

THE CIVIL WAR DRAFT: INTRODUCTION

Imagine, there was a time when...

Draft evaders went to Canada--and returned unpunished.

Government officials carrying out the draft were deceived, assaulted, and even murdered.

The media condemned the draft, vilified the President, and "played the race card."

There were public accusations that the government was drafting for "a rich man's war, but a poor man's fight."

Those who could afford to do what it took were exempt from getting killed--but often made a killing.

The national director of the draft was vilified to the extent that all his other accomplishments are now ignored.

It was widely believed that draft officials were inept, dishonest, partisan, immoral, and "political hacks and narrow-minded partisans totally lacking in tact or judgement." (They were also described as "insensitive, corrupt and inefficient). (Geary, p. 71)

Minorities were good enough to take bullets, but not ballots.

Those who violated federal law justified their action by resort to Biblical interpretation and later petitioned for the return of their fine money.

The writ of *habeas corpus* was suspended for draft protestors.

The government changed the rules in mid-war and reneged on its promises to those who enlisted.

Residents of upstate New York had their manpower and financial resources used for the benefit of New York City.

The actions of the federal government resulted in vast increases in the financial commitments of local governments.

That time was not the 1960s....

It was the 1860s!

It was a time when the average American had to look into his heart-of-hearts and reconcile his values, his politics, and the need for conscription.