

Sherman's Total War Strategy

Read the text and answer the questions.

Union General William Tecumseh Sherman's capture of Atlanta on September 2, 1864, was an important victory for the Union. Once Atlanta was won, Sherman and his army of 60,000 men continued to Savannah on a destructive "March to the Sea."

The biggest impact was that Atlanta, a railroad hub and industrial center, could no longer provide the Confederacy with food and weapons. As Sherman passed through Georgia, he used a "scorched earth" policy, otherwise known as "total war." His troops stole food and livestock, ripped up railroad tracks, and burned the crops and houses of civilians. Sherman's scorched earth tactics destroyed Confederate supplies and discouraged Georgians from supporting the Confederate war effort. Sherman explained that the Union was "not only fighting hostile armies, but a hostile people."

One of Sherman's men described the purpose of the destruction: "...we must war upon and destroy the organized rebel forces—must cut off their supplies, destroy their communications... and produce among the people of Georgia a thorough conviction of the personal misery which attends war, and the utter helplessness and inability of their 'rulers' to protect them...If that terror and grief and even want shall help to paralyze their husbands and fathers who are fighting us...it is mercy in the end."

- Why was Sherman's conquest of Atlanta important to the Union?
- Write a definition for "total war" in your own words.
 - Use the text to explain why Sherman's march is called "total war."
- Analyze each statement and identify whether it **most likely** expresses the point of view of a soldier in Sherman's army or a Georgia civilian.
 - _____ "It is our duty to protect our homes from the invaders."
 - _____ "I pity their families and homes, but this war must be won."
 - _____ "A rebel state and a rebel people will receive no soft hand."
- Who did Union soldiers cause to feel "personal misery" and "utter helplessness"? Describe two ways this benefited the Union.
- Do you agree or disagree that Sherman's total war tactics were "mercy in the end"? Why or why not?

ANSWER THE QUESTIONS ON THE BACK.

NAME: _____

PER: _____

DATE: _____

Sherman's Christmas Gift

During Sherman's March to the Sea, Sherman was out of touch with President Lincoln for nearly a month. On December 22, 1864, Sherman sent President Lincoln a telegram presenting the captured city of Savannah as a Christmas gift to Lincoln. This letter is President Lincoln's reply to General Sherman.

Read the letter and answer the questions.

Many, many thanks for your Christmas gift - the capture of Savannah. When you were leaving Atlanta for the Atlantic coast, I was anxious, if not fearful; but feeling that you were the better judge, and remembering that 'nothing risked, nothing gained' I did not interfere. Now, the undertaking being a success, the honor is all yours; for I believe none of us went farther than to acquiesce. And taking the work of Gen. Thomas into the count, as it should be taken, it is indeed a great success. Not only does it afford the obvious and immediate military advantage; but, in showing to the world that your army could be divided, putting the stronger part to an important new service, and yet leaving enough to vanquish the old opposing force of the whole-Hood's army-it brings those who sat in darkness, to see a great light. But what next? I suppose it will be safer if I leave Gen. Grant and yourself to decide. Please make my grateful acknowledgements to your whole army, officers and men.

- Use the letter to infer whether each statement is **true** or **false**. Cite evidence from the letter to support your answer.
 - _____ From the start, Lincoln was confident in Sherman's victory.
 - _____ Sherman faced risks by dividing his army.
 - _____ Lincoln was grateful for the gift of victory over Savannah.
 - _____ Lincoln ordered Sherman's next movement.

- Use the text to make five inferences about President Lincoln as commander-in-chief. Cite words or phrases from the letter to support each inference.
- In your opinion, is the proverb "nothing risked, nothing gained" appropriate to describe Sherman's March to the Sea? Use evidence from the text to support your opinion.

GENERAL SHERMAN STUDENT WORKSHEET