

**1** "Men from the North felt that the South had illegally seceded from the Union and that the rebellion should be squashed. Soldiers from the South felt that the government of the United States was infringing on their rights to secession and were completely justified in fighting for them."

**4** "Black recruiters such as Frederick Douglass urged former slaves to "fly to arms and smite with death the power that denied you liberty" and to "give your life yet again to gain your freedom." Many fought for freedom, but most blacks didn't join the Union Army for that cause alone. They joined to fight to earn the same rights, privileges, and respect given to any other ordinary citizen and to prove to themselves and the nation that they deserved it."

**6** "Louisiana free blacks gave their reason for fighting in a letter written to New Orleans' Daily Delta: "The free colored population love their home, their property, their own slaves and recognize no other country than Louisiana, and are ready to shed their blood for her defense. They have no sympathy for Abolitionism; no love for the North, but they have plenty for Louisiana."

**2** "Popular pressure was a very strong factor for enlisting to fight for the Confederacy (as well as the Union). Thousands of persons indifferent to enlisting, and even many who were openly opposed to it, were swept like a wave into the ranks in 1861 by the tremendous force of popular pressure."

**5** "The most obvious reasons...as is most of the time...are the simplest ones. Northerners had grown increasingly against the injustice of involuntary servitude.... The South...having such reliance on the slaves fought to keep the old way of life intact. Both fought for the principles of freedom however...the North to free slaves and the South to maintain the freedom of states to do as they wished."

**3** "In the South, 385,000 families owned slaves, out of a white population of 1,516,000 families. In the Army of Northern Virginia, for example, the majority of soldiers did not come from families that even had a direct personal stake in slavery. Therefore, "it was not the issue of slavery for which the average officer or enlisted man went to war." Actually, what really motivated them to enlist was their tremendous pride in their own land and to protect against invasion from what they and their fathers had achieved.

# WHY DID WE FIGHT?

**EXPLORING  
THE REASONS  
FOR FIGHTING  
THE CIVIL WAR!**

**7** "Some, like a 12-year-old girl who joined as a drummer boy, were fleeing an abusive home situation. For poor, working-class, and farm women, the bounties and pay (\$13 per month for Union soldiers, \$11 per month for Confederates) served as an incentive. A small number of women were living as men prior to the war and felt the same pressure as men to enlist. One Northern woman was a staunch abolitionist who fought because "slavery was an awful thing." A Southern counterpart sought adventure, yearning to "shoulder my pistol and shoot some Yankees."

**8** "The legacy of the Founding Fathers was also invoked in the North, saying that this nation founded by their wisdom and the blood of the revolutionaries must be preserved. In the South, many claimed they were fighting for liberty and invoked the Founding Fathers in a different way. As one Texas Confederate put it, the Revolution brought "liberty and freedom in this western world, [and we are] now enlisted in 'The Holy Cause of Liberty and Independence' again."

**9** "Some of us volunteered to fight for Union. Some came in mainly because we were bored at home and this looked like it might be fun. Some came because we were ashamed not to. Many of us came . . . because it was the right thing to do.... But freedom . . . is not just a word. This is free ground. All the way from here to the Pacific Ocean. No man has to bow.... What we're all fighting for, in the end, is each other."