

STUDENT NOTES: AMERICAN CIVIL WAR – 1861-1865

A civil war is a war between different groups of people who belong to the same country. The American Civil War was fought between the North (Union states) and the South (Confederate states). It lasted from 1861-1865, triggered by the election of Abraham Lincoln in 1860. Lincoln wanted to end slavery and keep the Union together.

Some people say simplistically that the Civil War was fought over slavery. Unfortunately, there is no “simple” reason. The causes of the war were a complex series of events, including slavery, that began long before the first shot was fired. Competing nationalisms, political turmoil, the definition of freedom, the preservation of the Union, the fate of slavery and the structure of our society and economy could all be listed as significant contributing factors in America’s bloodiest conflict.

The conflict between the North (the Yankees) and the South (the Rebels) started because of their different ways of living. The North wanted the South to give up their farms, build factories, and abolish slavery. Congress treated the slaves as personal property and would not take away rights of ownership.

Thus, America began the conflict that would take the lives of more than 620,000 of its citizens and injure more than 375,000. The Civil War was fought in 10,000 places, from Valverde, New Mexico, and Tullahoma, Tennessee, to St. Albans, Vermont, and Fernandina on the Florida coast. More than 3 million Americans fought in it, and over 600,000 men, 2 percent of the population, died in it. Most of the battles took place in the South and the recovery from the destruction took many years. The major battles of the Civil War were fought primarily in Virginia while others were fought in Pennsylvania, Georgia, and Tennessee.

Secession Events

- **Attempted Compromises: The Missouri Compromise (1820)**, kept a voting balance of a slave state (Missouri) and a free state (Maine). Proposed by Henry Clay to keep balance between free and slave states. Missouri = slave; all land north = free
- **Compromise of 1850**, California was a free state, Southwest territories would decide about slavery. Proposed by Henry Clay to keep balance in Congress and settle issues that were keeping Congress divided. Five points to compromise: 1) California – free; 2) New Mexico – no restrictions on slavery; 3) New Mexico/Texas border settled; 4) Slave trade was abolished in D.C.; 5) stronger fugitive slave law
- **Kansas-Nebraska Act**, popular sovereignty decided the issue of slavery in the state. Proposed by Stephen Douglas to enter Kansas and Nebraska into Union. Overturned the Missouri Compromise. Introduced “Popular Sovereignty” – people’s decision as to whether to allow slavery in new states. Kansas & Nebraska became slave states.
- **Fugitive Slave Act – 1850**: any citizen who caught a slave in US had to return them to their owner. Aiding a fugitive = \$1,000 fine and/or jail. Resistance to Act: Underground Railroad
- **“Bleeding Kansas” – 1856** – Two governments in Kansas: proslavery & antislavery. Proslavery supporters attacked Lawrence, Kansas (the anti-slavery capital). “Crazy” John Brown – abolitionist led group to Pottawatomie Creek and killed 5 men. Revealed intense hostility between North and South
- **Dred Scott case** – Dred Scott was a slave. His master took him from the slave state of Missouri to the free state of Illinois. Scott lived as a slave for four years in a free state. His master then took him back to Missouri. Abolitionist thought it was a good case to test slavery and paid for a lawyer to sue for Scott’s freedom. The case went to the Supreme Court. On March 6, 1857 the court decided that Scott had no right to freedom because he was property and could be moved anywhere, NOT a person. The court also said that any state that did anything against slavery was unconstitutional
- Republican Abraham Lincoln was inaugurated President on March 4, 1861.

- ❑ Southern states feared there would be no new slave states.
- ❑ Southern leaders thought their power in the House would decline as free states joined
- ❑ Southern states wanted the right to declare any national law illegal.
- ❑ Northern states wanted the national government's power to be supreme over the states.

 The Confederate States (South) Gray  (States that seceded from the Union) Confederate President: Jefferson Davis Rebels		
Alabama Arkansas Florida Georgia	Louisiana Mississippi North Carolina South Carolina	Tennessee Texas Virginia
Border slave states that remained loyal to the Union: Delaware Kentucky Maryland Missouri (Western counties of Virginia refused to secede from the Union)		
 The Union States (North) Blue  Union President: Abraham Lincoln Yankees		
California Connecticut Illinois Indiana Iowa Kansas	Maine Massachusetts Michigan Minnesota New Hampshire New Jersey	Ohio Pennsylvania Rhode Island Vermont West Virginia* Wisconsin

	North	South
Economic Differences	factories, favored taxes that protected them from foreign competition	large plantations, opposed taxes that would raise prices and hurt sales to New England states
	money not plentiful, but developing	prospered from farming tobacco & cotton
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing technology and industry • factory system • mass production • improved transportation steamboats/steamships clipper ships railroads canals • faster communication telegraph (Morse Code) printing press • agricultural advances steel-tipped plow mechanical reaper thresher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cotton is King! • Cotton gin • limited industry because agriculture made money • lack of capital • market for manufactured goods decreased in south • some people didn't want industry • South depended on North for manufactured goods – North depended on South for raw materials • South had fewer railroads and hardly any canals for transportation • Sectionalism – North vs. South
Cultural Differences	freedom for slaves	depended on slavery
	urban society, people held jobs	lived in small villages and on farms
Constitutional Differences	Strong central government, wanted the nation to stay together	State's rights important (secession)
Why Fight?	#1 reason – bring South back into Union (also to end slavery)	#1 reason – state's rights
Advantages at the beginning of the war	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • high population – 2-1/2 times more people • good industry – more factories • banking system – more wealth • good ships/Navy • more weapons • more oil • more clothing, uniforms • more food • good transportation – 5/6 of national railroads • government already in operation • Abraham Lincoln 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support of whites • familiar territory – fighting on home soil • defending homes and freedom • closer to own bases of supplies • men were more used to riding and shooting • good military leaders • expert leadership of Robert E. Lee • Stonewall Jackson • help from England • good military training • more fighting spirit • fighting for independence • defensive strategy

Disadvantages at the beginning of the war

- public opinion was divided
- had to invade South
- conflicting loyalties

- smaller population
- fewer factories
- produced less food
- poor railroads
- conflicting loyalties

Influential People of the Civil War



Abraham Lincoln

President of the U.S.

Opposed slavery (Emancipation Proclamation)
Believe the U.S. was one nation, not individual states



Jefferson Davis

President of the Confederate States



Ulysses S. Grant

General of the Union army that defeated General Robert E. Lee



Robert E. Lee

Leader of the Army in Northern Virginia
Offered the Union command, but chose not to fight against Virginia
Opposed secession, but didn't want to force unity
Urged Southerners to accept defeat and reunite



Frederick Douglass

Former slave who escaped to the North and became an abolitionist



Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson

One of the most skilled Confederate generals, from Virginia

Information about the North & South: Student Handout

When contrasting the North and South you must consider the differences in climate, geography, population, cities, economy, culture and transportation.

The South has a climate that is generally warm and sunny, with long, hot, humid summers, and mild winters, and heavy rainfall. It has a climate ideal for agriculture and the ability to grow many different crops in large amounts. The Southeast is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico and had many broad, slow moving, navigable rivers. Cities developed along these rivers and as ports along the Gulf and Atlantic coasts. The Atlantic Coastal Plain is an area of fertile, rich soil and swamps. To the west of the Atlantic Coast Plain is the Piedmont, another area of good farmland and forests.

Population of the South was made up of Europeans (mostly of English and Scotch-Irish descent) and enslaved Africans. By 1860 there were 4 million slaves in America and the United States was the largest slave holding republic. The total population of the South reached 12 million, one third of who were slaves. The south was an overwhelmingly agricultural region of mostly farmers. Most farmers lived in the backcountry on medium sized farms, while a small number of planters ran large farms, or plantations. Only one fourth of the Southern population owned slaves and most of these were the planters. The rest of the population was made up of white independent farmers, tenant farmers (who rented land and paid the landowners in crops or money), laborers, or frontier families.

Most Southerners lived on farms, scattered along the coastal plains and the small farmers in the backcountry. Since the economy was based on agriculture, industries and towns developed at a slower pace than in the North. There were many small towns along the banks of rivers and the coasts. Only a few large cities

developed as trading centers in the South. Plantations were so large and so distant from each other that they became almost self sufficient, like small towns.

The Southern economy was based on agriculture. Crops such as cotton, tobacco, rice, sugar cane and indigo were grown in great quantities. These crops were known as cash crops, ones that were raised to be sold or exported for a profit. They were raised on large farms, known as plantations, which were supported by slave labor. After Eli Whitney invented the cotton gin in 1793, cotton took over as “king” of the southern economy. The cotton gin was a machine that separated the seed from the cotton fiber much faster than it could be done by hand. The cotton industry began to develop rapidly, spreading over many parts of the South. In 1793 Southern farmers produced about 10,000 bales of cotton. By 1835, they were growing over 1,000,000. Cotton exports made up two thirds of the total value of American exports. To clear land and grow cotton Southerners started using slave labor. Slavery was essential for the prosperity of the Southern economy. The South had little manufacturing, the Southerners wanted cheap imports. Since they exported most of their cotton and tobacco they believed that high tariffs –taxes on imported goods—would scare away the foreign markets that bought their goods. For these reasons the South was against tariffs.

Life in the South revolved around the small, wealthy class of planter and the agricultural system they controlled. Planters were the aristocracy—the upper class—of the South. They lived like country gentleman of England and ran the political and economic life of the South. Plantations were far apart and developed their own communities. Recreational activities included such things as fox hunting, dancing, horseracing, and watching cockfights. There were few schools or churches in the South, since neither education nor religion were very organized. The best educated were the sons of planters. On plantations there were sometimes small schools, and often planters hired private tutors to teach their children until they were sent off to private schools. Small farmers had little or no education.

Methods of long-distance transports, such as steamships and railroads, affected the South because products could more easily be sold to more distant markets. By 1860 about 10,000 miles of railroad spread across the Southern states. Still, this was not nearly as vast a railroad system as the North. Meanwhile, hundreds of steamboats moved Southern crops to the North and to European markets.

The North has a climate of warm summers and snowy cold winters. The terrain is rocky, hilly, and not good for farming. These conditions along with a short growing season made farming difficult. Most of the forest was made up of timber used for shipbuilding. There are many sheltered bays and inlets on the Atlantic coast. Settlers found that ships could sail along wide rivers into many of these bays. Most of the rivers are fast, shallow, and hard to navigate. At a certain point, called the Fall Line—a plateau over which eastward-flowing rivers fell onto the plain—the many waterfalls of most rivers made them no longer navigable. At the Fall Line many ships dropped their cargo. Cities, which served as trading centers, grew up at these points. Soon people realized that the waterfalls were a cheap source of energy, and the waterpower began to be used to run factories.

The period between 1800 and 1860 brought rapid population growth throughout the United States. In the North the overall population rose from about 5 million to 31 million during this time. Part of this increase was due to massive immigration. Between 1830 and 1850 along, over 2 million Irish, German and other northern Europeans arrived in the United States. Most of them settled in the North.

Cities in the North thrived as centers of commerce. They were set up along the Atlantic coast and served as centers of trade between the North and Europe. They were hubs of manufacturing of textiles (cloth goods) and other products. Many people from rural New England moved to the cities looking for employment opportunities. In 1800 about 5 percent of the population lived in cities, but by 1850 nearly 15 percent did.

Increased trade and manufacturing drew many laborers to town to work. Cities were often crowded and dirty. Not until after 1830's were harbors and streets improved, sanitation systems were started, and police forces were created. Public services such as education began to take root. Cities were important centers of art, culture, and education. Most cities printed newspapers and books and provided many forms of recreation, such as dancing, card playing, and theater.

The Northern economy was based on many different industries. These industries included shipping, textiles, lumber, furs, and mining. The majority of people lived on small farms and found that much of the land was suited for subsistence farming—raising food crops and livestock for family use—rather than producing goods to export, or send to other countries. Northerners started to use their “ingenuity” to manufacture all kinds of goods. With the use of waterpower and coal for steam plants, manufacturing developed quickly. Items such as textiles, iron, and ships were manufactured in great quantities. These goods were traded for foreign products, transported to and from all continents by trading ships. To protect its industries from foreign competition, the North favored high tariffs, or taxes on goods coming in from other countries.

The growth of trade, manufacturing and transportation brought many changes to cities in the North. Cities took on an increasingly important role in determining the culture of the North. Merchants, manufacturers, wage earners, and new business owners brought new ideas to the North. Merchants, manufacturers, wage earners, and new business owners brought new ideas to the North. The majority of Northerners were Protestant believers. Villages became strong centers of community activities. Both religion and education were organized institutes. Most towns had both schools and churches. Public education grew in the north after the 1830's. Although, a minimum of boys went to secondary school, and college was reserved mostly for the wealthy.

During the first half of the 1800's transportation vastly improved and the size of the United States more than doubled. By 1860 there were over 88,000 miles of surfaced roads. Canals, mostly built in the North, were a cheap source of transportation. The Erie Canal was clearly a success for New York commercial activities. Many other cities began to follow suit and within a decade a system of over 3,000 canals provided water transportation between the Eastern seaboard and rivers in the West. Not long after the first railroad were laid, and by 1850, 30,000 miles of tracks connected distant parts of the United States. Most of the new rail lines were in the North.

Major Civil War Battles

On April 12, 1861 at 4:30 A.M. the first shot hurtled over Fort Sumter, at the entrance to the harbor of Charleston, South Carolina. **This was the beginning of the Civil War.** Union troops, were forced to leave the fort the following day. The U.S. flag was not raised again at Fort Sumter until February 18, 1865. The fort was not of military importance, but a symbol to both sides.

The First Battle at Bull Run (1861) was the first major battle. It was suppose to be the shortest and the end to the brand new war. Volunteer soldiers lined-up in colorful, clean uniforms waiting for the event to begin. People with picnic baskets sat on the hillsides as the troops battled. After ten hours of fighting, 900 soldiers lay dying as the Union troops retreated to Washington.

Known as the bloodiest battle of the Civil War, the Battle of Shiloh caused more than 23,500 men to be killed or missing. From this important battle, General Grant knew that the South would not be pushovers.

The Battle of Antietam (1862) saw General Lee lead the Confederate troops into the North. The battle was not

a decisive victory for either side. This battle led to the issuance of the **Emancipation Proclamation** by President Abraham Lincoln.

On July 3, 1861, Lee's troops fought against General George Mead's army at the Battle of Gettysburg. This was the **turning point** in the war. Meade lost 70% of his men, but 4,000 Confederate soldiers were captured.

From December 1862 to July 1863, the Battle of Vicksburg was fought in Mississippi. This Union victory split the Confederacy in two, with the **North controlling the Mississippi River**. Grant had twice as many soldiers as confederate soldiers were starving and low on ammunition when General Pemberton surrendered.

Fort Sumter April 12, 1861
First Battle at Bull Run (Manassas) July 21, 1861
Shiloh April 6, 1862
Antietam Sept. 16, 1862
Gettysburg July 1, 1863
Vicksburg July 4, 1863

Civil War Facts

- Of the 364,000 on the Union side who lost their lives, a third were killed or died of wounds and two-thirds died of disease. The chance of surviving a wound in Civil War days was 7 to 1; in the Korean War, 50 to 1.
- Many doctors who saw service in the Civil War had never been to medical school, but had served an apprenticeship in the office of an established practitioner.
- Approximately 130,000 freed slaves became Union soldiers during the war.
- Besides the rifle and cannon, weapons consisted of revolvers, swords, cutlasses, hand grenades, Greek fire and land mines. Fully armed, a soldier carried about seven pounds of ammunition. His cartridge box contained 40 rounds, and an additional 60 rounds might be conveyed in the pocket if an extensive battle was anticipated. The muzzle-loading rifle could be loaded at the rate of about three times a minute. Its maximum range was about 1000 yards. Most infantry rifles were equipped with bayonets, but very few men wounded by bayonet showed up at hospitals. The conclusion was that the bayonet was not a lethal weapon. The explanation probably lay in the fact that opposing soldiers did not often actually come to grips and, when they did, were prone to use their rifles as clubs. The principal weapon of the war and the one by which 80 percent of all wounds were produced was a single-shot, muzzle-loading rifle in the hands of foot soldiers.
- Eighty percent of all wounds during the Civil War were in the extremities (arm or leg). Most wounds were caused by an elongated bullet made of soft lead, about an inch long, pointed at one end and hollowed out at the base, and called a "minie" ball, having been invented by Capt. Minié of the French army.
- There were 6,000,000 cases of disease in the Federal armies, which meant that, on an average, every man was sick at least twice. The diseases most prevalent were dysentery, typhoid fever, malaria, pneumonia, arthritis, and the acute diseases of childhood, such as measles, mumps, and malnutrition. Sickness accounted for a full one-third of all casualties in the Civil War. The 12th Connecticut Regiment entered the war with a compliment of 1,000 men. Before it entered its first engagement, sickness had reduced its strength to 600 able bodied soldiers.
- During the Civil war a person who had been drafted could hire a substitute. This bounty system was exploited by so called "bounty jumpers". These men would hire out to more than one draftee and then make a hasty exit once they were paid. The record for bounty-jumping was held by John O'Connor. He admitted to hiring himself out 32 times before being caught. He received a 4 year prison term.

- The first U. S. Naval hospital ship, the Red Rover, was used on the inland waters during the Vicksburg campaign.
- Black soldiers were paid \$10 per month while serving in the Union army. This was \$3 less than white soldiers.
- General Robert E. Lee, commander of the Confederate forces, traveled with a pet hen that laid one egg under his cot every morning.
- According to the U. S. Census, the population of the United States in 1860 numbered 31,443,321 persons. Of these, approximately 23,000,000 were in the 22 Northern states and 9,000,000 in the 11 Southern states. Of the latter total, 3,500,000 were slaves.
- The famous Confederate blockade - runner, the C.S.S. Alabama, never entered a Confederate port during the length of her service.
- The first civilian killed by the abolitionist John Brown and his cohorts at Harper's Ferry was a free black man.
- In the Peninsular campaign in the spring of 1862, as many as 5000 wounded were brought into a hospital where there were only one medical man and five hospital stewards to care for them. The first organized ambulance corps were used in the Peninsula campaign and at Antietam.
- At one time or another, the Northern armies numbered 2,100,000 soldiers. The Southern armies were considerably smaller. The total dead on both sides was about 500,000.
- There were more than 10,000 soldiers serving in the Union Army that were under the age of 18.
- The artillery barrage at the battle of Gettysburg during Pickett's charge was heard over 100 miles away in Pittsburgh.
- Union and Confederate forces stationed at Fredericksburg during the winter of 1862 traded items by constructing small boats and floating them back and forth across the Rappahannock River.
- Approximately 2,000 men served in the 26th North Carolina Regiment during the course of the Civil War. With Lee's surrender at the Appomattox courthouse, there were only 131 men left to receive their paroles.
- Lincoln did not believe that whites and blacks could live together in peace. He had planned to relocate the entire black population of the United States to Central America.
- In the battle of Gettysburg, 1100 ambulances were in use. The medical director of the Union army boasted that all the wounded were picked up from the field within 12 hours after the battle was over. This was a far cry from the second battle of Bull Run, when many of the wounded were left on the field in the rain, heat, and sun for three or four days.
- The Union Army consisted of between 2.5 to 2.7 million men while the Confederate forces had 750,000 to 1.2 million men.
- The Union Army lost approximately 360,000 men during the war. Only 110,070 of these men were listed as having been killed in battles. The remainder were listed as having died of disease or other causes.
- The Confederate forces lost approximately 258,000 men with 94,000 listed as having died in battles while 164,000 were listed as having died of disease or other causes. The figures of the Confederate's will never be known for sure because many records were either lost or destroyed.
- The Confederate forces lost 63 Brigadier Generals, 7 Major Generals, 3 Lieutenant Generals during the war.
- The first military decoration formally authorized by the American government was, the Medal of Honor created by an act of Congress in December 1861 by Senator James W Grimes of Iowa, the Medal of Honor was awarded liberally during the Civil War to about 1,200 men. According to the act establishing the army medal, the award was to be given to those members of the armed forces who "shall distinguish themselves by their gallantry in action, and other soldier like qualities.
- The last land engagement of the Civil War was fought on May 13, 1865 at the Battle of Palmito Ranch in far south Texas, more than a month after Gen. Lee's surrender at Appomattox, VA.