

The Civil War, 1861-1865

The Secession Crisis

I. **The Confederate States of America** –

- a. Led by South Carolina, seven Deep South states seceded before Lincoln took office on March 4, 1861. These seven cotton belt states left the Union because they believed Lincoln was an enemy of the South and its slave system.
- b. The seven seceded states sent delegates to Montgomery, Alabama, where they founded the Confederate States of America. The delegates adopted a constitution and elected Jefferson Davis of Mississippi as president.

II. **Lincoln Inaugurated** –

- a. Lincoln faced a grave crisis. In his inaugural address he struck a conciliatory tone by repeating his pledge not "to interfere with the institution of slavery in the states where it exists." Lincoln reminded the seceded states, "We are not enemies, but friends."
- b. Lincoln nonetheless denied that states had any lawful right to leave the Union, insisting "the Union of these states is perpetual." The issue of civil war therefore lay, he said, with the people of the South: "The Government will not assail you. You can have no conflict, without being yourselves the aggressors."

III. **Fort Sumter** –

- a. The nation's attention swiftly became riveted to the sixty-nine Union soldiers stationed at Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor.
 - i. On April 6th, Lincoln notified the governor of South Carolina that he intended to resupply the Union garrison with food.
 - ii. Six days later, before the supply ships arrived, Confederate guns opened fire on Fort Sumter. The shelling continued for 34 hours before the Union forces lowered their flag.
 - iii. One day later, Lincoln called upon the loyal states to supply 75,000 militiamen to subdue the rebellion.
 - iv. The firing on Fort Sumter and Lincoln's call for troops persuaded Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina to join the Confederacy.
 1. The Confederate Congress meeting in Montgomery welcomed these states and moved its capital to Richmond, Virginia.

IV. **The Border States** –

- a. Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri were all slaveholding Border States that remained in the Union.
- b. Kentucky provided industrial and agricultural resources that proved vital to the Union. Lincoln recognized Kentucky's strategic importance when he declared, "I hope to have God on my side, but I must have Kentucky."

North vs. South

I. The North

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The North enjoyed a significant population advantage. In 1861, the 23 states in the Union had a population of about 22 million people. In contrast, the 11 Confederate states had just 9 million people, 4 million of whom were enslaved.• The North enjoyed an enormous advantage in industrial capacity. The Union produced over 90 percent of the nation's manufactured goods. In addition, the Union had far more wagons, horses, ships, and miles of railroad track.• The North enjoyed a significant advantage in presidential leadership. Lincoln proved to be an inspiring leader and a forceful commander-in-chief. He successfully held the Republican Party together despite its internal conflicts.• Northern farms produced 140 million bushels of wheat, seven times the harvest in the South. Because of crop failures and drought in Europe, wheat supplanted cotton as the nation's most important export.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When the war began, the North lacked an able group of military commanders. Lincoln had to frequently replace generals as he searched for commanders who could rival those of the South.• At first, the North did not enjoy a consensus on its war aims. While Lincoln's announced goal was to save the Union, abolitionists argued that the Union should also abolish slavery. At the same time, a vocal group of "Copperheads" called for a negotiated peace.

II. The South

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The South enjoyed the advantage of fighting a defensive war to protect its homeland. It only needed to hold back the invading Union armies and wait for Northern public opinion to tire of fighting a prolonged and costly war.• The South boasted a strong military tradition that produced an exceptional group of experienced commanders, including Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson.• Great Britain and France imported three-quarters of their cotton from the South. Southern leaders confidently, but inaccurately, predicted that a cotton famine would cause massive unemployment that would force these two European powers to recognize the Confederacy and break the Union blockade.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The disparities in population, industrial capacity, and railroad mileage meant that the South could not sustain a prolonged war.• Jefferson Davis proved to be an ineffective political and military leader. He frequently quarreled with his Cabinet and failed to implement a consistent military strategy.

The Emancipation Proclamation

I. Context –

- a. The Civil War disrupted plantation life throughout the South. As Federal forces pushed into the Confederacy, fugitive slaves sought refuge behind Union lines.
- b. Union generals labeled the escaped slaves "contraband of war" – enemy property that could be legitimately seized according to international law.
 - i. The 1861 Confiscation Act authorized Union troops to seize all Confederate property including slaves.
- c. **Radical Republicans** persuaded Congress to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia and to exclude it from all federal territories.

II. Emancipation Proclamation –

- a. President Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation to take effect on New Year's Day, 1863.
 - i. The Proclamation was not a law passed by Congress. Instead, it was based on the president's constitutional authority as commander-in-chief of the armed forces.
- b. The Emancipation Proclamation only freed slaves living in states that rebelled against the Union.
 - i. It did not free slaves in the Union-controlled Border States.
 - ii. Slavery was not completely abolished until the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment on December 6, 1865.

III. Consequences –

- a. The Emancipation Proclamation strengthened the Union's moral cause. The Civil War was now widened into a crusade against slavery.
 - i. Advancing Union troops thus became liberators who freed human beings from slavery.
- b. With slavery doomed, public opinion in Britain and France swung decisively behind the Union cause. The Emancipation Proclamation thus ended any chance that these two European powers would support the Confederacy.
- c. "Blacks in Blue" –
 - i. The Emancipation Proclamation permitted Black men to join the Federal army. Frederick Douglass urged blacks to rally to the Union cause. "The iron gate of our prison," he told them, "stands half open."
 - ii. Approximately 180,000 African Americans served in the Union army. Although these "blacks in blue" fought with great valor, they were paid less than white soldiers of equal rank.
 1. More than 38,000 black soldiers lost their lives during the Civil War.

Republican Economic Policies

I. Republican Congress –

- a. During the 1840s and 1850s, Southern congressmen repeatedly blocked tariff, railroad, banking, and land policies favored by the North and West.
- b. The secession of the Southern states enabled the Republicans to dominate Congress. They promptly passed a series of landmark acts with far-reaching social and economic consequences.

II. The Homestead Act, 1862 –

- a. The Homestead Act enabled settlers to acquire a free tract of 160 acres of surveyed public land. Settlers acquired title to the land after five years of continuous residence.
- b. The Homestead Act opened the Great Plains to settlers. By 1935, 1.6 million homesteaders received 270 million acres of federal lands.

III. **The Morrill Land-Grant College Act, 1862** –

- a. The act conveyed 30,000 acres of federal land per member of Congress from each state. The sales of the land provided funds to create colleges of "agriculture and mechanical arts."
- b. The land-grant colleges played an important role in promoting agriculture, engineering, and veterinary medicine.

IV. **The Pacific Railroad Act, 1862** –

- a. Prior to the Civil War, Southern congressmen supported a transcontinental railroad that would link New Orleans with California.
- b. Following the outbreak of the Civil War, Congress approved a transcontinental route that would run along a north-central route linking Omaha, Nebraska, with Sacramento, California.

V. **The National Banking Act of 1863**

- a. Banking policies had been a source of contention since the formation of the First National Bank in 1791. The rising cost of currency and an orderly banking system.
- b. The National Banking Act of 1863 established a national banking system to provide a uniform currency. No additional important changes were made in the nation's banking system until Congress passed the Federal Reserve Act in 1913.

Consequences of the Civil War

I. **Federal Government** –

- a. The Civil War ended the long-held Southern principle of state sovereignty. States could no longer threaten to nullify a federal law or claim the right to secede.
- b. The Civil War broadened the definition of federal power. The adoption of the Thirteenth Amendment affirmed the supreme power of the federal government to abolish slavery, ensure the liberty of all Americans, and act on matters affecting "the general welfare".

II. **The South** –

- a. Prior to the Civil War, the Southern planter elite played a disproportionate role in national affairs. For example, a Southern slaveholder occupied the presidency during two thirds of the years from 1789 to 1861. The Civil War ended this long era of power.
- b. The South suffered devastating human losses. More than 258,000 Confederate soldiers died in the war. This constituted over 20 percent of the South's adult white male population.
- c. The South suffered devastating economic losses. In 1860, the South contributed 30 percent of the nation's wealth. The Civil War destroyed Southern homes, crops, livestock, and railroad lines. In 1870, the South contributed just 12 percent of the nation's wealth.
- d. The Civil War caused a severe reduction in the South's political influence and economic prosperity. However, it left the region's commitment to white supremacy unbroken. This would create a problem that would not be successfully confronted until the Civil Rights Movement in

the 1950s and 1960s.

III. **The North** –

- a. The Civil War solidified the alliance of Northern business interests and Western farmers with the Republican Party.
- b. The war accelerated the creation of powerful corporate enterprises. This enhanced the economic and political influence of a rising class of Northern "captains of industry."

IV. **Women** –

- a. Women in both the Union and Confederacy accepted new responsibilities as more and more men left their homes and jobs to fight in the army.
 - i. In the South, planters' wives and daughters learned how to manage their plantations.
 - ii. Women on smaller farms plowed the fields and harvested their crops.
 - iii. In the North, women took paying jobs in business and government.
- b. Women pushed the boundaries of their traditional roles by serving as nurses.
 - i. The North set up a training program for nurses under **Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell**, the first American woman to graduate from medical school.
 - ii. **Clara Barton**, who later founded the American Red Cross, helped overcome resistance to women working in military hospitals.
 - iii. Over 3,000 women served as nurses in Northern frontline hospitals.

V. **Enslaved African Americans** –

- a. The Civil War emancipated about 4 million slaves. However, existing laws still denied them legal equality and the right to vote.
- b. Frederick Douglass succinctly described the plight of freed slaves: "He had neither money, property, nor friends. He was free from the old plantation, but he had nothing but the dusty road under his feet. He was turned loose, naked, hungry, and destitute to the open sky."