Pauline Cushman was an American actress and a wartime spy. Using her guile to fraternize with Confederate officers, Cushman snuck military plans and drawings to Union officials in her shoes. She was caught, tried, and sentenced to death but was apparently saved days before her execution by the occupation of her native New Orleans by Union forces. Whether as spies, nurses, or textile workers, women were essential to the Union war effort. *Pauline Cushman*, between 1855 and 1865. Library of Congress.

leading to Benjamin Butler's infamous General Order Number 28, which arrested all rebellious women as prostitutes.

Military strategy shifted in 1864. The new tactics of "hard war" evolved slowly, as restraint toward southern civilians and property ultimately gave way to a concerted effort to demoralize southern civilians and destroy the southern economy. Grant's successes at Vicksburg and Chattanooga, Tennessee (November 1863), and Meade's cautious pursuit of Lee after Gettysburg prompted Lincoln to promote Grant to general-in-chief of the Union army in early 1864. This change in command resulted in some of the bloodiest battles of the Eastern Theater. Grant's Overland Campaign, including the Battle of the Wilderness, the Battle of Cold Harbor, and the siege of Petersburg, demonstrated Grant's willingness to tirelessly attack the ever-dwindling Army of Northern Virginia. By June 1864, Grant's army surrounded the Confederate city of Petersburg, Virginia. Siege operations cut off Confederate forces and supplies from the capital of Richmond. Meanwhile out west, Union armies under the command of William Tecumseh Sherman implemented hard war strategies and slowly made their way through central Tennessee and northern Georgia, capturing the vital rail hub of Atlanta in September 1864.

Pennsylvania Light Artillery, Battery B, Petersburg, Virginia. Photograph by Timothy H. O'Sullivan, 1864. The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Action in both theaters during 1864 caused even more casualties and furthered the devastation of disease. Disease haunted both armies, and accounted for over half of all Civil War casualties. Sometimes as many as half of the men in a company could be sick. The overwhelming majority of Civil War soldiers came from rural areas, where less exposure to diseases meant soldiers lacked immunities. Vaccines for diseases such as smallpox were largely unavailable to those outside cities or towns. Despite the common nineteenth-century tendency to see city men as weak or soft, soldiers from urban environments tended to succumb to fewer diseases than their rural counterparts. Tuberculosis, measles, rheumatism, typhoid, malaria, and smallpox spread almost unchecked among the armies.

Civil War medicine focused almost exclusively on curing the patient rather than preventing disease. Many soldiers attempted to cure themselves by concocting elixirs and medicines themselves. These ineffective home remedies were often made from various plants the men found in woods or fields. There was no understanding of germ theory, so many soldiers did things that we would consider unsanitary today.[29] They ate food that was improperly cooked and handled, and they practiced what we would consider poor personal hygiene. They did not take appropriate steps to ensure that drinking water was free from bacteria. Diarrhea and dysentery were common. These diseases were especially dangerous, as Civil War soldiers did not understand the value of replacing fluids as they were lost. As such, men affected by these conditions would weaken and become unable to fight or march, and as they became dehydrated their immune system became less effective, inviting other infections to attack the body. Through trial and error soldiers began to protect themselves from some of the more preventable sources of infection. Around 1862 both armies began to dig latrines rather than rely on the local waterways.

Burying human and animal waste also cut down on exposure to diseases considerably.

Medical surgery was limited and brutal. If a soldier was wounded in the torso, throat, or head, there was little surgeons could do. Invasive procedures to repair damaged organs or stem blood loss invariably resulted in death. Luckily for soldiers, only approximately one in six combat wounds were to one of those parts. The remaining were to limbs, which was treatable by amputation. Soldiers had the highest chance of survival if the limb was removed within forty-eight hours of injury. A skilled surgeon could amputate a limb in three to five minutes from start to finish. While the lack of germ theory again caused several unsafe practices, such as using the same tools on multiple patients, wiping hands on filthy gowns, or placing hands in communal buckets of water, there is evidence that amputation offered the best chance of survival.

Amputations were a common form of treatment during the war. While it saved the lives of some soldiers, it was extremely painful and resulted in death in many cases. It also produced the first community of war veterans without limbs in American history. *Amputation being performed in a hospital tent, Gettysburg*, July 1863. National Archives and Records Administration.

It is a common misconception that amputation was done without anesthesia and against a patient's wishes. Since the 1830s, Americans understood the benefits of nitrous oxide and ether in easing pain. Chloroform and opium were also used to either render patients unconscious or dull pain during the procedure. Also, surgeons would not amputate without the patient's consent.

In the Union army alone, 2.8 million ounces of opium and over 5.2 million opium pills were administered. In 1862, William Alexander Hammon was appointed Surgeon General for the United States. He sought to regulate dosages and manage supplies of available medicines, both to prevent overdosing and to ensure that an ample supply remained for the next engagement. However, his guidelines tended to apply only to the regular federal army. Most Union soldiers were in volunteer units and organized at the state level. Their surgeons often ignored posted limits on medicines, or worse, experimented with their own concoctions made from local flora.

In the North, the conditions in hospitals were somewhat superior. This was partly due to the organizational skills of women like Dorothea Dix, who was the Union's Superintendent for Army Nurses. Additionally, many women were members of the United States Sanitary Commission and helped to staff and supply hospitals in the North.

Women took on key roles within hospitals both North and South. The publisher's notice for *Nurse and Spy in the Union Army* states, "In the opinion of many, it is the privilege of woman to minister to the sick and soothe the sorrowing—and in the present crisis of our country's history, to aid our brothers to the extent of her capacity."[30] Mary Chesnut wrote, "Every woman in the house is ready to rush into the Florence Nightingale business."[31] However, she indicated that after she visited the hospital, "I can never again shut out of view the sights that I saw there of human misery. I sit thinking, shut my eyes, and see it all."[32] Hospital conditions were often so bad that many volunteer nurses quit soon after beginning. Kate Cumming volunteered as a nurse shortly after the war began. She, and other volunteers, traveled with the Army of Tennessee. However, all but one of the women who volunteered with Cumming quit within a week.

Death came in many forms; disease, prisons, bullets, even lightning and bee stings took men slowly or suddenly. Their deaths, however, affected more than their regiments. Before the war, a wife expected to sit at her husband's bed, holding his hand, and ministering to him after a long, fulfilling life. This type of death, "the Good Death," changed during the Civil War as men died often far from home among strangers.[33] Casualty reporting was inconsistent, so a woman was often at the mercy of the

men who fought alongside her husband to learn not only the details of his death but even that the death had occurred.

"Now I'm a widow. Ah! That mournful word. Little the world think of the agony it contains!" wrote Sally Randle Perry in her diary.[34] After her husband's death at Sharpsburg, Sally received the label she would share with more than two hundred thousand other women. The death of a husband and loss of financial, physical, and emotional support could shatter lives. It also had the perverse power to free women from bad marriages and open doors to financial and psychological independence.

Widows had an important role to play in the conflict. The ideal widow wore black, mourned for a minimum of two and a half years, resigned herself to God's will, focused on her children, devoted herself to her husband's memory, and brought his body home for burial. Many tried, but not all widows were able to live up to the ideal. Many were unable to purchase proper mourning garb. Black silk dresses, heavy veils, and other features of antebellum mourning were expensive and in short supply. Because most of these women were in their childbearing years, the war created an unprecedented number of widows who were pregnant or still nursing infants. In a time when the average woman gave birth to eight to ten children in her lifetime, it is perhaps not surprising that the Civil War created so many widows who were also young mothers with little free time for formal mourning. Widowhood permeated American society. But in the end, it was up to each widow to navigate her own mourning. She joined the ranks of sisters, mothers, cousins, girlfriends, and communities in mourning men.[35]

By the fall of 1864, military and social events played against the backdrop of the presidential election of 1864. While the war raged on, the presidential contest featured a transformed electorate. Three new states (West Virginia, Nevada, and Kansas) had been added since 1860, while the eleven states of the Confederacy did not participate. Lincoln and his vice presidential nominee, Andrew Johnson (Tennessee), ran on the National Union Party ticket. The main competition came from his former commander, General George B. McClellan. Though McClellan himself was a "War Democrat," the official platform of the Democratic Party in 1864 revolved around negotiating an immediate end to the Civil War. McClellan's vice presidential nominee was George H. Pendleton of Ohio—a well-known Peace Democrat.

On Election Day—November 8, 1864—Lincoln and McClellan each needed 117 electoral votes (out of a possible 233) to win the presidency. For much of the 1864 campaign season, Lincoln downplayed his chances of reelection and McClellan assumed that large numbers of Union soldiers

would grant him support. However, thanks in great part to William Sherman's capture of Atlanta on September 2, 1864, and overwhelming support from Union troops, Lincoln won the election easily. Additionally, Lincoln received support from more radical Republican factions and members of the Radical Democracy Party that demanded the end of slavery.

In the popular vote, Lincoln defeated McClellan, 55.1 percent to 44.9 percent. In the Electoral College, Lincoln's victory was even more pronounced: 212 to 21. Lincoln won twenty-two states, and McClellan only carried three: New Jersey, Delaware, and Kentucky.[36]

In the wake of his reelection, Abraham Lincoln delivered his second inaugural address on March 4, 1865, in which he concluded:

> With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan—to do all which may

With crowds of people filling every inch of ground around the U.S. Capitol, President Lincoln delivered his inaugural address on March 4, 1865. Alexander Gardner, *Lincoln's Second Inaugural*, between 1910 and 1920, from a photograph taken in 1865. Wikimedia.

achieve and cherish a just, and a lasting peace, among ourselves, and with all nations.[37]

The years 1864 and 1865 were the very definition of hard war. Incredibly deadly for both sides, the Union campaigns in both the West and the East destroyed Confederate infrastructure and demonstrated the efficacy of the Union's strategy. Following up on the successful capture of Atlanta, William Sherman conducted his March to the Sea in the fall of 1864, arriving in Savannah with time to capture it and deliver it as a Christmas present for Abraham Lincoln. Sherman's path of destruction took on an even more destructive tone as he moved into the heart of the Confederacy in South Carolina in early 1865. The burning of Columbia, South Carolina, and subsequent capture of Charleston brought the hard hand of war to the birthplace of secession. With Grant's dogged pursuit of the Army of Northern Virginia, Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox Court House on April 9, 1865, effectively ending major Confederate military operations.

To ensure the permanent legal end of slavery, Republicans drafted the Thirteenth Amendment during the war. Yet the end of legal slavery did not mean the end of racial injustice. During the war, ex-slaves were often

Union soldiers pose in front of the Appomattox Court House after Lee's surrender in April 1865. Wikimedia.

segregated into disease-ridden contraband camps. After the war, the Republican Reconstruction program of guaranteeing black rights succumbed to persistent racism and southern white violence. Long after 1865, most black southerners continued to labor on plantations, albeit as nominally free tenants or sharecroppers, while facing public segregation and voting discrimination. The effects of slavery endured long after emancipation.

V. Conclusion

As battlefields fell silent in 1865, the question of secession had been answered, slavery had been eradicated, and America was once again territorially united. But in many ways, the conclusion of the Civil War created more questions than answers. How would the nation become one again? Who was responsible for rebuilding the South? What role would African Americans occupy in this society? Northern and southern soldiers returned home with broken bodies, broken spirits, and broken minds. Plantation owners had land but not labor. Recently freed African Americans had their labor but no land. Former slaves faced a world of possibilities—legal marriage, family reunions, employment, and fresh starts—but also a racist world of bitterness, violence, and limited opportunity. The war may have been over, but the battles for the peace were just beginning.

VI. Reference Material

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