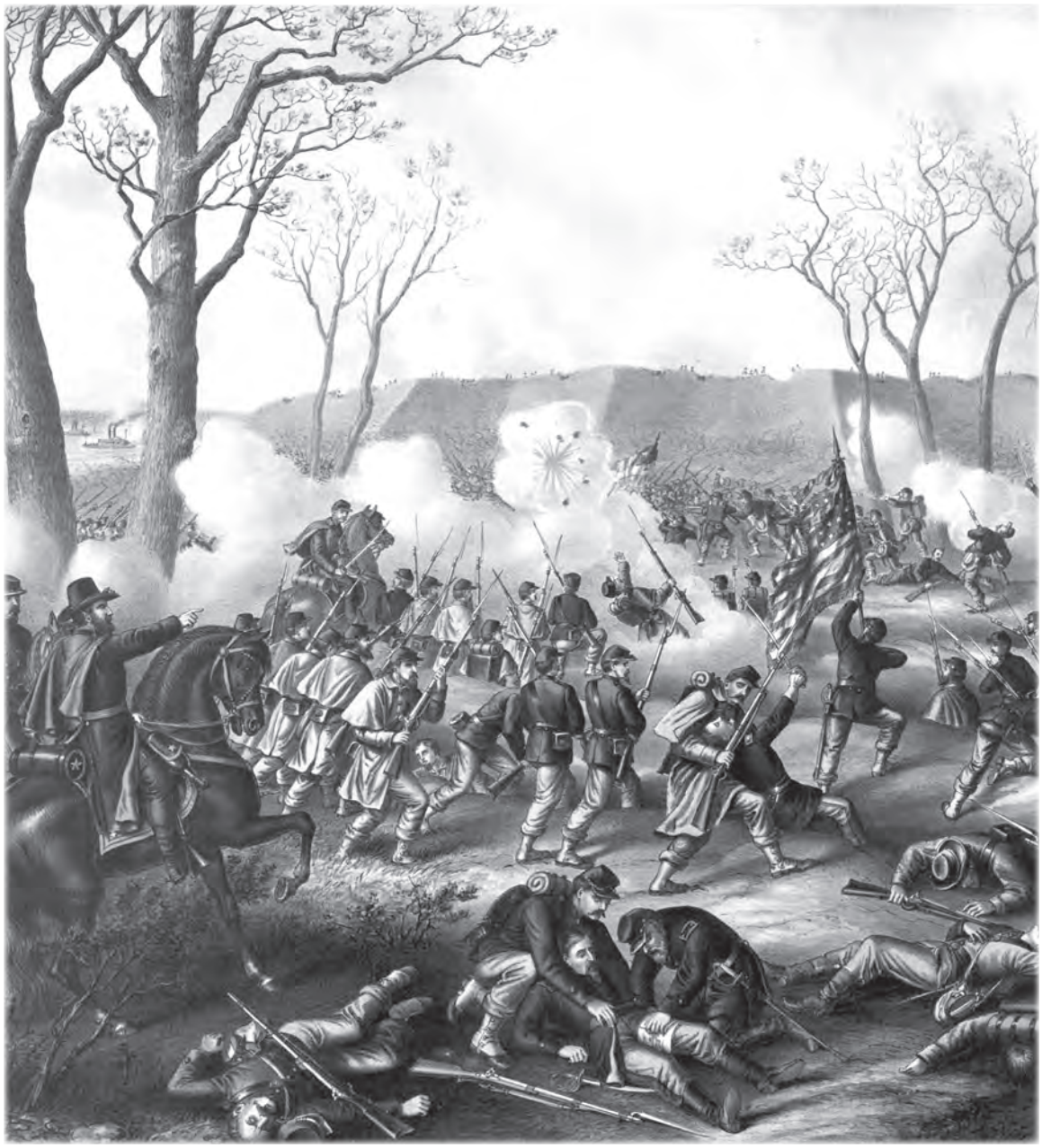


This lithograph of the Battle of Fort Donelson, Tennessee (fought on February 16, 1862), represents the close-quarters fighting that marked much of the tactics used throughout the Civil War. (Library of Congress)

CHAPTER 2

Sherman L. Fleek

OVERVIEW OF THE CIVIL WAR

The greatest danger to American survival at mid-century, however, was neither class tension nor ethnic division. Rather it was sectional conflict between North and South over the future of slavery.

—James M. McPherson[1]

The American Civil War, fought between 1861 and 1865, has been the subject of some of the great literary giants in America, such as Shelby Foote, Robert Penn Warren, Bruce Catton, and Stephen Crane. Filmmakers such as Ken Burns have tried to describe it in sweeping prose and narrative language that capture both the grandeur and the brutality of this awful but critical episode in our history. Great historical minds of recent generations, such as James McPherson, Alan Nevins, Kenneth Stampp, and T. Harry Williams have tried to analyze, define, and interpret the war in accurate and reasonable terms. Even the venerable Winston Churchill provided his opinion on the scope and meaning of this great conflict.[2] All these individuals have shed a little more light on a complex historical problem.

For many in America, the Civil War was, at the crossroads of American democracy and progress, the defining moment that brutally ushered in a new way of life for most and fresh opportunities for many. Others perceive it as a major military conflict, introducing a new era of war with a viciousness that was unprecedented. Still others view it as a dramatic course correction that has not only destroyed a culture and a wicked form of economic labor but also put in jeopardy a fundamental political right—states' rights. Yet for most Americans it is a colossal event that we learned about in school, reading, listening, and just as quickly dismissing because, like so much else in history, the Civil War was so long ago, and what does it mean for us today?

Perhaps President Abraham Lincoln's clarity and centrality from his Gettysburg Address provides guidance in at least one line: "The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here." This statement is true regarding any attempt to understand, write, and analyze this

incredible war and conflict, this monstrous tragedy set upon the path of American history that our grandparents and their grandparents had to face and grapple with. As with any major war, entire cultures, peoples, and nations changed and had to reconcile themselves with this momentous episode.

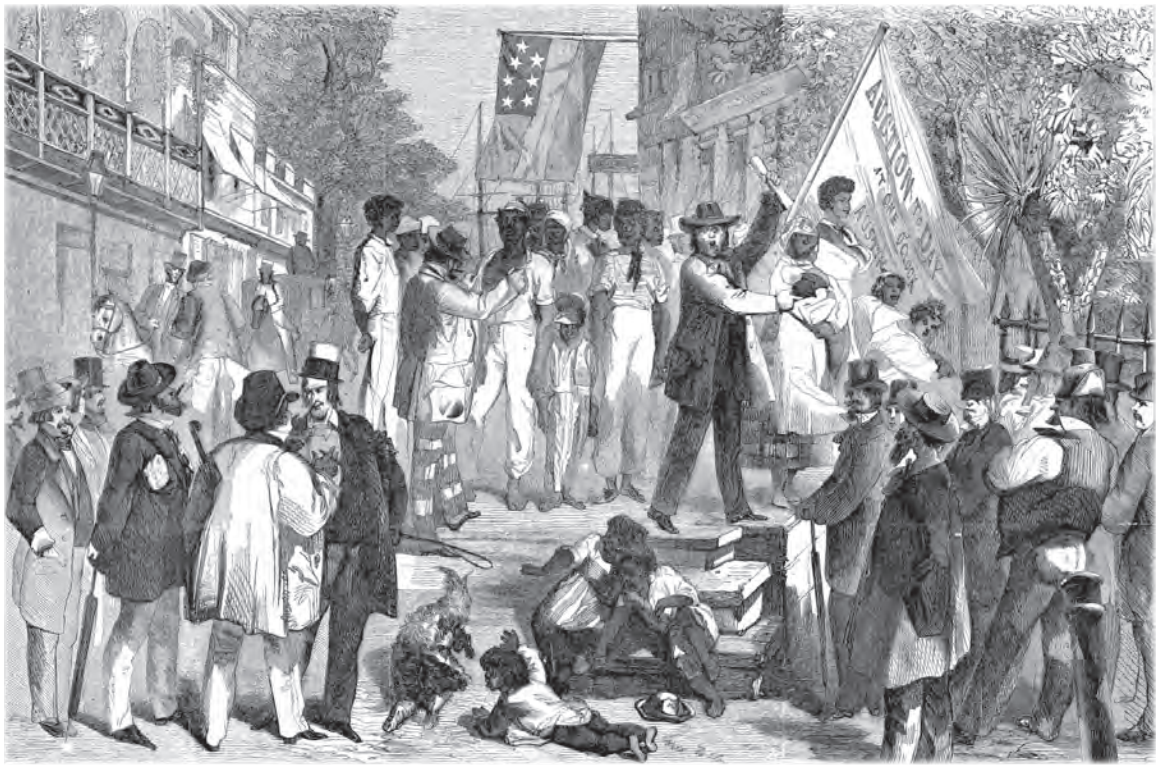
After the founding of the United States in the eighteenth century, the Civil War was the second greatest historical event in the American experience as well as the most revolutionary in the way of change and evolution. This great landmark event was also catastrophic, with some 620,000 dead Americans. This war was America's deadliest, but for some four million people, it also marked the escape from the bonds of a miserable and immoral institution; both of these aspects still haunt us today.[3]

Militarily, the war introduced or expanded two great evolutions in warfare. The Civil War was "modern," with its technological improvements and vast new methods of not only death and destruction in advanced weaponry but also breakthroughs in transportation, communication, industrial output, and logistical methods. The war was also a foreshadowing of "total" war—when a nation attempts to harness all its resources, all facets of society, and its entire populace into a coherent, coordinated, marshaled effort and machine to fulfill its war aims and achieve victory. The American Civil War may be one of the first conflicts to harness both these types of warfare; at the very least, it was certainly a harbinger of wars to come.

CAUSES OF THE WAR

The causes and results of the Civil War are just as nebulous to define and describe, but simply put, at the center of all the political jousting, compromising, state and federal disputing, and economic and legal wrangling was the ugly moral dilemma of slavery. And the overriding question was what to do with it. Perhaps the best explanation remains that the Civil War came as a result of the secession of Southern states after forty years of sectional feuds and the national crisis of politics, economics, and social morality that was the expansion and status of slavery into the ever-growing republic. By 1860 the two sections could no longer compromise and avoid war as they had in the past. What may have been a seemingly inevitable conflict germinated in the colonial period and was not resolved in the succeeding eighty years since the founding of the republic. In the words of perhaps the most eloquent writer on the Civil War, Bruce Catton, "Without slavery, the problems between the sections could probably have been worked out by the ordinary give-and-take of politics; with slavery, they became insoluble. So, in 1861 the North and South went to war, destroying one America and beginning the building of another which is not even yet complete."[4]

Undoubtedly, the issue of states' rights was a huge catalyst behind all the gesturing, posturing, and politicking of the 1820s through the 1850s. But what was the one right the South was willing to defend and fight over, and what was the one right the North was unwilling to allow? Slavery. The expansion of slavery into the new territories gained from Mexico was the real cause of the regional conflict. From 1820 with the Missouri Compromise to 1854 with the Kansas-Nebraska Act, slavery and its future were always the critical sectional issue that divided the country and came to divide the parties. This issue destroyed the Whig Party and gave birth to the Republican Party in the early 1850s.[5] Abraham Lincoln's election to the presidency in 1860, with the Republican



At the center of all the political jousting, compromising, state and federal disputing, and economic and legal wrangling was the ugly moral dilemma of slavery. And the overriding question was what to do with it. This July 1861 Harper's Weekly *image shows a slave auction in the South.* (Harper's Weekly)

free soil, free labor, and free man notions, was too much for the Southern Democrats—they decided to secede. This secession was a not a mass exit: state by state seceded over a period of several months once the first hostilities began. Eleven states eventually formed the Confederacy, but only after a concerted and organized campaign involving newspaper editorializing and dedicated speakers and lobbyists who flocked to the undecided states encouraging them to join with the seceding states. There these "firebrands" stoked the flames of secession, worshipped the common culture of racism, and created a vitriolic campaign against the "Black" Republicans in the symbol of Lincoln. A Mississippi judge led a delegation to address Georgia legislators and offered these fiery words: "Sink or swim, live or die, survive or perish, the part of Mississippi is chosen, she will never submit to the principles and policy of this Black Republic administration," adding this threat, that the South would avoid "submission to negro equality. . . . Secession is inevitable." Ironically, as each Southern state clamored for its individual sovereignty and the right to separate from the Union, the first thing the South did was form another union of states.[6]

Most people today find it difficult to grasp and understand the causes and outcomes of this complicated and complex national crisis. The fact that fathers and brothers opposed members of their own family, that people and region were at odds with each other, was a terrible prospect. Fortunately, the military campaigns, national politics, and final

resolution are more easily narrated than are the causes and consequences of the war.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The American Civil War began at Fort Sumter, South Carolina, in April 1861. Yet, in some regards, if one really considers the facts, relationships, issues, and causes, one could argue that the war actually began in the Territory of Kansas in the spring of 1856. At that time, Americans were killing each other for the same reason they would five years later: the future of slavery. Yet since there was no secessionist government intact and no clean break of states rebelling against the mother country in 1856, the attack on Fort Sumter remains the distinct starting point.[7]

The election of Abraham Lincoln (1809–65) set in motion events that culminated in the American Civil War (1861–65). Lincoln was very involved as commander in chief and often wrote personal letters to the families of fallen soldiers. (Mathew Brady Collection, National Archives)

On a dark morning in Charleston Harbor on April 12, 1861, heavy Confederate siege guns opened fire, and the war started. Four years and a few months later, the last field armies surrendered, and resistance crumbled as the Federal Union was holding a grand review in Washington, DC. Some historians have argued for decades that the South did not have a chance to win their independence. Many feel the Confederacy was doomed because of the North's overwhelming resources, industrial base, and population. Then the obvious question is, why go to war if the outcome was inevitable? If there is one event in the course of human history that is not inevitable, it has to be war.[8]

Jefferson Davis (1808–89) served as the only president of the Confederacy. Davis was a West Point graduate, veteran of the Mexican War, U.S. senator, and former secretary of war. (Mathew Brady Collection, National Archives)

Perhaps the South had some chances to negotiate peace, but it did not have enough military might to win the war. The Confederacy never envisioned and developed the war aims necessary to achieve victory, and thus its national strategy was inadequate to coordinate, employ, and conduct the full spectrum of total warfare, though the Southern nation bled itself white in the attempt. On the other hand, toward the end of the war, the Federal union, its president, and the principal commanders

learned and understood how to use modern war, with its powerful new technologies and tactics, to achieve a total war strategy to defeat the Confederacy and end America's deadliest war.[9]

Except for the small professional army of eighteen thousand authorized officers and men, the war was fought by volunteers—many of whom were amateurs who learned their skills well through war's terribly bloody apprenticeship program. The ranks of enlistments, state regiments, and casualty lists swelled during the four years of conflict.

This 1861 lithograph was "a biting vilification of the Confederacy, representing it as a government in league with Satan. From left to right are: 'Mr. Mob Law Chief Justice,' a well-armed ruffian carrying a pot of tar; Secretary of State Robert Toombs raising a staff with a 'Letter of Marque' (a governmental authorization to seize subjects or property of foreign state, here a reference to Georgia's January seizure of federal Fort Pulaski and the Augusta arsenal); CSA President Jefferson Davis, wearing saber and spurs. Vice President Alexander Stephens holds forward a list of 'The Fundamental Principles of our Government,' including treason, rebellion, murder, robbery, incendiarism, and theft. Behind the group, on horseback, is Confederate general Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard, commander of forces at the bombardment of Fort Sumter. The delegation is received by Satan and two demonic attendants, who sit in a large cave at right. One attendant has over his shoulder a gallows from which hangs a corpse; the other holds a pitchfork. Satan holds a crown and scepter for Davis in his right hand, while in his left hand he hides a noose behind his back. He greets the Confederates, 'Truly! Fit representatives of our Realm.' Over his head flies a banner with the palmetto of South Carolina and six stars. A large snake curls round its staff." (Library of Congress)

As the smoke cleared at Fort Sumter, there was no calculable equality between the North and the South regarding the resources in each area. The Northern states carried the advantage in population, finances, resources, railroads, industry, shipping, foundries, business, and even the strength of education and institutions of learning. Perhaps the only area where the Confederate states held an advantage was a reckoning of animals, livestock, some agricultural produce, and, of course, cotton. Yet as soon as the U.S. Navy entrapped the Southern ports with its tightening blockade, which took some time to perfect, European buyers began to search elsewhere for cotton, namely, Egypt, or turned to other substitutes, such as wool in England's case.[10]

Historians have argued for more than a hundred years about whether the Confederacy actually had a chance or not to win the war, to accomplish the political goal of separation and independence from the United States. Of course, these arguments are speculative, as interesting as they may seem. After Fort Sumter and due to President Abraham Lincoln's call for volunteers, other Southern states—especially Virginia—defected from the Union. The secession of states was not a general mass exodus; states departed one at a time, sometimes in clusters, but it was an individual process.

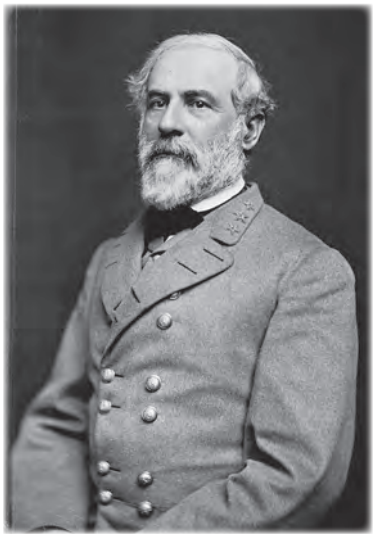
Men joined both sides in droves. The armies marched forth and clashed for the next

On August 17, 1861, Harper's Weekly *printed this summary of Confederate military uniforms.* (Harper's Weekly)

Two weeks later, on August 31, 1861, Harper's Weekly *printed these samples of Union military uniforms.* (Harper's Weekly)

four years while women and children waited, worried, and in most ways took over the roles of father and provider. At home they dreaded the casualty lists posted at the courthouse or town square.

The war developed into two major efforts or areas of operation. (Some historians use an older and less accurate World War II distinction: theaters of war.) Divided by the Appalachian Mountains, the front lines were mostly east and west. Field armies bore down on one another in killing fields that soon matched the butcher's bills at Waterloo or Austerlitz. Such major battles in previous European wars usually decided the war, and peace ensued. But in this new era of total war, Americans would fight several dozen Waterloo-type battles, and the outcome would continue to be undecided for years. Virginia especially became the nexus of a dozen Napoleonic War–sized battles that just plowed more ground for graves.



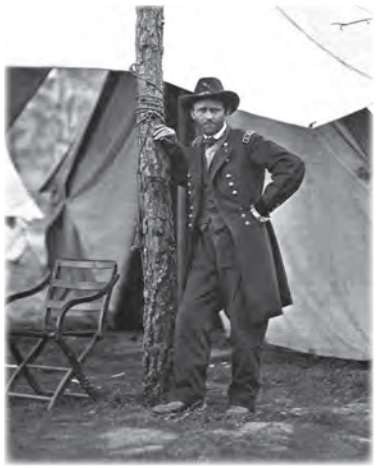
Confederate General Robert Edward Lee (1807–70) in 1863. Interestingly, it was Lee, a graduate and former superintendent of the United States Military Academy at West Point, who commanded the military detachment that captured the abolitionist John Brown at Harpers Ferry, Virginia, in 1859. (Mathew Brady Collection, National Archives)

Here it may be appropriate to state that the Civil War represents portions of both modern war, technological advancements on a vast scale, and total war, where a nation's complete resources, population, and efforts are unleashed to bring about the "unconditional surrender" or total defeat of the enemy. A major factor in the Union grand strategy was to blockade Southern ports. The naval war was important and sometimes romantic with ironclads, and the blockade was a significant war aim that squeezed the life out of the South's once-vital maritime commerce. However, the true battlefield of victory or defeat was accomplished on land—warfare of maneuver and technology as never seen before.[11]

In 1861 the first major contest was along Bull Run, a creek near the railroad junction at Manassas, Virginia. Most people, especially the politicians and journalists on both sides, wrongly thought the war would be decided by one major, bloody contest. On July 21, along Bull Run, the Federals had the upper hand most of the day until Confederate reinforcements arrived, and through lack of command and control, uncoordinated piecemeal attacks caused the Union effort to unravel. Confederate defense of the high ground, especially on the key terrain of Henry House Hill, won the day. The long, defeated, and straggling columns of discouraged Federal soldiers fled back to Washington as a rabble and not an army. Hundreds of civilians who came out to picnic and observe the exciting day were among the exhausted throng. From this time forth, both sides knew they had serious conflict before them.[12]

After the Rebel victory, the Federals regrouped, and soon thereafter the administration appointed forty-year-old George McClellan to command all the Union forces in the field. Soon the slogan "On to Richmond" echoed in a thousand camp sites,

especially in the East. This new army, called the Army of the Potomac, nearly became McClellan's private army, a well-organized and disciplined but inert specimen. This early concept of victory, taking the Confederate capital, cost the North dearly for nearly three years until President Lincoln, after trial and error, battle after battle, general after general, and tens of thousands of corpses, finally found a few commanders who devised the relentless strategy and had the guts to execute total war.[13]



General Ulysses S. Grant (1822–85) at Cold Harbor, Virginia, in 1864. Born Hiram Ulysses Grant, he was elected in 1868 as the eighteenth president the United States. (Mathew Brady Collection, National Archives)

The Confederacy, on the other hand, adopted flawed war aims and strategy that would eventually spell their doom. Every Yankee incursion and invasion was to be met and defeated; every square inch of Dixie was to be defended and, if lost, then later redeemed. No leaders with the vision of modern warfare came to the forefront. None understood how to achieve victory using a total war strategy—though the South employed the ingredients of total war without knowing it, in the sense that they sacrificed nearly everything to win. Even a limited war of attrition, fighting only when absolutely necessary and conserving resources and men, such as George Washington conducted against the British, may have, over time, proved more successful.[14]

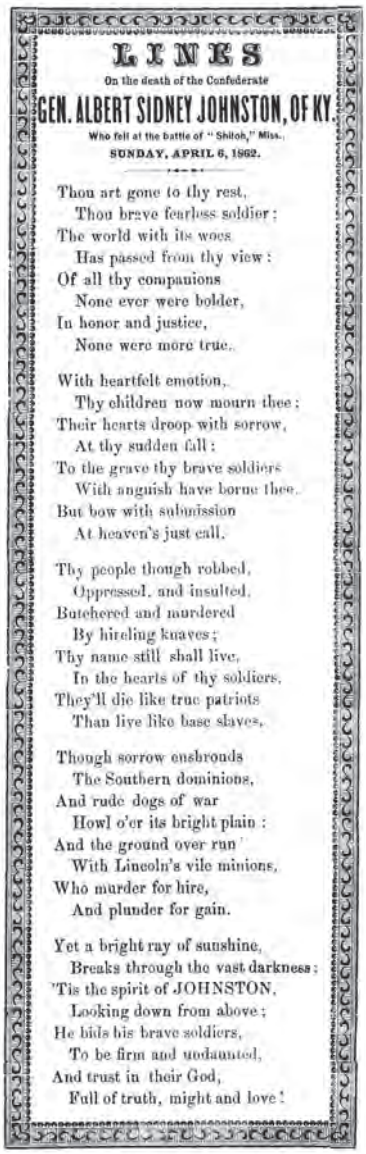
STRATEGY AND TACTICS

The true nature and perhaps even the outcome of the conflict manifested itself in the pivotal year of 1862. The western area of operations along the Mississippi River was the effort that eventually gave the North victory. The now-glamorous and bloody war along the East Coast, especially in Virginia, was nothing more than a mobile Western Front. These campaigns became a foreshadowing of the stalemate of World War I, a deadly war of attrition with no clear victory until the last months of the war.

President Lincoln became increasingly doubtful about General McClellan's leadership and enthusiasm for victory when the general failed to move and strike the heart of the Confederacy at Richmond. In fact, at one point he asked McClellan if he could "borrow the Army" for a time.[15] Finally, McClellan executed his grandiose plan to move some one hundred thousand men by boats and barges down the Potomac River into the Chesapeake Bay, farther down to the James River, then up the river to Harrison Landing, only twenty miles from Richmond. It was a masterful logistical exercise and daring operation, but within three months, the Peninsula Campaign was an ignominious failure for the United States. After nearly entering Richmond, the two opponents fought a series of battles, the "Seven Days Battles," where the Confederacy rose triumphant and McClellan had to withdraw his still-mammoth army to save it. During this period, the rise of one of the most spectacular field commanders in history was established in the likes of gentlemanly but aggressive leader

Robert E. Lee of Virginia. A West Point graduate and career army officer, he turned his back on oath and country and declared that his loyalty to Virginia was a higher, more sacred duty than that which he owed to the United States. The Confederacy now had its foremost warrior and his army, soon to be named the Army of Northern Virginia. Lee and his lean, aggressive men were a formidable force that defeated Federal efforts in the East again and again. Yet Lee's entire operational theory was based in the past—he searched vainly for the great, final victory or battle of annihilation, such as Waterloo or Yorktown, that would end the war. He was fighting a modern war with sixteenth- and seventeenth-century tactics and assumptions that cost the South dearly in the end.[16]

There were other contests—smaller campaigns that later became the stuff of romance and legends rather than substantive military value—such as the Confederate victories by General Thomas Jackson and his defense of the Shenandoah Valley in the spring of 1862.[17] The amazing introduction of modern war at sea by the clash of ironclads at Hampton Roads between the USS *Monitor* and the CSS *Virginia* changed forever naval warfare and spelled the end of the military age of sail.[18]



LINES

On the death of the Confederate

GEN. ALBERT SIDNEY JOHNSTON, OF KY.

Who fell at the battle of "Shiloh," Miss.,

SUNDAY, APRIL 6, 1862.

Thou art gone to thy rest,
Thou brave fearless soldier;
The world with its woes
Has passed from thy view;
Of all thy companions
None ever were bolder,
In honor and justice,
None were more true.

With heartfelt emotion,
Thy children now mourn thee;
Their hearts droop with sorrow,
At thy sudden fall;
To the grave thy brave soldiers
With anguish have borne thee,
But bow with submission
At heaven's just call.

Thy people though robbed,
Oppressed, and insulted,
Butchered and murdered
By hireling knaves;
Thy name still shall live,
In the hearts of thy soldiers,
They'll die like true patriots
Than live like base slaves.

Though sorrow enshrouds
The Southern dominions,
And rude dogs of war
Howl o'er its bright plain:
And the ground over run
With Lincoln's vile minions,
Who murder for hire,
And plunder for gain.

Yet a bright ray of sunshine,
Breaks through the vast darkness;
'Tis the spirit of JOHNSTON,
Looking down from above;
He bids his brave soldiers,
To be firm and undaunted,
And trust in their God,
Full of truth, might and love!

This broadsheet was published shortly after the death of Confederate general Albert Sidney Johnston, of Kentucky. (American Song Sheets, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University)

There were also battles in distant New Mexico and modern-day Arizona where small armies fought among canyons, cactus, and high mountain passes; these small engagements had little effect on the overall war.[19]

In the West, a rather common and insignificant commander of Federal forces now rose to the forefront. General Ulysses S. Grant, also a West Pointer, was a man who had failed at most civilian pursuits since leaving the army in early 1850s. He had a small force based in Illinois; employed river boats to ferry his troops south into Tennessee in bitter cold February 1862; and in a daring and brilliant campaign, captured two of the South's major fortifications, Forts Henry and Donelson, along river fronts, forcing the evacuation of Rebel forces from Nashville.[20]

With the tenacity of a bulldog, Grant won an incredible victory at Shiloh in April 1862—a battle where he was initially surprised by a major Confederate attack. The Southern army, under General Albert Sidney Johnston, who died at Shiloh, led the Federal troops during the Utah War of 1857–58. Losing

A Confederate artillery battery at Pensacola, Florida (circa 1861). (National Archives)

most of the advantages of terrain and with heavy casualties and the remainder his army in chaos, Grant had already decided to attack the next morning as reinforcements arrived from another army. Grant's cold and bold determination soon overwhelmed the Southerners. This stubborn willpower was one of the great measures that led him to final victory three years later.[21]

By the end of 1862, General Lee had won more victories in Virginia but made no progress against the North other than piling up many more thousands of corpses. In the summer, his victories were at Second Bull Run and Chantilly, and then he invaded Maryland only to fight an indecisive contest near Sharpsburg on Antietam Creek in September. The battle of Antietam remains the bloodiest day in American history, with 4,808 killed in action.[22] The operational defeat dashed the Confederacy's misplaced hope to have foreign powers recognize the South as a legitimate government and also to gain thousands of recruits from neutral Maryland, a border state.[23]

One of the unanticipated reasons for the bloodiness and gruesomeness of the war was the advancement of technology beyond the evolution of tactical art. The new rifle-musket was lethal to four hundred and five hundred yards, three and four times the range during the Napoleonic era and even the Mexican War, which meant volley fire at longer ranges and with greater accuracy. During the first year or two, all the generals fought the Civil War as they had against the Mexicans, at

close ranges, in closed ranks, and by firing in successive orders of volley fire. With the advanced lethality and velocity of the Minié ball, a conical-shaped projectile, the results were devastating. Soon, the generals learned and adapted their tactics and deployments, but not until thousands were killed because tactics had not advanced as technology had—a sad reality in almost all wars.[24]

A much larger result from victory at Antietam was a brilliant political and moral move. Lincoln announced the Emancipation Proclamation, which changed the very purpose of the war by freeing the slaves who were not under Federal control in those portions of the South that were still in rebellion. The North was now fighting not only to defeat the rebellion and reunite the nation but also to destroy slavery. Announced on September 22, 1862, the proclamation went into effect on January 1, 1863. The proclamation underwent several drafts and revisions, but perhaps one of the dramatic passages reflected Lincoln's reliance upon a higher religious power and his faith that all would come to pass. He wrote the concluding paragraph later, adding the phrase "upon military necessity" after the word "constitution," based on his belief that as commander in chief, his exclusive war powers were not enumerated in the Constitution. It was a wise revision with this final passage: "And upon this act, sincerely believing it to be an act of justice, warranted by the *Constitution*, upon military necessity, I invoke the considerate judgment of mankind, and the gracious favor of Almighty God."[25]

Then with a final victory by the North, the institution of slavery would end, and all those held in bondage would be "then, thenceforth and forever free."[26]

With Federal forces gaining the upper hand in the West by late 1862, Grant's slow but determined advance south to divide the Confederacy, and Lee's stubborn wins in the East, the war was far from over. Lee's great success at Fredericksburg in December 1862 was a gory day indeed. Union General Ambrose Burnside (legend has it that he was the father of sideburns because of his thick, lamb-chop whiskers) ordered thirteen frightful, bloody charges uphill against stone walls and earthworks bristling with rifle-muskets and twelve-pound field pieces. Thousands of blue-uniformed bodies lay scattered across a landscape shrouded by snow. Along with other Union commanding officers, Burnside was sacked directly but resigned his post as commander of the Army of the Potomac. Next came Joseph "Fighting Joe" Hooker, a bold, vulgar, and egotistical officer who took command of the Army of Potomac. He then led the army to perhaps its most terrible defeat: against General Lee, who orchestrated his tactical masterpiece of maneuver warfare at Chancellorsville in early May 1863, which move confirmed his legacy then and now.[27]

Lee's great victory at Chancellorsville led to his illogical proposal to once again, with limited resources dwindling every day, invade the North and take the war to the Federal hearthstone. His reasons were to destroy the Union army, pillage the land of provisions and goods, and then, while at the gates of "Festung Washington," he hoped that the Northern willpower would dissipate like a cloud. Then, with foreign recognition, the Confederacy would triumph with their independence established. Lee's great pride in his rough and tattered army could not possibly penetrate some sixty-eight separate Union forts and thousands of men and heavy artillery that guarded the nearly impregnable Federal capital. This plan was the Southern

This lithograph, created after the war, shows "full-length portraits of Stonewall Jackson, P. G.T. Beauregard, and Robert E. Lee with four versions of the Confederate flag surrounded by bust portraits of Jefferson Davis and Confederate Army officers." (Library of Congress)

operational scheme in the East during the summer of 1863.[28]

Lee advanced north without proper reconnaissance to assist him and found himself in a battle not of his choosing at a small crossroads town named Gettysburg. After three days of incredible slaughter and a final disastrous charge losing some seven thousand men, Lee retired on July 4, and this offensive campaign was his last of the war. Some fifty-eight thousand men from both sides fell or were casualties in this, the bloodiest of all Civil War battles.[29]

Many have stated and believed that Gettysburg was the decisive engagement of the Civil War, but on the very day that Lee retreated in ignominious defeat, the true turning point occurred about one thousand miles to the west at a Mississippi River town called Vicksburg.[30] The eventual victor of the war was General U. S. Grant. After three major failed attempts to outmaneuver or dig a canal past Vicksburg, Grant finally transported his army south by gunboats and riverboats under the heavily entrenched and armed batteries built on a high river bluff, a natural fortress. Grant then defeated three separate Confederate armies in five battles while completely cut off from his logistical base. He then approached, besieged, and starved the city and Confederate army into submission. By taking Vicksburg, the Mississippi River soon fell to complete Union control, and Lincoln in guarded exultation said that the mighty "father of waters" could now continue to flow. Other Federal forces, namely, General William Sherman's march through Georgia, would eventually divide the South again and cause the loss or disruption of great resources, especially livestock, that the Confederacy desperately needed. Vicksburg, we have learned after nearly 150 years, was the true turning point in the war. The nation and army that controlled the Mississippi River would eventually win the war.[31]

GUERRILLA WARFARE

Perhaps one of the most interesting untold stories of the Civil War is that some of the vicious and terrible fighting did not occur in the great battles in Virginia or Tennessee or even Georgia but in hundreds of gruesome firefights in Missouri. As one of several border states that did not join the Confederacy but had a strong pro-slavery sentiment, Missouri was the focal point of another awful condition of modern warfare—guerrilla war. For nearly four years, towns, farms, homes, and barns were burned and people dragged from their homes at night. Even captured soldiers were dragged from trains or camps and murdered. Guerrilla war in any form and intensity is appalling, but in Missouri it was worse than most.

It was Missouri "border ruffians" who caused the uproar and violence in "bleeding Kansas" in the late 1850s. Because there were few conventional armies and outposts in Missouri, the rich land of pastures, farms, and riverboat commerce became a killing ground for wicked desperadoes on both sides, but the Southern cause especially attracted some of the most notorious villains in American history. William Quantrill, who served on the Utah expedition in 1857–58 as a teamster and cook, gathered a group of mean and nasty killers that had a field day for several years murdering anyone who stood for the Union or was anti-slavery. Romantic figures—brutal killers really—such as Jesse and Frank James, the Younger brothers, "Bloody" Bill Anderson, and other equally wanton killers and thieves

learned their trade in the Civil War. The land of Missouri ran with partisan blood, and it is now impossible to quantify just how many hundreds, perhaps even thousands, of soldiers, citizens, men, women, and children perished through this ferocious guerrilla war.[32]

THE END OF THE WAR

The crucial year of 1864 was the last great year of battles and political anxiety in the North. In April, Lincoln finally found his general who would bring final victory: U. S. Grant. Promoted to lieutenant general and commander of all Federal armies, Grant designed what would become his famous "overland" maneuver that would finally force the tough and seasoned Confederate army under General Lee to its knees. In coming east to command, Grant chose to command from the field. He left the western area of operations to his faithful and competent friend, William Tecumseh Sherman. After several minor engagements along the Tennessee and Georgia border, Sherman pressed forward with some eighty thousand men toward the great commercial and transportation hub of Atlanta, perhaps the most important city in the Confederacy with its railroad links and manufacturing power. Eastward in Virginia, after several major and bloody fights at the Wilderness, Spotsylvania, and then Cold Harbor, was Grant's huge and poorly conceived frontal attack. Finally, Grant forced Lee into a box south of Richmond at Petersburg, where the war entered into a new phase of warfare, foreshadowing the Western Front of 1915–16: trenches and stalemate. The summer maneuvers cost the Federals some forty-four thousand men, but those lost were soon replaced with new faces. Ironically, the Confederates lost less than half that number, but they could not replace their losses.[33]

General William Tecumseh Sherman (1820–91) is probably best known for his "scorched earth" march to the sea through Georgia. Sherman succeeded Grant as commanding general of the army following the Civil War. (Pictured here in 1864–65.) (Mathew Brady Collection, National Archives)

The gruesome war slugged along as both populaces on the home front grew weary of the casualty lists. The politics of 1864 grew intense as the "peace" Democrats pilloried Lincoln and his advisors as warmongers who were no more than butchers. The nomination for president of former General George McClellan, who hoped to arrange a "negotiated peace" with the recalcitrant Southerners, hoped to end the bloodletting by putting "ole Abe" out to pasture.[34]

The war had evolved since the issue of the Emancipation Proclamation; it was now a crusade against slavery. Tens of thousands of African Americans flocked to the colors and fought in United States Colored Troops, "USCT" regiments led by white officers. Dozens were awarded the Medal of Honor, established during the war as the highest award in America for valor. Meanwhile in the Confederacy, there was a great debate about whether to use slaves in the ranks or at least free the slaves to finally gain international recognition. These measures were never adopted,

however; a more sinister policy was enacted. The Confederate government did decree that white officers, along with their black soldiers who were captured, were to be executed as rebels in sedition.[35]

The Southern diplomatic campaign failed—only one small German monarchy recognized the Confederacy as a sovereign nation. The great nations of Europe, France, Spain, Great Britain, and Russia wanted Southern cotton but would not lift a finger to help the Confederacy beyond selling war material and building Confederate ships for commerce raiding and blockade running.[36] Slowly but surely, the South was starving and dying, and its only hope was to stop Grant and his hordes in blue and continue to make the war an awful burden for the North. Little did they know or understand the will and determination of Americans in the Northern states.

The military victory that sealed Lincoln's reelection and the Confederacy's fate was Sherman's capture of Atlanta on September 2, 1864. Then followed Sherman's legendary march to Savannah and to the sea. In this campaign, Sherman introduced total war to Georgia and then to the Carolinas. The great campaign that divided the South also broke the will of the Southern people. The Federals cut a swath sixty miles wide that destroyed war resources and commodities. Rumors and myths evolved later that Union troops burned all homes and destroyed all private property in their way. Of course, war causes destruction, but Sherman issued stern orders to maintain control, which unfortunately were not always followed.[37]

Life slowly ebbed away from Lee's once-invincible Army of Northern Virginia; his men were starving, provisions were meager, and the once-battle-hardened core of veterans was mostly gone. There were battles in the trenches at Petersburg; the most spectacular was the "Crater," when former miners in the Union forces dug a tunnel under the Rebel earthworks and detonated tons of explosives, only losing the great opportunity by poor planning and poor leadership. So, as the winter came, the trenches stretched farther and farther, encircling Petersburg.

Just before the presidential election in November 1864, General Phil Sheridan, a diminutive infantryman turned cavalryman, won a string of decisive victories in Virginia's once-bountiful Shenandoah Valley. Here also, the inhabitants faced the flames of "total" war. Lincoln won a landslide victory at the polls, carrying most of the North against McClellan and peace Democrats. Victory was now assured both politically and militarily.

The spring thaw of 1865 brought bleakness for the Southern rebellion. In one last, risky attempt, General Lee cleverly withdrew from his trench lines and marched west for freedom and stores of goods near Charlottesville and Lynchburg. The Federals quickly pursued and surrounded his meager army after several meaningless and wasteful battles that finally ended in the parlor of a house at Appomattox. Lee surrendered his field army, but there were still several armies afield and more battles to fight and win for the North.[38]

After Richmond fell to the Federals, Mr. Lincoln visited the capital of the Confederacy but saw a gleam of hope for the once again united nation. Just days later, a coward's bullet killed the great statesman and father of freedom.

The results of the bloody Civil War are still with us. Historian Eric Foner labeled the events after the war, especially Reconstruction, as "the unfinished revolution." The nation's failure to establish and safeguard full citizenship and

civil rights for former slaves and to redeem the South remains a tragic chapter in American history. Books are still being written on every major and minute subject possible; it remains the most published and popular American war. More than 620,000 Americans perished. The nation was once again united, but the cost and memory of this war is still with us today. Beyond the great sacrifice, as President Lincoln declared, "a new nation" was born. The slaves were free, Constitutional amendments were added to define their freedom, the states were united, and a strong feeling of reconciliation later grew from the ashes of war. There was still much to do; the new freedmen had decades of prejudice to overcome, and the economic and political transformation of the South would occur for a century.

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NOTES

1. James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 7.
2. Henry Steele Commager, ed., *Churchill's History of the English-Speaking Peoples* (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1995), 380–440.
3. The Civil War was the deadliest war but not the bloodiest war; there is a difference. Some two-thirds, roughly 417,000 soldiers, in the Civil War died of natural causes, diseases, and accidents; some 206,000 or less died in battle or later from the results of wounds. In World War II some 290,000 died in action; thus it is our bloodiest war. See Alan R. Millet and Peter Maslowski, *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States of America* (New York: Free Press, 1994), 653.
4. Bruce Catton, *The Civil War* (1960; repr., New York: Fairfax, 1980), 3.
5. The Whig Party was developed in the mid-1830s by those opposed to President Andrew Jackson's campaign to end the Second United States Bank, which was a combination of both public and private assets and funds. There were other issues that caused the aligning of a new political party, many of whom were former Federalists, but the opposition to Jackson's Democratic issues and platform were major incentives. William Henry Harrison was the first Whig president, elected in 1840.
6. Charles B. Dew, *Apostles of Disunion: Southern Secession Commissioners and the Causes of the Civil War* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2001), 29.
7. See Nicole Etcheson, *Bleeding Kansas: Contested Liberty in the Civil War Era* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2004).
8. Millett and Maslowski, *For the Common Defense*, 172.
9. Millett and Maslowski, *For the Common Defense*, 171–72.
10. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 370–71.
11. Russell F. Weigley, *The American Way of War: A History of the United States Strategy and Policy* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1973), 151–52.
12. Millett and Maslowski, *For the Common Defense*, 172–73.
13. See T. Harry Williams, *Lincoln and the Generals* (New York: Knopf, 1952), 300–302.
14. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 856–57.
15. Jeffrey D. Wert, *The Sword of Lincoln: The Army of the Potomac* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 200), 55.
16. Peter S. Carmichael, ed., *Audacity Personified: The Generalship of Robert E. Lee* (Baton Rouge: University of Louisiana Press, 2004), xvii, 6–7, 12–13.
17. Peter Cozzens, *Shenandoah 1862: Stonewall Jackson's Valley Campaign* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008).
18. Millet and Maslowski, *For the Common Defense*, 221.
19. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 376–77.
20. Benjamin Franklin Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson: The Key to the Confederate Heartland* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1987).

21. See Charles Bracelen Flood, *Grant and Sherman: The Friendship That Won the Civil War* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005).
22. Mark M. Boatner III, *The Civil War Dictionary* (New York: David McKay, 1987), 21.
23. Wert, *Sword of Lincoln*, 172–73.
24. Gregory J. W. Urwin, *The United States Infantry: An Illustrated History, 1775–1918* (New York: Sterling, 1991), 85.
25. Geoffrey Perret, *Lincoln's War: The Untold Story of America's Greatest President and Commander in Chief* (New York: Random House, 2004), 294.
26. Catton, *The Civil War*, 109.
27. Edwin B. Coddington, *The Gettysburg Campaign: A Study in Command* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1968), 6.
28. Patricia L. Faust, ed., *Historical Times Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Civil War* (New York: Harper & Row, 1986), 804–5.
29. Faust, *Historical Times Illustrated Encyclopedia*, 307.
30. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 664–65.
31. Flood, *Grant and Sherman*, 188–89.
32. See Michael Fellman, *Inside War: The Guerrilla Conflict in Missouri during the American Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).
33. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 733.
34. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 771–72.
35. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 565–66.
36. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 837–38.
37. See Burke Davis, *Sherman's March* (New York: Vintage Books, 1988).
38. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 848–52.