

History
UNFOLDING

THE CIVIL WAR



MindSparks
CHALLENGING STUDENTS TO THINK HISTORICALLY

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Introduction

The Civil War

The story of the Civil War is history at a high point of drama, intensity, and importance. It was a turning point for the nation every bit as significant as the American Revolution itself—which in some ways it simply completed. For four years, this bloody conflict divided regions, communities, even families. It dominated every aspect of life. And its impact lingered for many decades. In fact, we still live in its aftermath.

The key issue at the heart of the conflict was slavery. And the nation paid a heavy price for this great flaw in its republican creed and institutions. In the midst of the struggle, Lincoln perhaps summed it up best. In his Second Inaugural Address, he told the nation:

Fondly do we hope—fervently do we pray—that this mighty scourge of war may pass away. Yet if God wills that it continue, until all the wealth piled by the bond-man’s two-hundred-and-fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn by the lash shall be paid with another drawn by the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said ‘the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.’

It is impossible to tell the entire story of the Civil War with just twelve illustrations. But the twelve we have chosen focus on many of the central themes in the history of the Civil War. The illustrations are presented in four lessons. Each lesson uses three of the illustrations to explore one broad topic in the overall story. Briefly, the four lessons are as follows:

The Divided Nation

The illustrations here call attention to the immediate political causes of the final split between the North and South. And they look at the very first military clashes between the two sides.

Warriors and Warfare

The focus here is on the terribly violent character of Civil War fighting, the high quality of military leadership on both sides, and the growing role of black soldiers in the Union ranks as the conflict wore on.

Behind the Lines

Political and economic trends behind the lines were just as important to the Civil War as the military battles themselves. Here we focus on two key aspects of the war behind the lines—Lincoln’s leadership and the role of industrial technology and economic power in giving the North its decisive advantage.

The Bitter End

The consequences of the war were huge: the enormous suffering, the disruption of every aspect of social and economic life (especially in the South), the continuing legacy and memory of the war. All of these factors kept the war alive as a force in American life for many decades.

Using Photos, Cartoons, and Other Visuals to Teach History

Many textbooks are full of colorful visuals. However, all too often these visuals function primarily as window dressing. They make the text more entertaining, or at least more palatable. Only occasionally do the visuals in textbooks do more than offer simple pictorial reinforcement of ideas already presented in the text. In many cases, they pander to the visual orientation of the young while doing little to help young people master the challenges of the visual media that dominate their lives.

By way of contrast, our approach to using visual materials emphasizes their unique strengths as historical documents. The lessons in this booklet focus students on the visual symbols and metaphors in editorial cartoons, the dramatic qualities of certain photographs, the potential of many images to make abstract ideas more specific and concrete, the implicit biases and stereotypes in certain images, their emotional power, and their ability to invoke the spirit of a time and place. In the process, we make every effort to strengthen students' visual literacy skills in general, as well as their ability to think critically and engage in spirited but disciplined discussions.

How to Use This Booklet

The booklet is divided into four lessons, with three illustrations per lesson. Each lesson consists of the following:

A BACKGROUND INFORMATION SHEET This page provides brief summaries explaining the three illustrations on which the lesson is based and their relevance to the lesson's objectives.

DIGITAL IMAGES The booklet's PDF allows you to project the images for use in your class discussions.

DISCUSSION-ACTIVITY SHEETS

Each sheet displays one illustration. It includes a sequence of questions to help you plan an all-class discussion while using the projected images. The questions take students step by step through an analysis of the illustration. If you wish, you may reproduce these pages and hand them out. In addition to the discussion questions on the illustration itself, one or two follow-up activities are suggested. Some of these can be made into individual assignments. Others will work best as small-group or all-class activities.

OBJECTIVES

1. Students will better understand how Americans experienced the break-up of the nation in 1861.
2. Students will better appreciate how hard it is for people to act in the face of uncertain knowledge of the future.

The Divided Nation

Use the background information on this page to help your students better understand the three illustrations making up this lesson. The questions and activities presented in the rest of the lesson can be used to help students clarify meanings and debate important issues.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION**Illustration 1**

In the 1850s, bitter arguments over slavery split the nation apart. First, these arguments divided and destroyed the Whig Party. Then in 1860, it was the Democratic Party's turn. Democratic Senator Steven Douglas had worked hard to find compromises that would satisfy both Northern and Southern Democrats. But by 1860, compromise no longer worked. As the 1860 Democratic convention prepared to nominate Douglas for president, most Southern Democrats walked out. Later, they chose Vice President John Breckinridge as their candidate. This cartoon shows Douglas and his running-mate in the wagon on the left pulling against Breckinridge and his running-mate on the right. Meanwhile Abraham Lincoln and the on-rushing Republican train are about to sweep the Democrats (and the whole era of compromise) off the tracks.

Illustration 2

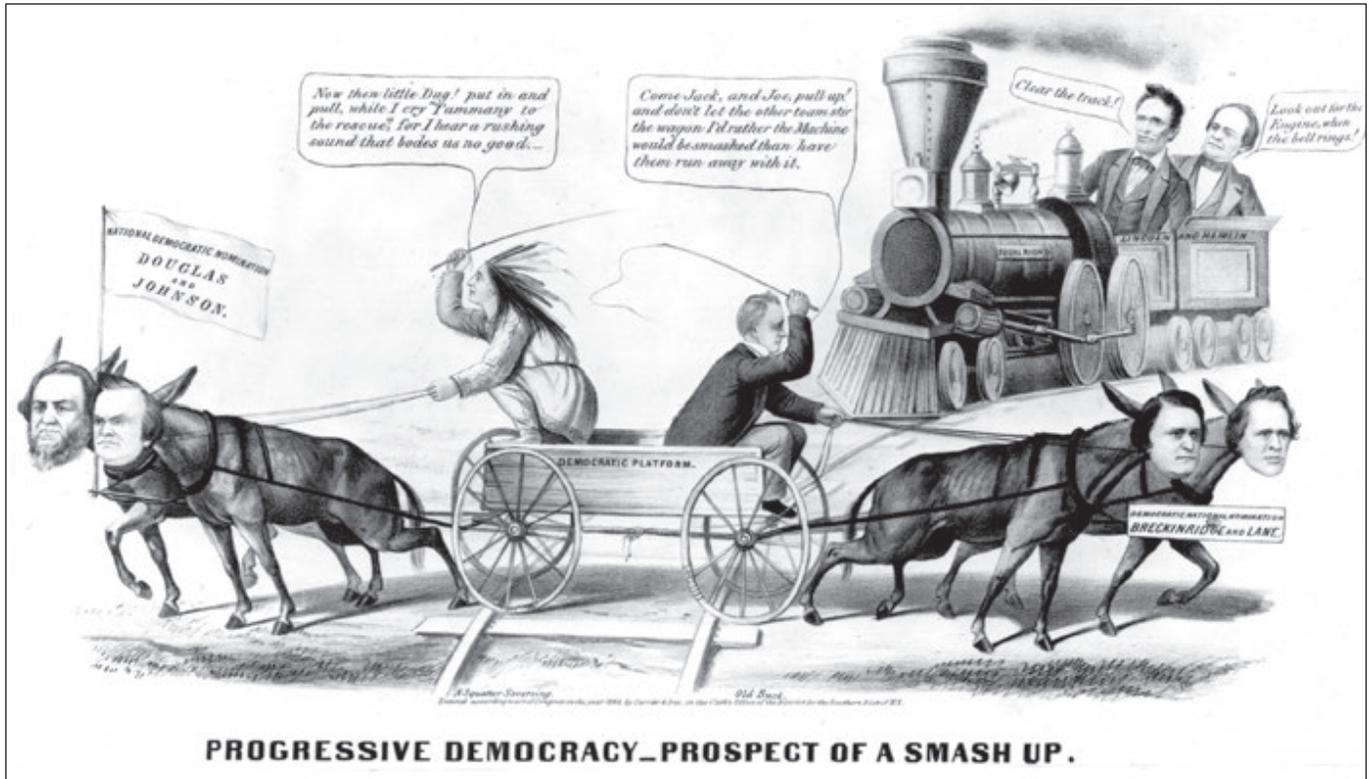
Lincoln's election led several Southern states to secede and form the Confederate States of America. Lincoln refused to accept this without a fight. But he also had no idea of how long such a war would last. At first, he called on state militias and volunteers to help fight the rebels. And calls for volunteers continued throughout the war. But they soon had to be supplemented with a draft—a measure that was very unpopular in certain parts of the North, such as New York City. This photo shows volunteers joining the army in New York in 1864. For many, it was the offer of money, not just appeals to patriotism, that got them to sign up.

Illustration 3

Early in 1861, the Confederates began seizing federal forts and other federal military facilities in the South. Soon, Confederate forces were on the march in Virginia and elsewhere. On both sides, most people expected the war to be over quickly. But then in July 1861, Union and Confederate forces faced off near the railroad center at Manassas Junction. People from nearby Washington D.C. flocked out to see what they were sure would be an easy victory for the Union. Instead, they watched in horror as Confederates, dug in near a little stream called Bull Run, held off and then routed their attackers. Union soldiers fell back in confusion and terror, as this drawing shows dramatically. This first Battle of Bull Run made it clear that a long and bloody conflict lay ahead.

Lesson 1 – The Divided Nation

Illustration 1



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Discussing the Illustration

1. This cartoon is about the election of 1860. It shows a train about to destroy a wagon labeled “Democratic Platform.” Explain what the train is supposed to stand for and identify the locomotive’s “engineer.”
2. Now also explain what the wagon is supposed to stand for. Why are donkeys shown pulling the wagon?
3. For a while in 1860, it seemed as though only the team of “Douglas and Johnson” would be pulling this wagon. Who is the “Douglas” shown on this team?
4. From what you know about the campaign of 1860, explain briefly why Douglas is not shown to be in complete control of the whole wagon.
5. The train in this cartoon might not have been as powerful as it seems if the wagon in the cartoon had not already become divided in the way shown here. Can you explain this point?

Follow-up Activities

1. Stephen Douglas is in the wagon on the left in the cartoon shown here. Many historians say he wound up in this position in part because of his “Freeport Doctrine.” Read the portions of the Lincoln-Douglas debates of 1858, in which Douglas describes this Freeport Doctrine. In a brief talk to the class, explain how that exchange in the famous Lincoln-Douglas debates helped put Douglas in the position he is in here in this cartoon.
2. What if the Democrats had united to support Douglas for president in 1860? And what if he then defeated Lincoln in the election of 1860. What would President Douglas have been able to do about the nation’s big fight over slavery? Read more about Stephen Douglas and his views about slavery in 1860. Then pretend you are Douglas and write an Inaugural Address, the speech you will give when you take over as President in March 1861. In this address, explain in detail what you think Douglas would have proposed to do about the slavery issue.

Illustration 2



The National Archives

Discussing the Illustration

1. This drawing shows men gathering to volunteer for something. What exactly are they volunteering to do? And what in the drawing makes this clear?
2. This is a recruiting station in New York City in 1864. Some of these men are signing up to fight because they are patriotic supporters of the Union. But this might not have been true of all of them. From the drawing, can you explain what else might be leading some of these men to volunteer as soldiers?
3. In the Civil War many soldiers on both sides joined up as volunteers. But both sides also had to make use of conscription to get men to fight. What is conscription? In general, do you think it was fair to use conscription to get more soldiers?
4. Under the conscription laws, a man could pay someone else to be a substitute. Or he could be excused from serving by paying the government a few hundred dollars. Was it fair to let some men avoid service in these ways? Why or why not?

Follow-up Activities

1. **Small-group activity:** As the above drawing shows, the government offered recruits a sum of money called a bounty to join the army. Some men became so-called “bounty jumpers.” These were men who would join up, desert, and then join up again just to collect more than one bounty. Pretend you are a group of advisers to President Lincoln. Come up with a plan to stop bounty jumping. Present your plan to the class and discuss it.
2. Many men volunteered out of a sense of duty. In other cases, conscription, or the draft, may have led some to volunteer in order to get a bounty. However, the draft itself was not very unpopular. In July 1863, a huge riot broke out in New York City in protest against the draft. Read more about this riot. Based on what you learn, write a newspaper account of the riot. Describe in detail the people doing the rioting, what they did during the riot, and their reasons for rioting. Now write a newspaper editorial giving your views about the riot.

Lesson 1 – The Divided Nation

Illustration 3



The National Archives

Discussing the Illustration

1. This drawing shows a small part of the first big battle of the Civil War. It is sometimes called First Manassas. What is the other name for this battle?
2. From the drawing, can you tell which side seems to be winning the battle? What in the drawing helps to show this? From your history reading, which side actually did win this battle?
3. This battle took place close to Washington, D.C. And many people there expected the Union troops to win the battle easily. In fact, many came out to watch it almost as if they were at a picnic. Why do you think they were so sure the North would win this battle?
4. Actually, neither side in this battle was really ready for the kind of fighting they would have to face in the Civil War. How does the drawing suggest that these soldiers were not really ready or well-trained for the kind of fighting they would face? Do you think the drawing portrays Civil War warfare accurately? Why or why not?

Follow-up Activities

1. **Small-group activity:** Study First Manassas as if you were a group of generals reporting to President Lincoln just after this big battle. Create a large map of the battlefield and the movements of the soldiers on both sides. Then prepare a talk to give in class describing the battle and explaining why the North lost it. (Your library should have books on the Civil War that can help you do this. See for example, *The Military History of the United States*, Vol. 5, by Christopher Chant, Marshal Cavandish Ltd, 1992.)
2. **Small-group activity:** Read a detailed account of First Manassas. Half of the group should pretend to be Union soldiers. The other half should pretend to be Confederate soldiers. Each group member will write two letters home: one just before the battle and one just after the battle. In the letters, write about what you think will happen in the battle, what did happen in it, and your feelings, hopes and fears. Create a bulletin board display using these letters and other materials you find on this battle.

OBJECTIVES

1. Students will better understand some of the key characteristics of warfare during the Civil War.
 2. Students will appreciate the courage and determination of leaders and ordinary soldiers, black and white, in the war.
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Warriors and Warfare

Use the background information on this page to help your students better understand the three illustrations making up this lesson. The questions and activities presented in the rest of the lesson can be used to help students clarify meanings and debate important issues.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION**Illustration 1**

This drawing shows a Union charge during a battle at Kernstown in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley on March 23, 1862. Charges by long lines of soldiers like this were common in most of the big Civil War battles. And in these battles, such attacks were always very costly. Casualties in the main battles often ran into the thousands or ten thousands. The defenders usually had the advantage in battles such as this one. In large part, that was because of the newer, much more accurate rifles in use on both sides. These rifles gave protected defenders much more time to fight off attacks. The rifles also helped to make the Civil War far more destructive than anyone at the time thought it would be.

Illustration 2

The Union and the Confederacy both had their share of truly superior military commanders. They also had many who were not very good. Standing out far above most of them were Ulysses S. Grant for the North and Robert E. Lee for the South. Each was a master at planning strategy, acting decisively, and winning the loyalty of their troops. Yet as these photographs suggest, the two men could not have been more unlike in their backgrounds and personalities. In a way, their differences in social standing, personality, and style reflected contrasting ways of life and belief in the North and the South generally.

Illustration 3

At first Lincoln viewed the Civil War mainly as an effort to save the Union. But he soon came to see that to save the Union, slavery would also have to be destroyed. In September of 1862, just after the battle of Antietam, he announced the Emancipation Proclamation. It freed all slaves living in areas still under rebel control. This showed how the war's aims were changing. So did his decision to use African American soldiers in battle. From the start, blacks had been used as scouts, cooks, and in other menial jobs. By July 1863, they had also seen some combat. But the attack of the 54th Massachusetts Colored Regiment on Fort Wagner on July 18, 1863, electrified the nation. It settled any doubts about the black soldier's courage or willingness to fight. This drawing of that battle helps to convey its importance in understanding the social and political significance of the war.

Lesson 2—Warriors and Warfare

Illustration 1



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Discussing the Illustration

1. This drawing shows a line of Union soldiers attacking Confederate soldiers positioned behind a stone wall. This battle at Kernstown in the Shenandoah Valley took place on March 23, 1862. In what state is the Shenandoah Valley located?
2. This battle was one of several in the Shenandoah in the spring of 1862 that kept large numbers of Union soldiers away from a campaign to capture the Confederacy's capital city. What city was that?
3. The Confederates in the Shenandoah Valley were led by one of the South's smartest commanders. Can you name him? Why do military historians think his Shenandoah campaign that spring was so brilliant?
4. This drawing shows an attack typical of the biggest Civil War battles. From the drawing, what do you think was most difficult about fighting in such battles? Would you rather have been in the line attacking up this hill, or among the soldiers fighting off this attack? Explain your answer.

Follow-up Activities

1. One important technical development in the Civil War had to do with the rifle musket most soldiers used. This rifle musket replaced the smoothbore muskets generally used by soldiers before the Civil War. Read more about the rifle muskets used in the Civil War. Then write a brief report answering the following questions: How did these rifle muskets differ from smoothbore muskets? How much better did they work? How did this affect major infantry battles? How did it affect the overall numbers of dead and wounded in the Civil War? Which side, if any, benefitted most from the fact that these rifle muskets were used in the war? Why?
2. **Small-group activity:** Do some research into some of the main large-scale battles of the Civil War, such as Antietam or Gettysburg. Have each member bring in books with at least five drawings of these battles. From these illustrations, choose ten to show the class in a brief talk called "Our Story in Pictures of the Typical Civil War Battlefield."

Lesson 2—Warriors and Warfare

Illustration 2



The National Archives



The National Archives

Discussing the Illustrations

1. These two men were both very important figures in the history of the Civil War. Can you identify each man?
2. In general, describe the important role each of these men played in the Civil War.
3. Photographs can fool you. But historians would probably say these two photos do give a good idea of what these great generals were like. Study the photos closely. Notice how the two men are dressed, where they are standing, their facial expressions, their posture, and so on. What idea of each man do you get from his photograph? That is, what kind of person or what kind of leader does each seem to be?
4. One historian made this comment about the photos: *“In these photos, each man seems to exemplify the character traits and values of his region at that time in our history.”* What do you think this historian meant? Do you agree or disagree with his view? Why?

Follow-up Activities

1. At one point, Abraham Lincoln asked Robert E. Lee to lead the Union armies. Instead, Lee decided to side with the South. He wrote: “With all my devotion to the Union, and the feeling of loyalty and duty of an American citizen, I have not been able to make up my mind to raise my hand against my relatives, my children, my home.” Write a brief essay describing your reaction to Lee’s decision. In the essay, explain your views about the words quoted here. Do you agree with them, disagree with them, or have mixed feelings about them? Why? What would you have done if you had been Robert E. Lee? Why?
2. Read a biography of Robert E. Lee or Ulysses S. Grant. After you finish the book, think about this question: Would the above photo of the man you have read about be good to use on the cover of his biography? Write a brief essay explaining why you would or would not use this photo on the book cover.

Illustration 3



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Discussing the Illustration

1. This is a famous Civil War battle. It shows the attack by the 54th Massachusetts Colored Regiment on Fort Wagner, South Carolina. This attack took place on July 18, 1863. What do you suppose it felt like to take part in an attack of the sort shown here? What do you suppose the African American soldiers in the attack felt about it? What do you suppose were the thoughts and feelings of the Southern Confederate soldiers being attacked?
2. At first, many in the North doubted that blacks would fight with courage. Why do you suppose so many people had these doubts?
3. This attack on Fort Wagner had a big effect on people who still had doubts about African American soldiers. What effect do you suppose it had?
4. Half of the 54th regiment died in this battle. And Fort Wagner was not even captured. Yet for African Americans this battle was a truly great victory. Why do you think that is so?

Follow-up Activities

1. Pretend it is the night before this attack on Fort Wagner. You are an African American soldier about to go into this battle. Write a long letter home to your family explaining your feelings about the war, the upcoming battle, and other matters such a soldier might have had on his mind that evening.
2. The 54th was led by Robert Gould Shaw, the white son of an abolitionist. He was killed in the fighting, and Confederate soldiers threw his body into a ditch with the rest of his men. Shaw's father later wrote:

“The poor benighted wretches thought they were heaping indignities upon his body, but the act recoils upon them. . . . We can imagine no holier place than that in which he is . . . nor wish him better company . . . what a body guard he has!”

What do you think about what the Confederate soldiers did? What do you think about these words from Shaw's father? Discuss these questions in class.

OBJECTIVE

1. Students will better understand some of the many economic, social and political factors behind the lines of battle that influenced the course of the war and its ultimate outcome.

Behind the Lines

Use the background information on this page to help your students better understand the three illustrations making up this lesson. The questions and activities presented in the rest of the lesson can be used to help students clarify meanings and debate important issues.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION**Illustration 1**

Abraham Lincoln was a physically tall man. But he was a towering figure in far important ways as well. As president, he had to unite the North and give it a reason to fight a long, horrible war. As commander in chief, he was the top military leader who had to plan strategy and make sure his generals carried out that strategy. Lincoln was often impatient with some of his generals, especially George B. McClellan. This photo shows Lincoln meeting with McClellan at his headquarters. In 1862, Lincoln removed McClellan as head of the Union forces for being too timid. Many see in this famous photo signs of the mistrust between the two men. The photo also seems to convey Lincoln's plain and humble, yet powerful and dignified personal character.

Illustration 2

The Civil War was one of the first big wars affected in a major way by the Industrial Revolution. The North's greater ability to move soldiers and supplies by rail gave it a big advantage over the South. It far outnumbered the South in factories able to provide modern weapons and supplies. Other new kinds of technology important in the war were the telegraph and a new rifle musket. That musket gave soldiers much greater range and accuracy than the smoothbore muskets of the past. Ironclad warships and repeating weapons were also introduced, hinting at the more sweeping impact of technology on warfare yet to come.

Illustration 3

We often think of the North as completely united behind Lincoln's strong leadership. This cartoon should set the record straight. It is about the presidential election campaign of 1864. In that wartime election, the Democrats nominated General McClellan. Even after he was removed as head of the army, McClellan remained popular—especially with Northern voters who opposed the war or at least wanted it settled quickly. Many such people accused Lincoln of dictatorial rule (he did in fact suspend certain individual rights during the war). In this cartoon, Lincoln is shown as an abolitionist, just as fanatic in his hatred of slavery as Confederate Jefferson Davis is in support of it. McClellan is shown as the statesman, standing between Lincoln and Davis (on the right) as they tear the Union apart.

Lesson 3—Behind the Lines

Illustration 1



The National Archives

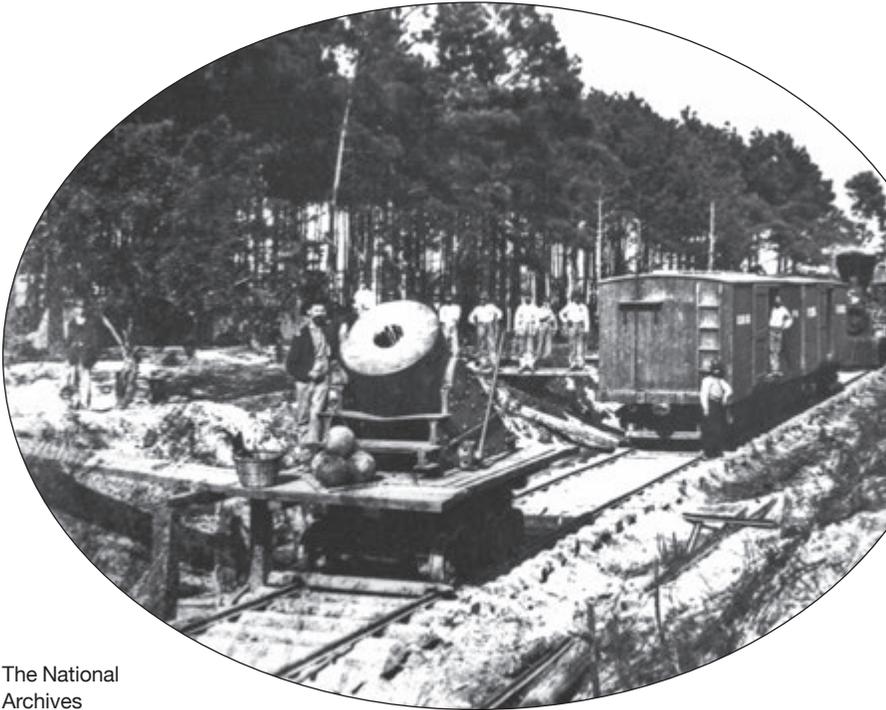
Discussing the Illustration

1. This photo shows President Lincoln meeting with the general in command at the 1862 Battle of Antietam. This general is the shorter man facing Lincoln. Can you name him?
2. The Battle of Antietam took place on September 17, 1862. What do you know about the outcome of this battle? Why was it such an important Civil War battle?
3. Lincoln was often annoyed with General McClellan. He seems to have felt that McClellan was too timid in fighting against Robert E. Lee's forces. Do you think the photo shows this tension between Lincoln and McClellan in any way? Why or why not?
4. As president, it was Lincoln's job to unite and lead civilians in the North. And as commander in chief, it was his job to lead Union soldiers and guide the war effort. What, if anything, does this photo help to show about how Lincoln performed both kinds of tasks? How good a job do you think Lincoln did in each role? Explain your answer.

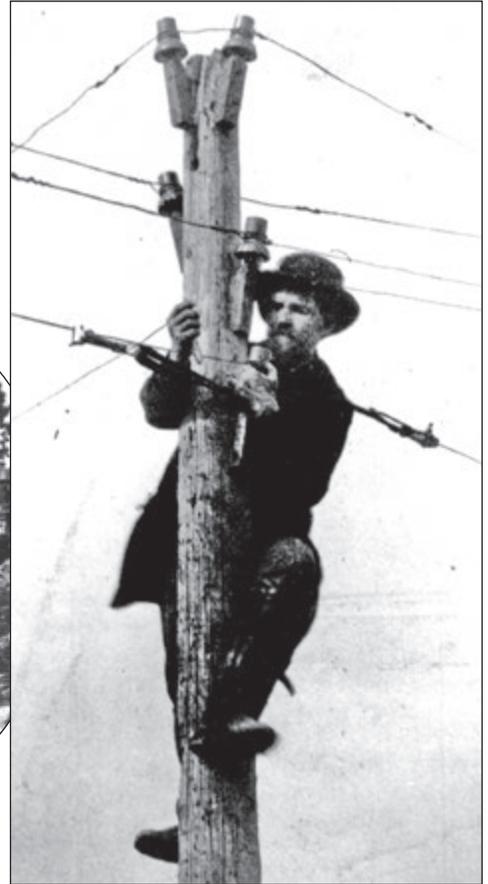
Follow-up Activities

1. **Small-group activity:** A big part of the story of the Civil War behind the lines has to do with President Lincoln's dealings with his generals. Lincoln had to make the biggest decisions about the goals of the war and the military strategies needed to win it. Your group's task is to conduct a role-playing "debate" among Lincoln's generals about Lincoln's military leadership. Each group member should read about one of these Union generals: Ulysses S. Grant, George B. McClellan, Joseph Hooker, Ambrose Burnside, Philip Henry Sheridan, William Tecumseh Sherman. Organize a panel discussion before the class on Lincoln's military leadership. In it, each member should play the part of one of the generals.
2. **Small-group activity:** Follow the same activity as above, except your group's members will play the parts of the South's generals in a debate about Confederate President Jefferson Davis' leadership. Some generals: Robert E. Lee, Braxton Bragg, "Stonewall" Jackson, Joseph E. Johnston, etc.

Illustration 2



The National Archives



The National Archives

Discussing the Illustrations

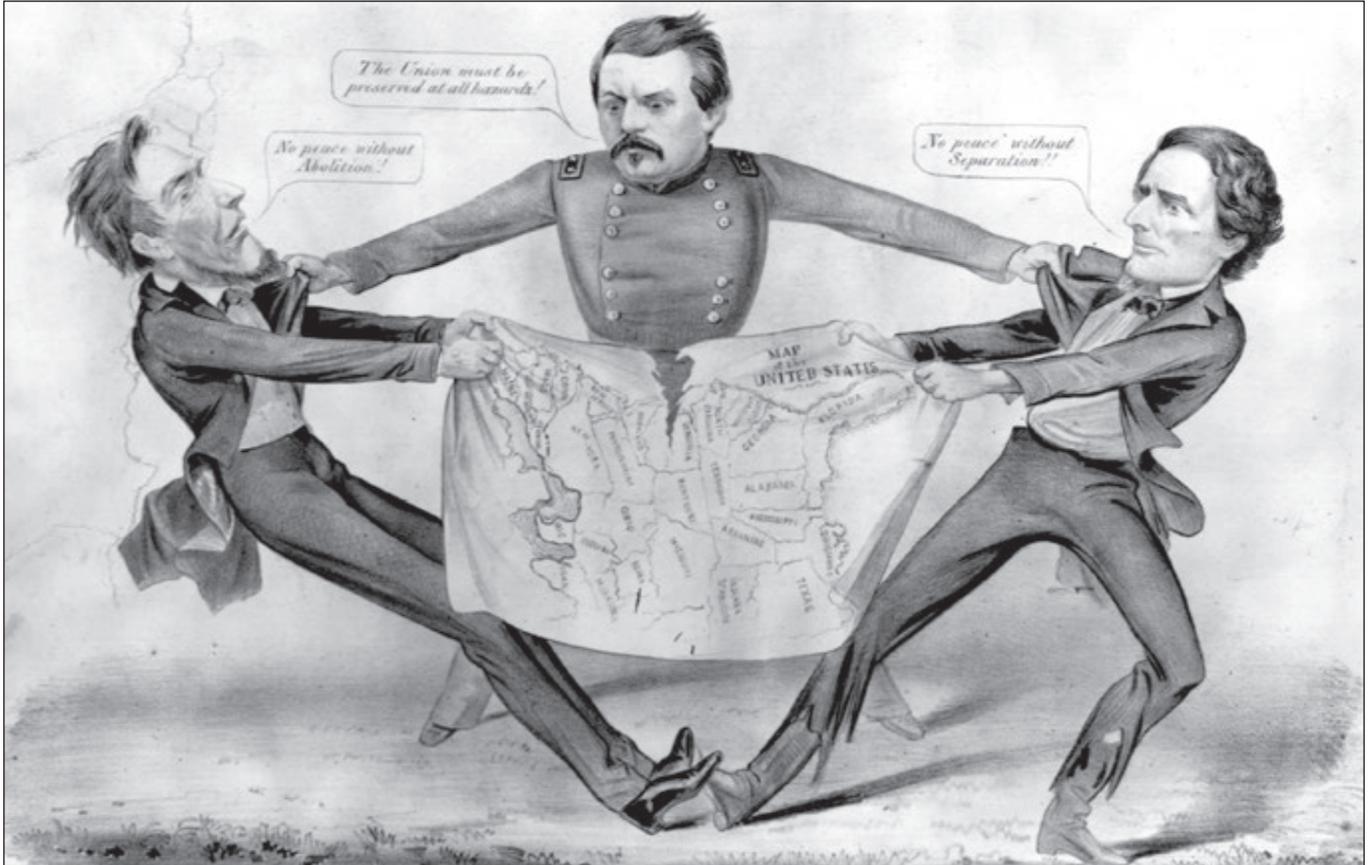
1. In a way, these photos show some of the more important weapons in the Civil War. That's clearly true of the big cannon you see. What other objects in these photos could be thought of as weapons?
2. Two inventions shown here—the railroad and telegraph—were especially important in fighting a war in the United States in the mid-1800s. Can you explain some of the reasons for this?
3. Historians say that, in general, the importance of railroads and telegraph lines gave the North a big advantage in fighting the Civil War. Why do you suppose that was?
4. What other kinds of new technology had a major effect on the way the Civil War was fought?
5. How might the railroad, telegraph, and other new kinds of technology in the Civil War have affected life for Americans who were *not* in the armies or doing any of the actual fighting?

Follow-up Activities

1. Suppose you had the choice to be a cavalry soldier in the Civil War, a soldier guarding a huge earthworks fortification, or a soldier guarding a train carrying arms and supplies, such as the train shown above. Which task would you have chosen? Why? Discuss this question as a whole class.
2. **Small-group activity:** In 1861, the North was far superior to the South in a number of important ways. It had twice as many people as the South, ten times the amount of factory production, more than twice as much railroad mileage, and many times more draft animals, firearms, iron, coal, ships and other kinds of wealth. All the South had was more cotton. Why then was it so hard for the North to defeat the South in the Civil War? As a group find out how at least five textbooks or other sources on the Civil War answer this question. Look in the index of each book under headings such as “advantages of North and South.” Summarize the views of these books in a discussion with the entire class.

Lesson 3—Behind the Lines

Illustration 3



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Discussing the Illustration

1. In 1864, as the Civil War raged on, a presidential election took place in the North. This cartoon is about that election. But only one of the two men tearing the nation apart here was a candidate in that election. Who are the two men tearing the nation apart here?
2. Lincoln did have an opponent in the 1864 election. He is shown in the middle here. He was at one time the Union's top general. Can you name him?
3. In the cartoon, Lincoln says, "No peace without abolition." Davis says, "No peace without separation." McClellan then says, "The Union must be preserved at all hazards!" From these words, how does the artist who drew this cartoon seem to view the differences between Lincoln and McClellan?
4. Based on your own history reading, what do you think the real differences were between Lincoln and McClellan? In other words, how accurate do you think this cartoon is? Why do you think so many in the North supported McClellan for president?

Follow-up Activity

1. In 1864, McClellan said he would seek an early end to the Civil War, but not without an agreement to keep the Union together. However, many other Democrats did favor an immediate end to the fighting, with talks between the Union and the Confederacy to follow. And for a time, it looked as though the Democrats might win the election. What do you suppose America would be like today if McClellan had won the election in 1864? Write an imaginative essay describing life today as if McClellan had won. In your essay, be sure to describe the following:

- The U.S. political system or systems
- Relations with other nations
- Life in the former Confederate states
- Life in the former Union states
- The history of your own family

OBJECTIVES

1. Students will appreciate the enormous price paid by the nation in the Civil War.
 2. Students will better understand why the Civil War's impact was felt for such a long time.
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The Bitter End

Use the background information on this page to help your students better understand the three illustrations making up this lesson. The questions and activities presented in the rest of the lesson can be used to help students clarify meanings and debate important issues.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION**Illustration 1**

The Civil War lasted four long years. Battle followed battle, with little apparent change, only more death. Both sides fought fiercely and with incredible courage. The South simply would not give up until a huge part of it was occupied by Union forces. About 600,000 Americans lost their lives in the war, more than in all of America's other wars to this day. The full horror of such numbers is hard to grasp. In a way, a photo like this of a lone Confederate soldier tells the story more powerfully. And yet slaughter on the battlefield was only one of several tragic features of the war. For example, only about a third of the Civil War deaths took place on the battlefield. Many more died of diseases from poor food, terrible medical treatment, or the awful conditions in prisoner of war camps. Thousands of soldiers lost limbs, in part because overworked and poorly trained surgeons amputated arms or legs unnecessarily.

Illustration 2

The Civil War was also devastating for civilians, especially in the South. Southerners were a conquered people. In many places, their farms, towns and cities were destroyed. They became homeless refugees like the people in this photo. The same was true for the former slaves. They were now free, but most were without land, tools, skills, or education. Moreover, they found themselves surrounded by whites who were often disinterested or hostile to them. Life was better for civilians in the North, where the economy actually grew during the war. But even there, hundreds of thousands of women were left alone to keep their families together and cope with the loss of husbands, sons, or fathers.

Illustration 3

For the soldiers themselves, the war was the most important event in their lives. Their memories of it often kept bitter feelings smoldering between North and South. President Lincoln's assassination in April 1865 made it even harder to heal these mental wounds. But for soldiers such as the one in this photo, memories could also be a source of pride and strength. The nation had paid a huge price. But it had also put an end to a huge evil—the evil of slavery. Lincoln said it best, perhaps, when he called the Civil War a “scourge” in which “every drop of blood drawn by the lash shall be paid with another drawn by the sword.”

Lesson 4—The Bitter End

Illustration 1



The National Archives

Discussing the Illustration

1. This photo shows a Confederate soldier dead in a trench at Petersburg in Virginia. The photo was taken after the Union overran this trench on April 3, 1865, just days before the end of the war. What makes this photo such a dramatic one?
2. This young man was shot and killed in battle. But actually, only about a third of the soldiers died on the battlefield, as this one did. What were some of the other big causes of death in the Civil War?
3. Altogether, more than 600,000 Americans on both sides died in the Civil War. This is a huge number. Yet many people would say that a photo of a single slain soldier makes the horror of war more real to them than hearing the total number of deaths. Is this true for you? Why or why not?
4. Most people find it upsetting to look at war photos of this sort. But many say it is important for us to see such photos if we are to understand the Civil War at all. Do you agree? Why or why not?

Follow-up Activities

1. Pretend you are a battlefield officer who must write a letter to the family of the fallen soldier you see in the above photograph. Write a letter from the field explaining what happened and expressing your own thoughts and feelings on this soldier's death.
2. This photo is attributed to Thomas C. Roche. It is a part of the Mathew Brady collection. Mathew Brady was the most famous Civil War photographer. He and several other photographers whom he hired created a vast photographic record of the Civil War. In your library, find a collection of Mathew Brady's Civil War photographs. Also do some research into Mr. Brady's life and his work during the Civil War. Choose ten photographs produced by Brady or his other cameramen that you think best help tell the story of the Civil War as these men saw it. Use the photos in a brief talk to the class about Brady, his cameramen, and their effect on our own ideas today about the Civil War.

Lesson 4—The Bitter End

Illustration 2



The National Archives

Discussing the Illustration

1. This photo shows a group of Civil War refugees about to leave their home with as many belongings as they could take with them. What might be some of the reasons for their decision to flee?
2. Compared to the North, far more people in the South became refugees like these. Why was that so?
3. Becoming a refugee would be hard for anyone. But it was often an especially serious problem for women and children. Why would that be so? What special problems would women face when enemy soldiers were fighting in an area near their homes?
4. Aside from having to become refugees, women in both the North and the South suffered in many other ways in the war. What other ways?
5. Of all the groups of Southern refugees, the problems of African American refugees in the South were the greatest. Why was that so?

Follow-up Activities

1. In 1864, in the midst of Grant's campaign to destroy Lee's forces, Thomas Halsey wrote this to his wife:
"We are now in fine country but oh what devastation we make. Houses are all deserted & crops are left to be trampled under... I have seen but one man at work since we left Brandy Station. There is not much but corn raised here & that is not cared for as I presume they have no one to do it. We have been shelling Petersburg now for two days. I suppose it must be deserted."
Do some background reading on conditions in the South near the end of the Civil War. Then pretend you are a Northern news reporter and use this quote in a longer report about those conditions.
2. Ask your librarian to help you find a copy of *Behind the Lines: A Sourcebook on the Civil War*, by Carter Smith (Millbrook Press, 1993). Read this book and choose three to five passages from it to share with your class in a discussion about life for civilians behind the lines during the Civil War.

Lesson 4—The Bitter End

Illustration 3



The National Archives

Discussing the Illustration

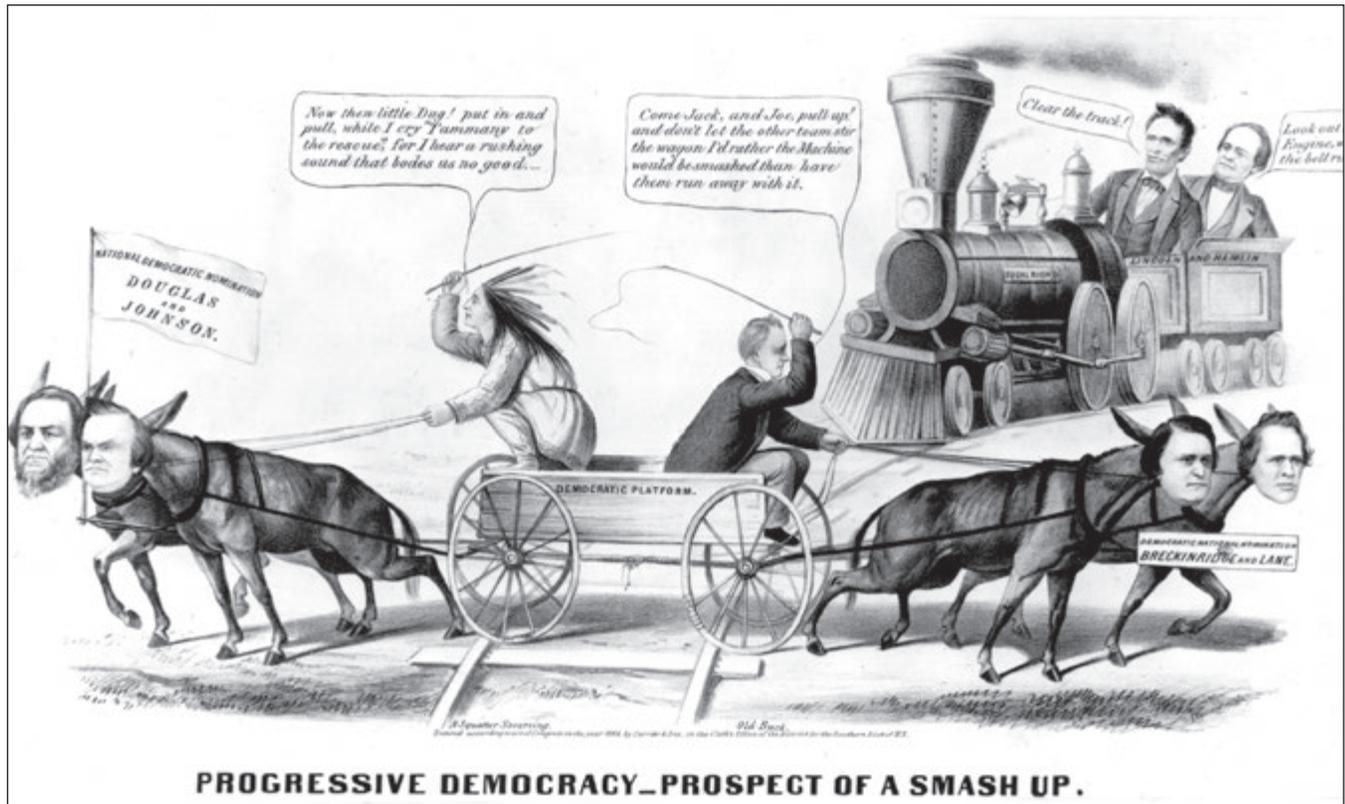
1. This Union soldier is holding the flag of the Eighth Pennsylvania Infantry. Why do you think he chose to be photographed with this particular flag?
2. Many soldiers came home from the war alive and well. But thousands of others spent the rest of their lives without limbs or with other serious wounds. What do you suppose life was like for those veterans?
3. For decades, the memories of the Civil War veterans played a big role in the nation's life, affecting elections as well as social and political ideas. What do you think some of these effects might have been?
4. One historian says of this picture: *"It's a simple photograph. Yet it seems to have several levels of meaning. In a way, it sums up the whole Civil War, both as a military conflict and as an enormous social and political event in the nation's history."* What do you think this historian means? Do you agree? In your opinion, what is so important about the Civil War in our nation's history?

Follow-up Activities

1. The Civil War divided the nation into two opposing sides. But it also often divided communities and even families. Many officers who had trained at West Point and who knew each other there later fought against one another in the Civil War. Read *Band of Brothers: West Point in the Civil War* by Thomas Fleming (Walker, 1988). Choose two officers from the book who knew each other, fought on different sides in the Civil War, and survived the war. Pretend you are one of these soldiers years later. Write a long letter to the other soldier. Then pretend you are that soldier and write a letter back.
2. Read the full text of Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address and his famous Second Inaugural Address. Then pretend you are the soldier in the above photo. You have just returned from the war and someone shows you these two speeches by Lincoln. Write a long letter to the editor of your local newspaper commenting on your war experience (use your imagination) and the words of President Lincoln.

Image Close-ups

The Divided Nation Illustration 1



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

The Divided Nation

Illustration 2



The National Archives

The Divided Nation
Illustration 3



The National Archives

Warriors and Warfare
Illustration 1



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Warriors and Warfare

Illustration 2

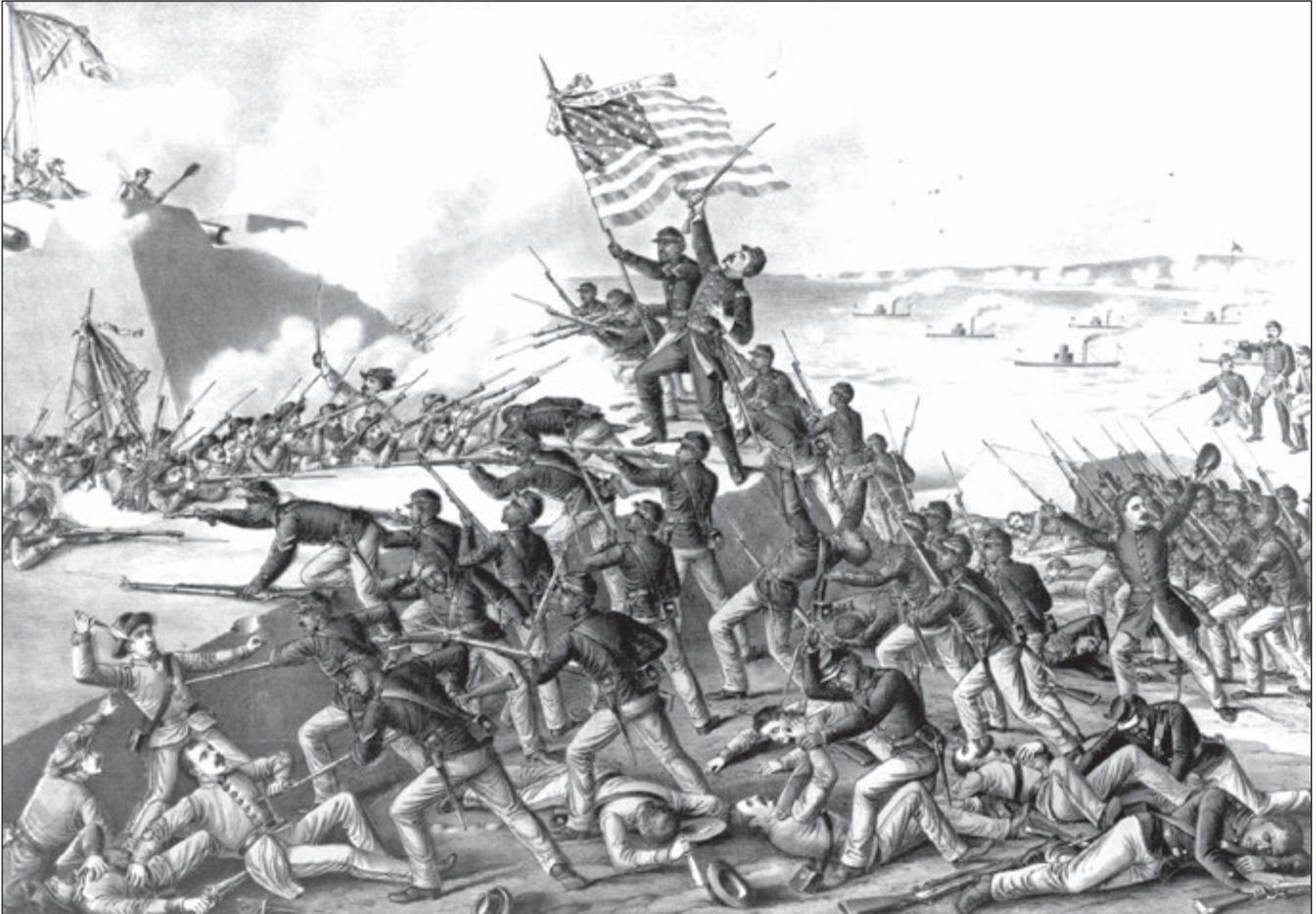


The National Archives



The National Archives

Warriors and Warfare
Illustration 3



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Behind the Lines
Illustration 1

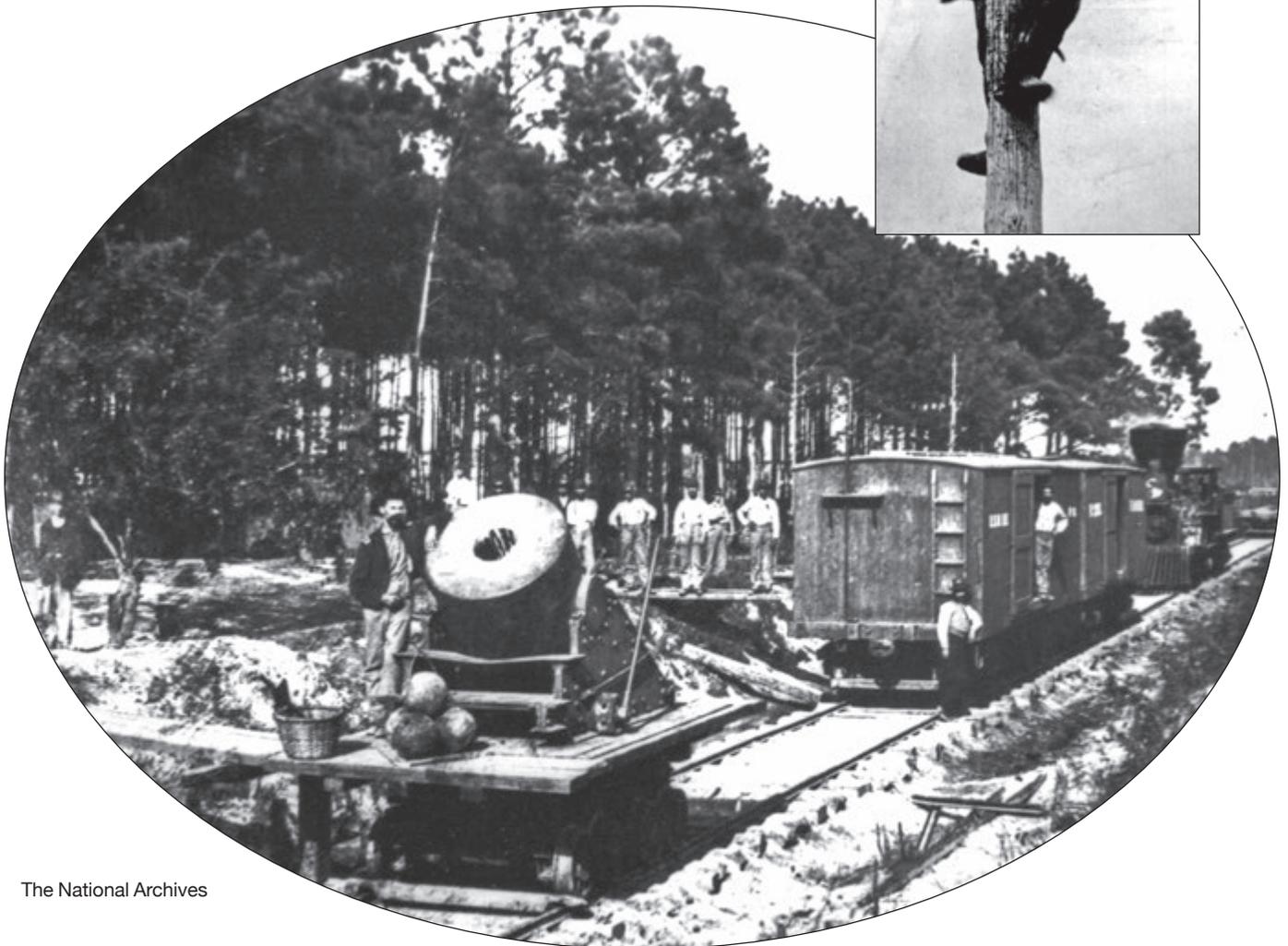
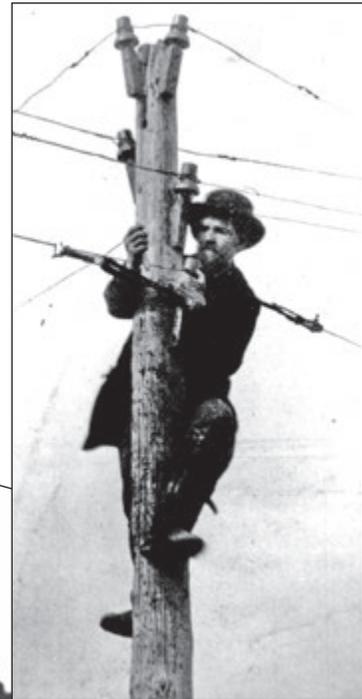


The National Archives

Behind the Lines

Illustration 2

The National Archives



The National Archives

The Bitter End
Illustration 1



The National Archives

The Bitter End **Illustration 2**



The National Archives

The Bitter End
Illustration 3



The National Archives

