

AMERICA AWAY FROM THE CIVIL WAR BATTLEFIELDS

Impact of Casualties



<http://www.jewish-history.com/CLIPARTGALLERY/illus.html>

- Men away from home
 - Less than 50% of Northern men went to military service
 - 80% of all Southern men were in the war at some point

 - The mortality rate among Union forces was 6%
 - The mortality rate among Confederate forces was 18%

 - The number of widows and orphans needing care increased dramatically

Scarcity

- In both the North and the South production was directed to the war effort.
 - Most families experienced some scarcity of food, clothing, household goods, and luxuries – more so in the Confederacy than in the Union.
 - Hunger was a far greater problem in the South.
 - Many tended to blame merchants and producers for a lack of supplies.
 - Cotton goods were in short supply everywhere.

Work

- **In the North**
 - Agricultural work – except in the few areas near battles – continued with little change
 - Western states had occasion to produce more for sale in the East
 - Women continued at jobs by which they sought to extend the world of females – teaching, medicine, business

- **In the South**
 - Poor women did more grueling farm work than ever before
 - Many worked for the Confederate Clothing Bureau, sewing shirts for thirty cents apiece
 - Arsenal workers might earn a dollar a day making cartridges
 - Munitions workers in Richmond grew so distraught they struck for higher wages
 - Some women of the upper class also had to work the fields or managing slaves
 - They taught school, served in hospitals, or worked in government offices
 - In 1862, the Confederate Congress enacted legislation making it legal for women to work in Confederate hospitals because wards operated by women experienced far lower death rates
 - The former ladies of fashion preferred supervision and visitation to actually dressing wounds or tending to patients' needs
 - By the end of the war, the number of women among the ranks of teachers increased from well under 10% to at least 50%.
 - Women anticipated a return to ante-bellum values and customs at war's end, though such was not to prove possible.

Holidays

- **Christmas – though not a federal holiday until 1870 – included much that would be familiar today**
 - Christmas trees
 - Christmas cards
 - Caroling
 - Reading Clement Moore's "A Visit from St. Nicholas"
 - Appearances by Santa Claus in department stores (though more rarely than today)
 - Greenery decorating both public spaces and private homes
- Thomas Nast depicted Santa as a Union supporter
 - Lincoln called his portrayal of Santa in 1862 "the best recruiting sergeant the North ever had"
 - Nast was the first to identify Santa's home as the North Pole
 - By 1863, Southern parents were explaining that Santa would not likely be able to run the blockade

Economic Shifts

- America begins to shift from agriculture to manufacturing.
 - Though the cotton textiles industry declined sharply, the woolen industry saw a 100% rise.
 - The production of shoes and leather – the second largest industry – also enjoyed growth.
 - The manufacture of arms, gunpowder, and wagons also boomed.
 - The production of iron and coal also enjoyed significant increases.
 - Returning veterans, tired of war, became more acquisitive.
 - The primacy of the Republican Party encouraged business.

- War demands led many established technologies to significant growth.
 - Sewing machine manufacturing
 - Condensed milk
 - Farm equipment, including the rotary plow and thresher
- The war created no new industries of any significance.
- Paper currency led to inflation, a rise in commodity prices, and a decrease in purchasing power
- Labor began to find a political voice.
 - Rise in trade unions and strikes
 - The discouragement of immigration significantly cut back on cheap labor.