

The Civil War

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1. Many historians call the Civil War one of the first “modern” wars in World History.

First, explain why the Civil War can be called a “total war” distinct from earlier conflicts in American history. Second, describe how the Union obtained the soldiers, supplies, and social support needed to sustain the successful war effort.

Total war is a type of warfare where all the resources of a given society are mobilized for the war and this includes elements such as infrastructure and resources associated with civilians. In this case, the state prioritizes the needs of the war over those of the non-combatants, and this was representative of the American civil war. The civil war can be described as a total war separate in character from other conflicts that appeared before in the history of America as it reached epic proportions never seen before. War technologies that were newly invented, and even more destructive, supported by previous developments on fields such as transportation were used. This included the railroad gun. It was the bloodiest war in The United States which resulted in close to 800, 000 deaths. It involved freeing of black slaves to aid in the war, destroying railroads and telegraph poles and a mobilization of resources that was only seen later in World War 2 (Locke & Ben, 2019).

The Civil war had an effect on every American individual in a time when the military machination and effort reached proportions that had never been seen previously in the country. It involved two factions, with the Northern states fighting to maintain the Union and subsequently their economic might, while the south fought on the lines of protecting the institution of slavery which in the long run, became the primary motive of this fight; the complete eradication of slavery in all its forms. The civil war became a defining moment in the history of the United States, but all the while, a wrenching event (Locke & Ben, 2019).

With the undertaking of the war, the black people increasingly pushed for their emancipation. They pressed for inclusion in the fight which was long sought but subsequently granted seeing the large numbers of African Americans escaping from slave holding states. Black troops were enlisted to fight on the Union's side. By the end of the civil war, slavery was abolished across all of the Union states.

During the start of the war, President Lincoln called for seventy five thousand volunteers to crush the rebellion. Funds for the union's course in the case of supplies were raised in the millions of dollars in sanitary fairs that took place in the old Northwest. Women came in to provide social support for the war by taking up important leadership roles in these sanitary fairs. To acquire soldiers, The Enrollment act was passed creating mandatory military drafts for all male citizens in the US that were of able bodies and were between 18-35 years, with a caveat to enable wealthy citizens to pay for substitution (Locke & Ben, 2019).

For society, popular discontent existed over the war all along its course due to the placing of war as the highest priority. This discontent soon boiled over due to consistent food shortages, leading up to the bread riots.

References

Locke L. Joseph, Ben, Wright. (2019). The American Yawp, A Massively Collaborative Open US History Textbook Vol 1: To 1877