

Effects of the Civil War

The Civil War effected the life of every American, whether it was on the battlefield or on the homefront. When volunteers started to join the Union and Confederate armies, families and friends were often pitted against one another. It was not uncommon for a father and son, or a brother and brother to be fighting on opposite sides of the war.

Troops on both sides were very young. Most soldiers were under the age of 21. Combat was very brutal for these boys. They often found them selves in man-to-man combat. As the war raged on with its new technologies such as cone-shaped bullets, which made rifles twice as accurate, new versions of cannons, and hand grenades, more than one quarter of the soldiers would die in any given battle. The South soon found it especially hard to find new recruits to replace their casualties. Dying in battle was not the only casualty of war; disease killed more men than bullets during the Civil War. Medical care on the battlefield was very primitive. Instead of patching up wounds, arms and legs were often cut off. This form of medical attention often led to infection. With the lack of medicines these infections often led to death. As a result, over half the wounded died.

The South was hardest hit during the Civil War. Returning soldiers found devastated cities and farmlands. Many of the railroads in the South had been destroyed. Farms and plantations were destroyed, and many southern cities were burned to the ground such as Atlanta, Georgia and Richmond, Virginia (the Confederacy's capitol). The southern financial system was also ruined. After the war, Confederate money was worthless. Would the South ever be able to recover from such a loss?

Women had a major effect on the Civil War for both the Confederacy and the Union. As the men left for battle, the women were forced to take over their jobs. During the four long years of battle, women ran the farms and plantations in the South and the businesses in the North. Some women even became involved on the battlefield. Some women would dress as men to actually fight in battle, other acted as spies, and worked in hospitals as nurses. Clara Barton was one of the most famous Civil War nurses and founder of the American Red Cross. She trained nurses, collected medical supplies, and served in the battlefield hospitals. Because of her efforts she became known as the "Angel of the Battlefield."

Women were not the only people, who helped the war effort, so did African Americans. In the beginning of the war African Americans were not allowed to join the army for either side. They were allowed to join the Union army in 1862, and from that point on, thousands of free African Americans enlisted. Even though they were allowed to fight for the Union causes, African American soldiers were discriminated against. They received less pay than white soldiers did, and they served in segregated units under the command of white officers. African Americans were proud to fight in the war even though they faced discrimination, they not only went to war to restore the Union, but they also went to war to fight for their freedom. Near the end of the war, the South no longer had enough white men to replace their casualties. Robert E. Lee demanded that the Confederate government allow African Americans to fight in Confederate armies. The government finally agreed and slaves were often used as naval crewmembers and soldiers in the Confederate Army. One of the most important African Americans who fought in the Civil War was Robert Smalls. He was a sailor and later a Union naval captain.

Now that the war is over it is time to rebuild the country. This will prove to be just as difficult as fighting the war itself!

Directions: Using "Effects of the Civil War" story, answer the following questions. You are to write out the question, skip a space, and then answer it.

1. What three new forms of technology were introduced during the Civil War, which cause over a quarter of the troops to die in any given battle?
2. What type of casualty caused more men to die then actually being shot in battle?
3. Which region was hardest hit during the Civil War, the north or the south?
4. Name four different things that were destroyed in the South after the Civil

War.

5. Name five ways women contributed to the war effort (both at home and on the battlefield) during the Civil War.

6. Who was Clara Barton

7. Name two ways African Americans were discriminated against once they enlisted in the Union army.

8. What were two reasons why African Americans enlisted in the Union army?

9. Why did the South finally allow African Americans to fight for the Confederacy?