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## **The Civil War in Numbers**

### **Introduction**

The Civil War was a turning point for the United States of America. It not only tested the country's unity as a nation, but its ideas of equality and justice. The Civil War was started in Fort Sumter, South Carolina on April 12, 1861 when Abner Doubleday fired the first shot. The war affected the trust in both the Union and Confederate sides. The Union (North) believed that slavery should not exist however, the Confederates (South) did not agree. They were in war against each other until the Confederate leader, Robert E. Lee, surrendered to the Union leader (Ulysses S. Grant) at Appomattox Courthouse on war tactics which changed the perspective of the way we see the Civil War today. Due to the excessive amount of death that resulted from the war, the numbers behind the battlefields present historian with unique insights into the causes and effects of such a brutal war. The Civil War consisted largely of a comparison of numbers, strategy, and battlefields and presents historians with unique insights into the causes and effects of such a brutal war. Most of the deaths in the Civil War were caused by infectious diseases. There were estimated to be over 60,000 deaths in the Civil War, which would be an extraordinary amount in modern day. To have as many deaths as this is astounding but an even more astonishing fact is that the cause of death was not limited to death on impact. Many people have pontificated on whether this is the truth of the matter. Some historians view the Civil War with various perspectives by attributing the economic differences, access to resources, and

population differences to the outcome of the war. Moreover, the events of the war and its aftermath can be better understood through the framework of statistics and numbers. The civil war was a bloodbath that was largely caused by demographic and cultural differences.

### **Death Toll**

To begin with, in the Civil War there were so many deaths. For example, “the human cost of the Civil War was beyond anybody's expectations. The young nation experienced bloodshed of a magnitude that has not been equaled by any other American conflict” (“The Numbers Illustrated”). This statement emphasizes that in this war, both the Union and Confederate sides lost so many soldiers that if we put all of the soldiers together from the other American wars that it wouldn't be close to the ones that died in the Civil War. Though the numbers of the dead were high for both sides, one side outnumbered the other in terms of amount of soldiers. “Even with close to total conscription, the South could not match the North's numerical strength. Southerners also stood a significantly greater chance of being killed, wounded, or captured” (“Civil War Services Population”). In fact, when the war began, the South had 1,082,139 soldiers and the North had 2,128,948 soldiers. Because the north outnumbered the south in the number of soldiers, it was clear that the Union had a clear advantage over the south simply based on numbers. The South lost 490,309 soldiers and had 591,810 left. The North lost 596,670 but had 1,532,278 left (“Civil War Casualties”). Therefore, by focusing solely on the numbers of both sides of the conflict, it is clear that the North definitively had the upper hand and had a higher probability of winning. The Confederate and Union soldiers died either at war in the battlefield or of disease. This means not only did soldiers die in battle, but they also or died in peaceful camps due to harsh conditions. ”For every three soldiers killed in battle, five more died of disease” (“Casualties of War”). These figures reveal that the war itself wasn't the only killer of

soldiers, but rather the poor nutrition and unsanitary conditions of being on the road or living in camps that caused soldiers to die of diseases (“Civil War Services Population”).

### **Economic numbers**

The wartime economies in the north and south were harsh, which forced them to rely on their primary resources. However, since the South’s main resource was slave labor, they received less support in combat as the slaves were needed on the fields and would not have been loyal to the South if they were active in battle. As it states in this quote, “As the war dragged on, the Union's advantages in factories, railroads, and manpower put the Confederacy at a great disadvantage” (“Benjamin T. Arrington”). This quote explains how the north had a large advantage in the war. With twice as much food and soldiers, it was without a doubt that the Union would prevail as winners. The ratio of men in the north to the men in the south was roughly 2:1, which goes more in depth to the topic of the Union’s advantages over the Confederate side. “The North, by contrast, was well on its way toward a commercial and manufacturing economy, which would have a direct impact on its war making ability. By 1860, 90 percent of the nation's manufacturing output came from northern states.” (“Benjamin T. Arrington”). What this quote states is that the north wanted to expand their commercial and manufacturing economy by building more factories. This would provide more money for the north and once again give them the upper hand. “The Southern economy, while shaky throughout the war, grew markedly worse in its later years. The Emancipation Proclamation both enraged the South with its promise of freedom for their slaves, and threatened the very existence of its primary labor source.” (Benjamin T. Arrington”). One could say the Emancipation Proclamation was the first crack in the southern economy and this showed the south was highly dependent on their slaves. Therefore the south became enraged when Abraham Lincoln issued the Amendment.

Through these factors, the South's economy was at a disadvantage, which greatly affected the result of the war.

### **Slavery in numbers**

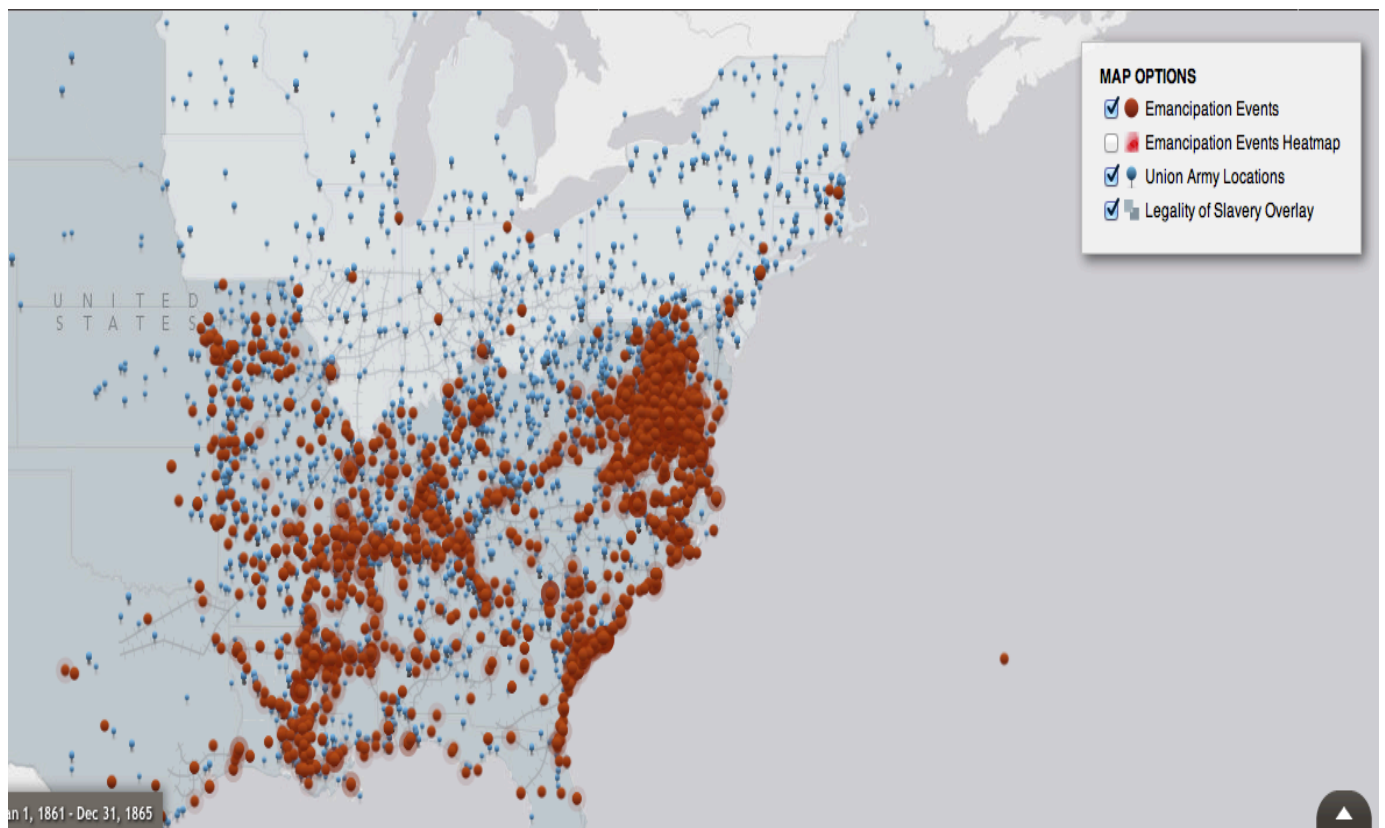
Since one of the main causes of the Civil War was slavery, it played an important role in the outcome of the war. "Congress passed laws permitting the seizure of slaves from the property of rebellious southerners" ("Slavery in the United States"). For example, the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law required that if a slave from the South fled to the North, the northerners would have to send them back to the south or they go to jail. As seen in Figure A, the map shows that there was a high concentration of slaves being released in Virginia because the South used the slaves to their advantage and when the north got rid of them, it weakened the southern army. "Slave prices inflated rapidly as the institution expanded in Texas. The average price of a bondsman, regardless of age, sex, or condition, rose from approximately \$400 in 1850 to nearly \$800 by 1860" ("How much did slaves cost in America?"). The cost of slaves were at no means small, which meant that the owners had to be rich to afford slaves to work on their plantations, further crippling the Southern economy and threatening their livelihood. Therefore, these disadvantages against the South have clearly affected their defeat in the Civil War.

### **Conclusion**

The impact of the Civil War has helped us visualize the mass destruction broken down into smaller sections such as death, the economy, and slavery. The importance of this topic is that it reveals why the Union won and the Confederates lost. It is evident that because the Union was better equipped and had more men, it changed the tide of the battle. Although people glorify war and can even analyze it by looking solely at the numbers, one cannot forget the human side of it. The idea is that people forget the grief the family members have to go through, but people

are oblivious because the numbers have nothing to do with them. The significance and legacy that the American Civil War left behind was that it was the first time the United States had a break in unity. Whoever had the best resources and stronger economy was going to decide the fate of the war, which is not the truth in any armed conflict around the world today. In America's case, it was the Union, which brought the United States together once more.

Figure A:



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