**Sherman’s March to the Sea**

Gen. William T. Sherman’s “March to the Sea” began after his 60,000 troops left the captured city of Atlanta on November 15, 1864, and ended 285 miles later on December 21, 1864 when Sherman’s troops seized the port city of Savannah. Sherman operated deep in southern territory without any direct supply lines. He took the resources his troops needed and destroyed what they didn’t in an attempt to weaken the Confederacy. These actions had catastrophic affects on the environment and the agricultural lands of the south. Critics said Sherman’s march waged war against women and children by pushing them to starvation and burning down their homes and property. Sherman’s troops ravaged the land.

Sherman was a hero to the Union because he was able to capture the vital port city of Savannah and deplete many Confederate supply stores without relying on supply lines of his own. Southerner claims that Sherman’s march was “simple waste and destruction” were an extreme understatement.

Sherman’s “total war” in Georgia was brutal and destructive, but it did just what it was supposed to do: it hurt Southern morale, made it impossible for the Confederates to fight at full capacity and likely hastened the end of the war. “This Union and its Government must be sustained, at any and every cost,” explained one of Sherman’s subordinates. “To sustain it, 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.”