



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.

22.4 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.

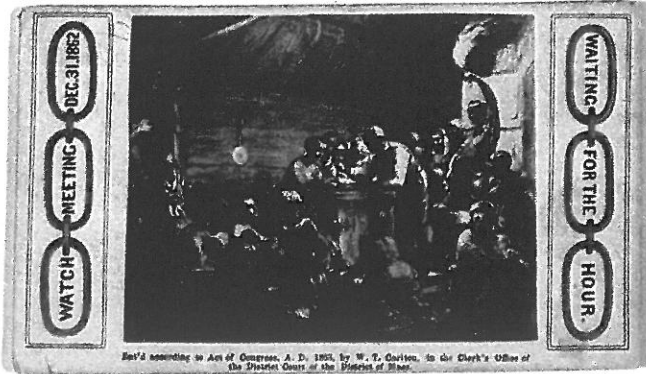
The New Realities of War The horrifying death toll at Antietam reflected the new realities of warfare. In past wars, battles had been won in hand-to-hand combat using bayonets. During the Civil War, improved weapons made killing at a distance much easier. Rifles, which replaced muskets, were accurate 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

22.5 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, for many in the North, the Emancipation Proclamation changed the war into a crusade for freedom. The Declaration of Independence had said that "all men are created equal." Now the fight was about living up to those words.

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.

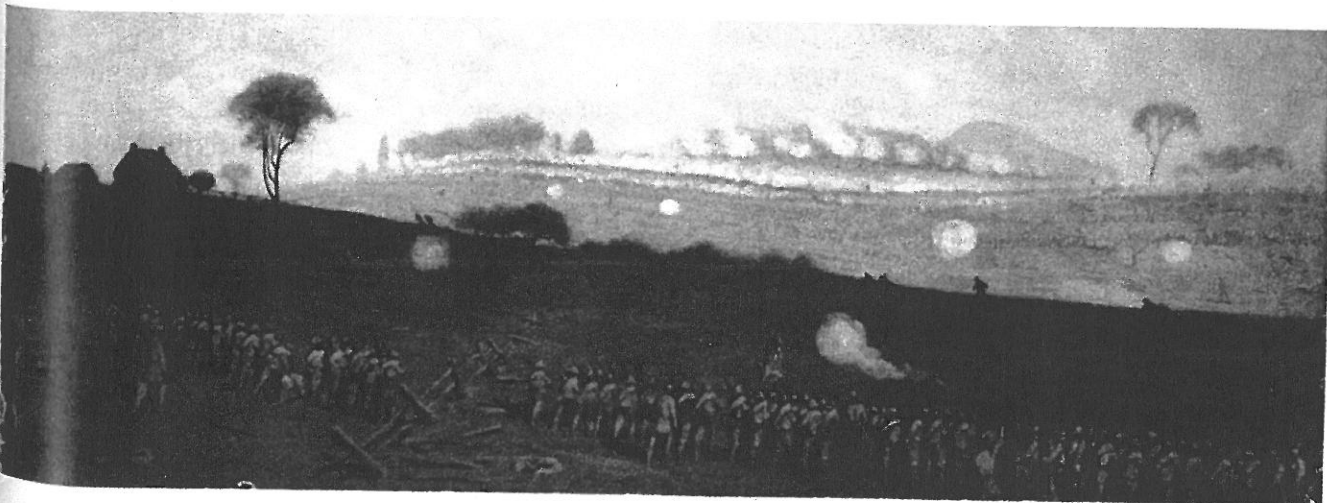
Other northerners opposed the war because they were sympathetic to the Confederate cause. When a pro-slavery mob attacked Union soldiers marching through Maryland, Lincoln sent in troops to keep order. He also used his constitutional power to suspend, or temporarily discontinue, the right of **habeas 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.

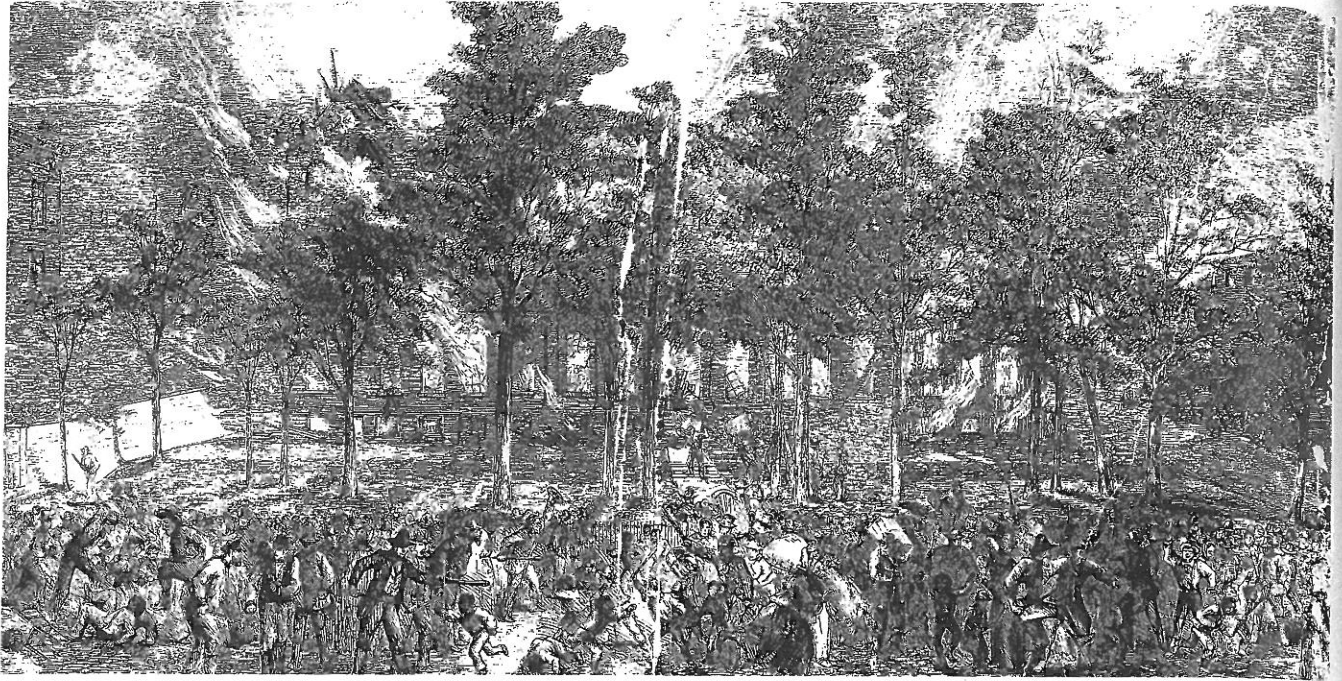
Draft Riots The Union draft law was passed just two months after Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. It also created opposition to the war. Some northerners resented being forced to fight to end slavery. Others protested that the new law "converts the Republic into one grand military dictatorship."

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 deliberately spoke of the war in words that echoed the Declaration of Independence. The "great civil war," he said, 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 the brave men, "living and dead," who had fought to defend that ideal. "The world...can never forget what they did here." Finally, he 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.