

IV. The Civil War (1861-65)

A. Secession and the Shock of War

1. South Carolina was quickly joined in secession (removal from the Union) by six southern states: Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas.
2. In February of 1861, these states joined to form the "Confederate States of America." The constitution of this new country allowed slavery.
3. When Lincoln asked the states to provide soldiers for an army to invade the seceded states and force them to stay in the Union, other states decided to secede as well. The Confederacy was joined by Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Arkansas.
5. Although slavery was permitted in Missouri, Kentucky, Delaware, and Maryland, these states chose not to leave the Union. Also, the western portion of Virginia decided to split from the state. (It later became the separate state of West Virginia.)
6. In April of 1861, Ft. Sumter, a fort in South Carolina belonging to the federal government, was bombarded by southern militia. This attack signaled the willingness of the South to fight for secession.
7. Both sides were still inexperienced in war. When their armies first met in battle, at the First Battle of Bull Run, neither side was prepared for how terrible it would be.
8. The Confederates, or "the South," was able to win this and later battles in part because of exceptional officers, such as "Stonewall" Jackson. Eventually, though, northern generals arose who could win the war.

B. The Eastern and Western Theaters of War

1. The Confederacy decided on Richmond, VA as its capital. This is only a hundred miles from Washington, making the northern part of Virginia itself the center of the war in the East.
2. West of the Appalachians, the North or ("the Union") decided to try to divide the Confederate states and take over the means of transportation, especially railroads and rivers, to cut supplies off from the main Confederate force in Virginia.
3. In early July of 1863, Generals Ulysses S. Grant and William Tecumseh Sherman succeeded in capturing Vicksburg, MS. This allowed the Union to control the entire Mississippi River.
4. Due to this success, Grant was put in charge of all Union armies, and Sherman was put in charge of the Union armies in the South.
7. Meanwhile, the South's greatest general, Robert E. Lee, had invaded the North to try to demoralize the Union. At the Battle of Gettysburg (the largest of the war) in Pennsylvania he was stopped by a larger Union army, and forced to retreat to the South.
8. Later that year, in a ceremony at the Gettysburg cemetery, President Lincoln gave a speech known as "The Gettysburg Address." In it he explained that the Civil War would prove whether or not a government "of the people, by the people, for the people" could survive.

C. The Emancipation Proclamation (January 1, 1863)

1. On January 1, 1863, Abraham Lincoln issued a proclamation, which said, "all persons held as slaves within any State...the people whereof shall be in rebellion against the United States shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free."
2. This did not free all the slaves in America. It punished the states that had seceded.

D. Sherman Devastates the South (1864)

1. As the army of Union under Grant and the Confederate army under Lee squared off between the two capitals, General Sherman was tearing through the South.
2. First Sherman laid siege to Atlanta. When he captured it, he forced the people from their homes and destroyed all its industries. This crippled the South, and caused Confederate soldiers to desert the army to try to return home and protect their families.
3. From Atlanta, Sherman's army marched to Savannah. During this "March to the Sea", Sherman destroyed everything in his path.
4. Many (especially Southerners) have criticized General Sherman's approach to war, which is sometimes called "total war." This involves doing harm to people who are not soldiers, such as women and children.
5. General Sherman did not attack these people directly, but he did burn down their cities, and he was unapologetic. "War is war," he said. Every person who supports the enemy by sending food and clothing or anything else is a part of the enemy and causes the women and children of the good side (in this case the Union) to lose their husbands and suffer greatly. The purpose of "total war" is to bring war to an end as quickly as possible in favor of the good side. By harming "non combatants," a commander demoralizes the enemy and denies them supplies. This tactic definitely works.

E. The End of the War

1. As Sherman wreaked havoc on the South, Grant gradually surrounded Richmond and forced Lee to flee the city westward.
2. Then, as Sherman advanced north, Lee realized there was no way to win against both armies, and he surrendered to Grant at Appomatox Court House on April 9, 1865.
3. The war was over, but just five days later, Abraham Lincoln was shot and killed by a Southerner, John Wilkes Booth, while attending a play.
4. The nation would have to be rebuild without the president who had led the cause of Union through the war.

V. Reconstruction (1865-77)

A. The Proclamation of Reconstruction

1. Late in 1863, when some of the Southern states had already been conquered by the Union, Abraham Lincoln began to work on putting the country back together again.
2. He offered amnesty (forgiveness and freedom from punishment) to Southerners as long as they swore loyalty to the Constitution and abolished slavery in their states. Sadly, they refused the bargain.

B. The Thirteenth Amendment

1. Although Lincoln was assassinated before it was completed, he supported the final solution to abolishing slavery: the Thirteenth Amendment.
2. This addition to the constitution reads: "*Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.*"
3. After being accepted by 2/3 of the House of Representatives and Senate, the amendment was passed on to the state governments, of which 3/4 had to agree as well

before it could become an amendment. Since the slave states were not part of the government yet, enough states agreed and the amendment became law.

C. Reaction and Punishment

1. Former slave owners of the South feared what newly freed slaves might do. They created new laws to try to keep them under control. These laws, known as “Black Codes,” said that all black people (since slaves were from Africa, they were all dark-skinned) had to have a job, or the government could force them to work. This was a new kind of slavery!
2. In response to the “Black Codes” the Federal government created the Freedman's Bureau which worked to give freed slaves food and 40 acres of land each so they could support themselves.
3. The government also created the Fourteenth Amendment, which said that all former slaves were citizens, and thus were protected by the laws of the United States like everyone else.

D. Military Rule over the South

1. When some southern states refused to accept the Fourteenth Amendment, Northerners decide to shut down these government using the army, and force southerners to create new ones.
2. The army supervised the creation of new state governments, which all had to accept the Fourteenth Amendment and allow black people to vote.
3. Since slaves were kept illiterate and ignorant by their masters, it would be easy for others to control them even though they were free. A secret group of criminals called the Ku Klux Klan was formed by Southern white people to attack black people and make them afraid of voting.

E. The Fifteenth Amendment and Force Acts

1. To complete the transformation of former black slaves into free American citizens, the federal government passed the Fifteenth Amendment. It said that all citizens had the right to vote.
2. To make sure that Southern states respected this amendment, the government also created laws called the “Force Acts,” which said that the police should protect all voters.
3. The government then used the police to break up the KKK.
4. Although the feeling of Union had certainly not returned, southern governments had been remade in a manner that seemed sufficient for the rights of freedmen to be protected.
5. Reconstruction was completed by the withdrawal of the army from the South in 1877.