

. Introduction



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The Confederate bombardment of Fort Sumter in Charleston, South Carolina, ended months of confusion. The nation was at war. The time had come to choose sides. For most whites in the South, the choice was clear. Early in 1861, representatives from six of the seven states that had seceded from the Union met to form a new nation called the Confederate States of America. Southerners believed that just as the states had once voluntarily joined the Union, they could voluntarily leave it now. The men who fought for the South were proud defenders of Southern independence.

For many Northerners, the choice was just as clear. "There can be no neutrals in this war," declared Senator Stephen Douglas after the attack of Fort Sumter, "*only patriots—or traitors.*" Most Northerners viewed the secession of Southern states as a traitorous act of rebellion against the United States. They marched off to war eager to defend what they saw as their union, their constitution, and their flag.



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Choosing sides was harder for the eight slave states located between the Confederacy and the free states. Four of these so-called border states—Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina—joined the Confederacy. The western counties of Virginia, however, remained loyal to the Union. Rather than fight for the South, they broke away to form a new state called West Virginia. The other four border states—Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri—remained in the Union, although many of their citizens fought for the South.

As Americans took sides, they began to see why a civil war—a conflict between two groups of citizens in one country—is the most painful kind of war. This conflict divided not only states, but also families and friends. In this chapter, you will learn how this “brothers’ war” turned into the most destructive of all American wars. As you read, put yourself in the shoes of the soldiers and civilians who were part of this long and tragic struggle.

2. North Versus South

President Abraham Lincoln’s response to the attack on Fort Sumter was quick and clear. He called for 75,000 volunteers to come forward to preserve the Union. At the same time, Jefferson Davis, the newly elected president of the [Confederacy](#), called for volunteers to defend the South. For the first time, Americans were fighting a [civil war](#).

Strengths and Weaknesses of the North The North began the war with impressive strengths. Its population was about 22 million, compared to the South’s 9 million. The North was both richer and

more **technologically** advanced than the South. About 90 percent of the nation's manufacturing, and most of its banks, were in the North.



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The North had geographic advantages, too. It had more farms than the South to provide food for troops. Its land contained most of the country's iron, coal, copper, and gold. The North controlled the seas, and its 21,000 miles of railroad track allowed troops and supplies to be transported wherever they were needed.

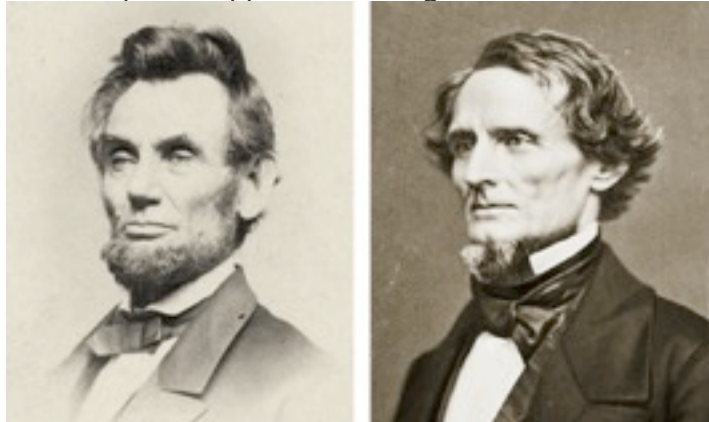
The North's greatest weakness was its military leadership. At the start of the war, about one-third of the nation's military officers resigned and returned to their homes in the South. During much of the war, Lincoln searched for effective generals who could lead the Union to victory.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the South In contrast to the North, the South's great strength was its military leadership. Most of America's best military officers were Southerners who chose to fight for the Confederacy. This was not an easy decision for many of them. Colonel Robert E. Lee, for example, was not a supporter of either slavery or secession. But he decided that he could not fight against his native Virginia. Lee resigned from the U.S. Army to become commander in chief of the Confederate forces.

The South had geographic advantages as well. To win the war, the North would have to invade and conquer the South. The sheer size of the South made this a daunting task. The South, in contrast, could win simply by defending its territory until Northerners grew tired of fighting. The South did have an important geographic disadvantage. If the Union could control the Mississippi River, it could split the Confederacy in two.

The South's main weaknesses were its economy and its transportation systems. The region's agriculturally based economy could not support a long war. It had few factories to produce guns and

other military supplies. The Confederacy also faced serious transportation problems. The South lacked the railroads needed to haul troops or supplies over long distances.



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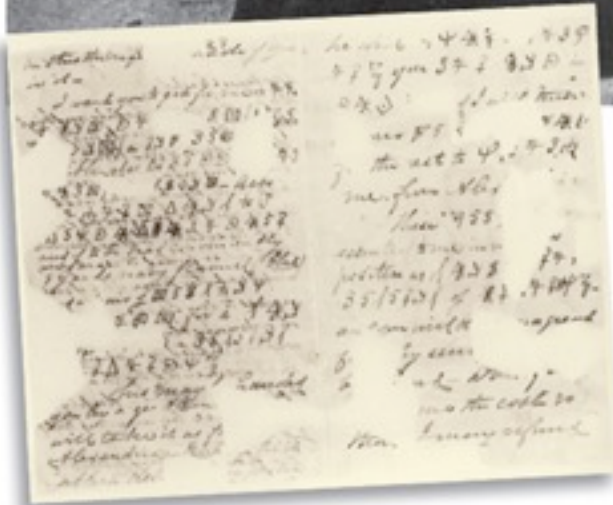
Abraham Lincoln versus Jefferson Davis The North's greatest advantage was its newly elected president, Abraham Lincoln. Through even the darkest days of the war, Lincoln never wavered from his belief that the Union was **perpetual**—never to be broken. Throughout his presidency, Lincoln related the preservation of the Union to the ideals of the American Revolution. In his first inaugural address, he said that the Union was begun by the American Revolution, “matured and continued” by the Declaration of Independence, and affirmed by the Constitution.

At the time of the secession **crisis**, Jefferson Davis was a U.S. senator from Mississippi. A firm believer in states' rights, he resigned his seat in the Senate when Mississippi left the Union. Like Lincoln, Davis often spoke of the American Revolution. When Southerners formed their own government, Davis said in his inaugural address, they “merely **asserted** a right which the Declaration of Independence of 1776 had defined to be inalienable.” He believed the South was fighting for the same freedom cherished by the nation's founders.

3. Bull Run: A Great Awakening

In the spring of 1861, President Lincoln and General Winfield Scott planned the Union's war strategy. Step one was to surround the South by sea to cut off its trade. Step two was to divide the Confederacy into

sections so that one region could not help another. Step three was to capture Richmond, Virginia, the capital of the Confederacy, and destroy the Confederate government. Journalists called this strategy the Anaconda Plan because it resembled the crushing death grip of an anaconda snake.



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Rose Greenhow's Dilemma Most Northerners believed that the war could be won with a single Union assault on Richmond. In 1861,

thousands of volunteers poured into Washington, D.C., shouting, "On to Richmond!" A young widow and Washington social leader named Rose O'Neal Greenhow watched these eager troops carefully. Greenhow was a strong supporter of the Southern cause. She used her friendship with government officials to learn just when and how the Union planned to attack Richmond. Her challenge was to find a way to deliver this information to Confederate leaders without being discovered.

The Battle of Bull Run On a hot July morning, long lines of Union soldiers marched out of Washington heading for Richmond. Their voices could be heard singing and cheering across the countryside. Parties of civilians followed the army, adding to the excitement. They had come along to see the end of the rebellion.

The troops would not have been so cheerful had they known what was waiting for them at Manassas, a small town on the way to Richmond. Greenhow had managed to warn Southern military leaders of Union plans. She had smuggled a coded note to them in a young girl's curls. Southern troops were waiting for the Union forces as they approached Manassas. The two armies met at a creek known as Bull Run.

At first, a Union victory looked certain. But Confederate general Thomas Jackson and his regiment of Virginians refused to give up. "Look," shouted South Carolina general Bernard Bee to his men, "there is Jackson with his Virginians, standing like a stone wall." Thus inspired by "Stonewall" Jackson's example, the Confederate lines held firm until **reinforcements** arrived. Late that afternoon, Jackson urged his men to "yell like furies" as they charged the Union forces. The charge overwhelmed the inexperienced Union troops, who fled in panic back to Washington.

The Battle of Bull Run was a smashing victory for the South. For the North, it was a shocking blow. Lincoln and his generals now realized that ending the war would not be easy.



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Women Support the War Over the next year, both the North and the South worked to build and train large armies. As men went off to war, women took their places on the home front. Wives and mothers supported their families by running farms and businesses. Many women went to work for the first time in factories. Others found jobs as nurses, teachers, or government workers.

Women also served the military forces on both sides as messengers, guides, scouts, smugglers, soldiers, and spies. Greenhow was arrested for spying shortly after the Battle of Bull Run. Although she was kept under guard in her Washington home, she continued to smuggle military secrets to the Confederates. The following year, Greenhow was allowed to move to the South, where President Jefferson Davis welcomed her as a hero.

Women also volunteered to tend sick and wounded soldiers. Dorothea Dix was already well known for her efforts to improve the treatment of the mentally ill. She was appointed director of the Union army's nursing service. Dix insisted that all female nurses be over 30 years old, plain in appearance, physically strong, and willing to do unpleasant work. Her rules were so strict that she was known as "Dragon Dix."

While most nurses worked in military hospitals, Clara Barton followed Union armies into battle, tending troops where they fell. Later generations would remember Barton as the founder of the American

Red Cross. To the soldiers she cared for during the war, she was “the angel of the battlefield.”

4. Antietam: A Bloody Affair

The Battle of Bull Run ended Northerners’ hopes for a quick victory. In the months that followed that sobering defeat, the Union began to carry out the Anaconda Plan.



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The Anaconda Plan in Action Step one of the Anaconda Plan was to blockade the South’s ports and cut off its trade. In 1861, the Union navy launched the blockade. By the end of the year, most ports in the South were closed to foreign ships. The South had long exported its cotton to Great Britain and France. The Confederacy looked to Great Britain to send ships to break through the blockade. The British, however, refused this request. As a result, the South could not export cotton to Europe or import needed supplies.

Early in 1862, the Union began to put step two of the Anaconda Plan into action. The strategy was to divide the Confederacy by gaining control of the Mississippi River. In April, Union admiral David Farragut led 46 ships up the Mississippi River to New Orleans. This was the largest American fleet ever assembled. In the face of such overwhelming force, the city surrendered without firing a shot.

Meanwhile, Union forces headed by General Ulysses S. Grant began moving south toward the Mississippi from Illinois. In 1862, Grant won a series of victories that put Kentucky and much of Tennessee under

Union control. A general of remarkable determination, Grant refused to accept any battle outcome other than unconditional, or total, surrender. For this reason, U. S. Grant was known to his men as “Unconditional Surrender” Grant.

Later in 1862, Union general George McClellan sent 100,000 men by ship to capture Richmond. Again, a Union victory seemed certain. But despite being outnumbered, Confederate forces stopped the Union attack in a series of well-fought battles. Once more, Richmond was saved.

The Battle of Antietam At this point, General Robert E. Lee, the commander of the Confederate forces, did the unexpected. He sent his troops across the Potomac River into Maryland, a slave state that remained in the Union. Lee hoped this show of strength might persuade Maryland to join the Confederacy. He also hoped that a Confederate victory on Union soil would convince European nations to support the South.

On a crisp September day in 1862, Confederate and Union armies met near the Maryland town of Sharpsburg along Antietam Creek. All day long, McClellan’s troops pounded Lee’s badly outnumbered forces. The following day, Lee retreated to Virginia.

McClellan claimed Antietam as a Union victory. But many who fought there saw the battle as a defeat for both armies. Of the 75,000 Union troops who fought at Antietam, about 2,100 were killed. About 10,300 were wounded or missing. Of the 52,000 Confederates who fought at Antietam, about 2,770 lost their lives, while 11,000 were wounded or missing. In that single day of fighting, more Americans were killed than in the War of 1812 and the Mexican War combined. The Battle of Antietam was the bloodiest day of the war.

A Turning Point

While neither side won the battle of Antietam, it was enough of a victory for Lincoln to take his first steps toward ending slavery. When the Civil War began, Lincoln had resisted pleas from abolitionists to make emancipation, or the freeing of slaves, a reason for fighting the Confederacy. He himself opposed slavery. But the purpose of the war, he said, “is to save the Union, and is not either to save or destroy slavery.”



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The Emancipation Proclamation As the war dragged on, Lincoln changed his mind. He decided to make abolition a goal of the Union. Lincoln realized that European nations that opposed slavery would never support the side that did not want slavery to end. Freeing slaves could also deprive the Confederacy of a large part of its workforce. On January 1, 1863, President Lincoln issued the [**Emancipation Proclamation**](#). The proclamation, or formal order, declared slaves in all Confederate states to be free. This announcement had little immediate effect on slavery. The Confederate states ignored the document. Slaves living in states loyal to the Union were not affected by the proclamation. Still, for many in the North, the Emancipation Proclamation changed the war into a crusade for freedom. The Declaration of Independence had said that “all men are created equal.” Now the fight was about living up to those words.

The Battle of Gettysburg In the summer of 1863, Lee felt confident enough to risk another invasion of the North. He hoped to capture a Northern city and help convince the weary North to seek peace.

Union and Confederate troops met on July 1, 1863, west of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. The Union troops, about 90,000 strong, were led by newly appointed General George C. Meade. After a brief skirmish, they occupied four miles of high ground along an area known as Cemetery Ridge. About a mile to the west, some 75,000 Confederate troops gathered behind Seminary Ridge.

The following day, the Confederates attempted to find weak spots in the Union position. The Union lines held firm. On the third day, Lee ordered an all-out attack on the center of the Union line. Cannons filled the air with smoke and thunder. George Pickett led 15,000 Confederate soldiers in a charge across the low ground separating the two forces.

Pickett's charge marked the northernmost point reached by Southern troops during the war. But as Confederate troops pressed forward, Union gunners opened great holes in their advancing lines. Those men who managed to make their way to Cemetery Ridge were struck down by Union soldiers in hand-to-hand combat.

Although Gettysburg was a victory for the Union, the losses on both sides were staggering. More than 17,500 Union soldiers and 23,000 Confederate troops were killed or wounded in three days of battle. Lee, who lost about a third of his army, withdrew to Virginia. From this point on, he would only wage a defensive war on Southern soil.

Opposition on the Union Home Front Despite the victory at Gettysburg, Lincoln faced a number of problems on the home front. One was opposition to the war itself. A group of Northern Democrats were more interested in restoring peace than in saving the Union or ending slavery. Republicans called these Democrats "Copperheads" after a poisonous snake with that name.

Other Northerners opposed the war because they were sympathetic to the Confederate cause. When a proslavery mob attacked Union soldiers marching through Maryland, Lincoln sent in troops to keep order. He also used his constitutional power to temporarily suspend the right of [habeas corpus](#). During the national emergency, citizens no longer had the right to appear before a court to face charges.

People who were suspected of disloyalty were jailed without being charged for a crime.

Lincoln's Gettysburg Address In 1863, President Lincoln traveled to Gettysburg. Thousands of the men who died there had been buried in a new cemetery. Lincoln was among those invited to speak at the dedication of this new burial ground. The nation would never forget Lincoln's [Gettysburg Address](#).

The president deliberately spoke of the war in words that echoed the Declaration of Independence. The "great civil war," he said, was testing whether a nation "conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal . . . can long endure." He spoke of the brave men, "living and dead," who had fought to defend that ideal. "The world . . . can never forget what they did here." Finally, he called on Americans to remain

dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.



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The New Realities of War The horrifying death toll at Antietam reflected the new realities of warfare. In past wars, battles had been fought in hand-to-hand combat using bayonets. During the Civil War, improved weapons made killing from a distance much easier. Rifles, which replaced muskets, were accurate over long distances. Improved cannons and artillery also made it easier for armies to attack forces some distance away. As a result, armies could meet, fight, die, and part without either side winning a clear victory.

Medical care was not as advanced as weaponry. Civil War doctors had no understanding of the causes of infections. Surgeons operated in dirty hospital tents with basic instruments. Few bothered to wash their hands between patients. As a result, infections spread rapidly from patient to patient. The hospital death rate was so high that soldiers often refused medical care. An injured Ohio soldier wrote that he chose to return to battle rather than see a doctor, “thinking that I had better die by rebel bullets than Union quackery [unskilled medical care].”

As staggering as the battle death tolls were, far more soldiers died of diseases than wounds. Unsanitary conditions in army camps were so bad that about three men died of typhoid, pneumonia, and other diseases for everyone who died in battle. As one soldier observed, “these big battles [are] not as bad as the fever.”

6. Vicksburg: A Besieged City



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The Civil War was a war of many technological firsts. It was the first American war to use railroads to move troops and to keep them supplied. It was the first war in which telegraphs were used to communicate with distant armies. It was the first conflict to be recorded in photographs. It was also the first to see combat between armor-plated steamships.

The *Merrimac* and the *Monitor* Early in the war, Union forces withdrew from the navy yard in Norfolk, Virginia. They left behind a warship named the *Merrimac*. The Confederacy began the war with no navy. They covered the wooden *Merrimac* with iron plates and added a powerful ram to its prow.

In response, the Union navy built its own ironclad ship called the *Monitor*. Completed in less than 100 days, the *Monitor* had a flat deck and two heavy guns in a revolving turret. It was said to resemble a “cheese box on a raft.”

In March 1862, the *Merrimac*, which the Confederates had renamed the *Virginia*, steamed into Chesapeake Bay to attack Union ships. With cannonballs harmlessly bouncing off its sides, the iron monster destroyed three wooden ships and threatened the entire Union blockade fleet.

The next morning, the *Virginia* was met by the *Monitor*. The two ironclads exchanged shots for hours before withdrawing. Neither could claim victory, and neither was harmed.

The battle of the *Merrimac* and the *Monitor* showed that iron-clad ships were superior to wooden vessels. After that, both sides added ironclads to their navies. The South, however, was never able to build enough ships to end the Union blockade of Southern harbors.

Control of the Mississippi Ironclads were part of the Union’s campaign to divide the South by taking control of the Mississippi River. After seizing New Orleans in 1862, Admiral David Farragut moved up the Mississippi to capture the cities of Baton Rouge and Natchez. At the same time, other Union ships gained control of Memphis, Tennessee.

The Union now controlled both ends of the Mississippi. The South could no longer move men or supplies up and down the river. But neither could the North, as long as the Confederates continued to control one key location—Vicksburg, Mississippi.



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The Siege of Vicksburg The town of Vicksburg was located on a bluff above a hairpin turn in the Mississippi River. The city was easy to defend and difficult to capture. Whoever held Vicksburg could, with a few well-placed cannons, control movement along the Mississippi. But even Farragut had to admit with fellow officer David Porter that ships “cannot crawl up hills 300 feet high.” An army would be needed to take Vicksburg.

In May 1863, General Ulysses S. Grant battled his way to Vicksburg with the needed army. For six weeks, Union gunboats shelled the city from the river while Grant’s army bombarded it from land. Slowly but surely, the Union troops burrowed toward the city in trenches and tunnels.

As shells pounded the city, people in Vicksburg dug caves into the hillsides for protection. To survive, they ate horses, mules, and bread made of corn and dried peas. “It had the properties of Indian rubber,” said one Confederate soldier, “and was worse than leather to digest.” Low on food and supplies, Vicksburg surrendered on July 4, 1863. The Mississippi was now a Union waterway, and the Confederacy was cut in two.

Problems on the Confederate Home Front As the war raged on, life in the South became grim. Because of the blockade, imported goods

disappeared from stores. What few items were available were extremely expensive.

Unable to sell their tobacco and cotton to the North or to other countries, farmers planted food crops instead. Still, the South was often hungry. Invading Union armies destroyed crops. They also cut rail lines, making it difficult to move food and supplies to Southern cities and army camps.

As clothing wore out, Southerners made do with patches and homespun cloth. At the beginning of the war, Mary Boykin Chesnut had written in her journal of well-dressed Confederate troops. By 1863, she was writing of soldiers dressed in “rags and tags.”

By 1864, Southerners were writing letters like this one to soldiers on the battlefield: “We haven’t got nothing in the house to eat but a little bit o’ meal. I don’t want to you to stop fighten them Yankees . . . but try and get off and come home and fix us all up some.” Many soldiers found it hard to resist such pleas, even if going home meant deserting their units.

7. Fort Wagner: African Americans and the War



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Early in the war, abolitionists had urged Congress to recruit African Americans for the army. But at first, most Northerners regarded the conflict as “a white man’s war.” Congress finally opened the door to black recruits in 1862. About 186,000 African Americans, many of

them former slaves, enlisted in the Union army. Another 30,000 African Americans joined the Union navy.

The Massachusetts 54th Regiment Massachusetts was one of the first states to organize black regiments. The most famous was the 54th Massachusetts Infantry, commanded by Colonel Robert Gould Shaw. Two of the 54th Infantry's 1,000 soldiers were sons of Frederick Douglass.

The men of the Massachusetts 54th were paid less than white soldiers. When the black soldiers learned this, they protested the unequal treatment by refusing to accept any pay at all. In a letter to Lincoln, Corporal James Henry Gooding asked, "Are we Soldiers, or are we Laborers? . . . We have done a Soldier's duty. Why can't we have a Soldier's pay?" At Lincoln's urging, Congress finally granted black soldiers equal pay.

After three months of training, the Massachusetts 54th was sent to South Carolina to take part in an attack on Fort Wagner outside of Charleston. As they prepared for battle, the men of the 54th faced the usual worries of untested troops. But they also faced the added fear that if captured, they might be sold into slavery.

African Americans at War The assault on Fort Wagner was an impossible mission. To reach the fort, troops had to cross 200 yards of open, sandy beach. Rifle and cannon fire poured down on them. After losing nearly half of their men, the survivors of the 54th regiment retreated. But their bravery won them widespread respect.

During the war, 166 African American regiments fought in nearly 500 battles. Black soldiers often received little training, poor equipment, and less pay than white soldiers. They also risked death or enslavement if captured. Still, African Americans fought with great courage to save the Union.

8. Appomattox: Total War Brings an End

During the first years of the war, Lincoln had searched for a commander who was willing to fight the Confederates. The president finally found the leader he needed in General Grant. He made Grant commander of the Union forces in March 1864. Grant's views on war were quite straightforward: "The art of war is simple enough. Find out where your enemy is. Get at him as soon as you can. Strike at him as hard as you can and as often as you can, and keep moving on."

Using this strategy, Grant mapped out a plan for ending the war. He would lead a large force against Lee to capture Richmond. At the same time, General William Tecumseh Sherman would lead a second army into Georgia to take Atlanta.



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Grant Invades Virginia In May 1864, General Grant invaded Virginia with a force of more than 100,000 men. They met Lee's army of 60,000 in a dense forest known as the Wilderness. In two days of fierce fighting, Grant lost 18,000 men. Still, Grant would not retreat. "I propose to fight it out along this line," he said, "if it takes all summer." He followed Lee's army to Cold Harbor, Virginia, where he lost 7,000 men in 15 minutes of fighting.

By the time the two forces reached Petersburg, a railroad center 20 miles south of Richmond, Grant's losses almost equaled Lee's entire army. But he was able to reinforce his army with fresh troops. Lee, who had also suffered heavy losses, could not.

Total War Grant believed in total war—war on the enemy's will to fight and its ability to support an army. With his army tied down in northern Virginia, Grant ordered General Philip Sheridan to wage total war in Virginia's grain-rich Shenandoah Valley. "Let that valley be so left that crows flying over it will have to carry their rations along with them," ordered Grant.

In May 1864, General Sherman left Tennessee for Georgia with orders to inflict "all the damage you can against their war resources." In September, Sherman reached Atlanta, the South's most important rail and manufacturing center. His army set the city ablaze.



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The Reelection of Lincoln Any hope of victory for the South lay in the defeat of President Lincoln in the election of 1864. Northern Democrats nominated General George McClellan to run against Lincoln. Knowing that the North was weary of war, McClellan urged an immediate end to the conflict.

Lincoln doubted he would win reelection. Grant seemed stuck in northern Virginia, and there was no end in sight to the appalling bloodletting. Luckily for the president, Sheridan's destruction of the Shenandoah Valley and Sherman's capture of Atlanta came just in time to rescue his campaign. These victories changed Northern views of Lincoln and his prospects for ending the war. In November, Lincoln was reelected.

Sherman's March Through Georgia After burning Atlanta, Sherman marched his army across the state toward Savannah, promising to "make Georgia howl." His purpose was to destroy the last untouched supply base for the Confederacy.

As they marched through Georgia, Sherman's troops destroyed everything that they found of value. They trampled or burned fields

and stripped houses of their valuables. They burned supplies of hay and food. Dead horses, hogs, and cattle that his troops could not eat or carry away lined the roads. The troops destroyed everything useful in a 60-mile-wide path.

In December 1864, Sherman captured Savannah, Georgia. From there, he turned north and destroyed all opposition in the Carolinas. Marching 425 miles in 50 days, he reached Raleigh, North Carolina, by March 1865. There he waited for Grant's final attack on Richmond.



The War Ends For nine months, Grant's forces battered Lee's army at Petersburg, the gateway to Richmond. On April 1, 1865, the Union forces finally broke through Confederate lines to capture the city. Two days later, Union troops marched into Richmond.

Grant's soldiers moved quickly to surround Lee's army. Lee told his officers, "There is nothing left for me to do but go and see General Grant, and I would rather die a thousand deaths."

On April 9, 1865, General Lee, in full dress uniform, arrived at Wilmer McLean's house in the village of [Appomattox Court House](#). He was there to surrender his army to General Grant. The Union general met him in a mud-splattered and crumpled uniform.

Grant's terms of surrender were generous. Confederate soldiers could go home if they promised to fight no longer. They could take with them their own horses and mules, which they would need for spring plowing. Officers could keep their swords and weapons. Grant also ordered that food be sent to Lee's men. Lee accepted the terms. As Lee returned to his headquarters, Union troops began to shoot their guns and cheer wildly. Grant told them to stop celebrating. "The war is over," he said, "the rebels are our countrymen again."

"Touched by Fire" No one who fought in the Civil War would ever forget the intensity of the experience. "In our youth," wrote Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr., "our hearts were touched by fire."

The nation, too, had been touched by fire. Many compared the Civil War to a great furnace that burned away one country and forged a new one in its place. In this new country, neither slavery nor the right to secession had any place. Just as Lincoln had said, the Union was a single whole, not a collection of sovereign states. Before the war, Americans tended to say "the United States are." After the war, they said "the United States is."

These momentous changes came at a horrifying cost. Billions of dollars had been spent on the conflict. Almost every family had lost a member or a friend. More than 620,000 Union and Confederate soldiers were dead. Thousands more came home missing an arm or a leg. It would take generations for the South to recover from the environmental destruction wrought by the war. Croplands lay in ruins. Two-fifths of the South's livestock had been destroyed.

Many historians have called the Civil War the first truly modern war. It was the first war to reflect the technology of the Industrial Revolution: railroads, the telegraph, armored ships, more accurate and destructive weaponry. It also introduced total war—war between whole societies, not just uniformed armies.

As devastating as it was, the Civil War left many issues unsettled. The old society of the South had been destroyed, but the memory of it lingered. Thousands of white Southerners clung to a romantic picture of the prewar South. Decaying plantation houses became shrines. In the years to come, many in the South would try to re-create their vanished way of life. Secession and slavery were gone, but conflicts over states' rights and the status of African Americans would continue long into the future.

Summary

In this chapter, you read about the Civil War between the Union and the Confederacy.

The North Versus the South Both sides had strengths and weaknesses going into the war. The North had a larger population and more factories and railroads than the South, but it lacked strong military leadership. The South had serious economic and transportation problems, but it had better military leadership and the advantage of fighting a defensive war.

Bull Run: An Awakening The Battle of Bull Run in 1861 was a victory for the Confederacy and showed the Union that ending the war would not be easy. As the North and South built their armies, women supported their families and the military forces.

Antietam: A Bloody Affair Using a strategy called the Anaconda Plan, Union forces blockaded Southern ports and gained control of the Mississippi River. High death tolls at the Battle of Antietam reflected new methods of warfare that included improved weapons.

Gettysburg: A Turning Point The Battle of Gettysburg ended the South's last attempt to invade the North. From that point on, Confederate forces fought a defensive war in Southern territory.

Vicksburg: A Besieged City In 1863, Confederate forces continued to hold Vicksburg, a key location on the Mississippi River. Capturing Vicksburg would divide the Confederacy in two and allow the Union to control the Mississippi River. After weeks of bombardment, Vicksburg surrendered.

Fort Wagner: African Americans and the War African Americans were able to join Union military forces in 1862. They fought in nearly 500 battles. The most famous black regiment was the 54th Massachusetts Infantry, which fought in the Battle of Fort Wagner.

Appomattox: Total War Brings an End In April 1865, Union forces captured the Confederate capital of Richmond and surrounded General Lee's Confederate army. Lee surrendered at Appomattox Court House.

Reading Further - Divided House, Divided Families

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Before the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln had warned, “A house divided against itself cannot stand.” But the nation did divide. People took sides, North or South. For most of them, the choice was clear. But for some, especially in the border states, the decision was difficult and painful. Not only was the country divided, but many families were, too.

Even as the Civil War began, Benjamin Hardin Helm had the prospect of a bright future in front of him. President Lincoln had offered him a good job with the Union army. The position paid well and would not require Helm to fight. It was a job many people wanted. “The position you offer me is beyond what I had expected in my most hopeful dreams,” Helm told the president. Still, he could not decide.

Helm was from Kentucky, a border state divided in its loyalties between North and South. He came from a prominent family and had served in the state legislature. He had also been an officer in the U.S. Army. Helm favored the South, and many of his family members and friends did, too. But he also had friends and family who supported the North. Even his father, a former governor, backed the Union.



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There was a further complication. Helm was married to Emilie Todd, a sister of Mary Todd Lincoln, President Lincoln's wife. That made Helm the president's brother-in-law. He and Emilie were close to the Lincolns.

Helm struggled with his decision. Lincoln's offer was generous. By accepting it, however, Helm would be turning against much of his family, including members who had joined the Confederate army. By refusing it, he would cut himself off from other members of the family, such as the Lincolns. "I had a bitter struggle with myself," he told a friend.

In the end, Helm turned down the president's offer. It was "the most painful moment of my life," he said, but he felt he could not take up arms against the South. Instead, he joined the Confederate cause and fought against the Union.

Helm's dilemma, though difficult, was not unusual. Many people found themselves torn between competing loyalties during the Civil War. This was especially true in border states like Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, and Delaware. Although these states remained in the Union, many of their citizens felt sympathy for the South. Families in border states were often deeply divided over the war.



Click to read caption

Lee's Decision

Virginia was also a border state, but one that joined the Confederacy. Robert E. Lee was one of its military heroes. Like Hardin Helm, Lee faced a tough decision. He, too, was offered a key position in the Union army. And like Helm, he turned it down, with great misgivings. Before the war, Lee was one of the most promising officers in the U.S. Army. A graduate of West Point, he had served with distinction during the Mexican War. As the Civil War began, Lincoln sent word to Lee offering him command of the Union army.

Lee was honored by the president's offer. He supported the Union and thought secession was a mistake. But he was a loyal Virginian above all and would not turn against his home state. "With all my devotion to the Union," he wrote, "I have not been able to . . . raise my hand against my relatives, my children, my home."

Lee resigned his position and became a Confederate general. The man who might have led the Union army eventually became the top commander of the Confederate forces.

Lincoln's Family Troubles

Robert E. Lee's decision probably came as little surprise to Lincoln. He knew that Southern officers had divided loyalties in the same way that states and families did. Lincoln's own family was a case in point.

The president actually had little immediate family of his own. But his wife's family, the Todds, was quite large. Mary Todd Lincoln had 14 brothers and sisters, all from Kentucky. Of these, 6 supported the Union and 8 backed the Confederacy. Several of her brothers fought in the Confederate army.

The Todds were important to Lincoln, and he did everything in his power to help them, even when they turned against him. Just as he tried to hold the nation together, he tried to keep the family together. But this was too much for even the president to accomplish.

As Kentucky Goes, So Goes the Nation

President Lincoln saw Kentucky as a symbol of the nation's divisions. In fact, the Union and Confederate leaders—Lincoln and Jefferson Davis—were both from Kentucky. They were born just 100 miles apart. The state's white soldiers were split almost evenly between North and South. Two-fifths fought for the Confederacy and three-fifths for the Union. No other state was so evenly divided.

Lincoln believed it was essential to keep Kentucky in the Union. "I think to lose Kentucky is nearly the same as to lose the whole game," he said. "Kentucky gone, we cannot hold Missouri, nor, as I think, Maryland." Officially, Kentucky remained neutral in the war, and Lincoln did what he could to keep it from seceding. "I hope to have God on my side," he supposedly said, "but I must have Kentucky."

Fathers and Sons Divided

Among Kentucky families, some of the bitterest divisions arose between fathers and sons. The Crittenden family was one example. John J. Crittenden was a respected member of Congress who had worked hard to prevent the Civil War. Early in the war, he wrote to his oldest son, George, urging him to remain loyal to the Union. Kentucky "loves the Union," he wrote, "and will cling to it as long as possible. And so, I hope, will you." His words were in vain. George joined the Confederate army and, in turn, Crittenden cut off all contact with his son.

Another case involved the Breckenridge family. Robert J. Breckenridge was a strong Union supporter. But his son Robert Jr. decided to join the Confederacy. He wrote his father, "Be . . . as lenient as possible in your thoughts of me." Breckenridge was stunned. He wrote his other son, Willie, saying, "[Your brother] has

hopelessly ruined himself.” Then Willie joined the Confederacy, too. Breckenridge was doubly stricken.

One young Kentuckian, Henry Lane Stone, ran away from home to join the rebel forces. He did so in secret because he knew his father and brothers would object. One of his brothers had already joined the Union army. A month later, Stone wrote home to his father. “I can imagine how your feelings are, one son in the Northern and another in the Southern army,” he wrote. “But so it is. . . Your rebelling son, Henry.”

Brother Against Brother

Henry Stone and his brother fought on opposing sides in the war. This was not uncommon. In fact, the Civil War was sometimes called the “brothers’ war.” One notable case of brother against brother involved the Campbell brothers from Scotland.



Click to read caption

James and Alexander Campbell came to America in the 1850s. James settled in Charleston, South Carolina. Alexander chose New York. When the war began, both signed up to fight, though on opposite sides.

In June 1862, Alexander’s regiment was part of an invasion force sent to retake Charleston from the Confederates. At the Battle of Secessionville, Union troops attacked Ft. Lamar, one of the forts

guarding the city. Although neither brother knew it at the time, they were both involved in the battle. Alexander held the U.S. flag at the base of the fort's walls, while James stood above, firing down on the attackers. James later wrote his brother,

I was astonished to hear from the prisoners that you [were] color Bearer of the Regiment that assaulted the Battery . . . I hope you and I will never again meet . . . on the Battlefield but if such should be the case . . . I will strive to discharge my duty to my country and my cause.

The two brothers fought in other battles of the war, but never again in the same place. After the war, they corresponded with each other and remained on good terms.

Another soldier, Matthew H. Peters, later recounted his own experience of the brothers' war in a poem:

*Both of us fought for what we thought right,
But of duty each took a different view;
Both of us entered the perilous fight
And did our duty as patriots do—
But he wore the gray and I wore the blue.*

—Matthew H. Peters, "My Brother and I," 1893

Unlike these soldiers, Hardin Helm did not survive the war. He was killed at the Battle of Chickamauga in 1863. When Lincoln got the news, he was devastated. "I never saw Mr. Lincoln more moved than when he heard of the death of his young brother-in-law," said a friend. Helm had died fighting for the Confederacy, but he was still family. For Lincoln, Helm's death was yet another tragedy of the divided nation. Families and communities had been torn apart by the war. It would take years for the wounds to heal.

Enrichment Essay - Great American Speeches: Abraham Lincoln's Inaugural Addresses

Speeches by political leaders have played an important role in American history. Some great speeches continue to influence and inspire Americans long after the events that prompted them. A good example is George Washington's Farewell Address. In this speech, Washington warned about the dangers of getting entangled in the affairs of other nations. Speakers have quoted his words ever since, applying them to new situations.

Abraham Lincoln served as president during the greatest crisis in American history, the Civil War. Lincoln rose to the occasion with several great speeches. His brief Gettysburg Address, for example, may be the most frequently quoted speech of any president. Most Americans have heard Lincoln's closing plea that "government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth." Perhaps no leader has ever expressed more eloquently than Lincoln the ties that Americans share. It is easy to understand why Lincoln emphasized this theme of a shared heritage and destiny. The great issue facing him was the breakup of the Union. He gave his First Inaugural Address after several southern states had said they were leaving the Union. Civil war threatened, but it had not yet begun. Four years later, the terrible war was nearly over. It was clear that the Union had won. Now Lincoln's task was to reunite a divided nation. Like the Gettysburg Address, these two speeches have lived on in American memory. As you read them, ask yourself what Lincoln hoped to achieve with each speech. In what ways are his thoughts and words still relevant today?

Abraham Lincoln's First Inaugural Address
March 4, 1861

Fellow-Citizens of the United States:

In compliance with a custom as old as the Government itself, I appear before you to address you briefly and to take in your presence the oath prescribed by the Constitution of the United States to be taken by the President "before he enters on the execution of this office...."

Apprehension [anxiety] seems to exist among the people of the Southern States that by the accession [assumption of power] of a Republican Administration their property and their peace and personal security are to be endangered. There has never been any reasonable cause for such apprehension. Indeed, the most ample evidence to the contrary has all the while existed and been open to their inspection. It is found in nearly all the published speeches of him who now addresses you. I do but quote from one of those speeches when I declare that—

I have no purpose, directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the States where it exists. I believe I have no lawful right to do so, and I have no inclination to do so.

Lincoln continues by promising to uphold the law. This promise includes laws calling for the return of fugitive slaves. After this reassurance to the South, he goes on to deny the right of states to secede from the Union:

I hold that in contemplation of universal law and of the Constitution the Union of these States is perpetual [unending]. Perpetuity is implied, if not expressed, in the fundamental law of all national governments. It is safe to assert that no government proper ever had a provision in its organic law for its own termination....

[The] proposition that in legal contemplation the Union is perpetual [is] confirmed by the history of the Union itself. The Union is much older than the Constitution. It was formed, in fact, by the Articles of Association in 1774. It was matured and continued by the Declaration of Independence in 1776. It was further matured... by the Articles of Confederation in 1778. And finally, in 1787, one of the declared objects for ordaining and establishing the Constitution was "to form a more perfect Union...."

It follows... that no State upon its own mere motion can lawfully get out of the Union; that resolves and ordinances to that effect are legally void, and that acts of violence within any State or States against the authority of the United States are insurrectionary or revolutionary....

I therefore consider that in view of the Constitution and the laws the Union is unbroken, and to the extent of my ability, I shall take care, as the Constitution itself expressly enjoins upon me, that the laws of the Union be faithfully executed in all the States. Doing this I deem to be only a simple duty on my part.

Lincoln has balanced his promise to respect the rights of the South with a pledge to preserve the Union. Next, he tries to narrow the conflict between North and South. The only issue, he argues, is whether slavery will be extended into new territories. The Union should not break up over this issue. Lincoln ends with a ringing appeal to the heritage shared by North and South.

One section of our country believes slavery is right and ought to be extended, while the other believes it is wrong and ought not to be extended. This is the only substantial dispute....

Physically speaking, we can not separate. We can not remove our respective sections from each other nor build an impassable wall

between them. A husband and wife may be divorced and go out of the presence and beyond the reach of each other, but the different parts of our country can not do this. They can not but remain face to face, and intercourse, either amicable or hostile, must continue between them. Is it possible, then, to make that intercourse more advantageous or more satisfactory after separation than before? Can aliens make treaties easier than friends can make laws? Can treaties be more faithfully enforced between aliens than laws can among friends? Suppose you go to war, you can not fight always; and when, after much loss on both sides and no gain on either, you cease fighting, the identical old questions, as to terms of intercourse, are again upon you....

My countrymen, one and all, think calmly and well upon this whole subject. Nothing valuable can be lost by taking time. If there be an object to hurry any of you in hot haste to a step which you would never take deliberately, that object will be frustrated by taking time; but no good object can be frustrated by it.... Intelligence, patriotism, Christianity, and a firm reliance on Him who has never yet forsaken this favored land are still competent to adjust in the best way all our present difficulty.

In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow-countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. The Government will not assail you. You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors. You have no oath registered in heaven to destroy the Government, while I shall have the most solemn one to "preserve, protect, and defend it."

I am loath to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.

Abraham Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address

March 4, 1865

Fellow-Countrymen:

At this second appearing to take the oath of the Presidential office there is less occasion for an extended address than there was at the first. Then a statement somewhat in detail of a course to be pursued seemed fitting and proper. Now, at the expiration of four years, during which public declarations have been constantly called forth on every point and phase of the great contest which still absorbs the attention and engrosses the energies of the nation, little that is new could be presented. The progress of our arms, upon which all else chiefly depends, is as well known to the public as to myself, and it is, I trust, reasonably satisfactory and encouraging to all. With high hope for the future, no prediction in regard to it is ventured.

On the occasion corresponding to this four years ago all thoughts were anxiously directed to an impending civil war. All dreaded it, all sought to avert it. While the inaugural address was being delivered from this place, devoted altogether to saving the Union without war, urgent agents were in the city seeking to destroy it without war—seeking to dissolve the Union and divide effects by negotiation. Both parties deprecated war, but one of them would make war rather than let the nation survive, and the other would accept war rather than let it perish, and the war came.

One-eighth of the whole population were colored slaves, not distributed generally over the Union, but localized in the southern part of it. These slaves constituted a peculiar and powerful interest. All knew that this interest was somehow the cause of the war. To strengthen, perpetuate, and extend this interest was the object for which the insurgents would rend the Union even by war, while the Government claimed no right to do more than to restrict the territorial enlargement of it. Neither party expected for the war the magnitude or the duration which it has already attained. Neither anticipated that the cause of the conflict might cease with or even before the conflict itself should cease. Each looked for an easier triumph, and a result less fundamental and astounding. Both read the same Bible and pray to the same God, and each invokes His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces, but let us judge not, that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered. That of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has His own purposes.... If we shall suppose that American slavery is one

of those offenses which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South this terrible war as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to Him? Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said "the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.

Source: *Inaugural Addresses of the Presidents of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1989).

Enrichment Essay - Florida and the Civil War

Florida chose to secede from the United States on January 10, 1861. Of the Confederate states, Florida had by far the fewest people. Nevertheless, it sent about 16,000 soldiers to battle. Most fought with the Confederate army. About 2,000 fought on the Union side.



[Click to read caption](#)

Other Floridians served the Confederate cause by producing food and other supplies. Many men were away at war. So women did the work of the men as well as their own. The Union tried to block Confederate supplies from reaching the battlefield. But Florida has a long coastline. Many ships got through the Union blockade. Florida supplied beef, salt, and other badly needed items to Confederate troops. Florida was far from most Civil War battlefields. The state did see fighting, however.

Like South Carolina, Florida was home to a Union fort. It was called Fort Pickens and it was located at Pensacola. Several times Confederates tried to capture the fort. Union forces fought them off. The Union held Fort Pickens for the entire war. In 1863, the Union also captured Fort Brooke, near Tampa.

In fact, Union troops held many places along Florida's coast. But they could not keep Floridians from supplying Confederate armies elsewhere.

The Union tried to stop Florida's Confederate troops. On February 20, 1864, a large Union force marched out of Jacksonville. They were to

block a shipment of beef from the state. Confederates under General Joseph Finegan met them at a place called Olustee, near Lake City in northern Florida. After the bloody Battle of Olustee, Union troops marched back to Jacksonville in defeat.

One place the Union never captured was Tallahassee. On March 4, 1865, they tried. A Confederate force stopped them in the Battle of Natural Bridge. Florida's capital was one of the few Confederate capitals the Union never captured.

Elsewhere in Florida, small groups known as the Cow Cavalry helped keep people safe and working. They fought many small battles with Union troops.