HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Tennessee seceded from the United States on May 7, 1861, and became the last state to join the Confederacy. Tennesseans were deeply divided over secession, and these divided loyalties resulted in Tennesseans fighting on both sides of the war.

Tennesseans witnessed the war firsthand with over 2,900 military engagements taking place in the state, the most of any state besides Virginia. Residents on the homefront struggled to survive under increasingly difficult circumstances. Troops raided homes and farms for food and supplies. They commandeered community buildings and houses, as well as private and public lands for camps, headquarters, and hospitals. Women managed farms and households on their own while their men were away at war. African Americans sought to gain their freedom by flight or by contributing to the Union cause.

By the end of the war, Tennesseans had witnessed considerable destruction to the landscape and economy. Their society, furthermore, was irrevocably changed. Tennessee became the first state to rejoin the Union in July 1866, and began the long road to recovery.

FROM THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS:

- Teachers Page: Themed Resources: Civil War
- American Memory Timeline: Civil War and Reconstruction, 1861-1877
- US Civil War: Selected Resources
- Civil War Photographs
- Civil War Maps
- Today in History, June 8: Tennessee secedes
- Today in History, December 16: Battle of Nashville

ALSO SEE:

- “Civil War” and “Civil War Occupation” from the Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture
- TPS- MTSU July 2010 Newsletter
- TPS- MTSU Civil War Links Guide
- Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area

SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHERS

The Library of Congress offers a wide variety of primary sources related to the Civil War, allowing students to think about the war in a larger context than just military history. Music, photographs, biographies, letters, and art illustrate the broader societal impact of the Civil War.

This source set focuses on photographs, maps, and sheet music to help students understand how different aspects of community and family life were drastically affected by the war. You may choose to analyze all the photographs, or all the maps, for instance, or select one or two from each category to help students learn to “read” different kinds of sources.

How did new technology such as photography impact how Tennesseans saw the war? What do the photographs show of daily life on the homefront? What do maps reveal about the geographic impact of battle and occupation? Can you find a map that represents your community during the Civil War? How does the music of this time period reflect the feelings of Tennesseans at home? How does it reflect soldiers’ thoughts about home and family?
Nashville, Tennessee. [Spectators watching the fight between Hood and Thomas]. [1864]

Nashville, Tennessee. View of city. [1864]

Chattanooga, Tennessee (vicinity). Blockhouse on the Nashville & Chattanooga Railroad [1864]

[Murfreesboro, Tenn., vicinity. Men repairing single-track railroad after Battle of Stone's River]. [1863]

Portrait of Pvt. Robert Patterson, Company D, 12th Tennessee Infantry, C.S.A. [between 1860 and 1865, re-photographed 1961]

Seeking for the wounded, by torch-light, after the battle [1862 March 8]
Knoxville, Tenn. Environs of Knoxville seen from south bank of Tennessee River; East Tennessee University in middle distance [1864?]

Oaklands, North Maney Avenue, Murfreesboro, Rutherford, TN: 2.
SOUTH (front) ELEVATION HABS TENN,75-MURFS,1-2

Lloyd's official map of the State of Tennessee Compiled from actual surveys and official documents, showing every rail road & rail road station with the distances between each station. Also the counties and county seats, cities, towns, villages, post offices, wagon roads, canals, forts, fortifications, &c. [1863]

Map of the battle of Nashville, dec. 15th & 16th 1864
Based on the government surveyed and drawn under the direction of Gen. Tower by M. Peseux. [S.I., 1887]

Memphis and vicinity / surveyed and drawn by order of Maj. Genl. W. T. Sherman, by Lieuts. Pitzman & Frick, Topographical Engineers. [186-]

A Thrilling scene in east Tennessee--Colonel Fry and the Union men swearing by the flag [published 1862]
Plat of Murfreesboro, Taken from a top'l. sketch of Murfreesboro and its environs. Surveyed under the direction of Capt. N. Michler, Top'l. Engrs., U.S.A. [S.I. 1863?]

Map of the approaches and defences of Knoxville, Tenn., showing the positions occupied by the United States & Confederate forces during the siege. Surveyed by direction of Capt. O. M. Poe ..., 1863-4. By Cleveland Rockwell & R. H. Talcott, [n.p., 1864. Knoxville, Tennessee Valley Authority, 1974?]


Knoxville from Mabry’s house, looking towards the southwest, March, 1864.
First line: The years creep slowly by Lorena [186-]

De darkie's rally / words and music by W.W. Partridge, [1863]

Bonnie blue flag; A Southern patriotic song. 1861

The soldiers funeral. By John Ross Dix

In our own dear homes again! By John Ross Dix.

Want-a substitute, By George P. Holt.

Texts:

Thirty years a slave. From bondage to freedom. The institution of slavery as seen on the plantation and in the home of the planter. Autobiography of Louis Hughes.

The testimony of a refugee from east Tennessee / Bokum, Hermann, 1807-1878.
CITATIONS: IMPACT OF THE CIVIL WAR ON THE TENNESSEE HOMEFRONT

Teachers: Providing these primary source replicas without source clues may enhance the inquiry experience for students. This list of citations is supplied for reference purposes to you and your students. We have followed the Chicago Manual of Style format, one of the formats recommended by the Library of Congress, for each entry below, minus the access date. The access date for each of these entries is May 21, 2010.


Cowen, James. Map of the battle of Nashville, dec. 15th & 16th 1864 Based on the government surveyed and drawn under the direction of Gen. Tower by M. Peseux. Map. [S.l., 1887] From Library of Congress, Civil War Maps. http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/gmd:@field(NUMBER+@band(g3964n+cw0430000)+@field(COLLID+cwmap))

Lloyd, James. Lloyd's official map of the State of Tennessee Compiled from actual surveys and official documents, showing every rail road & rail road station with the distances between each station. Also the counties and county seats, cities, towns, villages, post offices, wagon roads, canals, forts, fortifications, &c. Map. New York, J. T. Lloyd, 1863. From Library of Congress, Civil War Maps. http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/gmd:@field(NUMBER+@band(g3960+cw0389800)+@field(COLLID+cwmap))

Michler, Nathaniel. "Plat of Murfreesboro. Taken from a top'l. sketch of Murfreesboro and its environs. Surveyed under the direction of Capt. N. Michler, Top'l. Engrs. U.S.A. Map. [S.l., 1863?] From Library of Congress, Civil War Maps. http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/gmd:@filreq(@field(NUMBER+@band(g1964m+cw0429200))+@field(COLLID+cwdmap))

Rockwell, Cleveland. "Map of the approaches and defences of Knoxville, Tenn., showing the positions occupied by the United States & Confederate forces during the siege. Surveyed by direction of Capt. O. M. Poe ... 1863-4. By Cleveland Rockwell & R. H. Talcott. Map. [n.p., 1864. Knoxville, Tennessee Valley Authority, 1974?] From Library of Congress, Civil War Maps. http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/gmd:@filreq(@field(NUMBER+@band(g3964k+cw0428200))+@field(COLLID+cwmap))


