

The Irish Brigade In The American Civil War

Viewer's GUIDE

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I. Before You View

"The Fighting 69th", better known as the Irish Brigade, was one of many regiments that distinguished themselves during the American Civil War. These heroic immigrants had much at stake as they fought for their new country.

Where was the Irish Brigade formed? In the five years of the American Civil War, which states allied with the Union and which states allied with the Confederacy? What were the Major causes for this epic confrontation?

II. Video Worksheet The Irish Brigade

1. From what group of Irish settlers were the soldiers who later made up the famed "Irish Brigade"?

2. Why were these men of the Irish Brigade so intent on fighting for their adopted country? What did they feel they had to prove?

3. Who was Major General Thomas F. Meagher and why was he crucial to the effect of the Irish Brigade and their reputation as fearless soldiers?

4. How did the Battle of Antietam solidify the legend of the Irish Brigade? What occurred during this epic battle that was a sign of how the Brigade would be used in future confrontations? What was the result of the Battle of Antietam?

5. December 13, 1862 has been singled out as one of the most tragic days for the Irish Brigade. Why?

6. What was the significance of the Sprig of Green worn by soldiers of the Irish Brigade in their hats?

7. The Irish Brigade made a great impact in the Battle of Fredericksburg. How were they used in this battle and who won this pivotal fight of the Civil War?

8. In the Battles of Chancellorsville many lives were lost. How many losses did the Irish Brigade suffer and what was the outcome of this battle for the Union?

9. How many soldiers originally made up the Irish Brigade and how many survived the War?

10. What was the fate of Major General Thomas F. Meagher?

III. After Viewing:

Short Essay-Discovery

1. Why did Civil War soldiers view the War between the North and the South as a new kind of conflict?

2. The Civil War was fought mainly in three areas:

(1) between Richmond, Virginia and Washington, (2) in the valley of the Ohio, Cumberland and Tennessee Rivers, and (3) In the Mississippi River Valley. Find these areas on a map and identify which areas were held by Union and which areas were held by Confederate troops.

3. The American Civil War left over 600,000 dead.

It was the bloodiest in American History. Are there issues on which we are so divided today that could lead to a split and possible confrontation in the present United States? Why or why not?

4. Southerners in this conflict said they were fighting for self-government. What was the major flaw in this argument in the eyes of the Union?

For Further Reading:

"The Irish Brigade" by Capt. D.P. Conyngham

"Remember Fontenoy!" by Joseph G. Bilby

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