

Explain the federal
government's
success in the civil
war



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The Federal Government's Success in the Civil War When it became apparent that there was going to be a civil war between the South and the North over the issue of slavery, the South started out with numerous strikes against them while the North possessed several advantages. The South was mostly an agriculture area while the North possessed factories and resources that the South did not. Despite the South's bravado that the war would not last but a few months, the war actually went on for over four years and the devastation and destruction that the South suffered became paramount in the fact that it would be a long and slow recovery before the area would return to its once prosperity.

A great deal of the South's population was black and the number of men to call up for military service was far less than what the North possessed which was aided by a draft that was imposed by the federal government or the United States government at the beginning of the war. This did a great deal to ensure the success of the North as well, though there was strong opposition in many places against the act of war upon the southern part of the United States. People in New York knew that if the North won the war that there would be thousands of freed blacks that could possibly move north and take over the jobs of regular layman for fewer wages.

“ Such rhetoric inflamed smoldering tensions. Draft dodgers and mobs killed several enrollment officers during the spring and summer. AntiNegro violence erupted in a number of cities. Nowhere was the tinder more flammable than in New York City, with its large Irish population and powerful Democratic machine. Crowded into noisome tenements in a city with the worst disease mortality and highest crime rate in the Western world, working in low-skill jobs for marginal wages, fearful of competition from black

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workers, hostile toward the Protestant middle and upper classes who often disdained or exploited them, the Irish were ripe for revolt against this war waged by Yankee Protestants for black freedom. (McPherson 609)”

This, however, did not stop the North’s cause to bring about black freedom and they enacted some financial matters to insure that their Union soldiers would be paid and have proper supplies as in the following quote.

“ Unlike the Confederacy, which relied on loans for less than two-fifths of its war finances, the Union raised two-thirds of its revenues by this means. And while the South ultimately obtained only 5 or 6 percent of its funds by actual taxation, the northern government raised 21 percent in this manner.

Congress revised the tariff upward several times during the conflict, but wartime customs duties averaged only \$75 million a year--scarcely more, after adjustment for inflation, than the \$60 million annually in the mid-1850s. Far more important in potential, though not at first in realization, were the new internal taxes levied in the North, beginning with the first federal income tax in American history enacted on August 5, 1861.”(McPherson 443)

Between better financing, better production resources and stronger manpower, the Union was able to defeat the Confederate States with far less cost to the northern population and less destruction to northern land. Almost all the battles were fought on southern soil and the Union crippled the south repeatedly in strategy and naval.

On an interesting note, the United States government actually became termed the “ federal government” at the end of the Civil War when it was then divided from the status of the state governments. The government of the Union was successful due to a better political machine to handle the War
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Between the States.

Works Cited

McPherson, James M., *Battle Cry of Freedom, The Civil War Era*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1988