4 HARDSHIPS OF WAR

BEFORE YOU READ

Reading Focus
- What was life like for Confederate and Union soldiers?
- What problems did each side face at home?
- How did the war affect the economy of the North and the South?
- What role did women play in the war?

Key Terms
- Copperhead
draft
habeas corpus
income tax
inflation
profiteer

Taking Notes
Copy this incomplete Venn diagram. As you read, fill in key facts about conditions in the North and South during the Civil War. Write common characteristics in the overlapping section.

NORTH
- Copperheads oppose war

SOUTH
- War brings economic ruin

Main Idea The demands of the war hurt civilians as well as soldiers on both sides, but the problems were worse in the Confederate States.

SETTING THE SCENE

John Jones knew that he was not alone in the hardships he experienced. All he had to do was look around in the Confederate capital of Richmond. Some of the city’s residents, he noted, looked “like vagabonds ... gaunt and pale with hunger.” As for his own family:

“... My daughter’s cat is staggering today, for want of animal food. Sometimes I fancy I stagger myself. We do not average two ounces of meat daily; and some do not get any for several days together.”

—John B. Jones, A Rebel War Clerk’s Diary

The Civil War caused hardships not only for soldiers but for people at home as well. Southerners were especially hard hit, because most of the fighting took place in the South. But for both North and South, the war affected every area of life.

THE HARD LIFE OF SOLDIERS

On both sides, most soldiers were under the age of 21. War, however, quickly turned gentle boys into tough men. Soldiers drilled and marched for long hours. They slept on the ground even in rain and snow. In combat, boys of 18 learned to stand firm as cannon blasts shook the earth and bullets whizzed past their ears.

As the death toll rose, the age restrictions for soldiers were relaxed. The South drafted boys as young as 17 and men as old as 50.

New technology added to the horror of war. Cone-shaped bullets made rifles twice as accurate. Improved cannons hurled exploding shells several miles. The new weapons had deadly results. In most battles, one fourth or more of the soldiers were killed or wounded.
Sick and wounded soldiers faced other horrors. Medical care on the battlefield was crude. Surgeons routinely amputated injured arms and legs. At the time, doctors did not know how germs cause infection and disease. As a result, minor wounds often became infected. In addition, poor sanitary conditions in the army camps allowed diseases to spread rapidly. Diseases such as pneumonia and malaria killed more men than guns or cannons did.

On both sides, prisoners of war faced horrifying conditions. At Andersonville, a prison camp in Georgia, many Union prisoners died of disease or starvation.

The difficult life of soldiers led many to desert. One out of every seven Union soldiers and one out of every nine Confederate soldiers deserted.

**Opposition to War in the North**

Some northerners opposed using force to keep the South in the Union. Supporters of the war called these people Copperheads, after the poisonous snake. Other northerners supported the war but opposed the way Lincoln was conducting it.

**The Draft Law** As the war dragged on, public support dwindled. When the war began, the North offered men money to enlist. However, some men abused the system. They would sign up, collect the money, and then desert. Soon, however, there was a shortage of volunteers to serve in the Union army.

**Viewing History**

**Battlefield Medicine**

Improved weapons during the Civil War made the injuries suffered by soldiers worse. Soldiers hit with the Minie ball suffered severe bone damage. Shown at left are the tools used by surgeons to amputate the limb. Unlike today, surgeons at that time worked without gloves, antiseptic, or masks. Now, there are better ways to care for wounds and, as shown at right, improved surgical procedures. Drawing

**Conclusions** How has technology been an advantage and a disadvantage in war?
Congress passed a draft law in 1863. It required all able-bodied males between the ages of 20 and 45 to serve in the military if they were called. Under the law, a man could avoid the draft by paying the government $300 or by hiring someone to serve in his place. This angered many people, who began to see the Civil War as “a rich man’s war and a poor man’s fight.”

**Riots in the Cities** Opposition to the draft law led to riots in several northern cities. The law had gone into effect soon after Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. Some white northerners, especially recent immigrants in the cities, believed that they were being forced to fight to end slavery. They also worried that they would have to compete with free African Americans for jobs.

The worst riot took place in New York City during July 1863. For four days, white workers attacked free blacks. Rioters also attacked rich New Yorkers who had paid to avoid serving in the army. At least 74 people were killed during the riot.

President Lincoln moved to stop the riots and other “disloyal practices.” Several times, he suspended *habeas corpus* (HAY bee uhs KOR puhs), the right to be charged or have a hearing before being jailed. Lincoln argued that the Constitution allowed him to deny people their rights “when in the cases of rebellion or invasion, the public safety may require it.” The President also said that those arrested could be tried under the stricter rules of a military court. Eventually, nearly 14,000 people were arrested. However, most were never charged with a specific crime or brought to trial.

**Problems in the South**

President Davis, meanwhile, struggled to create a strong federal government for the Confederacy. Many southerners firmly believed in states’ rights. They resisted paying taxes to a central government. At one point, Georgia even threatened to secede from the Confederacy!

Like the North, the South was forced to pass a draft law to fill its army. However, men who owned or supervised more than 20 slaves did not have to serve. Southern farmers who had few or no slaves resented this law.

Near the end of the war, the South no longer had enough white men to fill the ranks. Robert E. Lee urged that enslaved African Americans be allowed to serve as soldiers. Desperate, the Confederate congress finally agreed. The war ended, however, before any enslaved people put on Confederate uniforms.

**The Northern Economy**

The Civil War cost far more than any previous war. The Union had to use several strategies to raise money. In some ways, however, war helped the North’s economy.

**Taxation and Inflation** To pay for the war, Congress established the nation’s first income tax, or tax on people’s earnings, in 1861. A new agency, the Internal Revenue Bureau, oversaw the collection process. The Union also issued bonds worth millions of dollars. Still,
taxes and bonds did not raise enough money. To get the funds it needed, the North printed more than $400 million in paper money.

As the money supply increased, each dollar was worth less. In response, businesses charged more for their goods. The North was experiencing inflation, a rise in prices and a decrease in the value of money. During the war, prices for goods nearly doubled in the North.

**Economic Benefits** The war helped the North’s economy in several ways. Since many farmers went off to fight, there was a greater need for machines to plant and harvest crops. The purchase of reapers rose to nearly 165,000 during the war. As a result, farm production actually went up during the war.

The wartime demand for clothing, shoes, guns, and other goods helped many northern industries. Some manufacturers made fortunes by profiteering. **Profiteers** charged excessive prices for goods that the government desperately needed for the war.

**The Southern Economy**

For the South, war brought economic ruin. The South had to struggle with the cost of the war, the loss of the cotton trade, and severe shortages brought on by the Union blockade.

**The Economy Suffers** To raise money, the Confederacy imposed an income tax and a tax-in-kind. The tax-in-kind required farmers to turn over one tenth of their crops to the government. The government took crops because it knew that southern farmers had little money.

Like the North, the South printed paper money. It printed so much that wild inflation set in. By 1865, one Confederate dollar was worth only two cents in gold. Prices were especially high in Richmond, where a barrel of flour was $275 in early 1864, potatoes were $25 a bushel, and butter was $15 a pound.

The war did serious damage to the cotton trade, the South’s main source of income. Early in the war, President Davis halted cotton shipments to Britain. He hoped to force Britain to side with the South in return for renewed shipments of cotton. The tactic backfired. Britain simply bought more cotton from Egypt and India. Davis succeeded only in cutting the South’s income.

**Effects of the Blockade** The Union blockade created severe shortages in the South. Confederate armies sometimes had to wait weeks for supplies of food and clothing. With few factories of its own, the South bought many of its weapons in Europe. However, the
blockade cut off most deliveries from across the Atlantic. To acquire goods, the government began building and running factories. Private manufacturers were offered contracts and draft exemptions for their workers if they started making war goods.

For civilians, the blockade brought food shortages. The production of food became critical to the economy. Many plantations switched from growing cotton to raising grain and livestock, or animals raised for food. In some states, cotton production was limited.

**Women in the War**

Women of both the North and the South played vital roles during the war. As men left for the battlefields, women took jobs in industry and on farms.

Women’s aid societies helped supply the troops with food, bedding, clothing, and medicine. Throughout the North, women held fairs and other fundraising events to pay for supplies.

**Nursing the Wounded** Women on both sides worked as nurses. At first, doctors were unwilling to permit even trained nurses to work in military hospitals. When wounded men began to swamp army hospitals, however, this attitude soon changed. In fact, women performed so well that nursing became an accepted occupation for women after the war.

Dorothea Dix, famous for her work reforming prisons and mental hospitals, and Clara Barton, who later founded the American Red Cross, both became nurses for the Union army. Sojourner Truth, the African American antislavery leader, worked in Union hospitals and in camps for freed slaves. In the South, Sally Tompkins set up a hospital in Richmond, Virginia.

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**Section 4 Assessment**

**Recall**

1. **Identify** Explain the significance of (a) Copperhead, (b) Dorothea Dix, (c) Clara Barton, (d) Sojourner Truth, (e) Sally Tompkins.

2. **Define** (a) draft, (b) habeas corpus, (c) income tax, (d) inflation, (e) profiteer.

**Comprehension**

3. Describe three hardships faced by soldiers during the Civil War.

4. (a) Why did some northerners oppose the war? (b) How did the blockade affect the southern economy?

**Activity**

**Take It to the NET**

**Writing a Report**

Use the Internet to find out more about Civil War medicine. Among the topics you might research are nurses, surgeons, field hospitals, battle wounds, and disease. Then, use what you find to write a report about battlefield medicine during the Civil War. Visit The American Nation section of [www.phschool.com](http://www.phschool.com) for help in completing the activity.