CHAPTER 15

Crucible of Freedom: Civil War, 1861–1865

"Events transcending in importance anything that has ever happened within the recollection of any living person in *our* country, have occurred since I have written last in my journal," wrote Georgia matron Gertrude Clanton Thomas in July 1861. "*War* has been declared." Fort Sumter in South Carolina had surrendered; Lincoln had called for 75,000 troops; four more southern states—Virginia, North Carolina, Arkansas, and Tennessee—had left the Union; the newly formed Confederate government had moved from Montgomery, Alabama, to Richmond, Virginia; and thousands of troops had passed through Augusta, Georgia, on their way to the front. "So much has taken place," Gertrude Thomas declared, that "I appear to be endeavoring to recall incidents which have occurred many years instead of months ago."

At her marriage in 1852, Gertrude Thomas had become mistress of a small estate, Belmont, about six miles south of Augusta, in Richmond County, Georgia. The estate and thirty thousand dollars worth of slaves had been part of her dowry. While her husband, Jefferson Thomas, farmed plantation land he had inherited in nearby Burke County, Gertrude Thomas supervised the work force at Belmont and wrestled with her position on slavery. "I will stand to the opinion that the institution of slavery degrades the white man more than the Negro," she had declared in 1858; "all southern women are abolitionists at heart." After secession, her doubts about slavery

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persisted. "[T]he view has gradually become fixed in my mind that the institution of slavery is not right," she confided to her journal during the war. "I can but think that to hold men and women in *perpetual* bondage is wrong." On other occasions, more practical concerns about slaves emerged. "I do think that if we had the same [amount] invested in something else as a means of support," Gertrude Thomas wrote, "I would willingly, nay gladly, have the responsibility of them taken off my shoulders."

But slavery was the basis of Gertrude Thomas's wealth and social position; she disliked it not because it oppressed the enslaved but because of the problems it posed for the slave-owning elite. When war began, Gertrude and Jefferson Thomas fervently supported the newborn Confederacy. Jefferson Thomas enlisted in the Richmond Hussars, a cavalry company, and served until 1862, when, passed over for promotion, he hired a substitute. During the months that he spent with his company in Virginia, Jefferson Thomas longed for swift triumph. "Today I feel as if I wished this war was over and that I was home and that every Yankee engaged in it was at the bottom of the ocean," he wrote to his wife as 1861 came to a close. Sharing his militance and hatred of Yankees, Gertrude Thomas loyally boosted the Confederate cause. "Our country is invaded—our homes are in danger—We are deprived or they are attempting to deprive us of that glorious liberty for which our Fathers fought and bled and shall we finally submit to this? Never!" she declared. "We are only asking for self-government and freedom to decide our own destinies. We claim nothing of the North but—*to be let alone*."

During the Civil War, Gertrude Thomas pondered the conflict's potential benefits. "One great advantage which will be gained by the war is the distinction which will be made between the Northerner and the Southerner," she wrote in her journal on New Year's Day 1862. "God speed the day when our independence shall be achieved, our southern confederacy acknowledged, and peace be with us again." But peace came at a price. In the last year of war, Union invasions damaged the Thomas plantations in Burke County and threatened the property near Augusta as well. The Civil War's end brought further hardship to the Thomas family, which lost a small fortune of fifteen thousand dollars in Confederate bonds and ninety slaves. One by one, the former slaves left the Belmont estate, never to return. "As to the emancipated Negroes," Gertrude Thomas told her journal in May 1865, "while there is of course a natural dislike to the loss of so much property, in my inmost soul, I cannot regret it."

In their idealism, belligerence, and rage at the enemy, the Thomases were not alone. After Fort Sumter fell, Union and Confederate volunteers like Jefferson Thomas responded to the rush to arms that engulfed both regions. Partisans on both sides, like Gertrude Thomas, claimed the ideals of liberty, loyalty, and patriotism as their own. Like the Thomas family, most Americans of 1861 harbored what turned out to be false expectations.

Few volunteers or even politicians anticipated a protracted war. Most northern estimates ranged from one month to a year; rebels, too, counted on a speedy victory. Neither northerners nor southerners anticipated the carnage that the war would bring; one out of every five soldiers who fought in the Civil War died in it. Once it became clear that the war would not end with a few battles, leaders on both sides considered strategies once unpalatable or even unthinkable. The South, where the hand of government had always fallen lightly on the citizenry, found that it had to impose a draft and virtually extort supplies from its civilian population. By the war's end, the Confederacy was even ready to arm its slaves in an ironically desperate effort to save a society founded on slavery. The North, which began the war with the limited objective of overcoming secession and explicitly disclaimed any intention of interfering with slavery, found that in order to win it had to shred the fabric of southern society by destroying slavery. For politicians as well as soldiers, the war defied expectations and turned into a series of surprises. The inseparable connection of Union war goals and the emancipation of slaves was perhaps the most momentous surprise.

This chapter focuses on five major questions:

- **What major advantages did each of the combatants, Union and Confederacy, possess at the start of the Civil War?**
- **How successfully did the governments and economies of the North and South respond to the pressures of war?**
- **How did the issues of slavery and emancipation transform the war?**
- **What factors determined the military outcome of the war?**
- **In what lasting ways did the Civil War change the United States as a nation?**

Mobilizing for War

North and South alike were unprepared for war. In April 1861 the Union had only a small army of sixteen thousand men scattered all over the country, mostly in the West. One-third of the officers of the Union army had resigned to join the Confederacy. The nation had not had a strong president since James K. Polk in the 1840s. Its new president, Abraham Lincoln, struck many observers as a yokel. That such a government could marshal its people for war seemed a doubtful proposition. The federal government had levied no direct taxes for decades, and it had never imposed a draft. The Confederacy was even less prepared, for it had no tax structure, no navy, only two tiny gunpowder factories, and poorly equipped, unconnected railroad lines.

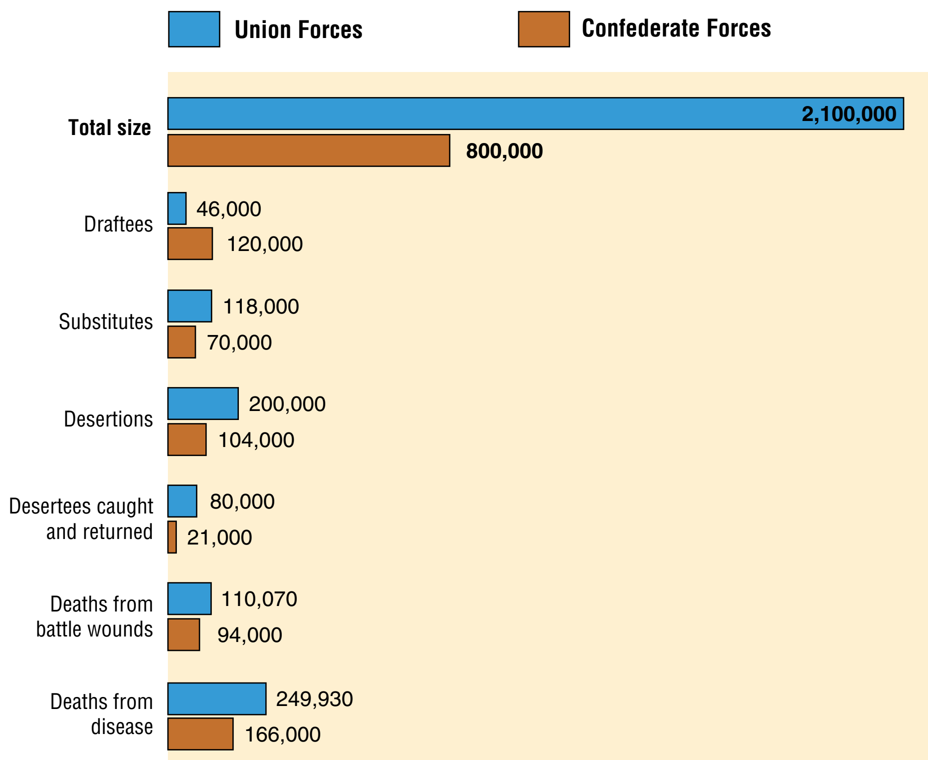
During the first two years of the war, both sides would have to overcome these deficiencies, raise and supply large armies, and finance the heavy costs of war. In each region mobilization for war expanded the powers of the central government to an extent that few had anticipated.

Recruitment and Conscription

The Civil War armies were the largest organizations ever created in America; by the end of the war, over 2 million men would serve in the Union army and 800,000 in the Confederate army (see Figure 15.1). In the first flush of enthusiasm for war, volunteers rushed to the colors. "I go for wiping them out," a Virginian wrote to his governor. "War! and volunteers are the only topics of conversation or thought," an Oberlin College student told his brother in April 1861. "I cannot study. I cannot sleep. I cannot work, and I don't know as I can write."

At first, the raising of armies depended on local efforts rather than on national or even state direction.

FIGURE 15.1
Opposing Armies of the Civil War
"They sing and whoop, they laugh: they holler to de people on de ground and sing out 'Good-bye,' " remarked a slave watching rebel troops depart. "All going down to die." As this graph shows (see also Figure 15.3), the Civil War had profound human costs. North and South, hardly a family did not grieve for a lost relative or friend. Injured veterans became a common sight in cities, towns, and rural districts well into the twentieth century.



Citizens opened recruiting offices in their hometowns, held rallies, and signed up volunteers; regiments were usually composed of soldiers from the same locale. Southern cavalrymen provided their own horses, and uniforms everywhere were left mainly to local option. In both armies, officers up to the rank of colonel were elected by other officers and enlisted men.

This informal and democratic way of raising and organizing soldiers could not long withstand the stress of war. As early as July 1861, the Union instituted examinations for officers. Also, as casualties mounted, military demand soon exceeded the supply of volunteers. The Confederacy felt the pinch first and in April 1862 enacted the first conscription law in American history. All able-bodied white men aged eighteen to thirty-five were required to serve in the military for three years. Subsequent amendments raised the age limit to forty-five and then to fifty, and lowered it to seventeen.

The Confederacy's Conscription Act antagonized southerners. Opponents charged that the draft was an assault on state sovereignty by a despotic regime and that the law would "do away with all the patriotism we have." Exemptions that applied to many occupations, from religious ministry to shoemaking, angered the nonexempt. So did a loophole, closed in 1863, that allowed the well-off to hire substitutes. One amendment, the so-called 20-Negro law, exempted an owner or overseer of twenty or more slaves from service. Although southerners widely feared that the slave population could not be controlled if all able-bodied white men were away in the army, the 20-Negro law led to complaints about "a rich man's war but a poor man's fight."

Despite opposition, the Confederate draft became increasingly hard to evade, and this fact stimulated volunteering. Only one soldier in five was a draftee, but 70 to 80 percent of eligible white southerners served in the Confederate army. A new conscription law of 1864, which required all soldiers then in the army to stay in for the duration of the war, ensured that a high proportion of Confederate soldiers would be battle-hardened veterans.

Once the army was raised, the Confederacy had to supply it. At first, the South relied on arms and ammunition imported from Europe, weapons confiscated from federal arsenals, and guns captured on the battlefield. These stopgap measures bought time until an industrial base was established. By 1862 southerners had a competent head of ordnance (weaponry), Josiah Gorgas. The Confederacy assigned ordnance contracts to privately owned factories like the Tredegar Iron Works in Richmond, provided loans to establish new factories, and created government-owned industries like the giant Augusta Powder Works in Georgia. The South lost few, if any, battles for want of munitions.

Supplying troops with clothing and food proved more difficult. Southern soldiers frequently went without shoes; during the South's invasion of Maryland in 1862, thousands of Confederate soldiers had to be left behind because they could not march barefoot on Maryland's gravel-surfaced roads. Late in the war, Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia ran out of food but never out of ammunition. Southern supply problems had several sources: railroads that fell into disrepair or were captured, an economy that relied more heavily on producing tobacco and cotton than growing food, and Union invasions early in the war that overran the livestock and grain-raising districts of central Tennessee and Virginia. Close to desperation, the Confederate Congress in 1863 passed the Impressment Act, which authorized army officers to take food from reluctant farmers at prescribed prices. This unpopular law also empowered agents to impress slaves into labor for the army, a provision that provoked yet more resentment.

The industrial North had fewer problems supplying its troops with arms, clothes, and food. However, recruiting troops was another matter. When the initial tide of enthusiasm for enlistment ebbed, Congress followed the Confederacy's example and turned to conscription. The Enrollment Act of March 1863 made every able-bodied white male citizen aged twenty to forty-five eligible for draft into the Union army.

Like the Confederate conscription law of 1862, the Enrollment Act granted exemptions, although only to high government officials, ministers, and men who were the sole support of widows, orphans, or indigent parents. It also offered two means of escaping the draft: substitution, or paying another man who would serve instead; and commutation, paying a $300 fee to the government. Enrollment districts often competed for volunteers by offering cash payments (bounties); dishonest "bounty jumpers" repeatedly registered and deserted after collecting their payment. Democrats denounced conscription as a violation of individual liberties and states' rights. Ordinary citizens of little means resented the commutation and substitution provision and leveled their own "poor man's fight" charges. Still, as in the Confederacy, the law stimulated volunteering. Only 8 percent of Union soldiers were draftees or substitutes.

Financing the War

The recruitment and supply of huge armies lay far beyond the capacity of American public finance at the

start of the war. In the 1840s and 1850s, annual federal spending had averaged only 2 percent of the gross national product. With such meager expenditures, the federal government met its revenue needs from tariff duties and income from the sale of public lands. During the war, however, annual federal expenditures gradually rose to 15 percent of the gross national product, and the need for new sources of revenue became urgent. Yet neither the Union nor the Confederacy initially wished to impose taxes, to which Americans were unaccustomed. In August 1861 the Confederacy enacted a small property tax and the Union an income tax, but neither raised much revenue.

Both sides therefore turned to war bonds; that is, to loans from citizens to be repaid by future generations. Patriotic southerners quickly bought up the Confederacy's first bond issue ($15 million) in 1861. That same year, a financial wizard, Philadelphia banker Jay Cooke, induced the northern public to subscribe to a much larger bond issue ($150 million). But bonds had to be paid for in gold or silver coin (specie), which was in short supply. Soaking up most of its available specie, the South's first bond issue threatened to be its last. In the North many hoarded their gold rather than spend it on bonds.

Recognizing the limitations of taxation and of bond issues, both sides began to print paper money. Early in 1862 Lincoln signed into law the Legal Tender Act, which authorized the issue of $150 million of the so-called greenbacks. Christopher Memminger, the Confederacy's treasury secretary, and Salmon P. Chase, his Union counterpart, shared a distrust of paper money, but as funds dwindled each came around to the idea. The availability of paper money would make it easier to pay soldiers, to levy and raise taxes, and to sell war bonds. Yet doubts about paper money lingered. Unlike gold and silver, which had established market values, the value of paper money depended mainly on the public's confidence in the government that issued it. To bolster that confidence, Union officials made the greenbacks legal tender (that is, acceptable in payment of most public and private debts).

In contrast, the Confederacy never made its paper money legal tender, and suspicions arose that the southern government lacked confidence in its own paper issues. To compound the problem, the Confederacy raised less than 5 percent of its wartime revenue from taxes. (The comparable figure for the North was 21 percent.) The Confederacy did enact a comprehensive tax measure in 1863, but Union invasions and the South's relatively undeveloped system of internal transportation made tax collection a hit-or-miss proposition.

Confidence in the South's paper money quickly evaporated, and the value of Confederate paper in relation to gold plunged. The Confederacy responded by printing more paper money, a billion dollars by 1865, but this action merely accelerated southern inflation. Whereas prices in the North rose about 80 percent during the war, the Confederacy suffered an inflation rate of over 9,000 percent. What cost a southerner one dollar in 1861 cost forty-six dollars by 1864.

By raising taxes, floating bonds, and printing paper money, both the Union and the Confederacy broke with the hard-money, minimal-government traditions of American public finance. For the most part, these changes were unanticipated and often reluctant adaptations to wartime conditions. But in the North, the Republicans took advantage of the departure of the southern Democrats from Congress to push through one measure that they and their Whig predecessors had long advocated, a system of national banking. Passed in February 1863 over the opposition of northern Democrats, the National Bank Act established criteria by which a bank could obtain a federal charter and issue national bank notes (notes backed by the federal government). It also gave private bankers an incentive to purchase war bonds. The North's ability to revolutionize its system of public finance reflected not only its longer experience with complex financial transactions but its greater political cohesion during the war.

Political Leadership in Wartime

The Civil War pitted rival political systems as well as armies and economies against each other. The South entered the war with several apparent political advantages. Lincoln's call for militiamen to suppress the rebellion had transformed hesitators in the South into tenacious secessionists. "Never was a people more united or more determined," a New Orleans resident wrote in the spring of 1861. "There is but one mind, one heart, one action." Southerners also claimed a strong leader. A former secretary of war and U.S. senator from Mississippi, President Jefferson Davis of the Confederacy possessed experience, honesty, courage, and what one officer described as "a jaw sawed in *steel*."

In contrast, the Union's list of political liabilities appeared lengthy. Loyal but contentious, northern Democrats wanted to prosecute the war without conscription, without the National Bank Act, and without the abolition of slavery. Within his own rival Republican party, Lincoln had trouble commanding respect. Unlike Davis, he had served in neither the cabinet nor the Senate, and his informal western manners dismayed

eastern Republicans. Northern setbacks early in the war convinced most Republicans in Congress that Lincoln was an ineffectual leader. Criticism of Lincoln sprang from a group of Republicans who became known as the Radicals and who included Secretary of the Treasury Salmon P. Chase, Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts, and Representative Thaddeus Stevens of Pennsylvania. The Radicals never formed a tightly knit group; on some issues they cooperated with Lincoln. But they did berate him early in the war for failing to make emancipation a war goal and later for being too eager to readmit the conquered rebel states into the Union.

Lincoln's distinctive style of leadership at once encouraged and disarmed opposition within the Republican party. Keeping his counsel to himself until ready to act, he met complaints with homespun anecdotes that caught his opponents off guard. The Radicals frequently concluded that Lincoln was a prisoner of the conservative wing of the party, whereas conservatives complained that Lincoln was too close to the Radicals. But Lincoln's cautious reserve had the dual benefit of leaving open his lines of communication with both wings of the party and fragmenting his opposition. He also co-opted some of his critics, including Chase, by bringing them into his cabinet.

In contrast, Jefferson Davis had a knack for making enemies. A West Pointer, he would rather have led the army than the government. His cabinet suffered from frequent resignations; the Confederacy had five secretaries of war in four years, for example. Davis's relations with his vice president, Alexander Stephens of Georgia, bordered on disastrous. A wisp of a man, Stephens weighed less than a hundred pounds and looked like a boy with a withered face. But he compensated for his slight physique with a tongue as acidic as Davis's. Leaving Richmond, the Confederate capital, in 1862, Stephens spent most of the war in Georgia, where he sniped at Davis as "weak and vacillating, timid, petulant, peevish, obstinate."

The clash between Davis and Stephens involved not just personalities but also an ideological division, a rift, in fact, like that at the heart of the Confederacy. The Confederate Constitution, drafted in February 1861, explicitly guaranteed the sovereignty of the Confederate states and prohibited the Confederate Congress from enacting protective tariffs and from supporting internal improvements (measures long opposed by southern voters). For Stephens and other influential Confederate leaders—among them the governors of Georgia and North Carolina—the Confederacy existed not only to protect slavery but, equally important, to enshrine the doctrine of states' rights. In contrast, Davis's main objective was to secure the independence of the South from the North, a goal that often led him to override the wishes of state governors for the good of the Confederacy as a whole.

This difference between Davis and Stephens bore some resemblance to the discord between Lincoln and the northern Democrats. Like Davis, Lincoln believed that winning the war demanded a boost in the central government's power; like Stephens, northern Democrats resisted governmental centralization. But Lincoln could control his foes more skillfully than Davis because, by temperament, he was more suited to conciliation and also because the nature of party politics in the two sections differed.

In the South the Democrats and the remaining Whigs agreed to suspend party rivalries for the duration of the war. Although intended to promote southern

unity, this decision actually encouraged disunity. Without the institutionalization of conflict that party rivalry provided, southern politics disintegrated along personal and factional lines. Lacking a party organization to back him, Davis could not mobilize votes to pass measures that he favored, nor could he depend on the support of party loyalists.

In contrast, in the Union, northern Democrats' organized opposition to Lincoln tended to unify the Republicans. In the 1862 elections, which occurred at a low ebb of Union military fortunes, the Democrats won control of five large states, including Lincoln's own Illinois. Republican leaders learned a lesson: no matter how much they disdained Lincoln, they had to rally behind him or risk losing office. Ultimately, the Union would develop more political cohesion than the Confederacy, not because it had fewer divisions but because it managed its divisions more effectively.

Securing the Union's Borders

Even before large-scale fighting began, Lincoln moved to safeguard Washington, which was bordered by two slave states (Virginia and Maryland) and filled with Confederate sympathizers. A week after Fort Sumter, a Baltimore mob attacked a Massachusetts regiment bound for Washington, but enough troops slipped through to protect the capital. Lincoln then dispatched federal troops to Maryland, where he suspended the writ of habeas corpus (a court order requiring that the detainer of a prisoner bring that person to court and show cause for his or her detention); federal troops could now arrest prosecession Marylanders without formally charging them with specific offenses. Cowed by Lincoln's bold moves, the Maryland legislature rejected secession. Delaware, another border slave state, followed suit.

Next Lincoln authorized the arming of Union sympathizers in Kentucky, a slave state with a Unionist legislature, a secessionist governor, and a thin chance of staying neutral. Lincoln also stationed troops under General Ulysses S. Grant just across the Ohio River from Kentucky, in Illinois. When a Confederate army invaded Kentucky early in 1862, the state's legislature turned to Grant to drive it out. Officially, at least, Kentucky became the third slave state to declare for the Union. The fourth, Missouri, was ravaged by four years of fighting between Union and Confederate troops and between bands of guerrillas and bushwhackers, a name for Confederate guerrillas who lurked in the underbrush. These included William Quantrill, a rebel desperado, and his murderous apprentices, Frank and Jesse James. Despite savage fighting and the divided loyalties of its people, Missouri never left the Union. West Virginia, admitted to the Union in 1863, would become the fifth border state. (This state originated in the refusal of thirty-five counties in the mainly nonslaveholding region of Virginia west of the Shenandoah Valley to follow the state's leaders into secession in 1861.)

By holding the first four border slave states—Maryland, Delaware, Kentucky, and Missouri—in the Union, Lincoln kept open his routes to the free states and gained access to the river systems in Kentucky and Missouri that led into the heart of the Confederacy. Lincoln's firmness, particularly in Maryland, scotched charges that he was weak-willed. The crisis also forced the president to exercise long-dormant powers. In the case *Ex parte* Merryman (1861), Chief Justice Roger B. Taney ruled that Lincoln had exceeded his authority in suspending the writ of habeas corpus in Maryland. The president, citing the Constitution's authorization of the writ's suspension in "Cases of Rebellion" (Article I, Section 9), insisted that he, rather than Congress, would determine whether a rebellion existed; and he ignored Taney's ruling.

In Battle, 1861–1862

The Civil War was the first war to rely extensively on railroads, the telegraph, mass-produced weapons, joint army-navy tactics, iron-plated warships, rifled guns and artillery, and trench warfare. All of this lends some justification to its description as the first modern war. But to the participants, slogging through muddy swamps and weighed down with equipment, the war hardly seemed modern. In many ways, the soldiers had the more accurate perspective, for the new weapons did not always work, and both sides employed tactics that were more traditional than modern.

Armies, Weapons, and Strategies

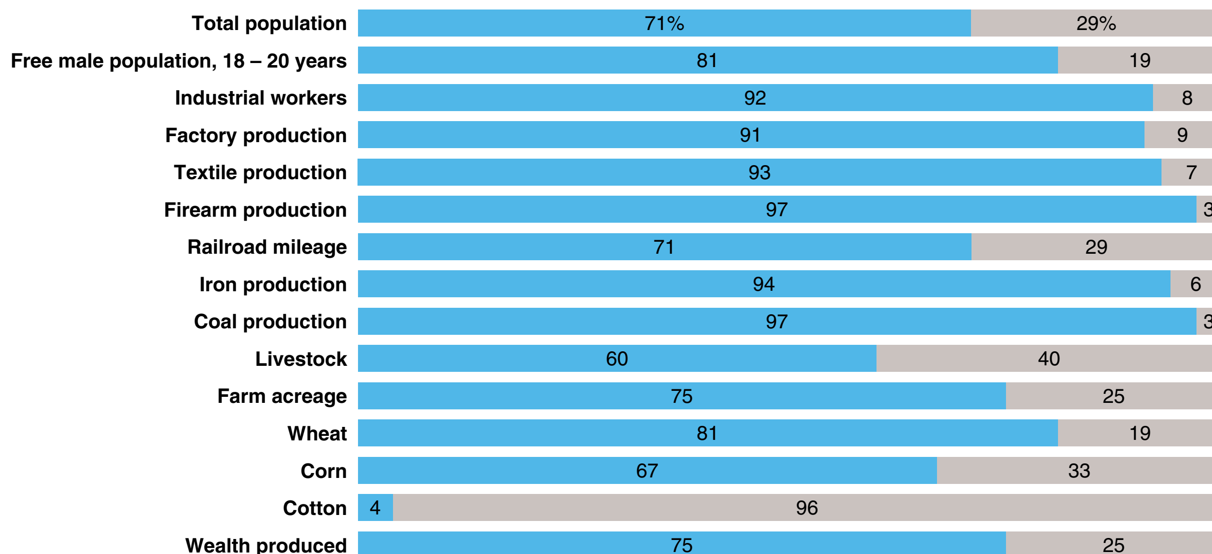
Compared to the Confederacy's 9 million people, one-third of them slaves, the Union had 22 million people in 1861 (see Figure 15.2). The North also had 3.5 times as many white men of military age, 90 percent of all U.S. industrial capacity, and two-thirds of its railroad track. Yet the Union faced a daunting challenge. Its goal was to force the South back into the Union, whereas the South was fighting merely for its independence. To subdue the Confederacy, the North would have to sustain offensive operations over a vast area.

Measured against this challenge, the Union's advantages in population and technology shrank. The North

FIGURE 15.2

Comparative Population and Economic Resources of the Union and the Confederacy, 1861

At the start of the war, the Union enjoyed huge advantages in population, industry, railroad mileage, and wealth, and, as it would soon prove, a superior ability to mobilize its vast resources. The Confederacy, however, enjoyed the many advantages of fighting a defensive war.



had more men, but needing to defend long supply lines and occupy captured areas, it could commit a smaller proportion of them to frontline duty. The South, which relied on slaves for labor, could assign a higher proportion of its white male population to combat. As for technology, the North required, and possessed, superior railroads. Fighting defensively on so-called interior lines, the South could shift its troops relatively short distances within its defensive arc without using railroads, whereas the North had to move its troops and supplies huge distances around the exterior of the arc. Not only could guerrillas easily sabotage northern railroads, but once Union troops moved away from their railroad bases, their supply wagons often bogged down on wretched southern roads that became watery ditches in bad weather. Even on good roads, horses and mules, which themselves consumed supplies, were needed to pull wagons; an invading army of 100,000 men required 35,000 horses or mules. Finally, southerners had an edge in soldiers' morale, for Confederate troops battled on home ground. "No people ever warred for independence," a southern general acknowledged, "with more relative advantages than the Confederates."

The Civil War witnessed experiments with a variety of newly developed weapons, including the submarine, the repeating rifle, and the multibarreled Gatling gun, the forerunner of the machine gun. Yet these futuristic innovations had less impact on the war than did the perfection in the 1850s of a bullet whose powder would not clog a rifle's spiraled internal grooves after a few shots. Like the smoothbore muskets that both armies had employed at the start of the war, most improved rifles had to be reloaded after each shot. But where the smoothbore musket had an effective range of only eighty yards, the Springfield or Enfield rifles widely employed by 1863 could hit targets accurately at four hundred yards.

The development of the rifle posed a challenge to long-accepted military tactics. Manuals used at West Point in the 1840s and 1850s had identified the mass infantry charge against an opponent's weakest point as the key to victory. These manuals assumed that defenders armed with muskets would be able to fire only a round or two before being overwhelmed. Armed with rifles, however, a defending force could fire several rounds before closing with the enemy. Attackers would now have far greater difficulty getting close enough to thrust bayonets; fewer than 1 percent of the casualties in the Civil War resulted from bayonet wounds.

Thus the rifle produced some changes in tactics during the war. Both sides gradually came to understand the value of trenches, which provided defenders

protection against withering rifle fire. By 1865 trenches pockmarked the landscape in Virginia and Georgia. In addition, growing use of the rifle forced generals to rely less on cavalry. Traditionally, the cavalry had ranked among the most prestigious components of an army, in part because cavalry charges were often devastatingly effective and in part because the cavalry helped maintain class distinctions within the army. But rifles reduced the effectiveness of cavalry by increasing the firepower of foot soldiers. Bullets that might miss the rider would at least hit the horse. Thus as cavalry charges against infantry became more difficult, both sides relegated cavalry to reconnaissance missions and raids on supply trains.

Although the rifle exposed traditional tactics to new hazards, it by no means invalidated those tactics. On the contrary, historians now contend, high casualties reflected the long duration of battles rather than the new efficacy of rifles. The attacking army still stood an excellent chance of success if it achieved surprise. The South's lush forests provided abundant opportunities for an army to sneak up on its opponent. For example, at the Battle of Shiloh in 1862, Confederate attackers surprised and almost defeated a larger Union army despite the rumpus created by green rebel troops en route to the battle, many of whom fired their rifles into the air to see if they would work.

Achieving such complete surprise normally lay beyond the skill or luck of generals. In the absence of any element of surprise, an attacking army might invite disaster. At the Battle of Fredericksburg in December 1862, Confederate troops inflicted appalling casualties on Union forces attacking uphill over open terrain, and at Gettysburg in July 1863, Union riflemen and artillery shredded charging southerners. But generals might still achieve partial surprise by hitting an enemy before it had concentrated its troops; in fact, this is what the North tried to do at Fredericksburg. Because surprise often proved effective, most generals continued to believe that their best chance of success lay in striking an unwary or weakened enemy with all the troops they could muster rather than in relying on guerrilla or trench warfare.

Much like previous wars, the Civil War was fought basically in a succession of battles during which exposed infantry traded volleys, charged, and countercharged. Whichever side withdrew from the field usually was thought to have lost the battle, but the losing side frequently sustained lighter casualties than the supposed victor. Both sides had trouble exploiting their victories. As a rule, the beaten army moved back a few miles from the field to lick its wounds; the winners stayed in place to lick theirs. Politicians on both sides raged at generals for not pursuing a beaten foe, but it was difficult for a mangled victor to gather horses, mules, supply trains, and exhausted soldiers for a new attack. Not surprisingly, for much of the war, generals on both sides concluded that the best defense was a good offense.

To the extent that the North had a long-range strategy in 1861, it lay in the so-called Anaconda plan. Devised by the Mexican War hero General Winfield Scott, the plan called for the Union to blockade the southern coastline and to thrust, like a huge snake, down the Mississippi River. Scott expected that sealing off and severing the Confederacy would make the South recognize the futility of secession and bring southern Unionists to power. But Scott, a southern Unionist, overestimated the strength of Unionist spirit in the South. Furthermore, although Lincoln quickly ordered a blockade of the southern coast, the North hardly had the troops and naval flotillas to seize the Mississippi in 1861. So while the Mississippi remained an objective, north-

ern strategy did not unfold according to any blueprint like the Anaconda plan.

Early in the war, the pressing need to secure the border slave states, particularly Kentucky and Missouri, dictated Union strategy west of the Appalachian Mountains. Once in control of Kentucky, northern troops plunged southward into Tennessee. The Appalachians tended to seal this western theater off from the eastern theater, where major clashes of 1861 occurred.

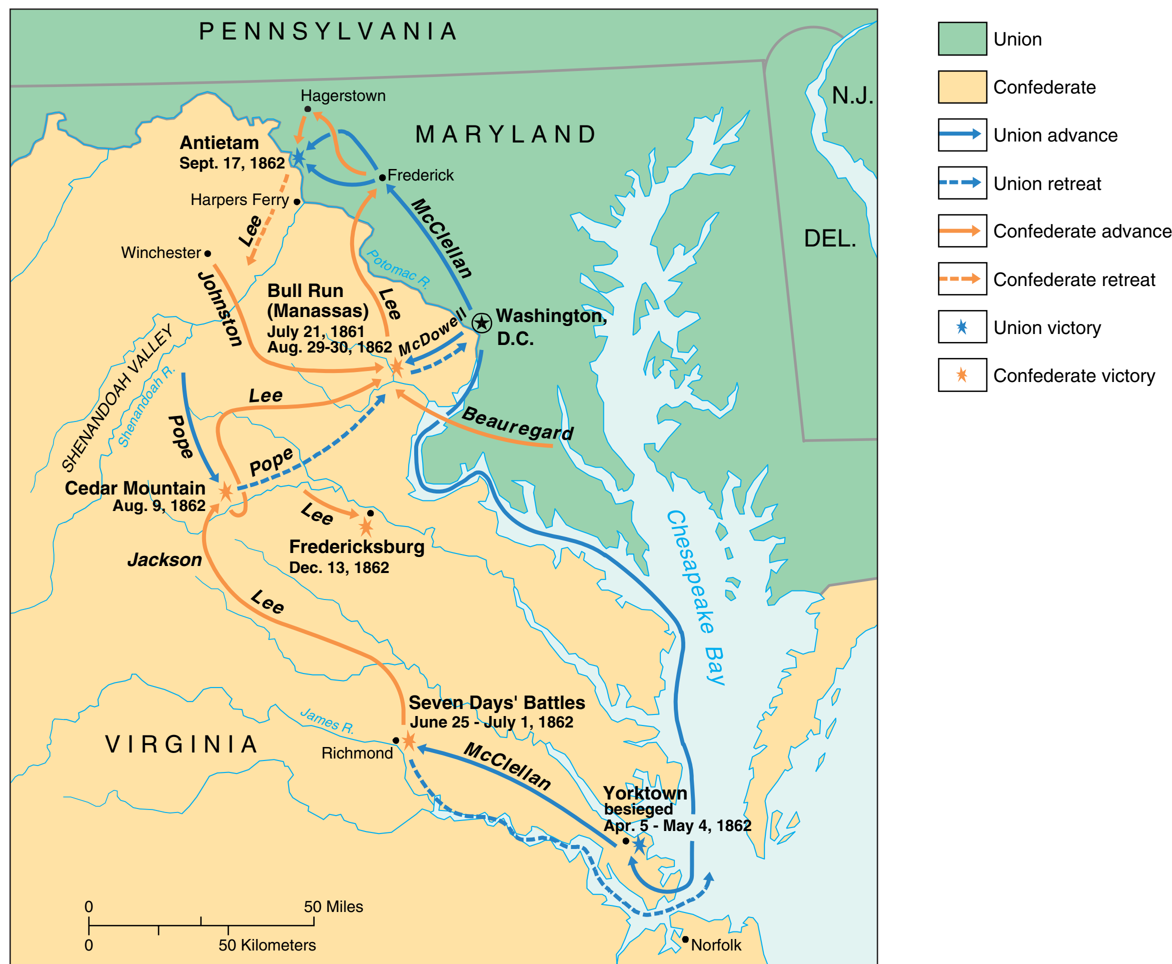
Stalemate in the East

The Confederacy's decision in May 1861 to move its capital from Montgomery, Alabama, to Richmond, Virginia, shaped Union strategy. "Forward to Richmond" became the Union's first war cry. Before they could reach Richmond, one hundred miles southwest of Washington, Union troops had to dislodge a Confederate army brazenly encamped at Manassas Junction, only twenty-five miles from the Union capital (see Map 15.1). Lincoln ordered General Irvin McDowell to attack his former West Point classmate, Confederate general P. G. T. Beauregard. "You are green, it is true," Lincoln told McDowell, "but they are green also; you are all green alike." In the resulting First Battle of Bull Run (or First Manassas), amateur armies clashed in bloody chaos under a blistering July sun. Well-dressed, picnicking Washington dignitaries gathered to view the action. Aided by last-minute reinforcements and by the disor-

MAP 15.1

The War in the East, 1861–1862

Union advances on Richmond were turned back at Fredericksburg and the Seven Days' Battles, and the Confederacy's invasion of Union territory was stopped at Antietam.



ganization of the attacking federals, Beauregard routed the larger Union army.

After Bull Run, Lincoln replaced McDowell with General George B. McClellan as commander of the Army of the Potomac, the Union's main fighting force in the East. Another West Pointer, McClellan had served with distinction in the Mexican War and mastered the art of administration by managing midwestern railroads in the 1850s. Few generals could match his ability to turn a ragtag mob into a disciplined fighting force. His soldiers adored him, but Lincoln quickly became disenchanted. Lincoln believed that the key to a Union victory lay in simultaneous, coordinated attacks on several fronts so that the North could exploit its advantage in manpower and resources. McClellan, a proslavery Democrat, hoped to maneuver the South into a relatively bloodless defeat and then negotiate a peace that would readmit the Confederate states with slavery intact.

McClellan soon got a chance to implement his strategy. After Bull Run, the Confederates had pulled back to await the Union onslaught against Richmond. Rather than directly attack the Confederate army, McClellan formulated a plan in spring 1862 to move the Army of the Potomac by water to the tip of the peninsula formed by the York and James Rivers and then move northwestward up the peninsula to Richmond. McClellan's plan had several advantages. Depending on water transport rather than on railroads (which Confederate cavalry could cut), the McClellan strategy reduced the vulnerability of northern supply lines. By dictating an approach to Richmond from the southeast, it threatened the South's supply lines. By aiming for the capital of the Confederacy rather than for the Confederate army stationed northeast of Richmond, McClellan hoped to maneuver the southern troops into a futile attack on his army in order to avert a destructive siege of Richmond.

By far the most massive military campaign in American history to that date, the Peninsula Campaign unfolded smoothly at first. Three hundred ships transported seventy thousand men and huge stores of supplies to the tip of the peninsula. Reinforcements swelled McClellan's army to one hundred thousand. By late May McClellan was within five miles of Richmond. But then he hesitated. Overestimating the Confederates' strength, he refused to launch a final attack without further reinforcements, which were turned back by Confederate general Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson in the Shenandoah Valley.

While McClellan delayed, General Robert E. Lee took command of the Confederacy's Army of Northern Virginia. A foe of secession and so courteous that at times he seemed too gentle, Lee possessed the qualities that McClellan most lacked, boldness and a willingness to accept casualties. Seizing the initiative, Lee attacked McClellan in late June 1862. The ensuing Seven Days' Battles, fought in the forests east of Richmond, cost the South nearly twice as many men as the North and ended in a virtual slaughter of Confederates at Malvern Hill. Unnerved by his own casualties, McClellan sent increasingly panicky reports to Washington. Lincoln, who cared little for McClellan's peninsula strategy, ordered McClellan to call off the campaign and return to Washington.

With McClellan out of the picture, Lee and his lieutenant, Stonewall Jackson, boldly struck north and, at the Second Battle of Bull Run (Second Manassas), routed a Union army under General John Pope. Lee's next stroke was even bolder. Crossing the Potomac River in early September 1862, he invaded western Maryland, where the forthcoming harvest could provide him with desperately needed supplies. By seizing western Maryland, moreover, Lee could threaten Washington, indirectly relieve pressure on Richmond, improve the prospects of peace candidates in the North's upcoming fall elections, and possibly induce Britain and France to recognize the Confederacy as an independent nation. But McClellan met Lee at the Battle of Antietam (or Sharpsburg) on September 17. Although a tactical draw, Antietam proved a strategic victory for the North, for Lee subsequently called off his invasion and retreated south of the Potomac.

Heartened by the apparent success of northern arms, Lincoln then issued the Emancipation Proclamation, a war measure that freed all slaves under rebel control. The toll of 24,000 casualties at Antietam, however, made it the bloodiest day of the entire war. A Union veteran recollected that one part of the battlefield contained so many bodies that a man could have walked through it without stepping on the ground.

Complaining that McClellan had "the slows," Lincoln faulted his commander for not pursuing Lee after the battle. McClellan's replacement, General Ambrose Burnside, thought himself and soon proved himself unfit for high command. In December 1862 Burnside led 122,000 federal troops against 78,500 Confederates at the Battle of Fredericksburg. Burnside captured the town of Fredericksburg, northeast of Richmond, but then sacrificed his army in futile charges up the heights west of the town. Even Lee was shaken by the northern casualties. "It is well that war is so terrible, or we should grow too fond of it," he told an aide during the battle. Richmond remained, in the words of a southern song, "a hard road to travel." The war in the East had become a stalemate.

The War in the West

The Union fared better in the West. There, the war ranged over a vast and crucial terrain that provided access to rivers leading directly into the South. The West also spawned new leadership. During the first year of war, an obscure Union general, Ulysses S. Grant, proved his competence. A West Point graduate, Grant had fought in the Mexican War and retired from the army in 1854 with a reputation for heavy drinking. He then failed at ventures in farming and in business. When the Civil War began, he gained an army commission through political pressure.

In 1861–1862 Grant retained control of two border states, Missouri and Kentucky. Moving into Tennessee, he captured two strategic forts, Fort Henry on the Tennessee River and Fort Donelson on the Cumberland. Grant then headed south to attack Corinth, Mississippi, a major railroad junction (see Map 15.2).

In early April 1862, Confederate forces under generals Albert Sidney Johnston and P. G. T. Beauregard tried to relieve the Union pressure on Corinth by a surprise attack on Grant's army, encamped twenty miles north of the town, in southern Tennessee near a church named Shiloh. Hoping to whip Grant before Union reinforcements arrived, the Confederates exploded from the woods near Shiloh before breakfast and almost drove the federals into the Tennessee River. Beauregard cabled Richmond with news of a splendid Confederate victory. But Grant and his lieutenant, William T. Sherman, steadied the Union line. Union reinforcements arrived in the

night, and federal counterattack drove the Confederates from the field the next day. Although Antietam would soon erase the distinction, the Battle of Shiloh was the bloodiest in American history to that date. Of the seventy-seven thousand men engaged, twenty-three thousand were killed or wounded, including Confederate general Albert Sidney Johnston, who bled to death from a leg wound. Defeated at Shiloh, the Confederates soon evacuated Corinth.

To attack Grant at Shiloh, the Confederacy had stripped the defenses of New Orleans, leaving only three thousand militia to guard its largest city. A combined Union land-sea force under General Benjamin Butler, a Massachusetts politician, and Admiral David G. Farragut, a Tennessean loyal to the Union, capitalized on the opportunity. Farragut took the city in late April and soon added Baton Rouge and Natchez to his list of conquests. Meanwhile, another Union flotilla moved down the Mississippi and captured Memphis in June. Now the North controlled the entire river, except for a two-hundred-mile stretch between Port Hudson, Louisiana, and Vicksburg, Mississippi.

Union and Confederate forces also clashed in 1862 in the trans-Mississippi West. On the banks of the Rio Grande, Union volunteers, joined by Mexican-American companies, drove a Confederate army from Texas out of New Mexico. A thousand miles to the east, in northern Arkansas and western Missouri, armies vied to secure the Missouri River, a crucial waterway that flowed into the Mississippi. In Pea Ridge, Arkansas, in March 1862, forewarned northern troops scattered a Confederate force of sixteen thousand that included three Cherokee regiments. (Indian units fought on both sides in Missouri, where guerrilla combat raged until the war's end.)

These Union victories changed the nature of the trans-Mississippi war. As the rebel threat faded, regiments of western volunteers that had mobilized to crush Confederates turned to fighting Indians. Conflict between the Dakota Sioux and Minnesota volunteers in the fall of 1862 spread to the north and west. Indian wars erupted in Arizona, Nevada, Colorado, and New Mexico, where California volunteers and the New Mexico cavalry, led by Colonel Kit Carson, overwhelmed the Apaches and Navajos. After 1865 federal troops moved west to complete the rout of the Indians that had begun in the Civil War.

MAP 15.2

The War in the West, 1861–1862

By the end of 1862, the North held New Orleans and the entire Mississippi River except for the stretch between Vicksburg and Port Hudson.

The Soldiers' War

Civil War soldiers were typically volunteers who left farms and small towns to join companies of recruits from their locales. Many men who enrolled in 1861 and 1862—those who served at Shiloh and Antietam—reenlisted when their terms expired; these hardy survivors became the backbones of their respective armies. Local loyalties spurred enrollment, especially in the South; so did ideals of honor and valor. Soldiers on both sides shared a vision of military life as a transforming experience in which citizens became warriors and boys became men. To serve in combat was to achieve "manhood." One New York father who sent two young sons to enlist marveled at how the war provided "so much manhood suddenly achieved." Exultant after a victory, an Alabama volunteer told his father, "With your first shot

you become a new man." Thousands of underage volunteers, that is, boys under eighteen, also served in the war; so did at least 250 women disguised as men.

New soldiers moved from recruitment rallies to camps of rendezvous, where local companies were meshed into regiments, and from there to camps of instruction. Military training proved notoriously weak, and much of army life was tedious and uncomfortable. Food was one complaint. Union troops ate beans, bacon, salt pork, pickled beef, and a staple called hardtack, square flour-and-water biscuits that were almost impossible to crack with a blow. On occasion, to provide troops with fresh meat, Union armies drove their own herds of cattle along with them. Confederate diets featured bacon and cornmeal, and as a southern soldier summed it up, "Our rations is small." Rebel armies often ran out of food, blankets, clothes, socks, and shoes. On both sides, crowded military camps, plagued by poor sanitation and infested with lice, fleas, ticks, flies, and rodents, insured soaring disease rates and widespread grievance. A sergeant from New York, only partly in jest, described his lot as "laying around in the dirt and mud, living on hardtack, facing death in bullets and shells, eat up by wood-ticks and body-lice."

Expectations of military glory swiftly faded. For most soldiers, Civil War battles meant inuring themselves to the stench of death. "We don't mind the sight of dead men no more than if they were dead hogs," a Union soldier claimed. Soldiers rapidly grasped the value of caution in combat. You learned, a southerner wrote, "to become cool and deliberate." According to a northern volunteer, "The consuming passion is to get out of the way." Others described the zeal aroused by combat. "[I]t is a terrible sight to see a line of men, two deep, coming up within 300 or 400 yards of you, with bayonets flashing and waving their colors," a New Jersey artilleryman recalled. "[Y]ou know that every shot you fire into them sends some one to eternity, but still you are a prompted by a terrible desire to kill all you can." The deadly cost of battle fell most heavily on the infantry, in which at least three out of four soldiers served. Although repeating rifles were superior weapons, with three or four times the range of the old smoothbore muskets, a combination of inexperience, inadequate training, and barriers of terrain curbed the impact of the new weapons in practice. Instead, large masses of soldiers faced one another at close range for long periods of time, exchanging fire until one side or the other gave up and fell back. The high casualty figures at Shiloh and Antietam reflected not advanced technology but the armies' inability to use it effectively. "Our victories . . . seem to settle nothing; to bring us no nearer to the end of the war," a southern officer wrote in 1862. "It is only so many killed or wounded, leaving the war of blood to go on." Armies gained efficiency in battle through experience, and only late in the war.

In their voluminous letters home (Civil War armies were the most literate armies that had ever existed), volunteers often discussed their motives as soldiers. Some Confederates enlisted to defend slavery, which they paired with liberty. "I choose to fight for southern rights and southern liberty" against the "vandals of the North" who were "determined to destroy slavery," a Kentucky Confederate announced. "A stand must be made for African slavery or it is forever lost," wrote a South Carolinian. A small minority of northern soldiers voiced antislavery sentiments early in the war: "I have no heart in this war if the slaves cannot go free," a soldier from Wisconsin declared. Few Union recruits, however, initially shared this antipathy to slavery, and some voiced the opposite view. "I don't want to fire another shot for the negroes and I wish all the abolitionists were in hell," a New York soldier declared. But as the war went on, northern soldiers accepted the need to free the slaves, sometimes for humanitarian reasons. "Since I am down here I have learned and seen more of what the horrors of

slavery was than I ever knew before," wrote an Ohio officer from Louisiana. Others had more practical goals. By the summer of 1862, Union soldiers in the South had become agents of liberation; they harbored fugitives who fled behind federal lines. Many who once had damned the "abolitionist war" now endorsed emancipation as part of the Union war effort. As a soldier from Indiana declared, "Every negro we get strengthens us and weakens the rebels."

Ironclads and Cruisers: The Naval War

By plunging its navy into the Confederacy like a dagger, the Union exploited one of its clearest advantages. The North began the war with over forty active warships against none for the South, and by 1865 the United States had the largest navy in the world. Steam-driven ships could penetrate the South's excellent river system from any direction. For example, the Confederacy had stripped New Orleans's defenses in the belief that the real threat to the city would come from the north, only to find Farragut slipping in from the south.

Despite its size, the Union navy faced an extraordinary challenge in its efforts to blockade the South's 3,500 miles of coast. Early in the war, small, sleek Confederate blockade-runners darted in and out of southern harbors and inlets with little chance of capture. The North gradually tightened the blockade by outfitting tugs, whalers, excursion steamers, and ferries as well as frigates to patrol southern coasts. The proportion of Confederate blockade-runners that made it through dropped from 90 percent early in the war to 50 percent by 1865. Northern seizure of rebel ports and coastal areas shrank the South's foreign trade even more. In daring amphibious assaults during 1861 and 1862, the Union captured the excellent harbor of Port Royal, South Carolina, the coastal islands off South Carolina, and most of North Carolina's river outlets. Naval patrols and amphibious operations shrank the South's ocean trade to one-third its prewar level.

Despite meager resources, the South strove to offset the North's naval advantage. Early in the war, the Confederacy raised the scuttled Union frigate *Merrimac,* sheathed its sides with an armor of iron plate, rechristened it *Virginia,* and dispatched it to attack wooden Union ships in Hampton Roads, Virginia. The *Merrimac* destroyed two northern warships but met its match in the hastily built Union ironclad the *Monitor.* In the first engagement of ironclads in history, the two ships fought an indecisive battle on March 9, 1862. The South constructed other ironclads and even the first submarine, which dragged a mine through the water to sink a Union ship off Charleston in 1864. Unfortunately, the "fish" failed to resurface and went down with its victim.

But the South could never build enough ironclads to overcome the North's supremacy in home waters. The Confederacy had more success on the high seas, where wooden, steam-driven commerce raiders like the *Alabama* and the *Florida* (both built in England) wreaked havoc on the Union's merchant marine. Commerce raiding, however, would not tip the balance of the war in the South's favor because the North, unlike its foe, did not depend on imports for war materials. The South would lose the naval war.

The Diplomatic War

While armies and navies clashed in 1861–1862, conflict developed on a third front, diplomacy. At the outbreak of the war, the Confederacy began a campaign to gain European recognition of its independence. Southern confidence in a swift diplomatic victory ran high. Planning to establish a colonial empire in Mexico, Napoleon III of France had grounds to welcome the permanent division of the United States. Moreover, the upper classes in France and Britain seemed sympathetic to the aristocratic South and eager for the downfall of the brash Yankee republic. Furthermore, influential southerners had long contended that an embargo of cotton exports would bring Britain to its knees. These southerners reasoned that Britain, dependent on the South for four-fifths of its cotton, would break the Union blockade and provoke a war with the North rather than watch its textile workers sink into revolutionary discontent under the weight of an embargo.

Leaving nothing to chance, the Confederacy in 1861 dispatched emissaries James Mason to Britain and John Slidell to France to lobby for recognition of the South as an independent nation. When a Union ship captain, acting without orders, boarded the British vessel the *Trent,* which was carrying Mason and Slidell, and brought the two men to Boston as prisoners, British tempers exploded. Considering one war at a time enough, President Lincoln released Mason and Slidell. But settling the *Trent* affair did not eliminate friction between the United States and Britain. The construction in British shipyards of two Confederate commerce raiders, the *Florida* and the *Alabama,* led to protests from Union diplomats. In 1863 the U.S. minister to London, Charles Francis Adams (the son of former president John Quincy Adams), threatened war if two British-built ironclads commissioned by the Confederacy, the so-called Laird rams, were turned over to the South. Britain capitulated to Adams's protests and purchased the rams for its own navy.

On balance, the South fell far short of its diplomatic objectives. Although recognizing the Confederacy as a belligerent, neither Britain nor France ever recognized it as a nation. Basically, the Confederacy overestimated the power of its vaunted "cotton diplomacy." The Confederate government talked of embargoing cotton exports in order to bring the British to their knees, but could never do so. Planters conducted business as usual by raising cotton and trying to slip it through the blockade. Still, the South's share of the British cotton market slumped from 77 percent in 1860 to only 10 percent in 1865. This loss resulted from forces beyond southern control. Bumper cotton crops in the late 1850s had glutted the British market by the start of the war and weakened British demand for cotton. In addition, Britain had found new suppliers in Egypt and India, thereby buffering itself from southern pressure. Gradually, too, the North's tightened blockade restricted southern exports.

The South also exaggerated Britain's stake in helping the Confederacy. As a naval power that had frequently blockaded its own enemies, Britain's diplomatic interest lay in supporting the Union blockade in principle; from Britain's standpoint, to help the South break the blockade would set a precedent that could easily boomerang. Finally, although France and Britain often considered recognizing the Confederacy, the timing never seemed quite right. The Union's success at Antietam in 1862 and Lincoln's subsequent issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation dampened Europe's enthusiasm for recognition at a crucial juncture. By transforming the war into a struggle to end slavery, the Emancipation Proclamation produced an upsurge of pro-Union feeling in antislavery Britain, particularly among liberals and the working class. Workingmen in Manchester, England, wrote Lincoln to praise his resolve to free the slaves. The proclamation, declared Henry Adams (diplomat Charles Francis Adams's son) from London, "has done more for us here than all of our former victories and all our diplomacy."

Emancipation Transforms the War, 1863

"I hear old John Brown knocking on the lid of his coffin and shouting 'Let me out! Let me out!' " abolitionist Henry Stanton wrote to his wife after the fall of Fort Sumter. "The Doom of Slavery is at hand." In 1861 this prediction seemed wildly premature. In his inaugural that year, Lincoln had stated bluntly, "I have no purpose, directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the states where it exists." Yet in two years, the

North's priorities underwent a decisive transformation. A mix of practical necessity and ideological conviction thrust the emancipation of the slaves to the forefront of northern war goals.

The rise of emancipation as a Union war goal reflected the changing character of the war itself. As late as July 1862, General George McClellan had restated to Lincoln his conviction that "neither confiscation of property . . . or forcible abolition of slavery should be contemplated for a moment." As the struggle dragged on, however, demands for the prosecution of "total war" intensified in the North. Even northerners who saw no moral value in abolishing slavery started to recognize the military value of emancipation as a tactic to cripple the South.

From Confiscation to Emancipation

Union policy on emancipation developed in stages. As soon as northern troops began to invade the South, questions arose about the disposition of captured rebel property, including slaves. Slaves who fled behind the Union lines were sometimes considered "contraband"—enemy property liable to seizure—and were put to work for the Union army. Some northern commanders viewed this practice as a useful tool of war, others did not, and the Lincoln administration was evasive. To establish an official policy, Congress in August 1861 passed the first Confiscation Act, which authorized the seizure of all property used in military aid of the rebellion, including slaves. Under this act, slaves who had been employed directly by the armed rebel forces and who later fled to freedom became "captives of war." But nothing in the act actually freed these contrabands, nor did the law apply to contrabands who had not worked for the Confederate military.

Several factors underlay the Union's cautious approach to the confiscation of rebel property. Officially maintaining that the South's rebellion lacked any legal basis, Lincoln argued that southerners were still entitled to the Constitution's protection of property. The president also had practical reasons to walk softly. The Union not only contained four slave states but also held a sizable body of proslavery Democrats who strongly opposed turning the war into a crusade against slavery. If the North in any way tampered with slavery, these Democrats feared, "two or three million semi-savages" might come north and compete with white workers. Aware of such fears, Lincoln assured Congress in December 1861 that the war would not become a "remorseless revolutionary struggle."

From the start of the war, however, Lincoln faced pressure from the loosely knit but determined Radical Republicans to adopt a policy of emancipation. Pennsylvanian Thaddeus Stevens urged the Union to "free every slave—slay every traitor—burn every Rebel mansion, if these things be necessary to preserve this temple of freedom." Radicals agreed with black abolitionist Frederick Douglass that "to fight against slaveholders without fighting against slavery, is but a half-hearted business." With every new northern setback, support for the Radicals' stance grew. Each Union defeat reminded northerners that the Confederacy, with a slave labor force in place, could commit a higher proportion of its white men to battle. The idea of emancipation as a military measure thus gained increasing favor in the North, and in July 1862 Congress passed the second Confiscation Act. This law authorized the seizure of the property of all persons in rebellion and stipulated that slaves who came within Union lines "shall be forever free." The law also authorized the president to employ blacks as soldiers.

Nevertheless, Lincoln continued to stall, even in the face of rising pressure for emancipation. "My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or destroy slavery," Lincoln told antislavery journalist Horace Greeley. "If I could save the Union without freeing *any* slave, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing *all* the slaves, I would do it; and if I could do it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that." Yet Lincoln had always loathed slavery, and by the spring of 1862, he had come around to the Radical position that the war must lead to its abolition. He hesitated principally because he did not want to be stampeded by Congress into a measure that might disrupt northern unity. He also feared that a public commitment to emancipation in the summer of 1862, on the heels of the northern defeat at Second Manassas and the collapse of the Peninsula Campaign, might be interpreted as an act of desperation. After failing to persuade the Union slave states to emancipate slaves in return for federal compensation, he drafted a proclamation of emancipation, circulated it within his cabinet, and waited for a right moment to issue it. Finally, after the Union victory in September 1862 at Antietam, Lincoln issued the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, which declared all slaves under rebel control free as of January 1, 1863. Announcing the plan in advance softened the surprise, tested public opinion, and gave the states still in rebellion an opportunity to preserve slavery by returning to the Union—an opportunity that none, however, took. The final Emancipation Proclamation, issued

on January 1, 1863, declared "forever free" all slaves in areas in rebellion.

The proclamation had limited practical impact. Applying only to rebellious areas where the Union had no authority, it exempted the Union slave states and those parts of the Confederacy then under Union control (Tennessee, West Virginia, southern Louisiana, and sections of Virginia). Moreover, it mainly restated what the second Confiscation Act had already stipulated: if rebels' slaves fell into Union hands, those slaves would be free. Yet the proclamation was a brilliant political stroke. By issuing it as a military measure in his role as commander-in-chief, Lincoln pacified northern conservatives. Its aim, he stressed, was to injure the Confederacy, threaten its property, heighten its dread, sap its morale, and hasten its demise. By issuing the proclamation himself, Lincoln stole the initiative from the Radicals in Congress and mobilized support for the Union among European liberals far more dramatically than could any act of Congress. Furthermore, the declaration pushed the border states toward emancipation: by the end of the war, Maryland and Missouri would abolish slavery. Finally, it increased slaves' incentives to escape as northern troops approached. Fulfilling the worst of Confederate fears, it enabled blacks to join the Union army.

The Emancipation Proclamation did not end slavery everywhere or free "*all* the slaves." But it changed the war. From 1863 on, the war for the Union would also be a war against slavery.

Crossing Union Lines

The attacks and counterattacks of the opposing armies turned many slaves into pawns of war. Some slaves became free when Union troops overran their areas. Others fled their plantations at the approach of federal troops to take refuge behind Union lines. A few were freed by northern assaults, only to be reenslaved by Confederate counterthrusts. One North Carolina slave celebrated liberation on twelve occasions, as many times as Union soldiers marched through his area. By 1865 about half a million slaves were in Union hands.

In the first year of the war, when the Union had not yet established a policy toward contrabands (fugitive slaves), masters were able to retrieve them from the Union army. After 1862, however, the thousands of slaves who crossed Union lines were considered free. Many freedmen served in army camps as cooks, teamsters, and laborers. Some worked for pay on abandoned plantations or were leased out to planters who swore allegiance to the Union. In camps or outside them, freedmen had reason to question the value of their liberation. Deductions for clothing, rations, and medicine ate up most, if not all, of their earnings. Labor contracts frequently tied them to their employers for prolonged periods. Moreover, freedmen encountered fierce prejudice among Yankee soldiers, many of whom feared that emancipation would propel blacks north after the war. The best solution to the "question of what to do with the darkies," wrote one northern soldier, "would be to shoot them."

But this was not the whole story. Contrabands who aided the Union army as spies and scouts helped to break down ingrained bigotry. “The sooner we get rid of our foolish prejudice the better for us,” a Massachusetts soldier wrote home. Before the end of the war, northern missionary groups and freedmen’s aid societies sent agents into the South to work among the freed slaves, distribute relief, and organize schools. In March 1865, just before the hostilities ceased, Congress created the Freedmen’s Bureau, which had responsibility for the relief, education, and employment of former slaves. The Freedmen’s Bureau law also stipulated that forty acres of abandoned or confiscated land could be leased to each freedman or southern Unionist, with an option to buy after three years. This was the first and only time that Congress provided for the redistribution of confiscated Confederate property.

Black Soldiers in the Union Army

During the first year of war, the Union had rejected African-American soldiers. Northern recruiting offices sent black applicants home, and black companies that had been formed in the occupied South were disbanded. After the second Confiscation Act, Union generals formed black regiments in occupied New Orleans and on the Sea Islands off the coasts of South Carolina and Georgia. Only after the Emancipation Proclamation did large-scale enlistment begin. Leading African-Americans such as Frederick Douglass and Harvard-educated physician Martin Delany worked as recruiting agents in northern cities. Douglass linked black military service to black claims as citizens. “Once let the black man get upon his person the brass letters, U.S.; let him get an eagle on his button, and a musket on his shoulder and bullets in his pocket, and there is no power on earth which can deny that he has earned the right to citizenship.” Union drafts now included blacks, recruiting offices appeared in the loyal border states, and freedmen in refugee camps throughout the occupied South were enlisted. By the end of the war, 186,000 African-Americans had served in the Union army, one-tenth of all Union soldiers. Fully half came from the Confederate states.

White Union soldiers commonly objected to the new recruits on racial grounds. But some, including Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson, a liberal minister and former John Brown supporter who led a black regiment, welcomed the black soldiers. “Nobody knows anything about these men who has not seen them in battle,” Higginson exulted after a successful raid in Florida in 1863. “There is a fierce energy about them beyond anything of which I have ever read, except it be the French Zouaves [French troops in North Africa].” Even Union soldiers who held blacks in contempt came to approve of “anything that will kill a rebel.” Furthermore, black recruitment offered new opportunities for whites to secure commissions, for blacks served in separate regiments under white officers. Colonel Robert Gould Shaw of the 54th Massachusetts Infantry, an elite black regiment, died in combat—as did half his troops—in an attack on Fort Wagner in Charleston harbor in July 1863.

Black soldiers suffered a far higher mortality rate than white troops. Typically assigned to labor detachments or garrison duty, blacks were less likely than whites to be killed in action but more likely to die of illness in the disease-ridden garrisons. In addition, the Confederacy refused to treat captured black soldiers as prisoners of war, a policy that prevented their exchange for Confederate prisoners. Instead, Jefferson Davis ordered all blacks taken in battle to be sent back to the states from which they came, where they were re-enslaved or executed. In an especially gruesome incident, when Confederate troops under General Nathan Bedford Forrest captured Fort Pillow, Tennessee, in 1864,

they massacred many blacks—an action that provoked outcries but no retaliation from the North.

Well into the war, African-American soldiers faced inequities in their pay. White soldiers earned $13 a month plus a $3.50 clothing allowance; black privates received only $10 a month, with clothing deducted. "We have come out like men and we Expected to be Treated as men but we have bin Treated more Like Dogs then men," a black soldier complained to Secretary of War Edwin Stanton. In June 1864 Congress belatedly equalized the pay of black and white soldiers.

Although fraught with hardships and inequities, military service became a symbol of citizenship for blacks. It proved that "black men can give blows as well as take them," Frederick Douglass declared. "Liberty won by white men would lose half its lustre." Above all, the use of black soldiers, especially former slaves, was seen by northern generals as a major strike at the Confederacy. "They will make good soldiers," General Grant wrote to Lincoln in 1863, "and taking them from the enemy weakens him in the same proportion they strengthen us."

Slavery in Wartime

Anxious white southerners on the home front felt as if they were perched on a volcano. "We should be practically helpless should the negroes rise," declared a Louisiana planter's daughter, "since there are so few men left at home." When Mary Boykin Chesnut of South Carolina learned of her cousin's murder in bed by two trusted house slaves, she became almost frantic. "The murder," Chesnut wrote, "has clearly driven us all wild." To control 3 million slaves, white southerners resorted to a variety of measures. They tightened slave patrols, at times moved entire plantations to relative safety in Texas or in the upland regions of the coastal South, and spread scare stories among the slaves. "The whites would tell the colored people not to go to the Yankees, for they would harness them to carts . . . in place of horses," reported Susie King Taylor, a black fugitive from Savannah.

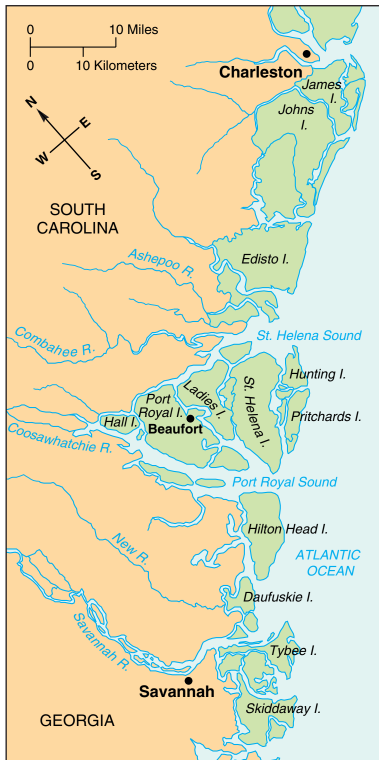
Wartime developments had a significant effect on the slaves. Some remained faithful to their owners and helped hide family treasures from marauding Union soldiers. Others were torn between loyalty and lust for freedom: one slave accompanied his master to war, rescued him when he was wounded, and then escaped on his master's horse. Given a viable choice between freedom and bondage, slaves usually chose freedom. Few slaves helped the North as dramatically as Robert Smalls, a hired-out slave boatman who turned over a Confederate steamer to the Union navy, but most who had a chance to flee to Union lines did so. The idea of freedom held irresistible appeal. Upon learning from a Union soldier that he was free, a Virginia coachman dressed in his master's clothes, "put on his best watch and chain, took his stick, and . . . told him [the master] that he might for the future drive his own coach."

The arrival of the Union navy on the Sea Islands off the coast of Georgia and South Carolina in November 1861 liberated some ten thousand slaves, the first large group of enslaved people to be emancipated by the Civil War (see Map 15.3). Northern teachers and missionaries arrived to run schools, and northern managers to run cotton plantations. A small number of former slaves received land; many worked for wages on the plantations; and some served as members of a black Union army regiment. By the last year of the war, the Sea Islands had become a haven for African American refugees from all over the South.

The majority of slaves, however, had no escape and remained under the nominal control of their owners. Despite the fears of southern whites, no general uprising of slaves occurred; and the Confederacy continued to impress thousands of slaves to toil in war plants, army camps, and field hospitals. But even slaves with no chance of flight were alert to the opportunity that war provided and swiftly tested the limits of enforced labor. As a Savannah mistress noted as early as 1861, the slaves "show a very different face from what they have had heretofore." Moreover, wartime conditions reduced the slaves' productivity. With most of the white men off at war, the master-slave relationship weakened. The women and boys who remained on plantations complained of their difficulty in controlling slaves, who commonly refused to work, performed their labors inefficienty, or even destroyed property. A Texas wife contended that her slaves were "trying all they can, it seems to me, to aggravate me" by neglecting the stock, breaking plows, and tearing down fences. "You may give your Negroes away," she finally wrote despairingly to her husband in 1864.

Whether southern slaves fled to freedom or merely stopped working, they acted effectively to defy slavery, to liberate themselves from its regulations, and to undermine the plantation system. Thus southern slavery disintegrated even as the Confederacy fought to preserve it. Hard-pressed by Union armies, short of manpower, and unsettled by the erosion of plantation slavery, the Confederate Congress in 1864 considered the drastic step of impressing slaves into its army as soldiers in exchange

MAP 15.3
The Sea Islands
The island chain was the site of unique wartime experiments in new social policies.



for their freedom at the war's end. Robert E. Lee favored the use of slaves as soldiers on the grounds that if the Confederacy did not arm its slaves, the Union would. Others were adamantly opposed. "If slaves will make good soldiers," a Georgia general argued, "our whole theory of slavery is wrong." Originally against arming slaves, Jefferson Davis changed his mind in 1865. In March 1865 the Confederate Congress narrowly passed a bill to arm three hundred thousand slave soldiers, although it omitted any mention of emancipation. As the war ended a few weeks later, however, the plan was never put into effect.

Although the Confederacy's decision to arm the slaves came too late to affect the war, the debate over

arming them damaged southern morale. By then, the South's military position had started to deteriorate.

The Turning Point of 1863

In the summer and fall of 1863, Union fortunes dramatically improved in every theater of the war. Yet the year began badly for the North. The slide, which had started with Burnside's defeat at Fredericksburg, Virginia, in December 1862, continued into the spring of 1863. Burnside's successor, General Joseph "Fighting Joe" Hooker, a windbag fond of issuing pompous proclamations to his troops, devised a plan to dislodge the Confederates from Fredericksburg by crossing the Rappahannock River north of the town and descending on the rebel rear. But Lee and Stonewall Jackson routed Hooker at Chancellorsville, Virginia, early in May 1863 (see Map 15.4). The battle proved costly for the South because Jackson was accidentally shot by Confederate sentries and died a few days later. Still, Hooker had twice as many men as Lee, so the Union defeat at Chancellorsville humiliated the North. Reports from the West brought no better news. Although repulsed at Shiloh in western Tennessee, the Confederates still had a powerful army in central Tennessee under General Braxton Bragg. Furthermore, despite repeated efforts, Grant was unable to take Vicksburg; the two-hundred-mile stretch of the Mississippi between Vicksburg and Port Hudson remained in rebel hands.

The upswing in Union fortunes began with Lee's decision after Chancellorsville to invade the North. Lee needed supplies that war-wracked Virginia could no longer provide. He also hoped to panic Lincoln into moving troops from besieged Vicksburg to the eastern theater. Lee envisioned a major Confederate victory on northern soil that would tip the balance in northern politics to the pro-peace Democrats and gain European recognition of the Confederacy. Moving his seventy-five thousand men down the Shenandoah Valley, Lee crossed the Potomac into Maryland and pressed forward into southern Pennsylvania. At this point, with Lee's army far to the west of Richmond, Hooker recommended a Union stab at the Confederate capital. But Lincoln brushed aside the advice. "Lee's *army,* and not *Richmond,* is your true objective," Lincoln shot back, and he replaced Hooker with the more reliable George G. Meade.

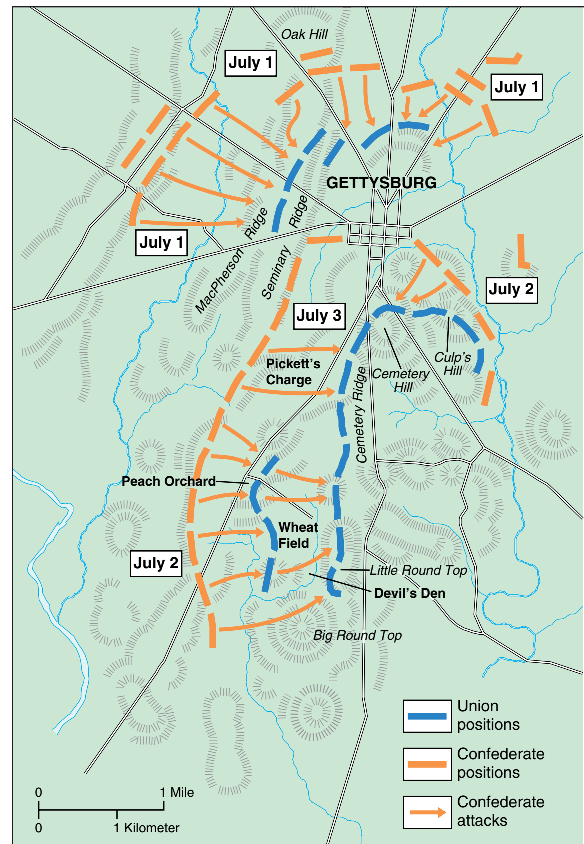
Early in July 1863, Lee's offensive ground to a halt at a Pennsylvania road junction, Gettysburg, (see Map 15.5). Confederates foraging for shoes in the town encountered some Union cavalry. Soon both sides called for reinforcements, and the war's greatest battle commenced. On July 1 Meade's troops installed themselves in hills south of town along a line that resembled a fishhook: the shank ran along Cemetery Ridge and a northern hook encircled Culp's Hill. By the end of the first day of fighting, most of the troops on both sides had arrived: Meade's army outnumbered the Confederates ninety thousand to seventy-five thousand. On July 2 Lee rejected advice to plant the Confederate army in a defensive position between Meade's forces and Washington and instead attacked the Union flanks, with some success. But because the Confederate assaults were uncoordinated, and some southern generals disregarded orders and struck where they chose, the Union was able to move in reinforcements and regain its earlier losses.

By the afternoon of July 3, believing that the Union flanks had been weakened, Lee attacked Cemetery Ridge in the center of the North's defensive line. After southern cannon shelled the line, a massive infantry force of fifteen thousand Confederates, Pickett's charge, moved in. But as the Confederate cannon sank into the ground and fired a shade too high, and as Union fire wiped out the rebel charge, rifled weapons proved their deadly effectiveness. At the end of the day, Confederate bodies lit-

MAP 15.4

The War in the East, 1863

Victorious at Chancellorsville in May 1863, Lee again invaded Union territory but was decisively stopped at Gettysburg.



MAP 15.5
Gettysburg, 1863
The failure of Pickett's charge against the Union center on July 3 was the decisive action in the war's greatest battle.

tered the field. "The dead and the dying were lying by the thousands between the two lines," a dazed Louisiana soldier wrote. A little more than half of Pickett's troops were dead, wounded, or captured in the horrible encounter. When Lee withdrew to Virginia on July 4, he had lost seventeen generals and over one-third of his army. Total Union and Confederate casualties numbered almost fifty thousand. Although Meade failed to pursue and destroy the retreating rebels, he had halted Lee's foray into the North, and the Union rejoiced.

Almost simultaneously, the North won a less bloody but more strategic victory in the West, where Grant finally pierced Vicksburg's defenses (see Map 15.6). Situated on a bluff on the east bank of the Mississippi, Vicksburg was protected on the west by the river and on the north by hills, forests, and swamps. It could be attacked only over a thin strip of dry land to its east and south. Positioned to the north of Vicksburg, Grant had to find a way to get his army south of the city and onto the Mississippi's east bank. His solution lay in moving his troops far to the west of the city and down to a point on the river south of Vicksburg. Meanwhile, Union gunboats and supply ships ran past the Confederate batteries overlooking the river at Vicksburg (not without sustaining considerable damage) to rendezvous with Grant's army and transport it across to the east bank. Grant then swung in a large semicircle, first northeastward to capture Jackson, the capital of Mississippi, and then westward back to Vicksburg. After a six-week siege, during which famished soldiers and civilians in Vicksburg were reduced to eating mules and even rats, General John C. Pemberton surrendered his thirty-thousand-man garrison to Grant on July 4, the day after Pickett's charge at Gettysburg. Port Hudson, the last Confederate holdout on the Mississippi, soon surrendered to another Union army. "The Father of Waters flows unvexed to the sea," Lincoln declared.

Before the year was out, the Union won another crucial victory in the West. General William S. Rosecrans fought and maneuvered Braxton Bragg's Confederate army out of central Tennessee and into Chattanooga, in the southeastern tip of the state, and then forced Bragg to evacuate Chattanooga. Bragg defeated the pursuing Rosecrans at the Battle of Chickamauga (September 19–20, 1863), one of the bloodiest of the war, and drove

him back into Chattanooga. But the arrival of Grant and reinforcements from the Army of the Potomac enabled the North to break Bragg's siege of Chattanooga in November. With Chattanooga secure, the way lay open for a Union strike into Georgia.

Union successes in the second half of 1863 stiffened the North's will to keep fighting and plunged some rebel leaders into despair. Hearing of the fall of Vicksburg, Confederate ordnance chief Josiah Gorgas wrote, "Yesterday we rode the pinnacle of success—today absolute ruin seems our portion. The Confederacy totters to its destruction."

Totter it might, but the South was far from beaten. Although the outcome at Gettysburg quashed southerners' hopes for victory on northern soil, it did not significantly impair Lee's ability to defend Virginia. The loss of Vicksburg and the Mississippi cut off the Confederate states west of the river—Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas—from those to the east; but these western states could still provide soldiers. Even with the loss of Chattanooga, the Confederacy continued to hold most of the Carolinas, Georgia, Florida, and Mississippi. Few contemporaries thought that the fate of the Confederacy had been sealed.

MAP 15.6
The War in the West, 1863: Vicksburg
Grant first moved his army west of Vicksburg to a point on the Mississippi south of the town. Then he marched northeast, taking Jackson, and finally west to Vicksburg.

WAR AND SOCIETY, NORTH AND SOUTH

Extending beyond the battlefields, the Civil War engulfed two economies and societies. By 1863 stark contrasts emerged: with its superior resources, the Union could meet wartime demands as the imperiled Confederacy could not. But both regions experienced labor shortages and inflation. As the conflict dragged on, both societies confronted problems of disunity and dissent, for war issues opened fissures between social classes. In both regions war encroached on everyday life. Families were disrupted and dislocated, especially in the

South. Women on both sides took on new roles at home, in the workplace, and in relief efforts.

The War's Economic Impact: The North

The war affected the Union's economy unevenly. Some industries fared poorly. For instance, the loss of southern markets damaged the shoe industry in Massachusetts, and a shortage of raw cotton sent the cotton-textile industry into a tailspin. On the other hand, industries directly related to the war effort, such as the manufacture of arms and clothing, benefited from huge government contracts. By 1865, for example, the ready-made clothing industry received orders for more than a million uniforms a year. Military demand also meant abundant business for the railroads. Some privately owned lines, which had overbuilt before the war, doubled their volume of traffic. In 1862 the federal government itself went into the railroad business by establishing the United States Military Railroads (USMRR) to carry troops and supplies to the front. By 1865 the USMRR was the largest railroad in the world.

The Republicans in Congress actively promoted business growth during the war. Holding 102 of 146 House seats and 29 of 36 Senate seats in 1861, they overrode Democratic foes and hiked the tariff in 1862 and again in 1864 to protect domestic industries. The Republican-sponsored Pacific Railroad Act of 1862 provided for the development of a transcontinental railroad, an idea that had foundered before the war on feuds over which route such a railroad should follow. With the South out of the picture and no longer able to demand a southern route from New Orleans across the Southwest, Congress chose a northern route from Omaha to San Francisco. Chartering the Union Pacific and Central Railroad corporations, Congress then gave to each large land grants and generous loans. These two corporations combined received more than 60 million acres in land grants and $20 million in government loans. The issuance of greenbacks and the creation of a national banking system, meanwhile, brought a measure of uniformity to the nation's financial system.

The Republicans designed these measures to benefit a variety of social classes, and to a degree, they succeeded. The Homestead Act, passed in 1862, embodied the party's ideal of "free soil, free labor, free men" by granting 160 acres of public land to settlers after five years of residence on the land. By 1865 twenty thousand homesteaders occupied new land in the West under the Homestead Act. The Republicans also secured passage in 1862 of the Morrill Land Grant Act, which gave to the states proceeds of public lands to fund the establishment of universities emphasizing "such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and mechanic arts." The Morrill Act spurred the growth of large state universities, mainly in the Midwest and West. Michigan State, Iowa State, and Purdue universities, among many others, profited from the law.

In general, however, the war benefited the wealthy more than the average citizen. Corrupt contractors grew fat by selling the government substandard merchandise such as the notorious "shoddy" clothing made from compressed rags, which quickly fell apart. Speculators who locked their patriotism in the closet made millions in the gold market. Because the price of gold in relation to greenbacks rose whenever public confidence in the government fell, those who bought gold in the hope that its price would rise gained from Union defeats, and even more from Union disasters. Businessmen with access to scarce commodities also reaped astounding profits. For example, manpower shortages stimulated wartime demand for the mechanical reaper that Cyrus McCormick had patented in 1834. When paid for reapers in greenbacks, which he distrusted, McCormick immediately reinvested them in pig iron and then watched in glee as wartime demand drove its price from twenty-three dollars to forty dollars a ton.

The war had a far less happy impact on ordinary Americans. Protected from foreign competition by higher tariffs, northern manufacturers hoisted the prices of finished goods. Wartime excise taxes and inflation combined to push prices still higher. At the same time, wages lagged 20 percent or more behind cost increases for most of the war. Common in most periods of rapid inflation, lagging wages became especially severe during the war because boys and women poured into government offices and factories to replace adult male workers who had joined the army. For women employees, entry into government jobs—even at half the pay of male clerks—represented a major advance. Still, employers' mere threats of hiring more low-paid youths and females undercut the bargaining power of the men who remained in the work force.

Some workers decried their low wages. "We are unable to sustain life for the price offered by contractors who fatten on their contracts," Cincinnati seamstresses declared in a petition to President Lincoln. Cigar makers and locomotive engineers formed national unions, a process that would accelerate after the war. But protests had little impact on wages; employers often denounced worker complaints as unpatriotic hindrances to the war

effort. In 1864 army troops were diverted from combat to put down protests in war industries from New York to the Midwest.

The War's Economic Impact: The South

The war shattered the South's economy. Indeed, if both regions are considered together, the war retarded *American* economic growth. For example, the commodity output of the American economy, which had registered huge increases of 51 percent and 62 percent in the 1840s and 1850s respectively, rose only 22 percent during the 1860s. This modest gain depended wholly on the North, for in the 1860s commodity output in the South actually *declined* 39 percent.

Multiple factors offset the South's substantial wartime industrial growth. For example, the war wrecked the South's railroads; invading Union troops tore up tracks, twisted rails, and burned railroad cars. Cotton production, once the foundation of the South's prosperity, sank from more than 4 million bales in 1861 to three hundred thousand bales in 1865 as Union invasions took their toll on production, particularly in Tennessee and Louisiana.

Invading Union troops also occupied the South's food-growing regions. Moreover, in areas under Confederate control, the drain of manpower into the army decreased the yields per acre of crops like wheat and corn. Food shortages abounded late in the war. "The people are subsisting on the ungathered crops and nine families out of ten are left without meat," a Mississippi citizen lamented in 1864. Agricultural shortages worsened the South's already severe inflation. By 1863 salt selling for $1.25 a sack in New York City cost $60 in the Confederacy. Food riots erupted in 1863 in Mobile, Atlanta, and Richmond; in Richmond the wives of ironworkers paraded to demand lower food prices.

Part of the blame for the South's food shortages rested with the planter class. Despite government pleas to grow more food, many planters continued to raise cotton, with far-reaching consequences. Slave labor, which could have been diverted to army camps, remained essential on cotton plantations. This increased the Confederacy's reliance on its unpopular conscription laws. Moreover, to feed its hungry armies, the Confederacy had to impress food from civilians. This policy not only led to resentment but also contributed to the South's mounting military desertions. Food-impressment agents usually concentrated on the easiest targets—farms run by the wives of active soldiers, who found it hard to resist desperate pleas to return home. "I don't want you to stop fighting them Yankees," wrote the wife of an Alabama soldier, "but try and get off and come home and fix us all up some and then you can go back." By the end of 1864, half of the Confederacy's soldiers were absent from their units.

The manpower drain that hampered food production reshaped the lives of southern white women. With the enlistment of about three out of four men of military age over the course of the war, Confederate women found their locales "thinned out of men," as a South Carolina woman described her town in 1862. "There is a vacant chair in every house," mourned a Kentucky Confederate girl. Often left in charge of farms and plantations, women faced new challenges and chronic shortages. As factory-made goods became scarce, the southern press urged the revival of home production; one Arkansas woman, a newspaper reported with admiration, not only wove eight yards of cloth a day but had also built her own loom. More commonly, southern homemakers concocted replacements for goods no longer attainable, including inks, dyes, coffee, shoes, and wax candles. "I find myself, every day, doing something I never did before," a Virginia woman declared in 1863. The proximity of war forced many Confederate women into lives as refugees. Property destruction or even the threat of Union invasions drove women and families away from their homes; those with slave property to preserve, in particular, sought to flee before Union forces arrived. Areas remote from military action, especially Texas, were favored destinations. Disorienting

and disheartening, the refugee experience sapped morale. "I will never feel like myself again," a Georgia woman who had escaped from the path of Union troops wrote to her husband in 1864.

In one respect, the persistence of cotton growing did aid the South because cotton became the basis for the Confederacy's flourishing trade with the enemy. The U.S. Congress virtually legalized this trade in July 1861 by allowing northern commerce with southerners loyal to the Union. In practice, of course, it proved impossible to tell loyalists from disloyalists. As long as Union textile mills stood idle for lack of cotton, northern traders happily swapped bacon, salt, blankets, and other necessaries for southern cotton. The Union's penetration of the Confederate heartland eased business dealings between the two sides. By 1864 traffic through the lines provided enough food to feed Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. To a northern congressman, it seemed that the Union's policy was "to feed an army and fight it at the same time."

Trading with the enemy alleviated the South's food shortages but intensified its morale problems. The prospect of traffic with the Yankees gave planters an incentive to keep growing cotton, and it fattened merchants and middlemen. "Oh! the extortioners," complained a Confederate war-office clerk in Richmond. "Our patriotism is mainly in the army and among the ladies of the South. The avarice and cupidity of men at home could only be exceeded by ravenous wolves."

Dealing with Dissent

Both wartime governments faced mounting dissent and disloyalty. Within the Confederacy, dissent took two basic forms. First, a vocal group of states' rights activists, notably Vice President Alexander Stephens and governors Zebulon Vance of North Carolina and Joseph Brown of Georgia, spent much of the war attacking Jefferson Davis's government as a despotism. Second, loyalty to the Union flourished among a segment of the Confederacy's common people, particularly those living in the Appalachian Mountain region that ran from western North Carolina through eastern Tennessee and into northern Georgia and Alabama. The nonslaveholding small farmers who predominated here saw the Confederate rebellion as a slaveowners' conspiracy. Resentful of such measures as the 20-Negro exemption from conscription, they were reluctant to fight for what a North Carolinian defined as "an adored trinity, cotton, niggers, and chivalry." "All they want," an Alabama farmer complained of the planters, "is to get you pupt up and to fight for their infurnal negroes and after you do there fighting you may kiss there hine parts for o they care."

On the whole, the Confederate government responded mildly to popular disaffection. In 1862 the Confederate Congress gave Jefferson Davis the power to suspend the writ of habeas corpus, but Davis used his power only sparingly, by occasionally and briefly putting areas under martial law, mainly to aid tax collectors.

Lincoln faced similar challenges in the North, where the Democratic minority opposed both emancipation and the wartime growth of centralized power. Although "War Democrats" conceded that war was necessary to preserve the Union, "Peace Democrats" (called Copperheads by their opponents, to suggest a resemblance to a species of easily concealed poisonous snakes) demanded a truce and a peace conference. They charged that administration war policy was intended to "exterminate the South," make reconciliation impossible, and spark "terrible social change and revolution" nationwide.

Strongest in the border states, the Midwest, and the northeastern cities, the Democrats mobilized the support of farmers of southern background in the Ohio Valley and of members of the urban working class, especially recent immigrants, who feared losing their jobs to an influx of free blacks. In 1863 this volatile brew of political, ethnic, racial, and class antagonisms in northern society exploded into antidraft protests in several cities. By far the most violent eruption occurred in July in New York City. Enraged by the first drawing of names under the Enrollment Act and by a longshoremen's strike in which blacks had been used as strikebreakers, mobs of Irish working-class men and women roamed the streets for four days until suppressed by federal troops. The city's Irish loathed the idea of being drafted to fight a war on behalf of the slaves who, once emancipated, might migrate north to compete with them for low-paying jobs. They also resented the provision of the draft law that allowed the rich to purchase substitutes. The rioters lynched at least a dozen blacks, injured hundreds more, and burned draft offices, the homes of wealthy Republicans, and the Colored Orphan Asylum.

President Lincoln's dispatch of federal troops to quash these riots typified his forceful response to dissent. Lincoln imposed martial law with far less hesitancy than Davis. After suspending the writ of habeas corpus in Maryland in 1861, he barred it nationwide in 1863 and authorized the arrest of rebels, draft resisters, and those engaged in "any disloyal practice." The contrasting responses of Davis and Lincoln to dissent underscored the differences between the two regions'

TECHNOLOGY AND CULTURE

The Camera and the Civil War

In October 1862, crowds gathered at photographer Mathew Brady's New York studio to gaze at images of the Civil War, especially at gruesome views of corpses on the battlefield. "Mr. Brady has done something to bring home to us the terrible reality and earnestness of war," declared the *New York Times.* "You will see hushed, reverent groups standing around these weird copies of carnage, bending down to look at the dead. . . . These pictures have a terrible distinctness." Entrepreneurs like Brady and his staff of photographers played an innovative role in the Civil War. Just as new technologies reshaped military strategy, so did the camera transform the image of war. Some fifteen hundred wartime photographers, who took tens of thousands of photos in makeshift studios, in army camps, and in the field, brought visions of military life to people at home. The Civil War became the first heavily photographed war in history.

Invented in 1839, the camera had played a small part in the Mexican-American War (1846–1848) and the Crimean War (1854–1855), but the still-unsophisticated nature of photography limited its influence. Photographs of the 1840s and 1850s were mainly daguerreotypes, reversed images (mirror images) on silver-coated surfaces of copper plates. The daguerreotype process required between fifteen and thirty minutes of exposure and produced only one image. Most daguerreotypes were stiff-looking portraits made in studios. Cheaper versions of daguerreotypes, ambrotypes (negatives on glass) and tintypes (negatives on iron), remained popular for years to come. In the 1850s, a new era of photography opened, with the development of the wet-plate or collodion process and the printing of photographs on paper. In the wet-plate process, the photographer coated a glass plate, or negative, with a chemical solution; exposed the negative (took the photo); and developed it at once in a darkroom. The new process required a short exposure time—a few second outdoors and up to a minute indoors—and lent itself to landscapes as well as portraits. Most important, the wet-plate process enabled photographers to generate multiple prints from a single negative. Professional photographers could now mass-produce prints of photos for a wide audience; the wet-plate process made photography not just a craft but a profitable enterprise.

Using new methods and older ones, Civil War photographers churned out many portraits of individual soldiers, often made in temporary tents in army camps; some were ambrotypes or tintypes, and others were cartes-de-visite, or mass-produced portraits mounted on cards (see the first page of this chapter). They disseminated images of political leaders and battle sites; some were stereographs, or two images, each made from the position of one eye, which, fused together, created a sense of spatial depth. Lugging their heavy equipment with them, including portable dark-boxes for developing images, wartime photographers competed both with one another and with sketch artists who also sought to record the war. Wood engravings derived from photographs appeared alongside lithographs in popular magazines such as *Harpers Weekly* and *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Weekly.* Finally, the Union army

used photography for military purposes. Photographers in the army's employ took photos of maps, battle terrain, bridges, armaments, and even medical procedures. The Union army's Surgeon General commissioned and collected hundreds of photos to illustrate case studies and surgical techniques.

Several factors limited the scope of Civil War photography. First, most camera work of the war years was northern; the Union blockade of the South, dwindling photographic supplies, and the sinking Confederate economy curbed southern photography. Photos of the South became part of the record mainly as Union forces invaded the Confederacy. Second, no Civil War photos showed battles in progress; action photos were not yet possible. Instead, photographers rushed to arrive right after battles had ended, perhaps with cannon and smoke in the distance, to photograph casualties before bodies were removed. But limitations aside, the camera now served, in Mathew Brady's words, as "the eye of history." Americans of the Civil War era appreciated the minute detail of photographs and the apparent truthfulness of the camera. They also responded with emotion to the content of photographs—to the courage of soldiers, to the massive might of the Union army, and to the deathly toll of war.

Two postwar publications by photographers George N. Barnard and Alexander Gardner, Brady's large collection of glass negatives, a huge military archive, and thousands of soldiers' portraits remain part of the Civil War's photographic legacy. Only in 1888, when inventor George Eastman introduced roll film (made of celluloid, a synthetic plastic) and a simple box camera, the Kodak, did members of the general public, until then primarily viewers of photography, become photographers themselves.

Focus Question:

How do photographs affect people's perceptions of the past? In what ways does the camera change the historical record?

Two photographers attached to the Army of the Potomac pose in front of their makeshift studio.

wartime political systems. As we have seen, Davis lacked the institutionalization of dissent provided by party conflict and thus had to tread warily, lest his opponents brand him a despot. In contrast, Lincoln and other Republicans used dissent to rally patriotic fervor against the Democrats. After the New York City draft riots, the Republicans blamed the violence on New York's antidraft Democratic governor, Horatio Seymour.

Forceful as he was, Lincoln did not unleash a reign of terror against dissent. In general, the North preserved freedom of the press, speech, and assembly. Although some fifteen thousand civilians were arrested during the war, most were quickly released. A few cases, however, aroused widespread concern. In 1864 a military commission sentenced an Indiana man to be hanged for an alleged plot to free Confederate prisoners. The Supreme Court reversed his conviction two years later when it ruled that civilians could not be tried by military courts when the civil courts were open (*Ex parte* Milligan, 1866). Of more concern were the arrests of politicians, notably Clement L. Vallandigham, an Ohio Peace Democrat. Courting arrest, Vallandigham challenged the administration, denounced the suspension of habeas corpus, proposed an armistice, and in 1863 was sentenced to jail for the rest of the war by a military commission. When Ohio Democrats then nominated him for governor, Lincoln changed the sentence to banishment. Escorted to enemy lines in Tennessee, Vallandigham was left in the hands of bewildered Confederates and eventually escaped to Canada. The Supreme Court refused to review his case.

The Medical War

Despite the discontent and disloyalty of some citizens, both the Union and the Confederacy witnessed a remarkable wartime patriotism that impelled civilians, especially women, to work tirelessly to alleviate soldiers' suffering. The United States Sanitary Commission, organized early in the war by civilians to assist the Union's medical bureau, depended on women volunteers. Described by one woman functionary as a "great artery that bears the people's love to the army," the commission raised funds at "sanitary fairs," bought and distributed supplies, ran special kitchens to supplement army rations, tracked down the missing, and inspected army camps. The volunteers' exploits became legendary. One poor window, Mary Ann "Mother" Bickerdyke, served sick and wounded Union soldiers as both nurse and surrogate mother. When asked by a doctor by what authority she demanded supplies for the wounded, she shot back, "From the Lord God Almighty. Do you have anything that ranks higher than that?"

Women also reached out to aid the battlefront through the nursing corps. Some 3,200 women served the Union and the Confederacy as nurses. Already

famed for her tireless campaigns on behalf of the insane, Dorothea Dix became the head of the Union's nursing corps. Clara Barton began the war as a clerk in the U.S. Patent Office, but she, too, greatly aided the medical effort, finding ingenious ways of channeling medicine to the sick and wounded. Catching wind of Union movements before Antietam, Barton showed up at the battlefield on the eve of the clash with a wagonload of supplies. When army surgeons ran out of bandages and started to dress wounds with corn husks, she raced forward with lint and bandages. "With what joy," she wrote, "I laid my precious burden down among them." After the war, in 1881, she would found the American Red Cross.

The Confederacy, too, had extraordinary nurses. One, Sally Tompkins, was commissioned a captain for her hospital work; another, Belle Boyd, served the Confederacy as both a nurse and a spy and once dashed through a field, waving her bonnet, to give Stonewall Jackson information. Danger stalked nurses even in hospitals far from the front. Author Louisa May Alcott, a nurse at the Union Hotel Hospital in Washington, D.C., contracted typhoid. Wherever they worked, nurses witnessed haunting, unforgettable sights. "About the amputating table," one reported, "lay large piles of human flesh—legs, arms, feet, and hands . . . the stiffened membranes seemed to be clutching oftentimes at our clothing."

Pioneered by British reformer Florence Nightingale in the 1850s, nursing was a new vocation for women and, in the eyes of many, a brazen departure from women's proper sphere. Male doctors were unsure about how to react to women in the wards. Some saw the potential for mischief, but others viewed nursing and sanitary work as potentially useful. The miasm theory of disease (see Chapter 11) won wide respect among physicians and stimulated some valuable sanitary measures, particularly in hospitals behind the lines. In partial consequence, the ratio of disease to battle deaths was much lower in the Civil War than in the Mexican War. Still, for every soldier killed during the Civil War, two died of disease. "These Big Battles is not as Bad as the fever," a North Carolina soldier wrote. The scientific investigations that would lead to the germ theory of disease were only commencing during the 1860s. Arm and leg wounds frequently led to gangrene or tetanus, and typhoid, malaria, diarrhea, and dysentery raged through army camps.

Prison camps posed a special problem. Prisoner exchanges between the North and the South, common early in the war, collapsed by midwar, partly because the South refused to exchange black prisoners and partly because the North gradually concluded that exchanges benefited the manpower-short Confederacy more than the Union. As a result, the two sides had far more prisoners than either could handle. Prisoners on both sides suffered gravely from camp environments, but the worst conditions plagued southern camps. Squalor and insufficient rations turned the Confederate prison camp at Andersonville, Georgia, into a virtual death camp; three thousand prisoners a month (out of a total of thirty-two thousand) were dying there by August 1864. After the war an outraged northern public secured the execution of Andersonville's commandant. Although the commandant was partly to blame, the deterioration of the southern economy had contributed massively to the wretched state of southern prison camps. The Union camps were not much better, but the fatality rate among northerners held by the South exceeded that of southerners imprisoned by the North.

The War and Women's Rights

Female nurses and Sanitary Commission workers were not the only women to serve society in wartime. In both northern and southern government offices and mills, thousands of women took over jobs vacated by men. Moreover, home industry revived at all levels of society. In rural areas, where manpower shortages were most acute, women often did the plowing, planting, and harvesting.

Few women worked more effectively for their region's cause than Philadelphia-born Anna E. Dickinson. After losing her job in the federal mint (for denouncing General George McClellan as a traitor), Dickinson threw herself into hospital volunteer work and public lecturing. Her lecture "Hospital Life," recounting the soldiers' sufferings, won the attention of Republican politicians. In 1863, hard-pressed by the Democrats, these politicians invited Dickinson, then scarcely twenty-one, to campaign for Republicans in New Hampshire and Connecticut. This decision paid handsome dividends for the party. Articulate and poised, Dickinson captivated her listeners. Soon Republican candidates who had dismissed the offer of aid from a woman begged her to campaign for them.

Northern women's rights advocates hoped that the war would yield equality for women as well as freedom for slaves. Not only should a grateful North reward women for their wartime services, these women reasoned, but it should recognize the link between black rights and women's rights. In 1863 Elizabeth Cady

Stanton and Susan B. Anthony organized the Woman's National Loyal League. The league's main activity was to gather four hundred thousand signatures on a petition calling for a constitutional amendment to abolish slavery, but Stanton and Anthony used the organization to promote woman suffrage as well.

Despite high expectations, the war did not bring women significantly closer to economic or political equality. Women in government offices and factories continued to be paid less than men. Sanitary Commission workers and most wartime nurses, as volunteers, earned nothing. Nor did the war alter the prevailing definition of woman's sphere. In 1860 that sphere already included charitable and benevolent activities; during the war the scope of benevolence grew to embrace organized care for the wounded. Yet men continued to dominate the medical profession, and for the rest of the nineteenth century, nurses would be classified in the census as domestic help.

The keenest disappointment of women's rights advocates lay in their failure to capitalize on rising sentiment for the abolition of slavery to secure the vote for women. Northern politicians could see little value in woman suffrage. The *New York Herald,* which supported the Loyal League's attack on slavery, dismissed its call for woman suffrage as "nonsense and tomfoolery." Stanton wrote bitterly, "So long as woman labors to second man's endeavors and exalt his sex above her own, her virtues pass unquestioned; but when she dares to demand rights and privileges for herself, her motives, manners, dress, personal appearance, and character are subjects for ridicule and detraction."

The Union Victorious, 1864–1865

Despite successes at Gettysburg and Vicksburg in 1863, the Union stood no closer to taking Richmond at the start of 1864 than in 1861, and most of the Lower South still remained under Confederate control. The Union invasion had taken its toll on the South's home front, but the North's inability to destroy the main Confederate armies had eroded the Union's will to keep attacking. Northern war weariness strengthened the Democrats and jeopardized Lincoln's prospects for reelection in 1864.

The year 1864 proved crucial for the North. While Grant dueled with Lee in the East, a Union army under WIlliam T. Sherman attacked from Tennessee into northwestern Georgia and took Atlanta in early September.

Atlanta's fall boosted northern morale and helped to reelect Lincoln. Now the curtain rose on the last act of the war. After taking Atlanta, Sherman marched across Georgia to Savannah, devastated the state's resources, and cracked its morale. Pivoting north from Savannah, Sherman moved into South Carolina. Meanwhile, having backed Lee into trenches around Petersburg and Richmond, Grant forced the evacuation of both cities and brought on the Confederacy's collapse.

The Eastern Theater in 1864

Early in 1864 Lincoln made Grant commander of all Union armies and promoted him to lieutenant general. At first glance, the stony-faced Grant seemed an unlikely candidate for so exalted a rank, held previously only by George Washington. Grant's only distinguishing characteristics were his ever-present cigars and a penchant for whittling sticks into chips. "There is no glitter, no parade about him," a contemporary noted. But Grant's success in the West had made him the Union's most popular general. With his promotion, Grant moved his headquarters to the Army of the Potomac in the East and mapped a strategy for final victory.

Like Lincoln, Grant believed that the Union had to coordinate its attacks on all fronts in order to exploit its numerical advantage and prevent the South from shifting troops back and forth between the eastern and western theaters. (The South's victory at Chickamauga in September 1863, for example, had rested in part on reinforcements sent by Lee to Braxton Bragg in the West.) Accordingly, Grant planned a sustained offensive against Lee in the East while ordering William T. Sherman to attack the rebel army in Georgia commanded by Bragg's replacement, General Joseph Johnston. Sherman's mission was to break up the Confederate army and "to get into the interior of the enemy's country . . . inflicting all the damage you can."

In early May 1864, Grant led 118,000 men against Lee's 64,000 in a forested area near Fredericksburg, Virginia, called the Wilderness. Checked by Lee in a series of bloody engagements (the Battle of the Wilderness, May 5–7), Grant then tried to swing around Lee's right flank, only to suffer new reverses at Spotsylvania on May 12 and Cold Harbor on June 3. These engagements were among the war's fiercest; at Cold Harbor, Grant lost 7,000 men in a single hour. Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., a Union lieutenant and later a Supreme Court justice, wrote home how "immense the butcher's bill has been." But Grant refused to interpret repulses as defeats. Rather, he viewed the engagements at the Wilderness, Spotsylvania, and Cold Harbor as less-than-complete victories. Pressing on, he forced Lee to pull back to the trenches guarding Petersburg and Richmond.

Grant had accomplished a major objective, because once entrenched, Lee could no longer swing around to the Union rear, cut Yankee supply lines, or as at Chancellorsville, surprise the Union's main force. Lee did dispatch General Jubal A. Early on raids down the Shenandoah Valley, which the Confederacy had long used both as a granary and as an indirect way to menace Washington. But Grant countered by ordering General Philip Sheridan to march up the valley from the north and so devastate it that a crow flying over would have to carry its own provisions. The time had come, a Union chaplain wrote, "to peel this land." After defeating Early at Winchester, Virginia, in September 1864, Sheridan controlled the valley.

While Grant and Lee grappled in the Wilderness, Sherman advanced into Georgia at the head of 98,000 men. Opposing him with 53,000 Confederate troops (soon reinforced to 65,000), General Joseph Johnston retreated toward Atlanta. Johnston's plan was to conserve strength for a final defense of Atlanta while forcing Sherman to extend his supply lines. But Jefferson Davis, dismayed by Johnston's defensive strategy, replaced him with the adventurous John B. Hood. Hood, who had lost the use of an arm at Gettysburg and a leg at Chickamauga, had to be strapped to his saddle; but for all his disabilities, he liked to take risks. In a prewar poker game, he had bet $2,500 with "nary a pair in his hand." Hood gave Davis what he wanted, a series of attacks on Sherman's army. The forays, however, failed to dislodge Sherman and severely depleted Hood's army. No longer able to defend Atlanta's supply lines, Hood evacuated the city, which Sherman took on September 2, 1864.

The Election of 1864

Atlanta's fall came at a timely moment for Lincoln, who faced a tough reelection campaign. Lincoln had secured the Republican renomination with difficulty. The Radicals, who had flayed Lincoln for delay in adopting emancipation as a war goal, now dismissed his plans to restore the occupied parts of Tennessee, Louisiana, and Arkansas to the Union. The Radicals insisted that only Congress, not the president, could set the requirements for readmission of conquered states and criticized Lincoln's reconstruction standards as too lenient. The Radicals endorsed Secretary of the Treasury Salmon P. Chase for the nomination. The Democrats, meanwhile, had never forgiven Lincoln for making emancipation a war goal, and now the Copperheads, or Peace

Democrats, demanded an immediate armistice, followed by negotiations between the North and the South to settle outstanding issues.

Facing formidable challenges, Lincoln benefited from both his own resourcefulness and his foes' problems. Chase's challenge failed, and by the time of the Republican convention in July, Lincoln's managers were firmly in control. To isolate the Peace Democrats and attract prowar Democrats, the Republicans formed a temporary organization, the National Union party, and replaced Lincoln's vice president, Hannibal Hamlin, with a prowar southern Unionist, Democratic Senator Andrew Johnson of Tennessee. This tactic helped exploit the widening division among the Democrats, who nominated George B. McClellan, the former commander of the Army of the Potomac and an advocate of continuing the war until the Confederacy's collapse. But McClellan, saddled with a platform written by the Peace Democrats, spent much of his campaign distancing himself from his party's peace-without-victory plank.

Despite the Democrats' disarray, as late as August 1864, Lincoln seriously doubted that he would be reelected. Leaving little to chance, he arranged for furloughs so that Union soldiers, most of whom supported him, could vote in states lacking absentee ballots. But the timely fall of Atlanta aided him even more. The Confederate defeat punctured the northern antiwar movement and saved Lincoln's presidency. With 55 percent of the popular vote and 212 out of 233 electoral votes, Lincoln swept to victory.

The convention that nominated Lincoln had endorsed a constitutional amendment to abolish slavery, which Congress passed early in 1865. The Thirteenth Amendment would be ratified by the end of the year (see Table 15.1).

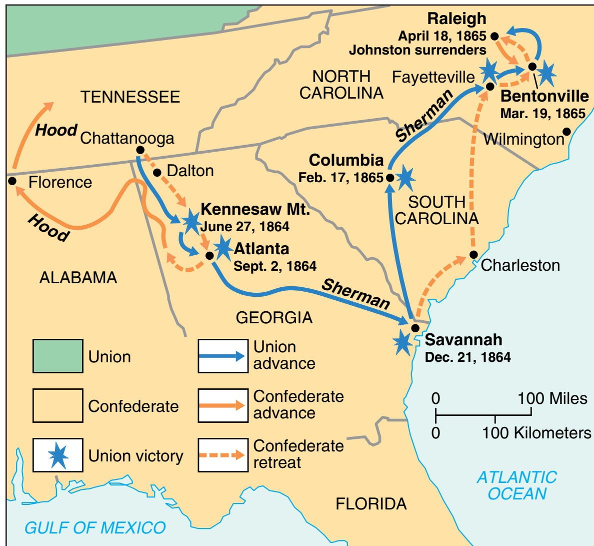
Sherman's March Through Georgia

Meanwhile, Sherman gave the South a new lesson in total war. After evacuating Atlanta, Hood led his Confederate army north toward Tennessee in the hope of luring Sherman out of Georgia. But Sherman refused to chase Hood around Tennessee and stretch his own supply lines to the breaking point. Rather, Sherman proposed to abandon his supply lines altogether, march his army across Georgia to Savannah, and live off the countryside as he moved along. He would break the South's will to fight, terrify its people, and "make war so terrible . . . that generations would pass before they could appeal again to it."

Sherman began by burning much of Atlanta and forcing the evacuation of most of its civilian population. This harsh measure relieved him of the need to feed and garrison the city. Then, sending enough troops north to ensure the futility of Hood's campaign in Tennessee, he led the bulk of his army, sixty-two thousand men, on a 285-mile trek to Savannah (see Map 15.7). Soon thousands of slaves were following the army. "Dar's de man dat rules the world," a slave cried on seeing Sherman.

TABLE 15.1 Emancipation of Slaves in the Atlantic World: A Selective List

HAITI	**1794**	A series of slave revolts began in St. Domingue in 1791 and 1792, and spread under the leadership of Toussaint L'Ouverture. In 1794 the French Republic abolished slavery in all French colonies. In 1804 St. Domingue became the independent republic of Haiti.
BRITISH WEST INDIES	**1834**	Parliament in 1833 abolished slavery gradually in all lands under British control, usually with compensation for slave owners. The law affected the entire British Empire, including British colonies in the West Indies such as Barbados and Jamaica. It took effect in 1834.
MARTINIQUE AND GUADELOUPE	**1848**	Napoleon had restored slavery to these French colonies in 1800; the Second French Republic abolished it in 1848.
UNITED STATES	**1865**	The Thirteenth Amendment, passed by Congress in January 1865 and ratified in December 1865, freed all slaves in the United States. Prior to that, the Second Confiscation Act of 1862 liberated those slaves who came within Union lines, and the Emancipation Proclamation of January 1, 1863, declared free all slaves in areas under Confederate control.
CUBA	**1886**	In the early 1880s, the Spanish Parliament passed a plan of gradual abolition, which provided an intermediate period of "apprenticeship." In 1886 Spain abolished slavery completely. Cuba remained under Spanish control until the end of the Spanish-American War in 1898.
BRAZIL	**1888**	Brazil, which had declared its independence from Portugal in 1822, passed a law to effect gradual emancipation in 1871, and in 1888, under the "Golden Law," abolished slavery completely.



MAP 15.7
Sherman's March Through the South, 1864–1865

Sherman's four columns of infantry, augmented by cavalry screens, moved on a front sixty miles wide and at a pace of ten miles a day. They destroyed everything that could aid southern resistance—arsenals, railroads, munitions plants, cotton gins, cotton stores, crops, and livestock. Railroad destruction was especially thorough; ripping up tracks, Union soldiers heated rails in giant fires and twisted them into "Sherman neckties." Although Sherman's troops were told not to destroy civilian property, foragers carried out their own version of total war, ransacking and sometimes demolishing homes. Indeed, the havoc seemed a vital part of Sherman's strategy. By the time he occupied Savannah, he estimated that his army had destroyed about a hundred million dollars' worth of property.

After taking Savannah in December 1864, Sherman's army wheeled north toward South Carolina, the first state to secede and, in the general's view, one "that deserves all that seems in store for her." Sherman's columns advanced unimpeded to Columbia, South Carolina's capital. After fires set by looters, slaves, soldiers of both sides, and liberated Union prisoners gutted much of the city, Sherman headed for North Carolina. By the spring of 1865, his army had left in its wake over four hundred miles of ruin. Other Union armies moved into Alabama and Georgia and took thousands of prisoners. Northern forces had penetrated the entire Confederacy, except for Texas and Florida, and crushed its wealth. "War is cruelty and you cannot refine it," Sherman wrote. "Those who brought war into our country deserve all the curses and maledictions a people can pour out."

Toward Appomattox

While Sherman headed north, Grant renewed his assault on the entrenched Army of Northern Virginia. His objective was Petersburg, a railroad hub south of Richmond (see Map 15.8). Although Grant had failed on several occasions to overwhelm the Confederate defenses in front of Petersburg, the devastation wrought by Sherman's army had taken its toll on Confederate morale. Rebel desertions reached epidemic proportions. Reinforced by Sheridan's army, triumphant from its campaign in the Shenandoah Valley, Grant late in March 1865 swung his forces around the western flank of Petersburg's defenders. Lee could not stop him. On April 2 Sheridan smashed the rebel flank at the Battle of Five Forks. A courier bore the grim news to Jefferson Davis, attending church in Richmond: "General Lee telegraphs that he can hold his position no longer."

Davis left his pew, gathered his government, and fled the city. In the morning of April 3, Union troops entered Richmond, pulled down the Confederate flag, and ran up the Stars and Stripes over the capitol. As white and black regiments entered in triumph, explosions set by retreating Confederates left the city "a sea of flames." "Over all," wrote a Union officer, "hung a canopy of dense smoke lighted up now and then by the bursting shells from the numerous arsenals throughout the city." Fires damaged the Tredegar Iron Works. Union troops liberated the town jail, which housed slaves awaiting sale, and its rejoicing inmates poured into the streets. On April 4 Lincoln toured the city and, for a few

MAP 15.8
The Final Virginia Campaign, 1864–1865
Refusing to abandon his campaign in the face of enormous casualties, Grant finally pushed Lee (below) into defensive fortifications around Petersburg, whose fall doomed Richmond. When Lee tried to escape to the west, Grant cut him off and forced his surrender.

minutes, sat at Jefferson Davis's desk with a dreamy expression on his face.

Lee made a last-ditch effort to escape from Grant and reach Lynchburg, sixty miles west of Petersburg. He planned to use the rail connections at Lynchburg to join General Joseph Johnston's army, which Sherman had pushed into North Carolina. But Grant and Sheridan swiftly choked off Lee's escape route, and on April 9 Lee bowed to the inevitable. He asked for terms of surrender and met Grant in a private home in the village of Appomattox Courthouse, Virginia, east of Lynchburg. While stunned troops gathered outside, Lee appeared in full dress uniform, with a sword. Grant entered in his customary disarray, smoking a cigar. When Union troops began to fire celebratory salutes, Grant put a stop to it. The final surrender of Lee's army occurred four days later. Lee's troops laid down their arms between federal ranks. "On our part," wrote a Union officer, "not a sound of trumpet . . . nor roll of drum; not a cheer . . . but an awed stillness rather." Grant paroled Lee's twenty-six thousand men and sent them home with their horses and mules "to work their little farms." The remnants of Confederate resistance collapsed within a month of Appomattox. Johnston surrendered to Sherman on April 18, and Davis was captured in Georgia on May 10.

Grant returned to a jubilant Washington, and on April 14 he turned down a theater date with the Lincolns. That night at Ford's Theater, an unemployed pro-Confederate actor, John Wilkes Booth, entered Lincoln's box and shot him in the head. Waving a knife, Booth

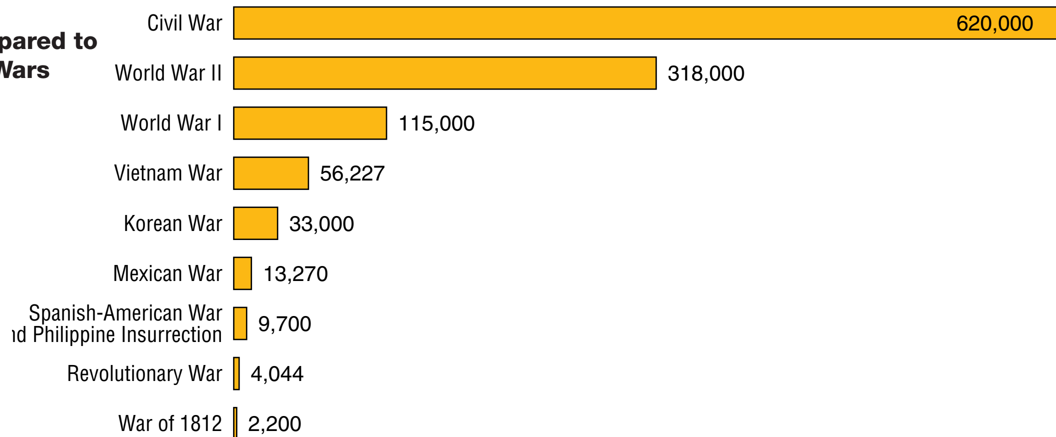


FIGURE 15.3
Civil War Deaths Compared to U.S. Deaths in Other Wars

leaped onstage shouting the Virginia state motto, "*Sic semper tyrannis*" ("Such is always the fate of tyrants") and then escaped, despite having broken his leg. That same night, a Booth accomplice stabbed Secretary of State Seward, who later recovered, while a third conspirator, assigned to Vice President Johnson, failed to attack. Union troops hunted down Booth and shot him within two weeks, or else he shot himself. Of eight accused accomplices, including a woman boardinghouse keeper, four were hanged and the rest imprisoned. On April 15, when Lincoln died, Andrew Johnson became president. Six days later Lincoln's funeral train departed on a mournful journey from Washington to Springfield, Illinois, with crowds of thousands gathering at stations to weep as it passed.

The Impact of the War

The Civil War took a larger human toll than any other war in American history. The 620,000 soldiers who lost their lives nearly equaled the number of American soldiers killed in all the nation's earlier and later wars combined (see Figure 15.3). The death count stood at 360,000 Union soldiers and 260,000 Confederates. Most families in the nation suffered losses. Vivid reminders of the price of Union remained beyond the end of the century. For many years armless and legless veterans gathered at regimental reunions. Citizens erected monuments to the dead in front of town halls and on village greens. Soldiers' widows collected pensions well into the twentieth century.

The economic costs were staggering, but the war did not ruin the national economy, only the southern part of it. The vast Confederate losses, about 60 percent of southern wealth, were offset by northern advances. At the war's end, the North had almost all of the nation's wealth and capacity for production. Spurring economic modernization, the war provided a hospitable climate for industrial development and capital investment. No longer the largest slaveowning power in the world, the United States would now become a major industrial nation.

The war had political as well as economic ramifications. It created a "more perfect Union" in place of the prewar federation of states. The doctrine of states' rights did not disappear, but it was shorn of its extreme features. Talk of secession ended; states would never again exercise their antebellum range of powers. The national banking system, created in 1863, gradually supplanted state banks. The greenbacks provided a national currency. The federal government had exercised powers that many in 1860 doubted it possessed. By abolishing slavery and imposing an income tax, it asserted power over kinds of private property once thought untouchable. The war also promoted large-scale organization in both the business world and public life. The giant railroad corporation, with its thousands of employees, and the huge Sanitary Commission, with its thousands of auxiliaries and volunteers, pointed out the road that the nation would take.

Finally, the Civil War fulfilled abolitionist prophecies as well as Unionist goals. Liberating 3.5 million slaves, the war produced the very sort of radical upheaval within southern society that Lincoln had originally said that would not induce.

Conclusion

When war began in April 1861, both sides were unprepared, but each had distinct strengths. The Union held vast advantages of manpower and resources, including most of the nation's industrial strength and two-thirds of its railroads. The North, however, faced a stiff challenge. To achieve its goal of forcing the rebel states back into the Union, it had to conquer large pieces of southern

territory, cripple the South's resources, and destroy its armies. The Union's challenge was the Confederacy's strength. To sustain Confederate independence, the South had to fight a defensive war, far less costly in men and material. It had to prevent Union conquest of its territory, preserve its armies from annihilation, and hold out long enough to convince the North that further effort would be pointless. Moreover, southerners expected to be fighting on home ground and to enjoy an advantage in morale. Thus, though its resources were fewer, the Confederacy's task was less daunting.

The start of war challenged governments, North and South, in similar ways: both sides had to raise armies and funds. Within two years, both the Union and the Confederacy had drafted troops, imposed taxes, and printed paper money. As war dragged on, both regions faced political and economic problems. Leaders on each side confronted disunity and dissent. Northern Democrats assailed President Lincoln; in the South, states-rights supporters defied the authority of the Confederate government. The North's two-party system and the skills of its political leaders proved to be assets that the Confederacy lacked. Economically, too, the North held an edge. Both regions endured labor shortages and inflation. But the Union with its far greater resources more handily met the demands of war. In the North, Republicans in Congress enacted innovative laws that enhanced federal might, such as the National Banking Act, the Pacific Railroad Act, and the Homestead Act. The beleaguered South, in contrast, had to cope with food shortages and economic dislocation. Loss of southern manpower to the army took a toll as well; slavery began to disintegrate as a labor system during the war. By 1864 even the Confederate Congress considered measures to free at least some slaves.

Significantly, war itself pressed the North to bring slavery to an end. To deprive the South of resources, the Union began to seize rebel property, including slaves, in 1861. Step by step, Union policy shifted toward emancipation. The Second Confiscation Act in 1862 freed slaves who fled behind Union lines. Finally, seizing the initiative from Radical Republicans, Lincoln announced a crucial change in policy. A war measure, the Emancipation Proclamation of January 1, 1863, served many purposes. The edict freed only slaves behind Confederate lines, those beyond the reach of the Union army. But it won foreign support, outflanked the Radicals, and confounded the Confederates. It also gave Union soldiers the power to liberate slaves, enabled former slaves to serve in the Union army, and vastly strengthened the Union's hand. "Crippling the institution of slavery," as a Union officer declared, meant "striking a blow at the heart of the rebellion." Most important, the proclamation changed the nature of the war. After January 1, 1863, the war to save the Union was also a war to

CHRONOLOGY, 1861–1865

1861 President Abraham Lincoln calls for volunteers to suppress the rebellion (April).
Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina join the Confederacy (April–May).
Lincoln imposes a naval blockade on the South (April).
U.S. Sanitary Commission formed (June).
First Battle of Bull Run (July).
First Confiscation Act (August).

1862 Legal Tender Act (February).
George B. McClellan's Peninsula Campaign (March–July).
Battle of Shiloh (April).
Confederate Congress passes the Conscription Act (April).
David G. Farragut captures New Orleans (April).
Homestead Act (May).
Seven Days' Battles (June–July).
Pacific Railroad Act (July).
Morrill Land Grant Act (July).
Second Confiscation Act (July).
Second Battle of Bull Run (August).
Battle of Antietam (September).
Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation (September).
Battle of Fredericksburg (December).

1863 Emancipation Proclamation issued (January).
Lincoln suspends writ of habeas corpus nationwide (January).
National Bank Act (February).
Congress passes the Enrollment Act (March).
Battle of Chancellorsville (May).
Woman's National Loyal League formed (May).
Battle of Gettysburg (July).
Surrender of Vicksburg (July).
New York City draft riots (July).
Battle of Chickamauga (September).

1864 Ulysses S. Grant given command of all Union armies (March).
Battle of the Wilderness (May).
Battle of Spotsylvania (May).
Battle of Cold Harbor (June).
Surrender of Atlanta (September).
Lincoln reelected (November).
William T. Sherman's march to the sea (November–December).

1865 Congress passes the Thirteenth Amendment (January).
Sherman moves through South Carolina (January–March).
Grant takes Richmond (April).
Robert E. Lee surrenders at Appomattox (April).
Lincoln dies (April).
Joseph Johnston surrenders to Sherman (April).

end slavery. Emancipation took effect mainly at the war's end and became permanent with the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865. The proclamation of 1863 was a pivotal turning point in the war.

Historians have long debated the causes of the Union victory. They have weighed many factors, including the North's imposing strengths, or what Robert E. Lee called its "overwhelming numbers and resources." Recently, two competing interpretations have held sway. One focuses on southern shortcomings. Did the South, in the end, lose the will to win? Did the economic dislocations of war undercut southern morale? Were there defects of Confederate nationalism that could not be overcome? Some historians point to internal weaknesses in the Confederacy as a major cause of Union triumph. Other historians stress the utterly unpredictable nature of the conflict. In their view, the two sides were fairly equally matched, and the war was a cliffhanger; that is, the North might have crushed the South much earlier or, alternatively, not at all. The North won the war, these historians contend, because it won a series of crucial contests on the battlefield, including the battles of Antietam, Vicksburg, Gettysburg, and Atlanta, any one of which could have gone the other way. The factors that determined the military outcome of the war continue to be a source of contention.

The impact of the Civil War is more clear-cut than the precise cause of Union triumph. The war gave a massive boost to the northern economy. It left in its wake a stronger national government, with a national banking system, a national currency, and an enfeebled version of states rights. It confirmed the triumph of the Republican party, with its commitment to competition, free labor, and industry. Finally, it left a nation of free people, including the millions of African-Americans who had once been slaves. Emancipation and a new sense of nationalism were the war's major legacies. The nation now turned its attention to the restoration of the conquered South to the Union and to deciding the future of the former slaves.

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