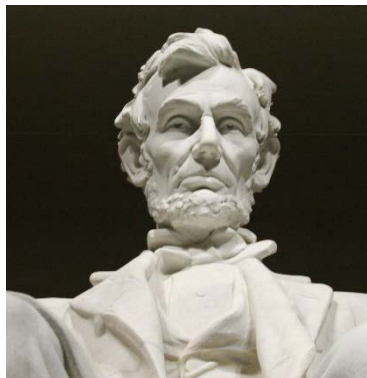


W A S T H E C I V I L W A R



A R I G H T E O U S J U D G E M E N T F O R A M E R I C A ' S E M B R A C E O F S L A V E R Y ?





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Q U E S T I O N E I G H T

W A S T H E C I V I L W A R

A R I G H T E O U S J U D G E M E N T F O R A M E R I C A ' S E M B R A C E O F S L A V E R Y ?

EXPLORING AMERICA'S HISTORY THROUGH COMPELLING QUESTIONS

S U P P O R T I N G Q U E S T I O N S

- 1 DID SLAVERY CAUSE THE CIVIL WAR?
- 2 DID WESTWARD EXPANSION
CAUSE THE CIVIL WAR?
- 3 COULD AMERICAN LEADERS HAVE
PREVENTED THE CIVIL WAR?
- 4 COULD THE SOUTH HAVE WON
THE CIVIL WAR?
- 5 WHAT DID THE WAR MEAN?
- 6 THE UNION WON THE WAR,
BUT WHO WON THE PEACE?

D E V E L O P E D A N D C O M P I L E D B Y
J O N A T H A N L O O M I S

S O U R C E S F O R O R I G I N A L T E X T I N C L U D E
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W A S T H E C I V I L W A R

A R I G H T E O U S J U D G E M E N T F O R A M E R I C A ' S E M B R A C E O F S L A V E R Y ?

By the time the Civil War started in 1860, slavery had been a part of American life for more than 200 years. There had never been a time during the existence of the United States, when slaves had not lived in the “Land of the Free.”

But slavery had not always been welcomed. The Founding Fathers had grappled with the question of slavery. Northerners had already in the 1770s and 1780s wanted to find ways to end slavery, but decided that compromising in order to declare independence and ratify the Constitution was more important. In effect, they made a deal with the Devil – trading the creation of the country for the continuation of slavery.

In the Antebellum Period, as the 1800s progressed, calls for the abolition of slavery increased and questions about the spread of slavery into new western territories divided the nation between the free states of the North and the slave states of the South. Although a series of political compromises preserved unity for a time, in 1860 all efforts failed, 11 southern states seceded and four years of civil war ensued.

In 1865 as the war was coming to a close, President Abraham Lincoln wondered if the death and destruction wrought by the war was God’s way of punishing Americans, that perhaps God would let the war continue “until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword.”

And that is the question for you. Did America deserve this war? Was slavery such a terrible sin that the only way to make things right was to pay with blood? Was the Civil War, in which more Americans died than any other in our nation’s history, as Lincoln called it, a righteous punishment for slavery?

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F I R S T Q U E S T I O N

DID SLAVERY CAUSE THE CIVIL WAR?



INTRODUCTION

From our vantage point in the 21st Century it seems obvious that slavery caused the Civil War. The Southern leaders explicitly talked about slavery when the seceded and formed their government. And slavery ended because of the war. The great hero of the time, President Abraham Lincoln, is remembered as the “Great Emancipator” who freed the slaves. Three amendments to the Constitution, ending slavery, guaranteeing citizenship and granting voting rights all resulted from the war.

But slavery had existed for more than 200 years before 1860 when the war began. Why hadn’t slavery caused a war before then? Great leaders like George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and John Adams had declared independence, fought a revolution and forged a new government, writing the Constitution and Bill of Rights all during a time of slavery. They didn’t have to fight a war about it.

And if slavery was so bad, why didn’t people find a peaceful way to give it up? Why didn’t White Americans just decide to free their slaves on their own? What was so special about the United States that we would have to fight a civil war?

After all, Great Britain, France, Mexico and dozens of other nations had ended slavery without fighting wars. Couldn’t the United States have done the same?

What do you think? Did slavery cause the Civil War?

1 DID SLAVERY CAUSE THE CIVIL WAR?



THE PECULIAR INSTITUTION

The **Peculiar Institution** is slavery. Its history in America begins with the earliest European settlements and ends with the Civil War. Yet its echo continues to reverberate loudly. Slavery existed both in the North and in the South, at times in equal measure. The industrialization of the North and the expansion of demand for cotton in the South shifted the balance so that it became a regional issue, as the southern economy grew increasingly reliant on cheap labor. As is always true in history, cultures grow and thrive in all conditions. Two interdependent cultures emerged in the American South before the Civil War — the world the slaveholders created for themselves and the world of their slaves. Even though slaves were not permitted to express themselves freely, they were able to fight back even though enchained.

Although African-Americans had been brought to British America since the time of Jamestown colony, American slavery adopted many of its defining characteristics in the 19th century. The cotton gin had not been invented until the last decade of the 1700s. This new invention led the American South to emerge as the world's leading producer of cotton. As the South prospered, Southerners became more and more nervous about their future. Plantation life became the goal of all the South, as poor yeoman farmers aspired to one day become planters themselves. Rebellions and abolitionists led Southerners to establish an even tighter grip on the enslaved.

Even amidst the bondage in the South, there was a significant population of free African-Americans who were creating and inventing and being productive.

The Peculiar Institution refused to die in the United States although it had ended in many other nations. Great Britain had outlawed the slave trade long before its former American colonies. New nations in the Western Hemisphere, such as Mexico, often banned slavery upon achieving independence.

But in America, political, religious, economic and social arguments in favor of the continuation of slavery emerged. Slavery became a completely sectional issue, as few states above the **Mason-Dixon Line** still permitted human bondage. These arguments also revealed the growing separation in the needs and priorities of the Northern industrial interests versus the Southern planting society.

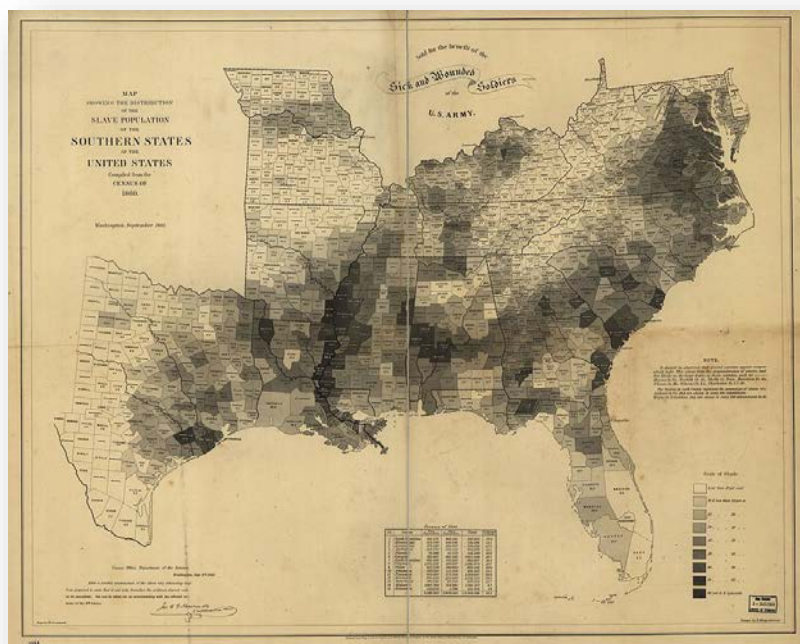


Peculiar Institution: Slavery. This was the euphemism used by the South.



Mason-Dixon Line: Also known as "Mason and Dixon's Line," a boundary surveyed between 1763 and 1767 by Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon in the resolution of a border dispute between British colonies in colonial America. It marked the line between Pennsylvania and Maryland, or the slave and free states.

1 DID SLAVERY CAUSE THE CIVIL WAR?



Secondary Source: Map

This map shows the density of the slave population in 1860. Notice that most slaves were concentrated in the tobacco growing Tidewater Region of Virginia, and in the cotton growing region of the Deep South.

KING COTTON

Removing seeds from newly picked cotton is not as simple as it sounds. Cotton is sticky when removed from the plant, and pulling the seeds from its grasp is difficult. Throughout the 1700s, cotton production was expensive because of the huge amount of labor necessary to remove the seeds. This changed with the invention of the cotton gin. What once was painstakingly slow was now relatively fast. By the end of the 18th century, demand for cotton was increasing as power looms were able to turn out great quantities of cloth. With the **cotton gin**, Southern cotton plantations could supply the world's demand.

Ironically, the man who would make cotton king was born to a Massachusetts farmer. Almost immediately after graduating from Yale University, **Eli Whitney** traveled south. While staying at the Savannah plantation of Mrs. Nathaniel Green in 1792, the widow of the Revolutionary War general, Whitney created the device that changed the world. Whitney built a machine that moved stiff, brush-like teeth through the raw cotton. To his delight, the teeth removed a very high percentage of the nettlesome seeds. Up to this point, it took up to ten hours to produce a pound of cotton, with very little profit. The cotton gin required many fewer workers to operate and ultimately grew to produce a thousand pounds of cotton per day.

As an indication of the impact of this invention, the total amount of cotton being exported was about 138,000 pounds in the year the cotton gin was



Cotton Gin: Short for "cotton engine", this machine was invented by Eli Whitney could quickly remove the seeds from raw cotton. Its use allowed plantation owners to greatly increase the production of cotton and drove demand for slaves.



Eli Whitney: Inventor of the cotton gin. He hoped it would help end slavery by replacing slaves. Instead, planters used more slaves to grow more cotton because the machine could remove the seeds more quickly at less cost.

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invented. Two years later, the amount of cotton being exported rose ten-fold, to 1,600,000 pounds. Before the gin, the prevailing thinking of the leaders of the country was that slavery would gradually disappear. This all changed when slaves could be used to cultivate millions of pounds of cotton for markets all over the world. Eli Whitney never made a cent on his invention because it was widely reproduced before it could be patented. Determined to duplicate his inventive success, he developed the milling machine, which led to the development of interchangeable parts and the northern factory system. This one individual played a great part in creating the industrial North, as well as the plantation South.

This phenomenal and sudden explosion of success of the cotton industry gave slavery a new lease on life. Prior to this, most thoughtful Southerners, including Washington and Jefferson, had seen slavery as an evil that must eventually be swept away. But with the Southern economy now based on the production and export of cotton, these beliefs were seen as old-fashioned, and slavery now was seen as an institution to be cherished. The importance of the cotton industry for both the North and the South led Americans to call their primary export **King Cotton**. Cotton and the millions of slaves who cultivated it became the foundation of Southern economy, Southern culture, and Southern pride.



King Cotton: The idea that the cotton industry was the key to the Southern, and more generally American economy.



Primary Source: Illustration

A drawing of slaves operating a cotton gin published in Harper's Weekly in 1869.



Watch a cotton gin in action

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SLAVERY IN AMERICA IN THE 1800S

Slave life varied greatly across America depending on many factors.

Life on the fields meant working sunup to sundown six days a week and having food sometimes not suitable for an animal to eat. Plantation slaves lived in small shacks with a dirt floor and little or no furniture. Life on large plantations with a cruel overseer was oftentimes the worst. However, work for a small farm owner who was not doing well could mean not being fed.

The stories about cruel overseers were certainly true in some cases. The **overseer** was paid to get the most work out of the slaves; therefore, overseers often resorted to whatever means were necessary. Sometimes the slaves would drive the overseer off the plantation in desperation. When slaves complained that they were being unfairly treated, slaveholders would most often be very protective of their "property" and would release the overseer.

In some cases, a driver was used rather than an overseer. The difference between the overseer and the **driver** was simple: drivers were slaves themselves. A driver might be convinced by a master to manage the slaves for better privileges. Drivers were usually hated by the rest of the slaves and these feelings often led to violence.

Large plantations usually required some slaves to work in the plantation home. These slaves enjoyed far better circumstances. **House slaves** lived in better quarters and received better food. They sometimes were able to travel with the owner's family. In many cases, a class system developed within the slave community. Domestic slaves did not often associate themselves with other slaves on the plantation, especially the **field hands**. They often aspired to arrange courtships for their children with other domestic slaves.

As the Peculiar Institution spread across the South, many states passed **slave codes**, which outlined the rights of slaves and the acceptable treatment and rules regarding slaves. Slave codes varied from state to state, but there were common threads. For example, one could not do business with a slave without the prior consent of the owner. Slaves could be awarded as prizes in raffles, wagered in gambling, offered as security for loans, and transferred as gifts from one person to another.

A slave was not permitted to keep a gun. If caught carrying a gun, the slave received 39 lashes and forfeited the gun. Blacks were held incompetent as witnesses in legal cases involving whites. The education of slaves was prohibited. Anyone operating a school or teaching reading and writing to any African-American in Missouri could be punished by a fine of not less than \$500 and up to six months in jail. Slaves could not assemble without a white



Overseer: Whites hired by plantation owners to manage the slaves.



Driver: A slave who was placed in charge of making sure other slaves worked.



House Slave: A slave who worked in the plantation owner's home. They were usually better dressed and fed than slaves who worked in the fields, and were therefore higher in the social order among slaves.



Field Hand: The slaves who worked in the fields. This was difficult and exhausting work. The field hands were at the bottom of the social order of slaves.



Slave Codes: Laws in each U.S. state defining the status of slaves and the rights of their owners and giving slave owners absolute power over their slaves. Over time, the slave codes became more and more restrictive.

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person present. Marriages between slaves were not considered legally binding. Therefore, owners were free to split up families through sale.

Any slave found guilty of arson, rape of a white woman, or conspiracy to rebel was put to death. However, since the slave woman was **chattel**, a white man who raped her was guilty only of a trespass on the master's property. Rape was common on the plantation, and very few cases were ever reported. Light-skinned slaves – those whose parents or grandparents were White – were common, although they were always considered Black, no matter how close they might look like their fathers. Even Thomas Jefferson fathered children with one of his slaves.



Chattel Slavery: The system of slavery that developed in the United States in which slaves were considered property.

Primary Source: Photograph

A photograph of a family of slaves working the cotton fields in the 1850s.



SLAVE REVOLTS

Starting as early as 1663, slaves were organizing revolts to regain their freedom. Hundreds of minor uprisings occurred on American plantations during the two and a half centuries of slavery. Most of the uprisings were small in scope and were put down easily. Some were larger in ambition and sent a chill down the spines of countless Southern planters. Two of the most famous revolts were in the early Nineteenth Century. One was led by Denmark Vesey and the other was led by Nat Turner.

Denmark Vesey earned his freedom by winning a lottery and purchasing his freedom. He worked as a carpenter in South Carolina as a respected artisan for years and was quite satisfied with his life. He was an educated man, fluent in several languages, which he learned while he was enslaved to a widely traveled slave trader. But a profound repulsion to slavery, plus encouragement from the successful slave revolt in **Haiti** led him to plan to



Denmark Vesey: A literate, skilled carpenter and leader among free African Americans in Charleston, South Carolina. He was accused of being the ringleader of "the rising," a major slave revolt planned for the city in June 1822. The plan was uncovered before it was carried out and Vesey was executed.

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murder every white in the South, with the help of thousands of slaves and supporters. The date was set for Sunday, July 24, 1822. Before the uprising began, his plan was revealed and he was captured, tried, and hanged. Forty-seven African-Americans were condemned to death for alleged involvement in the plot. An estimated 9,000 individuals were involved.

Nat Turner was somewhat of a mystic. He frequently was said to have religious visions, and he claimed at times to have spoken with God. In 1831, Turner claimed to be responding to one of these visions and organized as many as 70 slaves who went from plantation to plantation and murdered about 75 men, women and children. As they continued on their rampage they gathered additional supporters but when their ammunition was exhausted, they were captured. Turner and about 18 of his supporters were hanged. This was even more shocking than any previous uprising. Turner had done what others had not. He actually succeeded in killing a large number of white Southerners. The South responded by increasing slave patrols and tightening their ever more repressive slave codes.

Rebellion would often find voice in less dramatic ways and more personal ways. The slave codes bear witness to the growing fear of slave insurrection and revolt. Slaves ran away in droves, escaping to freedom in Canada and the Northern states. They fled to the Indians and joined them in their wars against the white settlers. Some accounts tell of slaves poisoning their masters and mistresses. Some slaves banded together and stopped working, while others deliberately slowed down their pace. The history of slave resistance and revolts is the story of the desperate and sometimes successful attempt of people to preserve their sense of dignity, humanity and to preserve their culture, and gain their liberty in the face of systematic repression and bondage.

THE WHITE POOR

The “Plain Folk of the Old South” were white subsistence farmers who occupied a social rung between rich planters and poor whites in the Southern United States before the Civil War. These farmers tended to settle in backcountry, and most of them were **Scotch-Irish** American and English American or a mixture thereof. They owned land, generally did not raise commodity crops, and owned few or no slaves. Jeffersonian and Jacksonian Democrats preferred to refer to these farmers as “yeomen” because the term emphasized an independent political spirit and economic self-reliance.

Historians have long debated how large this group was and how much influence its members exerted on Southern politics in the **Antebellum Period**, particularly why and to what extent these farmers were willing to support secession despite their typically not being slaveholders themselves. Frederick Law Olmsted (a Northerner who traveled throughout and wrote about the 1850s South) and historians such as William E. Dodd and Ulrich B. Phillips considered common Southerners as minor players in Southern



Haitian Revolution: In 1791 slaves in Haiti rose in revolt and expelled the French from the island, making Haiti the second independent nation in the Americas.



Nat Turner: An American slave who led a slave rebellion in Virginia on August 21, 1831, that resulted in 60 white deaths and at least 100 black deaths, the largest number of fatalities to occur in one uprising prior to the American Civil War in the Southern United States.



Scotch-Irish: White immigrants from the borderlands of Scotland and Ireland who settled primarily in the Appalachian Mountains. They are famously independent and distrustful of wealthy elites.



Antebellum Period: The years in the 1800s before the start of the Civil War in 1860.

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antebellum social, economic, and political life. Twentieth-century romantic portrayals of the Antebellum South, especially Margaret Mitchell's novel *Gone with the Wind* and the 1939 film adaptation, mostly ignored the role yeomen played. The nostalgic view of the South that emerged in the 20th Century emphasized the elite planter class of wealth and refinement who controlled large plantations and numerous slaves.

The major challenge to the view of planter dominance came from historian Frank Lawrence Owsley's book, *Plain Folk of the Old South* (1949). His work ignited a long historiographical debate. Owsley argued that yeoman farmers played a significant role in Southern society during this era rather than being sidelined by a dominant aristocratic planter class. The religion, language, and culture of these common people comprised a democratic "Plain Folk" society. Critics say Owsley overemphasized the size of the Southern landholding middle class and overlooked a large class of poor whites who owned neither land nor slaves. Owsley believed that shared economic interests united Southern farmers; critics suggest the vast difference in economic classes between the elite and subsistence farmers meant they did not have the same values or outlook.

In his study of Edgefield County, South Carolina, historian Orville Vernon Burton classified white society into the poor, the yeoman middle class, and the elite. A clear line demarcated the elite, but according to Burton, the line between poor and yeoman was less distinct. Another historian, Stephanie McCurry argued that yeomen were clearly distinguished from poor whites by their ownership of real property, that is, land. Yeomen were "self-working farmers," distinct from the elite because they physically labored on their land alongside any slaves they owned. Planters with numerous slaves had work that was essentially managerial, and often they supervised an overseer rather than the slaves themselves.

Nevertheless, the very presence of slaves throughout the American South fostered white unity despite economic disparities. In a speech before the U.S. Senate in 1858, South Carolina senator and planter, James Henry Hammond, demonstrated this logic by arguing that slaves comprised, "the very mud-sill of society," or a bottom supportive layer to a class system delineated across racial lines.

Though Southern society was dominated by a planter elite, "Plain Folk" supported secession to defend their families, homes, notions of liberty, and beliefs in racial hierarchies. Historians argue that a distinctive Southern political ideology blended localism, white supremacy, and Jeffersonian ideas of agrarian republicanism.

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FREEMEN

When Americans think of African-Americans in the **Deep South** before the Civil War, the first image that invariably comes to mind is one of slavery. However, many African-Americans were able to secure their freedom and live in a state of semi-freedom even before slavery was abolished by war. **Free Blacks** lived in all parts of the United States, but the majority lived amid slavery in the American South. It is estimated that by 1860 there were about 1.5 million free blacks in the Southern states.

How did African-Americans become free? Some slaves bought their own freedom from their owners, but this process became more and more rare as the 1800s progressed. Many slaves became free through **manumission**, the voluntary **emancipation** of a slave by a slave owner. Manumission was sometimes offered because slaves had outlived their usefulness or were held in special favor by their masters. The offspring of interracial relations were often set free. Some slaves were set free by their masters as the abolitionist movement grew. Occasionally slaves were freed during the master's lifetime, and more often through the master's will. Many African-Americans freed themselves through escape. A few Americans of African descent came to the United States as immigrants, especially common in the New Orleans area.

Were free blacks offered the same rights as free whites? The answer is quite simply no. For example, a Virginia law, passed in the early 1830s, prohibited the teaching of all blacks to read or write. Free blacks throughout the South were banned from possessing firearms, or preaching the Bible. Later laws even prohibited Negroes who went out of state to get an education from returning. In many states, the slave codes that were designed to keep African-Americans in bondage were also applied to free persons of color. Most horrifically, free blacks could not testify in court. If a slave catcher claimed that a free African-American was a slave, the accused could not defend himself in court.

The church often played a central role in the community of free blacks. The establishment of the **African Methodist Episcopal Church** represents an important shift. It was established with black leadership and spread from Philadelphia to Charleston and to many other areas in the South, despite laws which forbade blacks from preaching. The church suffered brutalities and massive arrests of its membership, clearly an indication of the fear of black solidarity. Many of these leaders became diehard abolitionists.

Free blacks were highly skilled as artisans, business people, educators, writers, planters, musicians, tailors, hairdressers, and cooks. African-American inventors like Thomas Jennings, who invented a method for the dry cleaning of clothes, and Henry Blair Glenn Ross, who patented a seed planter, contributed to the advancement of science. Some owned property and kept boarding houses, and some even owned slaves themselves.



Deep South: The states farthest to the South including North and South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas and Texas. In these states slavery was the most widespread.



Free Blacks: African Americans who were not slaves. Surprisingly, there were free blacks living throughout the South, especially in Southern cities.



Manumission: When a slave owner sets his or her slaves free.



Emancipation: When the government sets slaves free.



African Methodist Episcopal Church: Usually called the A.M.E. Church, it is the first independent Protestant denomination founded by African Americans.

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Prominent among free persons of color of the period are Frederick Douglass, Richard Allen, Absalom Jones, and Harriet Tubman.

ABOLITION

As the cotton industry took hold and slavery became more and more entrenched across the American South, the opposition to the Peculiar Institution began to grow.

The first widely accepted solution to the slavery question in the 1820s was put forward by the **American Colonization Society**. In effect, supporters of colonization wanted to transplant the slave population back to Africa. Their philosophy was simple: slaves were brought to America involuntarily. Why not give them a chance to enjoy life as though such a forced migration had never taken place? Funds were raised to transport freed African-Americans across the Atlantic in the opposite direction. The nation of **Liberia** was created as a haven for former American slaves.

But most African-Americans opposed this practice. The vast majority had never set foot on African soil. Many African-Americans rightly believed that they had helped build this country and deserved to live as free citizens of America. By the end of the decade, a full-blown Abolitionist movement was born.

These new **abolitionists** were different from their forebears. Anti-slavery societies had existed in America since 1775, but these activists were more radical. Early Abolitionists called for a gradual end to slavery. They supported compensation to owners of slaves for their loss of property. They raised money for the purchase of slaves to grant freedom to selected individuals.

The new Abolitionists thought differently. They saw slavery as a blight on America. It must be brought to an end immediately and without compensation to the owners. They sent petitions to Congress and the states, campaigned for office, and flooded the South with inflammatory literature.

Needless to say, eyebrows were raised throughout the North and the South. Soon the battle lines were drawn. President Andrew Jackson banned the post office from delivering Abolitionist literature in the South. A **gag rule** was passed on the floor of the House of Representatives forbidding the discussion of bills that restricted slavery. Abolitionists were physically attacked because of their outspoken anti-slavery views. While northern churches rallied to the abolitionist cause, the churches of the South used the Bible to defend slavery.

Abolitionists were always a minority, even on the eve of the Civil War. Their dogged determination to end human bondage was a struggle that persisted for decades. While mostly peaceful at first, as each side became more and more firmly rooted, pens were exchanged for swords. Another seed of sectional conflict had been deeply planted.



American Colonization Society: An organization set up by abolitionists who raised money to send freed slaves to Liberia in Africa.



Liberia: A country on the west coast of Africa established by freed slaves from the United States.



Abolitionist: A person who worked to end slavery.



Gag Rule: A rule that prohibits discussion of a subject.

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THE VOICES OF ABOLITION

Every movement needs a voice. For the entire generation of people that grew up in the years that led to the Civil War, **William Lloyd Garrison** was the voice of Abolitionism. Originally a supporter of colonization, Garrison changed his position and became the leader of the emerging anti-slavery movement. His publication, **The Liberator**, reached thousands of individuals worldwide. His ceaseless, uncompromising position on the moral outrage that was slavery made him loved and hated by many Americans.

In 1831, Garrison published the first edition of *The Liberator*. His words, "I am in earnest — I will not equivocate — I will not excuse — I will not retreat a single inch — and I will be heard," clarified the position of the New Abolitionists. Garrison was not interested in compromise. He founded the **New England Anti-Slavery Society** the following year. In 1833, he met with delegates from around the nation to form the American Anti-Slavery Society. Garrison saw his cause as worldwide. With the aid of his supporters, he traveled overseas to garner support from Europeans. He was, indeed, a global crusader. But Garrison needed a lot of help. *The Liberator* would not have been successful had it not been for the free blacks who subscribed. Approximately seventy-five percent of the readers were free African-Americans.

Garrison saw moral persuasion as the only means to end slavery. To him the task was simple: show people how immoral slavery was and they would join in the campaign to end it. He disdained politics, for he saw the political world as an arena of compromise. A group split from Garrison in the 1840s to run candidates for president on the **Liberty Party** ticket. Garrison was not dismayed. Once in Boston, he was dragged through the streets and nearly killed. A bounty of \$4000 was placed on his head. In 1854, he publicly burned a copy of the Constitution because it permitted slavery. He called for the North to secede from the Union to sever the ties with the slaveholding South.

While Garrison may have been the most well-known abolitionist, abolition of slavery was the single most important cause of free African-Americans.

Once the colonization effort was defeated, free African Americans in the North became more active in the fight against slavery. They worked with white abolitionists like William Lloyd Garrison and **Wendell Phillips** to spread the word. They developed publications and contributed money. Many, such as **Robert Purvis**, dedicated their lives to freeing individual slaves from bondage. Although many pledged their lives to the cause, three African-American abolitionists surpassed others in impact. They were David Walker, Frederick Douglass, and Sojourner Truth.

While Garrison is considered the prime organizer of the abolitionist movement, David Walker published his **Appeal** two years before *The Liberator*. In 1829, Walker declared slavery a malignancy, calling for its immediate termination. He cited the four evils causing the greatest harm to



William Lloyd Garrison: White abolitionist who published "The Liberator."



The Liberator: William Lloyd Garrison's abolitionist newspaper.



New England Anti-Slavery Society: William Lloyd Garrison's organization. They were the first to advocate for the immediate end of slavery.



Read The Liberator



Liberty Party: The first political party in the United States to advocate for the end of slavery. Many of its members later joined the Free-Soil Party and eventually the Republican Party.



Wendell Phillips: An abolitionist from Boston who was nearly lynched by a mob when he spoke. He was a renowned speaker and was nicknamed the golden trumpet of abolition.



Robert Purvis: An abolitionist. He was 1/4 African American. His home was nearly burned down by a mob who disagreed with his activism.

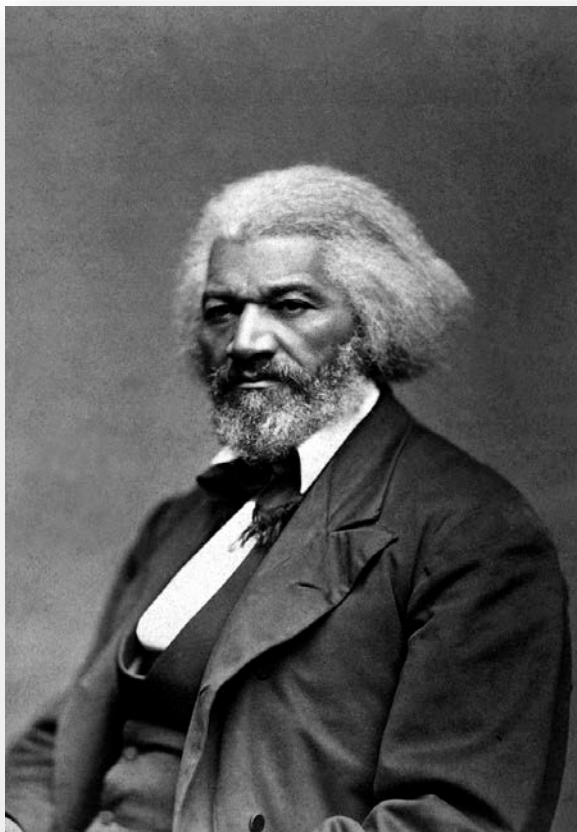


David Walker: African American abolitionist and publisher of "Appeal," a major newspaper promoting abolition.

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WAS THE
CIVIL WAR
A RIGHTeous JUDGEMENT
FOR AMERICA'S ENDORSE OF
SLAVERY?

African Americans as slavery, ignorance, Christianity, and colonization. Even white abolitionists decried the violent nature of his text. In the South, an award was raised for his capture, and nine months after publishing his *Appeal* he died mysteriously. Walker originated radical abolitionism.



Appeal: Along with "The Liberator" and "The North Star," a major abolitionist newspaper before the Civil War.

Primary Source: Photograph

A photograph of Frederick Douglass late in his life. He was well known for his sharp intellect and piercing gaze.



Read the North Star

The best known African American abolitionist was **Frederick Douglass**. Douglass escaped from slavery when he was 21 and moved to Massachusetts. As a former house servant, Douglass was able to read and write. In 1841, he began to speak to crowds about what it was like to be enslaved. His talents as an orator and writer led people to question whether or not he had actually been born a slave.



Frederick Douglass: An escaped slave and prolific orator. His autobiography was widely read.

All this attention put him at great risk. Fearful that his master would claim him and return him to bondage, Douglass went to England, where he continued to fight for the cause. A group of abolitionists eventually bought his freedom and he was allowed to return to the United States. He began publishing an anti-slavery newspaper known as the **North Star**. Douglass served as an example to all who doubted the ability of African Americans to function as free citizens.



North Star: Frederick Douglass's abolitionist newspaper.

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Sojourner Truth was born into slavery in New York, but was freed when the state outlawed the practice in 1827. She was born Isabella Baumfree, but changed her name because she believed God wanted her to travel about the country and spread the word. Truth was one of the best known abolitionists, renowned for her stirring oratory. Also concerned with women's rights, she joined the campaign for female suffrage. When slavery was ended, she continued to fight for equality by protesting segregation laws.

Speeches and Garrison's *Liberator* were important, but it was a novel that captured the collective conscience of the North.

"So you're the little woman who wrote the book that made this great war." This was Abraham Lincoln's reported greeting to **Harriet Beecher Stowe** when he met her ten years after her book **Uncle Tom's Cabin** was published. Although the President may have been exaggerating a bit, few novels in American history have grabbed the public spotlight and caused as great an uproar as *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.



Across the North, readers became acutely aware of the horrors of slavery on a far more personal level than ever before. In the South the book was met with outrage and branded an irresponsible book of distortions and overstatements. In such an explosive environment, her story greatly furthered the Abolitionist cause north of the Mason-Dixon Line and promoted sheer indignation in plantation America.

Harriet Beecher Stowe was born into a prominent family of preachers. Her father, Lyman Beecher, was one of the most renowned ministers in his generation. Her brother **Henry Ward Beecher** was already an outspoken Abolitionist, and by the mid-1850s would become the driving force behind aiding the free-soil cause in "Bleeding Kansas." While living for a short while



Sojourner Truth: An African-American abolitionist and women's rights activist. Truth was born into slavery in Swartekill, Ulster County, New York, but escaped with her infant daughter to freedom in 1826. Her best-known speech became widely known during the Civil War by the title "Ain't I a Woman?"



Harriet Beecher Stowe: Abolitionist author of "Uncle Tom's Cabin."



Uncle Tom's Cabin: Harriet Beecher Stowe's abolitionist novel that became a best seller in the North, and was banned in the South. The sympathetic characters helped convince many Northerners to support abolition.

Primary Source: Illustration

A full page illustration by Hammatt Billings for *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in 1852. The sympathetic characters applied to many in the North who began supporting abolition after reading the novel.



Read Uncle Tom's Cabin



Henry Ward Beecher: An American Congregationalist minister social reformer, and speaker, known for his support of the abolition of slavery, and his emphasis on God's love.

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in Cincinnati, Stowe became exposed to actual runaway slaves. Her heart ached at the wretched tales she heard. She began to write a series of short stories depicting the plight of plantation slaves.




Primary Source: Document

This notice was printed in a Virginia newspaper in 1839.

Encouraged by her sister-in-law, Stowe decided to pen a novel. First published as a series in 1851, it first appeared as a book the following year. The heart-wrenching tale portrays slave families forced to cope with separation by masters through sale. Uncle Tom mourns for the family he was forced to leave. In one heroic scene, Eliza makes a daring dash across the frozen Ohio River to prevent the sale of her son by slave traders. The novel also takes the perspective that slavery brings out the worst in the white masters, leading them to perpetrate moral atrocities they would otherwise never commit.

The reaction was incredible. Uncle Tom's Cabin sold 300,000 copies in the North alone. The **Fugitive Slave Act**, passed in 1850, could hardly be enforced by any of Stowe's readers. Although banned in most of the South, it served as another log on the growing fire.

 **Fugitive Slave Act:** A law passed in 1850, as part of the Compromise of 1850. It declared that all runaway slaves be brought back to their masters. Abolitionists nicknamed it the "Bloodhound Law."

The book sold even more copies in Great Britain than in the United States. This had an immeasurable appeal in swaying British public opinion. Many members of the British Parliament relished the idea of a divided United States. Ten years after the publication of Uncle Tom's Cabin, the British people made it difficult for its government to support the Confederacy, even though there were strong economic ties to the South. In the end, Mr. Lincoln may not have been stretching the truth after all.

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THE ARGUMENT FOR SLAVERY

Those who defended slavery rose to the challenge set forth by the Abolitionists. The defenders of slavery included economics, history, religion, legality, social good, and even humanitarianism, to further their arguments.

Defenders of slavery argued that the sudden end to the slave economy would have had a profound and killing economic impact in the South where reliance on slave labor was the foundation of their economy. The cotton economy would collapse. The tobacco crop would dry in the fields. Rice would cease being profitable.

Defenders of slavery argued that if all the slaves were freed, there would be widespread unemployment and chaos. This would lead to uprisings, bloodshed, and anarchy. They pointed to the mob's "rule of terror" during the French Revolution and argued for the continuation of the status quo, which was providing for affluence and stability for the slaveholding class and for all free people who enjoyed the bounty of the slave society.

Defenders of slavery argued that slavery had existed throughout history and was the natural state of mankind. The Greeks had slaves, the Romans had slaves, and the English had slavery until very recently.

Defenders of slavery noted that in the Bible, Abraham had slaves. They point to the Ten Commandments, noting that "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house... nor his manservant, nor his maidservant." In the New Testament, Paul returned a runaway slave, Philemon, to his master, and, although slavery was widespread throughout the Roman world, Jesus never spoke out against it.

Defenders of slavery turned to the courts, who had ruled, with the Dred Scott Decision, that all blacks — not just slaves — had no legal standing as persons in our courts — they were property, and the Constitution protected slaveholders' rights to their property.

Defenders of slavery argued that the institution was divine, and that it brought Christianity to the heathen from across the ocean. Slavery was, according to this argument, a good thing for the enslaved. John C. Calhoun said, "Never before has the black race of Central Africa, from the dawn of history to the present day, attained a condition so civilized and so improved, not only physically, but morally and intellectually."

Defenders of slavery argued that by comparison with the poor of Europe and the workers in the northern states, that slaves were better cared for. They said that their owners would protect and assist them when they were sick and aged, unlike those who, once fired from their work, were left to fend helplessly for themselves.

James Thornwell, a minister, wrote in 1860, "The parties in this conflict are not merely Abolitionists and slaveholders, they are Atheists, Socialists,

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Communists, Red Republicans, Jacobins on the one side and the friends of order and regulated freedom on the other."

When a society forms around any institution, as the South did around slavery, it will formulate a set of arguments to support it. The Southerners held ever firmer to their arguments as the political tensions in the country drew us ever closer to the Civil War.



Primary Source: Photograph

Harriet Tubman as she appeared in 1955 at the height of her work as a conductor on the Underground Railroad.

THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

Those who argued for and against slavery were instrumental in shaping the way ordinary Americans felt about the Peculiar Institution. However, revolutionary change requires people of action — those who little by little chip away at the forces who stand in the way. Such were the "conductors" of the **Underground Railroad**. Not content to wait for laws to change or for slavery to implode itself, railroad activists helped individual fugitive slaves find the light of freedom.

The Underground Railroad operated at night. Slaves were moved from "station" to "station" by abolitionists. These "stations" were usually homes



The Underground Railroad: The antebellum volunteer resistance movement that assisted slaves in escaping to freedom. Although it was not a railroad, the participants of the system used railroad terminology. Safe places for escaped slaves to stay were called stations and the people who guided the slaves were conductors.


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and churches — any safe place to rest and eat before continuing on the journey to freedom, as far away as Canada. Often whites would pretend to be the masters of the fugitives to avoid capture. Sometimes lighter skinned African Americans took this role. In one spectacular case, Henry “Box” Brown arranged for a friend to put him in a wooden box, where he had only a few biscuits and some water. His friend mailed him to the North, where bemused abolitionists received him in Philadelphia.

Most of the time, however, slaves crept northward on their own, looking for the signal that designated the next safe haven. This was indeed risky business, because slave catchers and sheriffs were constantly on the lookout. Over 3,200 people are known to have worked on the railroad between 1830 and the end of the Civil War. Many will remain forever anonymous.

Perhaps the most outstanding "conductor" of the Underground Railroad was **Harriet Tubman**. Born a slave herself, she began working on the railroad to free her family members. During the 1850s, Tubman made 19 separate trips into slave territory. She was terribly serious about her mission. Any slave who had second thoughts she threatened to shoot with the pistol she carried on her hip. By the end of the decade, she was responsible for freeing about 300 slaves. When the Civil War broke out, she used her knowledge from working the railroad to serve as a spy for the Union.

 **Harriet Tubman:** A slave who escaped to the North but returned thirteen times to guide other slaves to freedom. Tubman was nicknamed "Moses" and was the most famous conductor on the Underground Railroad. She also worked for women's rights and was a spy for the North during the Civil War.

Needless to say, the Underground Railroad was not appreciated by the slave owners. Although they disliked abolitionist talk and literature, this was far worse. To them, this was a simple case of stolen property. When northern towns rallied around freed slaves and refused compensation, yet another brick was set into the foundation of Southern secession.

CONCLUSION

Clearly slavery was a terribly divisive issue. The nation was growing wealthy off of the backbreaking labor of millions of slaves, but it was not a system that everyone, least of all African Americans were willing to accept. In fact, violent opposition to slavery was nothing new when the Civil War erupted in 1860. African Americans as well as Whites had been fighting to end it for years.

So, did slavery cause the Civil War?

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SUMMARY

Slavery had been a part of the American experience from almost immediately after the first British settlers arrived in Jamestown. Over time, economic and social pressures transformed the use of slave labor. By the mid-1800s, slavery was the primary source of labor south of the Mason-Dixon Line and slave codes had been passed that severely limited the rights and movement of slaves. Slaves had tried to revolt on numerous occasions, but each uprising led to more severe slave codes.

America was getting rich growing and selling cotton. Northern manufacturers produced textiles made from southern cotton and the South exported cotton to both the North and to Europe. It was so important to the overall economy that it was called King Cotton, and slaves did all the work cultivating it.

In the early years of the republic, the Founding Fathers had thought that slavery would die out. However, the invention of the cotton gin made processing cotton lucrative, and expansion into the Deep South increased the demand for slaves. Instead of disappearing, slavery became so central to the economy that few leaders in either the North or South could imagine a way to reasonably end it without massive disruption to the entire nation.

Slavery was central to the social order of the South. There were only a few wealthy Whites who owned slaves, so for the vast majority of other Whites, being superior to African Americans and having the possibility of someday being rich enough to purchase a slave was a mark of social standing.

Southerners argued that slaves were actually better off than the free workers of the industrial North since they were guaranteed housing, food, and work. Few were volunteering to trade places with the slaves, however, which is evidence that they probably didn't believe their own arguments.

There were a few free African Americans in the United States, mostly living in the North.

The abolition movement grew in the early 1800s alongside the temperance movement, transcendentalism and the other reform efforts that were inspired by the Second Great Awakening. Some had proposed purchasing slaves and sending them to Africa. The most vocal abolitionists were William Lloyd Garrison and Frederick Douglass. Abolition was not popular at first, and many abolitionists faced violence for their views. Harriett Beecher Stowe's book *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was a bestseller and convinced many Northerners that slavery was an evil institution. Her book was banned in the South.

In an effort to find freedom, some slaves ran away along a system of safe houses called the Underground Railroad. As part of a larger compromise, Congress passed a law that required Northerners to help capture runaway slaves. This infuriated moralistic Northerners.



PEOPLE & GROUPS

Abolitionist: A person who worked to end slavery.

African Methodist Episcopal Church: Usually called the A.M.E. Church, it is the first independent Protestant denomination founded by African Americans.

American Colonization Society: An organization set up by abolitionists who raised money to send freed slaves to Liberia in Africa.

David Walker: African American abolitionist and publisher of "Appeal," a major newspaper promoting abolition.

Denmark Vesey: A literate, skilled carpenter and leader among free African Americans in Charleston, South Carolina. He was accused of being the ringleader of "the rising," a major slave revolt planned for the city in June 1822. The plan was uncovered before it was carried out and Vesey was executed.

Driver: A slave who was placed in charge of making sure other slaves worked.

Eli Whitney: Inventor of the cotton gin. He hoped it would help end slavery by replacing slaves. Instead, planters used more slaves to grow more cotton because the machine could remove the seeds more quickly at less cost.

Field Hand: The slaves who worked in the fields. This was difficult and exhausting work. The field hands were at the bottom of the social order of slaves.

Frederick Douglass: An escaped slave and prolific orator. His autobiography was widely read.

Free Blacks: African Americans who were not slaves. Surprisingly, there were free blacks living throughout the South, especially in Southern cities.

Harriet Beecher Stowe: Abolitionist author of "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

Harriet Tubman: A slave who escaped to the North but returned thirteen times to guide other slaves to freedom. Tubman was nicknamed "Moses" and was the most famous conductor on the Underground Railroad. She also worked for women's rights and was a spy for the North during the Civil War.

Henry Ward Beecher: An American Congregationalist minister, social reformer, and speaker, known for his support of the abolition of slavery, and his emphasis on God's love.

House Slave: A slave who worked in the plantation owner's home. They were usually better dressed and fed than slaves who worked in the fields, and were therefore higher in the social order among slaves.

Liberty Party: The first political party in the United States to advocate for the end of slavery. Many of its members later joined the Free-Soil Party and eventually the Republican Party.

Nat Turner: An American slave who led a slave rebellion in Virginia on August 21, 1831, that resulted in 60 white deaths and at least 100 black deaths, the largest number of fatalities to occur in one uprising prior to the American Civil War in the Southern United States.

New England Anti-Slavery Society: William Lloyd Garrison's organization. They were the first to advocate for the immediate end of slavery.

Overseer: Whites hired by plantation owners to manage the slaves.

Robert Purvis: An abolitionist. He was 1/4 African American. His home was nearly burned down by a mob who disagreed with his activism.

Scotch-Irish: White immigrants from the borderlands of Scotland and Ireland who settled primarily in the Appalachian Mountains. They are famously independent and distrustful of wealthy elites.

Sojourner Truth: An African-American abolitionist and women's rights activist. Truth was born into slavery in Swartekill, Ulster County, New York, but escaped with her infant daughter to freedom in 1826. Her best-known speech became widely known during the Civil War by the title "Ain't I a Woman?"

Wendell Phillips: An abolitionist from Boston who was nearly lynched by a mob when he spoke. He was a renowned speaker and was nicknamed the golden trumpet of abolition.

William Lloyd Garrison: White abolitionist who published "The Liberator."



KEY CONCEPTS

Chattel Slavery: The system of slavery that developed in the United States in which slaves were considered property.

Emancipation: When the government sets slaves free.

King Cotton: The idea that the cotton industry was the key to the Southern, and more generally American economy.

Manumission: When a slave owner sets his or her slaves free.

Peculiar Institution: Slavery. This was the euphemism used by the South.

The Underground Railroad: The antebellum volunteer resistance movement that assisted slaves in escaping to freedom. Although it was not a railroad, the participants of the system used railroad terminology. Safe places for escaped slaves to stay were called stations and the people who guided the slaves were conductors.



LAWS

Fugitive Slave Act: A law passed in 1850, as part of the Compromise of 1850. It declared that all runaway slaves be brought back to their masters. Abolitionists nicknamed it the "Bloodhound Law."

Gag Rule: A rule that prohibits discussion of a subject.

Slave Codes: Laws in each U.S. state defining the status of slaves and the rights of their owners and giving slave owners absolute power over their slaves. Over time, the slave codes became more and more restrictive.



TEXTS

Appeal: Along with "The Liberator" and "The North Star," a major abolitionist newspaper before the Civil War.

North Star: Frederick Douglass's abolitionist newspaper.

The Liberator: William Lloyd Garrison's abolitionist newspaper.

Uncle Tom's Cabin: Harriet Beecher Stowe's abolitionist novel that became a best seller in the North, and was banned in the South. The sympathetic characters helped convince many Northerners to support abolition.



EVENTS

Antebellum Period: The years in the 1800s before the start of the Civil War in 1860.

Haitian Revolution: In 1791 slaves in Haiti rose in revolt and expelled the French from the island, making Haiti the second independent nation in the Americas.



INNOVATIONS

Cotton Gin: Short for "cotton engine", this machine was invented by Eli Whitney could quickly remove the seeds from raw cotton. Its use allowed plantation owners to greatly increase the production of cotton and drove demand for slaves.

2

S E C O N D Q U E S T I O N DID WESTWARD EXPANSION CAUSE THE CIVIL WAR?

**WAS THE
CIVIL WAR
A RIGHTEOUS JUDGEMENT
FOR AMERICA'S EMBRACE OF
SLAVERY?**

INTRODUCTION

From before the United States declared its independence in 1776, slavery had been a contentious issue. The Founding Fathers, in drafting the Constitution, had conspicuously ignored the issue. But, as the 1800s progressed, it was a political problem that could not be avoided. Since more people lived in the northern, free states, they would always have a majority of representatives in the House. But the Senate was different. Every state sends two Senators to Washington, and there the question of slavery would be decided. If either the free states of the North, or the slave holding states of the South were able to take a majority, their view of America's future would prevail.

Most white Americans agreed that western expansion was crucial to the health of the nation. But what should be done about slavery in the West? As the United States gained new territory, especially after defeating Mexico in the 1840s, the fight about the expansion of slavery became a major question that spawned political feuds, actual fighting, and gave birth to new political parties.

Most white Americans agreed that western expansion was crucial to the health of the nation, but they certainly did not all agree about what should be done about slavery in the West? Slavery might have divided the nation, but slavery had been dividing the nation of generations. Perhaps it was something more that brought all of that animosity to the level of war in 1860.

What do you think? Did westward expansion cause the Civil War?

THE MISSOURI COMPROMISE

The contradictions inherent in the expansion of white male voting rights can also be seen in problems raised by western migration. The new western states were at the forefront of more inclusive voting rights for white men, but their development simultaneously devastated the rights of Native American communities. Native American rights rarely became a controversial public issue. This was not the case for slavery, however, as Northern and Southern whites differed sharply about its proper role in the West.

The incorporation of new western territories into the United States made slavery an explicit concern of national politics. Balancing the interests of slave and free states had played a role from the very start of designing the federal government at the Constitutional Convention in 1787. The crucial compromise there that sacrificed the rights of African Americans in favor of a stronger union among the states exploded once more in 1819 when Missouri petitioned to join the United States as a slave state.

In 1819, the nation contained eleven free and eleven slave states creating a balance in the U.S. senate. Missouri's entrance threatened to throw this parity in favor of slave interests. The debate in Congress over the admission of Missouri was extraordinarily bitter after Congressman James Tallmadge from New York proposed that slavery be prohibited in the new state.

The debate was especially sticky because defenders of slavery relied on a central principle of fairness. How could the Congress deny a new state the right to decide for itself whether or not to allow slavery? If Congress controlled the decision, then the new states would have fewer rights than the original ones.

Henry Clay, a leading congressman, played a crucial role in brokering a two-part solution known as the **Missouri Compromise**. First, Missouri would be admitted to the union as a slave state, but would be balanced by the admission of Maine, a free state, that had long wanted to be separated from Massachusetts. Second, slavery was to be excluded from all new states in the Louisiana Purchase north of the southern boundary of Missouri. People on both sides of the controversy saw the compromise as deeply flawed. Nevertheless, it lasted for over thirty years until the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 determined that new states north of the boundary deserved to be able to exercise their sovereignty in favor of slavery if they so choose.

Democracy and self-determination could clearly be mobilized to extend an unjust institution that contradicted a fundamental American commitment to equality. The Missouri crisis probed an enormously problematic area of American politics that would



Henry Clay: Congressman from Kentucky who ran many times but never won the presidency. He is remembered as one of the three great dealmakers of the early 1800s who helped prevent civil war over slavery by negotiating the Missouri Compromise and the Compromise of 1850.



Missouri Compromise: An agreement brokered by Henry Clay in 1820 to maintain the balance of slave and free states in the Senate. Missouri entered the Union as a slave state and Maine as a free state.

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explode in a civil war. As Thomas Jefferson observed about the Missouri crisis, "This momentous question, like a fire-bell in the night, awakened and filled me with terror."

SLAVERY AND THE MEXICAN-AMERICAN WAR

While the admission of Missouri as a state had posed a serious political challenge, the Mexican-American War of 1846 to 1848 created the most problems of all. After Mexico surrendered and ceded half of its territory to the United States, there were vast new tracts of land, mostly in the southern half of the West, which were in question. Would slavery be allowed in these new territories?

Abolitionists rightly feared that attempts would be made to plant cotton in the new territory, which would bring the blight of slavery. Slaveholders feared that if slavery were prohibited in the new territory, southern slaveholding states would lose power in Congress.

Even before the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ending the war had been ratified by the Senate, both houses of Congress became the scene of angry debate over the spoils of war. Congress represented every political philosophy regarding slavery. Legal scholars discussed the right of Congress — or anyone else — to restrict slavery from the new lands. The specter of **secession** had risen again. Desperately the elder statesmen of the federal legislature proposed methods of keeping the country together.

The country's founders left no clear solution to the issue of slavery in the Constitution. Popular sovereignty, amendment, nullification, and secession were all discussed as possible remedies. In the end, conflict was avoided with the passing of the Compromise of 1850.

By the standards of his day, David Wilmot could be considered a racist. Yet the Pennsylvania representative was so adamantly against the extension of slavery to lands ceded by Mexico, he made a proposition that would divide the Congress. On August 8, 1846, Wilmot introduced legislation in the House that boldly declared, "neither slavery nor involuntary servitude shall ever exist" in lands won in the Mexican-American War. His proposal has become known as the **Wilmot Proviso**. If he was not opposed to slavery, why would Wilmot propose such an action? Why would the North, which only contained a small, but growing minority, of abolitionists, agree?

Wilmot and other Northerners were angered by President Polk. They felt that the entire Cabinet and national agenda were dominated by Southern minds and Southern principles. Polk was willing to fight for Southern territory, but proved willing to compromise when it came to the North. Polk had lowered the tariff and denied funds for internal improvements, both to the dismay of Northerners. Now they felt a



Secession: When a state or group of states leaves separates themselves from the country to form a new nation.



Wilmot Proviso: An addition to the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo that ended the Mexican American War proposed by David Wilmot. It stated that slavery would not be permitted in the new territories taken from Mexico, but was not adopted.



Slave Power: A phrase Northerners used to describe the political power Southern states had in Congress.

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war was being fought to extend the Southern way of life. The term **Slave Power** jumped off the lips of northern lawmakers when they angrily referred to their Southern colleagues. It was time for Northerners to be heard.

Though Wilmot's heart did not bleed for the slave, he envisioned California as a place where free white Pennsylvanians could work without the competition of slave labor. Since the North was more populous and had more Representatives in the House, the Wilmot Proviso passed. Laws require the approval of both houses of Congress, however. The Senate, equally divided between free states and slave states could not muster the majority necessary for approval. Angrily the House passed the Wilmot Proviso several times, all to no avail. It would never become law.

For years, the arguments for and against slavery were debated in the churches and in the newspapers. The House of Representatives had passed a gag rule forbidding the discussion of slavery for much of the previous decade. The issue could no longer be avoided. Lawmakers in the House and Senate, North and South, would have to stand up and be counted.

CLAY, CALHOUN AND WEBSTER

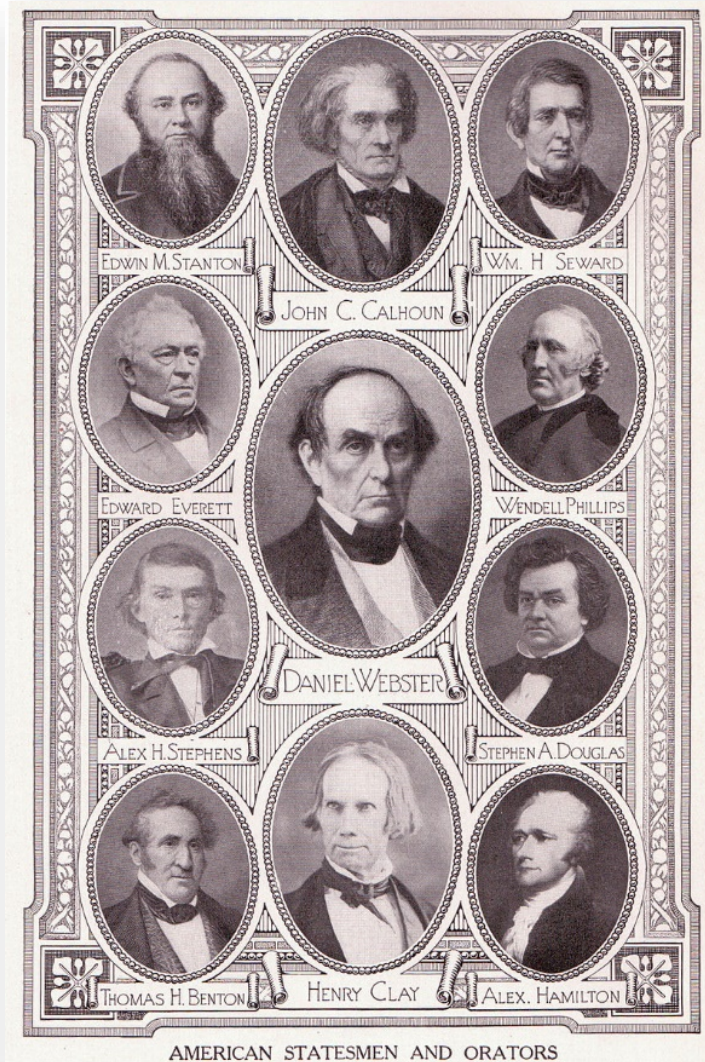
Henry Clay of Kentucky, John C. Calhoun of South Carolina, and Daniel Webster of Massachusetts dominated national politics from the end of the War of 1812 until their deaths in the early 1850s. Although none would ever be President, the collective impact they created in Congress was far greater than any President of the era, with the exception of Andrew Jackson. There was one issue that loomed over the nation throughout their time in power — slavery. They were continuously successful in keeping peace in America by forging a series of compromises. The next generation's leaders were not.

The Gold Rush led to the rapid settlement of California which resulted in its imminent admission as the 31st state. Southerners recognized that there were few slaves in California because Mexico had prohibited slavery. Immediate admission would surely mean California would be the 16th free state, giving the non-slave-holding states an edge in the Senate. Already holding the House of Representatives, the free states could then dominate legislation.

Texas was claiming land that was part of New Mexico. As a slave state, any expansion of the boundaries of Texas would be opening new land to slavery. Northerners were opposed. The North was also appalled at the ongoing practice of slavery in Washington, DC, the nation's capital — a practice the South was not willing to let go. The lines were

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drawn as the three Senatorial giants took the stage for the last critical time.



Secondary Source: Illustration

A page from a history book for children published in 1917 celebrating the great statesmen of the mid-1800s.



Listen to Daniel Webster's
"Liberty and Union" Speech

Henry Clay had brokered compromises before. When the Congress was divided in 1820 over the issue of slavery in the Louisiana Territory, Clay set forth the **Missouri Compromise**. When South Carolina nullified the tariff in 1832, Clay saved the day with the Compromise Tariff of 1833. After 30 years in Congress and three unsuccessful attempts at the Presidency, Clay wanted badly to make good with yet another nation-saving deal. He put forth a set of eight proposals that he hoped would pass muster with his colleagues.

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John C. Calhoun took to the floor next. Although sick and dying with consumption, he sat sternly in the Senate chamber, as his speech was read. The compromises would betray the South, he claimed. Northerners would have to agree to federal protection of slavery for the South to feel comfortable remaining in the Union. His words foreshadowed the very doom to the Union that would come within the decade.

Daniel Webster spoke three days after Calhoun's speech. With the nation's fate in the balance, he pleaded with Northerners to accept Southern demands, for the sake of Union. Withdrawing his former support for the Wilmot Proviso, he hoped to persuade enough of his colleagues to move closer to Clay's proposals. Although there was no immediate deal, his words "liberty and union, now and forever, one and inseparable" echoed in the minds of the Congressmen as they debated into that hot summer.

POPULAR SOVEREIGNTY

In the heat of the Wilmot Proviso debate, many Southern lawmakers began to question the right of Congress to determine the status of slavery in any territory. According to John Calhoun, the territories belonged to all the states. Why should a citizen of one state be denied the right to take his property, including slaves, into territory owned by all? This line of reasoning began to dominate the Southern argument. The Congress had a precedent for outlawing slavery in territories. It had done so in the Old Northwest with the passing of the Northwest Ordinance in 1787. The Missouri Compromise also had banned slavery above the **36°30' latitude** line. But times were different.

As the Mexican War drew to a close and no compromise could be reached in the Wilmot argument, the campaign for President became heated. The Democratic standard bearer, Lewis Cass of Michigan, coined the term **popular sovereignty** for a new solution that had begun to emerge. The premise was simple. Let the people of the territories themselves decide whether slavery would be permitted. The solution seemed perfect. In a country that has championed democracy, letting the people decide seemed right, if not obvious.

However simple popular sovereignty seemed, it was difficult to put into practice. By what means would the people decide? Directly or indirectly? If a popular vote were scheduled, what guarantees could be made against voter fraud? If slavery were voted down, would the individuals who already owned slaves be allowed to keep them? Cass and the Democrats did not say. His opponent, Zachary Taylor, ignored the issue of slavery altogether in his campaign, and won the election of 1848.



John C. Calhoun: Senator from South Carolina. In the decades before the Civil War he was the strongest voice for states' rights and defender of slavery. Along with Henry Clay and Daniel Webster he helped broker the Compromise of 1850.



Daniel Webster: Senator from Massachusetts. He was opposed to slavery but more than anything worked to preserve the Union and prevent Southern secession. Along with Henry Clay and John C. Calhoun he helped broker the Compromise of 1850.



36th Parallel: The line of latitude that was the dividing line between the free and slave states of the west. The Missouri Compromise had banned slavery north of the line, but the Compromise of 1850 ended that ban by allowing Missouri to become a slave state. The line is the southern border of Missouri.



Popular Sovereignty: The idea that the residents of each territory should decide for themselves if they would join the Union as a free or slave state. Stephen Douglas supported this idea and it was the heart of the Kansas-Nebraska Act.

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As the 1840s melted into the 1850s, **Stephen Douglas** became the loudest proponent of popular sovereignty. As long as the issue was discussed theoretically, he had many supporters. In fact, to many, popular sovereignty was the perfect means to avoid the problem. But problems do not tend to disappear when they are evaded — they often become worse.



Stephen Douglas: Senator from Illinois. He was opposed to slavery but wanted to preserve the Union. He believed that the best way was to let the people of each new state decide for themselves if slavery would be permitted. This idea, popular sovereignty is most strongly associated with Douglas.

THE COMPROMISE OF 1850

With the issue of slavery in the territories threatening to divide the nation yet again, the giants — Calhoun, Webster, and Clay — developed another compromise. It would be their last, great act of statesmanship. Still the Congress debated the contentious issues well into the summer. Each time Clay's compromise was set forth for a vote, it did not receive a majority. Henry Clay himself had to leave in sickness, before the dispute could be resolved. In his place, Stephen Douglas worked tirelessly to end the fight. On July 9, President Zachary Taylor died of food poisoning. His successor, Millard Fillmore, was much more interested in compromise. The environment for a deal was set. By September, Clay's Compromise became law.

California was admitted to the Union as the 16th free state. In exchange, the South was guaranteed that no federal restrictions on slavery would be placed on Utah or New Mexico. Texas lost its boundary claims in New Mexico, but the Congress compensated Texas with \$10 million. Slavery was maintained in the nation's capital, but the slave trade was prohibited. Finally, and most controversially, a fugitive slave law was passed, requiring Northerners to return runaway slaves to their owners under penalty of law.

The Terms of the Compromise:

For the North:

- California admitted as a free state
- Slave trade prohibited in Washington D.C.

For the South

- No slavery restrictions in Utah or New Mexico territories
- Slaveholding permitted in Washington D.C.
- Texas gets \$10 million
- Fugitive Slave Act

2 DID WESTWARD EXPANSION CAUSE THE CIVIL WAR?



Who won and who lost in the deal? Although each side received benefits, the North seemed to gain the most. The balance of the Senate was now with the free states, although California voted with the South on many issues in the 1850s. The major victory for the South was the Fugitive Slave Law. In the end, the North refused to enforce it. Massachusetts even called for its nullification, stealing an argument from John C. Calhoun. Northerners claimed the law was unfair. The flagrant violation of the Fugitive Slave Law set the scene for the tempest that emerged later in the decade. But for now, Americans had hope that the fragile peace would prevail.

By 1852, Clay, Calhoun, and Webster had all passed away. They left a rich legacy behind them. Clay of the West, Calhoun of the South, and Webster of the North loved and served their country greatly. The generation that followed produced no leader that could unite the country without the force of arms.

THE KANSAS-NEBRASKA ACT

For decades, both Northern states and Southern states had threatened secession and dissolution of the Union over the question of where slavery was to be permitted. At issue was power. Both sides sought to limit the governing power of the other by maintaining a balance of membership in Congress. This meant ensuring that admission of a new state where slavery was outlawed was matched by a state permitting slavery. In the Missouri Compromise, for example, at the same time that Missouri entered the Union as a slave state, Maine entered the Union as a free state.

New states were organized into self-governing territories before they became states. Hence, they developed a position on the slavery issue well before their admission to the Union. Southerners held that slavery must be permitted in all territories. Northerners held that slavery must not be extended into new territories.

If slavery were not permitted in the territories, slavery would never gain a foothold within them and Southern power in Congress would gradually erode. If either side were successful in gaining a distinct advantage, many felt disunion and civil war would follow.

Kansas would be the battleground on which the North and South would first fight. The **Kansas-Nebraska Act** led both to statehood and to corruption, hatred, anger, and violence. Men from neighboring Missouri stuffed ballot boxes in Kansas to ensure that a legislature friendly to slavery would be elected. Anti-slavery, or free soil, settlers formed a legislature of their own in Topeka. Within two years, there would be armed conflict between proponents of slavery and those against it.



Kansas-Nebraska Act: A law that said that when the new states of Kansas and Nebraska joined the Union, the people of those states of vote to decide if they would be slave states or free states. The law proposed by Stephen Douglass and embraced his idea of popular sovereignty as a way to avoid a political fight in Congress.

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The Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 may have been the single most significant event leading to the Civil War. By the early 1850s settlers and entrepreneurs wanted to move into the area now known as Nebraska. However, until the area was organized as a territory, settlers would not move there because they could not legally hold a claim on the land. The Southern states' representatives in Congress were in no hurry to permit a Nebraska territory because the land lay north of the 36°30' parallel — where slavery had been outlawed by the Missouri Compromise of 1820. Just when things between the North and South were in an uneasy balance, Kansas and Nebraska opened fresh wounds.

The person behind the Kansas-Nebraska Act was Senator Stephen Douglas of Illinois. He said he wanted to see Nebraska made into a territory and, to win Southern support, proposed a Southern state inclined to support slavery. It was Kansas. Underlying it all was his desire to build a transcontinental railroad to go through Chicago. The Kansas-Nebraska Act allowed each territory to decide the issue of slavery on the basis of popular sovereignty. Kansas with slavery would violate the Missouri Compromise, which had kept the Union from falling apart for the last thirty-four years. The long-standing compromise would have to be repealed. Opposition was intense, but ultimately the bill passed in May of 1854. Territory north of the sacred 36°30' line was now open to popular sovereignty. The North was outraged.

The political effects of Douglas' bill were enormous. Passage of the bill irrevocably split the Whig Party, one of the two major political parties in the country at the time. Every northern Whig had opposed the bill; almost every Southern Whig voted for it. With the emotional issue of slavery involved, there was no way a common ground could be found. Most of the Southern Whigs soon were swept into the Democratic Party. Northern Whigs reorganized themselves with other non-slavery interests to become the **Republican Party**, the party of Abraham Lincoln. This left the Democratic Party as the sole remaining institution that crossed sectional lines. Animosity between the North and South was again on the rise. The North felt that if the Compromise of 1820 was ignored, the Compromise of 1850 could be ignored as well. Violations of the hated Fugitive Slave Law increased. Trouble was indeed back with a vengeance.



Republican Party: A political party founded in the 1850s which initially opposed the expansion of slavery into the territories of the West. Abraham Lincoln was the first Republican president. Eventually the party worked to end slavery altogether.

BLEEDING KANSAS

Slavery was quite likely to be outlawed in Nebraska, where cotton doesn't grow well. The situation in Kansas was entirely different, where the land was similar to Missouri's, which was a slave state. Kansas was to be governed by the principle of popular sovereignty.

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Whether Kansas was to be slave or free would be decided at the polls. Both free and slave forces were determined to hold sway.

Missouri counties that bordered Kansas were strongly pro-slavery and wanted their neighbor to be a slave state. In the fall of 1854, Senator David Atchison of Missouri led over 1,700 men from Missouri into Kansas to vote for their pro-slavery representative. These were the infamous **Border Ruffians**, who threatened to shoot, burn and hang those opposed to slavery.



Border Ruffians: A nickname given to a group of pro-slavery men who went to Kansas to try to terrorize the people there who were opposed to slavery.

Although their votes were later ruled fraudulent, their candidate was elected to Congress. When it came time to elect a territorial legislature the following March, almost 5,000 men came into the state from Missouri to cast illegal ballots. Pro-slavery forces had the numbers, not the ethics, on their side. Anti-slavery settlers, though the majority in Kansas, were outvoted. The result of the election through fraud was a legislature with 36 pro-slavery delegates and 3 anti-slavery delegates.

As one of their first acts, this legislature passed a harsh slave code that provided fines and imprisonment simply for expressing opinions against slavery. The death penalty would be administered to any individual found guilty of assisting slaves to revolt or escape. It also legalized the "border ruffian" vote by not requiring voters to be residents in Kansas prior to voting and made the law retroactive to the preceding elections.

Within a year, however, the population of anti-slavery residents in Kansas grew and far outnumbered legal residents of Kansas who were pro-slavery. They were not prepared to obey the laws of the Bogus Legislature, seated in Shawnee Mission. Organized under the name of **Free Soilers**, they drew up a free state constitution and elected a separate governor and state legislature located in Topeka. The result was a state with two governments. Violence would soon follow.



Free Soil Party: A political party that existed during the 1850s. They believed that slavery should not be permitted in the territories of the West saying, "Free Men on Free Soil." Most Free Soilers eventually joined the Republican Party.

The town of Lawrence was the center of Kansas's anti-slavery movement. It was named for Amos Lawrence, a New England financier who provided aid to anti-slavery farmers and settlers. This group went beyond simple monetary aid. New England Abolitionists shipped boxes of Sharps rifles, named Beecher's Bibles to anti-slavery forces. The name for the rifles came from a comment by Henry Ward Beecher, the anti-slavery preacher who had remarked that a rifle might be a more powerful moral agent on the Kansas plains than a Bible. The lines were now drawn. Each side had passion, and each side had guns.

The administration of President Franklin Pierce refused to step in to resolve the election dispute resulting from the "border ruffians." In

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the spring of 1856, Judge Samuel Lecompte demanded that members of the anti-slavery government in Kansas, called the Free-Soil government, be indicted for treason. Many leaders in this government lived in Lawrence. On May 21, 1856, the pro-slavery forces sprang into action. A posse of over 800 men from Kansas and Missouri rode to Lawrence to arrest members of the free state government. The citizens of Lawrence decided against resistance. However, the mob was not satisfied. They proceeded to destroy two newspaper offices as they threw the printing presses from the Free-Soil newspaper into the nearby river. They burned and looted homes and shops. As a final message to Abolitionists, they aimed their cannons at the Free State Hotel and smashed it into oblivion.

The attack inflamed almost everyone. Republicans introduced bills to bring Kansas into the Union under the free state government, while Democrats introduced bills to bring in Kansas as a slave state. Neither party alone could get the votes necessary to win. To increase readership, Republican newspapers exploited the situation in Kansas. Their attack galvanized the northern states like nothing before. It went beyond passing pro-slavery laws. The **Sack of Lawrence** was a direct act of violent aggression by slave-owning Southern Fire Eaters.



John Brown was not a timid man. A devout reader of the Bible, he found human bondage immoral and unthinkable. The father of 20 children, he and his wife Mary settled in Kansas to wage a war on the forces of slavery. A few days after the sack of Lawrence, Brown sought revenge. He was furious that the people of Lawrence had chosen not to fight. He told his followers that they must "fight fire with fire," and they must "strike terror in the hearts of the pro-slavery people." In his eyes, the only just fate for those responsible for the border ruffian laws was death. A great believer in "an eye for an eye," John Brown sought to avenge the sack of Lawrence.



Sack of Lawrence: The town of Lawrence, Kansas was the center of the anti-slavery movement in that territory. In 1856 a group of pro-slavery men attacked and burned the town. The event was part of the era known as Bleeding Kansas.

Secondary Source: Mural

The mural "The Tragic Prelude" immortalizes John Brown and decorates the walls of the Kansas State Capitol building. It was painted in the 1900s by John Stewart Curry.



John Brown: A fierce abolitionist who moved to Kansas with his family. He led the Pottawatomie Creek Massacre and later led an attack on the federal arsenal at Harper's Ferry in the hope of leading a slave rebellion that would bring about the end of slavery. He was hated by Southerners but became a martyr for the abolitionist cause.

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Vengeance would come on the night of May 24, three days after the Lawrence affair. Setting out after dark with seven others and calling himself the Army of the North, Brown entered the pro-slavery town of **Pottawatomie Creek**. Armed with rifles, knives, and broadswords, Brown and his band stormed the houses of his enemies. One by one, Brown's group dragged out helpless victims and hacked at their heads with the broadswords. In one encounter, they even killed two sons of an individual they sought. Before the night was through, five victims lay brutally slain by the hands of John Brown.

It was the South's turn to be outraged. Destroying property was one thing, but no one had been killed at Lawrence. Brown had raised the stakes. He and his followers were doggedly hunted well into the summer. Federal troops arrested two of Brown's sons who had not been with him. Border ruffians burned the Brown homesteads to the ground. But John Brown lived to fight another day. Now a fugitive, he traveled north where he was received by abolitionists like a cult hero. This would not be the last America would hear of John Brown. He would again make national headlines at Harper's Ferry in 1859.

The Sack of Lawrence and the Pottawatomie Creek Massacre set off a brutal **guerrilla war in Kansas**. By the end of 1856, over 200 people would be gunned down in cold blood. Property damage reached millions of dollars. Federal troops were sent in to put down the fighting, but they were too few to have much effect. Kansas served as a small scale prelude to the bloody catastrophe that engulfed the entire nation just five years later.

CONCLUSION

So, slavery might have been what everyone was arguing about, but was it westward expansion that turned that argument into a war? It seems hard to imagine someone like John Brown peacefully protesting, but it's also hard to think of a reason why Kansas would have gotten its bloody nickname if it were not for White Americans moving west to begin with.

What do you think? Did westward expansion cause the Civil War?



Pottawatomie Creek Massacre: An attack by John Brown and his abolitionist followers on the town of Pottawatomie Creek, Kansas. They killed five people in revenge for the Sack of Lawrence. The events were part of the era known as Bleeding Kansas.



Bleeding Kansas: The name given to the time period of fighting between pro and anti-slavery forces in Kansas before it was admitted as a state.

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SUMMARY

Expansion of settlement greatly increased tensions that led to the Civil War because it made the question of expansion of slavery an issue politicians could not ignore. Central to this question was the balance of power between slave states and free states in the Senate. The House of Representatives would always be unbalanced because the North was so much more populous, but for the 40 years leading up to the war, maintaining an equal number of slave and free states was essential to keeping the nation together.

The Missouri Compromise was brokered by Henry Clay in 1820. It banned slavery in new territories north of Missouri, while admitting Missouri and Maine as slave and free states. It was the first in a series of such compromises.

After the Mexican-American War, the greatest question was whether or not to allow slavery into the Mexican Cession. The proposed Wilmot Proviso specifically banned this, but it was not adopted. The fight over the Proviso led Northerners to believe that "slave power" was taking over the federal government.

The three great senators of the early 1800s, Clay, Calhoun and Webster forged the Compromise of 1850 to keep the nation together. It preserved the Union, but in the end, it made no one happy.

The idea of popular sovereignty was proposed as a way of taking the fight over the expansion of slavery out of Congress and giving it to the people. Under this proposal, the people of each new state would vote for themselves about the question of being a slave or free state. This was put to the test with the Kansas-Nebraska Act and led to a period of violence called Bleeding Kansas, a precursor to the Civil War. John Brown and Jesse James both got their first taste of violence in Kansas.



PEOPLE AND GROUPS

Border Ruffians: A nickname given to a group of pro-slavery men who went to Kansas to try to terrorize the people there who were opposed to slavery.

Daniel Webster: Senator from Massachusetts. He was opposed to slavery but more than anything worked to preserve the Union and prevent Southern secession. Along with Henry Clay and John C. Calhoun he helped broker the Compromise of 1850.

Free Soil Party: A political party that existed during the 1850s. They believed that slavery should not be permitted in the territories of the West saying, "Free Men on Free Soil." Most Free Soilers eventually joined the Republican Party.

Henry Clay: Congressman from Kentucky who ran many times but never won the presidency. He is remembered as one of the three great dealmakers of the early 1800s who helped prevent civil war over slavery by negotiating the Missouri Compromise and the Compromise of 1850.

John Brown: A fierce abolitionist who moved to Kansas with his family. He led the Pottawatomie Creek Massacre and later led an attack on the federal arsenal at Harper's Ferry in the hope of leading a slave rebellion that would bring about the end of slavery. He was hated by Southerners but became a martyr for the abolitionist cause.

John C. Calhoun: Senator from South Carolina. In the decades before the Civil War he was the strongest voice for states' rights and defender of slavery. Along with Henry Clay and Daniel Webster he helped broker the Compromise of 1850.

Republican Party: A political party founded in the 1850s which initially opposed the expansion of slavery into the territories of the West. Abraham Lincoln was the first Republican president. Eventually the party worked to end slavery altogether.

Stephen Douglas: Senator from Illinois. He was opposed to slavery but wanted to preserve the Union. He believed that the best way was to let the people of each new state decide for themselves if slavery would be permitted. This idea, popular sovereignty is most strongly associated with Douglas.



KEY CONCEPTS

Popular Sovereignty: The idea that the residents of each territory should decide for themselves if they would join the Union as a free or slave state. Stephen Douglas supported this idea and it was the heart of the Kansas-Nebraska Act.

Secession: When a state or group of states leaves separates themselves from the country to form a new nation.

Slave Power: A phrase Northerners used to describe the political power Southern states had in Congress.



LAWS

Kansas-Nebraska Act: A law that said that when the new states of Kansas and Nebraska joined the Union, the people of those states of vote to decide if they would be slave states or free states. The law proposed by Stephen Douglass and embraced his idea of popular sovereignty as a way to avoid a political fight in Congress.

Missouri Compromise: An agreement brokered by Henry Clay in 1820 to maintain the balance of slave and free states in the Senate. Missouri entered the Union as a slave state and Maine as a free state.

Wilmot Proviso: An addition to the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo that ended the Mexican American War proposed by David Wilmot. It stated that slavery would not be permitted in the new territories taken from Mexico, but was not adopted.



EVENTS

Bleeding Kansas: The name given to the time period of fighting between pro and anti-slavery forces in Kansas before it was admitted as a state.

Pottawatomie Creek Massacre: An attack by John Brown and his abolitionist followers on the town of Pottawatomie Creek, Kansas. They killed five people in revenge for the Sack of Lawrence. The events were part of the era known as Bleeding Kansas.

Sack of Lawrence: The town of Lawrence, Kansas was the center of the anti-slavery movement in that territory. In 1856 a group of pro-slavery men attacked and burned the town. The event was part of the era known as Bleeding Kansas.



LOCATIONS

36th Parallel: The line of latitude that was the dividing line between the free and slave states of the west. The Missouri Compromise had banned slavery north of the line, but the Compromise of 1850 ended that ban by allowing Missouri to become a slave state. The line is the southern border of Missouri.

3

T H I R D Q U E S T I O N COULD AMERICAN LEADERS HAVE PREVENTED THE CIVIL WAR?

W A S T H E
C I V I L W A R
A R I G H T E O U S J U D G E M E N T
F O R A M E R I C A ' S E M B R A C E O F
S L A V E R Y ?

INTRODUCTION

For generations American leaders had dealt with the question of slavery without resorting to war. The Founding Fathers found a way to deal with it – the 3/5 Compromise, and Henry Clay, John C. Calhoun, and Daniel Webster had negotiated the Missouri Compromise and Compromise of 1850 to prevent war.

There were undoubtedly great leaders in the 1850s as well. Stephen Douglas, Henry Ward Beecher, William Lloyd Garrison and Frederick Douglass were all well respected voices of the day. But what made them different from the leaders of the past? Was it them, or had times changed? Could Clay, Calhoun and Webster have succeeded in the 1850s?

Then there's Abraham Lincoln, elected president in 1860. We regard him as one of our greatest presidents, but it was his election that prompted the Southern states to secede. He tried to convince the leaders of the South to give him a chance, but to no avail. And when they seceded he decided to go to war to prevent them from forming their own nation. Could he have done things differently to avoid war? Should he have just let them leave?

What do you think? Could American leaders have prevented the Civil War?

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THE FUGITIVE SLAVE ACT

By 1843, several hundred slaves a year were successfully escaping to the North along the routes of the Underground Railroad, making slavery untenable in the border states. The Fugitive Slave Act of 1793 required the return of runaway slaves by requiring authorities in free states to return fugitive slaves to their masters. However, many Northern states found ways to circumvent the Fugitive Slave Act. Some jurisdictions passed "personal liberty laws," which mandated a jury trial before alleged fugitive slaves could be moved. Others forbade the use of local jails or the assistance of state officials in the arrest or return of alleged fugitive slaves. In some cases, juries refused to convict individuals who had been indicted under federal law.

The Missouri Supreme Court held that voluntary transportation of slaves into free states, with the intent of their residing there permanently or definitely, automatically made them free, whereas the Fugitive Slave Act dealt with slaves who went into free states without their master's consent. Furthermore, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Prigg v. Pennsylvania* (1842) that states did not have to offer aid in the hunting or recapture of slaves, which greatly weakened the law of 1793. These and other Northern attempts to sidestep the 1793 legislation agitated the South, which sought stronger federal provisions for returning slave runaways.

In response to the weakening of the original fugitive slave law, the **Fugitive Slave Act** of 1850 made any federal marshal or other official who did not arrest an alleged runaway slave liable to a fine of \$1,000. In addition, officers who captured a fugitive slave were entitled to a bonus or promotion for their work, and any person aiding a runaway slave by providing food or shelter was subject to a six-month imprisonment and a \$1,000 fine. Law-enforcement officials everywhere now had greater incentive to arrest anyone suspected of being a runaway slave, and sympathizers had much more to risk in aiding those seeking freedom. Slave owners only needed to supply an affidavit to a federal marshal to claim that a slave had run away. The suspected runaway could not ask for a jury trial or testify on his or her own behalf. As a result, many free black people were accused of running away and were forced into slavery.

The Fugitive Slave Act was met with violent protest in the North. This anger stemmed less from the fact that slavery existed than from Northern fury at being coerced into protecting the institution of



Fugitive Slave Act: A law passed by the United States Congress on September 18, 1850, as part of the Compromise of 1850 between Southern slave-holding interests and Northern Free-Soilers. The Act was one of the most controversial elements of the 1850 compromise and heightened Northern fears of a "slave power conspiracy" that was taking control of the federal government. It required that all escaped slaves were, upon capture, to be returned to their masters and that officials and citizens of free states had to cooperate in this law.

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Southern slavery. Moderate abolitionists were faced with the choice of defying what they believed to be an unjust law or breaking with their own consciences and beliefs, and many became radical antislavery proponents as a result. Many Northerners viewed the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act as evidence that the South was conspiring to spread slavery through federal coercion and force regardless of the will of Northern voters. In many Northern towns, slave catchers were attacked, and mobs set free captured fugitives. Two prominent instances in which abolitionists set free captured fugitives include John McHenry in Syracuse, New York, in 1851, and Shadrach Minkins in Boston of the same year.

THE DRED SCOTT DECISION

For abolitionists, helping runaway slaves escape was one thing, but the idea that slavery might be permitted anywhere in the United States, even within the North was terrifying. What if a slave owner brought a slave into the North? Would that person still be a slave? What did the Constitution say on this subject? This question was raised in 1857 before the Supreme Court in case of **Dred Scott v. Sanford**. **Dred Scott** was a slave of an army surgeon, John Emerson. Scott had been taken from Missouri to posts in Illinois and what is now Minnesota for several years in the 1830s, before returning to Missouri. The Missouri Compromise of 1820 had declared the area including Minnesota free. In 1846, Scott sued for his freedom on the grounds that he had lived in a free state and a free territory for a prolonged period of time. Finally, after eleven years, his case reached the Supreme Court. At stake were answers to critical questions, including slavery in the territories and citizenship of African-Americans. The verdict was a bombshell.

The Court ruled that Scott's "sojourn" of two years to Illinois and the Northwest Territory did not make him free once he returned to Missouri.

The Court further ruled that as a black man Scott was excluded from United States citizenship and could not, therefore, bring suit. According to the opinion of the Court, African-Americans had not been part of the sovereign people who made the Constitution.

The Court also ruled that Congress never had the right to prohibit slavery in any territory. Any ban on slavery was a violation of the Fifth Amendment, which prohibited denying property rights without due process of law.

The Missouri Compromise was therefore unconstitutional.

The Chief Justice of the United States was **Roger B. Taney**, a former slave owner, as were four other Southern justices on the Court. The



Dred Scott: A slave who sued for his freedom after being taken into the North. His case went all the way to the Supreme

Court where he lost.



Dred Scott v. Sanford: A landmark Supreme Court case in 1857 in which Chief Justice Roger Taney wrote that the federal government did not have the power to regulate slavery, effectively allowing slavery in all states, North and South, as well as the territories. The outcome of the case infuriated abolitionists who saw it as a major expansion of the power of slave owners over the federal government.



Roger Taney: The Supreme Court Chief Justice who wrote the Dred Scott decision.

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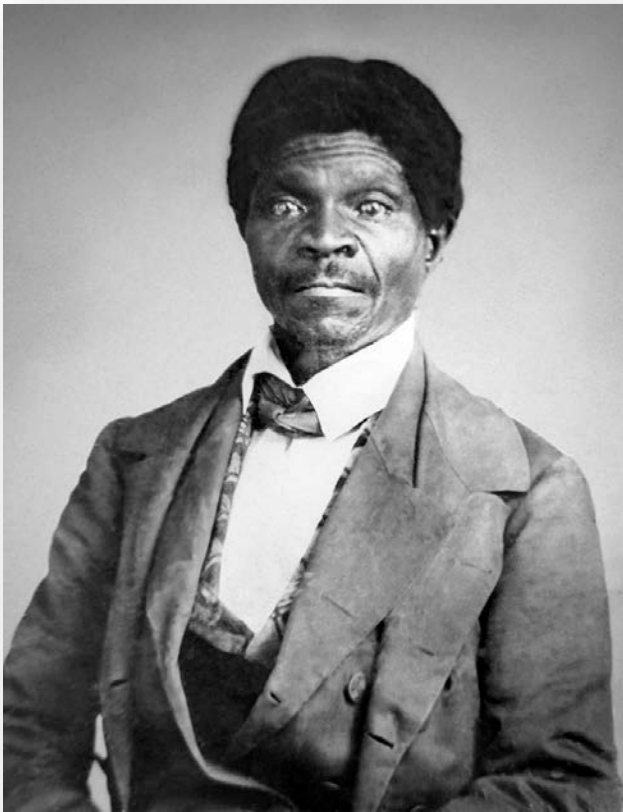


two dissenting justices of the nine-member Court were the only Republicans. The North refused to accept a decision by a Court they felt was dominated by "Southern fire-eaters." Many Northerners, including Abraham Lincoln, felt that the next step would be for the Supreme Court to decide that no state could exclude slavery under the Constitution, regardless of their wishes or their laws.

Two of the three branches of government, the Congress and the President, had failed to resolve the issue. Now the Supreme Court rendered a decision that was only accepted in the Southern half of the country. Was the American experiment collapsing? The only remaining national political institution with both Northern and Southern strength was the Democratic Party, and it was now splitting at the seams. The fate of the Union looked hopeless.

Primary Source: Photograph

A photograph of Dred Scott, taken around the time of his court case in 1857



THE LINCOLN-DOUGLAS DEBATES

In 1858, as the country moved ever closer to disunion, two politicians from Illinois attracted the attention of a nation. From August 21 until October 15, Stephen Douglas battled Abraham Lincoln in face to face **debates** around the state. The prize they sought was a seat in the

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Senate. Lincoln challenged Douglas to a war of ideas. Douglas took the challenge. The debates were to be held at seven locations throughout Illinois. The fight was on and the nation was watching.

The spectators came from all over Illinois and nearby states by train, by canal-boat, by wagon, by buggy, and on horseback. They briefly swelled the populations of the towns that hosted the debates. The audiences participated by shouting questions, cheering the participants as if they were prizefighters, applauding and laughing. The debates attracted tens of thousands of voters and newspaper reporters from across the nation.

During the debates, Douglas still advocated **popular sovereignty** which maintained the right of the citizens of a territory to permit or prohibit slavery. It was, he said, a sacred right of self-government. Lincoln pointed out that Douglas's position directly challenged the Dred Scott decision, which decreed that the citizens of a territory had no such power.

In what became known as the **Freeport Doctrine**, Douglas replied that whatever the Supreme Court decided was not as important as the actions of the citizens. If a territory refused to have slavery, no laws, no Supreme Court ruling, would force them to permit it. This sentiment would be taken as betrayal to many Southern Democrats and would come back to haunt Douglas in his bid to become President in the election of 1860.

Time and time again, Lincoln made that point that **"a house divided against itself cannot stand."** Douglas refuted this by noting that the founders, "left each state perfectly free to do as it pleased on the subject." Lincoln felt that blacks were entitled to the rights enumerated in the Declaration of Independence, which include "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Douglas argued that the founders intended no such inclusion for blacks.

Neither Abraham Lincoln nor Stephen Douglas won a popular election that fall. Under rules governing Senate elections, voters cast their ballots for local legislators, who then choose a Senator. The Democrats won a majority of district contests and returned Douglas to Washington. But the nation saw a rising star in the defeated Lincoln. The entire drama that unfolded in Illinois would be played on the national stage only two years later in the 1860 presidential election.

CIVILITY BREAKS DOWN IN CONGRESS

Senator **Charles Sumner** of Massachusetts was an avowed Abolitionist and leader of the Republican Party. After the sack of Lawrence, on May 21, 1856, he gave a bitter speech in the Senate



Lincoln-Douglas Debates: A series of famous debates between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas during their campaign for the open Illinois senate seat in 1858. Lincoln, a Republican, and Douglas a Democrat drew national attention as they debated the future of slavery. Despite losing the election, the debates catapulted Lincoln to widespread fame and respect.



Popular Sovereignty: The idea that the residents of each territory should decide for themselves if they would join the Union as a free or slave state. Stephen Douglas supported this idea and it was the heart of the Kansas-Nebraska Act.



Freeport Doctrine: Named for the town of Freeport, Illinois where Stephen Douglas articulated it in one of the Lincoln-Douglas Debates, the Freeport Doctrine was Douglas's assertion that despite the Dred Scott decision, the people of new territories could still ban slavery on their own. His argument for popular sovereignty angered Democrats in the South and helped lead to a split in the party.



A House Divided: This was a metaphor that Abraham Lincoln articulated during the Lincoln-Douglas Debates. He said that the nation was like a house that could not stand if it was divided. He predicted that the country would either become all slave, or all free, but could not continue with slavery allowed in only the South.



Charles Sumner: Senator from Massachusetts, abolitionist, and leader of the Radical Republicans who advocated for immediate abolition.

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called "the crime against Kansas." He blasted the "murderous robbers from Missouri," calling them "hirelings, picked from the drunken spew and vomit of an uneasy civilization." Part of this oratory was a bitter, personal tirade against South Carolina's Senator Andrew Butler. Sumner declared Butler an imbecile and said, "Senator Butler has chosen a mistress. I mean the harlot, slavery." During the speech, Stephen Douglas leaned over to a colleague and said, "that damn fool will get himself killed by some other damn fool." The speech went on for two days.

Representative **Preston Brooks** of South Carolina thought Sumner went too far. Southerners in the nineteenth century were raised to live by an unwritten code of honor. Defending the reputation of one's family was at the top of the list. A distant cousin of Senator Butler, Brooks decided to teach Charles Sumner a lesson he would not soon forget. Two days after the end of Sumner's speech, Brooks entered the Senate chamber where Sumner was working at his desk. He flatly told Sumner, "You've libeled my state and slandered my white-haired old relative, Senator Butler, and I've come to punish you for it." Brooks proceeded to beat Sumner over the head repeatedly with a gold-tipped cane. The cane shattered as Brooks rained blow after blow on the hapless Sumner, but Brooks was not deterred. Only after being physically restrained by others did Brooks end the pummeling.



Preston Brooks: Senator from South Carolina who angrily beat Charles Sumner on the floor of the Senate with his cane. He became a hero in the South.



Primary Source: Editorial Cartoon

A lithograph cartoon published in 1855 depicting Preston Brooks' attack on Charles Sumner in the Senate chamber.

Charles Sumner spent years recovering from the attack and Northerners were incensed. The House of Representatives voted to expel Brooks, but it could not amass the votes to do so. Brooks was levied a \$300 fine for the assault. He resigned and returned home to South Carolina, seeking the approval of his actions there. South Carolina held events in his honor and reelected him to his House seat.

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Replacement canes were sent to Brooks from all over the South. This response outraged Northern moderates even more than the caning itself.

As for poor Charles Sumner, the physical and psychological injuries from the caning kept him away from the Senate for most of the next several years. The voters of Massachusetts also reelected him and let his seat sit vacant during his absence as a reminder of Southern brutality. The violence from Kansas had spilled over into the national legislature.

JOHN BROWN'S RAID

On October 16, 1859, John Brown led a small army of 18 men into the small town of **Harper's Ferry**, Virginia. His plan was to instigate a major slave rebellion in the South. He would seize the arms and ammunition in the federal arsenal, arm slaves in the area and move South along the Appalachian Mountains, attracting slaves to his cause. He had no rations. He had no escape route. His plan was doomed from the very beginning. But it did succeed to deepen the divide between the North and South.

John Brown and his cohorts marched into an unsuspecting Harper's Ferry and seized the federal complex with little resistance. It consisted of an armory, arsenal, and engine house. He then sent a patrol out into the country to contact slaves, collected several hostages, including the great grandnephew of George Washington, and sat down to wait. The slaves did not rise to his support, but local citizens and militia surrounded him, exchanging gunfire, killing two townspeople and eight of Brown's company. Troops under the command of Lieutenant Colonel **Robert E. Lee** arrived from Washington to arrest Brown. They stormed the engine house, where Brown had withdrawn, captured him and members of his group, and turned them over to Virginia authorities to be tried for treason. He was quickly tried and sentenced to hang on December 2, 1859.

Brown's strange effort to start a rebellion was over less than 36 hours after it started; however, the consequences of his raid would last far longer. In the North, his raid was greeted by many with widespread admiration. While they recognized the raid itself was the act of a madman, some Northerners admired his zeal and courage. Church bells pealed on the day of his execution and songs and paintings were created in his honor. Brown was turned into an instant **martyr**. Ralph Waldo Emerson predicted that Brown would make "the gallows as glorious as the cross." The majority of Northern newspapers did, however, denounce the raid. The Republican Party adopted a specific plank condemning John Brown and his ill-fated plan. But that was not what the South saw.



Harper's Ferry: A small town in West Virginia and site of the federal arsenal that John Brown attacked.



Robert E. Lee: Brilliant general from Virginia who led the assault on John Brown at Harper's Ferry and later led the Confederate armies during the Civil War. His surrender to Ulysses S. Grant ended the war.



Martyr: A hero who dies for a cause.

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Southerners were shocked and outraged. How could anyone be sympathetic to a fanatic who destroyed their property and threatened their very lives? How could they live under a government whose citizens regarded John Brown as a martyr? Southern newspapers labeled the entire North as John Brown sympathizers. Southern politicians blamed the Republican Party and falsely claimed that Abraham Lincoln supported Brown's intentions. Moderate voices supporting compromise on both sides grew silent amid the gathering storm. In this climate of fear and hostility, the election year of 1860 opened ominously. The election of Abraham Lincoln became unthinkable to many in the South.

THE ELECTION OF 1860

The Democrats met in Charleston, South Carolina, in April 1860 to select their candidate for President in the upcoming election. It was turmoil. Northern democrats felt that Stephen Douglas had the best chance to defeat the "Black Republicans." Although an ardent supporter of slavery, Southern Democrats considered Douglas a traitor because of his support of popular sovereignty, permitting territories to choose not to have slavery. Southern democrats stormed out of the convention, without choosing a candidate. Six weeks later, the Northern Democrats chose Douglas, while at a separate convention the Southern Democrats nominated then Vice-President John C Breckenridge.

The Republicans met in Chicago that May and recognized that the Democrat's turmoil actually gave them a chance to take the election. They needed to select a candidate who could carry the North and win a majority of the Electoral College. To do that, the Republicans needed someone who could carry New Jersey, Illinois, Indiana and Pennsylvania — four important states that remained uncertain. There were plenty of potential candidates, but in the end Abraham Lincoln had emerged as the best choice. Lincoln had become the symbol of the frontier, hard work, the self-made man and the American dream. His debates with Douglas had made him a national figure and the publication of those debates in early 1860 made him even better known. After the third ballot, he had the nomination for President.

A number of aging politicians and distinguished citizens, calling themselves the **Constitutional Union Party**, nominated John Bell of Tennessee, a wealthy slaveholder as their candidate for President. These people were for moderation. They decided that the best way out of the present difficulties that faced the nation was to take no stand at all on the issues that divided the North and the South.

With four candidates in the field, Lincoln received only 40% of the popular vote and 180 electoral votes — enough to narrowly win the



Constitutional Union Party: A political party that existed just before the start of the Civil War. They argued simply that the nation should stay together and ignore the question of slavery. They did not win, but their candidate John Bell won some votes in the election of 1860.

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crowded election. This meant that 60% of the voters had selected someone other than Lincoln. With the results tallied, the question was, would the South accept the outcome? A few weeks after the election, South Carolina seceded from the Union.

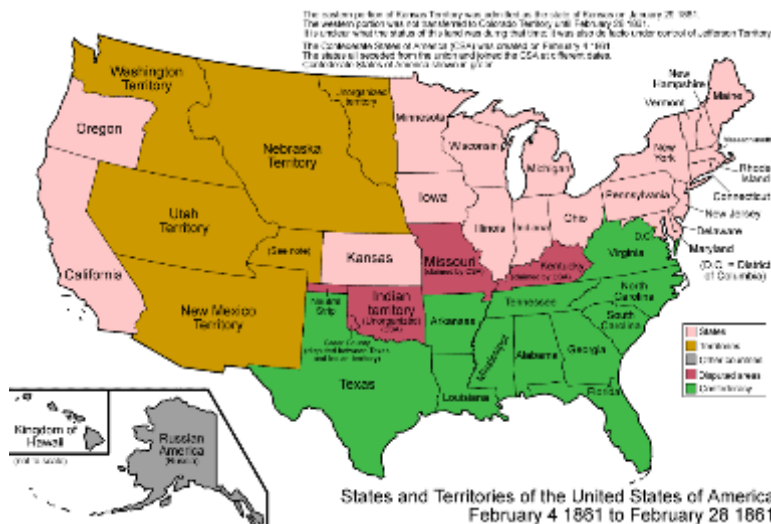
SECESSION

The force of events moved very quickly upon the election of Lincoln. South Carolina acted first, calling for a convention to secede from the Union. State by state, conventions were held, and the **Confederacy** was formed.



Confederacy: The Confederate States of America – the slave-holding states from the South that seceded.

Within three months of Lincoln's election, seven states had seceded from the Union. Just as Springfield, Illinois celebrated the election of its favorite son to the Presidency on November 7, so did Charleston, South Carolina, which did not cast a single vote for him. It knew that the election meant the formation of a new nation. In a reference to the protests against British rule in the 1770s, the Charleston Mercury wrote, "The tea has been thrown overboard, the revolution of 1860 has been initiated."



Secondary Source: Map

The United States and Confederate States of America in 1861.

Within a few days, the two United States Senators from South Carolina submitted their resignations. On December 20, 1860, by a vote of 169-0, the South Carolina legislature enacted an "ordinance" that "the union now subsisting between South Carolina and other States, under the name of 'The United States of America,' is hereby dissolved." South Carolina's action resulted in conventions in other Southern states. Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas all left the Union by February 1. On February 4, delegates from all these states except Texas met in Montgomery, Alabama, to create and staff a government called the Confederate States of



Jefferson Davis: President of the Confederacy. Usually regarded as an ineffective wartime leader.

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America. They elected President **Jefferson Davis**. The gauntlet was thrown. How would the North respond?

A few last ditch efforts were made to end the crisis through Constitutional amendment. Senator James Henry Crittenden proposed to amend the Constitution to extend the old 36°30' line to the Pacific. All territory north of the line would be forever free, and all territory south of the line would receive federal protection for slavery. Republicans refused to support the measure.

On March 2, 1861, two days before Lincoln's inauguration, the 36th Congress passed the Corwin Amendment and submitted it to the states for ratification as an amendment to the Constitution. Senator William H. Seward of New York introduced the amendment in the Senate and Representative Thomas Corwin of Ohio introduced it in the House of Representatives. The text of the proposed amendment was:

"No amendment shall be made to the Constitution which will authorize or give to Congress the power to abolish or interfere, within any State, with the domestic institutions thereof, including that of persons held to labor or service by the laws of said State."

Like the rest of the language in the Constitution prior to the Civil War, the proposed amendment never uses the word "slavery," instead employing the euphemisms "domestic institutions" and "persons held to labor or service." The proposed amendment was designed to reassure the seceding slave states that the federal government would not interfere with their "peculiar institution." If it had passed, it would have rendered unconstitutional any subsequent amendments restricting slavery, such as the 13th Amendment, which outlawed slavery throughout the nation. The Corwin Amendment passed the state legislatures in Ohio, Kentucky, Rhode Island and Maryland. Even Lincoln's own state of Illinois passed it, though the lawmakers who voted for it in Illinois were not actually the elected legislators but were delegates to a state constitutional convention.

Lincoln supported the amendment, specifically mentioning it in his first inaugural address:

"I understand a proposed amendment to the Constitution — which amendment, however, I have not seen — has passed Congress, to the effect that the Federal Government shall never interfere with the domestic institutions of the States, including that of persons held to service ... holding such a provision to now be implied constitutional law, I have no objection to its being made express and irrevocable."

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The amendment failed to get the required approval of 3/4 of all state legislatures for a constitutional amendment, largely because many of the Southern slave states had already seceded and did not vote on it.

What was the president doing during all this furor? Abraham Lincoln would not be inaugurated until March 4. James Buchanan presided over the exodus from the Union. Although he thought secession to be illegal, he found using the army in this case to be unconstitutional. Both regions awaited the arrival of President Lincoln and wondered anxiously what he would do.

LINCOLN'S FIRST INAUGURATION

Abraham Lincoln's first inaugural address was delivered on Monday, March 4, 1861, as part of his taking of the oath of office for his first term as the sixteenth President of the United States. The speech was primarily addressed to the people of the South, and was intended to succinctly state Lincoln's intended policies and desires.

Written in a spirit of reconciliation toward the seceded states, Lincoln's inaugural address touched on several topics: first, his pledge to "hold, occupy, and possess the property and places belonging to the government"—including Fort Sumter in South Carolina, which was still in federal hands; second, his argument that the Union was undissolvable, and thus that secession was impossible; and third, a promise that while he would never be the first to attack, any use of armed force against the United States would be regarded as rebellion, and met with force.

Lincoln denounced secession as anarchy, and explained that majority rule had to be balanced by constitutional restraints in the American system of republicanism, saying, "A majority held in restraint by constitutional checks and limitations, and always changing easily with deliberate changes of popular opinions and sentiments, is the only true sovereign of a free people."

Desperately wishing to avoid this terrible conflict, Lincoln ended with this impassioned plea:

"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.**"

While much of the Northern press praised or at least accepted Lincoln's speech, the new Confederacy essentially met his inaugural



Read Lincoln's First Inaugural Address



The Better Angels of our Nature: A famous image invoked by President Lincoln at his first inaugural address when he called upon the nation to avoid war.

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address with contemptuous silence. The Charleston Mercury was an exception: it excoriated Lincoln's address as manifesting "insolence" and "brutality," and attacked the Union government as "a mobocratic empire." The speech also did not impress other states who were considering secession from the Union. Indeed, after Fort Sumter was attacked and Lincoln declared a formal State of Insurrection, four more states—Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee and Arkansas—seceded from the Union and joined the Confederacy.

Modern writers and historians generally consider the speech to be a masterpiece and one of the finest presidential inaugural addresses, with the final lines having earned particularly lasting renown in American culture. Literary and political analysts likewise have praised the speech's eloquent prose.

FORT SUMTER

It all began at Fort Sumter.

On December 20, 1860, South Carolina seceded from the Union. Five days later, 68 federal troops stationed in Charleston, South Carolina, withdrew to **Fort Sumter**, an island in Charleston Harbor. President Lincoln and the North considered the fort to be the property of the United States government. The people of South Carolina believed it belonged to the new Confederacy. Four months later, the first engagement of the Civil War took place on this disputed soil.

The commander at Fort Sumter, Major Robert Anderson, was a former slave owner who was nevertheless unquestionably loyal to the Union. With 6,000 South Carolina militia ringing the harbor, Anderson and his soldiers were cut off from reinforcements and resupplies. In January 1861, as one of the last acts of his administration, President James Buchanan sent 200 soldiers and supplies on an unarmed merchant vessel, *Star of the West*, to reinforce Anderson. It quickly departed when South Carolina artillery started firing.

In February 1861, Jefferson Davis was inaugurated as the provisional president of the Confederate States of America, in Montgomery, Alabama. On March 4, 1861, Abraham Lincoln took his oath of office as president of the Union in Washington, DC. The fate of Fort Sumter lay in the hands of these two leaders.

As weeks passed, pressure grew for Lincoln to take some action on Fort Sumter and to reunite the states. Lincoln thought of the Southern secession as "artificial." When Jefferson Davis sent a group of commissioners to Washington to negotiate for the transfer of Fort Sumter to South Carolina, they were promptly rebuffed.



Fort Sumter: Fort in Charleston Harbor, South Carolina. The Union controlled the fort at the start of the Civil War, and Confederate troops bombarded and took control of the fort. It was the first military action of the war.

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Lincoln had a dilemma. Fort Sumter was running out of supplies, but an attack on the fort would appear as Northern aggression. States that still remained part of the Union (such as Virginia and North Carolina) might be driven into the secessionist camp. People at home and abroad might become sympathetic to the South. Yet Lincoln could not allow his troops to starve or surrender and risk showing considerable weakness.

At last he developed a plan. On April 6, Lincoln told the governor of South Carolina that he was going to send provisions to Fort Sumter. He would send no arms, troops, or ammunition — unless, of course, South Carolina attacked.

Now the dilemma sat with Jefferson Davis. Attacking Lincoln's resupply brigade would make the South the aggressive party. But he simply could not allow the fort to be resupplied. J.G. Gilchrist, a Southern newspaper writer, warned, "Unless you sprinkle the blood in the face of the people of Alabama, they will be back in the old Union in less than ten days."

Davis decided he had no choice but to order Major Anderson to surrender Sumter. Anderson refused.

The Civil War began at 4:30 a.m. on April 12, 1861, when Confederate artillery, under the command of General Pierre Gustave T. Beauregard, opened fire on Fort Sumter. Confederate batteries showered the fort with over 3,000 shells in a three-and-a-half day period. Anderson surrendered. Ironically, Beauregard had developed his military skills under Anderson's instruction at West Point. It was the first of countless relationships and families devastated in the Civil War. The fight was on.

CONCLUSION

Clearly the problems of slavery and especially the expansion of slavery into the West were enormous, but there were efforts at compromise. If the influential voices of the day — John Brown, Charles Sumner or Preston Brooks for example — hadn't been so extreme in their rhetoric or actions and had followed more closely the conciliatory example of Abraham Lincoln, could war have been avoided?

Or, had the problem just grown so large that war was inevitable, no matter how brilliant or charismatic the nation's leaders might have been. By the end of the 1850s, could anyone have keep the peace?

What do you think? Could America's leaders have prevented the Civil War?

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SUMMARY

The Fugitive Slave Act required Northerners to help Southerners catch and return slaves trying to escape along the Underground Railroad. It was part of the Compromise of 1850. One slave, Dred Scott went to court against his owner after having been brought to the North. He argued that because he was in a free state, he was free. The Supreme Court ruled in *Dred Scott v. Sanford* that he was not. This ruling effectively made slavery legal in all states and territories. It was terrifying for Northerners.

Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas held a series of famous debates in Illinois as they campaigned for Senate. Lincoln lost the election, but the debates were republished widely since they were essentially a debate about the future of slavery. Douglas advocated for popular sovereignty. Lincoln argued that the nation could not survive half free and half slave. He predicted that it would become all one or all the other.

In Congress, politicians accused one another of inciting violence in Kansas, and fighting broke out on the floor of the Senate.

John Brown attacked the federal arsenal at Harper's Ferry in an attempt to launch a general slavery uprising. His effort failed and he was captured, tried and executed for treason. In the process he became a martyr for the abolitionist cause. Northerners might have seen the Dred Scott case as evidence that slave power had taken over Washington, but Southerners believed John Brown's raid showed that abolitionists were willing to ignore the law and use violence to take away their slaves.

In the election of 1860, Abraham Lincoln won as the first Republican president. He did not appear on the ballot in any southern state. Southerners viewed his victory as evidence that the North would do anything to get its way and that the less populous South would be the losers in the end.

Eleven southern states seceded and formed the Confederate States of America. Four slave states chose not to secede and remained in the Union. Lincoln took office hoping to keep the nation together, but warned the South that if they insisted on leaving, it would mean war. When Southerners bombed Fort Sumter in South Carolina, the Civil War began.



PEOPLE AND GROUPS

Charles Sumner: Senator from Massachusetts, abolitionist, and leader of the Radical Republicans who advocated for immediate abolition.

Constitutional Union Party: A political party that existed just before the start of the Civil War. They argued simply that the nation should stay together and ignore the question of slavery. They did not win, but their candidate John Bell won some votes in the election of 1860.

Dred Scott: A slave who sued for his freedom after being taken into the North. His case went all the way to the Supreme Court where he lost.

Jefferson Davis: President of the Confederacy. Usually regarded as an ineffective wartime leader.

Martyr: A hero who dies for a cause.

Preston Brooks: Senator from South Carolina who angrily beat Charles Sumner on the floor of the Senate with his cane. He became a hero in the South.

Robert E. Lee: Brilliant general from Virginia who led the assault on John Brown at Harper's Ferry and later led the Confederate armies during the Civil War. His surrender to Ulysses S. Grant ended the war.

Roger Taney: The Supreme Court Chief Justice who wrote the Dred Scott decision.



COURT CASES

Dred Scott v. Sandford: A landmark Supreme Court case in 1857 in which Chief Justice Roger Taney wrote that the federal government did not have the power to regulate slavery, effectively allowing slavery in all states, North and South, as well as the territories. The outcome of the case infuriated abolitionists who saw it as a major expansion of the power of slave owners over the federal government.



KEY IDEAS

A House Divided: This was a metaphor that Abraham Lincoln articulated during the Lincoln-Douglas Debates. He said that the nation was like a house that could not stand if it was divided. He predicted that the country would either become all slave, or all free, but could not continue with slavery allowed in only the South.

Freeport Doctrine: Named for the town of Freeport, Illinois where Stephen Douglas articulated it in one of the Lincoln-Douglas Debates, the Freeport Doctrine was Douglas's assertion that despite the Dred Scott decision, the people of new territories could still ban slavery on their own. His argument for popular sovereignty angered Democrats in the South and helped lead to a split in the party.

Popular Sovereignty: The idea that the residents of each territory should decide for themselves if they would join the Union as a free or slave state. Stephen Douglas supported this idea and it was the heart of the Kansas-Nebraska Act.

The Better Angels of our Nature: A famous image invoked by President Lincoln at his first inaugural address when he called upon the nation to avoid war.



LAWS

Fugitive Slave Act: A law passed by the United States Congress on September 18, 1850, as part of the Compromise of 1850 between Southern slave-holding interests and Northern Free-Soilers. The Act was one of the most controversial elements of the 1850 compromise and heightened Northern fears of a "slave power conspiracy" that was taking control of the federal government. It required that all escaped slaves were, upon capture, to be returned to their masters and that officials and citizens of free states had to cooperate in this law.



EVENTS

Lincoln-Douglas Debates: A series of famous debates between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas during their campaign for the open Illinois senate seat in 1858. Lincoln, a Republican, and Douglas a Democrat drew national attention as they debated the future of slavery. Despite losing the election, the debates catapulted Lincoln to widespread fame and respect.



LOCATIONS

Confederacy: The Confederate States of America – the slave-holding states from the South that seceded.

Fort Sumter: Fort in Charleston Harbor, South Carolina. The Union controlled the fort at the start of the Civil War, and Confederate troops bombarded and took control of the fort. It was the first military action of the war.

Harper's Ferry: A small town in West Virginia and site of the federal arsenal that John Brown attacked.

4

F O U R T H Q U E S T I O N COULD THE SOUTH HAVE WON THE CIVIL WAR?

WAS THE
CIVIL WAR
A RIGHTEOUS JUDGEMENT
FOR AMERICA'S EMBRACE OF
SLAVERY?

INTRODUCTION

We often make the mistake of looking back at history and thinking, “of course.” Of course the North was going to win the Civil War. Of course Lincoln would free the slaves. Of course the championship team was going to win!

But we rarely make this mistake when looking into the future. The future seems far less certain. And actually, looking more closely at events from history, the outcome of major events is usually less certain than we think it was. When the Civil War began both the North and the South thought that they would win easily, and they were both wrong. Each side had significant advantages, and had it not been for some key turning points, the outcome of the war might have been very different.

Don't be too quick to conclude that what did happen is what was going to happen all along.

Could the South have won the Civil War?

4 COULD THE SOUTH HAVE WON THE CIVIL WAR?



STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

On paper, the **Union** outweighed the **Confederacy** in almost every way. Nearly 21 million people lived in 23 Northern states. The South claimed just 9 million people — including 3.5 million slaves — in 11 confederate states. Despite the North's greater population, however, the South had an army almost equal in size during the first year of the war.

The North had an enormous industrial advantage as well. At the beginning of the war, the Confederacy had only one-ninth the industrial capacity of the Union. But that statistic was misleading. In 1860, the North manufactured 97 percent of the country's firearms, 96 percent of its railroad locomotives, 94 percent of its cloth, 93 percent of its pig iron, and over 90 percent of its boots and shoes. The North had twice the density of railroads per square mile. There was not even one rifle works in the entire South.

All of the principal ingredients of gunpowder were imported. Since the North controlled the navy, the seas were in the hands of the Union. A **blockade** could suffocate the South. Still, the Confederacy was not without resources and willpower.

The South could produce all the food it needed, though transporting it to soldiers and civilians was a major problem. The South also had a great nucleus of trained officers. Seven of the eight military colleges in the country were in the South.

The South also proved to be very resourceful. By the end of the war, it had established armories and foundries in several states. They built huge gunpowder mills and melted down thousands of church and plantation bells for bronze to build cannon.

The South's greatest strength lay in the fact that it was fighting on the defensive in its own territory. Familiar with the landscape, Southerners could harass Northern invaders.

The military and political objectives of the Union were much more difficult to accomplish. The Union had to invade, conquer, and occupy the South. It had to destroy the South's capacity and will to resist — a formidable challenge in any war. In short, the North had to win. The South simply had to not lose.

Southerners enjoyed the initial advantage of morale: The South was fighting to maintain its way of life, whereas the North was fighting to maintain a union. Slavery did not become a moral cause of the Union effort until Lincoln announced the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863.



Union: The United States of America. The North including the four border states which had slaves but did not secede.



Confederacy: The Confederate States of America. The slave-holding states from the South that seceded.



Blockade: Using a navy to prevent ships from entering or exiting a port.

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When the war began, many key questions were still unanswered. What if the slave states of Maryland, Kentucky, Missouri, and Delaware joined the Confederacy? What if Britain or France came to the aid of the South? What if a few decisive early Confederate victories turned Northern public opinion against the war?

Indeed, the North looked much better on paper in terms of resources, but victory for the North was by no means a foregone conclusion.

THEY ALL THOUGHT IT WOULD BE A SHORT WAR

When the war began in April 1861, most Americans in the North and South expected the conflict to be brief. When President Lincoln called upon the governors and states of the Union to furnish him with 75,000 soldiers, he asked for an enlistment of only 90 days. When the Confederacy moved its capital to Richmond, Virginia, 100 miles from Washington, everyone expected a decisive battle to take place on the ground between the two cities.

In the spring of 1861, 35,000 Confederate troops led by General Pierre Beauregard moved north to protect Richmond against invasion. Lincoln's army had almost completed its 90-day enlistment requirement and still its field commander, General Irvin McDowell, did not want to fight. Pressured to act, on July 18 (three months after the war had begun) McDowell marched his army of 37,000 into Virginia.

Hundreds of reporters, congressional representatives, and other civilians traveled from Washington in carriages and on horses to see a real battle. It took the Northern troops two and a half days to march 25 miles. Beauregard was warned of McDowell's troop movement by a Southern belle who concealed the message in her hair. He consolidated his forces along the south bank of Bull Run, a river a few miles north of Manassas Junction, and waited for the Union troops to arrive.

Early on July 21, the **First Battle of Bull Run** began. During the first two hours of battle, 4,500 Confederates gave ground grudgingly to 10,000 Union soldiers. But as the Confederates were retreating, they found a brigade of fresh troops led by General Thomas Jackson waiting just over the crest of the hill.

Trying to rally his infantry, General Bernard Bee of South Carolina shouted, "Look, there is Jackson with his Virginians, standing like a stone wall!" The Southern troops held firm, and Jackson's nickname, "Stonewall," was born.

During the afternoon, thousands of additional Confederate troops arrived by horse and by train. The Union troops had been fighting in intense heat — many for 14 hours. By late in the day, they were



First Battle of Bull Run: The first major battle between the armies of the North and South. It ended in a victory for the South and demonstrated that neither side would have an easy victory.

4 COULD THE SOUTH HAVE WON THE CIVIL WAR?



feeling the effects of their efforts. At about 4 p.m., when Beauregard ordered a massive counterattack, Stonewall Jackson urged his soldiers to "yell like furies." The Rebel Yell became a hallmark of the Confederate Army. A retreat by the Union became a rout.

Over 4,800 soldiers were killed, wounded, or listed as missing from both armies in the battle. The next day, Lincoln named Major General **George B. McClellan** to command the new **Army of the Potomac** and signed legislation for the enlistment of one million troops to last three years. The high esprit de corps of the Confederates was elevated by their victory. For the North, which had supremacy in numbers, it increased their caution. Seven long months passed before McClellan agreed to fight. Meanwhile, Lincoln was growing impatient at the timidity of his generals.

In many ways, the Civil War represented a transition from the old style of fighting to the new style. During Bull Run and other early engagements, traditional uniformed lines of troops faced off, each trying to outflank the other. As the war progressed, new weapons and tactics changed warfare forever. Railroads were used by armies. Metal boats called ironclads replaced wooden warships and leaders sent messages over telegraph.

THE WAR AT HOME: THE NORTH

After initial setbacks, most Northern civilians experienced an explosion of wartime production. During the war, coal and iron production reached their highest levels. Merchant ship tonnage peaked. Traffic on the railroads and the Erie Canal rose over 50%.

Union manufacturers grew so profitable that many companies doubled or tripled their dividends to stockholders. The newly rich built lavish homes and spent their money extravagantly on carriages, silk clothing and jewelry. There was a great deal of public outrage that such conduct was unbecoming or even immoral in times of war. What made this lifestyle even more offensive was that workers' salaries shrank in real terms due to inflation. The price of beef, rice and sugar doubled from their pre-war levels, yet salaries rose only half as fast as prices while companies of all kinds made record profits.

Women's roles changed dramatically during the war. Before the war, women of the North already had been prominent in a number of industries, including textiles, clothing and shoe-making. With the conflict, there were great increases in employment of women in occupations ranging from government civil service to agricultural field work. As men entered the Union army, women's proportion of the manufacturing work force went from one-fourth to one-third. At home, women organized over one thousand soldiers' aid societies,



George McClellan: General who led the Union army at the start of the war. He infuriated Lincoln with his unwillingness to lead his troops into battle. Eventually Lincoln fired him.



Army of the Potomac: The Union army that did most of the fighting in Virginia against General Lee. It was named after the Potomac River that separates Maryland and Virginia.

4 COULD THE SOUTH HAVE WON THE CIVIL WAR?

WAS THE
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rolled bandages for use in hospitals and raised millions of dollars to aid injured troops.

Nowhere was their impact felt greater than in field hospitals close to the front. Dorothea Dix, who led the effort to provide state hospitals for the mentally ill, was named the first superintendent of women nurses and set rigid guidelines for quality. **Clara Barton**, working in a patent office, became one of the most admired nurses during the war and, as a result of her experiences, formed the **American Red Cross**.



Clara Barton: Nurse and founder of the American Red Cross.



American Red Cross: An organization that provides free healthcare and support to soldiers and people affected by war or disaster. It was founded by Clara Barton during the Civil War.

Primary Source: Photograph

Clara Barton, the founder of the American Red Cross

Resentment of the **draft** was another divisive issue. In the middle of 1862, Lincoln called for 300,000 volunteer soldiers. Each state was given a quota, and if it could not meet the quota, it had no recourse but to draft men into the state militia. Resistance was so great in some parts of Pennsylvania, Ohio, Wisconsin and Indiana that the army had to send in troops to keep order. Tempers flared further over the provision that allowed exemptions for those who could afford to hire a substitute.

In 1863, facing a serious loss of manpower through casualties and expiration of enlistments, Congress authorized the government to enforce conscription, resulting in **riots** in several states. In July 1863,



Draft: A process in which the government forces people to join the military.



Draft Riots: Riots that happened in 1863 in major cities of the North, especially in New York City when the government enforced

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when draft offices were established in New York to bring new Irish workers into the military, mobs formed to resist. At least 74 people were killed over three days. The same troops that had just been fighting Lee's army in the South were deployed to maintain order in New York City.

THE WAR AT HOME: THE SOUTH

After the initial months of the war, the South was plagued with shortages of all kinds. It started with clothing. As the first winter of the war approached, the Confederate army needed wool clothing to keep their soldiers warm. But the South did not produce much wool and the Northern blockade prevented much wool from being imported from abroad. People all over the South donated their woolens to the cause. Soon families at home were cutting blankets out of carpets.

Almost all the shoes worn in the South were manufactured in the North. With the start of the war, shipments of shoes ceased and there would be few new shoes available for years. The first meeting of Confederate and Union forces at Gettysburg arose when Confederates were investigating a supply of shoes in a warehouse.

Money was another problem. The South's decision to print more money to pay for the war led to unbelievable increases in price of everyday items. By the end of 1861, the overall rate of **inflation** was running 12% per month. For example, salt was the only means to preserve meat at this time. Its price increased from 65¢ for a 200 pound bag in May 1861 to \$60 per sack only 18 months later. Wheat, flour, corn meal, meats of all kinds, iron, tin and copper became too expensive for the ordinary family. Profiteers frequently bought up all the goods in a store to sell them back at a higher price. It was an unmanageable situation. **Food riots** occurred in Mobile, Atlanta and Richmond.

Over the course of the war, inflation in the South caused Women's roles changed dramatically. The absence of men meant that women were now heads of households. Women staffed the Confederate government as clerks and became schoolteachers for the first time. Women at first were denied permission to work in military hospitals as they were exposed to "sights that no lady should see." But when casualties rose to the point that wounded men would die in the streets due to lack of attention, female nurses such as Sally Louisa Tompkins and Kate Cumming would not be denied. Indeed, by late 1862, the Confederate Congress enacted a law permitting civilians in military hospitals, giving preference to women.

The most unpopular act of the Confederate government was the institution of a draft. Like in the North, loopholes permitted a drafted

conscription into the army. They demonstrated that the war was not universally popular.



Inflation: When the prices of good increase over time.



Food Riots: Riots that occurred in the major cities of the South, especially led by women when the blockade of Southern ports by the Union navy prevented enough food from being imported. These were also sometimes called the Bread Riots.

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man to hire a substitute, leading many wealthy men to avoid service. When the Confederate Congress exempted anyone who supervised 20 slaves, dissension exploded. Many started to conclude that it was "a rich man's war and a poor man's fight." This sentiment and the suffering of their families led many to desert the Confederate armies. By November 1863, James Seddon, the Confederate Secretary of War said he could not account for 1/3 of the army. Soldiers worried more about their families than staying to fight for their new country. Much of the Confederate army deserted and went home to pick up the pieces of their shattered lives.

DIPLOMACY: THE IMPORTANCE OF EUROPEAN POWER

Rebellions rarely succeed without foreign support. When the Americans launched their revolution against British rule in the 1770s, French support was crucial to their success. The North and South both sought British and French support. Jefferson Davis was determined to secure such an alliance with Britain or France for the Confederacy. Abraham Lincoln knew this could not be permitted. A great chess match was about to begin.

Cotton was a formidable weapon in Southern diplomacy. Europe was reliant on cotton grown in the South for their textile industry. Over 75% of the cotton used by British mills came from states within the Confederacy.

By 1863, the Union blockade reduced British cotton imports to 3% of their pre-war levels. Throughout Europe there was a cotton famine. There was also a great deal of money being made by British shipbuilders. The South needed fast ships to run the blockade, which British shipbuilders were more than happy to furnish.

France had reasons to support the South. Napoleon III saw an opportunity to get cotton and to restore a French presence in America, especially in Mexico, by forging an alliance.

But the North also had cards to play. Crop failures in Europe in the early years of the war increased British dependency on Union wheat. In 1862, over one-half of British grain imports came from the Union. The growth of other British industries such as the iron and shipbuilding offset the decline in the textile industry. British merchant vessels were also carrying much of the trade between the Union and Great Britain, providing another source of income.

The greatest problem for the South lay in its embrace of slavery, as the British took pride in their leadership of ending the trans-Atlantic slave trade. To support a nation that had openly embraced slavery now seemed unthinkable. After Lincoln issued the Emancipation

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Proclamation and freed slaves in the rebelling states, Britain was much less prepared to intervene on behalf of the South.

The key for each side was to convince Europe that victory for its side was inevitable. Early Southern victories convinced Britain that the North couldn't triumph against a foe so large and so opposed to domination. This was a lesson reminiscent of the one learned by the British themselves in the Revolutionary War. Yet, despite all its victories, the South never struck a decisive blow to the North. The British felt they must know that the South's independence was certain before recognizing the Confederacy. The great Southern loss at Antietam in 1862 loomed large in the minds of European diplomats.

Yet efforts did not stop. Lincoln, his Secretary of State William Seward, and Ambassador Charles Francis Adams labored tirelessly to maintain British neutrality. As late as 1864, Jefferson Davis proposed to release slaves in the South if Britain would recognize the Confederacy, but it was too little too late. Britain and France never took side.

GETTYSBURG: THE TURNING POINT OF THE WAR

As the years dragged on, Robert E. Lee developed a strategy to end the war. He proposed to take the offensive, invade the northern state of Pennsylvania, and defeat the Union Army in its own territory. Such a victory would relieve Virginia of the burden of war, strengthen the hand of **Peace Democrats** in the North, and undermine Lincoln's chances for reelection. It would reopen the possibility for European support that was closed at Antietam. And perhaps, it would even lead to peace.

The result of this vision was the largest battle ever fought on the North American continent. This was **Gettysburg**, where more than 170,000 fought and over 40,000 were casualties.

Lee began his quest in mid-June 1863, leading 75,000 soldiers out of Virginia into south-central Pennsylvania. Forty miles to the south of Lee, the new commander of the Union Army of the Potomac, General George Meade, headed north with his 95,000 soldiers. When Lee learned of the approach of this concentrated force, he sent couriers to his generals with orders to reunite near Gettysburg to do battle. As sections of the Confederate Army moved to join together, Confederate General A.P. Hill, heard a rumor that that there was a large supply of shoes at Gettysburg. On July 1, 1863, he sent one of his divisions to get those shoes. The battle of Gettysburg was about to begin.



Peace Democrats: Also called Copperheads, they were Democrats in the North who wanted to end the war and make peace with the South.



Battle of Gettysburg: The turning point battle of the war. Lee led his army into Pennsylvania hoping to force the North to give up, but lost the battle.

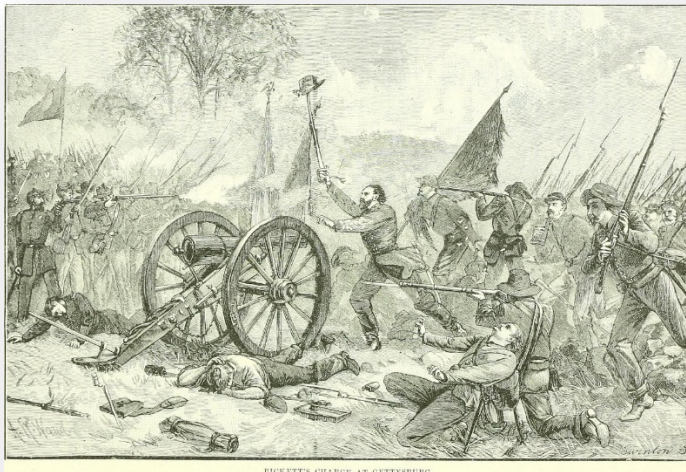
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As Hill approached Gettysburg from the west, he was met by the Union cavalry of John Buford. Couriers from both sides were sent out for reinforcements. By early afternoon, 40,000 troops were on the battlefield, aligned in a semicircle north and west of the town. At noon on July 2, the second day of the battle, Lee ordered his divisions to attack but the Union soldiers were able to prevent defeat.

Lee was determined to leave Pennsylvania with a victory. On the third day of battle, he ordered a major assault against the center of the Union line on Cemetery Ridge. Confederate cannon batteries started to fire into the Union center. The firing continued for two hours. At 3 p.m., 14,000 Confederate soldiers under the command of General George Pickett began their famous **charge** across three-quarters of a mile of open field to the Union line.

Few Confederates made it and the attack has often been called the **High Tide of the Confederacy**. Lee's attempt for a decisive victory in Pennsylvania had failed. He had lost 28,000 troops — one-third of his army. A month later, he offered his resignation to Jefferson Davis, which was refused. Meade had lost 23,000 soldiers. The hope for Southern recognition by any foreign government was dashed. The war continued for two more years, but Gettysburg marked the end of Lee's major offensives.



Pickett's Charge: Lee's final attack on the third day of the Battle of Gettysburg. Often called the High Tide of the Confederacy, it was a disaster for the South, ending in defeat and the loss of thousands of troops.



High Tide of the Confederacy: A term used to describe the Battle of Gettysburg, and especially Pickett's Charge. It was the closest the South ever came to military victory in the war. Although far from over, after the battle the war turned in the North's favor.

Secondary Source: Illustration

An artist's illustration of a scene from Pickett's Charge at the Battle of Gettysburg published in 1896.



Watch a reenactment of Pickett's Charge

THE LONG, SLOW END OF THE WAR

Only one day after their victory at Gettysburg, Union forces captured **Vicksburg**, the last Confederate stronghold on the Mississippi River. Lincoln and Union commanders began to make plans for finishing the war. The Union strategy to win the war did not emerge all at once.



Battle of Vicksburg: A major victory for the Union army in the South. Vicksburg was a city along the Mississippi River. After it fell to the North, the Union controlled shipping on the river and was able to split the South in two.

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By 1863, however, the Northern military plan consisted of five major goals:

First, blockade all Southern coasts. This strategy, known as the **Anaconda Plan**, would eliminate the possibility of Confederate help from abroad.

Second, control the Mississippi River. The river was the South's major inland waterway. Also, Northern control of the rivers would separate Texas, Louisiana, and Arkansas from the other Confederate states.

Third, capture **Richmond**. Without its capital, the Confederacy's command lines would be disrupted.

Fourth, shatter Southern civilian morale by capturing and destroying the cities of Atlanta, Savannah, and the heart of Southern secession, the State of South Carolina.

Finally, Lincoln and his generals planned to use the numerical advantage of Northern troops to engage the enemy everywhere to break the spirits of the Confederate Army.



Anaconda Plan: The North's strategy to blockade Southern ports to prevent trade and resupply.



Richmond: The capital city of Virginia and of the Confederacy.



Primary Source: Illustration

A drawing from 1861 depicting the Anaconda Plan. General Winfield Scott developed the plan.

By early 1864, the first two goals had been accomplished. The blockade had successfully prevented any meaningful foreign aid and also prevented the South from exporting any of its cotton, thus starving it of badly needed cash. General **Ulysses S. Grant's** success at Vicksburg delivered the Mississippi River to the Union. Lincoln turned to Grant to finish the job and, in the spring of 1864, appointed Grant to command the entire Union Army.



Ulysses S. Grant: General who led the Union armies at the end of the war. He won the Battle of Vicksburg and Lincoln promoted him to commander of all of the Union Armies. He accepted Lee's surrender at the end of the war and later was elected president.

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Grant had a plan to end the war by November. He mounted several major simultaneous offensives. General George Meade was to lead the Union's massive Army of the Potomac against Robert E. Lee. Grant would stay with Meade, who commanded the largest Northern army. General James Butler was to advance up the James River in Virginia and attack Richmond, the capital of the Confederacy. General **William Tecumseh Sherman** was to plunge into the heart of the South, inflicting as much damage as he could against their war resources.

Meade faced Lee's army in Virginia. Lee's strategy was to use terrain and fortified positions to his advantage, thus decreasing the importance of the Union's superiority in numbers. He hoped to make the cost of trying to force the South back into the Union so high that the Northern public would not stand for it.

But, unlike the Union commanders of the past, Grant had the determination to press on despite the cost. Twenty-eight thousand soldiers were casualties of the Battle of the Wilderness. A few days later, another 28,000 soldiers were casualties in the Battle of Spotsylvania Court House. More than two-thirds of the casualties of these battles were Union soldiers.

At Cold Harbor the following week, Grant lost another 13,000 soldiers — 7,000 of them in half an hour. In the 30 days that Grant had been fighting Lee, he lost 50,000 troops — a number equal to half the size of the Confederate army at the time. As a result, Grant became known as "The Butcher." Congress was appalled and petitioned for his removal. But Lincoln argued that Grant was winning the battles and refused to grant Congress's request.

Butler failed to capture Richmond, and the Confederate capital was temporarily spared. On May 6, 1864, one day after Grant and Lee started their confrontation in the Wilderness, Sherman entered Georgia, scorching whatever resources that lay in his path. By late July, he had forced the enemy back to within sight of Atlanta. For a month, he lay siege to the city. Finally, in early September he entered Atlanta — one day after the Confederate army evacuated it.

Sherman waited until seven days after Lincoln's hotly fought reelection before putting Atlanta to the torch and starting his army's **March to the Sea**. No one stood before him. His soldiers pillaged the countryside and destroyed everything of conceivable military value as they traveled 285 miles to Savannah, Georgia in a march that became legendary for the misery it created among the civilian population. On December 22, 1864 Savannah fell. When he arrived, Sherman sent a telegram to President Lincoln saying, "I beg to present you as a Christmas gift the City of Savannah..."



William Tecumseh Sherman: Northern general who led his army through the South destroying everything he could — farms, railroads, etc. — in an effort to prevent the South from having the means of waging war.



Sherman's March to the Sea: In 1864 General Sherman led his Union army through Georgia destroying everything he could. He started in Atlanta and his destination was the city of Savannah on the coast. He became of a hero of the North and villain across the South.

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Next, Sherman ordered his army to move north into South Carolina. Their intent was to destroy the state where secession began. Exactly a month later, its capital, Columbia, fell to him. On the same day, Union Forces retook Fort Sumter. The war was almost over.



Primary Source: Illustration

A drawing published in Harper's Weekly depicting the burning of Columbia, South Carolina by General Sherman's troops.

THE ELECTION OF 1864

It is hard for modern Americans to believe that Abraham Lincoln, one of history's most beloved Presidents, was nearly defeated in his reelection attempt in 1864. Yet by that summer, Lincoln himself feared he would lose. How could this happen? First, the country had not elected an incumbent President for a second term since Andrew Jackson in 1832 — nine Presidents in a row had served just one term. Also, his embrace of emancipation was still a problem for many Northern voters.

Despite Union victories at Gettysburg and Vicksburg a year earlier, the Southern armies came back fighting with a vengeance. During three months in the summer of 1864, over 65,000 Union soldiers were killed, wounded, or missing-in-action. In comparison, there had been 108,000 Union casualties in the first three years. General Ulysses S. Grant was being called The Butcher. At one time during the summer, Confederate soldiers came within five miles of the White House.

Lincoln had much to contend with. He had staunch opponents in the Congress. Underground Confederate activities brought rebellion to parts of Maryland. Lincoln's suspension of the **writ of habeas corpus** was ruled unconstitutional by Supreme Court Chief Justice Roger B. Taney — an order Lincoln refused to obey.



Writ of Habeas Corpus: A legal term that means "Show me the Body." It means that the government cannot accuse you of a crime and then hold you in jail indefinitely before giving you a trial.

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Meanwhile the Democratic Party split, with major opposition from Peace Democrats, who wanted a negotiated peace at any cost. They chose as their nominee George B. McClellan, Lincoln's former commander of the Army of the Potomac. Even Lincoln expected that McClellan would win.

The South was well aware of Union discontent. Many felt that if the Southern armies could hold out until the election, negotiations for Northern recognition of Confederate independence might begin.

Everything changed on September 6, 1864, when General Sherman seized Atlanta. The war effort had turned decidedly in the North's favor and even McClellan now argued for continuing the war and achieving military victory instead of trying to negotiate a peace agreement with the Confederacy. Two months later, Lincoln won the popular vote that eluded him in his first election. He won the electoral college by 212 to 21 and the Republicans won three-fourths of Congress. A second term and the power to conclude the war were now in his hands.

APPOMATTOX: THE SOUTH SURRENDERS

After Sherman's victory in Savannah, only Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia remained as a substantial military force to oppose the Union Army. For nine months, Grant and Lee had faced each other from 53 miles of trenches during the **Siege of Petersburg**. Lee's forces had been reduced to 50,000, while Grant's had grown to over 120,000.

The Southern troops began to melt away as the end became clear. On April 2, Grant ordered an attack on Petersburg and broke the Confederate line. Lee and his shrinking army were able to escape but Lee sent a message to Jefferson Davis saying that Richmond could no longer be defended and that he should evacuate the city. That night Jefferson Davis and his cabinet set fire to everything of military value in Richmond, then boarded a train to Danville, 140 miles to the south. Mobs took over the streets and set more fires. The next day, Northern soldiers arrived. And one day after that, Lincoln visited the city and sat in the office of Jefferson Davis.

Lee's Army of Northern Virginia, now reduced in size to 35,000 troops, had escaped to the west. They were starving, and Lee had asked the Confederate Commissary Department to have rations for his infantry waiting at the Amelia Courthouse. But when he arrived there, no rations awaited his troops. The Confederate government had no money to buy food for its army, and even if it did, there was not food to be found and now way to deliver its hungry troops. Lee and his men were forced to forage the countryside for food. The delay



Siege of Petersburg: The long attack on the City of Petersburg south of Richmond, Virginia. It was devastating for both armies, but due to the South's inability to replace lost soldiers, proved to be a death blow to Lee's army.

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caused by his need to acquire food proved fatal to the Confederate effort.

Now 125,000 Union soldiers were surrounding Lee's army, whose numbers had been reduced to 25,000 troops and were steadily falling. Still, Lee decided to make one last attempt to break out. On April 9, the remaining Confederate Army, under John Gordon, drove back Union cavalry blocking the road near the village of **Appomattox Court House**. But beyond them were 50,000 Union infantry, and as many or more were closing in on Lee from his rear. It was over and Lee knew it.

Lee sent a note to Grant, and later that afternoon they met in the home of Wilmer McLean. Grant offered generous **terms of surrender**. Confederate officers and soldiers could go home, taking with them their horses, side arms, and personal possessions. Also, Grant guaranteed their immunity from prosecution for treason. At the conclusion of the ceremony, the two men saluted each other and parted. Grant then sent three days' worth of food rations to the 25,000 Confederate soldiers. The official surrender ceremony occurred three days later, when Lee's troops stacked their rifles and battle flags. The war was over, and the hard road toward rebuilding the South began.

CONCLUSION

The war ended in total defeat for the South. Their armies were defeated on the battlefield. Their cities were destroyed. Their economy was devastated by the loss of slave labor and a crippling blockade. But did it have to end that way? Could the South have done things differently to produce a different outcome? If Lincoln and the leaders of the Union armies had made different choices would the war have ended differently?

What do you think? Could the South have won the Civil War?



Appomattox Court House: The small town in Virginia where Lee surrendered to Grant.



Terms of Surrender: The agreement made by two armies or nations to formally end a war.

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SUMMARY

The North and South each had strengths and weaknesses going into the Civil War. The North was more populous, industrialized and wealthy. However, the North had to take the fight to the South and win. The South simply had to hold out until the North gave up. The Southerners saw themselves as fighting for their freedom, which was an ideological advantage in the beginning. Later in the war, Northerners saw their armies as marching to end slavery, a moral crusade of their own. Most of the nation's best generals, were from the South. The lack of effective leadership made the North's efforts in the first years of the war mostly ineffective.

In order to prevent the South from exporting its cotton to Europe, the North implemented a blockade of Southern ports.

Both sides believed it would be a short war. After the first battles, it became clear that this would not be the case. Although the Union general McClellan was an excellent organizer and trained a professional army, he was hesitant to take it into battle and failed to destroy the smaller Confederate army early in the war even when he had the chance.

In the North, the war helped some become rich. Vast federal expenditures led to an increase in industrial output. Although many men volunteered at the start of the war, Lincoln instituted a draft as the war dragged on which led to rioting. In the South, a blockade by the Union navy choked off trade and led to hunger and food riots by southern women. In both the North and South, the wealthy found ways to avoid the fighting, while women found new roles in industry, farming and the war effort. Women founded the Red Cross during the war.

Southern leaders had hoped to use the cotton trade to convince England and France to recognize their independence. Lincoln successfully avoided this by exporting northern wheat and reminding the English that the South was fighting to preserve slavery, a practice the English had recently banned.

The turning point of the war was the Battle of Gettysburg. Although neither side won, Robert E. Lee lost more men than he could replace, and it was the last time he would attempt to take his army into the North or try to capture Washington, DC. At that same time, Union armies in the South captured Vicksburg, thus gaining control of the Mississippi River and dividing the South in half.

During the war, Lincoln won reelection. Although he had violated the Constitution, he won because the war was going well in 1864 and

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because democrats were split between those who supported the war, and those who wanted to make a deal for peace with the South.

It took two more years of fighting after Gettysburg to finally destroy the South. General Sherman marched his Union army through Georgia, destroying everything he could in the first example of modern total warfare. General Grant eventually destroyed the Confederate capital of Richmond and forced Lee to surrender.



PEOPLE

George McClellan: General who led the Union army at the start of the war. He infuriated Lincoln with his unwillingness to lead his troops into battle. Eventually Lincoln fired him.

Army of the Potomac: The Union army that did most of the fighting in Virginia against General Lee. It was named after the Potomac River that separates Maryland and Virginia.

American Red Cross: An organization that provides free healthcare and support to soldiers and people affected by war or disaster. It was founded by Clara Barton during the Civil War.

Clara Barton: Nurse and founder of the American Red Cross.

Peace Democrats: Also called Copperheads, they were Democrats in the North who wanted to end the war and make peace with the South.

Ulysses S. Grant: General who led the Union armies at the end of the war. He won the Battle of Vicksburg and Lincoln promoted him to commander of all of the Union Armies. He accepted Lee's surrender at the end of the war and later was elected president.

William Tecumseh Sherman: Northern general who led his army through the South destroying everything he could – farms, railroads, etc. – in an effort to prevent the South from having the means of waging war.



LOCATIONS

Confederacy: The Confederate States of America. The slave-holding states from the South that seceded.

Union: The United States of America. The North including the four Border States which had slaves but did not secede.

Appomattox Court House: The small town in Virginia where Lee surrendered to Grant.

Richmond: The capital city of Virginia and of the Confederacy.



EVENTS

First Battle of Bull Run: The first major battle between the armies of the North and South. It ended in a victory for the South and demonstrated that neither side would have an easy victory.

Draft Riots: Riots that happened in 1863 in major cities of the North, especially in New York City when the government enforced conscription into the army. They demonstrated that the war was not universally popular.

Battle of Gettysburg: The turning point battle of the war. Lee led his army into Pennsylvania hoping to force the North to give up, but lost the battle.

Battle of Vicksburg: A major victory for the Union army in the South. Vicksburg was a city along the Mississippi River. After it fell to the North, the Union controlled shipping on the river and was able to split the South in two.

Food Riots: Riots that occurred in the major cities of the South, especially led by women when the blockade of Southern ports by the Union navy prevented enough food from being imported. These were also sometimes called the Bread Riots.

Pickett's Charge: Lee's final attack on the third day of the Battle of Gettysburg. Often called the High Tide of the Confederacy, it was a disaster for the South, ending in defeat and the loss of thousands of troops.

Sherman's March to the Sea: In 1864 General Sherman led his Union army through Georgia destroying everything he could. He started in Atlanta and his destination was the city of Savannah on the coast. He became a hero of the North and villain across the South.

Siege of Petersburg: The long attack on the City of Petersburg south of Richmond, Virginia. It was devastating for both armies, but due to the South's inability to replace lost soldiers, proved to be a death blow to Lee's army.



KEY IDEAS

Blockade: Using a navy to prevent ships from entering or exiting a port.

Draft: A process in which the government forces people to join the military.

Inflation: When the prices of goods increase over time.

Anaconda Plan: The North's strategy to blockade Southern ports to prevent trade and resupply.

High Tide of the Confederacy: A term used to describe the Battle of Gettysburg, and especially Pickett's Charge. It was the closest the South ever came to military victory in the war. Although far from over, after the battle the war turned in the North's favor.

Terms of Surrender: The agreement made by two armies or nations to formally end a war.

Writ of Habeas Corpus: A legal term that means "Show me the Body." It means that the government cannot accuse you of a crime and then hold you in jail indefinitely before giving you a trial.

5

F I F T H Q U E S T I O N WHAT DID THE WAR MEAN?

**WAS THE
CIVIL WAR
A RIGHTEOUS JUDGEMENT
FOR AMERICA'S EMBRACE OF
SLAVERY?**

INTRODUCTION

We like to apply meaning to important events. We look back at the Revolution and say that it was about independence, standing up for our right to self-determination, to be represented in government, and to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. We apply meaning to wars as well. World War Two was about defeating hatred in the form of Nazi Germany.

Often, in the face of tragedy, especially disasters and war, we look for some greater meaning that will help us understand the events. Earthquakes offer lessons about safe construction practices. Sometimes, events are cautionary tales – “don’t try that again.”

What was the Civil War about? Was it a moral crusade to end the evils of slavery? What is about preserving the Union that the Founding Fathers and the Revolutionary Generation had worked so hard to establish? What is about preserving the rights of people to elect their leaders? What is a punishment from God? Was it a terrible mistake that shows us how not to deal with crisis?

What do you think? What did the war mean?

5 WHAT DID THE WAR MEAN?



WHAT THEY FOUGHT FOR

Popular culture - poetry, books, television, film - as well as the interests of politicians have often distorted the motivations of individual soldiers. Sometimes they have been portrayed as heroic liberators of slaves struggling to be free, or alternatively evil planters wishing to maintain chattel slavery. Like many things however, the truth is far more complicated than the simplistic summaries provided by politicians, poets and screen writers.

In recent years historians have been able to read over thousands of letters that soldiers from both the North and the South sent home during the War and we are now able to more accurately describe what motivated so many thousands of people to risk their lives.

For some, the war was about **ideology**. Northerners believed that secession was unconstitutional and fought to prevent the southern states from leaving the Union. And across the battle lines from them there were Southerners who believed in states' rights, that the Northern government was tyrannical, and that the right of the South to secede was as absolute as had been the right of the 13 Colonies to declare independence in 1776.



Ideology: Beliefs about what is important or true.

For others, the war was about slavery. Undoubtedly for Southern political leaders - the slaveholding elite - the war was a means to preserve their wealth and way of life. But for infantrymen of the South who owned few or no slaves, slavery was important all the same. They believed that African Americans were inferior to whites and the North's efforts to end slavery was a threat to their sense of self-worth.

Slavery was important for Northern troops as well, especially for those who were believers in the fight to abolish slavery. As the war went on, the struggle was seen more and more as an epic moral battle against a terrible evil. Some Northerners cast themselves as instruments of God, punishing the South and liberating souls. For free African Americans in the North, and for slaves who escaped and joined the Union armies, the destruction of slavery can hardly be overstated.

For others, the war was more personal. Many men fought for their homes and their families. Especially in the South, where most of the fighting took place, soldiers did not see their sacrifice in terms of ideological, political or moral terms, but simply as protecting their loved ones.

Sullivan Ballou, a major in the Union army eloquently summarized the feelings of many who fought in the war in a letter he wrote to his wife, just before he was killed at the First Battle of Bull Run in 1861.



Divine Providence: God

5 WHAT DID THE WAR MEAN?



He wrote, "Sarah, my love for you is deathless, it seems to bind me to you with mighty cables that nothing but Omnipotence could break; and yet my love of Country comes over me like a strong wind and bears me irresistibly on with all these chains to the battlefield. The memories of the blissful moments I have spent with you come creeping over me, and I feel most gratified to God and to you that I have enjoyed them so long. And hard it is for me to give them up and burn to ashes the hopes of future years, when God willing, we might still have lived and loved together and seen our sons grow up to honorable manhood around us. I have, I know, but few and small claims upon **Divine Providence**, but something whispers to me — perhaps it is the wafted prayer of my little Edgar — that I shall return to my loved ones unharmed. If I do not, my dear Sarah, never forget how much I love you, and when my last breath escapes me on the battlefield, it will whisper your name."

Whatever their reasons, the men and women who struggled through the four terrible years of war demonstrated tremendous devotion. In all, over one million Americans died, more than three percent of the entire population of the country at that time.

EMANCIPATION: THE END OF SLAVERY

Looking back at the Civil War with the benefit of more than 150 years of hindsight, it is easy to say that the war was about ending slavery and that emancipation was going to be the obvious outcome of the war. This this was not at all obvious then.

Prior to the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln attempted to abstain from the debate over slavery, arguing that he had no constitutional authority to intervene. As the war progressed, emancipation remained a risky political act that had little public support. Lincoln faced strong opposition from **Copperhead Democrats**, who demanded an immediate peace settlement with the Confederacy. They believed that it would be much better to simply let the South secede and avoid war altogether. Many recent immigrants in the North also opposed emancipation, viewing freed slaves as competition for scarce jobs.

Within the Republican Party, however, the **Radical Republicans**, led by House Republican leader **Thaddeus Stevens**, put strong pressure on Lincoln to end slavery quickly. One of the Radicals Republicans' most persuasive arguments was that the South's economy would be destroyed were it to lose slave labor.

Congress passed several laws between 1861 and 1863 that aided the growing movement toward emancipation. Despite his concerns that premature attempts at emancipation would weaken his support and entail the loss of crucial border states - the slave states that had



Listen to Sullivan
Ballou's Letter



Copperhead Democrats: Sometimes called the Peace Democrats, they were Northerners who wanted to end the war and make a peace treaty that allowed the South to secede.



Radical Republicans: Members of the Republican Party who were strong abolitionists.



Thaddeus Stevens: Leader of the Radical Republicans in the House of Representatives.

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decided to remain in the Union, Lincoln signed these acts into law. The first of these laws to be implemented was the First Confiscation Act of August 1861, which authorized the confiscation of any Confederate property, including slaves, by Union forces. In March 1862, Congress approved a law which forbade Union Army officers from returning fugitive slaves to their owners. The laws had their intended effect. As Union armies moved through the South, thousands of slaves left their homes and fled to the approaching Union troops and the South's economy suffered.

The following month, Congress declared that the federal government would **compensate** slave owners who freed their slaves. Moderate Republicans accepted Lincoln's plan for gradual, compensated emancipation, which was put into effect in the District of Columbia. In June 1862, Congress passed a law to emancipate slaves in the territories of the West. What Lincoln really needed, however, was a major military victory that would demonstrate to the country, and to France and Britain, that the North was going to win on the battlefield and that emancipation would be a moral justification for the bloodshed that the war had unleashed.

That victory came in September of 1862 at Antietam. No foreign country wants to ally with a potential losing power. By achieving victory, the Union demonstrated that the South would probably lose. As a result, the British did not recognize the Confederate States of America, and Antietam became one of the war's most important diplomatic battles, as well as one of the bloodiest. Five days after the battle, Lincoln decided to issue the **Emancipation Proclamation**, effective January 1, 1863. Unless the Confederate States returned to the Union by that day, he proclaimed their slaves "shall be then, thenceforward and forever free."

It is sometimes said that the Emancipation Proclamation freed no slaves. In a way, this is true. The proclamation would only apply to the Confederate States, as an act to seize enemy resources. By freeing slaves in the Confederacy, Lincoln was actually freeing people he did not directly control. The way he explained the Proclamation made it acceptable to much of the Union army. He emphasized emancipation as a way to shorten the war by taking Southern resources and hence reducing Confederate strength. Even McClellan supported the policy as a soldier. Lincoln made no such offer of freedom to the slaves in the border states of Missouri, Kentucky, Maryland and Delaware that were still in the Union.

The Emancipation Proclamation created a climate where the destruction of slavery was seen as one of the major objectives of the war. Overseas, the North now seemed to have the greatest moral cause. Even if a foreign government wanted to intervene on behalf of



Compensate: To pay for something that is lost or taken away.



Emancipation Proclamation: President Lincoln's official order freeing all slaves in the rebelling territories (but not in the Border States that had remained in the Union).



Read the Emancipation Proclamation

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the South, its population might object. The Proclamation itself freed very few slaves, but it was the death knell for slavery in the United States. Eventually, the Emancipation Proclamation led to the proposal and ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which formally abolished slavery throughout the land.



Secondary Source: Painting

Henry Louis Stephens's 1963 painting of a man reading the Emancipation Proclamation.

Predictably, the Confederates were initially outraged by the Emancipation Proclamation and used it as further justification for their rebellion. The Proclamation was also immediately denounced by Copperhead Democrats, a more extreme wing of the Northern Democratic faction of the Democratic Party that opposed the war and hoped to restore the Union peacefully via federal acceptance of the institution of slavery. Additionally, these Democrats viewed the Proclamation as an unconstitutional abuse of Presidential power. Controversy surrounding the Emancipation Proclamation, as well as military defeats suffered by the Union, caused many moderate Democrats to abandon Lincoln and join the more extreme Copperheads in the 1862 elections. Democrats gained 28 seats in the House of Representatives in the 1862 election cycle, as well as the governorship of New York. The outcome of the elections showed that

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abolition was still not the primary factor that motivated most Northerners to continue fighting.

Some Copperheads advocated violent resistance to the wartime effort, which greatly increased tensions between pro-war and anti-war factions. Though no organized attacks ever materialized, sensationalist politics did give rise to the Charleston Riot in Illinois during March 1864. Many Copperhead leaders were arrested and held in military prisons without trial, sometimes for months at a time.

In 1863 issued General Order Number 38 in Ohio, which made it an offense to criticize the war in any way. The order was then used to arrest a congressman from Ohio, Clement Vallandigham, when he criticized the order itself. Additionally, a number of Copperheads were accused of treason for criticizing the war by Republicans in a series of trials that took place during 1864. As has been the case in many wars, the right of free speech was severely limited during the Civil War by Lincoln and his supporters. At one point, Lincoln even suspended the **writ of habeas corpus** which meant that he could hold people in prison without a trial. The Supreme Court overturned this action as clearly unconstitutional, but the campaign to suppress opposition to the war is remembered as a stain on Lincoln's record.



Writ of Habeas Corpus: A legal term that means "Show me the Body." It means that the government cannot accuse you of a crime and then hold you in jail indefinitely before giving you a trial.

THE GETTYSBURG ADDRESS

After the Battle of Gettysburg in July of 1863, work began to move the bodies of the fallen soldiers from their makeshift graves scattered across the expansive battlefield to a single cemetery. As part of a ceremony to formally dedicate the cemetery, President Lincoln was invited "to formally set apart these grounds to their sacred use by a few appropriate remarks."



Primary Source: Photograph

The only known photograph of Abraham Lincoln at Gettysburg. He is in the center looking down to the left.

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So it was, that on November 19, 1863, four and a half months after the Union armies defeated those of the Confederacy at the Battle of Gettysburg that Lincoln delivered the **Gettysburg Address**, one of the most remembered and quoted speeches in history. Actually, President Lincoln's carefully crafted address was not the day's main event. His speech was just over two minutes long and came after a two-hour speech by famed **orator** Edward Everett. Even Lincoln said that people "would not long remember" what he had to say, but today it is Lincoln's ten sentences, and not Everett's words that remain important.

Beginning with the now-iconic phrase "Four score and seven years ago," a reference to the Declaration of Independence in 1776, Lincoln reiterated the principles of human equality espoused by the Founding Fathers. He looked back to the Revolution and cast the Civil War as "a new birth of freedom." Indeed, many historians agree with him, noting that while the Revolution of the 1770s produced an independent United States, the Civil War demonstrated that it could survive.

But Lincoln also redefined the War as a struggle not just for the Union, but also for the principle of human equality, thus tying together his initial stated purpose for the war - to preserve the Union - with the abolition of slavery.

Lincoln ended his short address with a reminder that the war was a test of the strength of the Founding Fathers' trust in representative democracy, saying that victory would show that "government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

LINCOLN'S SECOND INAUGURAL ADDRESS

Abraham Lincoln delivered his **second inaugural address** on March 4, 1865. At a time when victory over secessionists in the American Civil War was within days and slavery in all of the Union was near an end, Lincoln's speech was not celebratory, boastful or proud. Instead, he was filled with sadness. He rejected triumphalism and reminded his audience of the unmistakable evil of slavery. Throughout his speech he made numerous references to the Bible and to how he saw God at work in the war. It is considered one of the finest speeches in American history.

Lincoln wondered what God's will might have been in allowing the war to happen and why it had assumed the terrible dimensions it had taken. He reiterated the cause of the war, slavery, in saying "slaves constituted a peculiar and powerful interest. All knew that this interest was somehow the cause of the war." But Lincoln was cautious not to cast blame entirely on the South. He alluded to the



Gettysburg Address: Lincoln's famous speech in 1863 in which he outlined the purpose of the war.



Orator: A person who gives speeches.



Read the Gettysburg Address



Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address: Lincoln's speech in 1865 in which he outlined his beliefs about the war and his view of Reconstruction.

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New Testament saying, "but let us judge not, that we be not judged" and reminded Northerners that before the war their own textile mills had grown wealthy processing cotton that slaves had picked.

Lincoln suggested that the death and destruction wrought by the war was God's way of punishing Americans for having embraced slavery, wondering if God might be imposing an eye-for-an-eye punishment and letting the war continue "until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword."

Lincoln believed it is impossible for humans to know exactly what God's purposes are but that it was his, and everyone's role to move forward to rebuild the country in the best way they knew how. In closing his address, Lincoln looked forward to his vision of Reconstruction. He believed that punishing the South would be counterproductive, and was the wrong course of action. Again he alluded to scripture saying, "let us strive on 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."

Lincoln's sense that the God's will was unknowable, however, stood in marked contrast to sentiments at the time. In most people's minds, both sides of the Civil War assumed that they could read God's will and assumed that he supported their causes. Julia Ward Howe's popular song "Battle Hymn of the Republic" expressed sentiments common in the North, that the Union was waging a righteous war - that the Union armies were acting as the Hand of God to destroy the evils of secession and slavery.

Like many of his earlier speeches, in his last major address Lincoln was eloquent, succinct, and modest. He described Reconstruction as compassionate rather than punishing, but ultimately it was Republicans in Congress, not Lincoln who would determine the fate of the effort to rebuild the South.

LINCOLN'S ASSASSINATION

On April 11, 1865, two days after Lee's Surrender at Appomattox, Lincoln delivered a speech outlining his plans for peace and reconstruction. In the audience was **John Wilkes Booth**, a successful actor, born and raised in Maryland. Booth was a fervent believer in slavery and white supremacy. Upon hearing Lincoln's words, he said to a companion, "Now, by God, I'll put him through. That is the last speech he will ever make."

After failing in two attempts earlier in the year to kidnap the President, Booth decided Lincoln must be killed. His conspiracy was grand in design. Booth and his collaborators decided to assassinate



Read Lincoln's
Second Inaugural
Address



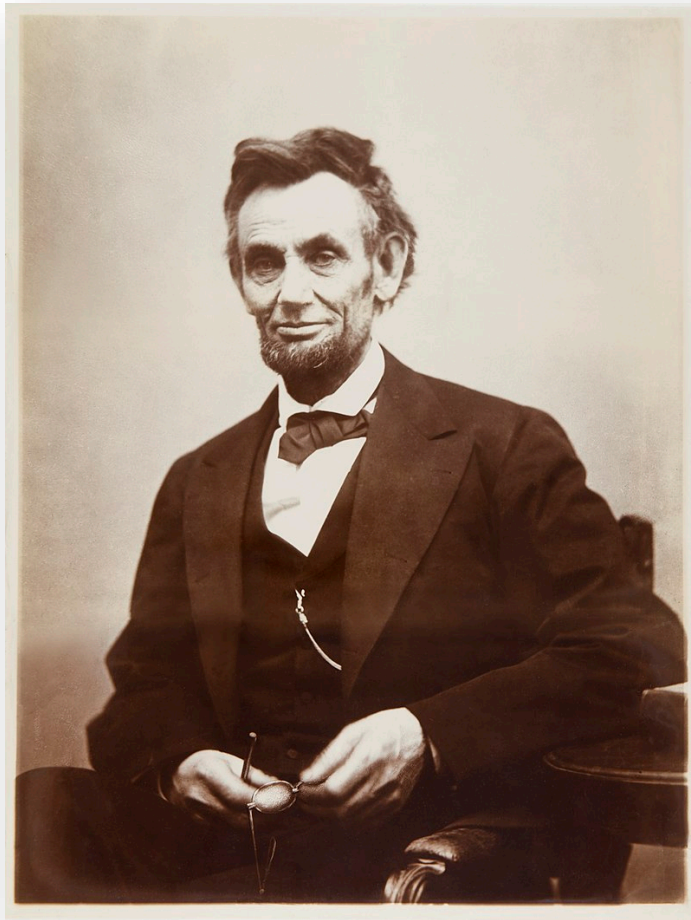
John Wilkes Booth: An actor from Virginia who assassinated President Lincoln in the vain hope that it might inspire the South to continue fighting.



Ford's Theater: The theater in Washington, DC where President Lincoln was assassinated.

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the President, Vice President Andrew Johnson, and Secretary of State William Seward all in the same evening. Lincoln decided to attend a British comedy, *Our American Cousin*, at **Ford's Theater**. Ulysses S. Grant had planned to accompany the President and his wife, but during the day he decided to see his son in New Jersey. Attending the play that night with the Lincolns were Major Henry Rathbone and his fiancée, Clara Harris, the daughter of a prominent Senator.



Primary Source: Photograph

The last known photograph of President Lincoln, taken just a few days before his assassination in 1865.

In the middle of the play that night, Booth slipped into the entryway to the President's box, holding a dagger in his left hand and a Derringer pistol in his right. He fired the pistol six inches from Lincoln and slashed Rathbone's arm with his knife. Booth then vaulted over the front of the President's box, caught his right leg in a flag and landed on the stage, breaking his leg. He waved his dagger and shouted what is reported to be **sic semper tyrannis** — Latin for "thus always to tyrants." Some reported that he said, "The South is



Sic Semper Tyrannis: The motto of the State of Virginia. It is Latin for "Thus Always to Tyrants." John Wilkes Booth shouted it after assassinating President Lincoln.

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avenged." He then ran limping out of the theater, jumped on his horse, and rode off towards Virginia.

The bullet entered Lincoln's head just behind his left ear, tore through his brain and lodged just behind his right eye. The injury was mortal. Lincoln was brought to a boarding house across the street, where he died the next morning. The other targets escaped death. Lewis Powell, one of Booth's accomplices, went to Seward's house, stabbed and seriously wounded the Secretary of State, but Seward survived. Another accomplice, George Atzerodt, could not bring himself to attempt to assassinate Vice President Johnson.

Two weeks later, on April 26, Union cavalry trapped Booth in a Virginia tobacco barn. The soldiers had orders not to shoot and decided to burn him out of the barn. A fire was started. Before Booth could even react, Sergeant Boston Corbett took aim and fatally shot Booth. The dying assassin was dragged to a porch where his last words uttered were, "Useless ... useless!"

A train carried Lincoln's body on a circuitous path back home for burial in Springfield, Illinois. A mourning nation turned out by the hundreds of thousands to bid farewell to their President, the first to fall by an assassin's bullet.

THE LEGACY OF THE CIVIL WAR

The Civil War was the bitterest war in American history by almost any definition. It has been called the "brothers' war," the "War between the States," or the "War of Northern Aggression." Strong feelings about the background, causes, fighting, and meaning of the Civil War continue to this day. For a long time, the number of deaths on both sides in the Civil War was estimated at slightly over 600,000, with another 400,000 suffering grievous wounds. Recently that estimate has been revised upward to 750,000, a figure upon which many preeminent historians now agree. In addition, millions of dollars' worth of property were destroyed, families were disrupted, fortunes were made and lost, and the country that emerged from the war in 1865 was very different from the country that had existed in 1860. Myths about the causes, conduct and results of the war also persist into modern times. It is often difficult to separate the mythological from the factual history of the war, about which much is still being written.

In the immediate aftermath of the war its most serious consequence was undoubtedly the rage that swept across the South, manifesting itself in bitterness and hatred of all things associated with the Union. "Yankee" was a pejorative term, and "damn Yankee" was one of the milder epithets applied to anyone who came from the far side of the Mason-Dixon line. Not only had the South seen a huge portion of its



Watch a reenactment
of Lincoln's
Assassination

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young male population destroyed, along with homesteads, farms, factories and railroads, but after all the sacrifice and suffering that Southerners felt they had to endure, they were back in that hated Union. Furthermore, slavery, which had an indisputable role in secession and thus in the causes of the Civil War itself was as a result of the Thirteenth Amendment decreed to be gone forever.

Abraham Lincoln, considered by many to be America's greatest president, was viewed in the South as an enemy at best, and at worst as a "bloodthirsty **tyrant**." One Virginia woman expressed feelings very common at the end of the Civil War when she wrote in her diary: "I stood in the street in Richmond and watched the Yankees raise the flag over the capitol with tears running down my face, because I could remember a time when I loved that flag, and now I hate the very sight of it!" As Southerners viewed the history of the prewar years, secession and the war itself, they began the process of writing their own history of those terrible events, and came to adopt what is called the "**Lost Cause**," the idea that in the end the South had been right in its desire to govern itself and its "peculiar institution" of slavery. The idea, or as some term it, the myth of the Lost Cause is still present.

Reconstruction, the process of rebuilding the South, would have been difficult under the best of circumstances and with the best of leadership. But Abraham Lincoln, whose attitude toward the South was encapsulated in his Second Inaugural Address "with charity for all and malice toward none" was dead. And Andrew Johnson, a Southerner, was far from the best man for the job. The Republican radicals in the United States Congress, who dominated the government, and whose good intentions may have been heartfelt, nevertheless dictated strict terms under which the South could rejoin the Union, terms that were virtually impossible for the South to swallow without choking on them. Reconstruction was, in the words of one historian, a "states' righter's nightmare."

Naturally the rage and frustration felt by many Southerners needed a target or outlet, and unsurprisingly, that target was the **Freedmen** and women, the former slaves who now walked unfettered in the streets of Charleston, Atlanta, Mobile and New Orleans. Their very presence as free men and women further aggravated feelings of Southerners like salt in a wound, and their wrath was often bloody and violent.

What is called the **Reconstruction** period lasted about a dozen years, but its effects went on for decades, and indeed the legacy of the Civil War and its aftermath, Reconstruction, remain with us to this day. The results of the Civil War included the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments that ended slavery, created national citizenship for the first time, amplified the meaning of the Bill of Rights, and attempted



Tyrant: A terrible leader.



Lost Cause: The idea that the South was right to secede and should have maintained slavery and that the fight for Southern independence should go on.



Freedmen: Former slaves



Reconstruction: The period of time from the end of the Civil War in 1865 until 1877 when the victorious North tried to rebuild the South and deal with the problems the war created, including passing legislation related to former slaves.

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to provide access to the democratic process for all adult male Americans. They were, at least for more than a generation only partially successful at best.

CONCLUSION

At Gettysburg Lincoln said, “that these here dead shall not have died in vain.” But what did all those who perished in the Civil War die for? Did they die to end slavery, or preserve the Union? Was the war a terrible mistake in which millions of men died simply to defend a homeland, no matter what its faults? Was the war a holy crusade to make the world right?

What do you think? What did the war mean?

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SUMMARY

The North and the South both believed their side was fighting for the right cause. Northerners fought the war to preserve the Union, and later to end slavery. Southerners believed they were fighting for freedom from a tyrannical North that was trying to take away their right to govern themselves. Both sides thought god was on their side.

Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation to start the end of slavery. It actually only freed slaves in territory that was actively rebelling, so it did nothing for slaves in the four border states, or in territory that the Union army had already captured. However, it inspired slaves in the South to run away, and gave the North a moral purpose for the war.

Lincoln's Gettysburg Address is remembered as one of the great speeches of American history. In it, he explained how the Civil War was an extension of the Revolution by connecting the present to the work of the Founding Fathers. The phrase "Four score and seven years ago..." refers to the Declaration of Independence.

In his Second Inaugural Address, Lincoln demonstrated his sense of forgiveness and a desire for a generous reconstruction of the South. He described the war as a punishment by god for the evils of slavery, and questioned whether anyone could truly claim to have god on their side.

Lincoln was assassinated two days after Lee surrendered. Instead of restarting the war, as those who conspired to kill him had hoped, it left a dangerous vacuum of leadership. Andrew Johnson, the vice president who took over, was from Tennessee and was hated by the Republicans who dominated Congress. They clashed repeatedly about the proper way to rebuild the South.

The Civil War had an enormous impact on the nation and its history. Never again would any state attempt to leave the Union. Millions of dollars were spent and hundreds of thousands of lives were lost. The war was fought mostly in the South, which was devastated. In contrast, the North grew and the industrial revolution went into overdrive. Most importantly, slavery ended. For the next decade, the North and South argued what the future of the South would look like and what would happen to the new freedmen and women.



PEOPLE

Copperhead Democrats: Sometimes called the Peace Democrats, they were Northerners who wanted to end the war and make a peace treaty that allowed the South to secede.

Freedmen: Former slaves

John Wilkes Booth: An actor from Virginia who assassinated President Lincoln in the vain hope that it might inspire the South to continue fighting.

Orator: A person who gives speeches.

Radical Republicans: Members of the Republican Party who were strong abolitionists.

Thaddeus Stevens: Leader of the Radical Republicans in the House of Representatives.

Tyrant: A terrible leader.



KEY IDEAS

Compensate: To pay for something that is lost or taken away.

Divine Providence: God

Ideology: Beliefs about what is important or true.

Lost Cause: Idea that the South was right to secede and should have maintained slavery and that the fight for Southern independence should go on.

Sic Semper Tyrannis: The motto of the State of Virginia. It is Latin for "Thus Always to Tyrants." John Wilkes Booth shouted it after assassinating President Lincoln.

Writ of Habeas Corpus: A legal term that means "Show me the Body." It means that the government cannot accuse you of a crime and then hold you in jail indefinitely before giving you a trial.



DOCUMENTS

Emancipation Proclamation: President Lincoln's official order freeing all slaves in the rebelling territories (but not in the Border States that had remained in the Union).



SPEECHES

Gettysburg Address: Lincoln's famous speech in 1863 in which he outlined the purpose of the war.

Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address: Lincoln's speech in 1865 in which he outlined his beliefs about the war and his view of Reconstruction.



LOCATIONS

Ford's Theater: The theater in Washington, DC where President Lincoln was assassinated.



EVENTS

Reconstruction: The period of time from the end of the Civil War in 1865 until 1877 when the victorious North tried to rebuild the South and deal with the problems the war created, including passing legislation related to former slaves.

SIXTH QUESTION

6 THE UNION WON THE WAR, BUT WHO WON THE PEACE?

**WAS THE
CIVIL WAR
A RIGHTEOUS JUDGEMENT
FOR AMERICA'S EMBRACE OF
SLAVERY?**

INTRODUCTION

Reconstruction refers to the period following the Civil War of rebuilding the United States. It was a time of great pain and endless questions. On what terms would the Confederacy be allowed back into the Union? Who would establish the terms, Congress or the President? What was to be the place of freed blacks in the South? Did Abolition mean that black men would now enjoy the same status as white men? What was to be done with the Confederate leaders, who were seen as traitors by many in the North?

Although the military conflict had ended, Reconstruction was in many ways still a war. This important struggle was waged by radical northerners who wanted to punish the South and Southerners who desperately wanted to preserve their way of life. Perhaps most of all, Reconstruction was a struggle by former slaves to define a new life as freedmen.

The North won the war. But in the decade after the war ended, these struggles involved a series of political choices, and countless actions taken by White Southerners, Northerners who travelled to the South, and former slaves. Would their efforts bring about a new, more inclusive and just culture in the South? Would freedom for slaves also mean equality? Or, would slavery end but the same social order go on, with a few wealthy White elites controlling the South, while millions of poor Whites and former slaves occupied the very bottom of the social order? After all the suffering of the war, what would be the final outcome?

What do you think? The North won the war, but who won the peace?

NORTHERN ATTITUDES TOWARD RECONSTRUCTION

The North was split on the question of reconstructing the South. Many Northerners favored a speedy reconstruction with a minimum of changes in the South. Other Northerners, many of them former abolitionists, had the rights of the freedmen and women in mind. That faction favored a more rigorous reconstruction process, which would include consideration of the rights of freed African-Americans.

In the North, with the exception of thousands of shattered families, many with wounded veterans back in their midst, there was little to reconstruct, since most of the fighting was done in the South. Northerners buried their dead, cared for the wounded and did their best to get on with their lives. Although it is safe to say that the majority of Northerners were happy to see slavery gone, if for no other reason than the fact that the divisiveness of the issue had poisoned the political scene for decades, it cannot be assumed that the attitudes of Northerners were friendly to the full incorporation of blacks into the national fabric. Most Northerners did not see Blacks as equals and were not excited about the prospect of millions of former slaves moving to the North. On the other hand, most Northerners did expect the South to accept the verdict of the war and to do whatever would be necessary to reconcile themselves to the end of that “peculiar institution” of slavery.



Primary Source: Photograph

A photograph showing the devastation of the South. In this case, the destroyed railroad lines and burned out remains of a building after Sherman and his army passed through the area. This sort of devastation was common across the South.

SOUTHERN ATTITUDES TOWARD RECONSTRUCTION

Many Southerners were enraged at the outcome of the war. Having suffered and bled and died to get out of the Union, they now found themselves back in it. A woman in Richmond wrote in her diary after the hated Yankees raised the American flag over the former

Confederate capitol, "I once loved that flag, but now I hate the very sight of it!" Southerners recognized that they had to bow to the results of their loss, but did so with underlying resentment often bordering on hatred. Much ill feeling toward the North existed among the people who had stayed at home, especially in areas invaded by Sherman and others: wives, widows, orphans and those who had endured incredible hardships were particularly horrified to be back under federal control, ruled by their former enemies.

Many Southern whites, having convinced themselves in the prewar years that Blacks were incapable of running their own lives, were also unable to understand what freedom meant to Blacks. As one former slave expressed it, "Bottom rung on top now, Boss." Many whites were still convinced slavery had been right. In a migration reminiscent of the departure of loyalists after the Revolution, many southerners took their slaves and went to Brazil, where the institution still flourished. Others went west to get as far away from "those damn Yankees" as they could.

THE FREEDMEN AND WOMEN

Many **freedmen**, the name given to former slaves, who had been restricted all their lives had no "where" to go—although they were elated to be free: the great day of jubilation, it was called—but this new state of freedom also caused confusion. Some stayed on old plantations, others wandered off in search of lost family. Many slave owners were glad to get rid of "burdensome slaves" and threw them out "just like Yankee capitalists." Some former slaves, especially in cities like Charleston, celebrated their freedom in ways that whites considered "insolent." They put on fancy clothes, paraded through the streets and showed none of the deferential attitudes that had shown before the war toward their former masters.



Freedmen: Former slaves

While some Freedmen celebrated openly, others, less trusting, approached their new status with caution. As they quickly learned, there was more to being free than just not being owned as a slave. When asked how it felt to be free by a member of an investigating committee, one former slave said, "I don't know." When challenged to explain himself, he said, "I'll be free when I can do anything a white man can do." One does not have to be a historian to know that degree of freedom was a long time coming.

For African Americans, the most important single result of War was freedom—"the great watershed of their lives." Pertinent phrases include: "I feel like a bird out of a cage... Amen... Amen... Amen!" Freedom came "like a blaze of glory." "Freedom burned in the heart long before freedom was born." The search for lost families was "awe inspiring." Some whites claimed that Blacks did not understand

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freedom and were to be "pitied." But Blacks had observed a free society, and they knew it meant an end to injustices against slaves. Blacks in the South also had a workable society of their own including churches, families and in time schools as well. A Black culture already existed, and could be adapted to new conditions of freedom. Blacks also took quickly to politics. As one author has put it, they watched the way their former masters voted and then did the opposite. Remarkably, Southern Blacks exhibited little overt resentment against their former masters, and many adopted a conciliatory attitude. When they got into the legislatures they did not push hard for reform.

Much of the South was physically devastated and demoralized after the war. Railroads and factories had been destroyed, farms had gone unattended, and livestock had been killed or driven off in areas occupied by the Union armies. The former plantation owners still had their land but had lost much if not all of their capital. The former slaves comprised a large and experienced labor force but owned neither land nor capital. Many former slaves believed General Sherman's promise that the federal government was going to supply them with "**forty acres and a mule.**" Sherman, however, had exceeded his authority, and the Constitution inhibited the ability of the government to confiscate private property "without due process of law."

Some sort of system of production had to be worked out, and what evolved was a combination of various plans that on the surface seemed reasonable: sharecropping, tenant farming and the crop lien system. **Sharecropping** meant that those working the land would share the profits from their crop sales with landowners and **tenant farmers** simply rented the land. Both systems had as their basis a bargain between laborers and the land owners. Each system was potentially beneficial to both parties, but each also contained the possibility of exploitation and fraud, as was shown in practice. Even poor whites became sharecroppers or tenant farmers, so there was nothing inherently discriminatory in any approach. In fact, by 1880 a significant portion of the former slaves had become landowners, and despite exploitation and abuses, the system brought a moderate amount of cooperative self-reliance to the parties involved. Nevertheless, many former slaves still found themselves caught in a system that offered few rewards beyond mere subsistence.

PRESIDENTIAL RECONSTRUCTION

All of these concerns, and the economic devastation of the South were issues that politicians in Washington, DC had to grapple with. In 1864, Republican Abraham Lincoln had chosen **Andrew Johnson**, a Democratic senator from Tennessee, as his Vice Presidential



Forty Acres and a Mule: This is what General Sherman promised all freed slaves. Since he had no power to seize property to give to the slaves, he wasn't able to fulfill his promise.



Share Cropping: When farm workers use land that belongs to someone else and pay by sharing some of what they grow.



Tenant Farmer: When farmers pay to live and grow food on someone else's land.



Andrew Johnson: Vice President who became President when Lincoln was assassinated. He was from Tennessee and tried to carry out Lincoln's vision for a forgiving Reconstruction. He was opposed by the Radical

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candidate. Lincoln was looking for Southern support and hoped that by selecting Johnson he would appeal to Southerners who never wanted to leave the Union. Johnson was different from the slave owning elites of the South who had led the Confederacy into secession and war. Johnson, like Lincoln, had grown up in poverty and never owned slaves. He did not learn to write until he was 20 years old. He came to political power as a backer of the small farmer. In speeches, he railed against "slaveocracy" and a bloated "Southern aristocracy" that had little use for the white working man.

The views of the Vice President rarely matter too much, unless something happens to the President. Following Lincoln's assassination, Johnson's views now mattered a great deal. Would he follow Lincoln's moderate approach to reconciliation? Would he support limited black suffrage as Lincoln did? Would he follow the Radical Republicans and be harsh and punitive toward the South?

For the first few years after the war ended, Reconstruction followed was led by Johnson. Historians have called this period **Presidential Reconstruction**. Johnson believed the Southern states should decide the course that was best for them. He also felt that African-Americans were unable to manage their own lives. He certainly did not think that African-Americans deserved to vote. At one point in 1866 he told a group of blacks visiting the White House that they should immigrate to another country.

He also gave **amnesty** and **pardon**. He returned all property, except, of course, their slaves, to former Confederates who pledged loyalty to the Union and agreed to support the Thirteenth Amendment. Confederate officials and owners of large taxable estates were required to apply individually for a Presidential pardon. Many former Confederate leaders were soon returned to power. Johnson's vision of Reconstruction had proved remarkably lenient. Very few Confederate leaders were persecuted. By 1866, 7,000 Presidential pardons had been granted.

RADICAL RECONSTRUCTION

While President Johnson sought a gentle, and forgiving Reconstruction, there were Republicans in Congress who were horrified at his approach. These men, dubbed the **Radical Republicans** believed blacks were entitled to the same political rights and opportunities as whites. They also believed that the Confederate leaders should be punished for their roles in the Civil War. Leaders like Pennsylvania Representative **Thaddeus Stevens** and Massachusetts Senator **Charles Sumner** vigorously opposed Andrew Johnson's lenient policies and great political battle ensued.

Republicans in Congress, impeached but not convicted, and was ineffective.



Presidential Reconstruction: The period immediately after the Civil War ended when reconstruction was based on Lincoln and especially President Andrew Johnson's lenient and forgiving policies.



Amnesty: A general forgiving of crimes for an entire group of people. After the war, former Confederate soldiers were given amnesty from prosecution for treason.



Pardon: When a president or governor forgives a particular person's crime.



Radical Republicans: Members of the Republican Party who were strong abolitionists and wanted to punish the South.



Thaddeus Stevens: Leader of the Radical Republicans in the House of Representatives.



Charles Sumner: Leader of the Radical Republicans in the Senate.

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Americans had long been suspicious of the federal government playing too large a role in the affairs of states. But the Radicals felt that extraordinary times called for direct intervention in state affairs and laws designed to protect the emancipated blacks. At the heart of their beliefs was the notion that blacks must be given a chance to compete in a free-labor economy. In 1866, this activist Congress also introduced a bill to extend the life of the **Freedmen's Bureau** and began work on a **Civil Rights Bill**.

President Johnson stood in opposition. He vetoed the Freedmen's Bureau Bill, claiming that it would bloat the size of government. He vetoed the Civil Rights Bill rejecting that blacks have the "same rights of property and person" as whites.

The Radical Republicans in Congress grew impatient with President Johnson and began overriding his vetoes. As they grew in political power, they took over the role of leading Reconstruction. This later period has come to be known as Congressional, or **Radical Reconstruction**.



Civil Rights Bill of 1866: The first major law passed after the Civil War to provide basic rights to all African Americans.



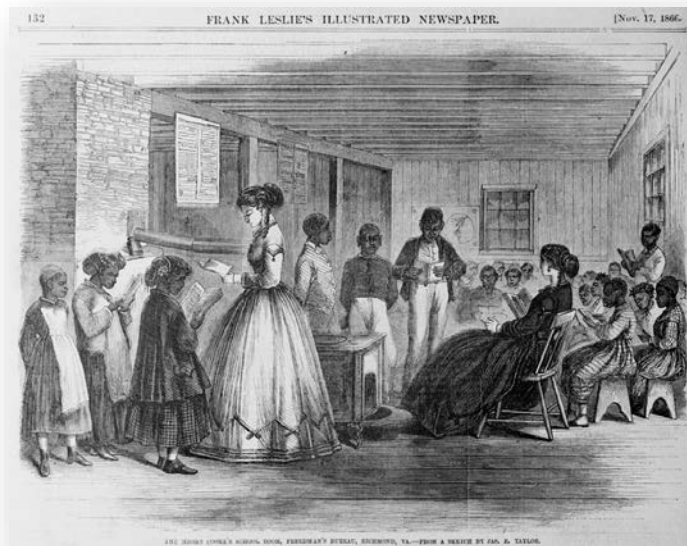
Freedmen's Bureau: The government organization created to help former slaves transition to free life after the war. They are especially remembered for setting up and running schools.



Radical Reconstruction: The later period of reconstruction which was led by the Radical Republicans in Congress rather than by President Andrew Johnson.

Primary Source: Illustration

An illustration of "The Misses Cooke's school room," one of many schools operated the South by the Freedman's Bureau. This illustration appeared in Frank Leslie's illustrated newspaper, 1866.



IMPEACHMENT

Impeachment refers to the process specified in the Constitution for trial and removal from office of any federal official accused of misconduct. It has two stages. The House of Representatives charges the official with articles of impeachment. "Treason, bribery, or other high crimes and misdemeanors" are defined by the Constitution as



Impeachment: A legal process for removing a president or other elected official because of a crime they have committed.

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impeachable offenses. Once charged by the House, the case goes before the Senate for a trial.

In the spring of 1868, Andrew Johnson became the first President to be impeached. The heavily Republican House of Representatives brought 11 articles of impeachment against Johnson. Many insiders knew that the Congress was looking for any excuse to rid themselves of an uncooperative President.

The case against Johnson involved appointed officials and the president's authority to fire officials who had been approved by the Senate. The affair was clearly a fight for power between Congress and the President, and when Johnson asked for the resignation of Radical Republicans in his Cabinet, it gave his opponents in Congress an excuse to impeach him. Johnson's defense was simple: only a clear violation of the law warranted his removal. But as with politics, things are rarely simple. One problem was that since Johnson had become president when Lincoln was assassinated, there was no new Vice President to take over.

Eventually, in May of 1868, 35 Senators voted to convict, one vote short of the required 2/3 majority. Seven Republican Senators jumped party lines and found Johnson not guilty. Johnson dodged a bullet and was able to serve out his term. It would be 130 years before another President — Bill Clinton — would be impeached.

THREE AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

Of all of the laws passed during Reconstruction, and all of the political fighting between Congress, the President, and Whites in the South, by far the most important and longest lasting effect was the passage of three amendments to the Constitution.

When President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, he was concerned that the measure might be unconstitutional. Congressional Republicans shared the president's concerns, in that the proclamation was a war measure and might be invalid once the war was over. At Lincoln's urging, Congress passed the **Thirteenth Amendment** in 1864. It read, "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." Lincoln made passage and ratification of the amendment to abolish slavery a campaign issue in the election of 1864 and it was ratified by the requisite number of states in December, 1865.



Thirteenth Amendment: The amendment to the Constitution ratified in 1864 that ended slavery.

In March 1865, Congress passed the Trumbull Civil Rights Act, which was designed to counter the Supreme Court decision in the Dred



Fourteenth Amendment: The amendment to the Constitution ratified in 1865 that gave

Scott case by granting blacks citizenship. The act affirmed the right of freedmen to make contracts, sue, give evidence and to buy, lease and convey personal and real property. The act excluded state statutes on segregation, but did not provide for public accommodations for blacks. Johnson again vetoed the bill on constitutional grounds and also on the grounds that Southern Congressmen had been absent. Again, he was overridden. Johnson's vetoes infuriated the Radical Republicans in congress. In June they passed the **Fourteenth Amendment** because they feared that the Trumbull Civil Rights Act might be declared unconstitutional. The Amendment states, "All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the state wherein they reside. No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."

Ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment was eventually made a condition for states to be readmitted to the Union. The radicals continued to uphold their exclusion of Southern Congressmen on grounds that by excluding blacks from the political process. Every Southern state legislature except that of Tennessee refused to ratify the Fourteenth Amendment. Instead, they persisted in applying Black Codes to the freedmen and denying them voting and other rights.

In 1869 Congress passed the **Fifteenth Amendment** to the Constitution, which stated that, "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude." The amendment was finally ratified in 1870, and well over half a million black names were added to the voter rolls during the 1870s.

Although the Fifteenth Amendment was meant to ensure voting rights for all males, over time, devices such as **poll taxes** and **literacy tests** were implemented by White southern leaders to subvert the purpose of the amendment. Poll taxes had to be paid two years in advance, and the financial burden was stiff for blacks. (Poor whites could procure election "loans" to enable them to vote.) Literacy tests were used to restrict blacks, and alternatives such as passing a test on the Constitution were often rigged in favor of whites. By the turn of the century, as a result of such things as amended state constitutions, **grandfather clauses** and gerrymandering, black voting in the South had been reduced to a fraction of its former numbers. By 1910 few blacks could vote in parts of the South; thus, a vast contrast existed between the earlier goals of the abolitionists and the reality of

citizenship to anyone born in the United States, effectively making former slaves citizens.



race.

Fifteenth Amendment: The amendment to the Constitution ratified in 1869 that guaranteed the right all men regardless of



voting.

Poll Tax: A tax a person has to pay in order to vote. It effectively prevents poor people, especially aimed at African Americans, from



could not vote.

Literacy Test: A test that a person had to pass in order to vote. White officials were able to manipulate the results so that



could not vote.

Grandfather Clause: A rule that stated that if a person's grandfather had voted, they could also. This was a way to allow poor and illiterate Whites who could not pay poll taxes or pass literacy tests to vote while preventing the descendants of former slaves from voting.

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everyday life for freedmen in the South. This condition persisted until the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s.

VIOLENT OPPOSITION TO RECONSTRUCTION

The changes brought about the Reconstruction, whether led by President Johnson or by the Radical Republicans in Congress, were not met with jubilation by Whites in the South.

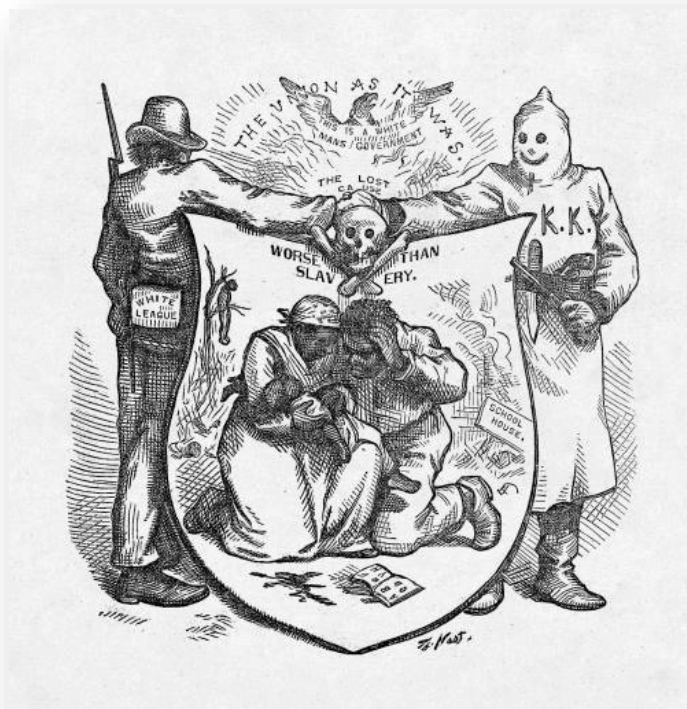
In the months following the end of the Civil War many whites carried out acts of random violence against blacks. In their frustration at having lost the war and suffered great loss of life and property, they made the former slaves scapegoats for what they had endured. The violence became more focused when the **Ku Klux Klan** was founded in December, 1865. The Klan and other white supremacy groups, such as the Knights of the White Camellia, the Red Shirts and the White League, were well underway by 1867. The target of the Klan was the Republican Party, both blacks and whites, as well as anyone who overtly assisted blacks in their quest for greater freedom and economic independence.



Ku Klux Klan: A White terrorist organization that was formed immediately after the Civil War to counter Northern reconstruction efforts. They attacked African Americans and Republicans. They began to die out as Reconstruction ended, but later became popular again in the 1920s and were an important political force through the 1960s.

Primary Source: Editorial Cartoon

An illustration from Harper's Weekly in 1874. The "supporters" are a member of the White League and a hooded Ku Klux Klansman, shaking hands on the "Lost Cause".



The result was what can only be called a reign of terror conducted by the Klan and other groups over the following decades. Thousands were killed, injured or driven from their homes or suffered property damage as buildings were burned and farm animals destroyed. Blacks



Carpentbaggers: A nickname for people from the North who came to the South after the war to help with Reconstruction. The name comes from the thick fabric suitcases they carried. In the South, "carpenterbag" is an insult

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who tried to further the cause of the Republican Party were singled out for attack, as were whites who, for example, rented rooms to northern **carpetbaggers**, including school teachers. Black men were beaten or lynched in front of horrified family members. The fear of night riders often drove blacks into the woods to sleep because they felt they were not safe in their own homes.

Former Confederate general Nathan Bedford Forrest, reported to be the first Grand Wizard of the Klan, formally disbanded the KKK in 1868 because of increasing violence. Nevertheless, the group continued to exist and to wreak vengeance upon freedmen and their white supporters. Eventually the Congress passed the **Lodge Force Bills** in 1870 and 1871 to control the violence and protect blacks from being deprived of their civil and political, but enforcement of those acts was often lax, and other means of intimidation often proved effective.

Despite efforts to control the violence, **lynching** in the South remained common throughout the 19th and into the 20th century. They were performed in public to further intimidate blacks, who realized that they remained vulnerable, and that the perpetrators would not be punished by a judicial system controlled by Whites, even though it was obvious who the guilty parties were. Almost any action deemed unacceptable by whites could lead to a lynching, including looking too closely at a white woman, talking disrespectfully to whites or simply being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

THE COMPROMISE OF 1877

By 1876 many people both North and South had grown tired of reconstruction and wanted to forget the Civil War altogether. It had become apparent that the problems of the South could not be resolved by tough federal legislation, no matter how well intended. The country had undergone a long-lasting financial recession beginning in 1873; the Indian Wars were in full swing in the West; the first transcontinental railroad had been completed in 1869, but labor discontent was rising; and immigrants were pouring into the country at an ever-increasing rate. Thus the problems of the South had become something of a distraction. Social equality for Blacks was nonexistent and Congress was losing focus on the issue.

In May 1872, Congress passed a general **Amnesty Act**, which restored political rights to most remaining confederates. The Democratic Party was restored to control in many Southern states, and black voting rights began to be curtailed.

The election of 1876 was the vehicle by which Reconstruction was finally ended. The candidates were former Union General **Rutherford B. Hayes** of Ohio, Republican, and New York Democratic Governor **Samuel Tilden**. The campaign was filled with corruption. White

since it refers to an outsider who shows up and tries to tell you how you should live.



Lodge Force Bills: Proposed by Henry Cabot Lodge, these laws provided federal overseers to make sure that African Americans could vote. Later, however, they were rescinded and the Jim Crow system was put into effect.



Lynch: To hang a person without a trial. Lynching was used by the KKK and other White terrorist groups to intimidate African Americans.



Amnesty Act: A law that gave political, especially voting rights back to former Confederate soldiers.



Rutherford B. Hayes: Republican who became president in 1877.

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supremacy groups helped spread pro-Democratic propaganda throughout the South. As the campaign drew to a close, Tilden was regarded as the favorite, and on the final night of voting, even Hayes believed that he had lost as he retired for the night. It soon became apparent, however, that the results were unclear.

To this day it is not certain who really won. When the electoral votes had been counted, the election returns in three Southern states - South Carolina, Florida and Louisiana - were in question. Charges arose that the election had been stolen in those three states. The apparent results gave those three states to Hayes, which meant that he would have won in the Electoral College by one vote; but if any of those results were overturned, Tilden would have become the victor. The question was: how could the conflict be resolved?

Congress formed a committee to decide what to do. Originally there were supposed to be seven republicans, seven democrats and one independent on the committee, but the independent was deemed ineligible and was replaced by a republican. When the returns in the three states in question were examined, the committee decided to accept the results as presented to Congress, in each case by a vote of 8 to 7. Thus all three states were given over to Hayes.

Democrats in Congress threatened to refuse to accept the committee's recommendations which would have thrown the nation into turmoil, with no new president to take office. Behind closed doors, in smoke-filled rooms, the **Compromise of 1877** was hatched. In return for allowing Hayes to take office as president, the Democrats exacted three promises. First, Reconstruction would be ended and all federal troops would be removed from the South. Second, the South would get a cabinet position in Hayes's government. Third, money for internal improvements would be provided by the federal government for use in the South.

The irony is that President Hayes probably already planned to do those things, but the Compromise of 1877 was accepted. In April of that year federal troops marched out of the South, turning the freedmen over, as Frederick Douglass put it, to the "rage of our infuriated former masters."

THE REDEEMERS

Historian Page Smith writes that the Compromise of 1877 which ended Reconstruction "was also a death sentence for the hopes of southern blacks." Feeling that the North under the radical Republicans in Congress had sought to impose "black rule" on the South. White Southerners set about restoring white supremacy. Their assault on Black rights proceeded on both political and economic ground. Once federal troops left the South, all the



Samuel Tilden: Democratic Governor of New York. He ran for president in 1876 but lost but did not win as a result of the Compromise of 1877.



Compromise of 1877: A deal struck between Republicans and Democrats after the close and contested presidential election between Rutherford B. Hayes and Samuel Tilden. Democrats allowed Hayes to become president in return for the end of Reconstruction and the removal of federal troops from the South.



Redeemers: White Democrats in the South who made it was their mission to restore as much of the antebellum social order as possible, including eliminating voting and civil rights for African Americans and establishing the Jim Crow system of segregation.

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advances that had been made for black people during the reconstruction period slowly began to unravel. The Southern governments that took over were dominated by conservative Democrats known as “**Redeemers**.” Their purpose was to disenfranchise Republicans, black or white, and restore what they viewed as the proper order of things, namely, a society based on white supremacy. The Republican Party soon ceased to exist as a viable political force in the former Confederate states, and Democrats ruled the South for over one hundred years.



Secondary Source: Statue

The Robert E. Lee Monument in Richmond, Virginia. Completed in 1890, the monument was created by French sculptor Antonin Mercié. Across the South, the many monuments to Confederates like this one serve as a reminder to everyone, especially African Americans, that the “Lost Cause” is still a potent idea.

All across the South, Blacks who attempted to exercise their electoral franchise were harassed, intimidated, and even killed to prevent them from voting. Resolutions were passed by groups of white citizens, and editorials appeared in newspapers claiming that Blacks should be excluded from voting because of their political incompetence. Some southern leaders took pride in their attempts to prevent Blacks from voting. One South Carolina leader even bragged of having shot blacks for attempting to vote. Black leaders courageous enough to fight the tide of discrimination were unable even through eloquent pleas for fairness to effect a change in the growing attitude of political discrimination.

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As for social equality, during the last quarter of the 19th century, the Southern states passed many “**Jim Crow**” laws that resulted in segregated public schools and limited black access to public facilities, such as parks, restaurants and hotels. Segregation in the South soon spread to virtually all public entities. As a Richmond Times editorial stated, “God Almighty drew the color line and it cannot be obliterated. The Negro must stay on his side of the line, and the white man on his.” Although African Americans struggled against that imposition of that line for generations, it was not until the great Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s - 100 years after the Civil War - that meaningful progress was made to ensure that Blacks really enjoyed the promises of Reconstruction.



Jim Crow: The nickname for a system of laws that enforced segregation. For example, African Americans had separate schools, rode in the backs of busses, could not drink from White drinking fountains, and could not eat in restaurants or stay in hotels, etc.

CONCLUSION

Reconstruction came to a close in 1877 and the nation as a whole tried to move on from the long agony of the Civil War. A great deal had changed, but many things had not. In the South a system of segregation enforced by Jim Crow laws replaced slavery. Three amendments to the Constitution had been added, but the promises they made to former slaves were not a reality for many. Women especially were disappointed that the Fifteenth Amendment gave voting rights only men of all races.

After so much bloodshed, before, during, and after the Civil War, we would like to be able to assign winners and losers. Battlefield victors are easy to name. After all, Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox. But winning battles and achieving long-term goals are different things entirely. The North defeated the Confederate armies, but did they get what they really wanted? The South lost on the battlefield, but did their worldview win out in the long run?

What do you think? The North won the war, but who won the peace?

SUMMARY

After the war, Northerners got on with their lives. There was little evidence in the North that the war had even happened. In the South, most cities had been destroyed. Southerners were surrounded by newly freed former slaves. Reconstruction was very difficult for the South.

African Americans celebrated the end of the Civil War, but faced hardship. Many began looking for lost loved ones. Some hoped to have simple things such as a little land to live on. During the war General Sherman had promised “forty acres and a mule” but this did not happen. Most became share croppers, working land they did as slaves and giving a portion of their harvests as rent. Others worked

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someone else's land and paid rent. This new system was only a small step above slavery.

Leaders in the North had different ideas about the proper way to rebuild the South. Lincoln and Andrew Johnson, the new president, wanted to quickly bring the South back into the Union and forgive Southerners who had fought for the Confederacy. He pardoned Southern leaders and returned their property, with the exception of their slaves.

Radical Republicans in Congress wanted to punish Southern leaders and do more to change the social order of the South. They promoted African Americans and spent money to open schools to teach freedmen. They impeached President Johnson when he tried to stop them. He kept his job by one vote, but leadership of Reconstruction switched from the White House to Congress.

Three amendments to the Constitution resulted from the Civil War. The 13th Amendment ended slavery. The 14th Amendment gave citizenship to anyone born in the United States. The 15th Amendment gave all men the right to vote.

Despite these legal gains for African Americans, White southern leaders retook control of their states. They passed laws such as poll taxes and literacy tests. Terrorists groups such as the KKK effectively stopped African Americans from exercising their new freedoms. Reconstruction ended in 1877 when Republicans and Democrats compromised. Hayes was elected president as a Republican and northern troops left the South. Without the army to enforce the ideas of the Radical Republicans, White southern leaders reasserted control and implement the Jim Crow system of segregation. Over time, Redeemers worked to change the meaning of the war. They deemphasized slavery and promoted the idea that Southerners were fighting for freedom. The South may have lost the war, but they won the peace.

In the decades after the Civil War, the industrial revolution exploded in the North. This period saw a rise in consolidation and the development of monopolies dominated by extraordinarily wealthy industrialists.



PEOPLE

Andrew Johnson: Vice President who became President when Lincoln was assassinated. He was from Tennessee and tried to carry out Lincoln's vision for a forgiving Reconstruction. He was opposed by the Radical Republicans in Congress, impeached but not convicted, and was ineffective.

Carpetbaggers: A nickname for people from the North who came to the South after the war to help with Reconstruction. The name comes from the thick fabric suitcases they carried. In the South, "carpetbagger" is an insult since it refers to an outsider who shows up and tries to tell you how you should live.

Charles Sumner: Leader of the Radical Republicans in the Senate.

Freedmen: Former slaves

Freedmen's Bureau: The government organization created to help former slaves transition to free life after the war. They are especially remembered for setting up and running schools.

Ku Klux Klan: A White terrorist organization that was formed immediately after the Civil War to counter Northern reconstruction efforts. They attacked African Americans and Republicans. They began to die out as Reconstruction ended, but later became popular again in the 1920s and were an important political force through the 1960s.

Radical Republicans: Members of the Republican Party who were strong abolitionists and wanted to punish the South.

Redeemers: White Democrats in the South who made it was their mission to restore as much of the antebellum social order as possible, including eliminating voting and civil rights for African Americans and establishing the Jim Crow system of segregation.

Rutherford B. Hayes: Republican who became president in 1877.

Samuel Tilden: Democratic Governor of New York. He ran for president in 1876 but lost but did not win as a result of the Compromise of 1877.

Tenant Farmer: When farmers pay to live and grow food on someone else's land.

Thaddeus Stevens: Leader of the Radical Republicans in the House of Representatives.



KEY IDEAS

Amnesty: A general forgiving of crimes for an entire group of people. After the war, former Confederate soldiers were given amnesty from prosecution for treason.

Forty Acres and a Mule: This is what General Sherman promised all freed slaves. Since he had no power to seize property to give to the slaves, he wasn't able to fulfill his promise.

Grandfather Clause: A rule that stated that if a person's grandfather had voted, they could also. This was a way to allow poor and illiterate Whites who could not pay poll taxes or pass literacy tests to vote while preventing the descendants of former slaves from voting.

Impeachment: A legal process for removing a president or other elected official because of a crime they have committed.

Literacy Test: A test that a person had to pass in order to vote. White officials were able to manipulate the results so that African Americans didn't pass the tests and therefore could not vote.

Lynch: To hang a person without a trial. Lynching was used by the KKK and other White terrorist groups to intimidate African Americans.

Pardon: When a president or governor forgives a particular person's crime.

Poll Tax: A tax a person has to pay in order to vote. It effectively prevents poor people, especially aimed at African Americans, from voting.

Share Cropping: When farm workers use land that belongs to someone else and pay by sharing some of what they grow.



EVENTS

Presidential Reconstruction: The period immediately after the Civil War ended when reconstruction was based on Lincoln and especially President Andrew Johnson's lenient and forgiving policies.

Radical Reconstruction: The later period of reconstruction which was led by the Radical Republicans in Congress rather than by President Andrew Johnson.



LAWS

Amnesty Act: A law that gave political, especially voting rights back to former Confederate soldiers.

Civil Rights Bill of 1866: The first major law passed after the Civil War to provide basic rights to all African Americans.

Compromise of 1877: A deal struck between Republicans and Democrats after the close and contested presidential election between Rutherford B. Hayes and Samuel Tilden. Democrats allowed Hayes to become president in return for the end of Reconstruction and the removal of federal troops from the South.

Thirteenth Amendment: The amendment to the Constitution ratified in 1864 that ended slavery.

Fourteenth Amendment: The amendment to the Constitution ratified in 1865 that gave citizenship to anyone born in the United States, effectively making former slaves citizens.

Fifteenth Amendment: The amendment to the Constitution ratified in 1869 that guaranteed the right all men regardless of race.

Jim Crow: The nickname for a system of laws that enforced segregation. For example, African Americans had separate schools, rode in the backs of busses, could not drink from White drinking fountains, and could not eat in restaurants or stay in hotels, etc.

Lodge Force Bills: Proposed by Henry Cabot Lodge, these laws provided federal overseers to make sure that African Americans could vote. Later, however, they were rescinded and the Jim Crow system was put into effect.

Q U E S T I O N E I G H T

W A S T H E C I V I L W A R

A R I G H T E O U S J U D G E M E N T F O R A M E R I C A ' S E M B R A C E O F S L A V E R Y ?

So there it is, the story of the struggle by millions of Americans to deal with the questions of slavery and secession. In the end, our leaders failed to preserve the peace, we fought our bloodiest war, which the North won, thus ending slavery and preserving the Union.

However, as you now know, the war, for all the changes that it caused, did not entirely remake the segregated social order of the South or bring real equality between the races. Since, as many historians have argued, the North may have won the war but the South seemed to win the peace.

Slavery was indeed terrible, for both the slaves, and Whites who were stained by the terrible thing that they were doing. White Americans may have grown wealthy by the toil of millions of slaves, but in the end, there was a price to pay.

That price, President Lincoln argued, was the devastation and heartache of war. He believed in a just God who let the war come as a righteous punishment for slavery.

What do you think? Was the Civil War a righteous judgement for America's embrace of slavery?



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