

The Civil War

Section 4



MAIN IDEAS

1. The Emancipation Proclamation freed slaves in Confederate states.
2. African Americans participated in the war in a variety of ways.
3. President Lincoln faced opposition to the war.
4. Life was difficult for soldiers and civilians alike.

Key Terms and People

emancipation the freeing of slaves

Emancipation Proclamation announcement freeing Confederate slaves

contrabands escaped slaves

54th Massachusetts Infantry heroic unit of African American soldiers

Copperheads nickname for the Peace Democrats

habeas corpus constitutional protection against unlawful imprisonment

Clara Barton army volunteer whose work became the basis for the American Red Cross

Section Summary

EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION

President Lincoln realized that one way to weaken the South was to free the slaves. **Emancipation** would free many slaves on which the South’s economy relied. After the Battle of Antietam, Lincoln presented the **Emancipation Proclamation**. Despite the impossibility of enforcing it in Confederate-held states, the proclamation still had a distinct effect on the war.

What was the purpose of the Emancipation Proclamation?

AFRICAN AMERICANS PARTICIPATE IN THE WAR

In July 1862 Congress decided to allow African Americans to join the army as laborers. This decision included both free African Americans and **contrabands**, or escaped slaves. Within a year several African American units had formed. The most famous of these was the **54th Massachusetts Infantry**, which helped attack South Carolina’s Fort Wagner.

How were contrabands different from other African Americans who joined the Union army?

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African American soldiers received less pay than white soldiers. They also faced greater danger because, if captured by Confederates, they could be returned to slavery. In fact Lincoln suggested these soldiers be rewarded by getting the right to vote.

GROWING OPPOSITION

Some mid-westerners did not think the war was necessary. They called themselves Peace Democrats, but their enemies called them **Copperheads**, after the poisonous snake.

Because he saw them as a threat to the war effort, Lincoln had Copperheads put in jail with no evidence and no trial. To do this he ignored their right of **habeas corpus**, the constitutional protection against unlawful imprisonment. Despite this and the northern draft, Lincoln won his second election in 1864.

What is habeas corpus?

LIFE FOR SOLDIERS AND CIVILIANS

For the soldier both camplife and combat offered dangers. Poor camp conditions, including lack of medicine and painkillers, led to illness. This alone killed more men than battle did. Those wounded or captured in battle often met the same fate.

Those left behind took over the work of the men who went to war. In addition, many women also provided medical care for the soldiers. For example, volunteer **Clara Barton** formed the organization that would become the American Red Cross.

How did women help the war effort?

CHALLENGE ACTIVITY

Critical Thinking: Contrast First, imagine you are a lawyer for the Peace Democrats. Write a paragraph explaining why their right of habeas corpus should not be ignored. Then imagine you are a lawyer for the federal government. Write a paragraph defending Lincoln's actions.