NEW YORK was vital to the success of the Union during the Civil War. New York State was one of the business and financial centers of the world. The people of New York were able to produce much of what the Union army needed to fight the war. Although cotton mills were not successful, wool mills were able to run 24 hours a day producing cloth desperately needed for soldiers. Thousands of tailors, women and cobblers turned the factory goods in finished uniforms and shoes. The iron and steel industry, which was strong before the war grew as they worked to produce the shells and bullets necessary for the war. New York can even lay claim to having produced the iron plates which lined the Monitor. Not only did New York produce the goods which fueled the Northern war success, but New York also provided more soldiers than any other state. In 1861, 30,000 of the 75,000 soldiers Abraham Lincoln requested were volunteers from New York. By 1863, twenty percent of the Union army was from New York. The North and the Union relied heavily on New York to win the Civil War.

An Alternate Northern Perspective:

Clearly the state of New York was vital to the success of the Union. However, New York did not offer unconditional support. Early in the war there was debate concerning fighting a war to keep states in the union who clearly did not want to be there. Additionally, some workers objected to fighting a war to free enslaved people. These objectors were worried that freed slaves would provide more competition for jobs. There were also violent protests of the draft law in New York City since the city’s draft quota was unfairly high. Despite these issues, New York as a whole rallied around the Northern cause.

A Southern Perspective:

The strength of New York State made the war very difficult for the south to fight. The Confederate States of America simply did not have the industrial resources that even New York had, let alone the entire union. While the south was the major producer of cotton and was able to disrupt the cotton textile industry in New York, there were unable to truly affect any of the other industries. Additionally the south was unable to fight any battles far enough north which would impact New York’s industrial strength.