

The Civil War

21.1 Introduction

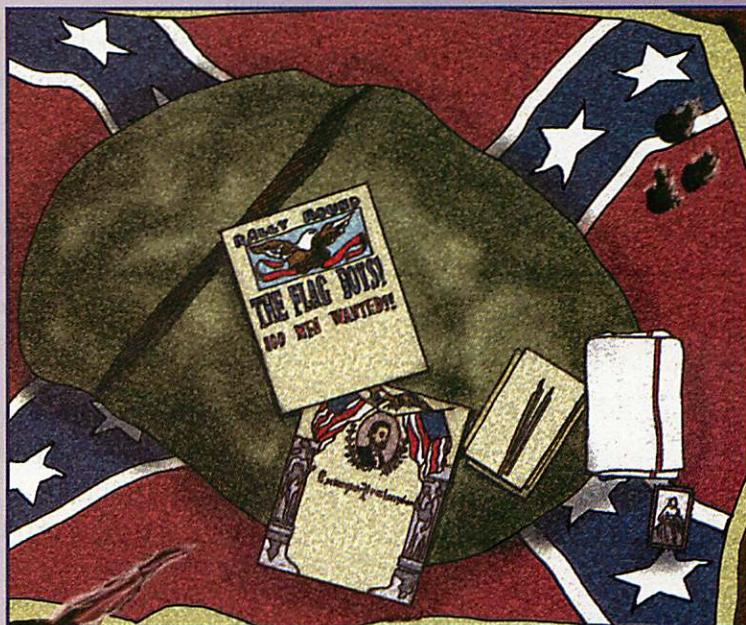
The cannon shells bursting over Fort Sumter ended months of confusion. The nation was at war. The time had come to choose sides.

For most whites in the South, the choice was clear. Early in 1861, representatives from six of the seven states that had seceded from the Union met to form a new nation called the Confederate States of America. Southerners believed that just as the states had once voluntarily joined the Union, they could voluntarily leave it now. The men who fought for the **Confederacy** were proud defenders of “Southern Rights” and “Southern Independence.”

For many northerners, the choice was just as clear. “There can be no neutrals in this war,” declared Stephen Douglas after Fort Sumter, “only patriots—and traitors.” Most northerners viewed the secession of southern states as traitorous acts of rebellion against the United States. They marched off to war eager to defend “Our Union! Our Constitution! and Our Flag!”

Choosing sides was harder for the eight slave states located between the Confederacy and the free states. Four of these “border states”—Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina—joined the Confederacy. The western counties of Virginia, however, remained loyal to the Union. Rather than fight for the South, they broke away to form a new state called West Virginia. The other four border states—Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri—remained in the Union, although many of their citizens fought for the South.

As Americans took sides, they began to see why a **civil war**—a conflict between two peoples in one country—is the most painful kind of war. This conflict divided not only states, but also families and friends. In this chapter, you will learn how this “brothers’ war” turned into the most destructive of all American wars. As you read, put yourself in the shoes of the men and women who were part of this long and tragic struggle.



Graphic Organizer: Annotated Illustration

You will use this illustration of a soldier’s haversack to understand the events and effects of the Civil War.



The Granger Collection, New York

This iron- and wireworks in Massachusetts was just one of many northern factories. Ninety percent of the nation's manufacturing was in the North.

21.2 Preparing for War

President Lincoln's response to the attack on Fort Sumter was quick and clear. He called for 75,000 volunteers to come forward to preserve the Union. At the same time, Jefferson Davis, the newly elected president of the Confederacy, called for volunteers to defend the South.

Both sides looked forward to a quick victory. "I cannot imagine that the South has resources for a long war or even a short one," said a Philadelphia lawyer. Southerners, on the other hand, believed they could easily whip any army Lincoln sent south. A North Carolina journalist boasted:

The army of the South will be composed of the best material that ever yet made up an army; while that of Lincoln will be gathered from the sewers of the cities...who will serve for pay and will run away as soon as danger threatens.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the North The North began the war with impressive strengths. It had a population of about 22 million people, compared to 9 million in the South. About 90 percent of the nation's manufacturing was in the North. The North also had more farms to provide food for Union troops.

For the first time in warfare, railroads were important for providing transportation. The North had about 21,000 miles of railroad track, compared to 9,000 in the South. The northern lines allowed movement to all parts of the country, including battle sites in the South. Most of the nation's banks and wealth in gold were in the North as well.

The greatest weakness of the North was its military leadership. At the start of the war, about one third of the nation's military officers resigned and returned to their homes in the South. Of those officers who remained in the North, many were too old to command a battlefield. During much of the war, Lincoln searched for effective military leaders who could lead the Union to victory.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the South When the war began, southerners also had reasons to be confident of victory. Unlike Union forces, southerners would be fighting a defensive war in their own territory. To win the war, the North would have to invade the South. Union troops would have to subdue people who were defending what they believed to be their liberty, honor, and traditions. The South, in contrast, could win simply by defending its territory until the North grew tired of fighting and decided to leave the Confederacy alone.

The South's great strength was its military leadership. Most of America's best military officers were southerners who chose to fight for the Confederacy. This was not an easy decision for many of them. Colonel Robert E. Lee, for example, was opposed to slavery and secession. But he decided that he could not fight against his native Virginia. Lee resigned from the U.S. Army to become the commander-in-chief of the Confederate forces.

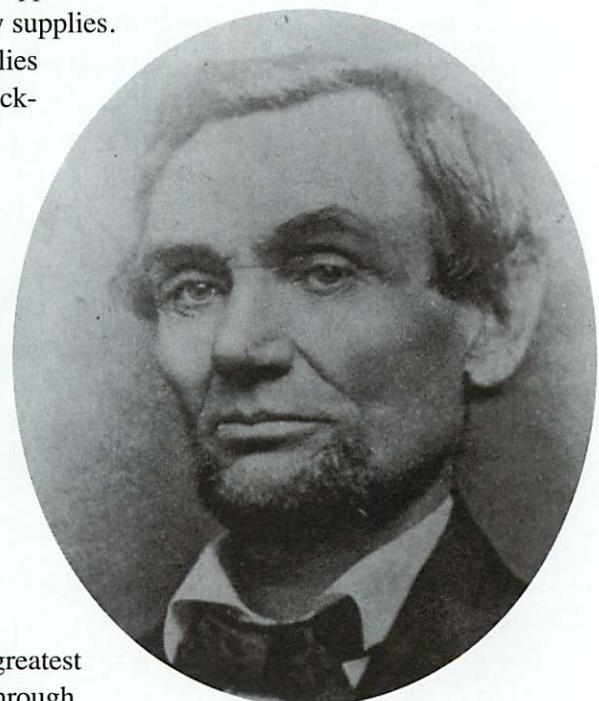
The South's main weakness was an economy that could not support a long war. It had few factories to produce guns and other military supplies. As long as southerners could trade cotton for weapons and supplies from Europe, this was not a problem. But when Union ships blockaded southern ports and cut off this trade, Confederate armies faced severe shortages.

The Confederacy also faced serious transportation problems. The South lacked the railroad network needed to haul goods over long distances. Most rail lines were short and went only to seaport towns. Supplies had to be carried by wagon from the railroad to the troops. And as the war dragged on, horses and mules to draw these wagons were in short supply.

Money might have helped solve these problems. But most wealth in the South was invested in land and slaves. The Confederate government printed paper money to finance the war effort. But as these paper dollars flooded the South, their value quickly dropped.

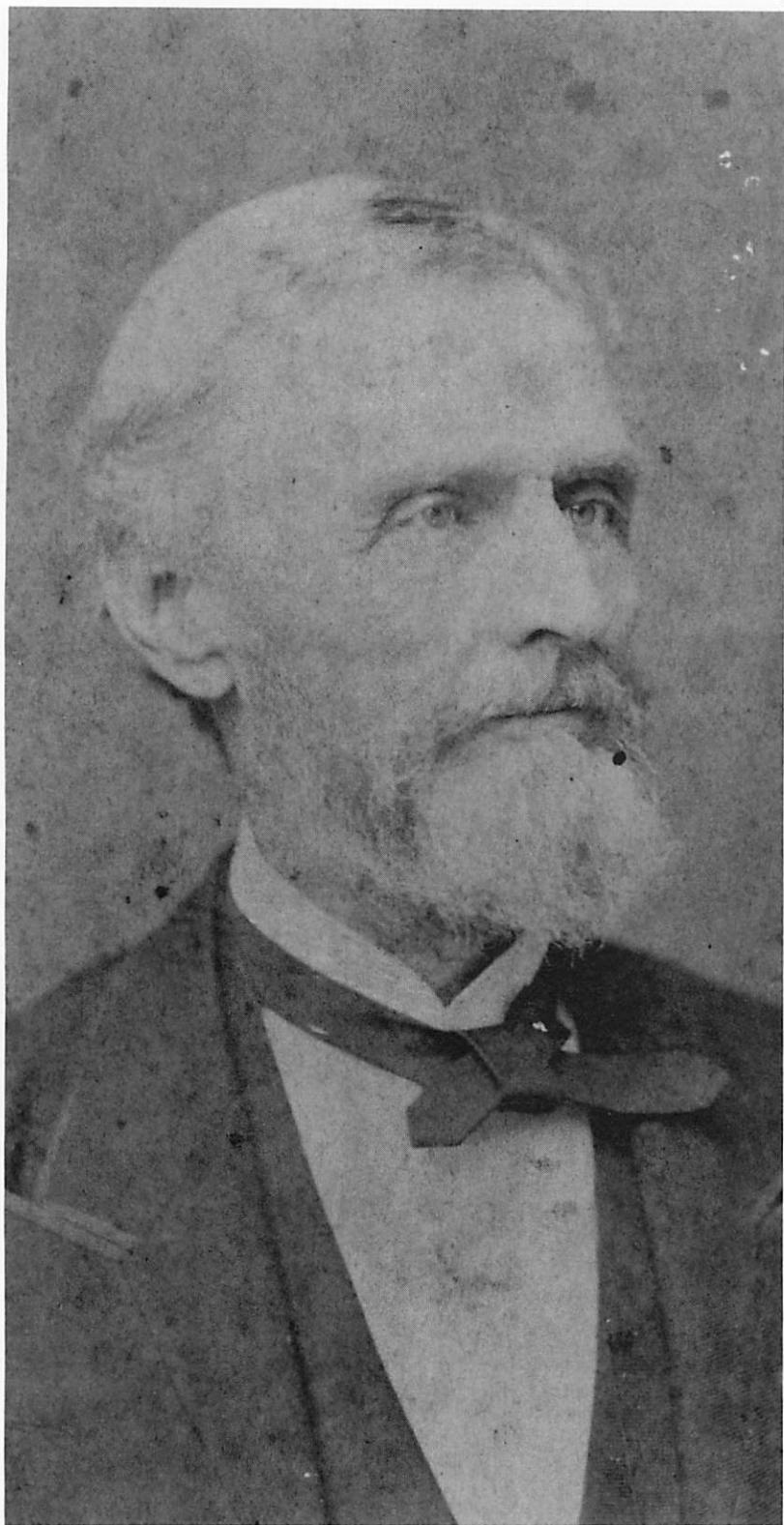
Abraham Lincoln versus Jefferson Davis The North's greatest advantage was its newly elected president, Abraham Lincoln. Through even the darkest days of the war, Lincoln never wavered from his goal of preserving the Union. Confederate president Jefferson Davis was equally devoted to the secessionist cause. But he was never able to form a strong, single nation out of 11 strongly independent states.

Abraham Lincoln was born in Kentucky on February 12, 1809. His family was poor, and his mother died while he was a young child. All in



Abraham Lincoln led the country during the Civil War. His devotion to the Union, patience, tolerance, and a sense of humor enabled the nation to survive this bloody conflict.

Jefferson Davis, trained at West Point, had little experience as a politician. When he was elected president of the Confederacy, he faced the difficult task of forming a new nation and preparing for war.



all, Lincoln figured that his schooling "did not amount to a year." It was enough, however, to excite a craving for knowledge. He read everything he could lay his hands on. "My best friend," he said, "is the man who'll get me a book I ain't read."

When Lincoln was 21, his family moved to Illinois. During the next few years, he held whatever jobs he could find—store clerk, rail-splitter, surveyor, postmaster. In the evenings, he read law books and eventually became a lawyer. Later, Lincoln served as a captain in the Black Hawk War. This was the only military experience Lincoln had before becoming president.

At six feet four inches tall, Lincoln towered above most other men. His dark, sunken eyes gave him a sad but kind appearance. In this case, looks did not lie. Lincoln was patient, thoughtful, and tolerant of others. He also possessed a good sense of humor. At moments of failure and frustration during the war, this sense of humor saved him from despair. "I laugh," he once said, "because if I didn't I would weep."

Like Lincoln, Jefferson Davis was born in Kentucky in a log cabin. He grew up on a small plantation in Mississippi. As a young man, he attended the military academy at West Point, New York. He then served as commander of the Mississippi Rifles in the Mexican War. Later that same year, he was selected to fill a term as U.S. senator from Mississippi.

Standing nearly six feet, Davis was a lean, intense person. Given his military experience, he had hoped to be chosen to command the armies of the Confederacy. Instead, he was elected president of the Confederate States. While Davis accepted this responsibility, he really did not enjoy politics. As Davis's wife said of her husband, "He did not know the arts of a politician and would not practice them if he understood."

Geography Challenge

The Civil War 1861–1865



1. Identify four interesting details on this map.
 2. Where did most battles take place: in Union states, in Confederate states, or in border states?
 3. In the early part of the war (1861–1862), which side won more battles? Why do you think this side was more successful?
 4. In the later part of the war (1863–1865), which side won more battles? Why do you think this side was more successful?



Rose Greenhow is shown here with her daughter. During her Washington parties, she collected valuable information about Union plans to attack Richmond. She passed this information on to Confederate leaders through coded messages such as the one below.

Washington, D.C., shouting, "On to Richmond!" These eager troops were watched carefully by an attractive young widow and Washington social leader named Rose O'Neal Greenhow.

Greenhow was a strong supporter of the southern cause. She used her friendship with government officials to learn just when and how the Union planned to attack Richmond. Her problem was to find some way to deliver this information to Confederate leaders without being discovered.

21.3 Bull Run: A Great Awakening

In the spring of 1861, President Lincoln and General Winfield Scott planned the Union's war strategy. Step one was to surround the South by land and sea to cut off its trade. Step two was to divide the Confederacy into sections so that one rebel region could not help another. Step three was to capture Richmond, Virginia, the capital of the Confederacy, and destroy the rebel government. Journalists called this strategy the "Anaconda Plan" because it resembled the crushing death grip of an anaconda snake.

Rose Greenhow's Dilemma Most northerners, however, believed that the war could be won with a single Union assault on Richmond. In 1861, thousands of volunteers poured into

The Battle of Bull Run On a hot July morning, long lines of soldiers marched out of Washington heading for Richmond. Their voices could be heard singing and cheering across the countryside. Parties of politicians and society folks followed the army, adding to the excitement. They had come along to see the end of the rebellion.

The troops would not have been so cheerful had they known what was waiting for them at Manassas, a small town on the way to Richmond. Rose Greenhow had managed to warn southern military leaders of Union plans. She had smuggled a coded note to them in the curls of a young girl. Southern troops were waiting for the Union forces as they approached Manassas. The two armies met at a creek known as Bull Run.

At first, Union victory looked certain. But Confederate general Thomas Jackson and his regiment of Virginians refused to give way. "Look," shouted South Carolina general Bernard Bee to his men, "there is Jackson with his Virginians, standing like a stone wall." Thus inspired by "Stonewall" Jackson's example, the rebel lines held firm until reinforcements arrived. Late that afternoon, Jackson urged his men to "yell like furies" as they charged the Union forces. The sound and fury of this charge unnerved the green (inexperienced) Union troops, who fled in panic back to Washington.

The Battle of Bull Run was a smashing victory for the South. For the North, it was a shocking blow. Lincoln and his generals now realized that ending the rebellion would not be easy. It was time to prepare for a long war.

Women Support the War Over the next year, both the North and the South worked to build and train large armies. As men went off to war, women took their places on the home front. Wives and mothers supported their families by running farms and businesses. Many women went to work for the first time in factories. Others found jobs as nurses, teachers, or government workers.

Women also served the military forces on both sides as messengers, guides, scouts, smugglers, soldiers, and spies. Rose Greenhow was arrested for spying shortly after the Battle of Bull Run. Although she was kept under guard in her Washington home, she continued to smuggle military secrets to the Confederates. The following year, Greenhow was allowed to move to the South, where President Jefferson Davis welcomed her as a hero.

Women also volunteered to help tend sick and wounded soldiers. Dorothea Dix was already well known for her efforts to improve the treatment of the mentally ill. She was appointed director of the Union army's nursing service. Dix insisted that all female nurses be over 30 years old, plain in appearance, physically strong, and willing to do unpleasant work. Her rules were so strict that she was known as "Dragon Dix."

While most nurses worked in military hospitals, Clara Barton followed Union armies into battle, tending troops where they fell. Later generations would remember Barton as the founder of the American Red Cross. To the soldiers she cared for during the war, she was "the angel of the battlefield."

During the Civil War, many women went to work in factories such as this munitions plant. They replaced men who were in the army.





For 12 hours, Confederate and Union forces fought at Antietam in what was the bloodiest day of the Civil War. Some of the 2,770 Confederate soldiers who died during this battle are shown in this photograph.

21.4 Antietam: A Bloody Affair

The Battle of Bull Run ended northerners' hopes for a quick victory. In the months that followed that sobering defeat, the Union began to put the Anaconda Plan into effect.

The Union Blockade In 1861, the Union navy launched its blockade of southern ports. By the end of the year, most southern ports were closed to foreign ships. As the blockade shut down its ports, the Confederacy asked Britain for help in protecting its ships. The British, however, refused this

request. As a result, the South could not export its cotton to Europe, nor could it import needed supplies.

Dividing the Confederacy Early in 1862, Union forces moved to divide the Confederacy by gaining control of the Mississippi River. In April, Union admiral David Farragut led 46 Union ships up the Mississippi River to New Orleans. This was the largest American fleet ever assembled. In the face of such overwhelming force, the city surrendered without firing a shot.

Meanwhile, Union forces headed by General Ulysses S. Grant began moving south toward the Mississippi from Illinois. In 1862, Grant won a series of victories that put Kentucky and much of Tennessee under Union control. A general of remarkable determination, Grant refused to accept any battle outcome other than unconditional (total) surrender. For this reason, U.S. Grant was known to his men as "Unconditional Surrender" Grant.

Attacking Richmond That same year, Union general George McClellan sent 100,000 men by ship to capture Richmond. Again, a Union victory seemed certain. But despite being outnumbered, Confederate forces stopped the Union attack in a series of well-fought battles. Once more, Richmond was saved.

The Battle of Antietam At this point, General Robert E. Lee, the commander of the Confederate forces, did the unexpected. He sent his troops across the Potomac River into Maryland, a slave state that remained in the Union. Lee hoped that this show of strength might persuade Maryland to join the Confederacy. He also hoped that a Confederate victory on Union soil would convince European nations to support the South.

On a crisp September day in 1862, Confederate and Union armies met near the little town of Sharpsburg along Antietam Creek. All day long,

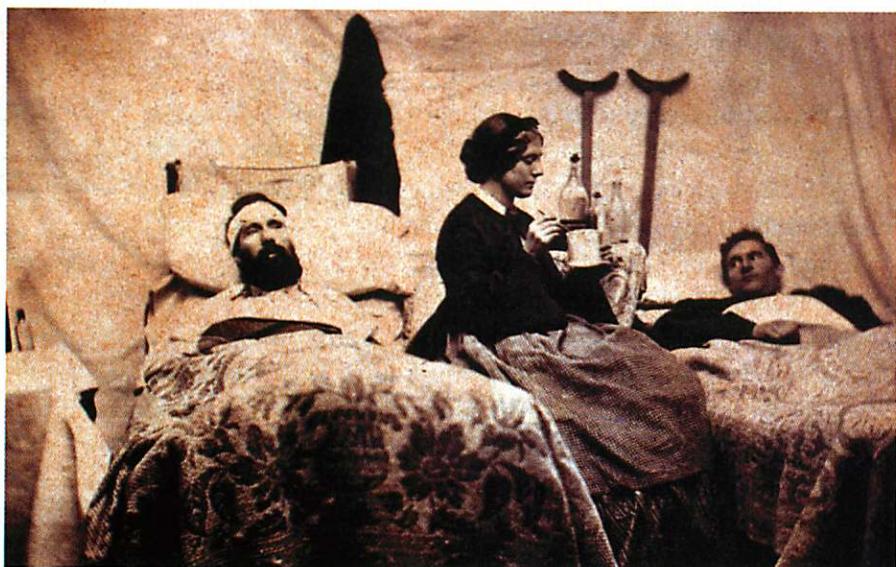
McClellan's troops pounded Lee's badly outnumbered forces. The following day, Lee pulled back to Virginia.

McClellan claimed Antietam as a Union victory. But many who fought there saw the battle as "a defeat for both armies." Of the 75,000 Union troops who fought at Antietam, about 2,100 were killed. Another 10,300 were wounded or missing. Of the 52,000 Confederates who fought at Antietam, about 2,770 lost their lives, while 11,000 were wounded or missing. In that single day of fighting, more Americans were killed than in the War of 1812 and the Mexican War combined. The Battle of Antietam was the bloodiest day of the war.

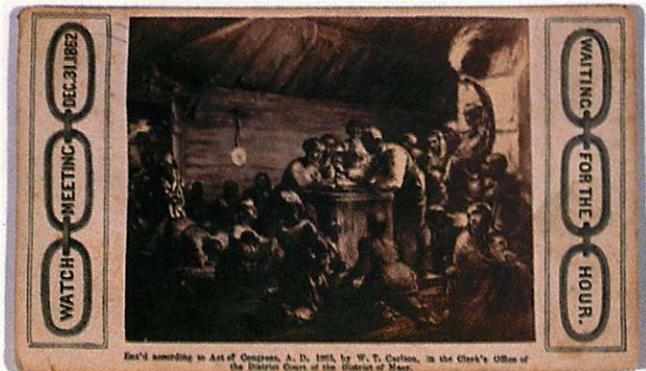
The New Realities of War The horrifying death toll at Antietam reflected the new realities of warfare. In past wars, battles had been won in hand-to-hand combat using bayonets. During the Civil War, improved weapons made killing at a distance much easier. Rifles, which replaced muskets, were accurate over long distances. Improved cannons and artillery also made it easier for armies to rain down death on forces some distance away. As a result, armies could meet, fight, bleed, and part without either side winning a clear victory.

Unfortunately, medical care was not as advanced as weaponry. Civil War doctors had no understanding of the causes of infections. Surgeons operated in dirty hospital tents with basic instruments. Few bothered to wash their hands between patients. As a result, infections spread rapidly from patient to patient. The hospital death rate was so awful that soldiers often refused medical care. An injured Ohio soldier wrote that he chose to return to battle rather than see a doctor, "thinking that I had better die by rebel bullets than Union Quackery [unskilled medical care]."

As staggering as the battle death tolls were, far more soldiers died of diseases than wounds. Unsanitary (unclean) conditions in army camps were so bad that about three men died of typhoid, pneumonia, and other diseases for every one who died in battle. As one soldier observed, "these big battles [are] not as bad as the fever."



Medical care was shockingly poor during the Civil War. Surgeries were performed without anesthetics. Thousands of soldiers died from infections or disease. Nevertheless, nurses performed heroically as they cared for the sick and wounded.



In this illustration, slaves are pictured waiting for the Emancipation Proclamation. While the proclamation had little immediate effect, it meant the Union was now fighting to end slavery.

emancipation: the act of freeing people from slavery

draft: a system for requiring citizens to join their country's armed forces

21.5 Gettysburg: A Turning Point

While neither side won the battle of Antietam, it was enough of a victory for Lincoln to take his first steps toward ending slavery.

When the Civil War began, Lincoln had resisted pleas from abolitionists to make **emancipation**, or the freeing of slaves, a reason for fighting the Confederacy. He himself opposed slavery. But the purpose of the war, he said, “is to save the Union, and is not either to save or destroy slavery.”

The Emancipation Proclamation As the war dragged on, Lincoln changed his mind. Declaring an end to slavery, he realized, would discourage Europeans who opposed slavery from assisting the Confederacy. Freeing slaves could also deprive the Confederacy of a large part of its workforce.

On January 1, 1863, President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. The proclamation, or formal order, declared slaves in all Confederate states to be free. This announcement had little immediate effect on slavery. The Confederate states simply ignored the document. Slaves living in states loyal to the Union were not affected by the proclamation.

Still, the Emancipation Proclamation changed the war from a fight to save the Union into a crusade for freedom. “The time came,” Lincoln said later, “when I felt that slavery must die [so] that the nation might live.”

The Draft Meanwhile, both the North and the South had run out of volunteers to fill their armies. In 1862, the Confederacy passed the nation’s first **draft** law. This law said that all white men aged 18 to 35 could be called for three years of military service. A year later, the North passed a similar law that drafted men aged 20 to 45.

Under both laws, a drafted man could avoid the army by paying a substitute to take his place. This provision led to charges that the conflict was “a rich man’s war and a poor man’s fight.”

The Battle of Gettysburg The need to pass draft laws was a sign that both sides were getting tired of war. Still, in the summer of 1863, Lee felt confident enough to risk another invasion of the North. He hoped to capture a northern city and help convince the weary North to seek peace.

Union and Confederate troops met on July 1, 1863, west of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. The Union troops, about 90,000 strong, were led by newly appointed General George C. Meade. After a brief skirmish, they occupied four miles of high ground along an area known as Cemetery Ridge. About a mile to the west, some 75,000 Confederate troops gathered behind Seminary Ridge.

The following day, the Confederates attempted to find weak spots in the Union position. But the Union lines held firm. On the third day, Lee ordered an all-out attack on the center of the Union line. Cannons filled

the air with smoke and thunder. George Pickett led 15,000 Confederate soldiers in a charge across the low ground separating the two forces.

Pickett's charge marked the northernmost point reached by southern troops during the war. But as the rebels pressed forward, Union gunners opened great holes in their advancing lines. Those brave men who managed to make their way to Cemetery Ridge were struck down by Union troops in hand-to-hand combat.

The losses at Gettysburg were staggering. More than 17,500 Union soldiers and 23,000 Confederate troops were killed or wounded in three days of battle. Lee, who lost about a third of his army, withdrew to Virginia. From this point on, he would only wage a defensive war on southern soil.

Opposition on the Union Home Front Despite the victory at Gettysburg, Lincoln faced a number of problems on the home front. One was opposition to the war itself. A group of northern Democrats were far more interested in restoring peace than in saving the Union or ending slavery. Republicans called these Democrats "Copperheads" after a poisonous snake with that name.

Other northerners opposed the war because they were sympathetic to the Confederate cause. When a pro-slavery mob attacked Union soldiers marching through Maryland, Lincoln sent in troops to keep order. He also used his constitutional power to suspend, or temporarily discontinue, the right of **habeas corpus**. During the national emergency, citizens no longer had the right to a trial before being jailed. People who were suspected of disloyalty were jailed without trial.

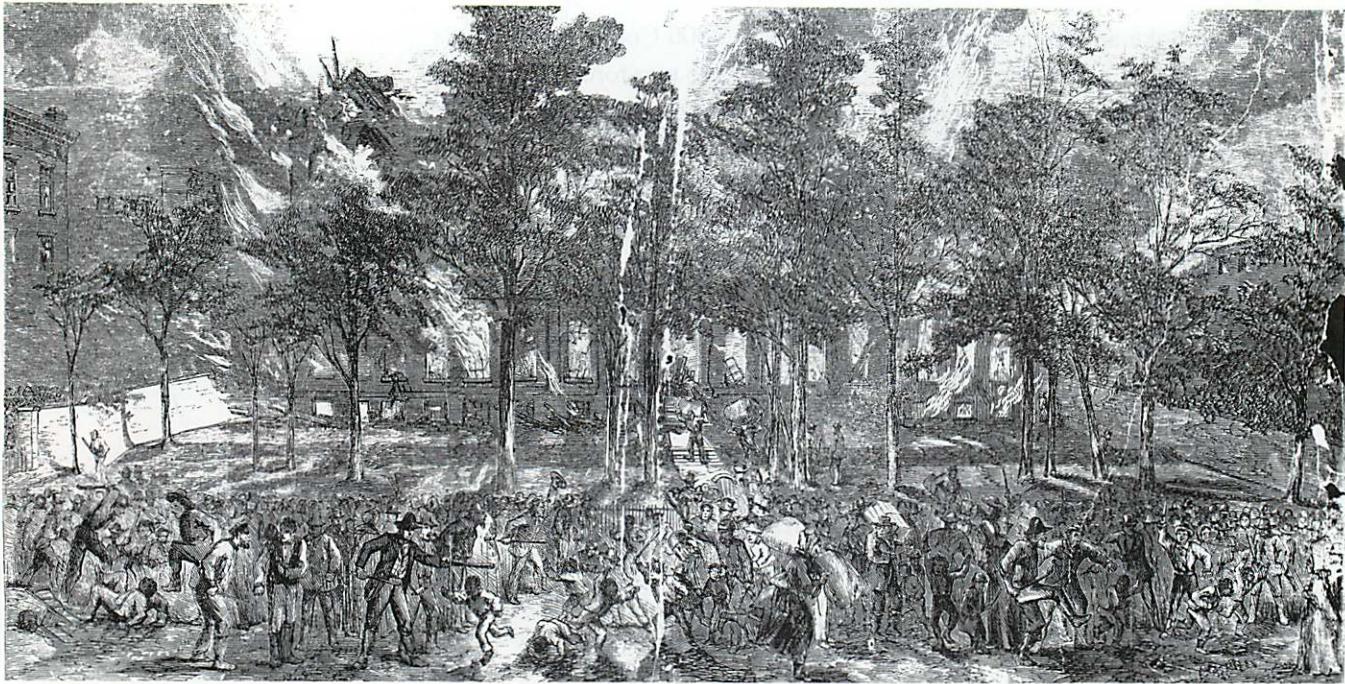
Draft Riots The Union draft law was passed just two months after Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. It also created opposition to the war. Some northerners resented being forced to fight to end slavery. Others protested that the new law "converts the Republic into one grand military dictatorship."

When the federal government began calling up men in July 1863, a riot broke out in New York City. For four days, crowds of angry white New

habeas corpus: a written order from a court that gives a person the right to a trial before being jailed

On July 3, 1863, General George Pickett led 15,000 Confederate troops in a charge against the Union lines. Row after row of Confederate soldiers fell under a rain of bullets until they finally retreated.





During the draft riots, white workers attacked free blacks. The whites feared African Americans would take their jobs and resented being forced to fight a war to end slavery. Almost 100 African Americans died during the four days of riots.

Yorkers burned draft offices and battled police. But their special targets were African Americans. Almost 100 black New Yorkers died as mobs attacked black boardinghouses, a black church, and a black orphanage. The rioting finally stopped when troops fresh from Gettysburg restored order.

Lincoln's Gettysburg Address Four months after the draft riots, President Lincoln traveled to Gettysburg. Thousands of the men who died there had been buried in a new cemetery overlooking the battlefield. Lincoln was among those invited to speak at the dedication of this new burial ground.

After an hour-long talk by another speaker, Lincoln rose and spoke a few words. Many of the 15,000 people gathered on Cemetery Ridge could not hear what he had to say. But the nation would never forget Lincoln's Gettysburg Address.

The president reminded his audience that the war was testing whether a nation "conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal...can long endure." He spoke of those who had died defending that ideal.

"The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here," he said, "but it can never forget what they did here." Finally, the president called on Americans to remain

dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

21.6 Vicksburg: A Besieged City

The Civil War was a war of many firsts for both sides. It was the first American war to use railroads to move troops and to keep them supplied. It was the first war in which telegraphs were used to communicate with distant armies. It was the first conflict to be recorded in photographs. It was also the first to see combat between armor-plated steamships.

The Granger Collection, New York

The Merrimac and the

Monitor Early in the war, Union forces withdrew from the navy yard in Norfolk, Virginia. They left behind a warship named the *Merrimac*. The Confederacy began the war with no navy. They covered the wooden *Merrimac* with iron plates and added a powerful ram to its prow.

In response, the U.S. Navy built its own ironclad ship. Completed in less than 100 days, the *Monitor* had a flat deck and two heavy guns in a revolving turret. It was said to resemble a “cheese box on a raft.”

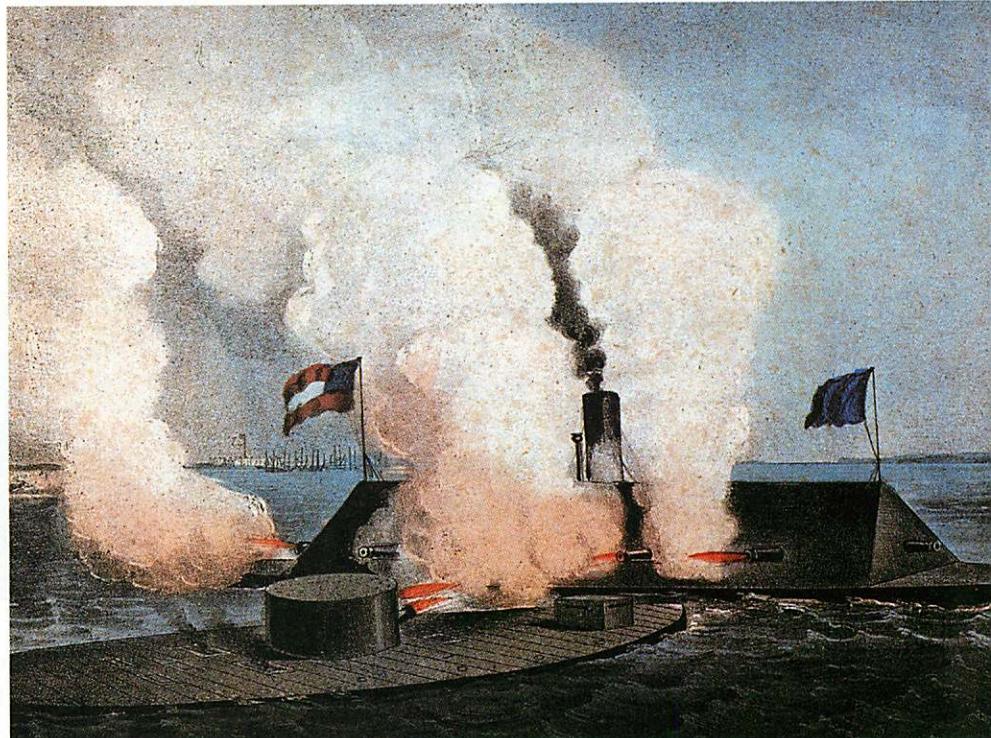
In March 1862, the *Merrimac*, which the Confederates had renamed the *Virginia*, steamed into Chesapeake Bay. With cannonballs harmlessly bouncing off its sides, the iron monster destroyed three wooden ships and threatened the entire blockade fleet.

The next morning, the *Virginia* was met by the *Monitor*. The two ironclads exchanged shots for four hours before withdrawing. Neither could claim victory, and neither was harmed.

The battle of the *Merrimac* and the *Monitor* proved that “wooden vessels cannot contend with iron-clad ones.” After that, both sides added ironclads to their navies. But the South was never able to build enough ships to threaten the Union blockade of southern harbors.

Control of the Mississippi Ironclads were also part of the Union’s campaign to divide the South by taking control of the Mississippi River. After seizing New Orleans in 1862, Admiral Farragut moved up the Mississippi to capture Baton Rouge and Natchez. At the same time, other Union ships gained control of Memphis, Tennessee.

The Union now controlled both ends of the Mississippi. The South could no longer move men or material up and down the river. But neither could the North as long as the Confederates continued to control one key location—Vicksburg, Mississippi.



In 1862, the *Monitor* and the *Merrimac*, two ironclad ships, fought to a standstill. Nevertheless, the battle between the two signaled the end of wooden warships.



For more than a month, Union forces bombarded Vicksburg with an average of 2,800 shells a day. Forced to eat horses, mules, dogs, and rats, the defenders finally surrendered.

into the hillsides for protection. To survive, they ate horses, mules, and bread made of corn and dried peas. “It had the properties of India rubber,” said one Confederate soldier, “and was worse than leather to digest.”

Low on food and supplies, Vicksburg surrendered on July 4, 1863. The Mississippi was a Union waterway, and the Confederacy was divided.

Problems on the Confederate Home Front As the war raged on, life in the South became grim. Because of the blockade, imported goods disappeared from stores. What few items were available were extremely expensive.

Unable to sell their tobacco and cotton, farmers planted food crops instead. Still, the South was often hungry. Invading Union armies destroyed crops. They also cut rail lines, making it difficult to move food and supplies to southern cities and army camps.

As clothing wore out, southerners made do with patches and rough, homespun cloth. At the beginning of the war, Mary Boykin Chesnut had written in her journal of well-dressed Confederate troops. By 1863, she was writing of soldiers dressed in “rags and tags.”

By 1864, southern troops were receiving letters like this one: “We haven’t got nothing in the house to eat but a little bit o’ meal. I don’t want to you to stop fighting them Yankees...but try and get off and come home and fix us all up some.” Many soldiers found it hard to resist such pleas, even if going home meant deserting their units.

Vicksburg The town of Vicksburg was located on a bluff above a hairpin turn in the Mississippi River. The city was easy to defend and difficult to capture. Whoever held Vicksburg could, with a few well-placed cannons, control movement on the Mississippi. But even Farragut had to admit that ships “cannot crawl up hills 300 feet high.” An army would be needed to take Vicksburg.

In May 1863, General Grant battled his way to Vicksburg with the needed army. For six weeks, Union gunboats shelled the city from the river while Grant’s army bombarded it from land. Slowly but surely, the Union troops burrowed toward the city in trenches and tunnels.

As shells pounded the city, people in Vicksburg dug caves

21.7 Fort Wagner: African Americans

Join the War

Early in the war, abolitionists had urged Congress to recruit African Americans for the army. But at first, most northerners regarded the conflict as “a white man’s war.” Congress finally opened the door to black recruits in 1862. About 186,000 African Americans, many of them former slaves, enlisted in the Union army. Another 30,000 African Americans joined the Union navy.

The Massachusetts 54th Regiment Massachusetts was one of the first states to organize black regiments. The most famous was the 54th Massachusetts Infantry, commanded by Colonel Robert Gould Shaw. Two of the 54th Infantry’s 1,000 soldiers were sons of Frederick Douglass.

The men of the Massachusetts 54th were paid less than white soldiers. When the black soldiers learned this, they protested the unequal treatment by refusing to accept any pay at all. In a letter to Lincoln, Corporal James Henry Gooding asked, “Are we soldiers or are we laborers?...We have done a soldier’s duty. Why can’t we have a soldier’s pay?” At Lincoln’s urging, Congress finally granted black soldiers equal pay.

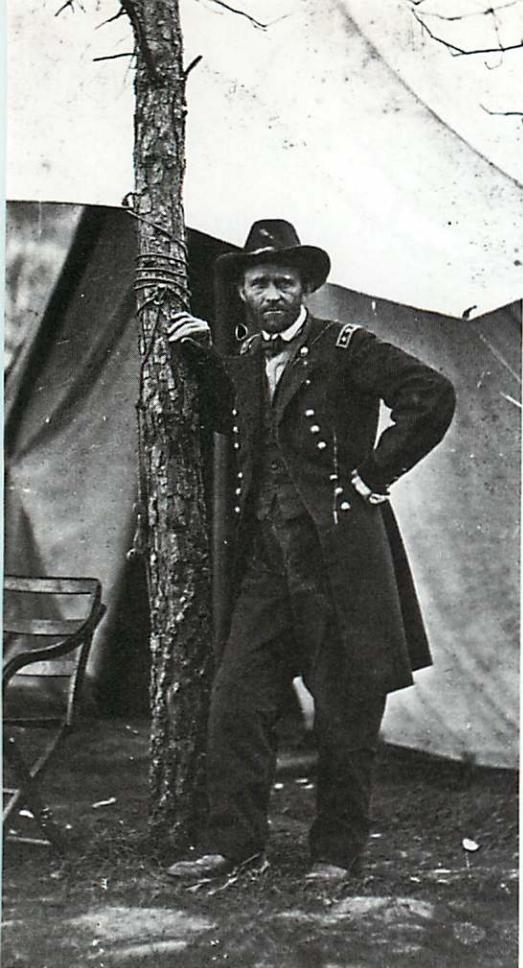
After three months of training, the Massachusetts 54th was sent to South Carolina to take part in an attack on Fort Wagner. As they prepared for battle, the men of the 54th faced the usual worries of untested troops. But they also faced the added fear that if captured, they might be sold into slavery.

African Americans at War The assault on Fort Wagner was an impossible mission. To reach the fort, troops had to cross 200 yards of open, sandy beach. Rifle and cannon fire poured down on them. After losing nearly half of their men, the survivors of the 54th regiment pulled back. But their bravery won them widespread respect.

During the war, 166 African American regiments fought nearly 500 battles. Black soldiers often received little training, poor equipment, and less pay than white soldiers. They also risked death or enslavement if captured. Still, African Americans fought with great courage to save the Union and to end slavery forever.

African American soldiers demonstrated their courage during their attack on Fort Wagner. The 54th Massachusetts Infantry charged across 200 yards of open beach in their effort to reach the fort. The regiment withdrew after almost half of their men were lost.





In 1864, Lincoln gave command of all Union forces to Ulysses S. Grant. Grant believed in using his larger army to wear down the enemy regardless of the casualties that his own forces suffered.

21.8 Appomattox: Total War Brings an End

During the first years of the war, Lincoln had searched for a commander who was willing to fight the Confederates. None of his commanders caused him more frustration than George McClellan. After the failure of the Union army at the Battle of Bull Run, General McClellan continued to train his force, but refused to risk them in battle. When his patience had reached its limits, Lincoln wrote the following letter:

My dear McClellan:

*If you are not using the army,
I should like to borrow
it for a while.*

Yours respectfully,
A. Lincoln

Grant Takes Charge The president finally found the leader he needed in General Grant. Grant's views on war were quite straightforward: "The art of war is simple enough. Find out where your enemy is. Get at him as soon as you can. Strike him as hard and as often as you can, and keep moving on."

Using this strategy, Grant mapped out a plan for ending the war. He would lead a large force against Lee to capture Richmond. At the same time, General William Tecumseh Sherman would lead a second army into Georgia to take Atlanta.

On to Richmond In May 1864, Grant invaded Virginia with a force of more than 100,000 men. They met Lee's army of 60,000 in a dense forest known as "The Wilderness." In two days of fierce fighting, Grant lost 18,000 men. Despite these heavy losses, Grant would not retreat. "I propose to fight it out along this line," he said, "if it takes all summer." He followed Lee's army to Cold Harbor, where he lost 7,000 men in 15 minutes of fighting.

By the time the two forces reached Petersburg, a railroad center 20 miles south of Richmond, Grant's losses almost equaled Lee's entire army. But he was able to reinforce his army with fresh troops. Lee, who had also suffered heavy losses, could not.

Total War Grant believed in total war—war on the enemy's will to fight and its ability to support an army. With his army tied down in northern Virginia, Grant ordered General Philip Sheridan to wage total war in Virginia's grain-rich Shenandoah Valley. "Let that valley be so left that crows flying over it will have to carry their rations long with them," ordered Grant.

In May 1864, General Sherman left Tennessee for Georgia with orders to inflict "all the damage you can against their war resources." In September, he reached Atlanta, the South's most important rail and manufacturing center. His army set the city ablaze.

The Reelection of Lincoln Any hope of victory for the South lay in the defeat of President Lincoln in the election of 1864. The northern Democrats nominated General George McClellan to run against Lincoln. Knowing that the North was weary of war, McClellan urged an immediate end to the conflict.

During most of the campaign, Lincoln doubted he would be reelected. Grant seemed stuck in northern Virginia. The large numbers of casualties suffered by his forces appalled many voters. Worse yet, there was no end to the conflict in sight.

Luckily for Lincoln, Sheridan's destruction of the Shenandoah Valley and Sherman's capture of Atlanta came just in time to rescue his campaign. These victories changed northern views of Lincoln and his prospects for ending the war. Lincoln was reelected in November 1864 and inaugurated the following March.

Sherman's March through Georgia After burning Atlanta, Sherman marched his army toward Savannah, promising to "make Georgia howl." His purpose was to destroy the last untouched supply base for the Confederacy.

During Sherman's march through Georgia, his troops destroyed everything they found of value. Fields were trampled or burned. Houses were ransacked (robbed). Hay and food supplies were burned. Roads were lined with dead horses, hogs, and cattle that his troops could not eat or carry away. Everything useful in a 60-mile-wide path was destroyed.

In December 1864, Sherman captured Savannah, Georgia. From there, he turned north and destroyed all opposition in the Carolinas. Marching 425 miles in 50 days, he reached Raleigh, North Carolina, by March 1865. There he waited for Grant's final attack on Richmond.

The End at Appomattox For nine months, Grant's forces battered Lee's army at Petersburg, the gateway to Richmond. On April 1, 1865, the Union forces finally broke through Confederate lines to capture the city. Two days later, Union troops marched into Richmond.

General Sherman, a believer in total war, cut a path of destruction through Georgia. The photograph below shows the burned ruins of Atlanta.





General Lee surrendered to General Grant at Appomattox Courthouse in Virginia. Grant was generous to Lee's soldiers, sending food to the troops and allowing them to keep their horses and mules.

Grant's soldiers moved quickly to surround Lee's army. Lee told his officers, "There is nothing left for me to do but go and see General Grant, and I would rather die a thousand deaths."

A Noble Surrender On April 9, 1865, General Lee, in full dress uniform, arrived at Wilmer McLean's house in the village of Appomattox Courthouse. He was there to surrender his army to General Grant. The Union general met him in a mud-splattered and crumpled uniform.

Grant's terms of surrender were generous. Confederate soldiers were to be allowed to go home if they promised to fight no longer. They could take with them their own horses and mules, which they would need for spring plowing. Officers could keep their swords and weapons. Grant also ordered that food be sent to Lee's half-starved men. Lee accepted the terms.

As Lee returned to his headquarters, Union troops began to shoot their guns and cheer wildly. Grant told them to stop celebrating. "The war is over," he said, "the rebels are our countrymen again."

The Costs of War The bloodiest war in the nation's history had ended at last. The Union had been saved and slavery abolished—but at horrifying costs. Billions of dollars had been spent on the conflict. Almost every family had lost a member, a relative, or a friend. More than 620,000 Union and Confederate soldiers lay dead in their graves. Thousands more came home missing an arm or a leg. In addition, the South had been devastated.

For President Lincoln, the end of the war was a happy day. "Thank god I have lived to see this," he said. "I have been living a nightmare for four years, and now the nightmare is over."

21.9 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, you read about the Civil War between the Union and the Confederacy. You used an annotated illustration of a soldier's haversack to help you understand the events and effects of the Civil War.

Both sides had advantages and disadvantages going into the war. The North had a larger population and more factories and railroads than the South, but it lacked strong military leadership. The South had serious economic problems, but it had capable generals and the advantage of fighting a defensive war.

New weapons and military tactics allowed soldiers to kill from greater distances. They also caused horrifying numbers of deaths and casualties. Unfortunately, medical knowledge was not as advanced as the weapons of war. Infection and disease spread rapidly through field hospital tents. More soldiers died of diseases than wounds, by a ratio of three to one.

After the Battle of Antietam, President Lincoln decided to issue his Emancipation Proclamation, freeing all slaves in the Confederacy. The proclamation helped to make the war a fight to end slavery.

As the war dragged on, both the Union and the Confederacy had to pass draft laws to gather more troops. Everyone wanted the war to be over. The defeat of Lee at Gettysburg ended the South's last attempt to invade the North. It proved to be a turning point.

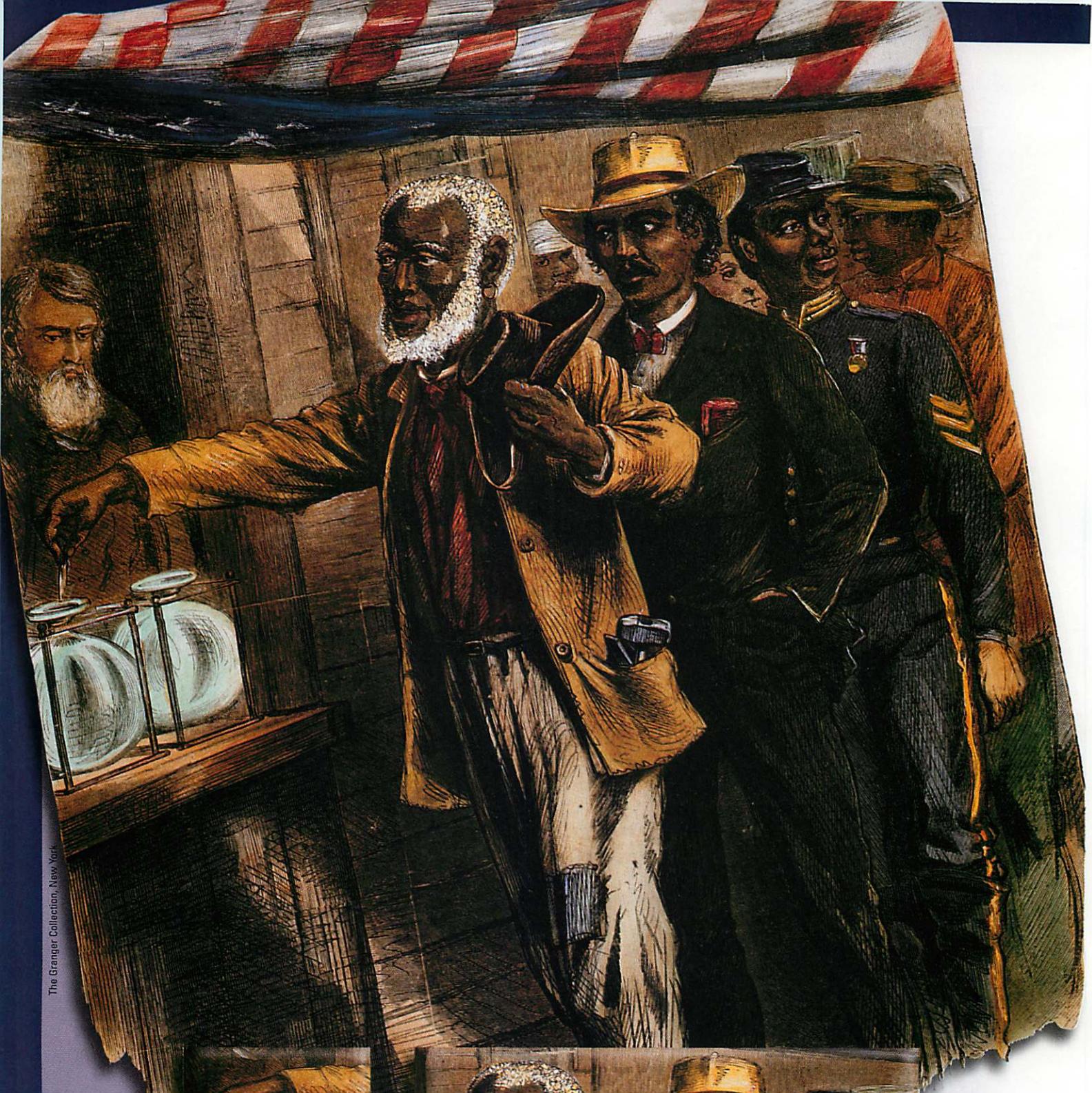
President Lincoln finally found the leader he'd been looking for in General Grant. Grant began waging total war on the Confederacy. Union soldiers marched through the South, burning fields and houses and terrifying all those in their path.

When the Union army surrounded Confederate troops at Appomattox Courthouse, General Lee was forced to surrender. Grant was generous to the southern troops. He fed them and sent them home to rebuild their lives.

The rebellion had ended. The time had come to rebuild. In the next chapter, you will read about how the country tried to become whole again.



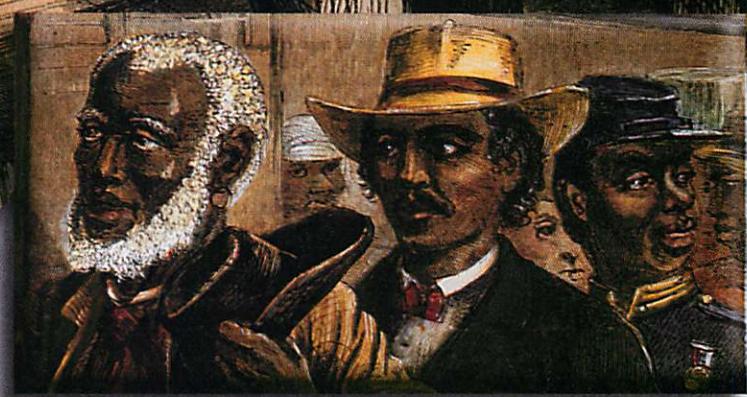
This painting, *End of the Rebellion in the United States*, 1865, celebrates the conclusion of the Civil War and the preservation of the Union.



The Granger Collection, New York



What is this man doing?



How are the lives of these former slaves different now?