

THE CIVIL WAR: 1861 to 1865

1861

Battle of Bull Run: First Battle of the War

The First Battle of Bull Run took place near Washington, D.C. on July 21, 1861. **General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson** led the Confederates who defeated the Union soldiers. This surprised the Northerners who had expected a quick victory. Now it appeared that the war would be long and tough.



Stonewall Jackson at the Battle of Bull Run, July 21, 1861

1862

Grant's Victories in Tennessee

On February 6, 1862, Grant led his men in an attack on two Confederate forts in western Tennessee—Fort Henry and Fort Donelson. He informed the Confederates that, "No terms except unconditional and immediate surrender can be accepted." A three-day battle followed. Grant won, effectively cutting off supply lines to the South from the West.

Two months later, the Confederate Army surprised Grant at Shiloh, Tennessee. The Southern troops were winning. Backup Union troops arrived and helped to defeat them. This gave the Union greater control of the Mississippi River Valley.

The Monitor and the Merrimac At Sea

Meanwhile, on the coast, the Confederates had turned the **Merrimac**, a captured Union ship, into an **ironclad**. They coated the wooden ship with iron and renamed it the **Virginia**. The **Merrimac** sank a number of Union warships in a Virginia harbor in March 1862. When the Confederate ironclad reappeared on March 9, the **Monitor**, a Union ironclad, was waiting. The two ironclads fought for hours, but did no damage to each other. However, the **Merrimac** retreated and the Union was able to continue the blockade of the South.

The Surrender of New Orleans

In April 1862, **David Farragut** ordered his warships to sail through the fire from Confederate forts on land. When they arrived in New Orleans, that city surrendered opening the way for him to take other cities on the Mississippi.

Lincoln's Goal: Seize Richmond

From the beginning, President Lincoln's aim was to overtake the Confederate capital, Richmond. In June of 1862, he sent General **George B. McClellan** to capture Richmond, Virginia. But General Robert E. Lee began to push the Union Army away from the capital. The armies fought five separate times in a period of a week. Both sides lost thousands of men in this fighting called the Seven Days' Battle. Then Union General John Pope tried to reach Richmond from Washington. He, too, was defeated at the Second Battle at Bull Run and retreated to Washington.

Lee Invades the North

Now that the North was on the run, General Lee planned to pursue the enemy. He crossed the

Potomac River and invaded Maryland. While in Maryland, he wrote down his plans to bring the North to the table for peace talks. Lee's troops moved on, accidentally leaving a copy of the plans behind. McClellan and his men stopped at the same campsite and found the plans.

Battle at Antietam

McClellan now had the information to stop Lee. He went on the attack, meeting Lee's army at the Battle at Antietam Creek. Fought in September 1862, it turned out to be the bloodiest single-day battle of the war. It was a key win for the North. However, McClellan moved slowly. He misjudged his victory and did not capture Lee's army, which retreated safely across the Potomac River to Virginia. This caused Lincoln to replace him with Ambrose Burnside. Burnside's men were slaughtered at the Battle of



Fredricksburg, Virginia in December, with over 12,000 casualties. General Hooker replaced Burnside.

The Emancipation Proclamation

Lincoln's goal as President was to keep the country united—not necessarily to abolish slavery. However, two years later he thought the time had come. On January 1, 1863, President Lincoln issued the **Emancipation Proclamation** freeing all the slaves living in the Confederacy. It did not affect those slaves living in the border states. This document, in effect, cancelled the Fugitive Slave Law. The Proclamation also gave renewed spirit to the Union troops.

1863

By the spring of 1863, the War Department allowed free African American volunteers and **contrabands**, or escaped slaves, to join the Union army. The **54th Massachusetts Infantry** consisted mostly of Free African Americans. It became the most famous African American unit of the war.

The Battle of Chancellorsville

General Hooker's troops met Lee at Chancellorsville, Virginia in May 1863. The Confederates, greatly outnumbered, once again soundly defeated the Union forces. However, General "Stonewall" Jackson died from pneumonia after being shot by friendly fire. One of his own men had mistaken him for a Union soldier.

The Siege of Vicksburg

News of victory came from Vicksburg, Mississippi. This city sat on high hills above the Mississippi River. In 1862, General Grant had conquered most of the South's strongholds on the Mississippi. However, Vicksburg remained under Confederate control.

In May 1863, General Grant's troops surrounded the city, preventing supplies from reaching Vicksburg. The people of the city suffered from the lack of food and the bombardment of shells during the Siege of Vicksburg. Things got so desperate that people ate horses, dogs, and rats. They finally surrendered on July 4, 1863, after six weeks of siege. The Union now had complete control over the Mississippi. The South was split in two.

The Battle of Gettysburg

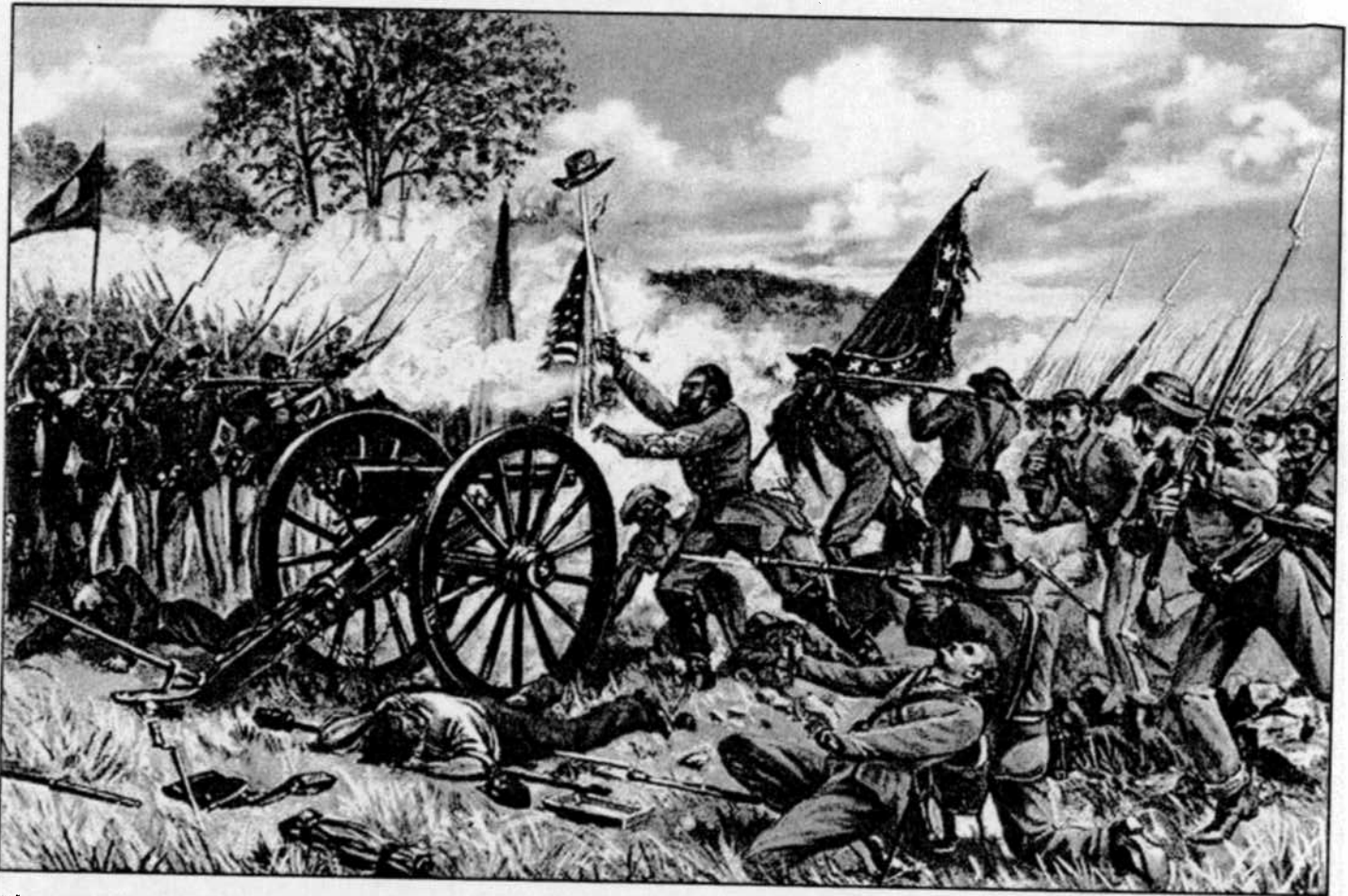
Pressing north again, Lee crossed into Pennsylvania. On July 1, 1863, the Confederates came upon the Union forces led by General Meade in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

The Battle of Gettysburg raged on for three days. Union soldiers dug in on Cemetery Hill, and the Confederates, or Rebels as the North called them, tried to force them down. The bullets pelted through the air, whipping in all directions, as dense as a hailstorm. On July 3, Lee ordered General Pickett to attack the middle of the Union line. About 13,000 Confederate soldiers charged up the hill. Sabers, bayonets, and pistols chopped down soldiers as they met in hand-to-hand combat. **Pickett's Charge** littered the field with gruesome piles of dead bodies. 3,500 soldiers were buried there.

Once again Lee retreated, but Union generals did not follow. President Lincoln began to think he would never find a general who would complete the job and destroy Lee's army.

Lincoln's Gettysburg Address

On November 19, 1863, Lincoln dedicated a national cemetery in Gettysburg to the soldiers buried there. Lincoln's two-minute speech, the **Gettysburg Address**, is remembered as one of the best speeches of all time. The opening sentence sums up the reason



Thousands of soldiers on both sides were killed or wounded at the Battle of Gettysburg, July 3, 1863.

for the struggle. The Civil War was fought to continue the Union based on those words. "Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal."

Civilian Life in the South is Dismal

Civilians in the South suffered brutal hardships during the war. Most farmers had gone off to war. The army used the railroads, so food could not get to the market. Inflation raged. In 1863, the severe shortage of food caused crowds, composed mainly of women and children, to riot in Richmond and several other Southern towns.

The South introduced the **draft** in 1862. By 1863, the draft required all men from 18 to 45 years of age to serve in the military. However, a wealthy Southerner could hire a substitute to serve in his place, a practice the average person resented.

Civilians in the North Fare Better

There was a great deal of dissatisfaction among civilians in the North, too. The **Copperheads** were Northerners who did not agree with Lincoln about the war. They supported making peace with the South. Lincoln temporarily halted the **Writ of Habeas Corpus**. Written in the Constitution, Habeas Corpus guarantees that a person is entitled to a trial soon

after he or she has been imprisoned for a crime. He did this to discourage people from protesting.

The Union also had a draft law. Rich men could buy their way out of service in the North, too. However, the Union offered up to \$500 to volunteers if they would join the army. As a result few men were drafted.

Industry benefited from the production of war materials. Factories and business provided work, so people in the North did not suffer hunger and hardship. New industries, such as steel, petroleum, and manufacturing, developed quickly. In 1861, Congress decided to put a tax on the money people earned. This "income tax" provided money for the Union to pay for the war. In addition, the government introduced paper money, called "greenbacks," because of their color. The new **currency** provided people with enough money to keep the economy in good shape. All in all, the northern civilian lived through the war far better off than the Confederate civilian did.

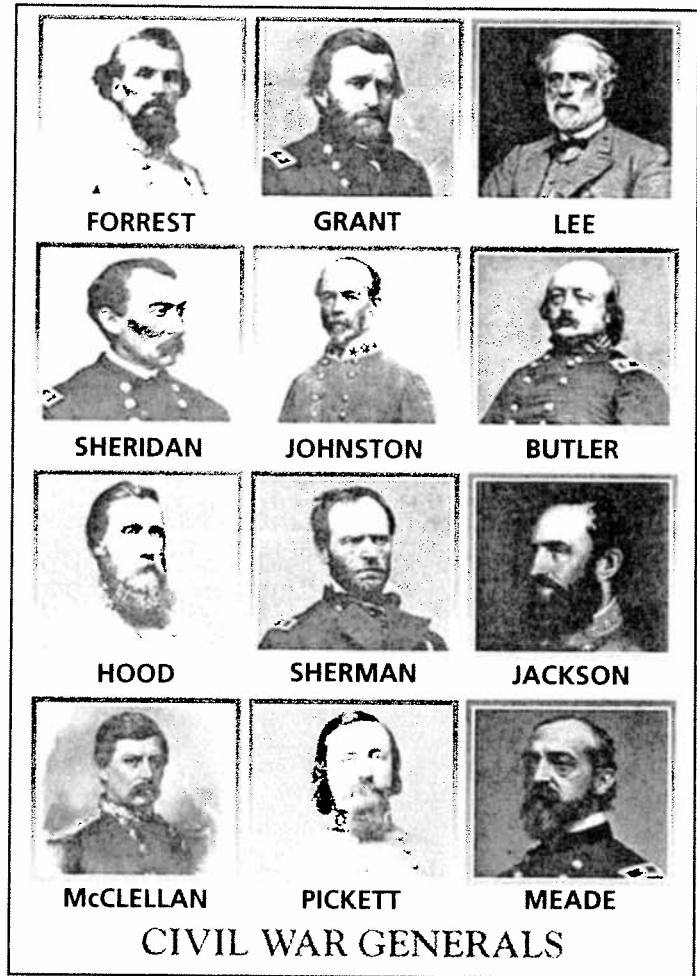
1864

Grant's Two-Part Plan

In March 1864, Lincoln, impressed with Grant's victory in Vicksburg, appointed him General-in-Chief of the North. Grant decided on a two-part plan to defeat the Confederates. Grant's troops would pin down Lee's army in Virginia. Meanwhile Sherman and his army would move from Tennessee east to Atlanta and on to the Atlantic Ocean.

Part 1: Grant's Wilderness Campaign

Grant mounted his 1864 Wilderness Campaign, a series of battles fought in the Wilderness region of Virginia. He was determined to defeat General Lee



Union (shown in blue) and Confederate Generals (shown in black)

and the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia. In early May 1864, Grant led his army into the dense scrub growth and tangled woods near Fredericksburg. The first encounter, the Battle of the Wilderness, took place in early May. There the Union army suffered huge losses. The Confederates had dug in and had few casualties.

Grant pressed on, moving toward Richmond. The fighting continued as armies fought at Spotsylvania. At Cold Harbor, outside Richmond, Grant met with a staggering defeat. He lost 6,000 to 7,000 men within the first hour. In June 1864, the Union army drew close to Richmond. Grant's army stopped at Petersburg, south of the Confederacy capital.

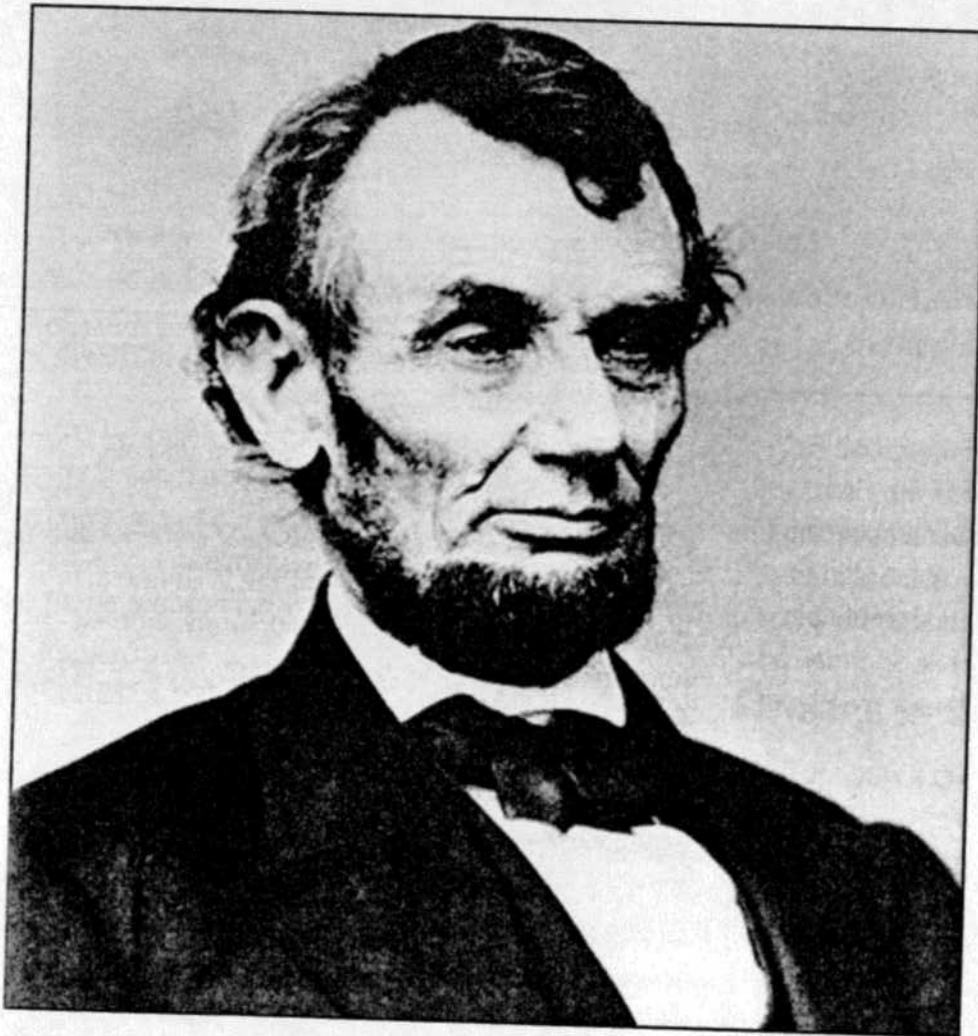
The soldiers could not break through the Confederate line of defense. They dug trenches, realizing they would be in for a long siege. General Lee's men hunkered down too. For the next 10 months the two sides fought in minor skirmishes. Still the number of casualties climbed mercilessly.

Part 2: Sherman's March to the Sea

General William Tecumseh Sherman had marched his troops through the Appalachian Mountains. In July, they reached Atlanta and began a 40-day siege of the city. When Atlanta surrendered on

September 2, 1864, much of the city had been burned. The confederacy lost an important railroad connection and a hub of industry. Then Sherman marched southeast toward Savannah, Georgia. He believed the North would win only if the South's economy and its military resources were destroyed.

On their **March to the Sea**, Sherman's troops conducted a **total war**. This is a war that not only seeks to defeat the enemy, but also tries to eliminate everything that gives support to the enemy. They destroyed railways, bridges, crops, livestock, and burned plantations. Sherman and his army left a path of cinders 60 miles wide and 250 miles long.



Abraham Lincoln

Lincoln Wins a Second Term in Office

1864 was a reelection year for Lincoln. The North was tired of war, tired of losing, and most voters did not intend to return Lincoln to office. The Democrats had nominated George McClellan as their candidate for the Presidency. He ran on an anti-war platform. News of Sherman's victory in Atlanta changed that. Lincoln won the presidency for a second term. In his inaugural address, Lincoln wished for an end to the war and a spirit of willingness among the people to "bind up the nation's wounds."

1865

Surrender at Appomattox

When Lee heard of Sherman's victories, he knew that the cause was hopeless. He withdrew from Richmond. Grant entered Richmond on April 3, 1865 and raised the Stars and Stripes over the Capitol.

Finally, on April 9, 1865 Lee officially surrendered. He and Grant met in the town of **Appomattox Court House**, Virginia. Grant wrote generous terms of surrender that would rule out treason trials. Confederate soldiers could return home in peace.

THE BITTER AFTERMATH

During the war, the Union Army had captured Lee's plantation in Arlington, Virginia. When it came time to choose a site for a military cemetery for Union soldiers, Lee's former estate was selected. This symbolic act was a bitter and spiteful decision. Today the cemetery is known as **Arlington National Cemetery**.

Many Northerners shared this resentment toward the South. Southerners, in turn, harbored bitterness toward the North. The Civil War had been too costly. Over 600,000 soldiers died. Another million suffered

wounds that would haunt them throughout their lives. The war scarred civilians on both sides.

In addition, both the United States government and the Confederacy had borrowed enormous amounts of money. The loss in commerce and trade alone would take years to recover.

The Thirteenth Amendment

Although the Emancipation Proclamation freed the slaves in the South, slaves still existed in the border states. In January 1865, Congress passed the **Thirteenth Amendment** banning slavery in the United States effective December 18, 1865.

Now the people considered the United States one nation, and not a group of states. The demands of war had created a larger more powerful federal government.

John Wilkes Booth Assassinates President Lincoln

Lincoln never saw his dream to end slavery succeed. Five days after Lee's surrender The President and Mrs. Lincoln were watching a play at Ford's Theater in Washington, D.C. John Wilkes Booth, a Confederate sympathizer, shot President Lincoln. Doctors were unable to remove the bullet from his brain and Lincoln died on April 15, 1865.

The assassination stunned the nation. People wept openly in the streets, mourning his loss. Many felt it would take the country longer to rebuild without Lincoln's political shrewdness and executive experience.

A Future Filled With Problems

Now the nation faced the test of rebuilding. The feeling of hate on both sides had to be overcome. Southern states would need help in coming back into the Union. A way had to be found to bring thousands of slaves into a free society.