

# Chapter 14: Two Societies at War, 1861-1865

## I. Secession and Military Stalemate, 1861-1862

### A. The Secession Crisis

1. The Civil War was called the “War between the States” by southerners and the “War of Rebellion” by northerners.
2. On December 20, 1860, the South Carolina convention voted unanimously to secede from the Union; “fire-eaters” elsewhere in the Deep South quickly followed.
3. The secessionists met in Montgomery, Alabama, in February 1861 and proclaimed a new nation – the Confederate States of America. They adopted a new constitution and named Jefferson Davis as its provisional president.
4. Secessionist fervor was less intense in the slave states of the Upper South, and their leaders proposed federal guarantees for slavery in states where it existed.
5. In December 1860, President James Buchanan declared secession illegal but denied that the federal government had the authority to restore the Union by force.
6. South Carolina demanded the surrender of Fort Sumter, a federal garrison in Charleston Harbor.
7. In response, President Buchanan ordered the resupply of the fort by an unarmed merchant ship. When South Carolinians fired on the ship, Buchanan refused to order the navy to escort it into the harbor.
8. Congress responded with a compromise – the Crittenden plan – which called for a constitutional amendment that would permanently protect slavery from federal interference in any state where it already existed and for the westward extension of the Missouri Compromise line to the California border. Slavery would be barred north of the line and protected to the south, including any territories “hereafter acquired.”
9. Lincoln upheld the first part of the Crittenden plan to protect slavery where it already existed but was not willing to extend the Missouri Compromise line to the California border.
10. Lincoln declared that secession was illegal and that acts against the Union constituted insurrection; he would enforce federal laws as well as continue to possess federal property in seceded states.

### B. The Upper South Chooses Sides

1. Jefferson Davis forced the surrender of Fort Sumter on April 14, 1861; Lincoln called in state militiamen to put down the insurrection.
2. Although some northerners were wary of Lincoln’s Republican administration, they remained supportive of the Union cause and responded positively to Lincoln’s call for the mobilization of the militias.
3. The states of Middle and Border South were forced to choose sides in the dispute. Support from these states was crucial to the Confederacy because of these states’ high populations and access to industry and fuel.
4. Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina joined the Confederacy after the fall of Fort Sumter. After Lincoln intervened, Missouri, Delaware, Maryland, and Kentucky stayed with the Union.

### C. Setting War Objectives and Devising Strategies

1. Jefferson Davis’s focus was on the defense of the Confederacy rather than conquering western territories; the Confederacy only needed a military stalemate to guarantee independence.
2. Lincoln portrayed secession as an attack on popular government, and he insisted on an aggressive military strategy and a policy of unconditional surrender.
3. In July 1861, General Irwin McDowell’s troops were routed by P. G. T. Beauregard’s Confederate troops near Manassas Creek (also called Bull Run).
4. Lincoln replaced McDowell with George B. McClellan and enlisted an additional million men, who would serve for three years in the newly created Army of the Potomac.
5. In 1862, McClellan launched a thrust toward Richmond, Virginia, the Confederate capital, but he moved too slowly and allowed the Confederates to mount a counterattack.
6. Washington was threatened when a Confederate army under “Stonewall” Jackson marched north up the Shenandoah Valley in western Virginia; Jackson won a series of small engagements, tying down the larger Union forces.
7. General Robert E. Lee launched an attack outside Richmond and suffered heavy casualties, but McClellan failed to exploit the advantage, and Richmond remained secure.
8. Jackson and Lee routed a Union army in the Second Battle of Bull Run in August 1862.

9. The battle at Antietam Creek on September 17, 1862, was the bloodiest single day in U.S. military history; Jackson's troops arrived just in time to save Lee's troops from defeat.
10. Lincoln replaced General McClellan with Ambrose E. Burnside, who later resigned and was replaced by Joseph ("Fighting Joe") Hooker.
11. The Union dominated the Ohio River Valley, and in 1862 General Ulysses S. Grant took Fort Henry on the Tennessee River and Fort Donelson on the Cumberland River.
12. In April, a Confederate army caught Grant by surprise near Shiloh; Grant forced a Confederate withdrawal but suffered a great number of casualties.
13. Union naval forces commanded by David G. Farragut captured New Orleans, the South's financial center and largest city, giving it a base for future naval operations.
14. Union victories in the West had significantly undermined Confederate strength in the Mississippi Valley.

## II. Toward Total War

### A. Mobilizing Armies and Civilians

1. The military carnage of 1862 forced both sides into **total war**, utilizing all of the resources of both nations to win at all costs.
2. After the defeat at Shiloh in April 1862, the Confederate Congress imposed the first legally binding draft in American history.
3. The Confederate draft had two loopholes: it exempted one white man for each twenty slaves on a plantation, and it allowed drafted men to hire substitutes.
4. Some southerners refused to serve, and the Confederate government lacked the power to compel them; the Confederate Congress overrode state judges' orders to free conscripted men.
5. To prevent sabotage and concerted resistance to the war effort in the Union, Lincoln suspended **habeas corpus** and imprisoned about 15,000 Confederate sympathizers without trial. He also extended martial law to civilians who discouraged enlistment or resisted the draft.
6. The Union government's Militia Act of 1862 set a quota of volunteers for each state, which was increased by the Enrollment Act of 1863; northerners, too, could hire replacements.
7. Hostility to the Enrollment Act of 1863 draft and to African Americans spilled into the streets of New York City when Irish and German workers sacked the homes of Republicans, killed a dozen African Americans, and forced hundreds of black families from their homes. Lincoln rushed in Union troops to suppress the insurrection.
8. The Union Army Medical Bureau and the United States Sanitary Commission provided medical services to the soldiers and tried to prevent deaths from disease, which killed more men than did the fighting.
9. The Confederate health system was poorly organized, and soldiers died from camp diseases at a higher rate than Union soldiers.
10. Women took a leading role in the Sanitary Commission and other wartime agencies; Dorothea Dix was the first woman to receive a major federal appointment.
11. Women staffed growing bureaucracies, volunteered to serve as nurses, and filled positions traditionally held by men.
12. A number of women took on military duties as spies, scouts, and (disguised as men) soldiers.

### B. Mobilizing Resources

1. The Union entered the war with a distinct advantage; its economy was far superior to the South's, and its arms factories were equipped for mass production.
2. The Confederates had substantial industrial capacity, and by 1863 they were able to provide every infantryman with a modern rifled-musket.
3. Confederate leaders counted on **King Cotton** to provide revenue to purchase clothes, boots, blankets, and weapons from abroad.
4. The British government never recognized the independence of the Confederacy, but it did recognize the rebel government as a belligerent power with the right under international law to borrow money and purchase weapons.
5. To sustain the allegiance of northerners to their party while bolstering the Union's ability to fight the war, the Republicans raised tariffs; created a national banking system; devised a system of internal improvements, especially railroads; and developed the Homestead Act of 1862.
6. The Confederate government's economic policy was less coherent. The Davis administration built and

operated shipyards, armories, foundries, and textile mills; commandeered food and raw materials; and requisitioned slaves to work on forts.

7. The Union government created a modern nation-state that raised revenue for the war by imposing broad-based taxes, borrowing from the middle classes, and creating a national monetary system based on the Legal Tender Act of 1862, which authored the issue of \$150million in treasury notes, soon to be known as **greenbacks**.
8. The Confederacy lacked a central government. It financed about 60 percent of its expenses with unbacked paper money, which created inflation; citizens' property rights were violated in order to sustain the war.

### **III. The Turning Point: 1863**

#### **A. Emancipation**

1. As war casualties mounted in 1862, Lincoln and some Republican leaders accepted Frederick Douglass's argument and began to redefine the war as a struggle against slavery.
2. Exploiting the disorder of wartime, tens of thousands of slaves escaped and sought refuge behind Union lines, where they were known as "contrabands."
3. Congress passed the First Confiscation Act in 1861, which authorized the seizure of all property – including slaves – used to support the rebellion.
4. In April 1862, Congress enacted legislation ending slavery in the District of Columbia, and in June it enacted the Wilmot Proviso.
5. In July 1862, the Second Confiscation Act declared "forever free" all fugitive slaves and all slaves captured by the Union army.
6. Lincoln's controversial Emancipation Proclamation of January 1, 1863, changed the nature of the conflict: Union troops became agents of liberation.
7. To reassure northerners who sympathized with the South or feared race warfare, Lincoln urged slaves to abstain from all violence.

#### **B. Vicksburg and Gettysburg**

1. Vicksburg, Mississippi, surrendered to the Union army on July 4, 1863, followed by Port Hudson, Louisiana, five days later, establishing Union control of the Mississippi.
2. Grant had cut off Louisiana, Arkansas, and Texas from the rest of the Confederacy; hundreds of slaves deserted their plantations.
3. The battle at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, was a great Union victory and the most lethal battle of the Civil War.
4. After Union victories at Gettysburg and Vicksburg, Republicans reaped political gains in their elections, while Confederate elections went sharply against politicians who supported Davis.
5. The Confederates' defeats at Vicksburg and Gettysburg ended their prospect of winning foreign recognition and acquiring advanced weapons from the British.
6. British manufacturers were no longer dependent on the South for cotton; however, they were dependent on the North for cheap wheat. Also, the British championed the abolitionist cause and wanted to avoid provoking a well-armed United States.

### **IV. The Union Victorious, 1864–1865**

#### **A. Soldiers and Strategy**

1. Lincoln initially refused to consider blacks for military service; nonetheless, by 1862, some African Americans had formed their own regiments in South Carolina, Louisiana, and Kansas.
2. The Emancipation Proclamation changed popular thinking and military policy; some northern whites argued that if blacks were to benefit from a Union victory, they should share in the fighting and dying.
3. As white resistance to conscription increased, the Lincoln administration was recruiting as many African Americans as it could.
4. Military service did not end racial discrimination, yet African Americans volunteered for Union military service in disproportionate numbers.
5. Lincoln put Ulysses S. Grant in charge of all Union armies and directed him to advance against all major Confederate forces simultaneously; they wanted a decisive victory before the election of 1864.
6. Grant knew how to fight a modern war that relied on technology and focused on an entire society and was willing to accept heavy casualties in assaults on strongly defended positions in the belief that attempts of earlier Union commanders "to conserve life" through cautious tactics had prolonged the war.

7. Lee was narrowly victorious in the battles of the Wilderness and Spotsylvania Court House. At Cold Harbor, Grant eroded Lee's forces, yet the Union losses were even greater.
8. Union and Confederate soldiers suffered through protracted trench warfare around Richmond and Petersburg; the enormous casualties and military stalemate threatened Lincoln with defeat in the November 1864 election.
9. To punish farmers who provided a base for Jubal Early and food for Lee's army, Grant ordered General Philip H. Sheridan to turn the region into a "barren waste."
10. Grant's decision to carry the war to Confederate civilians changed the definition of conventional warfare.

#### **B. The Election of 1864 and Sherman's March**

1. In June 1864, the Republican convention endorsed Lincoln's war measures, demanded the surrender of the Confederacy, and called for a constitutional amendment to abolish slavery.
2. The Republican Party temporarily renamed itself the National Union Party and nominated Democrat Andrew Johnson for vice president.
3. The Democratic convention nominated General George McClellan, who promised to recommend an immediate armistice and peace convention if elected.
4. On September 2, 1864, William T. Sherman forced the surrender of Atlanta, Georgia; Sherman's success gave Lincoln a victory in November.
5. The pace of emancipation accelerated; Maryland and Missouri freed their slaves, followed by Tennessee, Arkansas, and Louisiana.
6. On January 31, 1865, the Republican-dominated Congress approved the Thirteenth Amendment, which prohibited slavery throughout the United States.
7. Sherman declined to follow the Confederate army into Tennessee after the capture of Atlanta; instead he wanted to "cut a swath through sea" that would devastate Georgia and score a psychological victory.
8. After burning Atlanta, Sherman destroyed railroads, property, and supplies during his march to the sea; many Confederate soldiers deserted and fled home to protect their farms and families.
9. In February 1865, Sherman invaded South Carolina with a desire to wreak vengeance upon the state where secession had begun.
10. Because of class resentment from poor whites, the Confederacy had such a manpower shortage that they were going to arm the slaves in exchange for their freedom; the war ended before this had a chance to transpire.
11. The symbolic end to the war occurred on April 9, 1865, when Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox Court House, Virginia; by May, the Confederate army and government had dissolved.
12. For the South, the Union armies had destroyed slavery as well as the Confederacy and much of the South's economy. Almost 260,000 Confederate soldiers paid for secession with their lives.
13. For the North, the struggle had preserved the Union and destroyed slavery, but the cost of victory was enormous in terms of money, resources, and lives, with 360,000 Union soldiers dead and hundreds of thousands maimed.