

Matthew Rodibaugh

Periods 1 and 2

Mrs. Waling

27 May 2010

## The Real Civil War

The reality of the American Civil War brought out the fight and desire in many men. The men who gave in to the desire to fight enlisted for this horrid war. Patriotism, which is the desire to live for a country, made hundreds of thousands of men decide to go fight in the Civil War. Another reason to enlist, as told in Stephen Crane's book, The Red Badge of Courage, were because of all the tales of glory and stories of previous war heroes. Ray E. Boomhower tells about Lew Wallace in his book, The Sword and the Pen. Lew Wallace, who became a Civil war hero, wanted to become part of the war like his father. He wanted to get away from school and serve the Union (Boomhower 16).

In the Civil War, there were many terrible sights and battles. One of the places with terrible sights was the Battle of Shiloh on April 6, 1862. During this battle, 3,477 Union soldiers were killed (Boomhower 7). In the time period of the Civil War, communication was poor. This was proved when Lew Wallace led his troops to the Battle of Shiloh upon Ulysses S. Grant's order. When Wallace arrived at the battle, he was behind the Confederate forces. Battles could be described as chaotic, since soldiers were in bewilderment. When a shot could be heard, all of the soldiers in the area would start firing upon the enemy. Because of these firing outrages, dead or severely wounded would be

strewn all over the bloody ground after battle. The named Henry in The Red Badge of Courage was like many other soldiers in the fact that he didn't trust the officers in charge of him. Even during a very intense battle, soldiers would still be talking. Some were saying things like, "Why don't they send supports," "Save your fire," and one man was even singing a song that went, "Sing a song 'a vic'try, A pocketful 'a bullets, Five an' twenty dead men Baked in a-pie," (Crane 49).

Soldiers in this war had many fears as Jim Murphy tell in "The Boys' War." Soldiers were afraid of dying and not being identified, starving or freezing, the doctor and his knowledge, and prison camps. If they weren't identified at death, they would be thrown into and buried in a mass grave. They would have no dignity if this happened. They wanted to be buried in a single grave with a headboard marking it. Soldiers were very afraid of going to prison camps. At such camps, diseases weren't controlled and food was contaminated. At one prison in Andersonville, Georgia, 33,000 people were at a prison meant for 10,000 (Murphy 220). The prisoners lived in terrible conditions with very minimal food rations every day. If a prisoner got sick, he might go to a doctor, although the doctors didn't have knowledge to treat many of the Civil War injuries and diseases. Doctors would heat iron poker and put them directly on a person's skin to stop a person from bleeding to death. Dysentery, diarrhea, malaria, pneumonia, bronchitis, and scurvy were all diseases you were vulnerable to during the war. If you became sick, there was a very slim chance that you would live.

The American Civil War made many men and even boys want to fight for their country. Hundreds of thousands were killed or wounded. Prison camps were extreme overcrowded. Battles were horrible and chaotic. This war in which the Union won was vicious, killing people without second thought. The Civil War was a war in which true patriotism, sacrifice, and courage could be found in the soldiers, generals, and war heroes.

## Works Cited

- Boomhower, Ray E. The Sword and the Pen. A Life of Lew Wallace  
Indianapolis, Indiana: Indiana Historical Society Press, 2005.
- Crane, Stephen. The Red Badge of Courage. New York, New York:  
Random House, Inc., 1895.
- Murphy, Jim. Related Reading. The Boys' War: Across Five Aprils.  
By Irene Hunt. Evanston, Illinois: Houghton Mifflin, 1997.