

3 The Call to Arms

Section Focus

Key Terms antiseptic ■ anesthetic

Main Idea By calling out the state militias, Lincoln forced the border states to choose sides. Both North and South prepared for war.

Objectives As you read, look for answers to these questions:

1. What were the strengths and weaknesses of each side?
2. How did geography affect each side's strategy for fighting the war?
3. What roles did women have in the war?

A week after Major Anderson surrendered at Fort Sumter, Mary Chesnut, wife of a Confederate officer, sat down to write in her diary. "I have been sitting idly today," she wrote, "looking out upon this beautiful lawn, wondering if this can be the same world I was in a few days ago."

Indeed, the battle at Fort Sumter had shattered the springtime calm. The four years of war that followed would destroy one America and witness the building of another. Few that spring of 1861, however, recognized how great a trauma the nation was about to face. Northerners and southerners alike were confident that the war would last only two or three months.

LINCOLN CALLS OUT THE MILITIA

On April 15, 1861, President Lincoln called on the states to provide 75,000 militiamen for 90 days to put down the insurrection in the South. The call to arms was as exhilarating as a thunderstorm breaking the sultriness of a hot day. Northerners responded with energy, even gaiety, to Lincoln's command to muster Union forces. A young Illinois recruit wrote, "It is worth everything to live in this time." One woman wrote, "It seems as if we never were alive till now; never had a country till now." In Washington, D.C., an office worker named Clara Barton took a pistol, put up a target, and blazed away.

Throughout the North, volunteers hastened to sign up. The border states, however, responded with anger and defiance. The governor of Kentucky telegraphed, "Kentucky will furnish no troops for the wicked purpose of subduing her sister southern states." In the days that followed Lincoln's demand, Virginia, North Carolina, Ten-

nessee, and Arkansas voted to secede and join the Confederacy.

With Virginia on its side, the South had a much better chance for victory. Virginia was wealthy and populous. Just as important, it was also the home of Robert E. Lee. A brave and able leader, Lee had been Lincoln's choice for commander of the Union army. When Virginia seceded, Lee resigned from the United States Army and joined the Confederacy. He wrote, "Save in defense of my native state I have no desire ever again to draw my sword." He soon found himself the commanding general of the Confederate forces.

"Save in defense of my native state I have no desire ever again to draw my sword."

—Robert E. Lee, 1861

In May 1861, the Confederate Congress voted to set up its capital in Richmond, Virginia. This was a gesture of defiance, since Richmond stood only 100 miles from Washington, D.C.

CHOOSING SIDES

Both sides understood that the border states would play a key role in the war's outcome. From the Union's point of view, the most important of the border states was Maryland. If Maryland seceded, then Washington, D.C., would be cut off from the North. The Confederates might then capture the President and destroy the government. Determined to keep Maryland within the Union,

President Lincoln ordered the arrest of secessionist lawmakers in Baltimore. The remaining members of the Maryland legislature voted to stay neutral and to remain in the Union.

Federal troops helped a block of western counties break away from Virginia. These counties formed the state of West Virginia and returned to the Union. Delaware and Missouri also voted to side with the the Union. Kentucky declared itself neutral, but a Confederate invasion later prompted it to join the Union.

In the border states, war wrenched families apart. This tragedy reached even into the White House. Mary Lincoln, wife of the President, had four brothers and three brothers-in-law fighting for the South. Senator John Crittenden of Kentucky, who had labored so intently for a last-minute compromise, had one son who became a Confederate general and another who became a Union general.

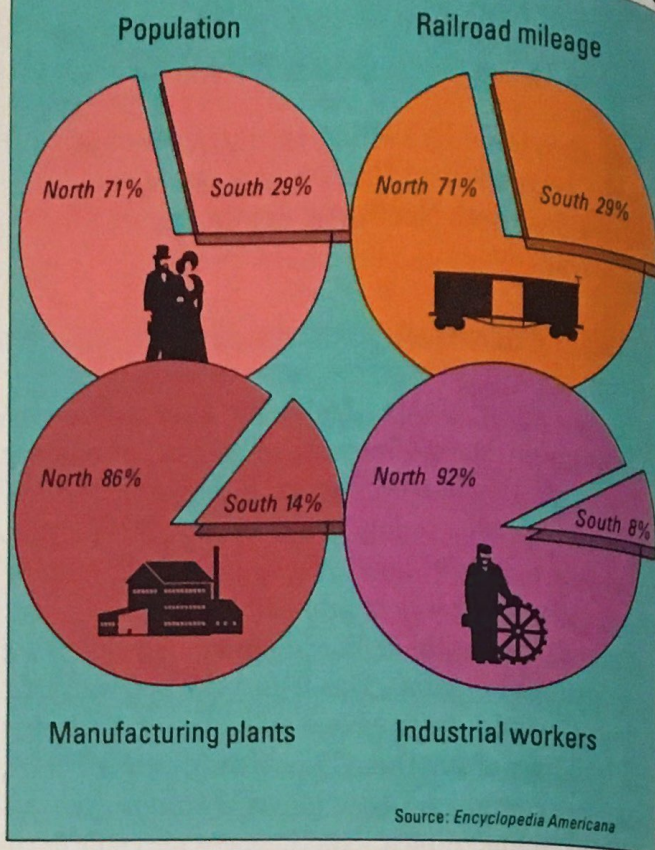
STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF EACH SIDE

On the face of it, the Union had overwhelming advantages. It had a population of 22 million. The Confederacy had 9.5 million, of whom 3.5 million were slaves. The Union had most of the mineral deposits—iron, coal, copper, and other precious metals. A full 86 percent of the nation’s manufacturing plants were located in the North. The North had 2.5 times the railroad mileage of the South. Almost every ship in the navy—90 of them—stayed with the Union. The war started just as the first phase of the Industrial Revolution was ending. For the North, the demands of the war hastened the development of a new phase of the Industrial Revolution. This phase would be characterized by steel production and the development of heavy industry.

Wealth alone, however, will not win a war. The Union’s greatest asset would turn out to be Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln was able to convince the North that the survival of democracy and freedom depended on preserving the Union. “Every war has its political no less than its military side,” one historian has written. “Lincoln’s genius was the management of the political side.”

The Confederacy began the war with better generals. One-third of the career officers in the

UNION AND CONFEDERATE RESOURCES, 1860



GRAPH SKILLS

These pie graphs show the overwhelming advantage the Union’s greater population and industrialization gave it. What percentage of Americans lived in the North? **CRITICAL THINKING** How might the North’s railways and factories have helped its armies?

United States Army resigned to join the Confederacy. These officers, most of whom had been trained at West Point, had experience fighting in the Mexican War. Foremost among them was Robert E. Lee.

The Confederacy had another advantage. It would be fighting a defensive war. “All we ask is to be let alone,” Jefferson Davis said. An invading army is usually at a disadvantage. Invaders generally have less will to fight than soldiers defending their homes. Furthermore, maintaining the supply lines of an invading army takes great resources.

“All we ask is to be let alone.”
—Jefferson Davis, 1861

Although the Confederate soldiers never lost a battle for want of ammunition, other needs such as food and clothing were often in short supply. At times the southerners appeared to live only on spirit and courage. Well into the war a Union officer wrote, "How such men as the rebel troops can fight as they do; that, filthy, sick, hungry and miserable, they should prove such heroes in fight, is past explanation."

GEOGRAPHY AND STRATEGY

The two sides entered the war with different war aims and thus different strategies. The North aimed at reuniting the country. At first, Lincoln hoped to bring the South to terms by economic suffocation. He thus immediately declared a blockade of its coast and made plans to seize Confederate strongholds along the Mississippi River.

The South, in contrast, aimed only at remaining independent. As historian James M. McPherson has pointed out, "The South could 'win' the war by not losing; the North could win only by winning." Thus the South would avoid large-scale battles even if this meant giving up territory. Southern leaders hoped that just as Britain finally gave up trying to subdue its rebellious American colonies, the North would soon tire of the war and accept southern independence.

The Confederate strategy also depended on King Cotton as a way to win foreign support. When the war broke out, southern planters withheld cotton from the world market. By doing so, they hoped to force France and Britain to aid the Confederate cause in order to keep European cotton mills running. But in 1861 Europe had a stockpile of cotton, and this southern strategy failed. By the next year southern planters were again selling cotton—if they could get it through the Union blockade. For the remainder of the war they would seek, but in vain, for European support of their cause.

Before long, both North and South moved away from their cautious strategies and looked for decisive victories on the battlefield. This happened for several reasons. Public opinion on both sides demanded action to win the war in one fell swoop. In addition, the North came to believe that only destruction of the southern armies could force a

Confederate surrender. The South, meanwhile, looked to military conquests to wreck northern morale and impress neutral Europe.

Much of the fighting took place on two fronts along the Confederacy's northern border, which stretched from Virginia to Arkansas. The eastern front lay primarily east of the Appalachian Mountains, and the western front lay between the Mississippi River and the Appalachians. Fighting also took place at sea and along the 3,500 miles of Confederate coast.

On the eastern front, the Confederate armies blocked the major routes southward. They were encamped in the Shenandoah Valley of central Virginia and on Virginia's coastal uplands.

On the western front, the main access to the South was by river. Union forces were based at Cairo, Illinois, at the crucial junction of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. Not far away were the mouths of the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers. These rivers led into one of the most productive regions of the Confederacy. Here grain was grown, mules and horses bred, and iron produced. Much of the war on the western front would focus on the struggle for control of this region.

THE TWO ARMIES

In 1861 the Union was completely unprepared for war. The volunteer militias were enthusiastic but untrained. Many of them were city residents who had never ridden a horse or fired a gun. In contrast, the southern militias had begun organizing several months before Fort Sumter. The Confederate volunteers were used to outdoor life. They knew how to handle both horses and guns.

When the war started, there were no standards for uniforms. Companies and regiments came dressed as their women had outfitted them. This caused confusion on battlefields because troops were not always certain who was friend or foe. As the war progressed, textile mills on each side began to turn out uniforms—dark blue for the Union and gray for the Confederates.

The great slayer of each army was not bullets but the microbes of disease and infection. By the end of the war, roughly 140,000 Union soldiers had been killed in action or died of wounds, while more than 220,000 died of disease and other causes. Few



Mathew Brady used a new invention, the camera, to record hundreds of powerful scenes during the Civil War. This photograph shows a Union soldier from Pennsylvania whose family has joined him in camp. **HISTORY** What false impression might have led families to stay together in the early stages of the war?

doctors knew that cleanliness prevented infection, and **antiseptics**—germ-killing substances—were unknown. **Anesthetics**, or pain-killers, were also rare. Most soldiers endured amputations and other operations by “biting the bullet.”

WOMEN IN THE WAR

As men in the North and South enlisted in militias, the women too prepared for war. Few provisions had been made for the health and general welfare of the soldiers. Women volunteered to do what the governments would not or could not do.

Hundreds of thousands of women in the North and South organized aid societies. They raised funds for the war and produced bandages and clothing for the soldiers. Clara Barton, one such woman, labored as a one-person aid society throughout the war. (After the war, Barton founded the American Red Cross.) Thousands of other women went to the front. Many of these women, as in wars past, accompanied their husbands in order to cook and care for them. At least 600 Union soldiers were women who passed as men until illness or death revealed their disguise.

The women of the Soldiers’ Aid Societies also formed the backbone of the Union’s Sanitary Commission. The purpose of the Sanitary Commission

was to coordinate the efforts of the aid societies and to further the war effort in every respect. It was organized with the help of Elizabeth Blackwell, the nation’s first woman doctor. Over the army’s objections, the government allowed the Sanitary Commission to inspect and advise camps and hospitals.

The Sanitary Commission was so effective that it became a distinct advantage to the Union. Its national officers, paid agents, and inspectors were men. Supporting them were the women volunteers who raised money, sent supplies to the



BIOGRAPHY

CLARA BARTON (1821–1912) was known as the “Angel of the Battlefield” for her nursing work with the wounded during the Civil War. After the war, she helped mark over 12,000 graves. In the Franco-Prussian War (1870–1871), Barton served with the International Red Cross and later established its American branch. She dedicated the American Red Cross to bringing relief in times of war and natural disaster.

camps, helped soldiers on leave, aided black fugitives, and recruited volunteer nurses.

The Civil War was the first war in which several thousand women served as nurses. Traditionalists on each side did not approve of women taking what had previously been considered a man's job. But in 1861 women had a new heroine. She was Florence Nightingale, who had earned fame caring for British soldiers several years earlier in the Crimean War. Altogether, some 3,000 women would serve as official Union army nurses. The Confederacy was slower to accept women nurses, but by 1862, they too were part of the Confederate army service.

SECTION REVIEW

- 1. KEY TERMS** antiseptic, anesthetic
- 2. PEOPLE AND PLACES** Richmond, Baltimore, Robert E. Lee, Elizabeth Blackwell
- 3. COMPREHENSION** What advantages did the North have over the South?
- 4. COMPREHENSION** Why was the blockade an important part of northern strategy?
- 5. CRITICAL THINKING** What opportunities did the war create for women? How might these new opportunities have changed women's role in society?

4 The Agony of War

Section Focus

Key Terms Battle of Bull Run ■ Battle of Shiloh ■ Seven Days' Battle

Main Idea In the first two years of war, the Confederate army successfully held its line of defense on the eastern front. On the western front, however, the Union won significant victories.

Objectives As you read, look for answers to these questions:

1. What was the impact of the war's first major battle?
2. How did the Union triumph in the war at sea?
3. What was the impact of Union victories in the West?

On to Richmond! the northern papers cried. By capturing the Confederate capital, the Union hoped to crush the rebellion in a single, swift blow. But to win Richmond the Union army would first have to take Manassas Junction. This important railway center was only 30 miles south of Washington.

On July 18, 1861, Union troops began the march to Manassas. They were raw recruits, undisciplined and in poor physical condition, who had signed up for 90 days of service. It took them three days to reach the battle site.

On July 21 a bevy of sightseers and picnickers rode out from Washington to watch the battle. Among them were society women carrying ele-

gant gowns in trunks. They expected the day to end with a grand ball of celebration at Richmond.

THE BATTLE OF BULL RUN

The two armies met at the stream called Bull Run, just north of Manassas Junction. The Union forces outnumbered the Confederates 30,000 to 20,000. By midday they had driven a Confederate flank back a mile. During a heavy Union barrage, a Confederate officer rallied his troops by pointing his sword to General Thomas J. Jackson. "There is Jackson standing like a stone wall! Rally behind the Virginians!" he is said to have cried. Thus Jackson, one of the Confederacy's most able generals, won the nickname of "Stonewall Jackson."