

SECTION  
2

# The Civil War Begins

## MAIN IDEA

Shortly after the nation's Southern states seceded from the Union, war began between the North and South.

## WHY IT MATTERS NOW

The nation's identity was forged in part by the Civil War. Sectional divisions remain very strong today.

## Terms & Names

- Fort Sumter
- Bull Run
- Stonewall Jackson
- Ulysses S. Grant
- Robert E. Lee
- Antietam
- Emancipation Proclamation
- conscription
- Clara Barton
- income tax

## One American's Story

On April 18, 1861, Major Robert Anderson was traveling by ship from Charleston, South Carolina, to New York City. That day, Anderson wrote a report to the secretary of war in which he described his most recent command.

### A PERSONAL VOICE ROBERT ANDERSON

“Having defended Fort Sumter for thirty-four hours, until the quarters were entirely burned, the main gates destroyed by fire, . . . the magazine surrounded by flames, . . . four barrels and three cartridges of powder only being available, and no provisions but pork remaining, I accepted terms of evacuation . . . and marched out of the fort . . . with colors flying and drums beating . . . and saluting my flag with fifty guns.”

—quoted in *Fifty Basic Civil War Documents*



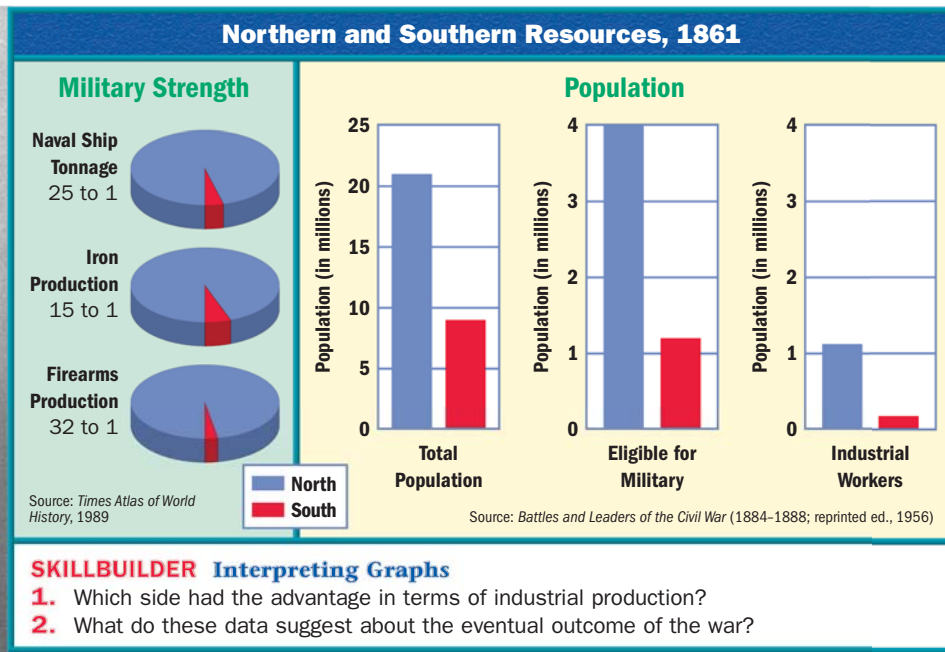
▲ Major Robert Anderson observes the firing at Fort Sumter in 1861.

Months earlier, as soon as the Confederacy was formed, Confederate soldiers in each secessionist state began seizing federal installations—especially forts. By the time of Lincoln's inauguration on March 4, 1861, only four Southern forts remained in Union hands. The most important was **Fort Sumter**, on an island in Charleston harbor.

Lincoln decided to neither abandon Fort Sumter nor reinforce it. He would merely send in “food for hungry men.” At 4:30 A.M. on April 12, Confederate batteries began thundering away to the cheers of Charleston's citizens. The deadly struggle between North and South was under way.

## Union and Confederate Forces Clash

News of Fort Sumter's fall united the North. When Lincoln called for volunteers, the response throughout the Northern states was overwhelming. However, Lincoln's call for troops provoked a very different reaction in the states of the



▲ **Most Union troops saw the war as a struggle to preserve the Union.**

▲ **Most Confederate soldiers fought to protect the South from Northern aggression.**

**MAIN IDEA**

**Making Inferences**

**A** Why were Northern factories and railroads so advantageous to the Union's war effort?

upper South. In April and May, Virginia, Arkansas, North Carolina, and Tennessee seceded, bringing the number of Confederate states to eleven. The western counties of Virginia opposed slavery, so they seceded from Virginia and were admitted into the Union as West Virginia in 1863. The four remaining slave states—Maryland, Delaware, Kentucky, and Missouri—remained in the Union.

**STRENGTHS AND STRATEGIES** The Union and the Confederacy were unevenly matched. The Union enjoyed enormous advantages in resources over the South—more people, more factories, greater food production, and a more extensive railroad system. The Confederacy's advantages included “King Cotton,” first-rate generals, and highly motivated soldiers. **A**

Both sides adopted military strategies suited to their objectives and resources. The Union, which had to conquer the South to win, devised a three-part plan:

- The navy would blockade Southern ports, so they could neither export cotton nor import much-needed manufactured goods.
- Union riverboats and armies would move down the Mississippi River and split the Confederacy in two.
- Union armies would capture the Confederate capital at Richmond, Virginia.

The Confederacy's strategy was mostly defensive, although Southern leaders encouraged their generals to attack the North if the opportunity arose.

**BULL RUN** The first bloodshed on the battlefield occurred about three months after Fort Sumter fell, near the little creek of **Bull Run**, just 25 miles from Washington, D.C. The battle was a seesaw affair. In the morning the Union army gained the upper hand, but the Confederates held firm, inspired by General Thomas J. Jackson. “There stands Jackson like a stone wall!” another general shouted, coining the nickname **Stonewall Jackson**. In the afternoon Confederate reinforcements helped win the first Southern victory. Fortunately for the Union, the Confederates were too exhausted to follow up their victory with an attack on Washington. Still, Confederate morale soared. Many Confederate soldiers, confident that the war was over, left the army and went home.

**UNION ARMIES IN THE WEST** Lincoln responded to the defeat at Bull Run by stepping up enlistments. He also appointed General George McClellan to lead the Union forces encamped near Washington. While McClellan drilled his troops, the Union forces in the west began the fight for control of the Mississippi River.



In February 1862 a Union army invaded western Tennessee. (See the Battles of the West map below.) At its head was General **Ulysses S. Grant**, a brave and decisive military commander. In just eleven days, Grant's forces captured two Confederate forts, Fort Henry on the Tennessee River and Fort Donelson on the Cumberland River. Two months later, Grant narrowly escaped disaster near Shiloh, a small church in Tennessee close to the Mississippi border. After Grant failed to have his troops dig trenches or set out adequate guards and patrols, thousands of Confederate soldiers carried out a surprise attack. Grant averted disaster by reorganizing his troops and driving the Confederate forces away the next day. However, Shiloh demonstrated what a bloody slaughter the war was becoming. Nearly one-fourth of the 100,000 men who fought there were killed, wounded, or captured.

As Grant pushed toward the Mississippi River, David G. Farragut, commanding a Union fleet of about 40 ships, seized New Orleans, the Confederacy's largest city and busiest port. (See the Fall of New Orleans map below.) By June, Farragut had taken control of much of the lower Mississippi. Between Grant and Farragut, the Union had nearly achieved its goal of cutting the Confederacy in two. Only Port Hudson, Louisiana, and Vicksburg, Mississippi, still stood in the way. **B**

**MAIN IDEA**

**Making Inferences**

**B** Why was control of the Mississippi River so important to the Union?

**THE WAR FOR THE CAPITALS** In the spring of 1862, while McClellan was leading his army toward Richmond, he met a Confederate army commanded by General Joseph E. Johnston. (See the Battles of the East map on page 171.) After a series of battles, Johnston was wounded, and command of the army passed on to **Robert E. Lee**. Lee was very different from McClellan—modest rather than vain, and willing to go beyond military textbooks in his tactics. Determined to save the Confederate capital, Lee drove McClellan away from Richmond.

**Civil War, 1861–1862**

INTERACTIVE

	Area controlled by Union
	Area won by Union, 1861–1862
	Area controlled by Confederacy
	Union troop movements
	Confederate troop movements
	Union victory
	Confederate victory
	Fort
	Capital

0 200 400 miles  
0 200 400 kilometers



**GEOGRAPHY SKILLBUILDER**

- 1. Region** In which region of the country did Northern forces have the most success?
- 2. Place** In which states did Confederate troops attempt invasions of the North?



Now it was Lee's turn to move against Washington. In September his troops crossed the Potomac into the Union state of Maryland. At this point McClellan had an incredible stroke of luck. A Union corporal found a copy of Lee's orders wrapped around some cigars! The plan revealed that Lee's and Stonewall Jackson's armies were separated for the moment.

McClellan ordered his men to pursue Lee, and the two sides fought on September 17 near a creek called the **Antietam** (ăn-tē'təm). The clash proved to be the bloodiest single-day battle in American history, with casualties totaling more than 26,000. The next day, instead of pursuing the battered Confederate army into Virginia and possibly ending the war, McClellan did nothing. As a result, Lincoln removed him from command.

**Vocabulary**

**casualties:** those who are injured, killed, captured, or missing in action

## The Politics of War

After secession occurred, many Southerners believed that dependence on Southern cotton would force Great Britain to formally recognize the Confederacy as an independent nation. Unfortunately for the South, Britain had accumulated a huge cotton inventory just before the outbreak of war. Instead of importing Southern cotton, the British now needed Northern wheat and corn. Britain decided that neutrality was the best policy. **C**

**MAIN IDEA**

**Drawing Conclusions**

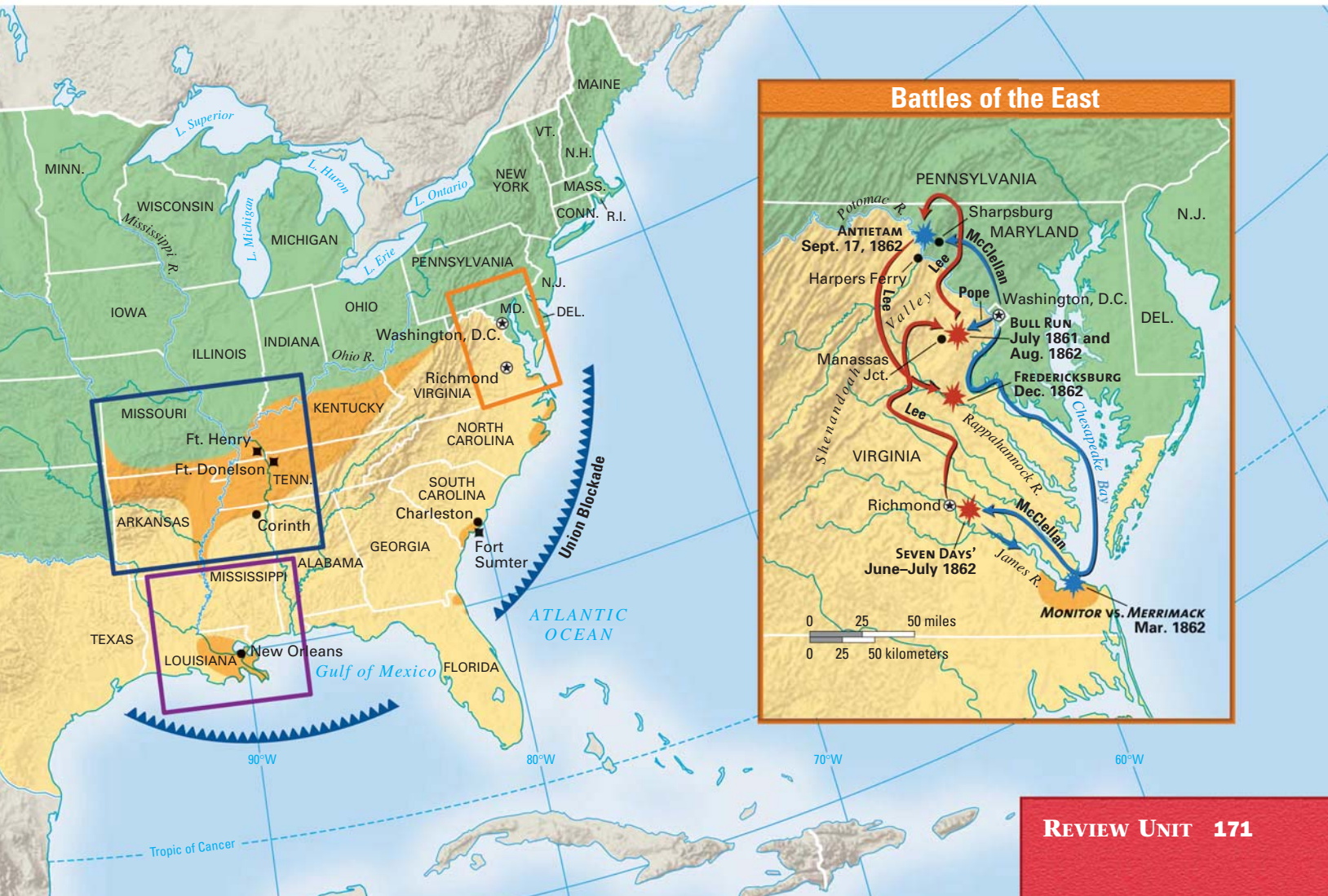
**C** Why did both the Union and Confederacy care about British neutrality?

### HISTORICAL SPOTLIGHT



**BOYS IN WAR**

Both the Union and Confederate armies had soldiers who were under 18 years of age. Examination of some Confederate recruiting lists for 1861–1862 reveals that approximately 5 percent were 17 or younger—with some as young as 13. The percentage of boys in the Union army was lower, perhaps 1.5 percent. These figures, however, do not count the great number of boys who ran away to follow each army without officially enlisting.



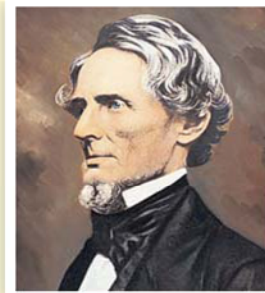
## KEY PLAYERS



### ABRAHAM LINCOLN 1809–1865

People question why Lincoln believed so passionately in the Union. A possible answer lies in his life story. He was born into poverty, the son of illiterate parents. Lincoln once said that in his boyhood there was “absolutely nothing to excite ambition for education,” yet he hungered for knowledge.

Apart from a year’s worth of school, Lincoln educated himself and, after working as rail-splitter, flatboatman, storekeeper, and surveyor, he taught himself to be a lawyer. This led to careers in politics and law—and eventually to the White House. Perhaps because of this upward mobility, Lincoln fought passionately to preserve the democracy he described as “the last best hope of earth.”



### JEFFERSON DAVIS 1808–1889

Davis, who was named after Thomas Jefferson, was born in Kentucky but grew up in Mississippi. After graduating from West Point, he served in the military, then settled down as a planter, before going into politics. He served terms in the U.S. Senate.

His election as president of the Confederacy dismayed him. As his wife Varina wrote, “I thought his genius was military, but as a party manager he would not succeed. He did not know the arts of the politician . . .” Varina was right. Davis fought frequently with other Confederate leaders and was blamed for the refusal of many Southern states to put the Confederacy’s welfare above their own.

**PROCLAIMING EMANCIPATION** As Jefferson Davis’s Confederacy struggled in vain to gain foreign recognition, abolitionist feeling grew in the North. Although Lincoln disliked slavery, he did not believe that the federal government had the power to abolish it where it already existed.

As the war progressed, however, Lincoln did find a way to use his constitutional war powers to end slavery. The Confederacy used the labor of slaves to build fortifications and grow food. Lincoln’s powers as commander in chief allowed him to order his troops to seize enemy resources. Therefore, he decided that, just as he could order the Union army to take Confederate supplies, he could also authorize the army to emancipate slaves. Emancipation was not just a moral issue; it became a weapon of war.

On January 1, 1863, Lincoln issued his **Emancipation Proclamation**. The following portion captured national attention.

### *from* THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION ABRAHAM LINCOLN

“I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves within these said designated States and parts of States are, and henceforward shall be free; and that the Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authorities thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of said persons.

And I hereby enjoin upon the people so declared to be free to abstain from all violence, unless in necessary self-defense; and I recommend to them, that in all cases, when allowed, they labor faithfully for reasonable wages.

And I further declare and make known that such persons of suitable condition will be received into the armed service of the United States to garrison forts, positions, stations, and other places, and to man vessels of all sorts in said service.

And, upon this, sincerely believed 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.”

—from The Emancipation Proclamation, January 1, 1863



## MAIN IDEA

### Analyzing Motives

**D** In what way was the Emancipation Proclamation a part of Lincoln's military strategy?

### Vocabulary

**desertion:** the act of abandoning an assigned post or duty

The proclamation did not free any slaves immediately because it applied only to areas behind Confederate lines, outside Union control. Nevertheless, for many, the proclamation gave the war a moral purpose by turning the struggle into a fight to free the slaves. It also ensured that compromise was no longer possible. **D**

**BOTH SIDES FACE POLITICAL DISSENT** Neither side in the Civil War was completely unified. The North harbored thousands of Confederate sympathizers, while the South had thousands of Union sympathizers.

Lincoln dealt forcefully with disloyalty and dissent. He suspended the writ of *habeas corpus*, which prevents the government from holding citizens without formally charging them with crimes. Jefferson Davis also adopted this practice.

## Life During Wartime

The war led to social upheaval and political unrest in both the North and the South. As the fighting intensified, heavy casualties and widespread desertions led each side to impose **conscription**, a draft that forced men to serve in the army. In the North, conscription led to draft riots, the most violent of which took place in New York City. Sweeping changes occurred in the wartime economies of both sides as well as in the roles played by African Americans and women.

**AFRICAN AMERICANS FIGHT FOR FREEDOM** Although African Americans made up only 1 percent of the North's population, by war's end about 180,000 African Americans had fought for the Union—about 10 percent of the Northern army. In spite of their dedication, African-American soldiers in the Union army suffered discrimination. They served in separate regiments commanded by white officers and earned lower pay for most of the war.

**SOLDIERS SUFFER ON BOTH SIDES** Both Union and Confederate soldiers had marched off to war thinking it would be a glorious affair. They were soon disillusioned, not just by heavy battlefield casualties but also by such unhealthy conditions as filthy surroundings, a limited diet, and inadequate medical care. In the 1860s, the technology of killing had outrun the technology of medical care.

Except when fighting or marching, most soldiers lived amid heaps of rubbish and open latrines. As a result, body lice, dysentery, and diarrhea were common.

If conditions in the army camps were bad, those in war prisons were atrocious. The Confederate camps were especially overcrowded and unsanitary. The South's lack of food and tent canvas also contributed to the appalling conditions. Prison camps in the North were only slightly better. Northern prisons provided

Wounded Union troops recuperate after battle near a makeshift field hospital.



more space and adequate amounts of food. However, thousands of Confederate prisoners, housed in quarters with little or no heat, contracted pneumonia and died. Historians estimate that 15 percent of Union prisoners in Southern prisons died, while 12 percent of Confederate prisoners died in Northern prisons.



▲ Union nurses, such as Clara Barton (above) and Louisa May Alcott, faced the hazards of disease in field hospitals.

**WOMEN WORK TO IMPROVE CONDITIONS** Although women did not fight, thousands contributed to the war effort. Some 3,000 women served as Union army nurses. One dedicated Union nurse was **Clara Barton**, who went on to found the American Red Cross after the war. Barton cared for the sick and wounded, often at the front lines of battle. Thousands of Southern women also volunteered for nursing duty. Sally Tompkins, for example, performed so heroically in her hospital duties that she eventually was commissioned as a captain.

Both sides benefited because women devoted so much time and energy to nursing. Women's help was desperately needed as a series of battles in the Mississippi Valley and in the East soon sent casualties flooding into Northern and Southern hospitals alike.

**THE WAR AFFECTS REGIONAL ECONOMIES** In general, the war expanded the North's economy and shattered the South's. The Confederacy soon faced a food shortage due to the drain of manpower into the army, the Union occupation of food-growing areas, and the loss of enslaved field workers. Food prices skyrocketed, and the inflation rate rose 7,000 percent.

Overall, the war's effect on the economy of the North was much more positive. The army's need for supplies supported woolen mills, steel foundries, and many other industries. The economic boom had a dark side, however. Wages did not keep up with prices, and many people's standard of living declined. When white male workers went out on strike, employees hired free blacks, immigrants, and women to replace them for lower wages. As the Northern economy grew, Congress decided to help pay for the war by collecting the nation's first **income tax**, a tax that takes a specified percentage of an individual's income.

**Background**

After the war, Clara Barton became the first woman to head a U.S. government agency, whose employees helped family members to track down missing soldiers.

SECTION 2

ASSESSMENT

**1. TERMS & NAMES** For each term or name, write a sentence explaining its significance.

- Fort Sumter
- Ulysses S. Grant
- Emancipation Proclamation
- Clara Barton
- Bull Run
- Robert E. Lee
- conscription
- income tax
- Stonewall Jackson
- Antietam

**MAIN IDEA**

**2. TAKING NOTES**

Create a chart like the one shown, listing the military actions and social and economic changes of the first two years of the Civil War.

Military Actions	Social & Economic Changes
1.	1.
2.	2.

What changes brought about by the war had the most effect on civilians in both the South and the North?

**CRITICAL THINKING**

**3. ANALYZING EFFECTS**

What effects did the Civil War have on women and African Americans?

**Think About:**

- the impact of the Emancipation Proclamation
- women's role in the war effort

**4. CONTRASTING**

What advantages did the Union have over the South?

**5. ANALYZING PRIMARY SOURCES**

This medical kit was used during the Civil War. What difficulties would caregivers and patients have faced during this time?

