

# North and south in the civil war



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At the onset of the American Civil War, following the secession of the South from the Union to create the Confederate States of America, the North and South were two completely different worlds in terms of their way of life. Simply put, each region had a different goal for itself, had moved in a very different direction over the past 100 years since the end of the Revolutionary period. When the Civil War began in 1861 the two armies that would meet in battle after battle throughout the turbulent, bloody years of the Civil War were as different as any two groups could be, despite the fact that they were from the same country, in terms of their geography, their politics, and their military, all of which were contributing factors in the ultimate outcome of the war itself.

The geography of the two regions of the United States can be linked to perhaps the major difference in terms of the two sides. In the North, where climates were colder, summer's were shorter, and the productivity of small farming was low, industrialization became a major part of their way of life. People in the north mostly lived in towns or cities, and their livelihoods depended on going to work everyday at a factory or within some industry.

They were used to taking orders and fulfilling them on a deadline. In the South, with their warm climate and long growing seasons, farming became a way of life. They lived an agrarian lifestyle, and therefore became more independent in terms of their views and thoughts. They had never had to answer to someone telling them what to do in the way that factory workers in the North did, which led to free-thinking and a sense of strong-willed independence. Their geography affected the way they thought and felt about

themselves, and this would be an extremely important factor in the Civil War.

The political climates of each region were affected by the types of mind sets that each group developed because of their ways of life. In the North, the prevailing idea was to create a strong and centralized federal government that would supercede any of the politics of the individual states. The view was that the federal government would have to be stronger than the states so that the country could create a higher power, so to speak, in government that would establish rules, regulations, and laws that all states had to abide by.

Basically, the North wanted the government to be a mini-version of working for a business in the North—people not questioning the decisions of the federal government, and instead simply obeying. This idea went against everything the agrarian, independent South stood for. Besides the institution of slavery, the issues went much deeper as southerners felt that only a local, state government could really know the issues and problems for their individual states, and only a state government was best to deal with it. The secession from the Union to create the Confederate States of America just prior to the Civil War is a perfect example of how serious the South was about this.

Militarily, the North and the South were very different as well. The North had three-times the population of the South, which meant many more soldiers to help the Union cause if the war was long and drawn out. In the North people were used to taking orders and blindly following them; in the South, people

were much more independent-minded. The North also had one major advantage, the fact that they were industrialized and could quickly open and run factories to supply the army with any necessities, including arms and ammunition. This created a major divide in the two armies, that would end in a Union victory.

The North and South were two completely different places, despite the fact they resided in the same borders. Their differences were too large to overcome without a war, and the Civil War was the cumulation of the politic and social bickering that had been happening for years. It is hard to imagine the South winning in light of so much stacked against them, and the North was simply better prepared due to their way of life and their industry to fight a long-standing war.

## **Works Cited**

1. Nelson, Rebecca, ed. *The Handy History Answer Book*. Detroit: Invisible Ink, 1999. 105-110.