in their manner towards each other, each new arrival bowing, scraping his feet, and shaking hands

with the others, while there are constant greetings, such as, “Huddy? How’s yer lady?” (“How d’ ye do? How’s your wife?”). The hand-shaking is performed with the greatest possible solemnity. There is never the faintest shadow of a smile on anybody’s face during this performance. The children, too, are taught to be very polite to their elders, and it is the rarest thing to hear a disrespectful word from a child to his parent, or to any grown person. They have really what the New-Englanders call “beautiful manners.” . . .

Daily the long-oppressed people of these islands are demonstrating their capacity for improvement in learning and labor. What they have accomplished in one short year exceeds our utmost expectations. . . . An old freedman said to me one day, “De Lord make me suffer long time. . . . But now we’s free. He bring us all out right at las’.”

Source: Charlotte Forten, “Life on the Sea Islands,” *The Atlantic Monthly*, May–June 1864, 587, 589, 592, 676.

Interpret the Evidence

- How does Forten describe the former slaves? What aspects of their behavior seem to strike her most forcefully?
- How is Forten trying to shape northern opinion about former slaves in this article?

Put It in Context

What resources could northern abolitionists and teachers provide for newly freed slaves?

Republicans in Congress emphasized the military advantages of allowing black enlistment. As Massachusetts senator Charles Sumner explained, “You will observe that I propose no crusade for abolition. [Emancipation] is to be presented strictly as a measure of military necessity.”

Meanwhile American Indians fought on both sides. The Comanches negotiated with both Union and

Confederate agents while raiding the Texas frontier for horses and cattle. The Confederacy gained the greatest support from slaveholding Indians who had earlier been removed from the Southeast. The Cherokee general Stand Watie led a pan-Indian force that battled alongside white Confederate troops on the western frontier. However, most members of the Cherokee and other southeastern tribes,

along with Osage, Delaware, and Seneca Indians, sided with the Union. Ely Parker, a Seneca sachem and engineer, rose to become a lieutenant colonel in the Union army, serving with General Ulysses S. Grant.

While some Indian regiments were rejected by state officials, African Americans were barred from enlisting by federal authority. In 1862, however, a series of military defeats helped transform northern attitudes. Although Union forces gained ground along the southern Mississippi River, they lost important battles farther north. In the spring of 1862, Confederate troops led by Stonewall Jackson won a series of stunning victories against three Union armies in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley. That June and July,

General Robert E. Lee fought General George B. McClellan to a standstill in the Seven Days Battle near Richmond. Then in August, Lee, Jackson, and General James Longstreet joined forces to defeat Union troops at the Second Battle of Bull Run (Map 13.1).

As the war turned against the North, the North turned against slavery. In April 1862, Congress approved a measure to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, symbolizing a significant shift in Union sentiment. During that bloody summer, Congress passed a second confiscation act, declaring that the slaves of anyone who supported the Confederacy should be "forever free of their servitude, and not again held as slaves." Finally, Congress passed a militia act that allowed



MAP 13.1 Early Civil War Battles, 1861–1862

In 1861 and 1862, the Confederate army stunned Union forces with a series of dramatic victories in Virginia and Missouri. However, the Union army won a crucial victory at Antietam (Sharpsburg); gained control of Confederate territory in Tennessee, Arkansas, and Mississippi; fended off Confederate efforts to gain New Mexico Territory; and established a successful naval blockade of Confederate ports.

“persons of African descent” to be employed in “any military or naval service for which they may be found competent.” Lincoln quickly signed these acts into law.

Yet support for the 1862 militia act also built on Union victories. In April 1862, a Union blockade led to the capture of New Orleans, while the **Battle of Shiloh** in Tennessee provided the army entrée to the Mississippi valley. There Union troops came face-to-face with slavery. Few of these soldiers were abolitionists, but many were shocked by what they saw. At some captured plantations, soldiers discovered instruments used to torture slaves. One Union soldier reported he had seen “enough of the horror of slavery to make one an Abolitionist forever.” Local blacks also provided valuable intelligence to Union officers.

The rising death toll also increased support for African American enlistment. The Battle of Shiloh was the bloodiest battle in American history up to that point. Earlier battles had resulted in a few hundred or even a few thousand casualties, but Shiloh raised the carnage to a new level. General Grant marveled, “I saw an open field . . . so covered with dead that it

would have been possible to walk across the clearing, in any direction, stepping only on dead bodies without a foot touching the ground.” As the war continued, such deadly battles became routine. The Union army would need every available man to sustain its effort against the Confederates.

Amid the roller coaster of victory and defeat, African Americans gave practical force to the 1862 militia act. In October 1862, a group of African American soldiers in the First Kansas Colored Volunteers repulsed Confederates at a battle in Missouri. Early the next year, another black regiment—the Massachusetts Fifty-fourth—attracted recruits from across the North. Frederick Douglass helped recruit a hundred men from New York State, including his three sons—Charles, Lewis, and Frederick Jr. In the South, Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson and other abolitionist officers organized former slaves into units like the First South Carolina Volunteers. By late 1863, tens of thousands of African American soldiers were serving with distinction and contributing to key northern victories.



President Lincoln Presenting the Emancipation Proclamation to His Cabinet

In this engraving, based on a painting by Francis B. Carpenter, Lincoln reads the first draft of his Emancipation Proclamation to his cabinet on September 22, 1862. To the left of Lincoln are Secretary of War Edwin Stanton (seated) and Secretary of the Treasury Salmon P. Chase, the two strongest supporters of the Proclamation. To the right of Lincoln are Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles (seated), Secretary of the Interior Caleb B. Smith, Secretary of State William Seward (seated), Postmaster General Montgomery Blair, and Attorney General Edward Bates (seated). Bates and Blair opposed the plan. Library of Congress

Union Politicians Consider Emancipation

By the fall of 1862, African Americans and abolitionists had gained widespread support for emancipation as a necessary goal of the war. In making a final decision, Lincoln and his cabinet had to consider numerous factors. Embracing abolition as a war aim would likely prevent international recognition of southern independence, a significant advantage; but it might also arouse deep animosity in the slaveholding border states and drive them from the Union.

International recognition was critical to the Confederacy. Support from European nations might persuade the North to accept southern independence. More immediately, recognition would ensure markets for southern agriculture and access to manufactured goods and war materiel. Confederate officials were especially focused on Britain, the leading market for cotton and a potentially important supplier of industrial products. President Davis considered sending Rose Greenhow to England to promote the Confederate cause among British textile workers and government officials, who were concerned about disruptions to their economy caused by the Union blockade.

Fearing that the British might capitulate to Confederate pressure, abolitionist lecturers toured Britain, reminding residents of their early leadership in the antislavery cause. The abolitionists recognized that the Union's formal commitment to emancipation could give the North an edge in the battle for public opinion and prevent diplomatic recognition of the Confederacy. By the summer of 1862, Lincoln agreed. But he wanted to proclaim emancipation as a sign of Union strength, not weakness, so he waited for a victory before making a formal announcement.

A series of Union defeats in the summer of 1862 had allowed Lee to march his army into Union territory in Maryland. On September 17, Longstreet joined Lee in a fierce battle along Antietam Creek as Union troops brought the Confederate advance to a standstill near the town of Sharpsburg. Union forces suffered more than 12,000 casualties and the Confederates more than 10,000, the bloodiest single day in U.S. warfare. Yet because Lee and his army were forced to retreat, Lincoln claimed Antietam as a great victory. Five days later, the president announced his preliminary **Emancipation Proclamation** to the assembled cabinet. He held firm despite a bloody defeat at Fredericksburg, Virginia, that December, when Confederate troops inflicted nearly 13,000 Union casualties while suffering only 5,000 of their own.

On January 1, 1863, Lincoln signed the final edict, proclaiming that slaves in areas still in rebellion were "forever free" and inviting them to enlist in the Union army. In many ways, the proclamation was a conservative document, applying only to slaves largely beyond the reach of

federal power. Its provisions exempted from emancipation the 450,000 slaves in the loyal border states, 275,000 slaves in Union-occupied Tennessee, and tens of thousands more in Louisiana and Virginia. The proclamation also justified the abolition of southern slavery on military, not moral, grounds.

Despite its limits, the Emancipation Proclamation prompted joyous "Watch Meetings" as abolitionists and free blacks met to give thanks as the edict took effect. At black churches across the North, crowds sang "Glory Hallelujah," "John Brown's Body," and "Marching On." If the Union proved victorious, the Emancipation Proclamation promised a total transformation of southern society.

REVIEW & RELATE

- What arguments did each side make in the debate over African American enlistment in the Union army?
- How and why did the Civil War become a war to end slavery?

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War Transforms the North and the South

For soldiers caught in the midst of battle, for civilians caught between warring armies, and for ordinary families seeking to survive the upheaval, political pronouncements did little to alleviate the dangers they faced. The extraordinary death tolls in Civil War battles shocked Americans on both sides. On the home front, the war created labor shortages and severe inflation in both the North and the South. It initially disrupted industrial and agricultural production as men were called to service, but the North recovered fairly quickly by building on its prewar industrial base and technological know-how. In the South, manufacturing increased, with some enslaved laborers pressed into service as industrial workers. But pulling slaves away from agricultural work only created more problems on plantations, which were already suffering labor shortages. These changing circumstances required women to take on new responsibilities on the home front and the battlefield. But the dramatic transformations also inspired dissent and protest as rising death tolls and rising prices made the costs of war ever clearer.

Life and Death on the Battlefield

Few soldiers entered the conflict knowing what to expect. A young private wrote home that his idea of combat had



Civil War Soldiers

The Civil War was the first major war to be photographed extensively. Photographers recorded many images of the aftermath of battle and the daily lives of soldiers. Soldiers also had portraits taken to send to loved ones. These images of a black and a white soldier suggest the pride that these men felt in their uniforms and their weapons. — both photos: Library of Congress

been that the soldiers “would all be in line, all standing in a nice level field fighting, a number of ladies taking care of the wounded, etc., etc., but it isn’t so.” **See Document Project 13: Civil War Letters, page 417.** Even where traditional forms of engagement did occur, improved weaponry turned them into scenes of carnage. Although individual soldiers could fire only a few times a minute, their Enfield and Springfield rifles were murderously effective at a quarter-mile distance. New conical bullets that expanded to fit the grooves of rifles proved far more accurate and more deadly than older round bullets. Minié balls that exploded on impact also increased fatalities. By mid-1863, the rival armies relied on heavy fortifications, elaborate trenches, and distant mortar and artillery fire when they could, but the casualties continued to rise, especially since the trenches proved to be a breeding ground for disease.

The hardships and discomforts of war extended beyond combat itself. As General Lee complained before the fighting at Antietam, many soldiers went into battle in ragged uniforms and without shoes. In the First Battle of Bull Run, a Georgia major reported that more than one

hundred of his men were barefoot, “many of whom left bloody foot-prints among the thorns and briars through which they rushed.” Rations, too, ran short. Food was dispensed sporadically and was often spoiled. Many Union troops survived primarily on an unleavened biscuit called hardtack as well as small amounts of meat and beans and enormous quantities of coffee. At least their diet improved over the course of the war as the Union supply system grew more efficient. Confederate troops, however, subsisted increasingly on cornmeal and fatty meat. As early as 1862, Confederate soldiers were gathering food from the haversacks of Union dead.

“There is more dies by sickness than gets killed,” a recruit from New York complained in 1861. Indeed, for every soldier who died as a result of combat, three died of disease. Measles, dysentery, typhoid, and malaria killed thousands who drank contaminated water, ate tainted food, and were exposed to the elements. Prisoner-of-war camps were especially deadly locales. Debilitating fevers in a camp near Danville, Virginia, spread to the town, killing civilians as well as soldiers. In the fall of 1862, yellow fever and malaria killed nearly five hundred in

Wilmington, Delaware, as infected soldiers built fortifications along the beaches.

African American troops fared worst of all. The death rate from disease for black Union soldiers was nearly three times greater than that for white Union soldiers, reflecting their generally poorer health upon enlistment, the hard labor they performed, and the minimal medical care they received in the field. Those who began their army careers in contraband camps fared even worse, with a camp near Nashville losing a quarter of its residents to death in just three months in 1864.

Even for white soldiers, medical assistance was primitive. Antibiotics did not exist, antiseptics were still unknown, and a perennial shortage of anesthetics meant that amputations were frequently conducted without it. Union soldiers did gain some access to better medical care from the **U.S. Sanitary Commission**, which was established by the federal government in June 1861 to improve and coordinate the medical care of Union soldiers. Nonetheless, a commentator accurately described most field hospitals as “dirty dens of butchery and horror.”

The need to bury the dead after battle was also a gruesome task. Early in the war, officers and enlisted men tried to recover and bury individual remains, but this practice proved unfeasible given the vast numbers killed. Instead, mass graves provided the final resting place for many soldiers on both sides. As the horrors of battle sank in and enlisted men discovered the inadequacies of food, sanitation, and medical care, large numbers of soldiers deserted. As the number of volunteers declined and the number of deserters rose, both the Confederate and the Union governments were eventually forced to institute conscription laws to draft men into service.

Explore

See Document 13.4 for an example of how photography brought the horrors of war home to civilians.

The Northern Economy Booms

As the war dragged on, the North's economic advantages became more apparent. The Union could provide more arms, food, and clothing to its troops and more of the necessities of life for families back home. Indeed, the Civil War quickened the industrial development of the North that had begun in the early nineteenth century. By 1860 manufacturing establishments in the region outnumbered those in the South six to one, with 1.3 million industrial workers in the North compared with only 110,000 in the South. Northern factories flourished as they turned out weapons, ammunition, blankets, clothing, and shoes, and shipyards built the fleets that blockaded southern ports.

Initially, the effects of the war on northern industry were little short of disastrous. Raw cotton for textiles was no longer available, southern planters stopped ordering shoes, and trade fell off precipitously in seaport cities. By 1863, however, the economic picture had improved dramatically. Coal mining and iron production boomed in Pennsylvania. In New England, woolen manufacturing replaced cotton, and the shoe industry thrived on orders from the army. Merchants dealing in war materiel made particularly handsome profits.

The economic boom was linked to a vast expansion in the federal government's activities. Direct orders from the War Office for blankets, firearms, boots, and other goods fueled the industrial surge. The government also granted large contracts to northern railroads to carry troops and supplies. With southern Democrats out of federal office, Congress increased the protection of northern industries by passing a steep tariff on imported manufactured goods. The government also hired thousands of “sewing women,” who worked under contract in their homes (often in crowded tenements) to make uniforms for Union soldiers. Other women joined the federal labor force as clerical workers, who sustained the expanding bureaucracy by handling the increasing amounts of government-generated paperwork.

That paperwork multiplied exponentially when the federal government created a national currency and a national banking system. Before the Civil War, private banks (chartered by the states) issued their own banknotes, which were used in most economic transactions. During the war, Congress revolutionized this system, giving the federal government the power to create currency, issue federal charters to banks, and take on national debt (which totaled \$2 billion by the war's end). The government used its new powers to flood the nation with treasury bills, commonly called **greenbacks**. The federal budget mushroomed as well—from \$63 million in 1860 to nearly \$1.3 billion in 1865. By the end of the war, the federal bureaucracy had grown to be the nation's largest single employer.

These federal initiatives provided a tremendous stimulus to industry, and northern manufacturers greeted them, on the whole, with enthusiasm. But they faced one daunting problem: a shortage of labor. Over half a million workers left their jobs to serve in the Union army, and others were hired by the expanding federal bureaucracy. Manufacturers dealt with the labor shortage primarily by mechanizing more tasks and by increasing the employment of native-born women and children and recently arrived immigrants. Mechanization advanced quickly in the clothing and shoe industries, allowing more jobs to be filled by unskilled or semiskilled workers. Industrialists also formed organizations such as the Boston Foreign

DOCUMENT 13.4

Timothy H. O'Sullivan | Burial of Federal Dead, Fredericksburg, Virginia, May 1864

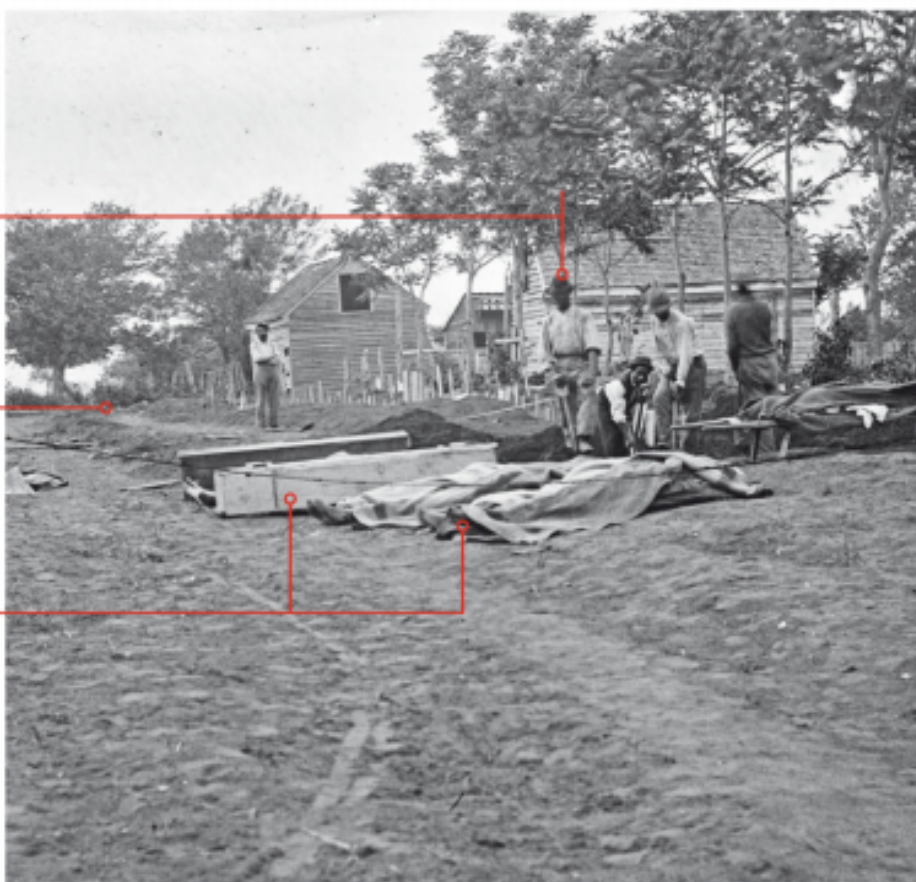
As the first war to be photographed extensively, the Civil War offered civilians new perspectives on the horrors of battle. Exhibited in the studios of photographers such as Mathew Brady in New York City, urban residents could view the carnage of war in stunning detail. This image was taken by Timothy H. O'Sullivan, an Irish-born photographer who worked with Brady after serving in the Union army. It captures a Union burial team near Fredericksburg during a period of intense fighting in northern Virginia.

Explore

Why were black Union soldiers, like those pictured here, often assigned to bury the dead?

How does this photograph represent the boundary between the battlefield and the home front?

What does this image suggest about the different experiences of officers and enlisted men even after death?



Library of Congress

Put It in Context

How might images such as this one affect civilian attitudes toward the war?

Emigrant Aid Society to encourage European migration, which had fallen off sharply in the first two years of the war. By 1863 the number of immigrants—mostly Irish, German, and British—had reached pre-1860 levels and continued to increase. Combining the lower wages paid to women and immigrants with production speedups, manufacturers improved their profits while advancing the Union cause.

Urbanization and Industrialization in the South

Although Southerners had gone to war to protect an essentially rural lifestyle, several factors encouraged the growth of industry and cities during the war. The creation of a large governmental and military bureaucracy brought thousands of Southerners to the Confederate capital of Richmond. Refugees merely trickled into cities during the early years of the war, but by 1863 they were flooding Atlanta, Savannah, and Mobile.

Industrialization also contributed to urban growth. Military necessity spurred southern industrialization. At the beginning of the war, the South contained only 15 percent of the factories in the United States. But unable to buy industrial goods from the North and limited in its trade with Europe, the South was forced to industrialize. By January 1863, the huge Tredegar Iron Works in Richmond employed more than 2,500 men, black and white. A factory to produce cannons opened in Selma, Alabama, where more than 10,000 people worked in war industries. According to a local newspaper, clothing and shoe factories had “sprung up almost like magic” in Natchez and Jackson, Mississippi. War widows and orphans, enslaved blacks, and white men too old or injured to fight were recruited for industrial labor in many cities.

The vast expansion of the South’s cities and industry enhanced class consciousness during the war. When Virginia legislators introduced a bill in the fall of 1863 to control food prices, Richmond workers hailed it by voicing their resentment toward the rich. “From the fact that he consumes all and produces nothing,” they proclaimed, “we know that without [our] labor and production the man with money could not exist.” Workers also criticized lavish balls hosted by the wives of wealthy industrialists, planters, and politicians during the war. Women like Mary Boykin Chesnut, a planter’s wife, insisted that such events were necessary to maintain morale and demonstrate that the South was far from defeated. But the *Richmond Enquirer* captured the views of the laboring class, arguing that these events were “shameful displays of indifference to national calamity . . . a mockery of the misery and desolation that covers the land.”

Women Aid the War Effort

Women of all classes contributed to the Union and Confederate war effort in numerous ways. Thousands filled jobs in agriculture, industry, and the government that were traditionally held by men. Others sought to assist the war effort more directly, by serving as nurses, spies, couriers, or soldiers; gathering supplies; and lobbying to influence government policies. Although Rose Greenhow and a few other women were recruited as spies early in the conflict, most military and political officials initially opposed women’s direct engagement in the war. Yet so many women organized relief efforts early on that the federal government organized the U.S. Sanitary Commission to coordinate their efforts. By 1862 tens of thousands of women had volunteered funds and assistance through hundreds of local chapters across the North and Midwest. They hosted fund-raising fairs, coordinated sewing and knitting circles, rolled bandages, and sent supplies to the front lines. With critical shortages of medical staff, some female nurses and doctors eventually gained acceptance in northern hospitals and field camps. Led by such memorable figures as Clara Barton, Mary Ann “Mother” Bickerdyke, and Dr. Mary Walker, northern women almost entirely replaced men as military nurses by the end of the war.

In the South, too, much of the medical care was performed by women. But without a government-sanctioned body to coordinate efforts and lobby for resources, women were left largely to their own devices, and nursing was never recognized as a legitimate profession for them. As a result, a Confederate soldier’s chances of dying from wounds or disease were even greater than those of his Union counterpart. Nonetheless, southern women worked tirelessly to supply soldiers with clothes, blankets, munitions, and food. But this work, too, was often performed locally and by individuals rather than as part of a coordinated Confederate effort. For example, Ann Cobb, the wife of a Georgia officer, went door-to-door among neighbors to gather provisions for her husband’s eighty-man unit.

Some Union and Confederate women played even more unusual roles in the war. A few dozen women joined Greenhow in gathering information for military and political authorities. One of the most effective on the Union side was the former fugitive Harriet Tubman. She worked as a spy in South Carolina from 1862 to 1864 and regularly secured military intelligence from slaves living behind Confederate lines. Even more women served as couriers, carrying messages across battle lines to alert officers of critical changes in military orders or in the opponent’s position. In addition, at least four hundred women disguised themselves as men and fought as soldiers; the identities of many were discovered only after they were wounded in battle.



Dr. Mary E. Walker

Dr. Mary E. Walker received her medical degree from Syracuse Medical College and became the first female army surgeon. Wearing bloomers (pants under a skirt), she assisted soldiers and civilians in numerous battlefield areas. Captured by Confederate troops in 1864, Walker soon returned to Union ranks. She was the first woman awarded the Medal of Honor for military service. Library of Congress

Finally, abolitionist women sought to influence federal wartime policies. Following the Emancipation Proclamation, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Lucy Stone founded the **Women's National Loyal League** and launched a massive petition drive to broaden Lincoln's policy. Collecting 260,000 signatures, two-thirds of them from women, the League demanded a congressional act "emancipating all persons of African descent" everywhere in the nation.

Dissent and Protest in the Midst of War

While the Women's National Loyal League lobbied Congress for universal emancipation, other Northerners wondered whether defeating the Confederacy was worth

the cost. Families were hard hit as wages fell and prices rose, and many Northerners cared more about the safe return of their husbands and sons than the fate of slavery. As the war dragged on, these concerns led to a rising tide of dissent and protest.

Despite the expanding economy, northern farmers and workers suffered tremendously during the war. Women, children, and old men took over much of the field labor in the Midwest, trying to feed their families and produce sufficient surplus to supply the army and pay their mortgages and other expenses. In the East, too, inflation eroded the earnings of factory workers, servants, and day laborers. As federal greenbacks flooded the market and military production took priority over consumer goods, prices climbed about 20 percent faster than wages. While industrialists garnered huge profits, railroad stocks leaped to unheard-of prices, and government contractors made huge gains, ordinary workers suffered. A group of Cincinnati seamstresses complained to President Lincoln in 1864 about employers "who fatten on their contracts by grinding immense profits out of the labor of their operatives." Although Republicans pledged to protect the rights of workers, employers successfully lobbied a number of state legislatures to pass laws prohibiting strikes. The federal government, too, proved a better friend to business than to labor. When workers at the Parrott arms factory in Cold Spring, New York, struck for higher wages in 1864, the government sent in troops, declared martial law, and arrested the strike leaders.

Discontent intensified when the Republican Congress passed a draft law in March 1863. The **Enrollment Act** provided for draftees to be selected by an impartial lottery, but a loophole allowed a person with \$300 to pay the government in place of serving or to hire another man as a substitute. Many workers deeply resented the draft law's profound inequality. Some also opposed the emancipation of slaves who, they assumed, would compete for scarce jobs once the war ended.

Dissent turned to violence in July 1863 when the new draft law went into effect. Riots broke out in cities across the North. In New York City, where inflation caused tremendous suffering and a large immigrant population solidly supported the Democratic machine, implementation of the draft triggered four days of the worst rioting Americans had ever seen. Women and men—many of them Irish and German immigrants—attacked Protestant missionaries, Republican draft officials, and wealthy businessmen. Homes in wealthy neighborhoods were looted, but the free black community became the rioters' main target. Rioters lynched at least a dozen African Americans and looted and burned the city's Colored Orphan Asylum. The violence ended only when Union



New York City Draft Riots, July 1863

Between July 13 and 16, 1863, riots broke out in New York City against the Enrollment Act. Blaming African Americans for the war, working-class mobs lynched, beat, and mutilated dozens of black men. At least 120 civilians were killed and another 2,000 injured. This illustration shows the *New York Tribune*, an abolitionist newspaper, under attack from rioters. Federal troops were eventually called in to restore peace. Private Collection/Peter Newark American Pictures/The Bridgeman Art Library

troops put down the riot by force. By then, more than one hundred New Yorkers lay dead.

A more prolonged battle raged in Missouri, where Confederate sympathizers never reconciled themselves to living in a Union state. From the beginning of this “inner civil war,” pro-southern residents formed militias and staged guerrilla attacks on Union supporters. The militias, with the tacit support of Confederate officials, claimed thousands of lives and forced the Union army to station troops in the area. The militia members hoped that Midwesterners, weary of the conflicts, would elect peace Democrats and end the war.

Northern Democrats saw the widening unrest as a political opportunity. Although some Democratic leaders supported the war effort, many others—whom opponents called **Copperheads**, after the poisonous snake—rallied behind Ohio politician Clement L. Vallandigham in opposing the war. Presenting themselves as the “peace party,” these Democrats enjoyed considerable success in eastern cities where inflation was rampant and immigrant workers were caught between low wages and military service. The party was also strong in parts of the Midwest where sympathy for the southern cause and antipathy to African Americans ran deep.

In the South, too, some whites expressed growing dissatisfaction with the war. In April 1862, Jefferson Davis had signed the first conscription act in U.S. history, inciting widespread opposition. The concept of a national draft undermined the southern tradition of states’ rights. As in the North, men could hire a substitute if they had enough money, and an October 1862 law exempted men owning twenty or more slaves from military service. Although the exemption was supposedly a response to growing

unruliness among slaves in the absence of masters, in practice it meant that large planters, many of whom served in the Confederate legislature, had exempted themselves from fighting. As one Alabama farmer fumed, “All they want is to get you pumped up and go to fight for their infernal negroes, and after you do their fighting you may kiss their hine parts for all they care.”

Small farmers were also hard hit by policies that allowed the Confederate army to take whatever supplies it needed. The army’s forced acquisition of farm produce intensified food shortages that had been building since early in the war. The southern economy was rooted in cash crops rather than foodstuffs. Quantities of grain and livestock were produced in South Carolina, central Virginia, and central Tennessee, but by 1863 the latter two areas had fallen under Union control. The Union blockade of port cities and the lack of an extensive railroad or canal system in the South limited the distribution of what food was available. Hungry residents of the Shenandoah Valley discovered that despite military victories there, food shortages worsened as Confederate troops ravaged the countryside.

Food shortages drove up prices on basic items like bread and corn, while the Union blockade and the focus on military needs dramatically increased the price of other consumer goods. As the Confederate government issued more and more treasury notes to finance the war, inflation soared 2,600 percent in less than three years. Food riots, often led by women, broke out in cities across the South, including the Confederate capital of Richmond.

Conscription, food shortages, and inflation took their toll on support for the Confederacy. The devastation of the war itself added to these grievances. Most

battles were fought in the Upper South or along the Confederacy's western frontier, where small farmers saw their crops, animals, and fields destroyed. A phrase that had seemed cynical in 1862—"A rich man's war and a poor man's fight"—became the rallying cry of the southern peace movement in 1864. The Washington Constitutional Union, a secret peace society with a large following among farmers, elected several members to the Confederate Congress. Another secret organization centered in North Carolina took more drastic measures, providing Union forces with information on southern troop movements and encouraging desertion by Confederates. In mountainous regions of the South, draft evaders and deserters formed guerrilla groups that attacked draft officials and actively impeded the war effort. In western North Carolina, some women hid deserters, raided grain depots, and burned the property of Confederate officials.

When slaveholders led the South out of the Union in 1861, they had assumed the loyalty of yeomen farmers, the deference of southern ladies, and the privileges of the southern way of life. Far from preserving social harmony and social order, however, the war undermined ties between elite and poor Southerners, between planters and small farmers, and between women and men. Although most white Southerners still supported the Confederacy in 1864 and internal dissent alone did not lead to defeat, it did weaken the ties that bound soldiers to their posts in the final two years of the war.

REVIEW & RELATE

What were the short- and long-term economic effects of the war on the North?

How did the war change the southern economy? What social tensions did the war create in the South?

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The Tide of War Turns

In the spring of 1863, Lee's army defeated a Union force twice its size at Chancellorsville, Virginia, setting the stage for a Confederate thrust into Pennsylvania. Yet Lee's decision to go on the offensive ultimately proved the Confederacy's undoing. Even as draft riots erupted across the North in July 1863, the Union won two decisive military victories: at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, and Vicksburg, Mississippi. These victories improved northern morale while devastating Confederate hopes. At the same

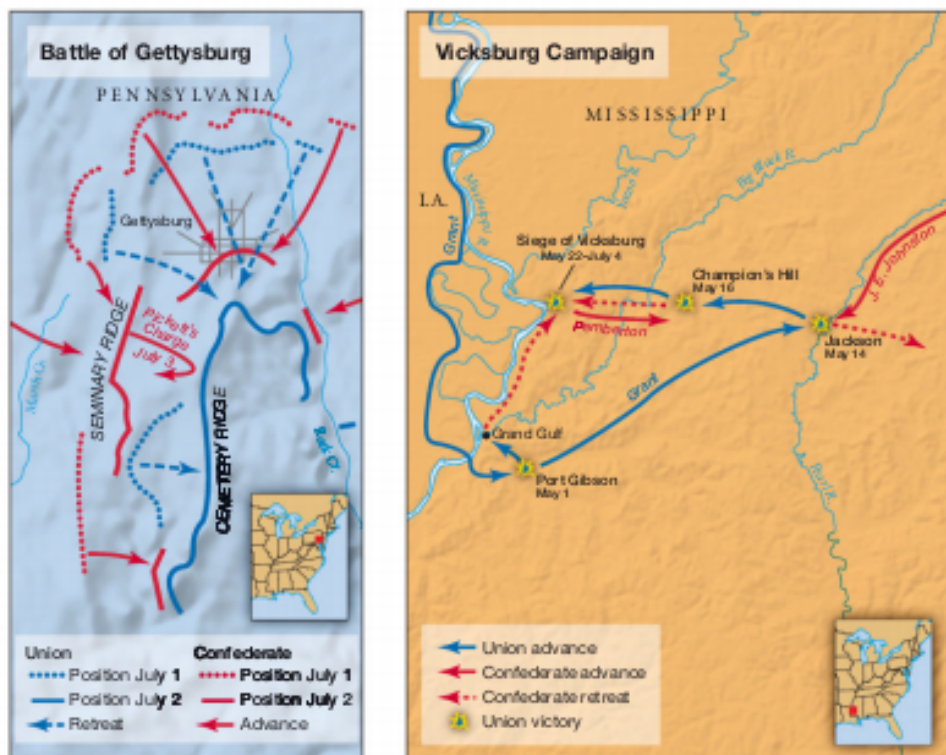
time, the flood of African Americans, including former slaves, into the Union army transformed the very meaning of the war. In late 1864 and early 1865, the momentum favored the Union, and the South was forced to consider prospects for peace.

Key Victories for the Union

In mid-1863, Confederate commanders believed the tide was turning in their favor. Following victories at Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville, General Lee launched an invasion of northern territory. While the Union army maneuvered to protect Washington, D.C., from Lee's advance, General Joseph Hooker resigned as head of the Union army. When Lincoln appointed George A. Meade as the new Union commander, the general immediately faced a major engagement at **Gettysburg**, Pennsylvania. If Confederates won a victory there, European countries might finally recognize the southern nation and force the North to accept peace.

Neither Lee nor Meade set out to launch a battle in this small Pennsylvania town. But Lee was afraid of outrunning his supply lines, and Meade wanted to keep Confederates from gaining control of the roads that crossed at Gettysburg. So on July 1, fighting commenced, with Lee pushing Union forces to the south of town. The Union vanguard managed to hold the ground along Cemetery Ridge until more troops arrived the following day. Although Confederate troops suffered heavy losses on July 2, Lee believed that Union forces were spread thin and ordered General George Pickett to launch a frontal assault on July 3 (Map 13.2). But Pickett's men were mowed down as they crossed an open field. The battle was a disaster for the South: More than 4,700 Confederates were killed, including a large number of officers; another 18,000 were wounded, captured, or missing. Although the Union suffered similar casualties, it had more men to lose, and it could claim victory.

As a grieving Lee retreated to Virginia, the South suffered another devastating defeat. Troops under General Ulysses S. Grant had been pounding Vicksburg, Mississippi, for months. In May 1863, Grant sent his men in a wide arc around the city and attacked from the east, setting the stage for a six-week siege. Although civilians refused to leave and even hid out in caves to outlast the Union barrage, Confederate troops were forced to surrender the city on July 4. This victory was even more important strategically than Gettysburg (Map 13.2). Combined with a victory five days later at Port Hudson, Louisiana, the Union army now controlled the entire Mississippi valley, the richest plantation region in the South. This series of victories also effectively cut off the Confederacy from Louisiana, Arkansas, and Texas, ensuring Union control of the West. In



MAP 13.2 Battles of Gettysburg and Vicksburg, 1863

The three-day battle in Gettysburg and the six-week siege of Vicksburg led to critical victories for the Union. Together, these victories forced General Lee's troops back into Confederate territory and gave the Union control of the Mississippi River. Still, the war was far from over. Confederate troops controlled the southern heartland, and Northerners wearied of the ever-increasing casualties.

November 1863, Grant's troops achieved a major victory at Chattanooga, opening up much of the South's remaining territory to invasion. Thousands of slaves deserted their plantations, and many joined the Union war effort.

As 1864 dawned, the Union had twice as many forces in the field as the Confederacy, whose soldiers were suffering from low morale, high mortality, and dwindling supplies. Although some difficult battles still lay ahead, the war of attrition (in which the larger, better-supplied Union forces slowly wore down their Confederate opponents) had begun to pay dividends.

The changing Union fortunes increased support for Lincoln and his congressional allies. Union victories and the Emancipation Proclamation also convinced Great Britain not to recognize the Confederacy as an independent nation. And the heroics of African American soldiers, who in 1863 engaged in direct and often brutal combat against southern troops, encouraged wider support for emancipation. Republicans, who now fully embraced abolition as a war aim, were nearly assured the presidency and a congressional majority in the 1864 elections.

Northern Democrats still campaigned for peace and the readmission of Confederate states with slavery intact. They nominated George B. McClellan, the onetime Union commander, as their candidate for president. McClellan attracted working-class and immigrant voters who traditionally supported the Democrats and who bore the heaviest burdens of the war. But Democratic hopes for victory in November were crushed when Union general William Tecumseh Sherman captured Atlanta, Georgia, just two months before the election. Lincoln and the Republicans won easily, giving the party a clear mandate to continue the war to its conclusion.

African Americans Contribute to Victory

Lincoln's election secured the eventual downfall of slavery. Yet neither the president nor Congress eradicated human bondage on their own. From the fall of 1862 on, African Americans enlisted in the Union army and helped ensure that nothing short of universal emancipation would be the outcome of the war. By the spring of 1865, nearly 200,000



The 107th U.S. Colored Infantry Band

The 107th U.S. Colored Infantry Band was photographed at Fort Corcoran in Arlington, Virginia. These 20 African American soldiers with their musical instruments were among the nearly 200,000 black men who volunteered for military service and served as soldiers and sailors to prove their manhood and their worthiness for full citizenship. Some 37,000 black soldiers died during the Civil War. Library of Congress

African Americans were serving in the Union army and navy. Private Thomas Long, a former slave serving with the First South Carolina Volunteers, explained the connection between African American enlistment and emancipation: "If we hadn't become sojers, all might have gone back as it was before; our freedom might have slipped through de two houses of Congress and President Linkum's four years might have passed by and notin' been done for us. But now tings can neber go back, because we have showed our energy and our courage and our naturally manhood."

In the border states, which were exempt from the Emancipation Proclamation, enslaved men were adamant about enlisting since those who served in the Union army were granted their freedom. Because of this provision, slaveholders in the border states did everything in their power to prevent their slaves from joining the army, including assault and even murder. Despite these efforts, between 25 and 60 percent of military-age enslaved men in the four border states joined the Union army and quickly distinguished themselves in battle. By the end of the war, approximately 37,000 black soldiers had given their lives for freedom and the Union.

Yet despite their courage and commitment, black soldiers felt the sting of racism. They were segregated in camps, given the most menial jobs, and often treated as

inferiors by white recruits and officers. Many blacks, for instance, were assigned the gruesome and exhausting task of burying the dead after grueling battles in which they had fought alongside whites. Particularly galling was the Union policy of paying black soldiers less than whites were paid. African American soldiers openly protested this discrimination even after a black sergeant who voiced his views was charged with mutiny and executed by firing squad in February 1864. An African American corporal wrote to Lincoln, describing the blood black troops had shed for the Union and asking, "We have done a Soldier's Duty. Why can't we have a Soldier's pay?" The War Department finally equalized wages in June 1864.

One of African American soldiers' primary concerns was to liberate slaves as Union armies moved deeper into the South. During 1863 and 1864, thousands more slaves headed for Union lines, joining the "contraband" who had escaped earlier in the war. Even those forced to remain on plantations realized that Union troops and freedom were headed their way. In areas close to Union lines, they talked openly of the advancing army. "Now they gradually threw off the mask," a slave remembered of this moment, "and were not afraid to let it be known that the 'freedom' in their songs meant freedom of the body in this world."

The Final Battles and the Promise of Peace

In the spring of 1864, the war entered its final stage. That March, Lincoln placed General Grant in charge of all Union forces, and he embarked on a strategy of **total war**, including attacks against civilian as well as military targets. Grant was willing to accept huge casualties in order to achieve victory. Over the next year, he led his troops overland through western Virginia in an effort to take Richmond. At the same time, he ordered General Sherman to head south through Georgia, destroying the remnants of the plantation system.

Grant's troops headed toward Richmond, where Lee's army controlled strong defensive positions. The Confederates won narrow victories in May 1864 at the Battles of the Wilderness and Spotsylvania Court House. In June, 7,000 Union soldiers were killed in one hour during a frontal assault at Cold Harbor, Virginia, where Confederates once again turned back the Union army. But Grant continued to push forward. Although Lee lost fewer men (31,000 casualties at Cold Harbor versus 55,000 for the Union), his army was melting away with each so-called victory.

The battles took a terrible toll on soldiers on both sides. Union troops and civilians called Grant "the

butcher" for his seeming lack of regard for human life. Grant, however, was not deterred. He laid siege to Petersburg in June 1864, where both sides lived in trenches and tunnels for months on end. That August, Sherman also laid siege to Atlanta, but on September 2 he ordered his troops out of the trenches, swept around the city, and destroyed the roads and rails that connected it to the rest of the Confederacy. When General John B. Hood and his southern troops abandoned their posts, Sherman telegraphed Lincoln: "Atlanta is ours, and fairly won." The victory cut the South in two.

Sherman then led his troops on a 300-mile march to the Atlantic coast and north through the Carolinas. Embracing the strategy of total war, his troops cut a path of destruction 50 miles wide during their "March to the Sea," destroying crops, livestock, and houses before they reached Savannah in late December. Nearly 18,000 enslaved men, women, and children left the ruined plantations and sought to join Sherman's victorious troops. To the fleeing slaves' dismay, soldiers refused to take them along. Worse, some Union soldiers abused African American men, raped black women, or stole their few possessions. Angry Confederates captured many of those who were turned away, killing some and reenslaving others.



**Richmond in Ruins,
April 1865**

This photograph captures the devastation the war brought to the Richmond and Petersburg Railroad Depot after General Grant drove General Lee's troops out of the Confederate capital in April 1865. This defining moment marked the end of the Civil War and the defeat of the South. During the next decade, the North and South struggled over reconfiguring the Union. Library of Congress

Explore

See Document 13.5 for a description of the destruction of Columbia, South Carolina.

Sherman's callous actions caused a scandal in Washington. In January 1865, Lincoln dispatched Secretary of War Edwin Stanton to Georgia to investigate the charges. At an extraordinary meeting in Savannah, Stanton and Sherman met with black ministers to hear their complaints and to ask what newly emancipated African Americans wanted. The ministers spoke movingly of the war lifting "the yoke of bondage." Freed blacks, they argued, "could reap the fruit of their own labor" and, if given land, "take care of ourselves, and assist the Government in maintaining our freedom." In response, Sherman issued **Field Order Number 15**, setting aside more than 400,000 acres of captured Confederate land to be divided into small plots for former slaves. Although

Sherman's order proved highly controversial, it suggested that the Civil War might, in the end, be a revolutionary force for change.

As defeat loomed, even Confederate leaders began to talk of emancipating the slaves. Jefferson Davis called for recruiting slaves into the army, with their payment to include freedom for themselves and their families. The Confederate Congress passed such a law in early 1865, but it was too late to make any difference. Still, the very idea suggested that the Civil War had turned southern society upside down.

In early April 1865, with Sherman heading toward Raleigh, North Carolina, Grant captured Petersburg and then drove Lee and his forces out of Richmond. In one of the war's most dramatic moments, seasoned African American troops led the final assault on the city and were among the first Union soldiers to enter the Confederate capital. On April 9, after a brief engagement at

DOCUMENT 13.5**Eleanor Cohen Seixas | Journal Entry, February 1865**

In February 1865, General Sherman and his men reached Columbia, South Carolina, intent on destroying as much property as possible. Thousands of residents fled the Columbia fires, including Philip and Cordelia Cohen and their daughter, Eleanor. Philip was a pharmacist, slave owner, and part of the state's small Jewish population. During the war, he moved his family to Columbia to find safety in the city. Eleanor recorded the trials of wartime and her hopes for southern victory in her journal. In this selection, she describes the arrival of Sherman's troops.

Explore

The fire raged fearfully all night, but on Saturday perfect quiet reigned. The vile Yankees took from us clothing, food, jewels, all our cows, horses, carriages, etc., and left us in a deplorable condition after stealing from us. Sherman, with great generosity, presented the citizens with 500 cattle, so poor they could hardly stand up. No words of mine can give any idea of the brutality of the ruffians. They swore, they cursed, plundered, and committed every excess. No age or sex was safe from them. Sometimes, after saving some valueless token, it was ruthlessly

snatched from our hands by some of their horde. Our noble women were insulted by words, and some, I have heard of, in deeds, but none came under my knowledge, for I myself, God be praised, I received no rude word from any of them. I did not speak . . . to them at all. The fire burned eighty-four squares, and nothing can tell the quantity of plunder they carried off as on Monday they left us, and though we feared starvation, yet we were glad to be rid of them.

Source: Jacob R. Marcus, ed., *Memoirs of American Jews, 1775–1885* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1965), 3:363.

Interpret the Evidence

- What does this journal entry reveal about how Southerners viewed the Union army?
- What insight does it provide into how Union soldiers felt about the South?

Put It in Context

What impact did Sherman's march have on Southerners' morale?

Appomattox Court House, Virginia, Lee surrendered to Grant with fewer than 30,000 soldiers remaining under his command. Within hours, his troops began heading home. Although Confederate soldiers continued to engage Union forces in North Carolina and west of the Mississippi, the Civil War, for all intents and purposes, had come to an end.

The legal abolition of slavery was initiated in Washington a few months before Lee's surrender. Following on the petitions submitted by the Women's National Loyal League, Congress passed the **Thirteenth Amendment** to the U.S. Constitution on January 31, 1865, prohibiting slavery and involuntary servitude anywhere in the United States. Although it still required approval by three-quarters of the states, wartime experiences made ratification likely. Some states and cities had already enacted laws to ease racial inequities. Ohio, California, and Illinois repealed statutes barring blacks from testifying in court and serving on juries. San Francisco, Cincinnati, Cleveland, and New York City desegregated their streetcars. In May 1865, Massachusetts passed the first comprehensive public-accommodations law in U.S. history, ensuring equal treatment in theaters, stores, schools, and other social spaces. With the final surrender of the Confederacy, many Northerners were hopeful that the nation reunited would be stronger and more just.

REVIEW & RELATE

- What role did African Americans play in the defeat of the South?
- How did the Union win the war? How did attitudes toward African Americans change in the final year of the war?

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Conclusion: An Uncertain Future

Jubilation in the North did not last long. On April 14, less than a week after Lee's surrender, Abraham Lincoln was shot at Ford's Theatre by a Confederate fanatic named John Wilkes Booth. The president died the next day, leading to an outpouring of grief across the North and leaving the entire nation in shock.

Lincoln left behind an incredible legacy. He had led the Union to victory in a devastating civil war, promulgated the Emancipation Proclamation, and resolved the conflict between competing systems based on slavery and free labor. More than 600,000 Americans died in the war, but nearly 4 million Americans who had been born enslaved were now

free. At the same time, northern and southern women had entered the labor force and the public arena in numbers never before imagined. Soldiers returned to their families, jobs, and communities with experiences and knowledge, but also with physical and emotional wounds that transformed their lives. And the federal government had extended its reach into more and more areas of daily life. The war had dramatically accelerated the pace of economic, political, and social change, transforming American society both during the war and afterward.

Still, the legacies of the war were far from certain in 1865. Defeated Southerners looked for heroes, and most considered Confederate generals the greatest representatives of the "Lost Cause." They honored Lee and his officers with statues, portraits, poems, and parades. Confederate women worked endlessly to preserve the memory of both military leaders and ordinary soldiers. They formed memorial associations to decorate cemeteries and promoted a southern perspective on the war in schools and history books. They also joined in paying tribute to heroines like Rose O'Neal Greenhow. Greenhow had traveled to England and France in 1863, promoting Confederate bond issues and publishing a book about her imprisonment under "abolition rule." On her return in August 1864, the British vessel she was on was pursued by federal ships blockading the harbor. Fearing capture, Greenhow insisted that she be rowed ashore carrying a bag of gold coins, the profits from her book. But the boat overturned in high seas, and Greenhow drowned. She was buried with full military honors in Wilmington, North Carolina.

Victorious Northerners had far more reason to celebrate, but they knew that much still needed to be done. Frederick Douglass was thrilled that slavery had been abolished, but he argued vehemently that "the work of Abolitionists is not done." He was deeply committed to the enfranchisement of African American men as the means to secure the rights of former slaves, for he had no illusions about the lengths to which many whites would go to protect their traditional privileges. Although Douglass considered the Republican Party the best hope for reconstructing the nation, not everyone shared his agenda. Some white abolitionists argued that their work was done; some women's rights advocates thought they were as entitled to voting rights as were black men; some militant blacks viewed the Republican Party as too moderate. Moreover, many northern whites were exhausted by four years of war and hoped to leave the problems of slavery and secession behind. Others wanted to rebuild the South quickly in order to ensure the nation's economic recovery. These competing visions—between Northerners and Southerners and within each group—would shape the promises of peace in ways few could imagine at the end of the war.

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Chapter Review

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KEY TERMS

Fort Sumter (p. 395)
 contraband (p. 399)
 Battle of Shiloh (p. 402)
 Emancipation Proclamation (p. 403)
 U.S. Sanitary Commission (p. 405)
 greenbacks (p. 405)
 Women's National Loyal League (p. 408)
 Enrollment Act (p. 408)
 Copperheads (p. 409)
 Gettysburg (p. 410)
 total war (p. 413)
 Field Order Number 15 (p. 414)
 Thirteenth Amendment (p. 415)

REVIEW AND RELATE

1. What steps did Lincoln take to prevent war? Why were they ineffective?
2. What advantages and disadvantages did each side have at the onset of the war?
3. What arguments did each side make in the debate over African American enlistment in the Union army?
4. How and why did the Civil War become a war to end slavery?
5. What were the short- and long-term economic effects of the war on the North?
6. How did the war change the southern economy? What social tensions did the war create in the South?
7. What role did African Americans play in the defeat of the South?
8. How did the Union win the war? How did attitudes toward African Americans change in the final year of the war?

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

1845	Frederick Douglass publishes <i>Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass</i>
April 14, 1861	Fort Sumter surrenders to Confederate forces
May 23, 1861	General Benjamin Butler declares escaped slaves "contraband"
June 1861	U.S. Sanitary Commission established
July 21, 1861	First Battle of Bull Run (Manassas)
August 6, 1861	Confiscation Act passed
April 1862	Slavery abolished in the District of Columbia
	Battle of Shiloh
	Jefferson Davis signs conscription act
June 1862	Rose O'Neal Greenhow exiled to the South
September 1862	Battle of Antietam
	Lincoln issues preliminary Emancipation Proclamation
January 1, 1863	Lincoln signs Emancipation Proclamation
March 1863	Enrollment Act passed in North
July 1863	Draft riots in New York City
	Battle of Gettysburg
	Battle of Vicksburg
September 2, 1864	Atlanta falls; Sherman begins "March to the Sea"
1865	200,000 African Americans serving in the Union army and navy
January 1865	Sherman issues Field Order Number 15
January 31, 1865	Congress passes Thirteenth Amendment
April 9, 1865	General Lee surrenders to General Grant at Appomattox Court House
April 14, 1865	Assassination of President Abraham Lincoln