The American Civil War (also known by other names) was a civil war in the United States from 1861 to 1865, fought between the northern United States (loyal to the Union) and the southern United States (that had seceded from the Union and formed the Confederacy). The civil war began primarily as a result of the long-standing controversy over the enslavement of black people. War broke out in April 1861 when secessionist forces attacked Fort Sumter in South Carolina shortly after Abraham Lincoln had been Many American Civil War images, pictures, and photos have survived. See our Civil War Pictures. Civil War Maps. The Civil War made wide use of battle maps. It was a war that saw many “firsts” that included America’s first income tax, the first battle between ironclad ships, the first extensive use of black soldiers and sailors in U.S. service, the first use of quinine to treat typhoid fever, America’s first military draft, and many others. There were advances in medical treatment, military tactics and the chaplain service.