Fitzgerald  
Topic 9 - Life for People During the War

A Soldier's Life

Raising Civil War Units from Same Geographic Area - The Consequences

* often in the same units as their friends, family and neighbors.
* if ran away during a battle, all of his neighbors, friends and family would hear about it.
* if a unit suffered horrendous casualties during a battle, it could effectively wipe out the male population of a small town.

**Camp Life - 3/4ths of the time a soldier is in camp**

* **10 hours a day of training**
* **guard duty**
* **gathering firewood**
* **digging latrines**
* **writing home**
* **basic food -** light bread, coffee, fresh meat when available, salt meat, beans, rice, onions, Irish and sweet potatoes and hardtack. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sf0IOVIB6Bc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sf0IOVIB6Bc%20)
* **Camps could be miserable**
  + **wet**
  + **no clean water -** health threat
  + **disease** - not unusual for 1/2 of men in a regiment to be too sick to fight

**Disease - the biggest killers during the war**

* reasons - bad hygiene, overcrowded army camps, bad water, bad food, and lack of proper sanitation
  + - latrine placed upstream from the water supply - foul water would quickly lead to water
* worst disease was Dysentery, which caused 45,000 Union and 50,000 Confederate deaths
* other disease included: Typhoid, Pneumonia, Measles, Tuberculosis, and Malaria.

**Civil War Medicine**

* Huge numbers of casualties - caused by
  + Greatly improved weapon technology - including the rifled gun barrels, minie ball, case shots that exploded over infantry, and canisters that made cannons work like shotguns
  + Coupled with old style battle tactics
* Medicine primitive - years behind the military technology
* Sanitation non-existent
  + - any type of open wound could easily become infected leading to severe complications even death
* Chloroform was available as an anesthetic
  + - Great quantities of it in both the north and the south
* Wounds to the head and truck were not treated
  + - Patients were made comfortable until they died
* Wounds to the limbs led to amputation
  + - Most recognizable piece of medical equipment - bone saw
    - 75% of surgeries in the field were amputations

**Prison Camps -** overcrowded deathtraps

* **1/10 soldiers who died in the war died in the camps**
* Two most famous

**Elmira, New York - Union Camp**

* + built to hold 5,000 - holds 10,000
  + in coldest, snowiest part of Union
  + fed only bread and water - eat rats to survive

**Andersonville, Georgia - Confederate Camp**

* + built for 10,000 - holds 35,000
  + a fenced open field with no shade
  + 100 die each day of starvation and exposure

**The Home Front - It would take *decades* for many communities to recover, both physically and emotionally**

* Family members **waited anxiously for word of soldiers**
  + - wrote frequently to their relatives in the field - cherished the letters they received in return
    - struggled to get accurate, timely information about battles and the fate of their loved ones
    - usually received news of death through a letter sent by an officer, comrade, or relative
* Missed labor of soldiers - **women had to do jobs once filled by men**
  + - working as clerks or in factories, planted and harvested crops and tended livestock
    - on large plantations in the South - relay orders to overseers and slaves
* **New jobs opened for women as nurses and teachers**
  + - men had previously been seen as teachers
* Many **families** **in the Upper South and in Coastal areas of the Confederacy** **relocated** -
  + - Went to live with friends or relatives
* Near the fighting - **soldiers from both sides stripped the countryside**
  + - took food, livestock, forage for the few remaining horses, and wood for fires
* People **near battles were devastated by the loss of life and the destruction**
  + - more wounded than local residents could care and had to bury the dead
    - Almost every available nearby building became a temporary hospital
* In the **Upper South**, in **rural** and **mountainous** areas outside of military control - **Guerillas attacked civilians with no men home to help protect them**
  + - Confederate bands targeted Unionists and vice versa
* **Soldiers’ aid societies** were developed
  + - made bandages, socks and other clothing, and regimental flags
    - handed out water, cakes, pies, fruit, and other foods to passing troops
* **Women able to act as spies** 
  + - men in positions of authority assumed that women didn't understand such things as war
    - spoke freely of confidential information
* **Runaway slaves gave the Union valuable information**
  + - Confederate troop movement
    - local geography and roads
    - Harriet Tubman - most famous African American informant for Union forces
      * disquised as slave, served as a scout in South Carolina and Florida
* **Slaves sabotaged Southern plantations**
  + - Purposefully performed tasks incorrectly - ex. Planted seeds too deep
    - Broke equipment - claimed did not know how to fix it
* **In Confederacy - food shortages** - due to blockade and scavenging soldiers
  + - Led to bread riots
    - Inflation - high, high prices for things
* **When the war ended, welcomed home soldiers**
  + - Still suffering - debilitating disease - dysentery, malaria, tuberculosis, lungs damaged by pneumonia, amputated limbs, post-traumatic stress disorder
* Estimates between **620,000 and 750,000 men killed - leave widows and orphans**

**Women in the War - nurses, spies, and soldiers**

## [A Civil War nurse attending to two injured soldiers](http://civilwarsaga.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/Civil-War-nurse.jpg)Women Nurses

* **Between 2,000 to 5,000 women volunteered as nurses during the Civil War**
* Nursing was a **gruesome job** -
  + - cleaned and bandaged wounds, fed soldiers, dispensed medication, assisted surgeons during operations and treatment for things like amputations
* **Most** **famous nurse** of the Civil War - **Clara Barton**
  + - worked as a clerk in the U.S. patent office when the Civil War broke out
    - began to show up at local battlefields armed with medical supplies, which she used to nurse sick and wounded soldiers
    - nickname “Angel of the Battlefield”
    - Years later - used this experience inspired Barton to found the American Red Cross
* Union Hospitals organized by Dorothea Dix - the young reformer famous for campaigning for the opening mental hospitals to get the mentally ill out of prison before the war

## Women Spies

* It is speculated that **hundreds of**[**women served as spies**](http://civilwarsaga.com/women-spies-in-the-civil-war/)
  + - usually **gathered valuable military information by flirting with male soldiers at parties, dinners or other social events**, especially when men had been drinking
    - also smuggled supplies, ammunition and medicine across enemy lines
* **Most famous Confederate spy was Belle Boyd**, from Virginia
  + - At 17, arrested for shooting a Union soldier who had broken into her family’s
    - investigated and cleared her of all charges but watched closely
    - Young and attractive, used charms to get information officers, which passed along to the Confederacy
    - also worked as a courier between Confederate generals "Stonewall" Jackson and P.G.T. Beauregard - credited with providing the intelligence that helped win many victories
    - 1862 - arrested, sent to prison in Washington, D.C., released a month later and deported to Richmond
    - soon caught behind federal lines and imprisoned for three more months
    - arrested again while trying to smuggle Confederate papers to England
    - fled the country and a few months later married one of the Union naval officers who had detained her

## Women Soldiers - Forbidden to join the military - still over 400 [women served](http://civilwarsaga.com/women-soldiers-in-the-civil-war/)

* Overwhelmingly **working-class, immigrant, poor, urban or subsistence farm** **girls**
* **Disguised themselves as men** and adopted masculine names
  + - Often only **discovered while being treated for injuries or illnesses**