SESSION PREPARATION

Read the following material before attending the workshop. As you read the excerpts and primary sources, take note of the “Questions to Consider” as well as any questions you have. The activities in the workshop will draw on information from the readings and the video shown during the workshop.

UNIT INTRODUCTION

Although the Civil War is viewed today through the lens of the Union’s ultimate victory, for much of the war that victory was far from certain. By examining the lives of the common soldier, as well as civilians on the home front, this workshop examines the uncertainty and horrible destruction in the war between the states.

UNIT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading the text materials, participating in the workshop activities, and watching the video, teachers will understand

• the idea of “contingency” and what factors affected the outcome of the Civil War;
• the conditions under which soldiers lived and fought;
• the individuals and groups who found new opportunities during the Civil War.

THIS UNIT FEATURES

• Textbooks excerpts (sections of U.S. history surveys, written for introductory college courses by history professors)
• Primary sources (documents and other materials created by the people who lived in the period) including letters, a cartoon, a poster, photographs, diary excerpts, song lyrics, and a flag
• A timeline at the end of the unit, which places important events in the era of the Civil War
In 1776, in the midst of a bloody war, the United States was founded, and unprecedented carnage marked one of the most critical events in its subsequent political history: the Civil War.

But, every war is more than just a series of battles. This unit will explore the broad political and social contexts, and consequences of this conflict. The Civil War did not simply determine that the United States would remain united—would be one nation rather than two (or many more). The North’s victory expanded the role of the federal government, and wrought extraordinarily important social strains and opportunities.

The war confounded expectations in other ways: both sides expected it to end quickly. Southerners, especially, expected it to be decided by the exercise of valor. The North finally won by using its greater human and industrial capital. The cost in suffering to soldiers and civilians was very high, however, and the war’s outcome was very much in doubt until its closing months. The Confederate States of America might well have won the Civil War.

In the meantime, over four long years, many Northerners and Southerners alike counted the war's costs as too high. Indeed, both governments felt it necessary to restrict their citizens’ rights to protest and resist the war.

The Civil War left hundreds of thousands of Americans dead, wounded, or disillusioned—even as it kept the Union intact, ended slavery, and expanded opportunities for African Americans and white women. It brought an expanded and lasting role for government in both economic and private life, while stimulating industrialization in the South, as well as the North. Nearly a century and a half later, it remains the most important turning point in the nation’s history.
Historical Perspectives

In the summer of 1864, President Lincoln’s chances of re-election looked slim, as Union casualties mounted and victory seemed to be a distant possibility. The outcome of the Civil War is an example of historical contingency: key events or processes are not necessarily predetermined.

The long war began with great optimism on both sides, and many soldiers were delighted when the fighting began in the spring of 1861. They would soon be shocked, however, by the brutal nature of modern warfare and the hardships of camp life. The war proceeded differently from how people expected—and it could have ended much differently than how it did.

Faces of America

Phoebe Pember Yates and William Carney were dramatically changed by the Civil War; each challenged rigid social norms with their actions during the war.

Phoebe Yates Pember was the matron of the largest hospital of the Civil War, located in Richmond. With men pressed into military service, women like Pember assumed work that had previously been considered inappropriate for women.

President Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation at the beginning of 1863 opened the door for African Americans to join the Union army. William Carney, like many others, enthusiastically joined the Massachusetts 54th, the nation’s first African American regiment. Later that year he led the charge at Fort Wagner, South Carolina, an engagement that cost the 54th nearly one-half of its men.

Hands on History

Where do history and popular culture intersect?

As head of the Virginia Military Institute’s museum, Colonel Keith Gibson frequently consults with the creators of feature films and documentaries. He uses the museum’s collection of artifacts, diaries, and other documents to ensure that these films realistically depict clothing, firearms, speech patterns, and social conventions.
Theme One: Although Americans today view the Civil War through the lens of the Union’s ultimate defeat of the Confederacy, for much of the war, the Union victory was far from certain.

Overview
Many historians have argued that the North’s victory was the inevitable result of more soldiers, food, miles of railroad track, and industrial output. The Civil War was a modern war, and modern wars have been won by the efficient use of superior material, not by gallant infantry or cavalry charges.

The South’s optimism was not entirely misplaced. They needed only to repel an enemy, not to conquer it. In addition, a significant fraction of the Northern public—far from united behind its new president—resented and resisted the war. The Confederacy also hoped that European nations dependent on its cotton might formally recognize it. The South had the best generals and a few early victories might prove decisive. Its economy, moreover, modernized during the war and gave it staying power.

Both sides hoped for a quick victory. But the war’s outcome hung in the balance until late in the four-year contest.

Questions to Consider
1. Why did the North win the Civil War?
2. How did the South nearly win the Civil War?
1. The Balance of Resources

The outcome of the southern bid for autonomy was far from clear. Statistics of population and industrial development suggested that the Union would prevail. Yet Great Britain had enjoyed enormous statistical advantages in 1775 and still had lost the War of American Independence. Many northern assets would only become effective over time. The federal army was small (16,000 men), supplemented by state militia volunteers called up in April 1861. Probably a quarter of the regular army officers, like Robert E. Lee, had resigned.

The North’s white population greatly exceeded that of the South, suggesting a powerful military advantage. Yet in the early days of war, the armies were not unevenly matched. Almost 187,000 Union troops bore arms in July 1861, while just over 112,000 men marched under Confederate colors. Even if numerically inferior, southerners believed that their population would prove the superior fighting force because it was more accustomed to outdoor life and the use of firearms. Furthermore, slaves could carry on vital work behind the lines, freeing most adult white males for service.

The North had one factory for every southern industrial worker, and 70 percent of the nation’s railroad tracks were in the North. Producing 17 times as much cotton cloth and woolen goods, 32 times as many firearms, and 20 times as much pig iron as the South, the North could clothe and arm troops and move them and their supplies on a scale that the South could not match. But to be effective, northern industrial resources had to be mobilized for war. That would take time, especially because the government did not intend to direct production. Furthermore, the depleted northern treasury made the government’s first task the raising of funds to pay for military necessities.

Yet the agricultural South had important resources of food, draft animals, and, of course, cotton, which hopefully would secure British and French support. Finally, in choosing to wage a defensive war, the South could tap regional loyalty and would enjoy protected lines of supply and support.

2. Border States

Uncertainty over the war’s outcome and divided loyalties produced indecision in the border states. When the seven states of the Deep South seceded during the winter of 1860–1861, the border states adopted a wait-and-see attitude. Their decisions were critically important to both North and South. [South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas seceded before April 15, 1861. Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina seceded after that date. Maryland, Delaware, Kentucky, and Missouri were slave states that stayed in the Union, as did West Virginia, which was created from Virginia in 1863.]

The states of the Upper South offered natural borders for the Confederacy along the Ohio River, access to its river traffic, and vital resources, wealth, and population. The major railroad link to the West ran through Maryland and western Virginia. Virginia boasted the South’s largest ironworks, and Tennessee as the region’s principal source of grain. Missouri provided the road to Kansas and the West and was strategically placed to control Mississippi River traffic. It was difficult to imagine the long- or short-term success of the Confederacy without the border states.

For the North, every border state that remained loyal represented a psychological triumph for the idea of Union. Nor was the North indifferent to the economic and strategic advantages of keeping the border states with the Union. Lincoln’s call for troops precipitated decisions in several states, however. Between April 17 and May 20, 1861, Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina joined the Confederacy.

The significance of border-state loyalty was soon dramatized in Maryland. Slave-owning tobacco and wheat planters from the state’s southern counties and eastern shore favored secession. Confederate enthusiasts abounded in Baltimore. But in the western and northern parts of the state, small farmers, often of German background, opposed slavery and supported the Union cause.

On the morning of April 19, the 6th Massachusetts Regiment arrived in Baltimore headed for Washington. Because the regiment had to change railroad lines, the soldiers set out across the city on foot and in horsecars. As they marched through the streets, a mob of some 10,000 southern sympathizers, flying Confederate flags, attacked them with paving stones, then bayonets and bullets. “A scene of bloody confusion followed.” In the commotion, would-be secessionists burned the railroad bridges connecting Baltimore to the North and
to the South. Washington, cut off from the rest of the Union, became an island in the middle of hostile territory.

Lincoln took stern measures to secure Maryland. The president agreed temporarily to route troops around Baltimore. In return, the governor called the state legislature into session at Frederick, a center of Union sentiment in western Maryland. This action and Lincoln's swift violation of civil rights damped secessionist enthusiasm.

Nash et al., 513.

3. Challenges of War

The tense weeks after Fort Sumter [the clash off the South Carolina coast that initiated war] spilled over with unexpected challenges. Neither side could handle the floods of volunteers. Both faced enormous organizational problems as they readied for war. In the South, a nation-state had to be created and its apparatus set in motion. Everything from a constitution and government departments to a flag and postage stamps had to be devised. As one onlooker observed, “The whole country was new. Everything was to be done—and to be made.”

In February 1861, the original seceding states sent delegates to Montgomery, Alabama, to work on a provisional framework and to select a provisional president and vice president. The delegates swiftly wrote a constitution resembling the federal constitution of 1787 except in its emphasis on the “sovereign and independent character” of the states and its explicit recognition of slavery. The provisional president, Jefferson Davis of Mississippi, tried to assemble a geographically and politically balanced cabinet of moderates. His cabinet was balanced but contained few of his friends and, more serious, few men of political stature. As time passed, it turned out to be unstable as well.

Davis’s cabinet appointees faced the formidable challenge of creating government departments from scratch. They had to hire employees and initiate administrative procedures with woefully inadequate resources. The president’s office was in a hotel parlor.

Despite such challenges, the new Confederate government could count on widespread civilian enthusiasm and a growing sense of nationalism. Ordinary
people spoke proudly of the South as “our nation” and referred to themselves as the “southern people.” Georgia’s governor insisted that “poor and rich, have a common interest, a common destiny.” Southern Protestant ministers encouraged a sense of collective identity and reminded southerners that they were God’s chosen people. The conflict was a sacred one.

Unlike Davis, Lincoln did not have to establish a postal system or decide the status of laws passed before 1861. But he too faced organizational problems. Military officers and government clerks daily left the capital for the South. The treasury was empty. The Republicans had won their first presidential election, and floods of office seekers thronged the White House looking for rewards.

Nor was it easy for Lincoln, who knew few of the “prominent men of the day,” to select a cabinet. Finally, he appointed important Republicans from different factions of the party to cabinet posts whether they agreed with him or not. Most were almost strangers. Several scorned him as a bumbling backwoods politician. Treasury Secretary Salmon P. Chase actually hoped to replace Lincoln as president in four years’ time. Soon after the inauguration, Secretary of State William Seward sent Lincoln a memo condescendingly offering to oversee the formulation of presidential policy.

Nash et al., 514–15.
Map and Graph of the 1860 Presidential Election

A divided electorate and the choice of four major candidates meant that Lincoln won the election despite widespread opposition to him in the South. Do the following map and graph suggest that the election of 1860 made the Civil War inevitable?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Political party</th>
<th>Popular votes</th>
<th>Electoral votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Lincoln</td>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>1,865,593</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. A. Douglas</td>
<td>Democratic</td>
<td>1,382,713</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. C. Breckinridge</td>
<td>Democratic</td>
<td>848,356</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Bell</td>
<td>Constitutional Union</td>
<td>592,906</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Item 3659
Nash et al., 501.
**Dividing the National Map**

**Questions to Consider**
1. Does the cartoon favor any of the candidates?
2. What were its creators hoping to convey about the four parties?

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**Creator:** Unknown political cartoonist

**Context:** The election of 1860 was a four-way race in which sectional sentiment ran very high.

**Audience:** Voters

**Purpose:** To persuade voters to support John Bell and the Constitutional Union Party

**Historical Significance:**
The 1860 election was one of the most divisive and confusing in U.S. history. The Democrats split along sectional lines: the northern wing nominated Stephen Douglas, while the southern wing nominated John Breckinridge. Republicans nominated Abraham Lincoln, who opposed the expansion of slavery and secession. Former southern Whigs who opposed the Democratic Party but found Lincoln too radical formed the Constitutional Union Party, which nominated John Bell.
4. **Lincoln and Davis**

A number of Lincoln’s early actions illustrated his leadership skills. As his Illinois law partner, William Herndon, pointed out, Lincoln’s “mind was tough—solid—knotty—gnarly, more or less like his body.” In his reply to Seward’s memo, the president firmly indicated that he intended to run his own administration. After Sumter, he swiftly called up the state militias, expanded the navy, and suspended habeas corpus. [This right stated that people could not be jailed without being charged with a specific crime before a judge.] He ordered a naval blockade of the South and approved the expenditure of funds for military purposes, all without congressional sanction, because Congress was not in session. As Lincoln told legislators later, “The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present . . . As our case is new, so must we think anew, and act anew . . . and then we shall save our country.” This willingness to “think anew” was a valuable personal asset, even though some regarded the expansion of presidential power as despotic.

By coincidence, Lincoln and his rival, Jefferson Davis, were born only 100 miles apart in Kentucky. However, the course of their lives diverged radically. Lincoln’s father had migrated north and eked out a simple existence as a farmer in Indiana and Illinois. Lincoln’s formal education was rudimentary; he was largely self-taught. Davis’s family had moved south to Mississippi and become cotton planters. Davis grew up in comfortable circumstances, went to Transylvania University and West Point, and fought in the Mexican-American War before his election to the U.S. Senate. His social, political, and economic prominence led to his appointment as secretary of war under Franklin Pierce (1853–1857). Tall, distinguished-looking, and very rich, he appeared every inch the aristocratic southerner.

Although Davis was not eager to accept the presidency, he loyally responded to the call of the provisional congress in 1861 and worked tirelessly until the war’s end. His wife, Varina, observed that “the President hardly takes time to eat his meals and works late at night.” Some contemporaries suggested that Davis’s inability to let subordinates handle details explained this schedule. Others observed that he was sickly, reserved, humorless, too sensitive to criticism, and hard to get along with. But, like Lincoln, Davis found it necessary to “think anew.” He reassured southerners in his inaugural address that his aims were conservative, “to preserve the Government of our fathers in spirit.” Yet under the pressure of events, he moved toward creating a new kind of South.

Nash et al., 515.
5. **Common Problems, Novel Solutions**

As the conflict dragged on into 1863, unanticipated problems appeared in both the Union and the Confederacy, and leaders devised novel approaches to solve them. War acted as a catalyst for changes that no one could have imagined in the heady spring days of 1861.

The problem of fighting a long war was partly monetary. Both treasuries had been empty initially, and the war proved extraordinarily expensive. Neither side considered trying to finance the war by imposing direct taxes. Such an approach violated custom and risked alienating support. Nevertheless, each side was so starved for funds that it initiated taxation on a small scale. Ultimately, taxes financed 21 percent of the North’s war expenses (but only 1 percent of southern expenses). Both treasuries also tried borrowing. Northerners bought over $2 billion worth of bonds, but southerners proved reluctant to buy their government’s bonds.

Nash et al., 520.
200 Substitutes Wanted!

Questions to Consider
1. What does this poster suggest about the fairness of the draft?
2. How does the poster try to make serving in the army attractive?

Historical Significance:
By 1863, it was clear that the North needed more soldiers than were willing to volunteer, and many volunteers had died or were returning home as their period of enlistment ended. As in the South, a series of drafts addressed this need. However, those deemed fit to serve could hire substitutes, or pay a $300 bounty rather than serving in the military. Although draftees made up only a tiny proportion of soldiers, the fees paid to avoid service added much-needed money to federal coffers and many substitutes joined the army. The poster below was displayed in New York City, where political leaders raised money to hire substitutes for their constituents.
Letter from North Carolina Governor Zebulon Vance to Confederate President Jefferson Davis, 30 December 1863.

Questions to Consider
1. What action did Vance advocate and why?
2. What does this letter suggest about popular feelings regarding the war?

State of North Carolina
Executive Department
Raleigh, Dec. 30th. 1863

His Excellency President Davis:

My dear Sir:

After a careful consideration of all the sources of discontent in North Carolina, I have concluded that it will be perhaps impossible to remove it except by making some effort at negotiation with the enemy. The recent action of the Federal House of Representatives, though meaning very little, has greatly excited the public hope that the Northern mind is looking towards peace. I am promised by all men who advocate this course, that if fair terms are rejected it will tend greatly to strengthen and intensify the war feeling and will rally all classes to a known, as demanding only to be let alone yet it seems to me that for the sake of humanity, without having any weak or improper motives attributed to us, we might with propriety constantly tender negotiations.

In doing so we would keep conspicuously before the world a disclaimer of our responsibility for the great slaughter of our race and convince the humblest of our citizens, who sometimes forget the actual situation, that the government is tender of their lives and happiness and would not prolong their sufferings unnecessarily one moment. Though Statesmen might regard this as useless, the people will not, and I think our cause will be strengthened thereby. I have not suggested the method of these negotiations or their terms, the effort to obtain peace is the principal matter. Allow me to beg your earnest consideration of this suggestion.

Very respectfully yours
Z. B. Vance


Historical Significance:
The Confederate States of America faced difficulty in persuading its citizens to unite behind the war. Zebulon Baird Vance had opposed secession in 1860, though he later fought with the Confederacy forces. After being elected governor of North Carolina in 1862, he worked hard to keep his state in the Confederacy. In this letter, written at the end of 1863, he suggested how Jefferson Davis might counter the growing sentiment for peace in North Carolina.
6. **A New South**

Many southerners denounced Davis because he recognized the need for the central government to take the lead. Despite the accusations, the Confederate Congress cooperated with him and established important precedents. In 1863, it enacted a comprehensive tax law and an impressment act that allowed government agents to requisition food, horses, wagons, and other necessary war materials, often for only about half their market price. These were prime examples of the central government’s power to interfere with private property. Government impressment of slaves for war work in 1863 affected the very form of private property that had originally driven the South from the Union.

The Conscription Act of 1862 did not solve the Confederate army’s manpower problems. By 1864, the southern armies were only one-third the size of the Union forces. Hence, in February 1864, an expanded conscription measure made all white males between the ages of 17 and 50 subject to the draft. By 1865, the necessities of war had led to the unthinkable: arming slaves as soldiers. Black companies were recruited in Richmond and other southern towns. However, because the war soon ended, no blacks actually fought for the Confederacy.

Southern agriculture also changed under the pressure of war. Earlier, the South had imported food from the North, concentrating on the production of staples such as cotton and tobacco for market. Now, more and more land was turned over to food crops. Some farmers voluntarily shifted crops, but others responded only to state laws reducing the acreage permitted for cotton and tobacco cultivation. These measures never succeeded in raising enough food to feed southerners adequately. But they contributed to a dramatic decline in the production of cotton, from 4.5 million bales in 1861 to 300,000 bales in 1864.

The South had always relied on imported manufactured goods. Even though some blockade runners were able to evade the Union ships, the noose tightened after 1862. The Confederacy could not, in any case, rely on blockade runners to arm and equip the army. Thus, war triggered the expansion of military-related industries in the South. Here, too, the government played a crucial role. The war and navy offices directed industrial development, awarding contracts to private manufacturing firms like Richmond’s Tredegar Iron Works and operating other factories themselves. The number of southern industrial workers rose dramatically. In 1861, the Tredegar Iron Works employed 700 workers; two years later, it employed 2,500, more than half of them black. The head of the Army Ordinance Bureau reflected on the amazing transformation: “Where three years ago we were
not making a gun, pistol nor a sabre, no shot nor shell... we now make all these in quantities to meet the demands of our large armies.” At the end of the war, the soldiers were better supplied with arms and munitions than with food.

Nash et al., 529.

7. The North

Like Davis, Lincoln was accused of being a dictator. Although he rarely tried to control Congress, veto its legislation, or direct government departments, Lincoln did use executive power freely. He violated the writ of habeas corpus by suspending the civil rights of over 13,000 northerners, who languished in prison without trials; curbed the freedom of the press because of supposedly disloyal and inflammatory articles; established conscription; issued the Emancipation Proclamation; and removed army generals. Lincoln argued that this vast extension of presidential power was temporarily justified because, as president, he was responsible for defending and preserving the Constitution. [He also cited the expansive war powers clause of the Constitution.]

Many of the wartime changes in government proved more permanent than Lincoln imagined. The financial necessities of war helped revolutionize the country’s banking system. Ever since Andrew Jackson’s destruction of the Bank of the United States, state banks had served American financial needs. Treasury Secretary Chase found this banking system inadequate and proposed to replace it. In 1863 and 1864, Congress passed banking acts that established a national currency issued by federally chartered banks and backed by government bonds. The country had a federal banking system once again.

The northern economy also changed under wartime demands. The need to feed soldiers and civilians stimulated the expansion of agriculture and new investment in farm machinery. With so many men off soldiering, farmers were at first short of labor. McCormick reapers performed the work of four to six men, and farmers began to buy them.

However, industries that produced for the war machine, especially those with advantages of scale, expanded and made large profits. Each year, the Union army required 1.5 million uniforms and 3 million pairs of shoes; the woolen and leather industries grew accordingly. Meatpackers and producers of iron, steel, and pocket watches all profited from wartime opportunities.

Nash et al., 529–30.
Conclusion

Leaders and ordinary citizens alike had expected a quick and decisive resolution of the secession crisis of 1861. Both the North and the South had reason for optimism. Indeed, the resources the two sides brought to the conflict were so evenly balanced that the dispute could not be resolved for four years, and leaders on both sides of the conflict had to overcome strong opposition and other obstacles to keep their forces in the fight.

Questions to Consider

1. What were the primary difficulties facing the war’s leaders in the North and the South?
2. What events or developments most surprised the war’s planners?
Theme Two: Rampant illness, shortages of supplies, poor camp conditions, and very high casualty rates quickly overshadowed the noble ideas that soldiers brought to the war.

Overview

Many soldiers on both sides of the conflict expected the Civil War to be decided quickly and honorably, in a series of decisive battles filled with heroic charges.

Instead, the two sides found themselves locked in a seemingly endless conflict. Modern weaponry cut down charging infantry long before they could even see the enemy, putting a premium on creating trenches and other well-positioned defensive structures. Diseases swept through tightly packed camps and killed even more soldiers than the bloody battles.

The scale and nature of death shocked soldiers on both sides of the interminable, unromantic war.

Questions to Consider

1. Why did volunteers enlist? Why did they stay?
2. How did soldiers respond to warfare?
1. Organizing the War

[The shelling of Fort Sumter marked the beginning of the Civil War and prompted an outpouring of patriotism in both the United States and the Confederacy. Volunteer soldiers abounded.] In some places, workers were so eager to join up that trade unions collapsed. Sisters, wives, and mothers set to work making uniforms. A New Yorker, Jane Woolsey, described the drama of those early days “of terrible excitement.”

Outside the parlor windows the city is gay and brilliant with excited crowds, the incessant movement and music of marching regiments and all the thousands of flags, big and little, which suddenly came fluttering out of every window and door . . . In our little circle of friends, one mother has just sent away an idolized son; another, two; another, four . . . One sweet young wife is packing a regulation valise for her husband today, and doesn’t let him see her cry.

The war fever produced so many volunteers that neither northern nor southern officials could handle the throng. Northern authorities turned aside offers from blacks to serve. Both sides sent thousands of white would-be soldiers home. The conviction that the conflict would rapidly come to a glorious conclusion fueled the eagerness to enlist. “We really did not think that there was going to be an actual war,” remembered Mary Ward, a young Georgia woman. “We had an idea that when our soldiers got upon the ground and showed, unmistakably that they were really ready and willing to fight . . . the whole trouble would be declared at an end.” Lincoln’s call for 75,000 state militiamen for only 90 days of service, and a similar enlistment term for Confederate soldiers, supported the notion that the war would be short.

Nash et al., 510–11.
Questions to Consider

1. What function did this diary play for Rhodes? Why did he keep it? Do you think he intended for others to see it? Do these entries suggest that diaries are trustworthy sources of historical information?

2. Rhodes’s diary describes a great deal of hardship. What does it reveal about why soldiers continued to fight?

Harrison’s Landing, James River, July 3/62 – We left Malvern Hill last night and in the midst of a pouring rain marched to this place where we arrived early this morning. O how tired and sleepy I am. We have had no rest since June 24th, and we are nearly dead. The first thing I noticed in the river was the steamer *Canonicus* of Providence. It made me think of home. We stacked arms and the men laid down in the rain and went to sleep. Lieutenant-Colonel Viall threw a piece of canvas over a bush and putting some straw upon the ground invited me to share it with him. We had just gone to sleep when a Rebel Battery opened and sent their shells over our heads. We turned out in a hurry and just left in time, too, for a shot or shell struck in the straw that we had just left. This shot covered Colonel Viall’s horse with mud. We were ordered to leave our knapsacks and go after this Rebel Battery. But our men could hardly, move, and after going a short distance we halted and other troops went on in pursuit. Battery “E” 1st R.I. Artillery sent out some guns and I hear that one of the Rebel guns was captured. We returned to our knapsacks and the men are trying to sleep.

July 4th 1862 – This morning all the troops were put to work upon the line of forts that have been laid out. As I was going to the spring I met General McClellan who said good morning pleasantly and told our party that as soon as the forts were finished we should have rest. He took a drink of water from a canteen and lighted a cigar from one of the men’s pipes. At Malvern Hill he rode in front of our Regiment and was loudly cheered. I have been down to the river. I rode the Adjutant’s horse and enjoyed the sight of the vessels. Gun boats and transports are anchored in the stream. Rest is what we want now, and I hope we shall get it. I could sleep for a week.

**Elisha Hunt Rhodes**

Rhodes served in the Union army.

**Creator:** Elisha Hunt Rhodes

**Context:** Rhodes served in the Union army.

**Audience:** Posterity

**Purpose:** To chronicle his experience during the war

**Historical Significance:**

Elisha Hunt Rhodes was the son of a Rhode Island sea captain who died in the Caribbean. He left school at age sixteen and worked as a clerk to support his family. Three years later he enlisted as a private in the Second Regiment of Rhode Island Volunteers. By the war’s end, he was a colonel. Rhodes was well educated and frequently wrote in his diary. He also wrote descriptive and detailed letters to friends and family. This excerpt was recorded in Northern Virginia, after McClellan had retreated from the vicinity of Richmond. Like other diarists, Rhodes wrote immediately after the events he described. Many other soldiers recorded their memories decades later, in autobiographies (histories of their lives) or memoirs (less comprehensive recollections).
The weather is very hot, but we have moved our camp to a wood where we get the shade. This is a queer 4th of July, but we have not forgotten that it is our national birthday, and a salute has been fired. We expect to have something to eat before long. Soldiering is not fun, but duty keeps us in the ranks. Well, the war must end some time, and the Union will be restored. I wonder what our next move will be. I hope it will be more successful than our last.

_Harrison’s Landing, Va., July 9/62_ – The weather is extremely hot, and as the men are at work on the forts they suffer much. The Army is full of sick men, but so far our Regiment seems to have escaped. The swamp in which we lived for a while in front of Richmond caused chills and fever. I have been very well, in fact not sick at all. Lt. Col. Nelson Viall of our Regiment is now in command of the 10th Mass. Vols., their field officers being all sick or wounded. Fred Arnold is in the hospital in Washington. Last night President Lincoln made a visit to the Army. As he passed along the lines salutes were fired, and the men turned out and cheered. We see General McClellan nearly every day, and he often speaks to the men. How I should like to see my home. In God’s own time we shall meet on earth or in Heaven. I have been busy all day preparing muster and pay rolls. We hope to get some money some day.

Despite the many economic and social differences between the North and the South, their armies shared some important social characteristics. Were there any significant differences? What were they?

Item 3682
Woods et al., 475, Figure 14.2.
2. Common Problems, Novel Solutions

Both sides confronted similar manpower problems as initial enthusiasm for the war evaporated. Soldiering, it turned out, was nothing like the militia parades and outings familiar to most American males. Young men were shocked at the deadly diseases that accompanied the army and were unprepared for the boredom of camp life. As one North Carolina soldier explained, “If anyone wishes to become used to the crosses and trials of this life, let him enter camp life.” None were prepared for the vast and impersonal destruction of the battlefield, which mocked values like courage and honor. It was with anguish that Robert Carter of Massachusetts saw bodies tossed into trenches “with not a prayer, eulogy or tear to distinguish them from so many animals.” Many in the service longed to go home. The swarm of volunteers disappeared. Rather than fill their military quotas from within, rich northern communities began offering bounties of $800 to $1,000 to outsiders who would join up.

Arthur Carpenter’s letters give a good picture of life in the ranks and his growing disillusionment with the war. As Carpenter’s regiment moved into Kentucky and Tennessee in the winter of 1862, his enthusiasm for army life evaporated. “Soldiering in Kentucky and Tennessee,” he complained, “is not so pretty as it was in Indianapolis . . . We have been half starved, half frozen, and half drowned. The mud in Kentucky is awful.” Soldiering often meant marching over rutted roads carrying 50 or 60 pounds of equipment with insufficient food, water, or supplies. One blanket was not enough in the winter. In the summer, stifling woolen uniforms attracted lice and other vermin. Poor food, bugs, inadequate sanitation, and exposure invited disease. Carpenter marched through Tennessee suffering from diarrhea and then fever. His regiment left him behind in a convalescent barracks in Louisville. Fearing the hospital at least as much as the sickness, he fled as soon as he could.

Nash et al., 520–21.
**Excerpts from Letters Written Home from the Front**

**Questions to Consider**

1. What most impressed or shocked these soldiers about warfare?
2. Where did these soldiers’ allegiances lie? What did they most care about?

*This letter was written by a Texan to his wife. It was written after the bloody battle of Gaines’s Mill outside of Richmond, one of a series of Confederate victories in June 1862 that left a great many casualties and thwarted the North’s attempt to end the war.*

“Yesterday evening we (the Texas Brigade) was in one of the hardest fought battles ever known . . . I don’t think the Regt (4th Tex) could muster this morning over 150 or 200 men & there were 530 yesterday went into the engagement . . . I got some of the men from the 5th Regt to go and look up our wounded . . . I never had a clear conception of the horrors of war untill that night and the [next] morning. On going round on that battlefield with a candle searching for my friends I could hear on all sides the dreadful groans of that wounded and their heart piercing cries for water and assistance. Friends and foes all togeth . . . Oh the awful scene witnessed on the battle field. May I never see any more such in lifet . . . I am satisfied not to make another such charge. For I hope dear Ann that this big battle will have some influence in terminating this war. I will assure you I am heartily sick or soldiering.”

*This letter was written by an Alabama soldier to his wife early in 1863, after the Battle of Murfreesboro (or Stones River) in Tennessee. Each side suffered casualties of about one-third of its forces, making this one of the deadliest battles of the war. Like many common soldiers, this one wrote eloquently but with poor, inconsistent spelling.*

“Martha . . . I can inform you that I have Seen the Monkey Show at last and I dont Waut to see it no more I am satsfide with Ware Martha I Cant tell you how many ded men I did see . . . thay ware piled up one one another all over the Battel feel the Battel was a Six days Battel and I was in all off it . . . I did not go all over the Battel feeld I Jest was one one Winge of the Battel feeld But I can tell you that there Was a meney a ded man where I was men Wàs shot Evey
fashinton that you mite Call for Som had there hedes shot of and som ther armes and leges Won was sot in too in the midel I can tell you that I am tirde of Ware I am satsfide if the Ballence is that is one thing shore I dont waunt to see that site no more I can inform you that West Brown was shot one the head he Was sent off to the horspitel . . . he was not herte very Bad he was struck with a pease of a Bum”

Bell Irvin Wiley, *The Life of Johnny Reb*  
(Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1943), 32–33.
3. Indians and Immigrants in the Service of the Confederacy

[Indians had fought effectively against the United States in both the American Revolution and the War of 1812. But the Confederates were generally unable to utilize their prowess as soldiers during the Civil War.] In 1861, southern military officials appealed to the Cherokees and the other Five Tribes for support, promising them arms and protection from Union forces in return. Only gradually and reluctantly did Cherokee leader John Ross commit his men to the Confederacy: “We are in the situation of a man standing alone upon a low naked spot of ground, with the water rising all around him.”

More devoted to the Confederate cause was Stand Watie, the brother of Elias Boudinot (one of the Cherokee leaders to have signed the original removal treaty). Backed by many Cherokee slaveholders, Stand Watie proceeded to mobilize what he called the “United Nations of Indians” as a fighting force on behalf of the Confederacy. Among those responding to the call to arms were Choctaw and Chickasaw men, who formed Company E of the 21st Mississippi Regiment, “the Indian Brigade.”

Although Indian Territory was considered of great strategic value to the Confederacy, southern military officials at times expressed frustration with the traditional battle tactics of Indian warriors. They were unused to military encounters that pitted long, straight rows of men on foot against each other. At the Battle of Elkhorn Tavern (Pea Ridge) in March 1862, Indian troops abandoned the battlefield in the face of cannon fire, leading their commander, Albert Pike, to demand that in the future they be “allowed to fight in their own fashion” rather than “face artillery and steady infantry on open ground.” Yet most Confederate generals, like George Washington during the Seven Years’ War, measured Indians by European American standards of what made a “proper” soldier on the battlefield. In the summer of 1862 the Confederacy lost its advantage in Confederate territory; the Cherokee and Creek were divided in their loyalties, with some joining Union forces and all “undisciplined . . . [and] not very reliable.” By this time, the Comanche and Kiowa, resentful of the Confederacy’s broken promises (guns and money diverted from them), had joined Union troops and were threatening to invade Texas.

Woods et al., 474–76.
4. Clashing on the Battlefield, 1861-1862

[Southern and Northern soldiers alike struggled to come to terms with the war’s murderous brutality. No other war in the nation’s history would bring so much death and destruction.] Much of the bloodshed resulted from changing military technology coupled with inadequate communications. By 1861, the range of rifles had increased from 100 to 500 yards, in part owing to the new French minié bullet, which traveled with tremendous velocity and accuracy. The greater reach of the new rifles meant that it was no longer possible to position the artillery close enough to enemy lines to support an infantry charge. Therefore, during the Civil War, attacking infantry soldiers faced a final, often fatal, dash of 500 yards in the face of deadly enemy fire.

Nash et al., 515.
The Army of the Potomac, A Sharpshooter on Picket Duty

Questions to Consider
1. What elements of this illustration are you first drawn to?
2. What is the tone of this illustration? What emotion was Homer trying to elicit?

By late 1862, after more than a year of fighting, Homer’s work became more gritty and realistic. “The Army of the Potomac—A Sharpshooter on Picket Duty” depicts a rifleman waiting for his prey.

Soldiers on both sides of the conflict had expected to kill and die on the battlefield in hand-to-hand combat, and were troubled that death often came unexpectedly from disease or a sniper’s bullet. Homer later referred to sniping “as being as near murder as anything I could think of in connection with the army.”

As it became clear that infantry charges resulted in horrible carnage, military leaders increasingly valued the importance of a strong defensive position.

Item 3374

See Appendix for larger image – pg. 52
INCIDENTS OF WAR. A HARVEST OF DEATH

Questions to Consider

1. Taking a photograph required a great deal of trouble. Why did photographers choose this sort of image?
2. What does this photograph convey that words cannot? Does it add anything to our understanding of the war? What are its limitations as primary sources?

Creator: Timothy H. O’Sullivan

Context: Photography had become advanced enough by the Civil War so that photographers could record still scenes after battles.

Audience: The general Northern public; often viewed as traveling exhibits

Purpose: To depict the aftermath of battles (Gettysburg and Antietam)

Historical Significance:
Photography was invented two decades before the Civil War began, but it was still a laborious and delicate process. The bulky cameras of the day required long exposure times (five seconds) and, therefore, could not capture movement. The conflict’s duration and scope, and the growth of reporting contributed to a boom in photography.

Item 1287

See Appendix for larger image – pg. 53
Conclusion

Civil War soldiers confronted new and horrifying modes of warfare that shocked them. Yet the conflict stretched on, battle after battle, year after year. Even the high mortality rates and unexpected horrors of modern war did not keep soldiers from persevering in their military service.

Questions to Consider

1. How did soldiers’ perceptions of the war change over time?
2. How, if at all, did the soldiers’ experiences affect the war’s outcome?
Theme Three: The prolonged conflict transformed civilian life, causing immense personal and financial losses to many Americans, expanding the role of government, and allowing white women and African Americans to take on new roles in both the North and the South.

Overview
While warfare dramatically increased the power of the Union and Confederate governments, they also worked more closely with the businessmen who provided the materials needed to fight the war—food, uniforms, weaponry, and other equipment. At the same time, they sought to unify public sentiment and participation behind the war. The result left a few people rich and many embittered, though employment and wages rose substantially in the North.

The war also provided unanticipated opportunities for people who had been politically and socially marginalized: slaves who escaped bondage, of course, but also free African Americans and white women. Union leaders resisted letting African American soldiers enlist for much of the war. Once they were allowed in, those enlistees faced substantial prejudice. But, the war offered many a chance to prove their courage and patriotism. In addition, white women experienced both more vulnerability and more autonomy, as the absence of men opened up and thrust them into new roles.

Although old prejudices remained strong, the nature of the war changed attitudes and, particularly, circumstances.

Questions to Consider
1. How did both dangers and opportunities expand dramatically during the Civil War for African Americans and white women?
2. Why did the war bring so much internal strife to the North and the South?
1. On the Home Front, 1861–1865

Large numbers of women and blacks entered the workforce, a phenomenon that would be repeated in all future American wars. But whereas work was easy to get and wages appeared to increase, real income actually declined. Inflation, especially destructive in the South, was largely to blame. By 1864, eggs sold in Richmond for $6 a dozen; butter brought $25 a pound. Strikes and union organizing pointed to working-class discontent.

Low wages compounded the problem of declining income and particularly harmed women workers. Often forced into the labor market because husbands could save little from small army stipends, army wives and other women took what pay they could get. As more women entered the workforce, employers cut costs by slashing wages. In 1861, the Union government paid Philadelphia seamstresses 17 cents per shirt. At the height of inflation, three years later, the government reduced the piecework rate to 15 cents. Private employers paid even less, about 8 cents a shirt. Working women in the South fared no better. War may have brought prosperity to a few Americans in the North and South, but for most it meant trying to survive on an inadequate income.

Nash et al., 531.
**Refugees of the Old Homestead**

**Questions to Consider**

1. What is the tone of these photographs? What were they meant to convey?
2. What do these photographs tell us about the war’s impact on civilians in the South?

**Item 1843**


*See Appendix for larger image – pg. 54*

**Creator:** Unknown photographers

**Context:** Photographers chronicled the war’s progress.

**Audience:** The general public

**Purpose:** To depict the impact of the war

**Historical Significance:**

Union General William Tecumseh Sherman contributed to much of the hardship faced by the Confederacy’s civilians: His march through the deep South in 1864 and 1865 spread panic and devastation in the heart of the Confederacy. Confiscating and burning property as they moved, Sherman’s soldiers sometimes caused Confederates in places such as Charleston, South Carolina, to damage property to keep it out of Yankee hands. The children in the second image are African Americans.
Theme Three Primary Source

Charleston, S. C. View of Ruined Buildings Through Porch of the Circular Church (150 Meeting Street)

Item 1791
Courtesy of the Library of Congress.
See Appendix for larger image – pg. 55
2. Wartime Race Relations

[Slaves became bolder as the Confederacy weakened and Union soldiers drew near.] Understanding what was at stake, slaves, in their own way, often worked for their freedom. Said one later, “Us slaves worked den when we felt like it, which wasn’t often.” [South Carolinian] Emily [Harris’] journal entry for February 22 confessed a “painful necessity.” “I am reduced,” she said, “to the use of a stick but the negroes are becoming so impudent and disrespectful that I cannot bear it.” A mere two weeks later she added, “The Negroes are all expecting to be set free very soon and it causes them to be very troublesom.”

... Insubordination, refusal to work, and refusal to accept punishment marked the behavior of black slaves, especially those who worked as fieldhands. Thousands of blacks (probably 20 percent of all slaves), many of them women who had been exploited as workers and as sexual objects, fled toward Union lines after the early months of the war. Their flight pointed to the changing nature of race relations and the harm slaves could do to the southern cause. Reflected one slaveowner, “The ‘faithful slave’ is about played out.”

Nash et al., 532–33.
3. The Other War: African American Struggles for Liberation

From the onset of military hostilities, African Americans, regardless of whether they lived in the North or the South, perceived the Civil War as a fight for freedom. Although they allied themselves with Union forces, they also recognized the limitations of Union policy in ending slavery. [Many enslaved blacks took action to free themselves and their families.] . . . Twenty-year-old Charlie Reason recalled his daring escape from a Maryland slave master and his decision to join the famous 54th Massachusetts Infantry composed of black soldiers: “I came to fight not for my country, I never had any, but to gain one.” Soon after the 54th’s assault on Fort Wagner (outside Charleston Harbor) in July 1863, Reason died of an infection contracted when one of his legs had to be amputated. In countless ways, black people throughout the South fought to gain a country on their own terms.

Wood et al., 484.
4. **Enemies Within the Confederacy**

Given the chance to steal away at night or walk away boldly in broad daylight, black men, women, and children left their masters and mistresses, seeking safety and paid labor behind Union lines. Throughout the South, black people waited and watched for an opportunity to flee from plantations, their actions depending on the movement of northern troops and the disarray of the plantations they lived on. In July 1862, the Union’s Second Confiscation Act provided that the slaves of rebel masters “shall be deemed captives of war and shall be forever free,” prompting Union generals to begin employing runaway male slaves as manual laborers. Consequently, military authorities often turned away women, children, older adults, and the disabled, leaving them vulnerable to spiteful masters and mistresses. For black men pressed into Union military and menial labor service, and for their families still languishing on plantations, “freedom” came at a high price indeed.

Wood et al., 484–85.
### Questions to Consider

1. What does the photograph suggest about the sort of slaves who were able to escape during the war? Consider age and gender and status.
2. What does the photograph suggest or reveal about these people’s attitudes and circumstances? Consider posture, clothing, and other possessions.

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#### Historical Significance:
Slaves seized their freedom during the Civil War before Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. These former Virginia slaves escaped to the Union lines in 1862. Termed “contraband,” a word that underscored their status as property, escaped slaves deprived the South of much-needed labor and presented Union leaders with the problem of how to respond to them.
Many Thousand Go, Song Lyrics

Questions to Consider

1. What are the strengths and the weaknesses of popular songs as historical evidence?
2. What does this song tell us about African American views of the Civil War? Do any of the lyrics surprise you? Why?

No more peck o’ corn for me, No more, no more; No more peck o’ corn for me. Many thousand go.

No more driver’s lash for me, No more, no more; No more driver’s lash for me. Many thousand go.

No more pint o’ salt for me, No more, no more; No more pint o’ salt for me. Many thousand go.

No more hundred lash for me, No more, no more; No more hundred lash for me. Many thousand go.

No more mistress’ call for me, No more, no more; No more mistress’ call for me. Many thousand go.

No more auction block for me, No more, no more; No more auction block for me. Many thousand go.

5. The Ongoing Fight Against Prejudice in the North and South

[ Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation prompted many African Americans to join the Union army. ] The proclamation itself allowed for such recruitment. Furthermore, many black men felt inspired to join U.S. forces since the Lincoln administration had declared the conflict a war for abolition. Eventually, about 33,000 northern blacks enlisted, following the lead of their brothers-in-arms from the South [ who sought safety and paid labor behind enemy lines. ]

For black northern soldiers, military service opened up a wider world; some learned to read and write in camp, and almost all felt the satisfaction of contributing to a war that they defined in stark terms of freedom versus slavery. They wore their uniforms proudly. However, Northern wartime policies toward black men as enlisted men and toward black people as laborers revealed that the former slaves ( as well as free people of color in the North ) would continue to fight prejudice on many fronts.

. . . Until late in the war, black soldiers were systematically denied opportunities to advance through the ranks and were paid less than whites. Although they showed loyalty to the cause in disproportionate numbers compared with white men, most blacks found themselves barred from taking up arms at all, relegated to fatigue work deemed dangerous and degrading to whites. They intended to labor for the Union, but, in the words of a black soldier from New York, “Instead of the musket it is the spade and the Wheelbarrow and the Axe cutting in one of the horrible swamps in Louisiana stinking and misery.” For each white Union soldier killed or mortally wounded, two died of disease; the ratio for blacks was one to ten.

Wood et al., 485–87.
**Sic Semper Tyrannis – 22nd Regt. Colored Troops**

**Questions to Consider**

1. How is the African American soldier depicted? What does his bearing and clothing suggest?
2. How did Bowser employ symbols in this painting?

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**Creator:** David Bustill Bowser

**Context:** Regiments had unique battle flags; African American units formed after Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation at the outset of 1863.

**Audience:** Soldiers and anyone else who viewed the regiment

**Purpose:** To inspire the soldiers and communicate what the regiment was fighting for

**Historical Significance:**

Born in Philadelphia early in 1820, David Bustill Bowser received a much better education than most African Americans and began studying art in 1831. He made a living as a barber and then, in the 1840s, began earning money as a painter. He also became a civil rights advocate.

In 1863, he was asked to design flags for newly formed African American regiments training at Camp Penn—banners that would be carried into battle.

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See Appendix for larger image – pg. 57
6. **Women and the War**

[The war also had profound, though sometimes subtle, effects on white women.] In both North and South, they entered government service in large numbers. In the North, hundreds of women became military nurses. Under the supervision of Drs. Emily and Elizabeth Blackwell; Dorothea Dix, superintendent of army nurses; and Clara Barton, northern women nursed the wounded and dying for low pay or even for none at all. They also attempted to improve hospital conditions by attacking red tape and bureaucracy . . .

Although men largely staffed southern military hospitals, Confederate women also cared for the sick and wounded in their homes and in makeshift hospitals behind the battle lines. Grim though the work was, many women felt that they were participating in the real world for the first time in their lives.

Women moved outside the domestic sphere in other forms of volunteer war work. Some women gained administrative experience in soldiers’ aid societies and in the U.S. Sanitary Commission that raised $50 million by the war’s end for medical supplies, nurses’ salaries and other wartime necessities. Others made bandages and clothes, put together packages for soldiers at the front, and helped army wives and disabled soldiers find jobs.

Nash et al., 533.
7. Disaffection in the Confederacy

[Poor Southern women often resented and resisted the Confederacy’s policies, which seemed to privilege the well-to-do.] Women from Virginia to Alabama protested a Confederate 10 percent “tax-in-kind” on produce grown by farmers and the food shortages that reached crisis proportions. In April 1863 several hundred Richmond women, many of them wives of Tredegar Iron Works employees, armed themselves with knives, hatchets, and pistols and ransacked stores in search of food: “Bread! Bread! Our children are starving while the rich roll in wealth.” An enraged President Davis told the rioters that he would give them five minutes to disperse before ordering troops to fire on them; the women went home. In their desperation they had highlighted the contradiction between the increasingly efficient process of Confederate industrialization and the increasingly inefficient process of providing basic necessities to people on the home front.

Whereas some white women resisted the Confederacy, others leaped to the fore to provide essential goods and services to the beleaguered new nation. Virginia’s Belle Boyd kept track of Union troop movements and served as a spy for Confederate armies. Poor women took jobs as textile factory workers, and their better-educated sisters found employment as clerks for the Confederate bureaucracy. Slaveholding women busied themselves running plantations, rolling bandages, and knitting socks for soldiers. In Augusta, Georgia, the Ladies Aid Society sewed garments for the troops, and the Augusta Purveying Association provided subsidized food for the poor. Still, many women felt their labors were in vain. Of the Confederacy’s stalled progress, Georgia’s Gertrude Thomas noted, “Valuable lives lost and nothing accomplished.”

Wood et al., 487–88.
**The War-Time Journal of a Georgia Girl**

1864–1865

**Questions to Consider**

1. Do you think this diary entry is a trustworthy account of how Andrews felt at the time that she wrote it? Why or why not?
2. Why did Andrews focus so much on food?

“We have nothing but ham, ham, ham, every day, and such crowds of company in the house, and so many lunches to furnish, that even the ham has to be husbanded carefully. It is dreadful to think what wretched fare we have to set before the charming people who are thrown upon our hospitality. Ham and cornfield peas for dinner one day, and cornfield peas and ham the next, is the tedious menu. Mother does her best by making Emily give us every variation on peas that ever was heard of; one day we have pea soup, another, pea croquettes, then baked peas and ham, and so on, through the whole gamut, but alas! they are cornfield peas still, and often not enough of even them. Sorghum molasses is all the sweetening we have, and if it were not for the nice home-made butter and milk, and father’s fine old Catawba wine and brandy, there would be literally nothing to redeem the family larder from bankruptcy.”


**Creator:** Frances Andrews

**Context:** Andrews lived in the South during the war.

**Audience:** Herself

**Purpose:** To chronicle her experiences during the war

**Historical Significance:**
Born into a prominent, slave-holding Georgia family in 1840, Frances Andrews chronicled life on the homefront as General Sherman’s Union forces marched through the state. She spent much of 1864 and 1865 living with an older sister whose husband was absent, fighting in the Confederate army. The diary was published more than forty years later.
8. Civil Unrest in the North

[Few Northern communities suffered at the hands of Confederate armies, but the war harmed and was resented by many white working people.] Following a military draft imposed on July 1, the northern white working classes erupted. Enraged at the wealthy who could buy substitutes, resentful of the Lincoln administration’s high-handed tactics, and determined not to fight on behalf of their African American competitors in the workplace, laborers in New York City, Hartford, Troy, Newark, and Boston (many of them Irish) went on a rampage. The New York City riot of July 11–15 was especially savage as white men directed their wrath against black men, women, and children. Members of the mob burned the Colored Orphan Asylum to the ground and then mutilated their victims.

A total of 105 people died before five Union troops were brought in to quell the violence. The regiments from Pennsylvania and New York were fresh from the Gettysburg battlefield; now they trained their weapons on citizens of New York City. In response to the rioting and to discourage other men from resisting the draft elsewhere, the federal government deployed 20,000 troops to New York. On August 19, the draft resumed. [Mayors raised money to protect their working-class constituents from the draft. The Lincoln administration had survived the crisis, though resentment and prejudice toward African Americans remained high.]

Wood et al., 490–91.
**Conclusion**

The Civil War offered unusual opportunities and difficulties to marginal peoples: African Americans, white women, and the working class. Depending on one’s status and outlook, the war in general and military service in particular was an intoxicating possibility or an unwelcome burden—for people at home as well as soldiers.

**Questions to Consider**

1. Why did hardship cause some people and groups to resist the war and others to remain committed to it?
2. Which groups gained most and least from the war?

**Unit Conclusion**

The Civil War is a prime example of an event that spun out of control in ways that leaders in neither the Union nor the Confederacy had predicted. A conflict that began as a contest to resolve whether or not the nation was indissoluble, it consumed and transformed many lives—those of soldiers and slaves, of course, but many others, too.

The boundaries of the United States were the same in 1865 as they had been in 1861, but its people and character had been much changed. Even before the war’s close, an ambitious program of federal Reconstruction aimed to restore the nation’s unity and to order the many changes the war had brought. That work would intensify when the long conflict at last ended.
**Timeline**

1860  Democratic Party splits, allowing Republican Abraham Lincoln to win election with less than 40 percent of vote

**Dec. 1860 – Feb. 1861**  South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana and Texas secede from Union

**Feb. 4, 1861**  Confederate States of America formed; constitution adopted; Jefferson Davis elected president

**Mar. 4, 1861**  Lincoln inaugurated and vows not to initiate war

**Apr. 12, 1861**  Fort Sumter attacked, beginning Civil War

**Apr. 1861**  Lincoln calls up state militia and suspends habeas corpus

**Apr. 17, 1861 – May 20, 1861**  Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Arkansas join the Confederate States of America

**Apr. 16, 1862**  With the Conscription Act of 1862, Confederacy enacts first American military draft

**Sept. 22, 1862**  Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation by Lincoln warns that slaves in rebel states will be freed

**Sept. 27, 1862**  1st Regiment of Louisiana Native Guards becomes first African American soldiers sworn into Union army

**Dec. 1862**  Confederate leaders name Phoebe Yates Pember as Chimborazo Hospital’s first matron

**Jan. 1, 1863**  Lincoln officially issues Emancipation Proclamation, freeing slaves only in states still in rebellion.

**Mar. 3, 1863**  Enrollment Act calling for first forced conscription in United States history

**Apr. 1, 1863**  Desperate Richmond women riot in streets, chanting “Bread!”; only disperse under threat of Confederate troops

**May 13, 1863**  The 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment, the most famous African American regiment of the war, sworn into federal service

**July 11–13, 1863**  Conscription of soldiers in New York City sparks three-day riot by Irish immigrants, targeting their violence on African Americans

**July 18, 1863**  54th volunteers to lead assault on strongly fortified Confederate troops at Fort Wagner, South Carolina
**TIMELINE cont’d**

- **Sept. 1, 1864** Sherman’s “Atlanta Campaign” concludes with the fall of Atlanta
- **Nov. 8, 1864** Lincoln re-elected in wake of capture of Atlanta and other battlefield successes
- **Apr. 9, 1865** Lee surrenders at Appomattox Courthouse in Virginia, ending the Civil War
- **Apr. 14, 1865** Abraham Lincoln assassinated
- **1879** Phoebe Yates Pember publishes *A Southern Woman’s Story*, vividly detailing her difficulties entering male domain of nursing
- **May 9, 1900** William Carney awarded the Medal of Honor for his bravery at Fort Wagner
UNIT REFERENCE MATERIALS


FURTHER READING


4 - Emilio, Luis. *A Brave Black Regiment: The History of the 54th Massachusetts, 1863–1865.*


6 - Horowitz, Tony. *Confederates in the Attic: Dispatches from the Unfinished Civil War.*


8 - Massey, Mary Elizabeth. *Ersatz in the Confederacy: Shortages and Substitutes on the Southern Homefront.*

9 - Pember, Phoebe Yates. *A Southern Woman’s Story*  
http://www.jewish-history.com


Visit the Web Site

Explore these themes further on the *America’s History in the Making* Web site. See how this content aligns with your own state standards, browse the resource archive, review the series timeline, and explore the Web interactives. You can also read full versions of selected *Magazine of History* (MOH) articles or selected National Center for History in the Schools (NCHS) lesson plans.
APPENDIX 2-2

THEME TWO PRIMARY SOURCE
Item 1287
Timothy H. O’Sullivan, INCIDENTS OF WAR. A HARVEST OF DEATH, GETTYSBURG, JULY, 1863 (1863).
Courtesy of the Library of Congress.
THEME THREE PRIMARY SOURCE
Item 1843
APPENDIX 3-3

THEME THREE PRIMARY SOURCE
ITEM 1264
James F. Gibson, CUMBERLAND LANDING, VA. GROUP OF “CONTRABANDS” AT FOLLER’S HOUSE (1862).
Courtesy of the Library of Congress.
THEME THREE PRIMARY SOURCE
Item 1098
David Bustill Bowser, SIC SEMPER TYRANNIS – 22TH REGT. COLORED TROOPS (1860–70).
Courtesy of the Library of Congress.