

2 War Affects Society

TERMS & NAMES

Copperhead
conscription
bounty
income tax
greenback
Clara Barton

MAIN IDEA

The Civil War caused social, economic, and political changes in the North and the South.

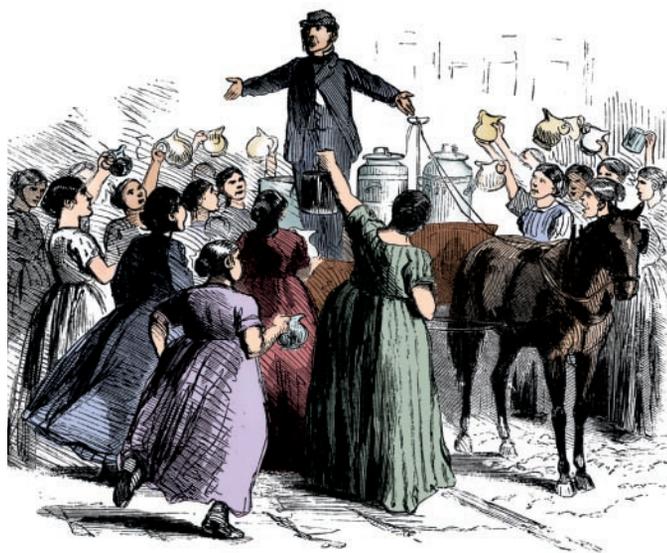
WHY IT MATTERS NOW

Some changes, like the growth of industry, affected Americans long after the end of Civil War.

ONE AMERICAN'S STORY

As the Civil War moved into its third year, the constant demand for men and resources began to take its toll back home. Sometimes, the hardships endured by civilians resulted in angry scenes like that witnessed by Agnes, a resident of Richmond, Virginia.

On April 3, 1863, Agnes went for her morning walk and soon came upon a group of hungry women and children, who had gathered in front of the capitol. She described the scene as these women and children were joined by other people who were upset by the shortage of food.



Food became scarce in many places during the Civil War. Here, women demand milk for their hungry families.

A VOICE FROM THE PAST

The crowd now rapidly increased, and numbered, I am sure, more than a thousand women and children. It grew and grew until it reached the dignity of a mob—a bread riot.

Agnes, quoted in *Reminiscences of Peace and War*

The mob then went out of control. It broke into shops and stole food, clothing, and other goods. Only the arrival of Confederate president Jefferson Davis and the threat of force ended the riot.

In this section, you will read more about hardships that the Civil War caused on the home front. These hardships caused changes in civilian society in both the North and the South.

Disagreement About the War

In the spring of 1863, riots like the one in Richmond broke out in a number of Southern towns. Southerners were growing weary of the war and the constant sacrifices it demanded.

Confederate soldiers began to leave the army in increasing numbers. By the end of the year, the Confederate army had lost nearly 40 percent of its men. Some of these men were on leave, but many others were deserters.



In this political cartoon, the Union defends itself against “Copperheads.” This was the name given to Northerners who sympathized with the South.



Faced with the difficulties of waging war, the Confederate states fell into disagreement. The same principle of states’ rights that led them to break with the Union kept them from coordinating their war effort. As one Southern governor put it, “I am *still* a rebel . . . no matter who may be in power.”

Disagreements over the conduct of the war also arose in the North. Lincoln’s main opponents were the **Copperheads**, Northern Democrats who favored peace with the South. (A copperhead is a poisonous snake that strikes without warning.) Lincoln had protesters arrested. He also suspended the writ of habeas corpus, which prevents the government from holding citizens without a trial.

Vocabulary

writ: a written order issued by a court of law

The Draft Laws

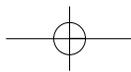
As the war dragged on, both the North and the South needed more soldiers. As a result, both sides passed laws of **conscription**, also known as the draft. These laws required men to serve in the military.

The Confederates had been drafting soldiers since the spring of 1862. By 1863, all able-bodied white men between the ages of 18 and 45 were required to join the army. However, there were a number of exceptions. Planters who owned 20 or more slaves could avoid military service. In addition, wealthy men could hire substitutes to serve in their place. By 1863, substitutes might cost as much as \$6,000. The fact that wealthy men could avoid service caused poor Southerners to complain that it was a “rich man’s war but a poor man’s fight.”

The Union draft law was passed in March 1863. Like the Confederacy, the Union allowed draftees to hire substitutes. However, the North also offered \$300 **bounties**, or cash payments, to men who volunteered to serve. As a result, only a small percentage of men in the North were drafted. Most men volunteered and received the bounty.

Reading History

A. Drawing Conclusions Why were many soldiers dissatisfied with the draft laws?



Even so, the draft was extremely unpopular. In July 1863, anger over the draft and simmering racial tensions led to the New York City draft riots. For four days, rioters destroyed property and attacked people on the streets. Over 100 people were killed—many of them African Americans.

Economic Effects of the War

Many people suffered economic hardship during the war. The suffering was severe in the South, where most battles were fought, but the North also experienced difficulties.

Food shortages were very common in the South, partly because so many farmers were fighting in the Confederate army. Moreover, food sometimes could not get to market because trains were now being used to carry war materials. The Confederate army also seized food and other supplies for its own needs.

Another problem, especially in the South, was inflation—an increase in price and decrease in the value of money. The average family food bill in the South increased from \$6.65 a month in 1861 to \$68 by mid-1863. Over the course of the war, prices rose 9,000 percent in the South.

Inflation in the North was much lower, but prices still rose faster than wages, making life harder for working people. Some people took advantage of wartime demand and sold goods for high prices.

Overall, though, war production boosted Northern industry and fueled the economy. In the short term, this gave the North an economic advantage over the South. In the long term, industry would begin to replace farming as the basis of the national economy.

During the war, the federal government passed two important economic measures. In 1861, it established the first **income tax**—a tax on earnings. The following year, the government issued a new paper currency, known as **greenbacks** because of their color. The new currency helped the Northern economy by ensuring that people had money to spend. It also helped the Union to pay for the war.

Some Southerners in the border states took advantage of the stronger Union economy by selling cotton to Northern traders, in violation of Confederate law. “Yankee gold,” wrote one Confederate officer, “is fast accomplishing what Yankee arms could never achieve—the subjugation of our people.”

Resistance by Slaves

Another factor that affected the South was the growing resistance from slaves. To hurt the Southern economy, slaves slowed their pace of work or stopped working altogether. Some carried out sabotage, destroying crops and farm equipment to hurt the plantation economy. When white

Reading History

B. Analyzing

Causes Why were economic problems particularly bad in the South?

Vocabulary

subjugate: to bring under control or to conquer

daily life

INFLATION IN THE SOUTH

During the Civil War, inflation caused hardship in the North and the South. But inflation was especially severe in the Confederacy, where prices could become outrageously high.

The food prices shown below are from 1864. Consider how many days it took a Confederate soldier to earn enough money to buy each of these foods.



\$6.00
Dozen Eggs



\$6.25
Pound of Butter



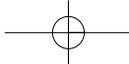
\$10.00
Quart of Milk



\$12.00
Pound of Coffee



\$18.00
Confederate Soldier's
Monthly Pay



planters fled advancing Union armies, slaves often refused to go along. They stayed behind, waiting for Union soldiers to free them.

Some enslaved people even rose up in rebellion against their overseers. More commonly, though, slaves ran away from plantations to join the Union forces as they pushed farther into Confederate territory. One Union officer described a common sight.

A VOICE FROM THE PAST

It was very touching to see the vast numbers of colored [African-American] women following after us with babies in their arms, and little ones like our Anna clinging to their tattered skirts. One poor creature, while nobody was looking, hid two boys, five years old, in a wagon, intending, I suppose that they should see the land of freedom if she couldn't.

Union officer, quoted in *The Civil War*

After Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, the number of slaves fleeing Southern plantations greatly increased. By the end of the war, as many as half a million had fled to Union lines.

Women Aid the War Effort

With so many men away at war, women in both the North and the South assumed increased responsibilities. Women plowed fields and ran farms and plantations. They also took over jobs in offices and factories that had previously been done only by men.

Other social changes came about because of the thousands of women who served on the front lines as volunteer workers and nurses. Susie King Taylor was an African-American woman who wrote an account of her experiences as a volunteer with an African-American regiment. She asked her readers to remember that “many lives were lost,—not men alone but noble women as well.”

Relief agencies put women to work washing clothes, gathering supplies, and cooking food for soldiers. Also, nursing became a respectable profession for many women. By the end of the war, around 3,000 nurses had worked under the leadership of Dorothea Dix in Union hospitals. Southern women were also active as nurses and as volunteers on the front.

Women also played a key role as spies in both the North and the South. Harriet Tubman served as a spy for Union forces along the coast of South Carolina. The most famous Confederate spy was Belle Boyd. Although she was arrested six times, she continued her work through much of the war. At one point, she even sent messages from her jail cell by putting them in little rubber balls and tossing them out the window.

Reading History

C. Summarizing
How did women participate in the Civil War?

AMERICA'S HISTORY MAKERS



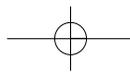
CLARA BARTON

1821–1912

Trained as a schoolteacher, **Clara Barton** was working for the government when the Civil War began. She organized a relief agency to help with the war effort. “While our soldiers stand and fight,” she said, “I can stand and feed and nurse them.”

She also made food for soldiers in camp and tended to the wounded and dying on the battlefield. At Antietam, she held a doctor's operating table steady as cannon shells burst all around them. The doctor called her “the angel of the battlefield.” After the war, Barton founded the American Red Cross.

How did Clara Barton demonstrate her leadership abilities?



Civil War Prison Camps

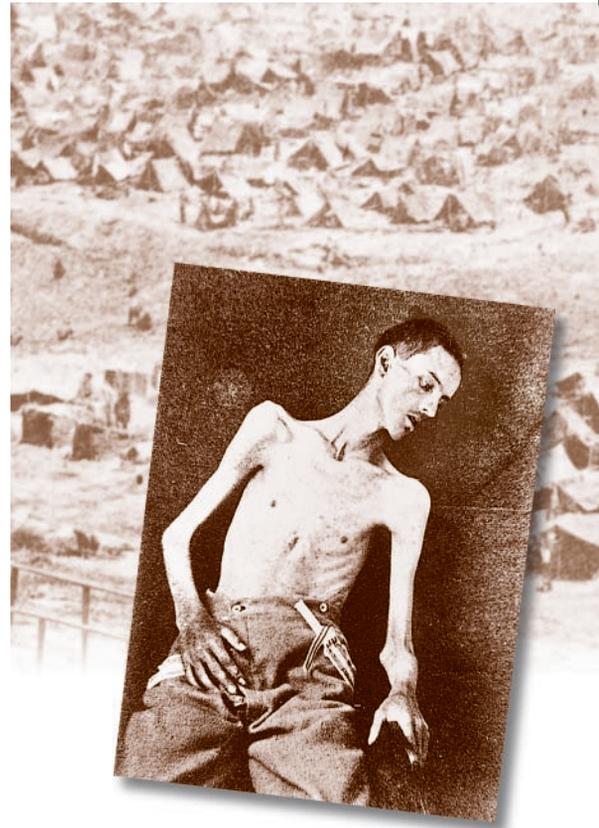
Women caught spying were thrown into jail, but soldiers captured in battle suffered far more. At prison camps in both the North and the South, prisoners of war faced terrible conditions.

One of the worst prison camps in the North was in Elmira, New York. Perhaps the harshest feature of a prisoner's life at the camp was the New York winter. One prisoner called Elmira "an excellent summer prison for southern soldiers, but an excellent place for them to find their graves in the winter." In just one year, more than 24 percent of Elmira's 12,121 prisoners died of sickness and exposure to severe weather.

Conditions were also horrible in the South. The camp with the worst reputation was at Andersonville, Georgia. Built to hold 10,000 prisoners, at one point it housed 33,000. Inmates had little shelter from the heat or cold. Most slept in holes scratched in the dirt. Drinking water came from one tiny creek that also served as a sewer. As many as 100 men per day died at Andersonville from starvation, disease, and exposure.

People who saw the camps were shocked by the condition of the soldiers. The poet Walt Whitman—who served as a Union nurse—described a group of soldiers who returned from a prison camp. He exclaimed, "Can those be *men*? . . . are they not really mummied, dwindled corpses?"

Around 50,000 men died in Civil War prison camps. But this number was dwarfed by the number of dead on the battlefronts and even more from disease in army camps. In the next section, you will read about the bloody battles that led to the end of the Civil War.



The terrible conditions at Civil War prison camps caused much suffering and death.

ReadingHistory

D. Making

Inferences Why were death rates so high at many Civil War prison camps?

Section 2 Assessment

1. Terms & Names

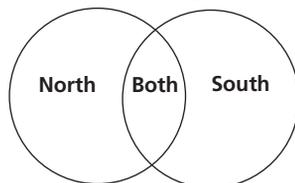
Explain the significance of:

- Copperhead
- conscription
- bounty
- income tax
- greenback
- Clara Barton

2. Taking Notes

Use a diagram like the one below to compare conditions in the North and South during the later years of war.

Conditions During the War



3. Main Ideas

- How did the South's principle of states' rights undermine the Confederate war effort?
- How did the draft laws in the North and South differ?
- What conditions at prison camps caused so many to suffer behind enemy lines?

4. Critical Thinking

Making Generalizations

What economic changes took place during the Civil War?

THINK ABOUT

- the war's effect on prices
- industry and agriculture
- new economic measures begun by the government

ACTIVITY OPTIONS

GEOGRAPHY

SPEECH

Study Civil War prison camps. Make a **map** showing where they were located or give a **speech** explaining why prisoners should be treated better.