

CHAPTER 15

Transforming Fire: The Civil War, 1861–1865

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After you have studied Chapter 15 in your textbook and worked through this study guide chapter, you should be able to:

1. Explain the strategy of the combatants during the first two years of the Civil War; identify their strengths and weaknesses; and indicate the relative position of each in early 1863.
2. Examine the social, political, and economic impact of the Civil War on the South, its values, and its people.
3. Examine the social, political, and economic impact of the Civil War on the North, its values, and its people.
4. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the North and the South, and explain the factors that led to northern victory and southern defeat.
5. Discuss Abraham Lincoln's and Congress's approach to the slavery question during the course of the Civil War; examine their decisions on this issue, and explain the impact of those decisions on the Union and its war effort.
6. Discuss Jefferson Davis's and the Confederate Congress's approach to the slavery question, examine their decisions on this issue, and explain the impact of those decisions on the Confederacy and its war effort.
7. Discuss the impact of military life and wartime experiences on Confederate and Union soldiers during the Civil War.
8. Explain Grant's strategy in the final years of the Civil War, and describe the battles that enabled him to achieve northern victory.
9. Examine the emergence of dissent and disorder in the Confederacy and the Union in the final two years of the Civil War, and explain the impact of these forces on the two combatants.
10. Discuss the efforts of both North and South to achieve their diplomatic objectives, and indicate the outcome of those efforts.
11. Examine the impact of the Civil War on the Indian peoples of the American West and on relations between Indians and Anglo-Americans.
12. Discuss the financial and human costs of the Civil War, and indicate what issues were resolved and what issues were left unresolved at war's end.

THEMATIC GUIDE

The title of Chapter 15 appropriately calls the Civil War a “transforming fire” and, in so doing, establishes the transformation of northern and southern societies as the chapter’s theme. Ironically, the South, which fought to prevent change, was changed the most.

Both North and South expected the Civil War to end quickly, but, as the discussion of the military engagements of the first two years illustrates, both were mistaken. In 1862, in an attempt to adjust to the likelihood of a prolonged conflict, the Confederacy adopted the first conscription law in the history of the United States. This is the first mention of the changes brought to the South by the war. These changes also included:

1. centralization of political and economic power;
2. increased urban growth;
3. increased industrialization;
4. changed roles for women;
5. mass poverty, labor shortages, food shortages, and runaway inflation; and
6. class conflict.

The theme of change is also apparent in the discussions of the war in the American West and in the discussion of the war’s economic, political, and social impact on northern society.

In the midst of this change, slavery, the institution that was the underlying cause of the war, was seldom mentioned by either Jefferson Davis or Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln’s silence on the issue during the first year of the war reflected both his hope that a compromise could be reached with the South and his attempt to keep intact the coalitions that constituted the Republican Party. In dealing with the subject in 1862, he took a conservative and racist approach. When Congress attempted to lead on the slavery question, Lincoln at first refused to follow; and when abolitionists prodded him on the question, he distinguished between official duty and personal wishes. When the president did act, it was to offer the Emancipation Proclamation—a document that was legally wanting but politically and morally of great meaning. Then, in 1864, he supported a constitutional ban on slavery by supporting the Thirteenth Amendment.

Ultimately, Jefferson Davis also addressed the slavery issue. Dedicated to independence for the Confederacy, Davis became convinced that emancipation was a partial means to that end. Although he faced serious opposition on the issue, Davis pushed and prodded the Confederacy toward emancipation, but his actions came too late to aid the Confederate cause.

The experience of war also changed the individual soldiers who served in the Confederate and Union armies. Accustomed to living largely unrestricted lives in rural areas, many had difficulty adjusting to the military discipline that robbed them of their individuality. Subjected to deprivation and disease and surrounded by dead, dying, and wounded comrades, the reality of war had a profound emotional impact on those who experienced it. However, the commonality of these experiences and the sense of dedication to a common task forged bonds among soldiers that they cherished for years.

The last two years of the war brought increasing antigovernment sentiment in both South and North. More widespread in the South, such sentiment involved the planters—who seemed committed only to their own selfish interests—the urban poor, and the rural masses. The deep-rooted nature of southern war resistance affected the war effort, and the internal disintegration of the Confederacy was furthered by disastrous defeats at Vicksburg and Gettysburg. It was in this atmosphere that southern peace movements emerged, more anti-Davis representatives were elected to the Confederate Congress, and

6. the Union naval campaign
7. Ulysses S. Grant
8. General Robert E. Lee
9. Battle of Antietam (Sharpsburg)
10. Jefferson Davis
11. the Morrill Land Grant Act
12. Homestead Act of 1862
13. Lincoln's use of presidential power

14. Lincoln's plan for gradual emancipation

15. the Emancipation Proclamation

16. the Thirteenth Amendment

17. African American soldiers in the Union army

18. the Battle of Vicksburg

19. the Battle of Gettysburg

20. the Gettysburg Address

21. Copperheads

22. New York City draft riot

23. the presidential election of 1864

24. Sherman's southern campaign

25. Appomattox Court House

26. John Wilkes Booth

IDEAS AND DETAILS

Objective 1

1. Which of the following is true of the blockade of southern ports by the Union navy?
 - a. It was never completely successful in blocking the Confederacy's avenues of commerce and supply.
 - b. It began an industrialization effort that caused the South's industrial capacity to match that of the North by 1865.
 - c. It was the major reason for mass starvation in the Confederate states.
 - d. It angered France and led to a Franco-Confederate alliance.

Objective 1

2. "It is well that war is so terrible. We should grow too fond of it." This remark was made after the Battle of Fredericksburg by
 - a. Robert E. Lee.
 - b. Ulysses S. Grant.
 - c. J. E. B. Stuart.
 - d. Ambrose Burnside.

Objective 2

2. The Civil War changed southern society by forcing
 - a. farmers to buy cotton from England.
 - b. businessmen to extend loans to the army.
 - c. an abandonment of the philosophy of weak central government.
 - d. most plantation owners to sell their estates.

Objectives 3 and 4

3. The mechanization of agriculture in the North caused
 - a. severe depression in rural areas as farm hands lost their jobs.
 - b. an expansion of the food supply for the expanding urban work force.
 - c. overproduction and declining prices for farm goods.
 - d. most farmers to become so heavily burdened with debt that they faced bankruptcy.

Objective 3

4. Which of the following inferences may be drawn from the facts surrounding the shipbuilding program supported by President Lincoln?
 - a. Lincoln engaged in defense spending that was unnecessary and unwise.
 - b. The war years witnessed an increase in presidential power.
 - c. The northern press had a decided impact on military decisions made by the president.
 - d. Lincoln often acted against the advice of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Objective 5

5. In his first mention of slavery in connection with the war, Lincoln
 - a. promised to negotiate with any southern state agreeing to free its slaves.
 - b. promised the large planters in the South that they would be allowed to keep twenty slaves if they freed all others.
 - c. proposed that Congress promise aid to any state agreeing to gradual emancipation of its slaves.
 - d. promised federal aid to all slaves who were able to escape to the North.

Objective 5

6. Which of the following is true of the group of Republicans in Congress known as the Radicals?
 - a. From the beginning of the Civil War, they dedicated themselves to transforming the struggle into a war for emancipation.
 - b. They actively worked against the northern war effort, believing that the United States would be stronger and more stable without the return of the Confederate states to the Union.
 - c. Against the explicit instructions of Republican-Party leaders and President Lincoln, they worked to bring about a negotiated settlement of the Civil War.
 - d. Believing that the United States could not continue to exist as a biracial society, they argued in favor of the removal of African Americans to a reservation in the American West.

Objective 5

7. The Emancipation Proclamation
 - a. abolished slavery in the United States.
 - b. freed slaves in the border states only.
 - c. provided for the gradual abolition of slavery in the Confederate states but not in the border states.
 - d. freed slaves in those areas in rebellion against the United States.

Objective 5

8. Although ambiguous, Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation had great meaning as a(n)
 - a. legal document.
 - b. economic document.

- c. moral and political document.
- d. humanitarian and religious document.

Objective 6

9. To achieve the goal of independence, Jefferson Davis
- a. issued an executive order that outlawed the practice of hiring substitutes for military service.
 - b. proposed that full equality be given to all southern blacks willing to actively support the Confederacy.
 - c. ordered that the eligible age for Confederate recruits be lowered to twelve.
 - d. proposed that emancipation be promised to slave soldiers and their families.

Objectives 4 and 9

10. In the midst of the Civil War, southern planters
- a. increasingly stood in opposition to the Confederate government.
 - b. demonstrated their commitment to building an independent southern nation.
 - c. accepted change as a natural consequence of the revolutionary path they had chosen.
 - d. did everything in their power to aid the war effort.

Objective 4

11. Abraham Lincoln, unlike Jefferson Davis, was
- a. able to reach the common people.
 - b. quiet, shy, and retiring.
 - c. cold and aloof.
 - d. sincere in his beliefs.

Objective 10

12. The Union's primary diplomatic goal was to
- a. break the Franco-Confederate alliance.
 - b. prevent recognition of the Confederacy by European nations.
 - c. prevent European financiers from extending loans to the Confederacy.
 - d. convince European nations to sell valuable arms and supplies to the Union.

Objective 8

13. In late 1863, General Grant decided to try the innovative strategy of
- a. repatriation of strategic southern areas under Union control.
 - b. guerrilla warfare led by Union loyalists throughout the South.
 - c. massive raids deep into the Confederacy.
 - d. flexible response.

ESSAY QUESTIONS

Objectives 2, 4, and 6

1. Defend the contention that the revolutionary means chosen by secession leaders were incompatible with their conservative purpose.

Objective 2

2. Examine the impact of the Civil War on the Confederate government. Why is it said that “Life in the Confederacy proved to be a shockingly unsouthern experience”?

Objectives 2 and 3

3. Discuss the impact of the Civil War on women in northern and southern societies.

Objective 5

4. Discuss Lincoln’s issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation. Why is it said that “as a legal document it was wanting, as a moral and political document it had great meaning”? What was its impact on the war?

Objective 9

5. Discuss the similarities and differences in antiwar sentiment in the South and in the North.

Objective 4

6. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the North and the South during the Civil War, and explain why the North won.

Multiple-Choice Answers

1.
 - a. Correct. In 1861, about 90 percent of the blockade runners successfully penetrated the North’s blockade, and by war’s end some 50 percent were successful. Although these statistics indicate that the blockade gradually became more successful, they also indicate that the blockade was never a complete success.
 - b. No. Although the South made impressive gains in industrialization, especially in the production of small arms and ammunition, it never matched the North’s industrial capacity. Therefore, although Confederate soldiers had weapons, they often did not have boots, uniforms, or blankets.
 - c. No. There was never “mass starvation” throughout the South. Furthermore, the food shortages that existed were caused by a multiplicity of factors, such as destruction of food crops by advancing armies, a shortage of farm labor, hoarding of food, and inadequate transportation facilities.
 - d. No. France never allied with the Confederacy and there is no mention of this in the text.
2.
 - a. Correct. Although the South advocated the states’ rights philosophy and the philosophy of weak central government, it became apparent, especially to Jefferson Davis, that centralization of power was necessary for the Confederacy to survive the Civil War.
 - b. No. Although the agrarian economy of the South was devastated by the war, cotton was still produced for export.
 - c. No. Although the government forced factories to work on government contracts to supply government needs, businesspeople were not forced to extend loans to the army during the Civil War.

- d. No. The evidence does not indicate that the Civil War changed southern society by forcing most plantation owners to sell their estates.
3. b. Correct. The shortage of labor in western agricultural areas caused increased reliance on labor-saving farm machinery. This in turn created a boom in the sale of agricultural machinery and increased the food supply for the growing urban work force.
- a. No. There was a labor shortage in the western agricultural areas. This labor shortage resulted from, (1) the food demands of the army and the industrial work force, and (2) the drafting of men into the army.
- c. No. The expansion of the northern urban work force and the need to feed the army caused the demand for farm products to remain constant and farm prices to remain high.
- d. No. Northern farm families turned increasingly to commercialized agriculture as the demand for farm products remained constant and farm prices remained high. The farm segment of the northern economy did not suffer depression during the war years.
4. b. Correct. Although Congress later approved the shipbuilding program, the fact that it was initiated by Lincoln before Congress assembled indicates an increase in executive power.
- a. No. There is no indication that the shipbuilding program initiated by President Lincoln and approved by Congress was either unnecessary or unwise.
- c. No. There is no indication that the northern press influenced Lincoln’s decision to support the shipbuilding program.
- d. No. Lincoln had no Joint Chiefs of Staff. This advisory body was not created until 1942.
5. c. Correct. Lincoln first mentioned the slavery issue in a major way in March 1862. He advocated, (1) that Congress promise aid to any state that agreed to emancipate its slaves, and (2) colonization of blacks outside the United States.
- a. No. Lincoln never made such a promise.
- b. No. Lincoln made no such promise to the plantation elite of the South.
- d. No. Lincoln never offered federal aid to slaves who were able to escape to the North.
6. a. Correct. From the beginning of the Civil War, the Radicals tried to push President Lincoln and the U.S. government into making emancipation of the slaves a primary war goal. It was with this goal in mind that the Radicals supported and gained passage of the Confiscation Acts of 1861 and 1862.
- b. No. The Radicals supported the northern war effort, the defeat of the Confederacy, and the ultimate return of the Confederate states, as free states, to the Union.
- c. No. The Radicals supported Lincoln’s commitment to unconditional surrender of the Confederate States of America.
- d. No. The Radicals did not support colonization of African Americans or their removal to a reservation. In fact, in the antebellum period, the men who constituted the faction in Congress known as the Radicals generally supported the immediatist/black equality goals of the American Anti-Slavery Society, not the gradualist/colonization goals of the American Colonization Society.
7. d. Correct. The Emancipation Proclamation freed slaves only in those areas over which the Union had no control. It did not free slaves in any area of the Confederacy that had fallen under Union control and did not free slaves in the border states.

- a. No. Slavery was abolished by the Thirteenth Amendment, not by the Emancipation Proclamation.
 - b. No. The Emancipation Proclamation allowed the border states (the slave states that had remained in the Union) to keep the institution of slavery.
 - c. No. The Emancipation Proclamation did not provide for the gradual abolition of slavery in the Confederate states.
8. c. Correct. The document raised legal questions and physically freed no slaves; however, it was nearly flawless as a political document and defined the Civil War as a war against slavery. Both liberals and conservatives could accept it, and its ambiguity gave Lincoln the political flexibility he wanted.
- a. No. The Emancipation Proclamation was flawed as a legal document and, in fact, raised a number of legal questions.
 - b. No. The document was not economic in its intent or language.
 - d. No. The Emancipation Proclamation was not humanitarian or religious in its intent or content.
9. d. Correct. Toward the end of the war, Davis realized that the only hope for the Confederacy was to increase the number of men in arms. Therefore, he proposed that slave soldiers be recruited and that the soldiers and their families be promised freedom.
- a. No. The Conscription Act of 1862, passed by the Confederate Congress, allowed a young man eligible for the draft to hire a substitute. Not until passage of the Conscription Act of 1864, again passed by the Confederate Congress, was this practice ended.
 - b. No. Davis never supported the concept of “full equality” for blacks and never questioned the political, social, and economic discrimination of free blacks that was part of the fabric of southern society.
 - c. No. Although Davis and his men became desperate for Confederate recruits and even began using the army to round up deserters, the eligible age for recruits was never lowered to twelve.
10. a. Correct. As the Confederate government’s powers increased, southern planters, committed only to their own selfish interests, increasingly resented and resisted the government’s encroachment on their lives.
- b. No. Southern planters demonstrated little or no commitment to building a southern nation. They seemed committed only to their own selfish interests.
 - c. No. Secession and war were bound to bring change to southern society. However, southern planters seemed not to recognize this fact and wanted a guarantee that their lives would remain unchanged and untouched.
 - d. No. Southern planters had little sense of commitment to the war effort.
11. a. Correct. Lincoln, unlike Davis, was at ease among common people and was able to communicate the sincerity of his feelings to them. He did not show the aloofness and austerity that were part of Davis’s nature.
- b. No. Lincoln was not quiet, shy, and retiring.
 - c. No. Davis, rather than Lincoln, was cold and aloof.
 - d. No. Lincoln and Davis appear to have been equally sincere in their beliefs.

12. b. Correct. Recognition of the Confederacy by European nations would hurt the Union cause in several respects, therefore, the Union’s primary diplomatic goal was to prevent such recognition.
- a. No. Although France under Napoleon III was hostile toward the North, it never concluded an alliance with the Confederacy.
- c. No. Although European loans to the Confederacy were certainly not in the North’s best interest, the North’s primary diplomatic goal was more all-encompassing than simply preventing such loans.
- d. No. The North’s industrial capacity was such that it could produce its own war material.
13. c. Correct. General Grant, with the goal of devastating the South economically and striking a decisive blow to southern morale, decided to use whole armies to conduct raids deep into the Confederacy.
- a. No. General Grant was not concerned with repatriation in 1863 and did not suggest this as an “innovative strategy.”
- b. No. General Grant did not attempt to organize Union loyalists in the South and did not adopt the strategy of guerrilla warfare on the part of such forces.
- d. No. Flexible response is a strategy associated with President John F. Kennedy, not with General Ulysses S. Grant.