

# 14

## CHAPTER

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What a scene it was," Union soldier Elisha Hunt Rhodes wrote in his diary at Gettysburg in July 1863. "Oh the dead and the dying on this bloody field." Thousands of men had already died, and the slaughter would continue for two more years. "Why is it that 200,000 men of one blood and tongue . . . [are] seeking one another's lives?" asked Confederate lieutenant R. M. Collins as another gruesome battle ended. "We could settle our differences by compromising and all be at home in ten days." But there was no compromise. "God wills this contest, and wills that it shall not yet end," President Abraham Lincoln reflected. "The Almighty has His own purposes."

While the reasons for the war are complex, racial slavery played a primary role. To southern whites, the Republican victory in 1860 presented an immediate danger to the slave-owning republic that had existed since 1776. "[O]ur struggle is for inherited rights," declared one southern leader. Southerners did not believe Lincoln when he promised not "directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the States where it exists." Soon, a southern senator warned, "cohorts of Federal officeholders, Abolitionists, may be sent into [our] midst" to encourage slave revolts and, even worse, racial mixture. By *racial mixture*, white southerners meant sexual relations between black men and white women, given that white masters had already fathered untold thousands of children by their enslaved black women. "Better, far better! [to] endure all horrors of civil war," insisted a Confederate recruit, "than to see the dusky sons of Ham leading the fair daughters of the South to the altar." To preserve black subordination and white supremacy, radical southerners chose the dangerous enterprise of secession.

Lincoln and the North would not let them go in peace. Living in a world still ruled by monarchies, northern leaders believed that the collapse of the American Union might forever destroy the possibility of democratic republican governments. "We cannot escape history," Lincoln eloquently declared. "We shall nobly save, or meanly lose, the last best hope of earth."

And so came the conflict. Called the War Between the States by southerners and the War of the Rebellion by northerners, the struggle finally resolved the great issues of the Union and slavery. The costs were terrible: more American lives lost than the combined total for all the nation's other wars, and a century-long legacy of bitterness between the triumphant North and the vanquished white South.

### IDENTIFY THE BIG IDEA

How did the military and political goals of the war bring significant changes to social, economic, and cultural life?



**Fields of Death** Fought with mass armies and new weapons, the Civil War took a huge toll in human lives, as evidenced by this grisly photograph of a small section of the battlefield at Antietam, Maryland. The most costly single-day battle in American history, it left 22,700 dead, wounded, and missing Confederate and Union soldiers. After the equally bloody three-day battle at Shiloh, Tennessee, in April 1862, General Ulysses Grant surveyed a field "so covered with dead that it would have been possible to walk . . . in any direction, stepping on dead bodies, without a foot touching the ground." *Library of Congress.*

## Secession and Military Stalemate, 1861–1862

Following Lincoln's election in November 1860, secessionist fervor swept through the Deep South. Veteran party leaders in Washington still hoped to save the Union. In the four months between Lincoln's election and his inauguration on March 4, 1861, they sought a new compromise.

### The Secession Crisis

The Union collapsed first in South Carolina, the home of John C. Calhoun, nullification, and southern rights. Robert Barnwell Rhett and other fire-eaters had demanded secession since the Compromise of 1850, and their goal was now within reach. "Our enemies are about to take possession of the Government," warned one South Carolinian. Frightened by that prospect, a state convention voted unanimously on December 20, 1860, to dissolve "the union now subsisting between South Carolina and other States."

**The Lower South Secedes** Fire-eaters elsewhere in the Deep South quickly called similar conventions and organized mobs to attack local Union supporters. In early January, white Mississippians joyously enacted a secession ordinance, and Florida, Alabama, Georgia, and Louisiana quickly followed. Texans soon joined them, ousting Unionist governor Sam Houston and ignoring his warning that "the North . . . will overwhelm the South" (Map 14.1). In February, the jubilant secessionists met in Montgomery, Alabama, to proclaim a new nation: the Confederate States of America. Adopting a provisional constitution, the delegates named Mississippian Jefferson Davis, a former U.S. senator and secretary of war, as the Confederacy's president and Georgia congressman Alexander Stephens as vice president.

Secessionist fervor was less intense in the four states of the Middle South (Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Arkansas), where there were fewer slaves. White opinion was especially divided in the four border slave states (Maryland, Delaware, Kentucky, and Missouri), where yeomen farmers held greater political power and, from bitter experience as well as the writings of journalist Hilton Helper, knew that all too often "the slaveholders . . . have hoodwinked you." Reflecting such sentiments, the legislatures of Virginia and Tennessee refused to join the secessionist movement and urged a compromise.

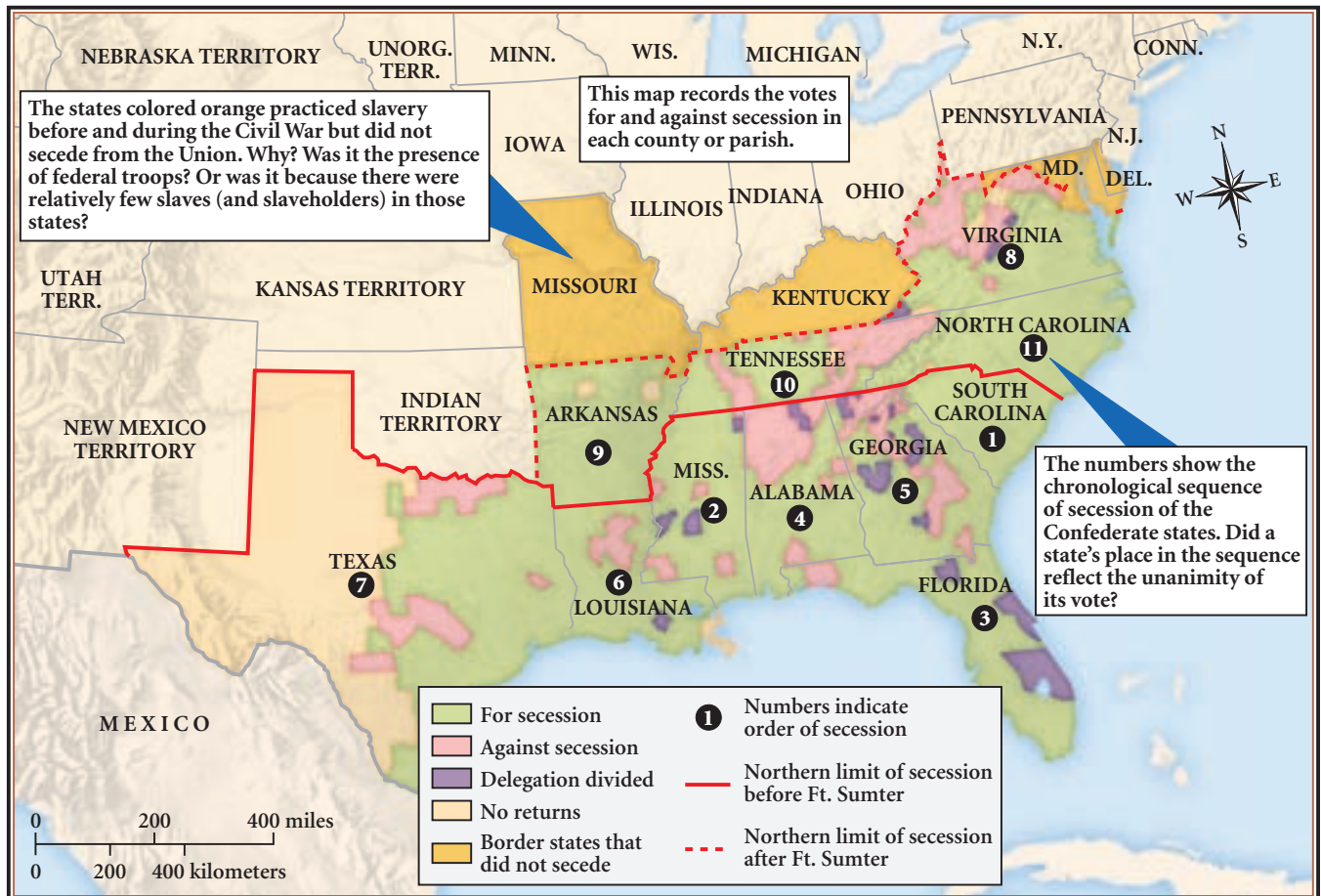


### Alabama Secession Flag

In January 1861, a Secession Convention in Alabama voted to leave the Union and marked their decision for independence by designating this pennant—created by a group of Montgomery women—as their official flag. Like John Gast's *American Progress* (p. 411), the Goddess of Liberty forms the central image. Here she holds a sword and a flag with a single star, symbolizing Alabama's new status as an independent republic. Alabama Department of Archives and History.

Meanwhile, the Union government floundered. President Buchanan declared secession illegal but—in line with his states' rights outlook—claimed that the federal government lacked authority to restore the Union by force. Buchanan's timidity prompted South Carolina's new government to demand the surrender of Fort Sumter (a federal garrison in Charleston Harbor) and to cut off its supplies. The president again backed down, refusing to use the navy to supply the fort.

**The Crittenden Compromise** Instead, the outgoing president urged Congress to find a compromise. The plan proposed by Senator John J. Crittenden of Kentucky received the most support. The **Crittenden Compromise** had two parts. The first, which Congress approved, called for a constitutional amendment to protect slavery from federal interference in any state where it already existed. Crittenden's second provision called for the westward extension of the Missouri Compromise line (36°30' north latitude) to the California border. The provision would ban slavery north of the line and allow bound labor to the south, including any territories "hereafter acquired," raising the prospect of expansion into Cuba or Central America. Congressional Republicans rejected Crittenden's second proposal on strict instructions from president-elect Lincoln. With good reason, Lincoln feared it

**MAP 14.1****The Process of Secession, 1860–1861**

The states of the Lower South had the highest concentration of slaves, and they led the secessionist movement. After the attack on Fort Sumter in April 1861, the states of the Upper South joined the Confederacy. Yeomen farmers in Tennessee and the backcountry of Alabama, Georgia, and Virginia opposed secession but, except in the future state of West Virginia, initially rallied to the Confederate cause. Consequently, the South entered the Civil War with its white population relatively united.

would unleash new imperialist adventures. “I want Cuba,” Senator Albert G. Brown of Mississippi had candidly stated in 1858. “I want Tamaulipas, Potosi, and one or two other Mexican States . . . for the planting or spreading of slavery.” In 1787, 1821, and 1850, the North and South had resolved their differences over slavery. In 1861, there would be no compromise.

In his March 1861 inaugural address, Lincoln carefully outlined his positions. He promised to safeguard slavery where it existed but vowed to prevent its expansion. Equally important, the Republican president declared that the Union was “perpetual”; consequently, the secession of the Confederate states was illegal. Lincoln asserted his intention to “hold, occupy, and possess” federal property in the seceded states and “to

collect duties and imposts” there. If military force was necessary to preserve the Union, Lincoln—like Democrat Andrew Jackson during the nullification crisis—would use it. The choice was the South’s: Return to the Union, or face war.

### The Upper South Chooses Sides

The South’s decision came quickly. When Lincoln dispatched an unarmed ship to resupply Fort Sumter, Jefferson Davis and his associates in the Provisional Government of the Confederate States decided to seize the fort. The Confederate forces opened fire on April 12, with ardent fire-eater Edmund Ruffin supposedly firing the first cannon. Two days later, the Union

**PLACE EVENTS  
IN CONTEXT**

How important was the conflict at Fort Sumter, and would the Confederacy—or the Union—have gone to war without it?

defenders capitulated. On April 15, Lincoln called 75,000 state militiamen into federal service for ninety days to put down an insurrection “too powerful to be suppressed by the ordinary course of judicial proceedings.”

Northerners responded to Lincoln’s call to arms with wild enthusiasm. Asked to provide thirteen regiments of volunteers, Republican governor William Dennison of Ohio sent twenty. Many northern Democrats also lent their support. “Every man must be for the United States or against it,” Democratic leader Stephen Douglas declared. “There can be no neutrals in this war, only patriots—or traitors.” How then could the Democratic Party function as a “loyal opposition,” supporting the Union while challenging certain Republican policies? It would not be an easy task.

Whites in the Middle and Border South now had to choose between the Union and the Confederacy, and their decision was crucial. Those eight states accounted for two-thirds of the whites in the slaveholding states, three-fourths of their industrial production, and well over half of their food. They were home to many of the nation’s best military leaders, including Colonel Robert E. Lee of Virginia, a career officer whom veteran General Winfield Scott recommended to Lincoln to lead the new Union army. Those states were also geographically strategic. Kentucky, with its 500-mile border on the Ohio River, was essential to the movement of troops and supplies. Maryland was vital to the Union’s security because it bordered the nation’s capital on three sides.

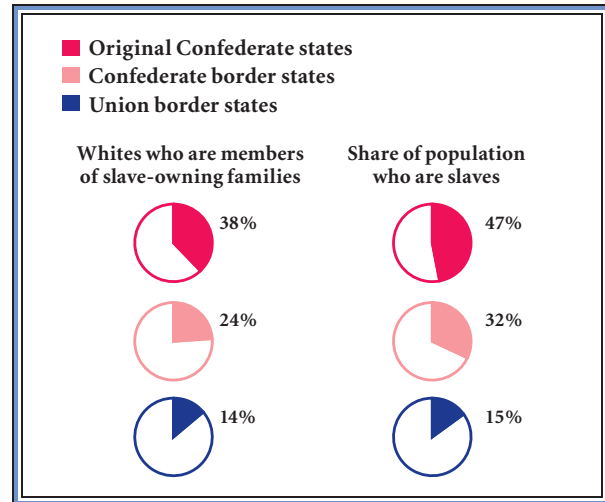
The weight of its history as a slave-owning society decided the outcome in Virginia. On April 17, 1861, a convention approved secession by a vote of 88 to 55, with the dissenters concentrated in the state’s yeomen-dominated northwestern counties. Elsewhere, Virginia whites embraced the Confederate cause. “The North was the aggressor,” declared Richmond lawyer William Poague as he enlisted. “The South resisted her invaders.” Refusing General Scott’s offer of the Union command, Robert E. Lee resigned from the U.S. Army.

“Save in defense of my native state,” Lee told Scott, “I never desire again to draw my sword.” Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina quickly joined Virginia in the Confederacy.

Lincoln moved aggressively to hold strategic areas where

**IDENTIFY CAUSES**

Per Figure 14.1, was slave ownership in a state the main cause of early secession? What other factors drove the secession movement?



**FIGURE 14.1**  
**Slavery and Secession**

As the pie charts indicate, slave labor dominated the economies of the Confederate states that initially seceded from the Union, but it was much less important in Confederate states further to the north that seceded later.

relatively few whites owned slaves (Figure 14.1). To secure the railway line connecting Washington to the Ohio River Valley, the president ordered General George B. McClellan to take control of northwestern Virginia. In October 1861, yeomen there voted overwhelmingly to create a breakaway territory, West Virginia. Unwilling to “act like madmen and cut our own throats merely to sustain . . . a most unwarrantable rebellion,” West Virginia joined the Union in 1863. Unionists also carried the day in Delaware. In Maryland, where slavery was still entrenched, a pro-Confederate mob attacked Massachusetts troops traveling through Baltimore, causing the war’s first combat deaths: four soldiers and twelve civilians. When Maryland secessionists destroyed railroad bridges and telegraph lines, Lincoln ordered Union troops to occupy the state and arrest Confederate sympathizers, including legislators. He released them only in November 1861, after Unionists had secured control of Maryland’s government.

Lincoln was equally energetic in the Mississippi River Valley. To win control of Missouri (and the adjacent Missouri and Upper Mississippi rivers), Lincoln mobilized the state’s German American militia, which strongly opposed slavery. In July, the German Americans defeated a force of Confederate sympathizers commanded by the state’s governor. Despite continuing

raids by Confederate guerrilla bands, which included the notorious outlaws Jesse and Frank James, the Union retained control of Missouri.

In Kentucky, where secessionist and Unionist sentiment was evenly balanced, Lincoln moved cautiously. He allowed Kentucky's thriving trade with the Confederacy to continue until August 1861, when Unionists took over the state government. When the Confederacy responded to the trade cutoff by invading Kentucky in September, Illinois volunteers commanded by Ulysses S. Grant drove them out. Mixing military force with political persuasion, Lincoln had kept four border states (Delaware, Maryland, Missouri, and Kentucky) and the northwestern portion of Virginia in the Union.

## Setting War Objectives and Devising Strategies

Speaking as provisional president of the Confederacy in April 1861, Jefferson Davis identified the Confederates' cause with that of the Patriots of 1776: like their grandfathers, he said, white southerners were fighting for the "sacred right of self-government." The Confederacy sought "no conquest, no aggrandizement . . . ; all we ask is to be let alone." Davis's renunciation of expansion was probably a calculated short-run policy; after all, the quest to extend slavery into Kansas and Cuba had sparked Lincoln's election. Still, this decision simplified the Confederacy's military strategy; it needed only to defend its boundaries to achieve independence. Ignoring strong antislavery sentiment among potential European allies, the Confederate constitution explicitly ruled out gradual emancipation or any other law "denying or impairing the right of property in negro slaves." Indeed, Confederate vice president Alexander Stephens insisted that his nation's "cornerstone rests upon the great truth that the Negro is not equal to the white man, that slavery—subordination to the superior race—is his natural or normal condition."

Lincoln responded to Davis in a speech to Congress on July 4, 1861. He portrayed secession as an attack on representative government, America's great contribution to world history. The issue, Lincoln declared, was "whether a constitutional republic" had the will and the means to "maintain its territorial integrity against a domestic foe." Determined to crush the rebellion, Lincoln rejected General Winfield Scott's strategy of peaceful persuasion through economic sanctions and a naval blockade. Instead, he insisted on an aggressive military campaign to restore the Union.

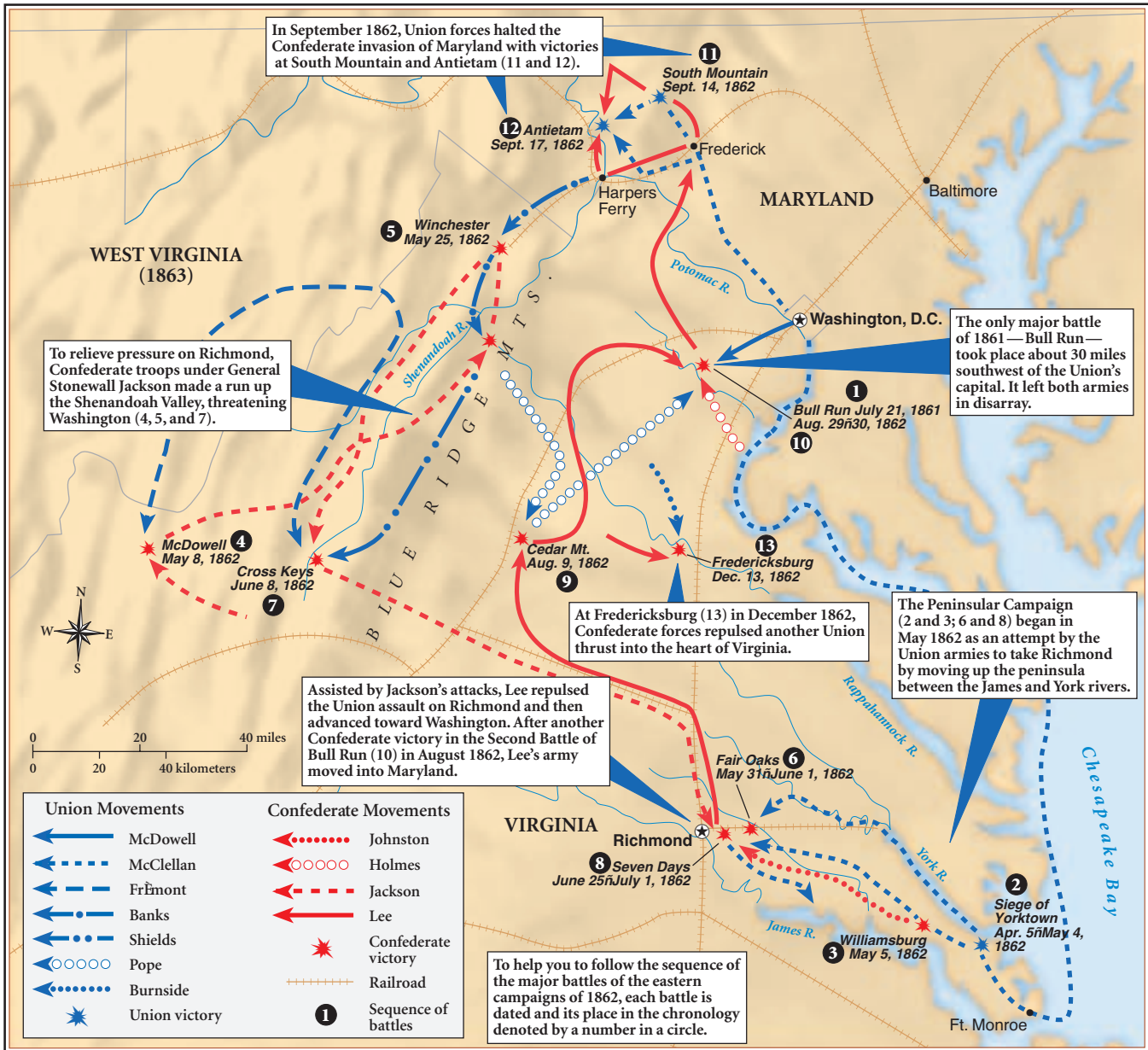
**Union Thrusts Toward Richmond** Lincoln hoped that a quick strike against the Confederate capital of Richmond, Virginia, would end the rebellion. Many northerners were equally optimistic. "What a picnic," thought one New York volunteer, "to go down South for three months and clean up the whole business." So in July 1861, Lincoln ordered General Irvin McDowell's army of 30,000 men to attack General P. G. T. Beauregard's force of 20,000 troops at Manassas, a Virginia rail junction 30 miles southwest of Washington. McDowell launched a strong assault near Bull Run, but panic swept his troops when the Confederate soldiers counterattacked, shouting the hair-raising "rebel yell." "The peculiar corkscrew sensation that it sends down your backbone . . . can never be told," one Union veteran wrote. "You have to feel it." McDowell's troops—and the many civilians who had come to observe the battle—retreated in disarray to Washington.

The Confederate victory at Bull Run showed the strength of the rebellion. Lincoln replaced McDowell with General George McClellan and enlisted a million men to serve for three years in the new Army of the Potomac. A cautious military engineer, McClellan spent the winter of 1861–1862 training the recruits and launched a major offensive in March 1862. With great logistical skill, the Union general ferried 100,000 troops down the Potomac River to the Chesapeake Bay and landed them on the peninsula between the York and James rivers (Map 14.2). Ignoring Lincoln's advice to "strike a blow" quickly, McClellan advanced slowly toward Richmond, allowing the Confederates to mount a counterstrike. Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson marched a Confederate force rapidly northward through the Shenandoah Valley in western Virginia and threatened Washington. When Lincoln recalled 30,000 troops from McClellan's army to protect the Union capital, Jackson returned quickly to Richmond to bolster General Robert E. Lee's army. In late June, Lee launched a ferocious six-day attack that cost 20,000 casualties to the Union's 10,000. When McClellan failed to exploit the Confederates' losses, Lincoln ordered a withdrawal and Richmond remained secure.

**Lee Moves North: Antietam** Hoping for victories that would humiliate Lincoln's government, Lee went on the offensive. Joining with Jackson in northern

### COMPARE AND CONTRAST

In 1861 and 1862, what were the political and military strategies of the Confederate and Union leaders? Which side was the more successful and why?



**MAP 14.2**  
The Eastern Campaigns of 1862

Many of the great battles of the Civil War took place in the 125 miles separating the Union capital, Washington, D.C., and the Confederate capital, Richmond, Virginia. During 1862, Confederate generals Thomas Jonathan “Stonewall” Jackson and Robert E. Lee won battles that defended the Confederate capital (3, 6, 8, and 13) and launched offensive strikes against Union forces guarding Washington (1, 4, 5, 7, 9, and 10). They also suffered a defeat—at Antietam (12), in Maryland—that was almost fatal to the Confederate cause. As was often the case in the Civil War, the victors in these battles were either too bloodied or too timid to exploit their advantage.

Virginia, he routed Union troops in the Second Battle of Bull Run (August 1862) and then struck north through western Maryland. There, he nearly met with disaster. When the Confederate commander divided his force, sending Jackson to capture Harpers Ferry in

West Virginia, a copy of Lee’s orders fell into McClellan’s hands. The Union general again failed to exploit his advantage, delaying an attack against Lee’s depleted army, thereby allowing it to secure a strong defensive position west of Antietam Creek, near Sharpsburg,

Maryland. Outnumbered 87,000 to 50,000, Lee desperately fought off McClellan's attacks until Jackson's troops arrived and saved the Confederates from a major defeat. Appalled by the Union casualties, McClellan allowed Lee to retreat to Virginia.

The fighting at Antietam was savage. A Wisconsin officer described his men "loading and firing with demoniacal fury and shouting and laughing hysterically." A sunken road — nicknamed Bloody Lane — was filled with Confederate bodies two and three deep, and the advancing Union troops knelt on this "ghastly flooring" to shoot at the retreating Confederates. The battle at Antietam on September 17, 1862, remains the bloodiest single day in U.S. military history. Together,

the Confederate and Union dead numbered 4,800 and the wounded 18,500, of whom 3,000 soon died. (By comparison, there were 6,000 American casualties on D-Day, which began the invasion of Nazi-occupied France in World War II.)

In public, Lincoln claimed Antietam as a Union victory; privately, he criticized McClellan for not fighting Lee to the bitter end. A masterful organizer of men and supplies, McClellan refused to risk his troops, fearing that heavy casualties would undermine public support for the war. Lincoln worried more about the danger of a lengthy war. He dismissed McClellan and began a long search for an aggressive commanding general. His first choice, Ambrose E. Burnside, proved



### The Battle of Pea Ridge, Arkansas, March 1862

Pea Ridge was the biggest battle of the Civil War fought west of the Mississippi and was of considerable strategic significance. By routing one Confederate army and holding another to a draw, outnumbered Union forces maintained their control of Missouri for the duration of the war. The lithograph, published in Chicago in 1889, commemorates the Union units—from Illinois and other midwestern states—who fought at Pea Ridge. Here the Union troops, half of whom were German immigrants, face a charging column of Confederate cavalry and infantry from Texas and Missouri and their Native American allies. Each side had about 1,000 men killed or wounded, with another 200 taken prisoner. Library of Congress.



to be more daring but less competent than McClellan. In December, after heavy losses in futile attacks against well-entrenched Confederate forces at Fredericksburg, Virginia, Burnside resigned his command, and Lincoln replaced him with Joseph “Fighting Joe” Hooker. As 1862 ended, Confederates were optimistic: they had won a stalemate in the East.

**The War in the Mississippi Valley** Meanwhile, Union commanders in the Upper South had been more successful (Map 14.3). Their goal was to control the Ohio, Mississippi, and Missouri rivers, dividing the Confederacy and reducing the mobility of its armies. Because Kentucky did not join the rebellion, the Union already dominated the Ohio River Valley. In February 1862, the Union army used an innovative tactic to take charge of the Tennessee and Mississippi rivers as well. General Ulysses S. Grant used riverboats clad with iron plates to capture Fort Donelson on the Cumberland River and Fort Henry on the Tennessee River. When Grant moved south toward Mississippi to seize critical railroad lines, Confederate troops led by Albert Sidney Johnston and P. G. T. Beauregard caught his army by surprise near a small log church at Shiloh, Tennessee. However, Grant relentlessly committed troops and forced a Confederate withdrawal. As the fighting at Shiloh ended on April 7, Grant surveyed a large field “so covered with dead that it would have been possible to walk over the clearing in any direction, stepping on dead bodies, without a foot touching the ground.” The cost in lives was horrific, but Lincoln was resolute: “What I want . . . is generals who will fight battles and win victories.”

Three weeks later, Union naval forces commanded by David G. Farragut struck the Confederacy from the Gulf of Mexico. They captured New Orleans, the South’s financial center and largest city. The Union army also took control of fifteen hundred plantations and 50,000 slaves in the surrounding region, striking a strong blow against slavery. Workers on some plantations looted their owners’ mansions; others refused to labor unless they were paid wages. “[Slavery there] is forever destroyed and worthless,” declared one northern reporter. Union victories had significantly undermined Confederate strength in the Mississippi River Valley.

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## Toward Total War

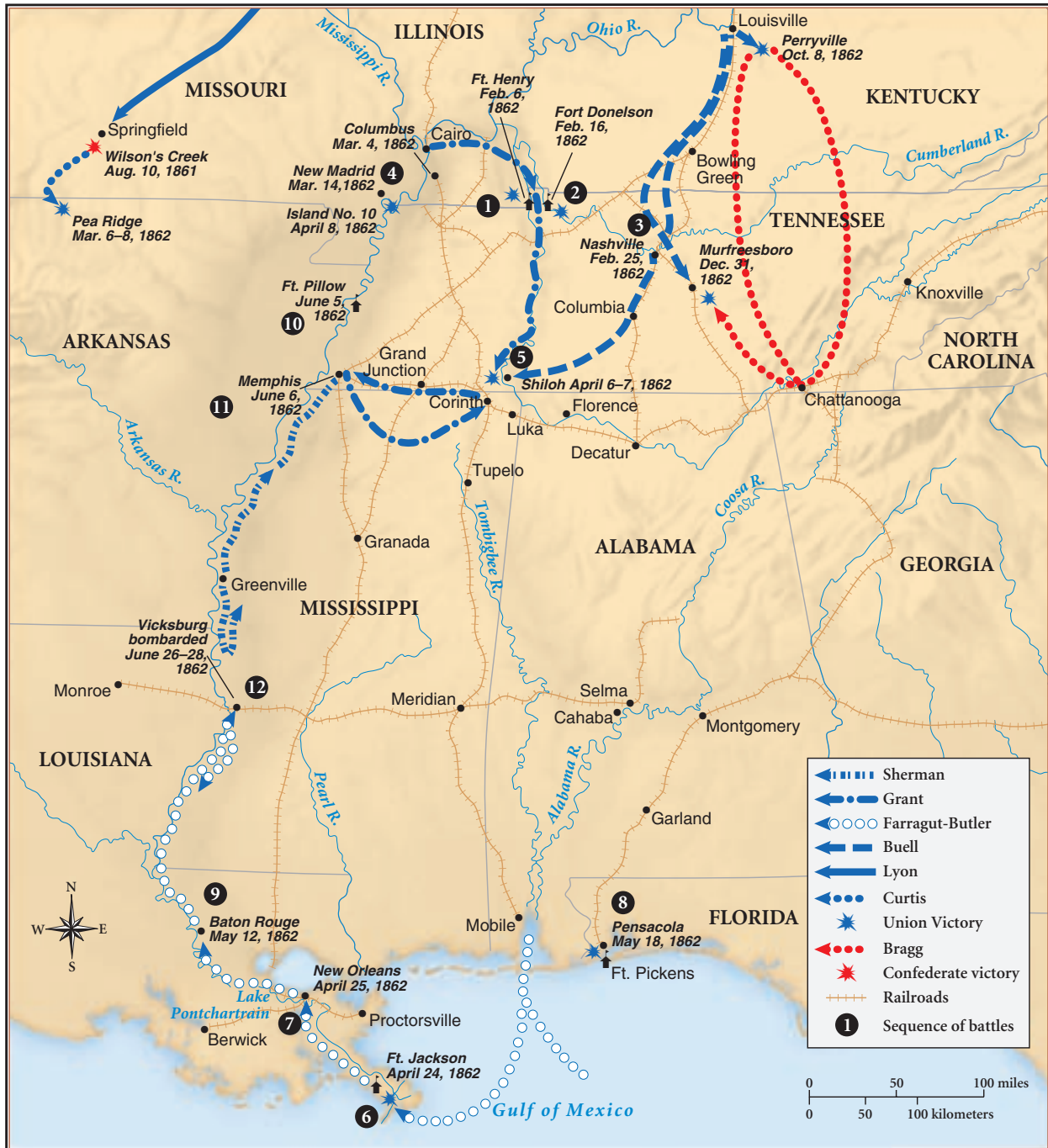
The military carnage in 1862 revealed that the war would be long and costly. Grant later remarked that, after Shiloh, he “gave up all idea of saving the Union

except by complete conquest.” Lincoln agreed. During the summer of 1862, he abandoned hope for a compromise peace that would restore the Union. Instead, he committed the nation to a **total war** that would mobilize all of society’s resources — economic, political, and cultural — in support of the North’s military effort and end slavery in the South. Aided by the Republican Party and a talented cabinet, Lincoln gradually organized an effective central government able to wage all-out war; and urged on by antislavery politicians and activists, he moved toward a controversial proclamation of emancipation. Jefferson Davis had less success at harnessing southern resources, because the eleven states of the Confederacy remained suspicious of centralized rule and southern yeomen grew increasingly skeptical of the war effort.

## Mobilizing Armies and Civilians

Initially, patriotic fervor filled both armies with eager young volunteers. All he heard was “War! War! War!” one Union recruit recalled. Even those of sober minds joined up. “I don’t think a young man ever went over all the considerations more carefully than I did,” reflected William Saxton of Cincinnatus, New York. “It might mean sickness, wounds, loss of limb, and even life itself. . . . But my country was in danger.” The southern call for volunteers was even more successful, thanks to its strong military tradition and a culture that stressed duty and honor. “Would you, My Darling, . . . be willing to leave your Children under such a [despotic Union] government?” James B. Griffin of Edgefield, South Carolina, asked his wife. “No—I know you would sacrifice every comfort on earth, rather than submit to it.” However, enlistments declined as potential recruits learned the realities of mass warfare: epidemic diseases in the camps and wholesale death on the battlefields. Both governments soon faced the need for conscription.

**The Military Draft** The Confederacy acted first. In April 1862, following the bloodshed at Shiloh, the Confederate Congress imposed the first legally binding **draft (conscription)** in American history. New laws required existing soldiers to serve for the duration of the war and mandated three years of military service from all men between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five. In September 1862, after the heavy casualties at Antietam, the age limit jumped to forty-five. The South’s draft had two loopholes, both controversial. First, it exempted one white man — the planter, a son, or an overseer — for each twenty slaves, allowing some



**MAP 14.3**  
The Western Campaigns, 1861–1862

As the Civil War intensified in 1862, Union and Confederate military and naval forces sought control of the great valleys of the Ohio, Tennessee, and Mississippi rivers. From February through April 1862, Union armies moved south through western Tennessee (1–3 and 5). By the end of June, Union naval forces controlled the Mississippi River north of Memphis (4, 10, and 11) and from the Gulf of Mexico to Vicksburg (6, 7, 9, and 12). These military and naval victories gave the Union control of crucial transportation routes, kept Missouri in the Union, and carried the war to the borders of the states of the Lower South.



### Kansas Volunteers, 1862

When they posed for this tintype photograph in 1862, these men from Company E, 8th Kansas Volunteer Infantry, had marched hundreds of miles through Kentucky and Tennessee in a largely fruitless pursuit of a Confederate army and wore the look of battle-hardened troops. Some of these volunteers appear to be in their thirties or forties, and perhaps were abolitionist veterans of the civil strife in Bloody Kansas during the 1850s. Kansas State Historical Society.

whites on large plantations to avoid military service. This provision, a Mississippi legislator warned Jefferson Davis, “has aroused a spirit of rebellion in some places.” Second, draftees could hire substitutes. By the time the Confederate Congress closed this loophole in 1864, the price of a substitute had soared to \$300 in gold, three times the annual wage of a skilled worker. Laborers and yeomen farmers angrily complained that it was “a rich man’s war and a poor man’s fight.”

Consequently, some southerners refused to serve. Because the Confederate constitution vested sovereignty in the individual states, the government in Richmond could not compel military service. Independent-minded governors such as Joseph Brown of Georgia and Zebulon Vance of North Carolina simply ignored President Davis’s first draft call in early 1862. Elsewhere, state judges issued writs of **habeas corpus**—legal instruments used to protect people from arbitrary arrest—and ordered the Confederate army to release reluctant draftees. However, the Confederate Congress

overrode the judges’ authority to free conscripted men, so the government was able to keep substantial armies in the field well into 1864.

The Union government acted more ruthlessly toward draft resisters and Confederate sympathizers. In Missouri and other border states, Union commanders levied special taxes on southern supporters. Lincoln went further, suspending habeas corpus and, over the course of the war, temporarily imprisoning about 15,000 southern sympathizers without trial. He also gave military courts jurisdiction over civilians who discouraged enlistments or resisted the draft, preventing acquittals by sympathetic local juries. However, most Union governments used incentives to lure recruits. To meet the local quotas set by the Militia Act of 1862, towns, counties, and states used cash bounties of as much as \$600 (about \$11,000 today) and signed up nearly 1 million men. The Union also allowed men to avoid military service by providing a substitute or paying a \$300 fee.

When the Enrollment Act of 1863 finally initiated conscription, recent German and Irish immigrants often refused to serve. It was not their war, they said.

### PLACE EVENTS IN CONTEXT

How did the Union and Confederacy mobilize their populations for war, and how effective were these methods?

Northern Democrats used the furor over conscription to bolster support for their party, which increasingly criticized Lincoln's policies. They accused Lincoln of drafting poor whites to liberate enslaved blacks, who would then flood the cities and take their jobs. Slavery was nearly “dead, [but] the negro is not, there is the misfortune,” declared a Democratic newspaper in Cincinnati. In July 1863, the immigrants' hostility to conscription and blacks sparked riots in New York City. For five days, Irish and German workers ran rampant, burning draft offices, sacking the homes of influential Republicans, and attacking the police. The rioters lynched and mutilated a dozen African Americans, drove hundreds of black families from their homes, and burned down the Colored Orphan Asylum. To suppress the mobs, Lincoln rushed in Union troops who had just fought at Gettysburg; they killed more than a hundred rioters.

The Union government won much stronger support from native-born middle-class citizens. In 1861, prominent New Yorkers established the U.S. Sanitary Commission to provide the troops with clothing, food, and medical services. Seven thousand local auxiliaries assisted the commission's work. “I almost weep,” reported a local agent, “when these plain rural people come to send their simple offerings to absent sons and brothers.” The commission also recruited battlefield nurses and doctors for the Union Army Medical Bureau. Despite these efforts, dysentery, typhoid, and malaria spread through the camps, as did mumps and measles, viruses that were often deadly to rural recruits. Diseases and infections killed about 250,000 Union soldiers, nearly twice the 135,000 who died in combat. Still, thanks to the Sanitary Commission, Union troops had a far lower mortality rate than soldiers fighting in nineteenth-century European wars. Confederate



### The Business of Recruiting an Army

Even before the antidraft riots in New York City in July 1863, Union governments used monetary bonuses to induce men to join the army, and the payments increased as the war continued. George Law's painting shows a New York recruiting post in 1864. To meet the state's quota of 30,000 men, the county and state governments offered volunteers bounties of \$300 and \$75—on top of a U.S. government bounty of \$302. The total—some \$677—was serious money at a time when the average worker earned \$1.70 for a ten-hour day. Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University Library.



### Hospital Nursing

Working as nurses in battlefield hospitals, thousands of Union and Confederate women gained firsthand experience of the horrors of war. A sense of calm prevails in this behind-the-lines Union hospital in Nashville, Tennessee, as nurse Anne Belle tends to the needs of soldiers recovering from their wounds. Most Civil War nurses were volunteers with little medical training; they spent time cooking and cleaning for their patients as well as tending their injuries. U.S. Army Military History Institute.

troops were less fortunate, despite the efforts of thousands of women who volunteered as nurses, because the Confederate army's health system was poorly organized. Scurvy was a special problem for southern soldiers; lacking vitamin C in their diets, they suffered muscle ailments and had low resistance to camp diseases (Thinking Like a Historian, p. 458).

So much death created new industries and cultural rituals. Embalmers devised a zinc chloride fluid to preserve soldiers' bodies, allowing them to be shipped home for burial, an innovation that began modern funeral practices. Military cemeteries with hundreds of crosses in neat rows replaced the landscaped "rural cemeteries" in vogue in American cities before the Civil War. As thousands of mothers, wives, and sisters mourned the deaths of fallen soldiers, they faced changed lives. Confronting utter deprivation, working-class women grieved for the loss of a breadwinner. Middle-class wives often had financial resources but, having embraced the affectionate tenets of domesticity, mourned the death of a loved one by wearing black crape "mourning" dresses and other personal accessories of death. The destructive war, in concert with the emerging consumer culture and ethic of domesticity,

produced a new "cult of mourning" among the middle and upper classes.

**Women in Wartime** As tens of thousands of wounded husbands and sons limped home, their wives and sisters helped them rebuild their lives. Another 200,000 women worked as volunteers in the Sanitary Commission and the Freedman's Aid Society, which collected supplies for liberated slaves.

The war also drew more women into the wage-earning workforce as nurses, clerks, and factory operatives. Dorothea Dix (Chapter 11) served as superintendent of female nurses and, by successfully combating the prejudice against women providing medical treatment to men, opened a new occupation to women. Thousands of educated Union women became government clerks, while southern women staffed the efficient Confederate postal service. In both societies, millions of women took over farm tasks; filled jobs in schools and offices; and worked in textile, shoe, and food-processing factories. A few even became spies, scouts, and (disguising themselves as men) soldiers. As Union nurse Clara Barton, who later founded the American Red Cross, recalled, "At the war's end, woman was at least fifty years in advance of the normal position which continued peace would have assigned her."

### Mobilizing Resources

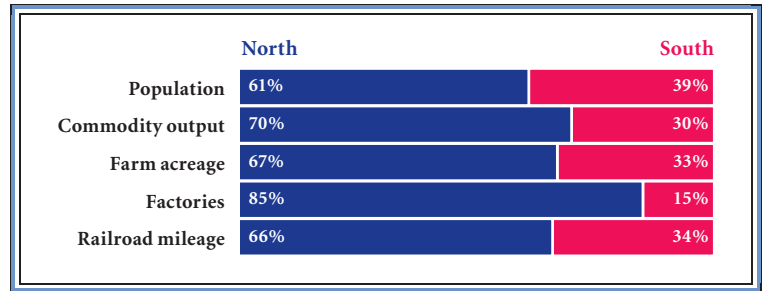
Wars are usually won by the side that possesses greater resources. In that regard, the Union had a distinct advantage. With nearly two-thirds of the nation's population, two-thirds of the railroad mileage, and almost 90 percent of the industrial output, the North's economy was far superior to that of the South (Figure 14.2). Furthermore, many of its arms factories were equipped for mass production.

Still, the Confederate position was far from weak. Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee had substantial industrial capacity. Richmond, with its Tredegar Iron Works, was an important manufacturing center, and in 1861 it acquired the gun-making machinery from the U.S. armory at Harpers Ferry. The production at the Richmond armory, the purchase of Enfield rifles from Britain, and the capture of 100,000 Union guns enabled the Confederacy to provide every infantryman with a modern rifle-musket by 1863.

Moreover, with 9 million people, the Confederacy could mobilize enormous armies. Enslaved blacks, one-third of the population, became part of the war effort by producing food for the army and raw cotton for export. Confederate leaders counted on **King**

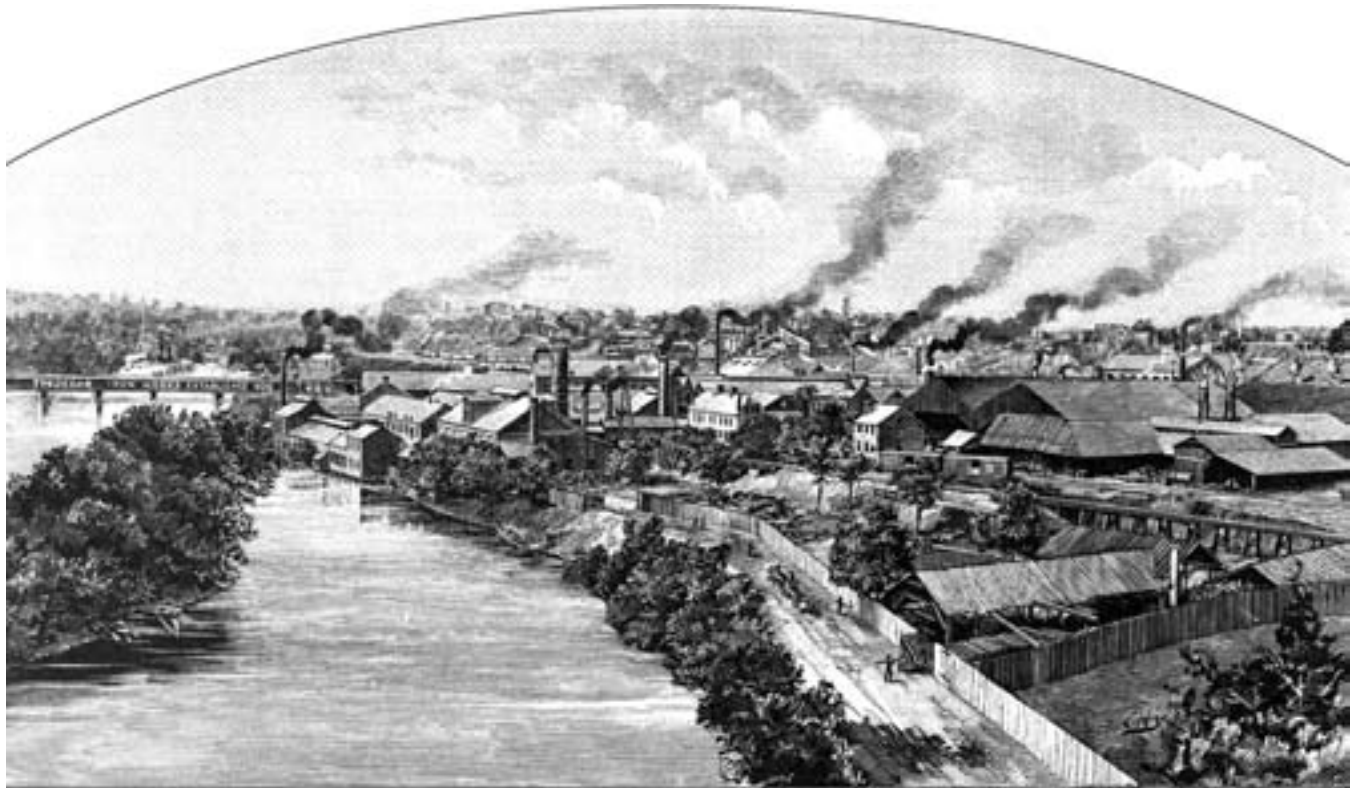
**FIGURE 14.2****Economies, North and South, 1860**

The military advantages of the North were even greater than this chart suggests. The population figures for the South include slaves, whom the Confederacy feared to arm. Also, the South's commodity output was primarily in farm goods rather than manufactures. Finally, southern factories were much smaller on average than those in the North.



**Cotton**—the leading American export and a crucial staple of the nineteenth-century economy—to purchase clothes, boots, blankets, and weapons from abroad. Leaders also saw cotton as a diplomatic weapon that would persuade Britain and France, which had large textile industries, to assist the Confederacy.

However, British manufacturers had stockpiled cotton and developed new sources in Egypt and India. Still, the South received some foreign support. Although Britain never recognized the Confederacy as an independent nation, it treated the rebel government as a belligerent power—with the right under international

**Richmond: Capital City and Industrial Center**

The Confederacy chose Richmond as its capital because of the historic importance of Virginia as the home of Washington, Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe. However, Richmond was also a major industrial center. Exploiting the city's location at the falls of the James River, the city's entrepreneurs had developed a wide range of industries: flour mills, tobacco factories, railroad and port facilities, and, most important, a substantial iron industry. In 1861, the Tredegar Iron Works employed nearly a thousand workers and, as the only facility in the South that could manufacture large machinery and heavy weapons, made a major contribution to the Confederate war effort. The Library of Virginia.



## Military Deaths—and Lives Saved—During the Civil War

The Civil War, like all wars before and since, encouraged innovation in both the destruction and the saving of human life. More than 620,000 soldiers—360,000 on the Union side and 260,000 Confederates—died during the war, about 20 percent of those who served. However, thanks to advances in camp hygiene and battlefield treatment, the Union death rate was about 54–58 per 1,000 soldiers per year, less than half the level for British and French troops during the Crimean War of 1854–1855.

- 1. Report by surgeon Charles S. Tipler, medical director of the Army of the Potomac, January 4, 1862.** *Most Civil War deaths came from disease. The major killers were bacterial intestinal diseases—typhoid fever, diarrhea, and dysentery—which spread because of unsanitary conditions in the camps.*

The aggregate strength of the forces from which I have received reports is 142,577. Of these, 47,836 have been under treatment in the field and general hospitals, 35,915 of whom have been returned to duty, and 281 have died; 9,281 remained under treatment at the end of the month; . . .

The diseases from which our men have suffered most have been continued remittent and typhoid fevers, measles, diarrhea, dysentery, and the various forms of catarrh [heavy discharge of mucus from the nose]. Of all the scourges incident to armies in the field I suppose that chronic diarrheas and dysenteries have always been the most prevalent and the most fatal. I am happy to say that in this army they are almost unknown. We have but 280 cases of chronic diarrhea and 69 of chronic dysentery reported in the month of November.

- 2. Minie ball wounds: femur shot by Springfield 1862 rifle and Private George W. Lemon, 1867.**

Ninety percent of battle casualties were the victims of a new technology: musket-rifles that fired lethal soft-lead bullets called minie balls (after their inventor, Claude-Étienne Minié). The rifle-musket revolutionized military strategy by enormously strengthening defensive forces. Infantrymen could now kill reliably at 300 yards—triple the previous range of muskets. Initially, the new technology baffled commanders, who continued to use the tactics perfected during the heyday of the musket and bayonet charge, sending waves of infantrymen against enemy positions.

A minie ball strike to the abdomen, chest, or head was usually fatal, but injuries to the limbs gave some hope of survival, given advances in battlefield surgery. When

Private George W. Lemon suffered a minie ball wound to his femur similar to the one shown here (below), surgeons amputated his leg below the hip and, after the war, fitted him with a prosthetic leg.



Source: National Museum of Health & Medicine, Armed Forces Institute of Pathology.



Source: Courtesy National Library of Medicine.

3. **Kate Cumming, April 23, 1862, journal entry on treating a Confederate victim after the Battle of Shiloh.** *Union surgeons performed 29,980 battlefield amputations during the Civil War. Confederate records are less complete, but surgeons apparently undertook about 28,000 amputations. They quickly removed limbs too shattered to mend, which increased the chances of survival. According to one witness, “surgeons and their assistants, stripped to the waist and bespattered with blood, stood around, some holding the poor fellows while others, armed with long, bloody knives and saws, cut and sawed away with frightful rapidity, throwing the mangled limbs on a pile nearby as soon as removed.” This journal entry from a young Confederate nurse in Corinth, Mississippi, describes the plight of one such victim after the Battle of Shiloh.*

A young man whom I have been attending is going to have his arm cut off. Poor fellow! I am doing all I can to cheer him. He says that he knows that he will die, as all who have had limbs amputated in this hospital have died. . . . He lived only a few hours after his amputation.

4. **William Williams Keen, MD, “Surgical Reminiscences of the Civil War,” 1905.** *Although 73 percent of the Union amputees survived the war, infected wounds—deadly gangrene—took the lives of most soldiers who suffered certain gunshot injuries in this pre-antibiotic, pre-antiseptic era. Keen, who later became the first brain surgeon in the United States, served as a surgeon in the Union army.*

Not more than one incontestable example of recovery from a gunshot wound of the stomach and not a single incontestable case of wound of the small intestines are recorded during the entire war among the almost 250,000 wounded. . . .

Of 852 amputations of the shoulder-joint, 236 died, a mortality of 28.5 per cent. Of 66 cases of amputation of the hip-joint, 55, or 83.3 per cent died. Of 155 cases of trephining [cutting a hole in the skull to relieve pressure], 60 recovered and 95 died, a mortality of over 61 per cent. Of 374 ligations of the femoral artery, 93 recovered and 281 died, a mortality of over 75 per cent.

These figures afford a striking evidence of the dreadful mortality of military surgery in the days before antiseptics and first-aid packages. Happily such death-rates can never again be seen, at least in civilized warfare.

5. **John Tooker, MD, “Aspects of Medicine, Nursing, and the Civil War,” 2007.** *The Union doctor Jonathan Letterman pioneered a new method of battlefield triage that was adopted by the entire army in 1864.*

Letterman had devised an efficient and, for the times, modern system of mass casualty management, beginning with first aid adjacent to the battlefield, removal of the wounded by an organized ambulance system to field hospitals for urgent and stabilizing treatment, such as wound closure and amputation, and then referral to general hospitals for longer term definitive management. This three-stage approach to casualty management, strengthened by effective and efficient transport, earned Letterman the title of “The Father of Battlefield Medicine.”

Sources: (1) *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1889), Series 1, Vol. 5 (Part V), 111–112; (3) Kate Cumming, *A Journal of Hospital Life in the Confederate Army of Tennessee* (Louisville, KY: John P. Morton & Company, 1866), 19; (4) William Williams Keen, “Surgical Reminiscences of the Civil War,” in *Addresses and Other Papers* (Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders, 1905), 433–434; (5) John Tooker, “Antietam: Aspects of Medicine, Nursing, and the Civil War,” National Center for Biotechnology Information, U.S. National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health.

### ANALYZING THE EVIDENCE

1. Based on Tipler’s report (source 1), would you say the Union army was healthy or unhealthy? Ready for battle or not?
2. Consider sources 2–4. How do you think the reentry of tens of thousands of maimed veterans into civil society affected American culture?
3. What do sources 3–5 suggest about the successes and limitations of battlefield medicine during the Civil War?
4. Consider the Civil War in the context of the Industrial Revolution. What was the impact of factory production and technological advances on the number of weapons and their killing power? And how might the organizational innovations of the Industrial Revolution pertain to the conflict? In this regard, what do you make of the new method of battlefield triage pioneered by Union doctor Jonathan Letterman (source 5)?

### PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

As a “total war” the Civil War involved the citizenry as well as the military, marshaling all of the two societies’ resources and ingenuity. Using your understanding of these documents and the textbook, write an essay that discusses the relation of the war to technology, medicine, public finance, and the lives of women on the battle lines and the home front.



law to borrow money and purchase weapons. The odds, then, did not necessarily favor the Union, despite its superior resources.

**Republican Economic and Fiscal Policies** To mobilize northern resources, the Republican-dominated Congress enacted a neomercantilist program of government-assisted economic development that far surpassed Henry Clay’s American System (Chapter 10). The Republicans imposed high tariffs (averaging nearly 40 percent) on various foreign goods, thereby encouraging domestic industries. To boost agricultural output, they offered “free land” to farmers. The Homestead Act of 1862 gave settlers the title to 160 acres of public land after five years of residence. To create an integrated national banking system (far more powerful than the First and Second Banks of the United States), Secretary of the Treasury Salmon P. Chase forced thousands of local banks to accept federal charters and regulations.

Finally, the Republican Congress implemented Clay’s program for a nationally financed transportation system. Expansion to the Pacific, the California gold rush, and subsequent discoveries of gold, silver, copper, and other metals in Nevada, Montana, and other west-

ern lands had revived demands for such a network. Therefore, in 1862, Congress chartered the Union Pacific and Central Pacific companies to build a transcontinental railroad line and granted them lavish subsidies. This economic program won the allegiance of farmers, workers, and

entrepreneurs and bolstered the Union’s ability to fight a long war.

New industries sprang up to provide the Union army—and its 1.5 million men—with guns, clothes, and food. Over the course of the war, soldiers consumed more than half a billion pounds of pork and other packed meats. To meet this demand, Chicago railroads built new lines to carry thousands of hogs and cattle to the city’s stockyards and slaughterhouses. By 1862, Chicago had passed Cincinnati as the meatpacking capital of the nation, bringing prosperity to thousands of midwestern farmers and great wealth to Philip D. Armour and other meatpacking entrepreneurs.

Bankers and financiers likewise found themselves pulled into the war effort. The annual spending of the Union government shot up from \$63 million in 1860 to more than \$865 million in 1864. To raise that enormous sum, the Republicans created a modern system

of public finance that secured funds in three ways. First, the government increased tariffs; placed high duties on alcohol and tobacco; and imposed direct taxes on business corporations, large inheritances, and the incomes of wealthy citizens. These levies paid about 20 percent of the cost. Second, interest-paying bonds issued by the U.S. Treasury financed another 65 percent. The National Banking Acts of 1863 and 1864 forced most banks to buy those bonds; and Philadelphia banker and Treasury Department agent Jay Cooke used newspaper ads and 2,500 subagents to persuade a million northern families to buy them.

The Union paid the remaining 15 percent by printing paper money. The Legal Tender Act of 1862 authorized \$150 million in paper currency—soon known as **greenbacks**—and required the public to accept them as legal tender. Like the Continental currency of the Revolutionary era, greenbacks could not be exchanged for specie; however, the Treasury issued a limited amount of paper money, so it lost only a small part of its face value.

If a modern fiscal system was one result of the war, immense concentrations of capital in many industries—meatpacking, steel, coal, railroads, textiles, shoes—was another. The task of supplying the huge war machine, an observer noted, gave a few men “the command of millions of money.” Such massed financial power threatened not only the prewar society of small producers but also the future of democratic self-government (America Compared, p. 461). Americans “are never again to see the republic in which we were born,” lamented abolitionist and social reformer Wendell Phillips.

**The South Resorts to Coercion and Inflation** The economic demands on the South were equally great, but, true to its states’ rights philosophy, the Confederacy initially left most matters to the state governments. However, as the realities of total war became clear, Jefferson Davis’s administration took extraordinary measures. It built and operated shipyards, armories, foundries, and textile mills; commandeered food and scarce raw materials such as coal, iron, copper, and lead; requisitioned slaves to work on fortifications; and directly controlled foreign trade.

The Confederate Congress and ordinary southern citizens opposed many of Davis’s initiatives, particularly those involving taxes. The Congress refused to tax cotton exports and slaves, the most valuable property held by wealthy planters, and the urban middle classes and yeomen farm families refused to pay more than their fair share. Consequently, the Confederacy covered less than 10 percent of its expenditures through

### TRACE CHANGE OVER TIME

How did the economic policies of the Republican-controlled Congress redefine the character of the federal government?



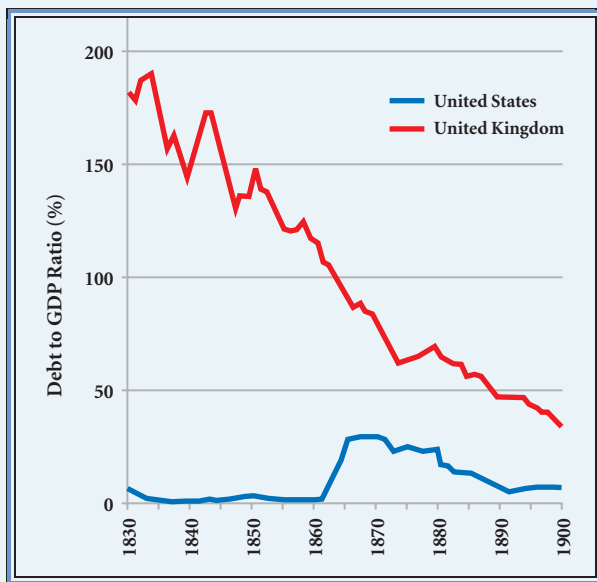
## War Debt: Britain and the United States, 1830–1900

Wars cost money, sometimes a lot of money, and nations often pay for them by issuing bonds and expanding the national debt. The British national debt grew enormously between 1750 and 1815 as it fought a great series of wars, all of which involved either its American colonies or the United States: the Great War for Empire (1754–1763), the War of American Independence (1776–1783), and the Wars of the French Revolution and Napoleon (1793–1815). Consequently, Britain’s national debt peaked in 1815 at 260 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP). Even in 1830, after years of high taxation and economic growth, the debt amounted to 180 percent of British GDP.

By comparison, the United States in 1830 was virtually debt-free, as the policies of Jeffersonian Republicans reduced its debt from about 27 percent of GDP in 1790

to less than 5 percent. Ample tariff revenues and the frugal policies of Presidents Andrew Jackson and Martin Van Buren then cut the debt nearly to zero by the early 1840s. Even the war with Mexico barely raised the level of the debt, thanks to the return of prosperity and the growth of GDP between 1844 and 1857.

Then came the Civil War, which boosted the Union debt from \$62 million in 1860 to \$2.2 billion at the end of 1865, a 1,500 percent increase. (The Fourteenth Amendment, ratified in 1868, declared “illegal and void” all debts incurred by the Confederacy.) In relation to GDP, the U.S. national debt shot up to 27 percent, the same level as 1790, and then—thanks again to tariff revenue—decreased gradually to about 10 percent of GDP by 1900. By then, the British national debt had fallen to about 40 percent of its GDP, as the British—the world’s strongest power—mostly avoided new wars and built a prosperous commercial and industrial economy. The cost of war, civil or international, may well be a high national debt.



**FIGURE 14.3**  
United States and United Kingdom National Debt as a Percentage of Gross Domestic Product, 1830–1900

### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. In 1864, President Lincoln lamented: “This war of ours, in its magnitude and in its duration, is one of the most terrible. It has produced a national debt and taxation unprecedented, at least in this country.” Given the relative size of the Union debt in relation to that of Britain, were Lincoln’s worries exaggerated?
2. In 2012, the national debt of the United States—now the world’s premier economic and military power—was nearly 100 percent of GDP and, since 1940, has averaged about 60 percent of GDP. Given those facts, and the evidence in this chart, is it fair to conclude that one of the costs of global power is a high national debt?

taxation. The government paid another 30 percent by borrowing, but wealthy planters and foreign bankers grew increasingly fearful that the South would never redeem its bonds.

Consequently, the Confederacy paid 60 percent of its war costs by printing paper money. The flood

of currency created a spectacular inflation: by 1865, prices had risen to ninety-two times their 1861 level. As food prices soared, riots erupted in more than a dozen southern cities and towns. In Richmond, several hundred women broke into bakeries, crying, “Our children are starving while the rich roll in



### A Southern Refugee Family

As Union and Confederate armies swept back and forth across northern Virginia and other war zones, the civilian population feared for its property and personal security. Here, two southern women—their husbands presumably away at war—have hitched up their mules and piled their goods and children on a farm wagon in order to flee the fighting. Lucky refugees had relatives in safe areas; others had to rely on the goodwill of strangers. National Archives.

wealth.” In Randolph County, Alabama, women confiscated grain from a government warehouse “to prevent starvation of themselves and their families.” As inflation spiraled upward, southerners refused to accept paper money, whatever the consequences. When South Carolina storekeeper Jim Harris refused the depreciated currency presented by Confederate soldiers, they raided his storehouse and, he claimed, “robbed it of about five thousand dollars worth of goods.” Army supply officers likewise seized goods from merchants and offered payment in worthless IOUs. Facing a public that feared strong government and high taxation, the Confederacy could sustain the war effort only by seizing its citizens’ property—and by championing white supremacy: President Davis warned that a Union victory would destroy slavery “and reduce the whites to the degraded position of the African race.”

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## The Turning Point: 1863

By 1863, the Lincoln administration had created an efficient war machine and a set of strategic priorities. Henry Adams, the grandson of John Quincy Adams and a future novelist and historian, noted the change from his diplomatic post in London: “Little by little, one began to feel that, behind the chaos in Washington power was taking shape; that it was massed and guided as it had not been before.” Slowly but surely, the tide of the struggle turned against the Confederacy.

### Emancipation

When the war began, antislavery Republicans demanded that abolition be a goal of the war. The fighting should continue, said a Massachusetts abolitionist,

“until the Slave power is completely subjugated, and *emancipation made certain*.” Because slave-grown crops sustained the Confederacy, activists justified black emancipation on military grounds. As Frederick Douglass put it, “Arrest that hoe in the hands of the Negro, and you smite the rebellion in the very seat of its life.”

**“Contrabands”** As abolitionists pressed their case, African Americans exploited wartime chaos to seize freedom for themselves. When three slaves reached the camp of Union general Benjamin Butler in Virginia in May 1861, he labeled them “contraband of war” (enemy property that can be legitimately seized, according to international law) and refused to return them. Butler’s term stuck, and soon thousands of **“contrabands”** were camping with Union armies. Near Fredericksburg, Virginia, an average of 200 blacks appeared every day, “with their packs on their backs and handkerchiefs tied over their heads—men, women, little children, and babies.” This influx created a humanitarian crisis; abolitionist Harriet Jacobs reported that hundreds of refugees were “[p]acked together in the most miserable quarters,” where many died from smallpox and dysentery. To provide legal status to the refugees—some 400,000 by the war’s end—in August 1861 Congress

passed the Confiscation Act, which authorized the seizure of all property, including slave property, used to support the rebellion.

With the Confiscation Act, **Radical Republicans**—the members of the party who had been bitterly opposed to the “Slave Power” since the mid-1850s—began to use wartime legislation to destroy slavery. Their leaders were treasury secretary Salmon Chase, Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts, and Representative Thaddeus Stevens of Pennsylvania. A long-time member of Congress, Stevens was a masterful politician, skilled at fashioning legislation that could win majority support. In April 1862, Stevens and the Radicals persuaded Congress to end slavery in the District of Columbia by providing compensation for owners; in June, Congress outlawed slavery in the federal territories (finally enacting the Wilmot Proviso of 1846); and in July, it passed a second Confiscation Act, which declared “forever free” the thousands of refugee slaves and all slaves captured by the Union army. Emancipation had become an instrument of war.

**The Emancipation Proclamation** Initially, Lincoln rejected emancipation as a war aim, but faced with thousands of refugees and Radical Republican pressure, he moved cautiously toward that goal. The president

**Eastman Johnson, *A Ride for Freedom—The Fugitive Slaves*, c. 1862**

At the second battle of Manassas in September 1862, American genre painter Eastman Johnson (1824–1906) witnessed this “veritable incident” of an African American family fleeing slavery—and then painted it. A powerful, split-second image of the riders’ silhouettes, Johnson’s painting captures the father looking forward toward freedom, while the mother cradles a young child and looks back apprehensively for possible pursuers. By “freeing themselves,” this family and thousands of blacks set the stage for Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation. Brooklyn Museum of Art, New York, USA/The Bridgeman Art Library.



drafted a general proclamation of emancipation in July 1862, and he publicly linked black freedom with the preservation of the Union in August. “If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it,” Lincoln told Horace Greeley of the *New York Tribune*, “and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it.”

Now he waited for a Union victory. Considering the Battle of Antietam “an indication of the Divine Will,” Lincoln issued a preliminary proclamation of emancipation on September 22, 1862, basing its legal authority on his duty as commander in chief to suppress the rebellion. The proclamation legally abolished slavery in all states that remained out of the Union on January 1, 1863. The rebel states could preserve slavery by renouncing secession. None chose to do so.

The proclamation was politically astute. Lincoln conciliated slave owners in the Union-controlled border

### UNDERSTAND POINTS OF VIEW

Some historians argue that slaves “freed themselves” by fleeing to Union armies, thereby forcing Lincoln to issue the Emancipation Proclamation. How persuasive is that argument?

states, such as Maryland and Missouri, by leaving slavery intact in those states. It also permitted slavery to continue in areas occupied by Union armies: western and central Tennessee, western Virginia, and southern Louisiana. In Indian Territory, also under Union control, most mixed-blood Cherokee slave owners remained committed to the Confederacy

and to bondage. They did not formally free their 4,000 slaves until July 1866, when a treaty with the U.S. government specified that their ex-slaves “shall have all the rights of native Cherokee.”

Consequently, the **Emancipation Proclamation** did not immediately free a single slave. Yet, as abolitionist Wendell Phillips understood, Lincoln’s proclamation had moved slavery to “the edge of Niagara,” and would soon sweep it over the brink. Advancing Union troops became the agents of slavery’s destruction. “I became free in 1863, in the summer, when the yankees come by and said I could go work for myself,” recalled Jackson Daniel of Maysville, Alabama. As Lincoln now saw it, “the old South is to be destroyed and replaced by new propositions and ideas” — a system of free labor.

Hailed by reformers in Europe, emancipation was extraordinarily controversial in America. In the Confederacy, Jefferson Davis labeled it the “most execrable measure recorded in the history of guilty man”; in the North, white voters unleashed a racist backlash. During the elections of 1862, the Democrats denounced emancipation as unconstitutional, warned of slave uprisings, and predicted that freed blacks would take

white jobs. Every freed slave, suggested a nativist-minded New Yorker, should “shoulder an Irishman and leave the Continent.” Such sentiments propelled Democrat Horatio Seymour into the governor’s office in New York; if abolition was a war goal, Seymour argued, the South should not be conquered. In the November election, Democrats swept to victory in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Illinois and gained thirty-four seats in Congress. However, Republicans still held a twenty-five-seat majority in the House and gained five seats in the Senate. Lincoln refused to retreat. Calling emancipation an “act of justice,” he signed the final proclamation on New Year’s Day 1863. “If my name ever goes into history,” he said, “it was for this act.”



To see a longer excerpt of the Jefferson Davis document, along with other primary sources from this period, see *Sources for America’s History*.

## Vicksburg and Gettysburg

The Emancipation Proclamation’s fate would depend on Republican political success and Union military victories, neither of which looked likely. Democrats had made significant gains in 1862, and popular support was growing for a negotiated peace. Two brilliant victories in Virginia by General Robert E. Lee, whose army defeated Union forces at Fredericksburg (December 1862) and Chancellorsville (May 1863), further eroded northern support for the war.

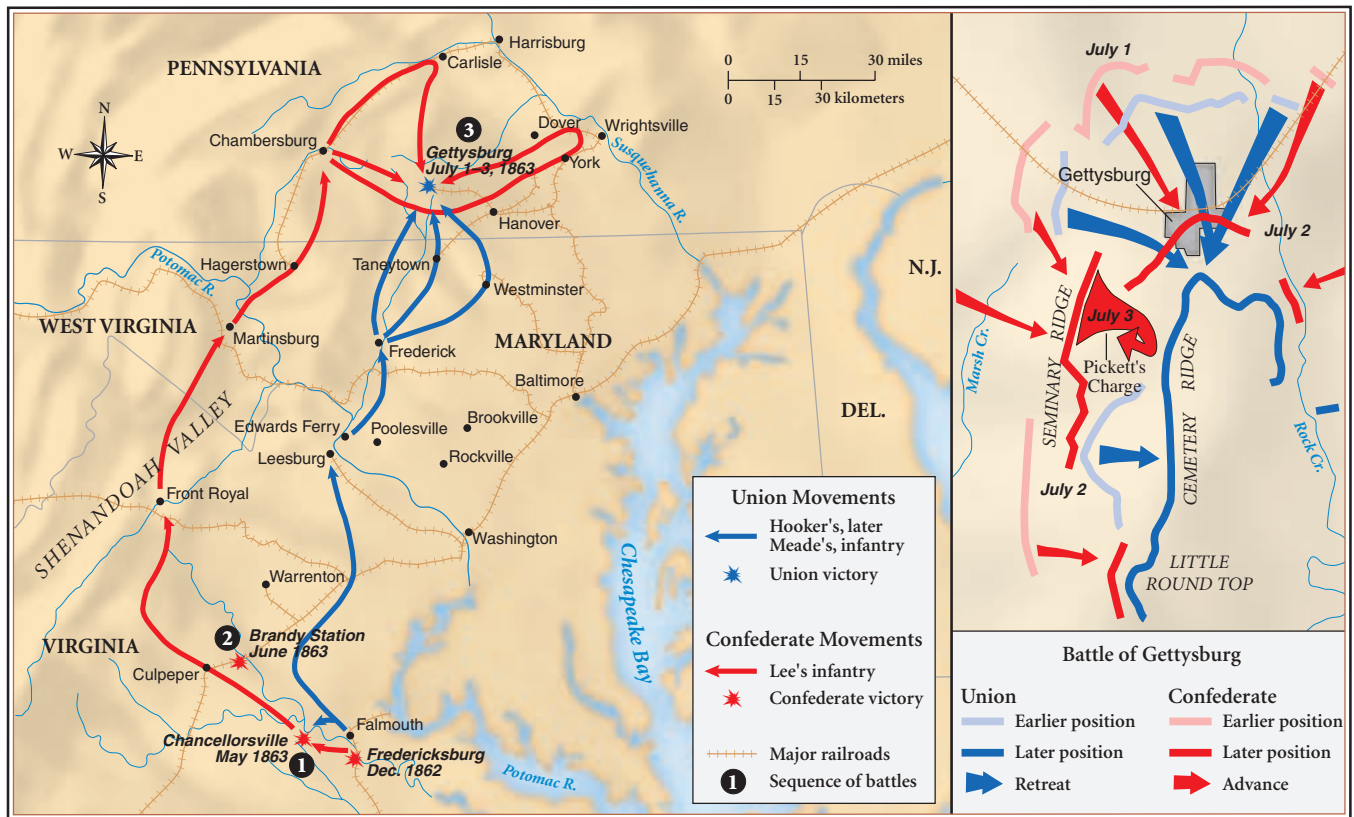
**The Battle for the Mississippi** At this critical juncture, General Grant mounted a major offensive to split the Confederacy in two. Grant drove south along the west bank of the Mississippi in Arkansas and then crossed the river near Vicksburg, Mississippi. There, he defeated two Confederate armies and laid siege to the city. After repelling Union assaults for six weeks, the exhausted and starving Vicksburg garrison surrendered on July 4, 1863. Five days later, Union forces took Port Hudson, Louisiana (near Baton Rouge), and seized control of the entire Mississippi River. Grant had taken 31,000 prisoners; cut off Louisiana, Arkansas, and Texas from the rest of the Confederacy; and prompted thousands of slaves to desert their plantations. Confederate troops responded by targeting refugees for re-enslavement and massacre. “The battlefield was sickening,” a Confederate officer reported from Arkansas, “no orders, threats or commands could restrain the men from vengeance on the negroes, and they were piled in great heaps about the wagons, in the tangled brushwood, and upon the muddy and trampled road.”

As Grant had advanced toward Vicksburg in May, Confederate leaders had argued over the best strategic response. President Davis and other politicians wanted to send an army to Tennessee to relieve the Union pressure along the Mississippi River. General Lee, buoyed by his recent victories, favored a new invasion of the North. That strategy, Lee suggested, would either draw Grant's forces to the east or give the Confederacy a major victory that would destroy the North's will to fight.

**Lee's Advance and Defeat** Lee won out. In June 1863, he maneuvered his army north through Maryland into Pennsylvania. The Army of the Potomac moved along with him, positioning itself between Lee and Washington, D.C. On July 1, the two great armies met by accident at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, in what became a decisive confrontation (Map 14.4). On the

first day of battle, Lee drove the Union's advance guard to the south of town. There, Union commander George G. Meade placed his troops in well-defended hilltop positions and called up reinforcements. By the morning of July 2, Meade had 90,000 troops to Lee's 75,000. Lee knew he was outnumbered but was intent on victory; he ordered assaults on Meade's flanks but failed to turn them.

On July 3, Lee decided on a dangerous frontal assault against the center of the Union line. After the heaviest artillery barrage of the war, Lee sent General George E. Pickett and his 14,000 men to take Cemetery Ridge. When Pickett's men charged across a mile of open terrain, they faced deadly fire from artillery and massed riflemen; thousands suffered death, wounds, or capture. As the three-day battle ended, the Confederates counted 28,000 casualties, one-third of the Army of Northern Virginia, while 23,000 of Meade's soldiers lay



**MAP 14.4**  
**Lee Invades the North, 1863**

After Lee's victories at Chancellorsville (1) in May and Brandy Station (2) in June, the Confederate forces moved northward, constantly shadowed by the Union army. On July 1, the two armies met accidentally near Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. In the ensuing battle (3), the Union army, commanded by General George Meade, emerged victorious, primarily because it was much larger than the Confederate force and held well-fortified positions along Cemetery Ridge, which gave its units a major tactical advantage.

**EXPLAIN CONSEQUENCES**

How did the battles at Gettysburg and Vicksburg significantly change the tide of war?

killed or wounded. Shocked by the bloodletting, Meade allowed the Confederate units to escape. Lincoln was furious at Meade's caution, perceiving that "the war will be prolonged indefinitely."

Still, Gettysburg was a great Union victory and, together with the simultaneous triumph at Vicksburg, marked a major military, political, and diplomatic turning point. As southern citizens grew increasingly critical of their government, the Confederate elections of 1863 went sharply against the politicians who supported Jefferson Davis. Meanwhile, northern citizens rallied to the Union, and Republicans swept state elections in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and New York. In Europe, the victories boosted the leverage of American diplomats. Since 1862, the British-built iron-clad cruiser the *Alabama* had sunk or captured more than a hundred Union merchant ships, and the Confederacy was about to accept delivery of two more iron-clads. With a Union victory increasingly likely, the British government decided to impound the warships and, subsequently, to pay \$15.5 million for the deprivations of the *Alabama*. British workers and reformers had long condemned slavery and praised emancipation; moreover, because of poor grain harvests, Britain depended on imports of wheat and flour from the American Midwest. King Cotton diplomacy had failed and King Wheat stood triumphant. "Rest not your hopes in foreign nations," President Jefferson Davis advised his people. "This war is ours; we must fight it ourselves."

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## The Union Victorious, 1864–1865

The Union victories of 1863 meant that the South could not win independence through a decisive military triumph. However, the Confederacy could still hope for a battlefield stalemate and a negotiated peace. To keep the Union in Republican hands, Lincoln faced the daunting task of conquering the South.

### Soldiers and Strategy

The promotion of aggressive generals and the enlistment of African American soldiers allowed the Union to prosecute the war vigorously. As early as 1861, free African Americans and fugitive slaves had volunteered, both to end slavery and, as Frederick Douglass put it, to

win "the right to citizenship." Yet many northern whites refused to serve with blacks. "I am as much opposed to slavery as any of them," a New York soldier told his local newspaper, "but I am not willing to be put on a level with the negro and fight with them." Union generals also opposed the enlistment of African Americans, doubting they would make good soldiers. Nonetheless, free and contraband blacks formed volunteer regiments in New England, South Carolina, Louisiana, and Kansas.

**The Impact of Black Troops** The Emancipation Proclamation changed military policy and popular sentiment. The proclamation invited former slaves to serve in the Union army, and northern whites, having suffered thousands of casualties, now accepted that blacks should share in the fighting and dying. A heroic and costly attack by the 54th Massachusetts Infantry on Fort Wagner, South Carolina, in 1863 convinced Union officers of the value of black soldiers. By the spring of 1865, the Lincoln administration had recruited and armed nearly 200,000 African Americans. Without black soldiers, said Lincoln, "we would be compelled to abandon the war in three weeks."

Military service did not end racial discrimination. Black soldiers initially earned less than white soldiers (\$10 a month versus \$13) and died, mostly from disease, at higher rates than white soldiers. Nonetheless, African Americans continued to volunteer, seeking freedom and a new social order. "Hello, Massa," said one black soldier to his former master, who had been taken prisoner. "Bottom rail on top dis time." The worst fears of the secessionists had come true: through the disciplined agency of the Union army, African Americans had risen in a successful rebellion against slavery, just as six decades earlier enslaved Haitians had won emancipation in the army of Toussaint L'Ouverture (Chapter 7).

**Capable Generals Take Command** As African Americans bolstered the army's ranks, Lincoln finally found a ruthless commanding general. In March 1864, Lincoln placed General Ulysses S. Grant in charge of all Union armies; from then on, the president determined overall strategy and Grant implemented it. Lincoln favored a simultaneous advance against the major Confederate armies, a strategy Grant had long favored, in order to achieve a decisive victory before the election of 1864.

Grant knew how to fight a war that relied on industrial technology and targeted an entire society. At Vicksburg in July 1863, he had besieged the whole city



### Black Soldiers in the Union Army

Determined to end racial slavery, tens of thousands of African Americans volunteered for service in the Union army in 1864 and 1865, boosting the northern war effort at a critical moment. These soldiers were members of the 107th Colored Infantry, stationed at Fort Corcoran near Washington, D.C. In January 1865, their regiment saw action in the daring capture of Fort Fisher, which protected Wilmington, North Carolina, the last Confederate port open to blockade runners. Library of Congress.

and forced its surrender. Then, in November, he had used railroads to rescue an endangered Union army near Chattanooga, Tennessee. Grant believed that the cautious tactics of previous Union commanders had prolonged the war. He was willing to accept heavy casualties, a stance that earned him a reputation as a butcher of enemy armies and his own men.

In May 1864, Grant ordered two major offensives. Personally taking charge of the 115,000-man Army of the Potomac, he set out to destroy Lee's force of 75,000 troops in Virginia. Grant instructed General William Tecumseh Sherman, who shared his harsh outlook, to invade Georgia and take Atlanta. "All that has gone before is mere skirmish," Sherman wrote as he prepared for battle. "The war now begins."

Grant advanced toward Richmond, hoping to force Lee to fight in open fields, where the Union's superior manpower and artillery would prevail. Remembering his tactical errors at Gettysburg, Lee remained in strong defensive positions and attacked only when he held an advantage. The Confederate general seized that opportunity twice in May 1864, winning costly victories at the battles of the Wilderness and Spotsylvania Court House. At Spotsylvania, the troops fought at

point-blank range; an Iowa recruit recalled "lines of blue and grey [soldiers firing] into each other's faces; for an hour and a half." Despite heavy losses in these battles and then at Cold Harbor, Grant drove on (Map 14.5). His attacks severely eroded Lee's forces, which suffered 31,000 casualties, but Union losses were even higher: 55,000 killed or wounded.

**Stalemate** The fighting took a heavy psychological toll. "Many a man has gone crazy since this campaign began from the terrible pressure on mind and body," observed a Union captain. As morale declined, soldiers deserted. In June 1864, Grant laid siege to Petersburg, an important railroad center near Richmond. As the siege continued, Union and Confederate soldiers built complex networks of trenches, tunnels, and artillery emplacements stretching for 40 miles along the eastern edge of Richmond and Petersburg, foreshadowing the devastating trench warfare in France in World War I. Invoking the intense imagery of the Bible, an officer described the continuous artillery barrages and sniping

### EXPLAIN CONSEQUENCES

How did the Emancipation Proclamation and Grant's appointment as general in chief affect the course of the war?





### Grant Planning a Strategic Maneuver

On May 21, 1864, the day this photograph was taken, Grant pulled his forces from Spotsylvania Court House, where a bitter two-week battle (May 8–21) resulted in 18,000 Union and 10,000 Confederate casualties. He moved his army to the southeast, seeking to outflank Lee's forces. Photographer Timothy H. O'Sullivan caught up to the Union army's high command at Massaponax Church, Virginia, and captured this image of Grant (to the left) leaning over a pew and reading a map held by General George H. Meade. As Grant plots the army's movement, his officers smoke their pipes and read reports of the war in newspapers that had just arrived from New York City. Intercepting Grant's forces, Lee took up fortified positions first at the North Anna River and then at Cold Harbor, where the Confederates scored their last major victory of the war (May 31–June 3). Library of Congress.

as “living night and day within the ‘valley of the shadow of death.’” The stress was especially great for the outnumbered Confederate troops, who spent months in the muddy, hellish trenches without rotation to the rear.

As time passed, Lincoln and Grant felt pressures of their own. The enormous casualties and military stalemate threatened Lincoln with defeat in the November election. The Republican outlook worsened in July, when Jubal Early's cavalry raided and burned the Pennsylvania town of Chambersburg and threatened Washington. To punish farmers in the Shenandoah Valley who had aided the Confederate raiders, Grant ordered General Philip H. Sheridan to turn the region into “a barren waste.” Sheridan's troops conducted a **scorched-earth campaign**, destroying grain, barns, and gristmills and any other resource useful to the Confederates. These tactics, like Early's raid, violated the military norms of the day, which treated civilians as noncombatants. Rising desperation and anger were changing the definition of conventional warfare.

## The Election of 1864 and Sherman's March

As the siege at Petersburg dragged on, Lincoln's hopes for reelection depended on General Sherman in Georgia. Sherman's army of 90,000 men had moved

methodically toward Atlanta, a railway hub at the heart of the Confederacy. General Joseph E. Johnson's Confederate army of 60,000 stood in his way and, in June 1864, inflicted heavy casualties on Sherman's forces near Kennesaw Mountain, Georgia. By late July, the Union army stood on the northern outskirts of Atlanta, but the next month brought little gain. Like Grant, Sherman seemed bogged down in a hopeless campaign.

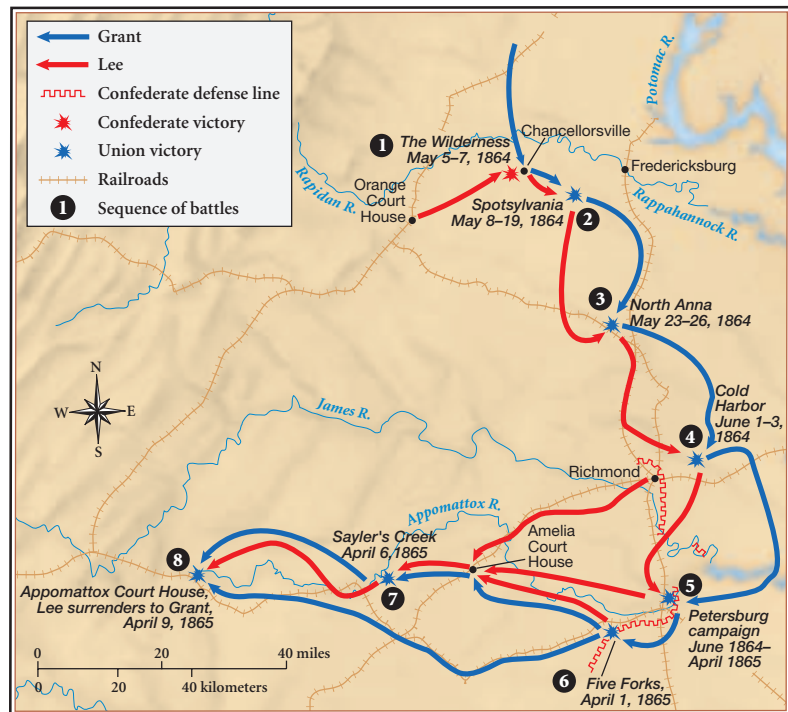
### The National Union Party Versus the Peace Democrats

Meanwhile, the presidential campaign of 1864 was heating up. In June, the Republican Party's convention rebuffed attempts to prevent Lincoln's renomination. It endorsed the president's war strategy, demanded the Confederacy's unconditional surrender, and called for a constitutional amendment to abolish slavery. The delegates likewise embraced Lincoln's political strategy. To attract border-state and Democratic voters, the Republicans took a new name, the National Union Party, and chose Andrew Johnson, a Tennessee slave owner and Unionist Democrat, as Lincoln's running mate.

The Democratic Party met in August and nominated General George B. McClellan for president. Lincoln had twice removed McClellan from military commands: first for an excess of caution and then for

**MAP 14.5****The Closing Virginia Campaign, 1864–1865**

Beginning in May 1864, General Ulysses S. Grant launched an all-out campaign against Richmond, trying to lure General Robert E. Lee into open battle. Lee avoided a major test of strength. Instead, he retreated to defensive positions and inflicted heavy casualties on Union attackers at the Wilderness, Spotsylvania Court House, North Anna, and Cold Harbor (1–4). From June 1864 to April 1865, the two armies faced each other across defensive fortifications outside Richmond and Petersburg (5). Grant finally broke this ten-month siege by a flanking maneuver at Five Forks (6). Lee's surrender followed shortly.



his opposition to emancipation. Like McClellan, the Democratic delegates rejected emancipation and condemned Lincoln's repression of domestic dissent, particularly the suspension of habeas corpus and the use of military courts to prosecute civilians. However, they split into two camps over war policy. **War Democrats** vowed to continue fighting until the rebellion ended, while **Peace Democrats** called for a "cessation of hostilities" and a constitutional convention to negotiate a peace settlement. Although personally a War Democrat, McClellan promised if elected to recommend to Congress an immediate armistice and a peace convention. Hearing this news, Confederate vice president Alexander Stephens celebrated "the first ray of real light I have seen since the war began." He predicted that if Atlanta and Richmond held out, Lincoln would be defeated and McClellan would eventually accept an independent Confederacy.

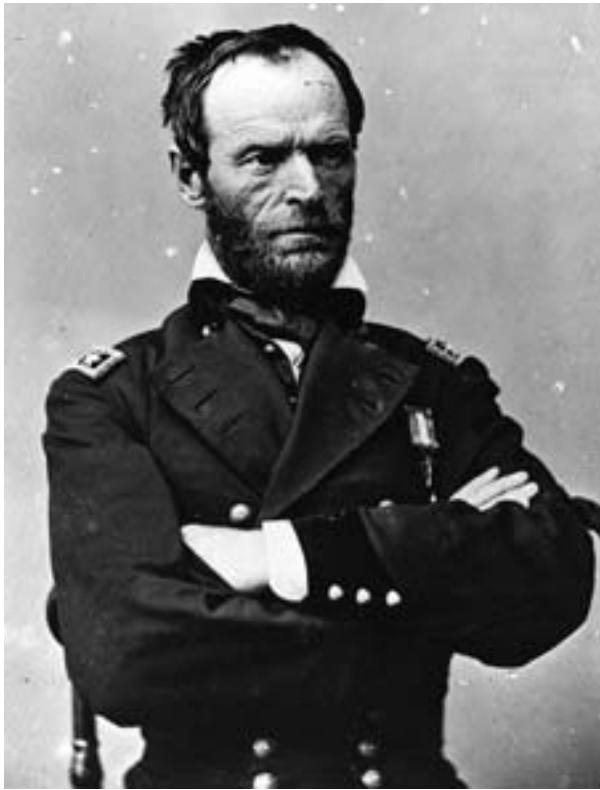
**The Fall of Atlanta and Lincoln's Victory** Stephens's hopes collapsed on September 2, 1864, as Atlanta fell to Sherman's army. In a stunning move, the Union general pulled his troops from the trenches, swept around the city, and destroyed its rail links to the south. Fearing that Sherman would encircle his army, Confederate general John B. Hood abandoned the city. "Atlanta is ours, and fairly won," Sherman telegraphed Lincoln, sparking hundred-gun salutes and wild Republican

celebration. "We are gaining strength," Lincoln warned Confederate leaders, "and may, if need be, maintain the contest indefinitely."

A deep pessimism settled over the Confederacy. Mary Chesnut, a plantation mistress and general's wife, wrote in her diary, "I felt as if all were dead within me, forever," and foresaw the end of the Confederacy: "We are going to be wiped off the earth." Recognizing the dramatically changed military situation, McClellan repudiated the Democratic peace platform. The National Union Party went on the offensive, attacking McClellan's inconsistency and labeling Peace Democrats as "copperheads" (poisonous snakes) who were hatching treasonous plots. "A man must go for the Union at all hazards," declared a Republican legislator in Pennsylvania, "if he would entitle himself to be considered a loyal man."

Lincoln won a clear-cut victory in November. The president received 55 percent of the popular vote and won 212 of 233 electoral votes. Republicans and National Unionists captured 145 of the 185 seats in the House of Representatives and increased their Senate majority to 42 of 52 seats. Many Republicans owed their victory to the votes of Union troops, who wanted to crush the rebellion and end slavery.

Legal emancipation was already under way at the edges of the South. In 1864, Maryland and Missouri amended their constitutions to end slavery, and the



### William Tecumseh Sherman

A man of nervous energy, Sherman smoked cigars and talked continuously. When seated, he crossed and uncrossed his legs incessantly, and a journalist described his fingers as constantly “twitching his red whiskers—his coat buttons—playing a tattoo on the table—or running through his hair.” On the battlefield Sherman was a decisive general who commanded the loyalty of his troops. A photographer captured this image of Sherman in 1865, following his devastating march through Georgia and the Carolinas. Library of Congress.

three Confederate states occupied by the Union army—Tennessee, Arkansas, and Louisiana—followed suit. Still, abolitionists worried that the Emancipation Proclamation, based legally on the president’s wartime powers, would lose its force at the end of the war. Urged on by Lincoln and the National Equal Rights League, in January 1865 the Republican Congress approved the Thirteenth Amendment, ending slavery, and sent it to the states for ratification. Slavery was nearly dead.

### William Tecumseh Sherman: “Hard War” Warrior

Thanks to William Tecumseh Sherman, the Confederacy was nearly dead as well. As a young military officer stationed in the South, Sherman sympathized with the planter class and felt that slavery upheld social stability. However, Sherman believed in the Union. Secession meant “anarchy,” he told his southern friends in early 1861: “If war comes . . . I must fight your

people whom I best love.” Serving under Grant, Sherman distinguished himself at Shiloh and Vicksburg. Taking command of the Army of the Tennessee, he developed the philosophy and tactics of “hard war.” “When one nation is at war with another, all the people of one are enemies of the other,” Sherman declared. When Confederate guerrillas fired on a boat carrying Unionist civilians near Randolph, Tennessee, Sherman sent a regiment to destroy the town, asserting, “We are justified in treating all inhabitants as combatants.”

After capturing Atlanta, Sherman advocated a bold strategy. Instead of pursuing the retreating Confederate army northward into Tennessee, he proposed to move south, live off the land, and “cut a swath through to the sea.” To persuade Lincoln and Grant to approve his unconventional plan, Sherman argued that his march would be “a demonstration to the world, foreign and domestic, that we have a power [Jefferson] Davis cannot resist.” The Union general lived up to his pledge. “We are not only fighting hostile armies,” Sherman wrote, “but a hostile people, and must make old and young, rich and poor, feel the hard hand of war.” He left Atlanta in flames, and during his 300-mile **March to the Sea** (Map 14.6) his army consumed or demolished everything in its path. A Union veteran wrote, “[We] destroyed all we could not eat, stole their niggers, burned their cotton & gins, spilled their sorghum, burned & twisted their R.Roads and raised Hell generally.” Although Sherman’s army usually did not harm noncombatants who kept to their peaceful business, the havoc so demoralized Confederate soldiers that many deserted their units and returned home (American Voices, p. 472). When Sherman reached Savannah in mid-December, the city’s 10,000 defenders left without a fight.

Georgia’s African Americans treated Sherman as a savior. “They flock to me, old and young,” he wrote. “[T]hey pray and shout and mix up my name with Moses . . . as well as ‘Abram Linkom,’ the Great Messiah of ‘Dis Jubilee.’” To provide for the hundreds of blacks now following his army, Sherman issued Special Field Order No. 15, which set aside 400,000 acres of prime rice-growing land for the exclusive use of freedmen. By June 1865, about 40,000 blacks were cultivating “Sherman lands.” Many freedmen believed that the lands were to be theirs forever, belated payment for generations of unpaid labor: “All the land belongs to the Yankees now and they gwine divide it out among de coloured people.”



To see more of Sherman’s writing, along with other primary sources from this period, see **Sources for America’s History**.

In February 1865, Sherman invaded South Carolina to punish the instigators of nullification and secession. His troops ravaged the countryside as they cut a narrow swath across the state. After capturing South Carolina’s capital, Columbia, they burned the business district, most churches, and the wealthiest residential neighborhoods. “This disappointment to me is extremely bitter,” lamented Jefferson Davis. By March, Sherman had reached North Carolina, ready to link up with Grant and crush Lee’s army.

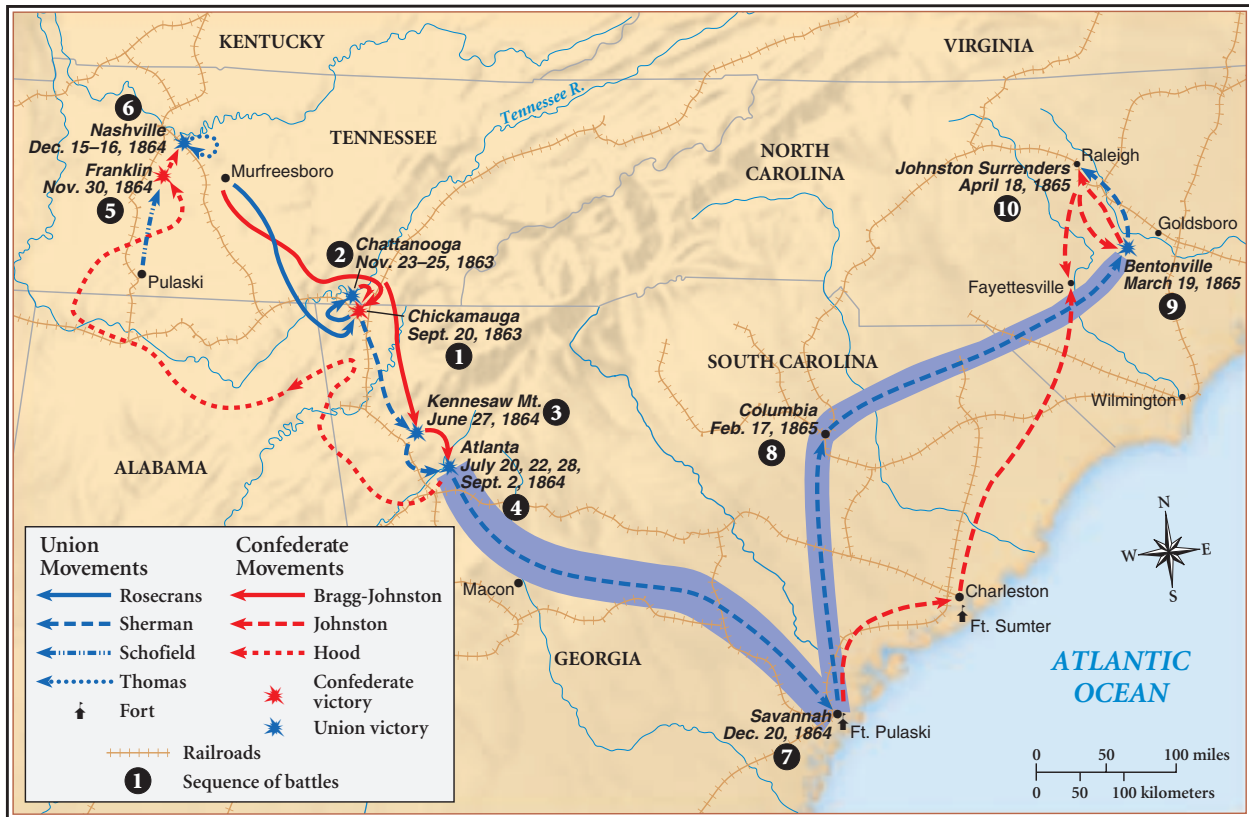
**The Confederate Collapse** Grant’s war of attrition in Virginia had already exposed a weakness in the Confederacy: rising class resentment among poor whites. Angered by slave owners’ exemptions from military service and fearing that the Confederacy was doomed, ordinary southern farmers now repudiated the draft. “All they want is to git you . . . to fight for

their infurnal negroes,” grumbled an Alabama hill farmer. More and more soldiers fled their units. “I am now going to work instead of to the war,” vowed David Harris, another backcountry yeoman. By 1865, at least 100,000 men had deserted from Confederate armies, prompting reluctant Confederate leaders to approve the enlistment of black soldiers and promising them freedom. However, the fighting ended too soon to reveal whether any slaves would have fought for the Confederacy.

The symbolic end of the war took place in Virginia. In April 1865, Grant finally gained control of the crucial railroad junction at Petersburg and forced Lee to abandon Richmond. As Lincoln visited the ruins of the Confederate capital, greeted by joyful

**PLACE EVENTS IN CONTEXT**

To what extent were Grant and Sherman’s military strategy and tactics responsible for defeat of the Confederacy?



**MAP 14.6**  
**Sherman’s March Through the Confederacy, 1864–1865**

The Union victory in November 1863 at Chattanooga, Tennessee (2), was almost as critical as the victories in July at Gettysburg and Vicksburg, because it opened up a route of attack into the heart of the Confederacy. In mid-1864, General William Tecumseh Sherman advanced on the railway hub of Atlanta (3 and 4). After finally taking the city in September 1864, Sherman relied on other Union armies to stem General Hood’s invasion of Tennessee (5 and 6) while he began his devastating March to the Sea. By December, he had reached Savannah (7); from there, he cut a swath through the Carolinas (8–10).



## Gender, Class, and Sexual Terror in the Invaded South

When the white men of the South marched off to war, they left behind their wives and children. Soon, Confederate women in the border states confronted an enemy army of occupation. Later, when Union armies invaded the Confederacy, southern women—both black and white—faced an even more dangerous army of conquest and destruction.

### Cornelia Peake McDonald Journal

Cornelia Peake McDonald was the wife of an affluent lawyer in Winchester, Virginia, a town occupied by Union forces. She had nine children, born between 1848 and 1861.

[May 1863] 22nd . . . To day I received another intimation that my house would be wanted for a [Union] regimental hospital. I feel a sickening despair when I think of what will be my condition if they do take it. . . .

Major Butterworth . . . told me that he was a quarter master, and that he had been sent to inform me that I must give up the house, as they must have it for a hospital. . . . I lost no time in seeking [General] Milroy's presence. . . . "Gen. Milroy," said I. He looked around impatiently. "They have come to take my house from me." . . . [He replied,] "Why should you expect me to shelter you and your family, you who are a rebel, and whose husband and family are in arms against the best government the world ever saw?" . . . "But Gen. Milroy, you are commandant here . . . and you can suffer me to remain in mine, where at least I can have a shelter for my sick children." . . . At last he raised his head and looked in my face. "You can stay but I allow it at the risk of my commission."

Source: *A Woman's Civil War*, ed. Minrose C. Gwin (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992), 101, 150–153.

### Judith White Brockenbrough McGuire Diary

Judith White Brockenbrough McGuire, of Alexandria, Virginia, spent most of the war as a refugee in Richmond.

June 11, 1865

These particulars . . . I have [heard] from our nephew, J. P. [in occupied central Virginia. He reports that] . . . the Northern officers seemed disposed to be courteous to the ladies, in the little intercourse which they had with them. General Ferrera, who commanded the negro troops, was humane, in having a coffin made for a young Confederate officer. . . . The surgeons, too, assisted in attending to the

Confederate wounded. An officer one morning sent for Mrs. N. [to return an item stolen by Union soldiers]. . . . She thanked him for his kindness. He seemed moved and said, "Mrs. N., I will do what I can for you, for I cannot be too thankful that my wife is not in an invaded country."

Source: Rod Gragg, *The Illustrated Confederate Reader* (New York: Harper & Row, 1989), 88–89.

### Lieutenant Colonel Samuel J. Nasmith Report, July 1, 1863

In June 1863, Confederate raiders attacked and burned twenty Union-run cotton plantations near Goodrich's Landing, Louisiana, along the Mississippi River. They captured 1,200 African American refugees and took vengeance on many others, including women and children. A report by Colonel Nasmith of the 25th Wisconsin Infantry related the gruesome details.

Major Farnan, commanding the cavalry, reports that the scenes witnessed by him . . . were of a character never before witnessed in a civilized country. . . . They spared neither age, sex, nor condition. In some instances the Negroes were shut up in their quarters, and literally roasted alive. The charred remains found in numerous instances testified to a degree of fiendish atrocity such as has no parallel either in civilized or savage warfare. Young children, only five or six years of age, were found skulking in the cane break with wounds, while helpless women were found shot down in the most inhumane manner. The whole country was destroyed, and every sign of civilization was given to the flames.

Source: *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1889), Series 1, Vol. 24 (Part II), 517.

### Anna Maria Green Diary

Twenty-year-old Anna Maria Green kept a diary as General William Tecumseh Sherman's army of 60,000 men approached Milledgeville, Georgia.

Saturday evening November 19th [1864] — Again we are in a state of excitement caused by the near approach to our town of the enemy. Last night they were two thousand strong at Monticello. . . . Minnie came in to call me to look at a fire in the west. My heart sank, and almost burst with grief as I beheld the horizon crimson and the desolation our hated foe was spreading. Great God! Deliver us, oh! Spare our city. . . .

Nov. 25th Friday evening . . . This morning the last of the vandals left our city and burned the bridge after them — leaving suffering and desolation behind them, and embittering every heart. The worst of their acts was committed to poor Mrs. Nichols — violence done, and atrocity committed that ought to make her husband an enemy unto death. Poor woman. I fear she has been driven crazy.

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Source: Rod Gragg, *The Illustrated Confederate Reader* (New York: Harper & Row, 1989), 175–176.

### Unknown Woman Letter to Her Daughter

This letter was written by a woman in Columbia, South Carolina.

Columbia March 3, 1865  
My dear Gracia

Doubtless your anxiety is very great to hear something about us after the great calamity that has befallen our town. We have lost everything, but thank God, our lives have been spared. Oh Gracia, what we have passed through no tongue can tell, it defies description! . . .

The first regiment sent into the city was what Sherman calls his “Tigers.” Whenever he sends these men ahead, he intends to do his worst. . . . The first thing they did was break open the stores and distribute the goods right and left. They found liquor and all became heartily drunk. . . . When night came on, the soldiers . . . fired the houses. It was a fearful sight. . . .

We stayed all night in the street, protected by a Yankee Captain from Iowa who was very kind to us.

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Source: Rod Gragg, *The Illustrated Confederate Reader* (New York: Harper & Row, 1989), 189–190.

### Daniel Heyward Trezevant Report

Daniel Heyward Trezevant, a doctor in Columbia, South Carolina, wrote a brief report after Sherman’s departure.

The Yankees’ gallantry, brutality and debauchery were afflicted on the negroes. . . . The case of Mr. Shane’s old negro woman, who, after being subjected to the most brutal indecency from seven of the Yankees, was, at the proposition of one of them to “finish the old Bitch,” put into a ditch and held under water until life was extinct. . . .

Mrs. T. B. C. was seized by one of the soldiers, an officer, and dragged by the hair and forced to the floor for the purpose of sensual enjoyment. She resisted as far as practical — held up her young infant as a plea for sparing her and succeeded, but they took her maid, and in her presence, threw her on the floor and had connection with her. . . . They pinioned Mrs. McCord and robbed her. They dragged Mrs. Gynn by the hair of her head about the house. Mrs. G. told me of a young lady about 16, Miss Kinsler, who . . . three officers brutally ravished and who became crazy.

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Source: Rod Gragg, *The Illustrated Confederate Reader* (New York: Harper & Row, 1989), 192.

#### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. How might class loyalties and shared cultural values have influenced General Milroy’s decision to let Cornelia McDonald stay in her home? How do the actions of the “Yankee Captain from Iowa” compare with Milroy’s?
2. Although none of these writers used the word *rape* (why not?), we can assume that Mrs. Nichols was raped, as were Miss Kinsler and the enslaved African American maid in Columbia. What about Mrs. T. B. C., Mrs. McCord, and Mrs. Gynn? How should we evaluate the credibility of these sources (and other, similar accounts written by whites) when they assert or imply that Union troops raped enslaved women and spared white women?
3. How should we compare the brutal actions of Confederate soldiers toward fugitive blacks and the treatment of southern women by Sherman’s troops? Explain why they do—or do not—represent the same kind of wartime military misconduct.

ex-slaves, Grant cut off Lee's escape route to North Carolina. On April 9, almost four years to the day after the attack on Fort Sumter, Lee surrendered at Appomattox Court House, Virginia. In return for their promise not to fight again, Grant allowed the Confederate officers and men to go home. By late May, all of the secessionist armies and governments had simply melted away (Map 14.7).

The hard and bitter conflict was finally over. Northern armies had preserved the Union and destroyed slavery; many of the South's factories, railroads, and cities lay in ruins; and its farms and plantations had suffered years of neglect. Almost 260,000 Confederate soldiers had paid for secession with their lives. On the other side, more than 360,000 northerners had died for the Union, and thousands more had been maimed. Was it all worth the price? Delivering his second inaugural address in March 1865—less than a month

before his assassination—Abraham Lincoln could justify the hideous carnage only by alluding to divine providence: “[S]o still it must be said ‘the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.’”

What of the war's effects on society? A New York census taker suggested that the conflict had undermined “autocracy” and had an “equalizing effect.” Slavery was gone from the South, he reflected, and in the North, “military men from the so called ‘lower classes’ now lead society, having been elevated by real merit and valor.” However perceptive these remarks, they ignored the wartime emergence of a new financial aristocracy that would soon preside over what Mark Twain labeled the Gilded Age. Nor was the sectional struggle yet concluded. As the North began to reconstruct the South and the Union, it found those tasks to be almost as hard and bitter as the war itself.



**MAP 14.7**  
The Conquest of the South, 1861–1865

It took four years for the Union armies to defeat the Confederate forces. Until 1864, most of the South remained in Confederate hands; even at the end of the war, Union armies had never entered many parts of the rebellious states. Most of the Union's territorial gains came on the vast western front, where its control of strategic lines of communication (the Ohio and Mississippi rivers and major railroads) gave its forces a decisive advantage.



### An Uncounted Casualty of the War

Many men who died in the war were husbands and fathers, leaving tens of thousands of widows—and even more children—to grieve over their loss. Dressed in mourning clothes, this unidentified, sad-faced young girl holds an image of her dead father, a cavalryman holding a sword and wearing a regulation dress hat. Library of Congress.

## SUMMARY

In this chapter, we surveyed the dramatic events of the Civil War. Looking at the South, we watched the fire-eaters declare secession, form a new Confederacy, and attack Fort Sumter. Subsequently, we saw its generals repulse Union attacks against Richmond and go on the offensive. However, as the war continued, the inherent weaknesses of the Confederacy came to the fore. Enslaved workers fled or refused to work, and yeomen farmers refused to fight for an institution that primarily benefitted wealthy planters.

Examining the North, we witnessed its military shortcomings. Its generals—McClellan and Meade—moved slowly to attack and did not pursue their weakened foes. However, the Union's significant advantages in industrial output, financial resources, and military manpower became manifest over time. Congress created efficient systems of banking and war finance, Lincoln found efficient and ruthless generals, and the emancipation and recruitment of African Americans provided an abundant supply of soldiers determined to end slavery.

We explored the impact of the war on civilians in both regions: the imposition of conscription and high taxes, the increased workload of farm women, and the constant food shortages and soaring prices. Above all else, there was the omnipresent fact of death—a tragedy that touched nearly every family, North and South.

## CHAPTER REVIEW

**MAKE IT STICK** Go to **LearningCurve** to retain what you've read.



**TERMS TO KNOW** Identify and explain the significance of each term below.

### Key Concepts and Events

**Crittenden Compromise** (p. 446)  
**total war** (p. 452)  
**draft (conscription)** (p. 452)  
**habeas corpus** (p. 454)  
**King Cotton** (p. 456)  
**greenbacks** (p. 460)  
**“contrabands”** (p. 463)  
**Radical Republicans** (p. 463)

**Emancipation Proclamation**  
 (p. 464)  
**scorched-earth campaign** (p. 468)  
**War and Peace Democrats**  
 (p. 469)  
**“hard war”** (p. 470)  
**March to the Sea** (p. 470)

### Key People

**Abraham Lincoln** (p. 444)  
**Jefferson Davis** (p. 446)  
**Robert E. Lee** (p. 448)  
**George McClellan** (p. 449)  
**Ulysses S. Grant** (p. 466)  
**William T. Sherman** (p. 470)



## REVIEW QUESTIONS

Answer these questions to demonstrate your understanding of the chapter's main ideas.

- Based on the evidence presented in this chapter, did Lee's surrender at Appomattox and Grant's magnanimity to the defeated forces save the nation from a drawn-out guerrilla war, as some historians have argued? Or, as other scholars have suggested, did the events at Appomattox undermine black emancipation by giving a high priority to the reconciliation of northern and southern whites?
- In 1860, the institution of slavery was firmly entrenched in the United States; by 1865, it was dead. How did this happen? How and why did Union policy toward slavery and enslaved people change over the course of the war?
- THEMATIC UNDERSTANDING** The thematic timeline for Part 5 (p. 409) lists six events or developments in the 1860s relating directly to the South's secession and the Civil War. Does that list capture the war's overwhelming importance to the history of nineteenth-century America? If not, is this deficiency inherent to timelines, or does it reflect a faulty construction of this specific timeline? How would you address this problem?

## MAKING CONNECTIONS

Recognize the larger developments and continuities within and across chapters by answering these questions.

- ACROSS TIME AND PLACE** After reviewing the compromises over slavery at the Constitutional Convention (p. 469), in the Missouri Compromise (p. 269), and in the Compromise of 1850 (p. 429), write an essay analyzing why the opposing sides failed to compromise in 1861.
- VISUAL EVIDENCE** The photographs of the Southern Refugee Family (p. 462) and Grant Planning a Strategic Maneuver (p. 468) remind us of a world in which people, goods, and soldiers moved either on foot or on horses and mules. How did this limited mobility affect civilians — slave and free — and military forces during the Civil War?

## MORE TO EXPLORE

Start here to learn more about the events discussed in this chapter.

Dora L. Costa and Matthew E. Kahn, *Heroes and Cowards: The Social Face of War* (2008). Demonstrates the role of friendship and community in soldiers' wartime behavior.

Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (2008). Examines the cultural changes prompted by massive casualties.

William W. Freehling, *The South vs. the South* (2001). Explores anti-Confederate sentiment in the South.

Gary W. Gallagher, *The Confederate War* (1997). Views the fighting from the perspective of the secessionists.

Earl J. Hess, *The Union Soldier in Battle* (1997). Vividly describes the smell, sound, and feel of combat.

James M. McPherson, *The Battle Cry of Freedom* (1988). A fine narrative history of the Civil War.

**TIMELINE** Ask yourself why this chapter begins and ends with these dates and then identify the links among related events.

<b>1860</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abraham Lincoln elected president (November 6)</li> <li>• South Carolina secedes (December 20)</li> </ul>
<b>1861</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lincoln inaugurated (March 4)</li> <li>• Confederates fire on Fort Sumter (April 12)</li> <li>• Virginia leaves Union (April 17)</li> <li>• General Butler declares refugee slaves “contraband of war” (May)</li> <li>• Confederates win Battle of Bull Run (July 21)</li> <li>• First Confiscation Act (August)</li> </ul>
<b>1862</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal Tender Act authorizes greenbacks (February)</li> <li>• Union triumphs at Shiloh (April 6–7)</li> <li>• Confederacy introduces draft (April)</li> <li>• Congress passes Homestead Act and Transcontinental Railroad Act (May, July)</li> <li>• Union halts Confederates at Antietam (September 17)</li> <li>• Preliminary emancipation proclamation (September 22)</li> </ul>
<b>1863</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lincoln signs Emancipation Proclamation (January 1)</li> <li>• Union wins battles at Gettysburg (July 1–3) and Vicksburg (July 4)</li> <li>• Union initiates draft (March), sparking riots in New York City (July)</li> </ul>
<b>1864</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ulysses S. Grant named Union commander (March)</li> <li>• Grant advances on Richmond (May)</li> <li>• William Tecumseh Sherman takes Atlanta (September 2)</li> <li>• Lincoln reelected (November 8)</li> <li>• Sherman marches through Georgia (November and December)</li> </ul>
<b>1865</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Congress approves Thirteenth Amendment (January 31)</li> <li>• Robert E. Lee surrenders (April 9)</li> <li>• Lincoln assassinated (April 14)</li> <li>• Thirteenth Amendment ratified (December 6)</li> </ul>

**KEY TURNING POINTS:** The Emancipation Proclamations (1862/1863); Union victories at Gettysburg and Vicksburg (1863); and Sherman’s taking of Atlanta (1864): historians have seen all of these events as important turning points. Assume that *one* of these events did not happen. What difference would it have made in the military and political struggle between the Union and the Confederacy?