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The American Civil War

Scope:

This course examines the era of the American Civil War with emphasis on the period from 1861 to 1865, four years during which the United States endured its greatest national trauma. The lectures address such questions as why the war came, why the North won (or the Confederacy lost), how military campaigns unfolded, and how the war affected various elements of American society. The principal goal is to convey an understanding of the scope and consequences of the bloodiest war in our nation’s history—a struggle that claimed more than 600,000 lives, freed nearly 4,000,000 enslaved African Americans, and settled definitively the question of whether states had the right to withdraw from the Union. The course also will address issues left unresolved at the end of the conflict, most notably the question of where former slaves would fit into the social and political structure of the nation.

Leading participants on both sides will receive extensive attention. Interspersed among discussions of military and nonmilitary aspects of the war will be biographical sketches of Abraham Lincoln, Robert E. Lee, Ulysses S. Grant, Frederick Douglass, “Stonewall” Jackson, William Tecumseh Sherman, Thaddeus Stevens, and several dozen other prominent figures. Although this is not a course on Civil War battles and generals per se, approximately half of the lectures will be devoted to the strategic and tactical dimensions of military campaigns. It is impossible to understand the broad impact of the war without a grasp of how military events shaped attitudes and actions on the home front, and there will be a special effort to tie events on the battlefield to life behind the lines.

Part I traces the prelude to the war by discussing the key issues of the antebellum period, starting with the Missouri Compromise of 1820 and continuing for 40 years to the election of 1860. The secession crisis that election precipitated turned into armed conflict in early 1861. Early lectures size up the two opposing sides of the military conflict, including a consideration of the men who manned the armies. The final five lectures of Part I trace the early fortunes of war from the Battle of Bull Run (First Manassas) through the Peninsula and Shenandoah Valley campaigns of early 1862, when first one side, then the other seemed to be in ascendancy.

Part II picks up the military narrative with the pivotal Seven Days’ Battles before Richmond, when the Union advance in the East was halted by the newly appointed General Robert E. Lee, and continues up to the crucial Battle of Antietam in September. Lectures on the issue of emancipation, military conscription, and financing of the war provide a look at political and social issues that came to the fore in this period. Part II concludes with more discussion of major campaigns and battles, including Gettysburg and Chickamauga, bringing the narration up to the fall of 1863.

Part III begins with the campaign for Chattanooga that saw the ascendancy of Ulysses S. Grant as the top Union general. The emphasis shifts to the diplomatic front, as both sides vied to present their case before the world (i.e., European) audience. The war from the African American perspective comes next, followed by a discussion of northern wartime “reconstruction” policies. We devote two lectures to the naval war, both that conducted on the high seas involving the northern blockade and southern commerce raiding, as well as that which took place on the “brown water” of rivers and bays. Two lectures cover the experience of women in the war, on the home front, as medical workers on the field, and even (in a few cases) as soldiers. The focus then shifts back to the military events of 1864, moving the narrative forward to the Overland campaign up to the battles of the Wilderness and Spotsylvania in the spring of 1864.

Part IV brings us to the finale of the Overland campaign and the siege of Petersburg and Richmond. This offers an excellent opportunity to discuss the home front, in both the North and the South, and consider the differences in the wartime experience between the two sections. After one lecture on the issue of prisoners of war, we turn back to the military front to investigate how Grant’s strategy to envelope the South and eliminate its ability to fight militarily played out in Sherman’s Atlanta campaign and his inexorable pressure on Lee at Richmond. With the conclusion of the war in April 1865 came the chance for peace and reconciliation, but the assassination of Abraham Lincoln dominated the immediate period after the cessation of hostilities. A final lecture sums up the lessons and legacies of this great national trauma and reminds us that, in a larger context, the issues that divided the nation during the era of the Civil War continue to resonate in modern America. This course will attempt to make those issues clear while providing a sense of the drama and tragedy of this tumultuous period in the life of the nation.

Lecture One Prelude to War

Scope: This introductory lecture provides an overview of the sectional controversies and clashes that helped set the stage for the political crisis of 1860–61. Historians have debated the degree to which the North and South developed into societies that were significantly different. Some scholars have argued that the two sections had become essentially separate civilizations divided across a fault line delineated by the institution of slavery. Other scholars point to a common language, common history, and other shared characteristics to insist that differences were minor compared to commonalities. This lecture will emphasize that the crucial point is not how different the two sections were, but whether Northerners and Southerners *believed* they were different. Through snapshots of the antebellum North and South and a review of major disruptive events between the Missouri Compromise in 1820 and the Supreme Court’s Dred Scott decision in 1857, it will suggest the degree to which Americans in the respective sections came to see each other and their societies as very different. The lecture will further suggest that a cluster of sectional perceptions and biases, virtually all of which can be linked to the institution of slavery and its political and social influences, set the stage for secession and eventually war.

Outline

- I. Between 1788 and 1860, the North developed into a society that embraced the idea of modern capitalism with strong industrial and merchant sectors.
 - A. The population grew rapidly and was more urban, with more immigrants than the South.
 - B. The economy was diversified: It was about 40 percent small-farm agricultural with a strong industrial sector.
 - C. Religion helped to encourage economic growth.
 1. Yankee Protestantism was dominant; the political and economic leadership largely came from this segment.
 2. A Catholic minority stood somewhat out of the mainstream.
 - D. Reform movements thrived in the North.
 1. Temperance stood among the more important movements.
 2. Public education received widespread support.
 3. Abolitionism was the most important reform movement, with its roots in the “free labor” idea.
 - E. Many people in the North held negative perceptions about the South. They thought it was holding the nation back.

- II. The South between 1788 and 1860 offered many contrasts to the North.
 - A. The population grew less rapidly.
 - 1. The South was not as urban and public works were not as extensive. The biggest city in 1861 was New Orleans with 160,000 people.
 - 2. Because of its smaller population, the South was falling behind in the House of Representatives.
 - B. About 80 percent of the economy was focused on agriculture, and slavery exerted a major influence on economic development.
 - 1. Leaders in the South were large, wealthy landowners and slaveholders.
 - 2. Only 25 percent of the population held slaves and only about 12 percent had twelve or more slaves.
 - 3. However, all southern whites had a stake in slavery, because it gave them status, regardless of their economic position.
 - 4. Agrarian dominance was based on cash crops, and “King Cotton” was the most important.
 - C. Southern religion differed from that in the North in important ways.
 - 1. It was more personal.
 - 2. It was less interested in societal reform and more interested in personal salvation.
 - D. Education and reform movements did not thrive in the South.
 - E. Many people in the South held negative perceptions about the North.
 - 1. They viewed Northerners as cold, grasping people.
 - 2. They thought Northerners were more interested in money than anything else.
- III. The issue of territorial expansion poisoned national politics.
 - A. Expansion helped to determine national political representation.
 - 1. The South saw the North gaining seats in the House of Representatives because of the increase in its population.
 - 2. The South wanted to protect its social system by keeping parity in the Senate and allowing expansion of slavery into the territories.
 - B. While the South supported expansion of slavery into the territories, the northern “Free Soil” movement opposed this expansion of slavery.
- IV. Several key mileposts marked the road toward sectional disruption.
 - A. The Missouri Compromise of 1820 calmed sectional tensions.
 - 1. It admitted Missouri as a slave state and Maine as a free state.
 - 2. It prohibited slavery in the territories north of 36°30' north latitude.
 - B. The year 1831 was critical in the growth of sectional tensions.
 - 1. Nat Turner’s slave revolt in Virginia shocked the South.
 - 2. William Lloyd Garrison began publication of *The Liberator*, an abolitionist newspaper.

- 3. Nullification in South Carolina, ostensibly over tariffs, caused a national crisis.
- C. The Liberty Party ran a candidate for president in 1840.
- D. The war with Mexico (1846–48) helped to inflame sectional tensions.
 - 1. The Wilmot Proviso, although voted down in the Senate, alienated slaveholders by barring slavery from any territorial acquisition as a result of the Mexican War.
 - 2. Land acquired from Mexico thus became the focus of hot debate.
 - 3. The Free Soil Party ran a presidential candidate in 1848.
- E. The Compromise of 1850 helped to avert a crisis, but satisfied neither the North nor the South.
 - 1. It allowed California to enter the Union as a free state, breaking parity in the Senate.
 - 2. However, it contained tough Fugitive Slave laws.
- F. Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* became a controversial best-selling novel in the North and abroad.
- G. The Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 deepened national divisions.
 - 1. The doctrine of “popular sovereignty” appealed to some as a solution to the slavery expansion problem. It would allow residents of the territories to decide the issue of slavery but in effect repealed the Missouri Compromise.
 - 2. Violence in Kansas broke out between pro- and anti-slavery forces.
 - 3. The caning of Massachusetts Senator Charles Sumner by Preston Brooks of South Carolina in the U.S. Senate confirmed negative images on both sides.
- H. The *Dred Scott* decision (1857) seemed to guarantee slavery’s spread throughout the United States and alienated a large part of the North.
 - 1. It declared that slaves were not citizens.
 - 2. It found that the Missouri Compromise violated the Fifth Amendment prohibition against governmental “taking.”
 - 3. Congress had a responsibility to protect slaves as “property.”
- V. National institutions failed to perform as stabilizing forces during this period.
 - A. Several churches divided into northern and southern branches (e.g., Southern Baptists).
 - B. National political parties split along sectional lines.
 - 1. The Whig Party died out in 1852.
 - 2. The Democratic Party became a southern party.
 - 3. In 1856, the Republican Party was founded and it became a sectional (northern) party.
 - C. The Supreme Court seemed to favor the slaveholding South.

- D. Even major northern politicians, such as Franklin Pierce and James Buchanan, seemed to favor the South in their policies and actions; for this, they and their ilk were derisively termed “dough faces” by their political opponents.
- E. The election of 1860 was the next crisis to be faced by the already divided nation.

VI. An important thing to remember when reviewing this period is that perception was more important than reality in the sectional crisis.

Essential Reading:

McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom, The Civil War Era*, chapters 1–5.

Potter, *The Impending Crisis, 1848–1861*, chapters 1–12.

Supplementary Reading:

Cooper, *The South and the Politics of Slavery, 1828–1856*.

Donald, *Charles Sumner and the Coming of the Civil War*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Did the North and South have good reasons to fear each other’s influence over the course of national affairs?
2. Would a serious crisis have been possible in the absence of slavery?

For further background on the antebellum period, we recommend The Teaching Company course *The History of the United States*, Part IV, by Dr. Louis Masur of The City College of New York.

Lecture Two

The Election of 1860

Scope: The presidential canvass of 1860 and Abraham Lincoln’s election as the first Republican to occupy the White House precipitated the secession crisis of 1860–61. Against a backdrop of sectional antagonism fueled by John Brown’s raid on Harpers Ferry, Virginia, in late 1859 and a series of fires in Texas during the summer of 1860, voters mobilized to decide which party would hold power in Washington. The Democrats proved unable to agree on a single candidate, fielding Stephen A. Douglas and John C. Breckinridge as the respective nominees of northern and southern wings of the party. They contended against Lincoln and John Bell, the latter carrying the banner of the Constitutional Union Party, in a contest that highlighted the deeply sectional nature of national politics.

Once again the issue of slavery in the territories loomed large. The Republican platform demanded that slaveholders be barred from all federal territories; the Breckinridge Democrats insisted that slavery be allowed in all federal lands; and the Douglas Democrats sought a compromise by supporting the idea of popular sovereignty and a definitive ruling on the question from the Supreme Court. Bell’s supporters remained silent on the topic, urging all voters to think of Union first. Lincoln won with fewer than 40 percent of the popular votes but carried the Electoral College by a wide margin. His victory, achieved without a single electoral vote from any slave state, underscored the degree to which the North had outstripped the South in terms of population and convinced many residents of the Deep South that their interests were no longer safe in the Union.

Outline

- I. Important events helped set the scene for a stormy presidential election in 1860.
 - A. John Brown’s raid on the Federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia (now West Virginia), on 16 October 1859, dominated the headlines in the North and South.
 1. There was a mixed response in the North: The majority did not approve, but there was some praise for Brown’s action.
 2. Most white Southerners, recalling Nat Turner’s earlier revolt, reacted to the raid with horror as a failed attempt to foment a slave uprising.
 3. In particular, the mixed praise in the North was perceived in the South as broader than it really was.

- B. A series of unexplained fires in Texas in the summer of 1860 further rocked the white South. They were attributed to slaves, which fed the fear among white Southerners.
- II. The 1860 presidential campaign was waged by four candidates on four different platforms.
- A. The Democratic Party fractured during the campaign.
 - 1. The initial convention at Charleston, South Carolina, was divided between the pro-slavery, pro-southern Yancey platform and the pro-northern Douglas platform that favored popular sovereignty in the territories. The convention failed to agree on a candidate as 49 southern delegates walked out.
 - 2. A second convention in Baltimore saw the final break-up of the Democratic Party, with the majority of delegates nominating Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois and Hershel C. Walker and the southern minority nominating John C. Breckinridge of Kentucky and Joseph Lane in mid-May 1860.
 - B. The Republican Party, aware of the disarray in the Democratic Party, selected a moderate candidate.
 - 1. Several principal contenders failed in early ballots: William Henry Seward (too radical), Salmon P. Chase (too radical), Edward Bates (ex-Whig, too conservative).
 - 2. Supporters of Abraham Lincoln of Illinois crafted a winning strategy to secure his nomination.
 - 3. The Republican platform accepted slavery where it existed but called for barring it from the Federal territories. It deplored John Brown's raid and called for a Homestead Act, internal public improvements, and protective tariffs.
 - 4. This platform represented a northern, progressive, mercantile philosophy.
 - C. The Constitutional Union Party, growing out of the earlier American Party and "Know-Nothing" movement, attempted to avoid the issue of slavery.
 - 1. John Bell and Edward Everett won the nomination.
 - 2. The platform ignored slavery and called for support of the Constitution and the Union.
- III. The campaign offered the spectacle of a nation in trauma.
- A. All four candidates professed devotion to the Union.
 - B. The canvass took on the character of two contests.
 - 1. Lincoln and Douglas contended for northern votes.
 - 2. Douglas, Breckinridge, and Bell contended for southern votes; Lincoln was not even on the ballot in several southern states.

- 3. Many Southerners, especially in the lower tier of states, threatened secession should the Republicans win; they associated Republicans with abolitionists and John Brown.
 - 4. Slavery, race, and economics were the principal campaign issues but were not equally important in every section of the nation. Abolitionists were not satisfied with the Republican platform, but they generally supported the Republican Party.
 - 5. Lincoln did not campaign; Douglas, on the other hand, did, even in the South.
- IV. The campaign of 1860 ranks as the most important and one of the most complex in United States history.
- A. The election yielded a divided result.
 - 1. Lincoln lost the popular vote by a wide margin (2.8 million votes to 1.9 million).
 - 2. Lincoln won the Electoral College by an even wider margin and an absolute majority of 180–123.
 - B. A united Democratic Party would not have won the election.
 - 1. Douglas polled 1.35 million votes and 12 Electoral votes.
 - 2. Breckinridge received 675,000 votes and 72 Electoral votes, mostly in the South.
 - 3. Bell won 600,000 votes and 39 Electoral votes in the upper South and border states.
 - C. Lincoln's support was not evenly distributed across the North.
 - 1. The Upper North (strongly antislavery in sentiment) provided the strongest Republican turnout.
 - 2. Antislavery Northerners viewed the election as a major step toward throwing off the "slaveocracy" of the South.
- V. The year of 1860 was a momentous one in American political history.
- A. Voters had a clear choice on the issues of slavery and the economy.
 - B. In only their second national campaign, the Republicans elected their candidate as president.

Essential Reading:

McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*, chapters 6–7.
 Potter, *The Impending Crisis, 1848–1861*, chapters 14–16.

Supplementary Reading:

Donald, *Lincoln*, chapters 8–9.

Questions to Consider:

1. What does the election of 1860 tell us about whether the American people believed there were true differences between the North and South?
2. Can you imagine a modern election in which the candidate of either the Democratic or Republican Party did not appear on the ballot in several states (as was the case with the Republicans in 1860)?

Lecture Three
The Lower South Secedes

Scope: Many white Southerners considered the Republican victory in 1860 a triumph for those in the North who hoped to kill the institution of slavery. This was especially true in the seven states of the Deep or Lower South (South Carolina, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Georgia, Texas, and Florida), where pro-secessionist forces quickly organized. Beginning with South Carolina in December 1860, all the Lower South states passed ordinances of secession by the first week of February 1861. They sent delegates to a convention in Montgomery, Alabama, who wrote a constitution and established a government for a new nation called the Confederate States of America.

Self-consciously modeling themselves on their revolutionary forebears and claiming to be their successors, the founders of the Confederacy chose moderate leaders and sought to entice the eight slaveholding states still in the Union (Arkansas, Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia) to join them. This first phase of the secession movement represented a risky effort on the part of the Lower South to protect the institution of slavery in the face of a defeat at the polls that promised, by their reading of events, to undermine the economic and social bases of their society.

Outline

- I. The Lower South reacted decisively to Lincoln's election.
 - A. South Carolina seceded on December 20, 1860, by a vote of 169–0.
 - B. Six other Lower South states followed suit by February 1, 1861; in order, they were Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas.
- II. The Montgomery Convention in early February 1861 established the Confederacy.
 - A. The Confederate and United States Constitutions offer an interesting comparison.
 1. There were many similarities of thought and language.
 2. There were key differences regarding slavery and Federal versus state power.
 3. The Confederate Constitution outlawed Congressional outlays for internal improvements and prohibited protective tariffs.
 4. Ironically, the Confederate Constitution also prohibited secession.
 - B. The Convention produced essentially moderate work.
 1. William L. Yancey and other radical secessionists were absent.

2. Moderates Jefferson Davis (Mississippi) and Alexander H. Stephens (Georgia) were chosen as provisional President and Vice President, respectively, pending general elections. Both Davis and Stephens were “reluctant” secessionists.
3. The Convention avoided radical actions in an attempt to appeal to the eight slave states of the Upper South.
4. The Convention refused to allow the re-introduction of the African slave trade.

III. The Montgomery Convention represented sentiment in the Lower South.

- A. Immediate secessionists (e.g., Breckinridge supporters) wanted each state to act at once.
- B. Cooperationists (e.g., Bell and some Douglas supporters) favored joint action regarding secession.
- C. Unionists (typically in the Upper South and border states) favored working out a compromise with the North.
- D. Many Northerners—including Lincoln—thought the Cooperationists were against secession and expected a “backlash” in the South against secessionist sentiment.

IV. Southerners took different stances about whether Montgomery represented a revolutionary or legal response to Lincoln’s election.

- A. Initially, secession was compared to the American Revolution of 1776 as an exercise in throwing off the yoke of an onerous central power.
 1. Although the hope was for peaceful separation, the Confederate States of America took several military actions during this period.
 2. They seized Federal forts and arsenals, activated the militia, and authorized an army of 100,000 men.
- B. Later arguments insisted that the Lower South had acted legally under the Constitution by asserting state sovereignty.

V. Secession cannot be disentangled from the institution of slavery.

- A. The Lower South embraced secession as a means to stave off northern efforts to strike at slavery.
 1. White Southerners feared that their social and economic fabric would be destroyed by a dominant North.
 2. The Republican Party’s victory in 1860 focused their fears.
- B. Postwar Southern arguments tried to shift focus away from slavery.
 1. One argument revolved around constitutional issues, and both Davis and Stephens wrote lengthy tomes on this issue.
 2. In studying this era and this question, we need to note what people said at the time to properly evaluate retrospective comments.

Essential Reading:

McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*, chapter 8.
 Potter, *The Impending Crisis, 1848–1861*, chapters 17–18.

Supplementary Reading:

Davis, “A Government of Our Own”: *The Making of the Confederacy*.
 Thomas, *The Confederate Nation, 1861–1865*, chapter 3.

Questions to Consider:

1. Did the secessionists of the Lower South make a good case that they were the heirs of the American revolutionary generation? Support your answer.
2. Would secession have been likely in 1860–61 without the presence of slavery?

Lecture Four

The Crisis at Fort Sumter

Scope: This lecture examines the impact of events at Fort Sumter between January and mid-April 1861. The period between the secession of the Lower South and the outbreak of war saw the United States and the Confederacy eye each other warily and contend for the support of eight slave states that remained in the Union. Lame-duck President James Buchanan and other Democrats sought to appeal to slaveholders with a range of compromises relating to slavery in the territories, but the Republicans stood firm in their demand for a total ban. The fate of Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor came to be the focal point of the crisis, with many in the North insisting that it be retained as a United States installation and many Confederates arguing that it stood on South Carolina soil and should be seized. Abraham Lincoln's decision to resupply the fort in April triggered an aggressive response from Jefferson Davis's government. The resultant shelling and capture of the fort caused Lincoln to call for 75,000 volunteers to suppress the rebellion and that, in turn, prompted Virginia, North Carolina, Arkansas, and Tennessee to join the Confederacy.

Outline

- I. The Buchanan Administration tried to diffuse the sectional crisis during its last few months.
 - A. President James Buchanan sought to placate the slaveholding South.
 1. He did not recognize the secession and stated that he would enforce the laws; however, he refused to coerce the seceding states.
 2. He proposed a constitutional amendment protecting slavery in the territories.
 3. He proposed repeal of "personal liberty" laws in the North (these laws reflected a northern states rights response to slavery and were given headlines by the Anthony Burns affair).
 4. He even proposed a movement to acquire Cuba and turn it into a slave state or states.
 - B. Senator John J. Crittenden of Kentucky offered the most famous compromise regarding the territories.
 1. Crittenden's constitutional amendment proposal favored the slaveholding South. For example, he proposed the extension of slavery in all territories to California below 36°30'.
 2. Republicans in the Senate defeated the bill twice.
 - C. Because each side had a minimum demand on which it would not yield, there was no real hope for a compromise.

- II. Lincoln pursued a careful path regarding the crisis before and after taking office.
 - A. He remained quiet before succeeding Buchanan in March of 1861.
 - B. He initially believed that Unionist sentiment in the South would assert itself.
 - C. His inaugural address sought to place responsibility for the start of any hostilities on the Confederates.
 1. He stated that the Federal government would hold, occupy, and protect its installations in the South and continue to carry out governmental functions, such as the collection of customs tariffs and so on.
 2. He said that he would not use force but would enforce the laws.
- III. Fort Sumter triggered the final crisis that led to civil war.
 - A. Lincoln decided to resupply the fort in Charleston Harbor with an unarmed vessel.
 1. An earlier attempt by Buchanan to do this had failed.
 2. The fort became a symbol for both sides.
 3. On March 5, 1861, the commanding officer of the fort sent a message saying that he was running out of provisions.
 4. In deciding to resupply the fort, Lincoln went against many of his advisers, including William Seward (Secretary of War) and General Winfield Scott.
 5. Lincoln believed that northern public opinion favored holding the fort.
 - B. The Davis Administration reacted by firing on the fort.
 1. Davis faced a range of poor options. He didn't want to appear to be the aggressor and asked the fort to surrender.
 2. Public opinion in the Confederacy supported seizing the fort; on 15 April, gun batteries opened fire and bombarded the fort for 36 hours.
 - C. News of the firing on Fort Sumter ignited passions across both the North and the South.
 - D. The next day, President Lincoln called for 75,000 volunteers to put down the rebellion.
- IV. The Upper South seceded in reaction to Lincoln's call for volunteers.
 - A. Virginia, North Carolina, Arkansas, and Tennessee decided that they must secede rather than supply troops to be used against the Confederacy.
 1. Public opinion in each state was divided about secession.
 2. Lincoln's call convinced a majority in each state to support secession.

- B. The loss of the Upper South greatly complicated the task of restoring the Union. There were now eleven states in secession.
 - 1. The Upper South (especially North Carolina, Virginia, and Tennessee) supplied most of the Confederacy's soldiers.
 - 2. The Upper South contained vital industrial and agricultural resources for the Confederacy.
- C. The capital of the Confederate States was moved from Montgomery, Alabama, to Richmond, Virginia (which had 40 percent of the South's manufacturing capacity), in recognition of Virginia's importance.

Essential Reading:

McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*, chapters 8–9.

Potter, *The Impending Crisis, 1848–1861*, chapters 19–20.

Supplementary Reading:

Current, *Lincoln and the First Shot*.

Potter, *Lincoln and His Party in the Secession Crisis*.

Stampf, *And the War Came: The North and the Secession Crisis, 1860–61*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Were there any possible grounds for compromise between Republicans and Democrats that might have averted the crisis of 1861?
2. To whom would you assign primary responsibility for the outbreak of war in mid-April 1861?

For more insight into President Lincoln and his political development, as well as a close look at his First Inaugural Address, we recommend The Teaching Company course *Abraham Lincoln: In His Own Words* by Professor David Zarefsky of Northwestern University.

Lecture Five The Opposing Sides,I

Scope: The next two lectures will evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each side as they prepared to wage war. At first glance, it might seem that the North had such decisive advantages in almost every measurable category as to guarantee victory. Much of the literature of the “Lost Cause,” which flourished in the South in the late nineteenth century and continues to influence writing about the conflict, argued that the Confederacy waged a gallant but doomed struggle for independence. In reality, important factors favored each side as fighting began. We will take a close look at these factors to underscore the importance of the fact that the outcome of the war was not predetermined. Either side could have won, and the Confederacy more than once came close to persuading the northern people that the contest was too costly in lives and treasure. The first of the two lectures on this subject will focus on areas in which one side or the other possessed a significant edge; the second lecture will address elements of the balance sheet that favored neither of the combatants.

Outline

- I. The North held obvious advantages in important categories.
 - A. The North had an edge of about five to two in manpower; its population of approximately 22.5 million far outstripped that of the South, which had 9.1 million, of which 3.5 million were blacks, including only 160,000 free blacks.
 1. The North drew on its own much larger population, as well as a significant portion of the Confederacy's white and black male populations that never supported the southern cause.
 2. The presence of slave labor allowed the Confederacy to muster a higher percentage of its military-age white males (about 75 to 80 percent, as opposed to about 50 percent in the North).
 3. A total of between 2.1 and 2.2 million men served in the military in the Civil War; between 750,000 and 850,000 served in the Confederate Army.
 - B. The northern economy, boasting approximately 110,000 businesses involving 1.3 million workers, dwarfed that of the Confederacy (with 18,000 business employing 110,000 workers).
 1. The North had as many manufacturing establishments as the Confederacy had factory workers.
 2. The northern railroad network was more extensive and modern, with 22,000 miles of track, compared to only 9,000 in the Confederacy.

3. Northern production of iron, ships, textiles, weapons, draft animals, and other crucial items far outstripped that in the South.
- C. The North began the war with a professional army and navy, although this advantage was less important than might be assumed.
1. The United States Army was only 15,000 strong and was spread across the continent; most units were west of the Mississippi.
 2. The United States Navy had only 42 vessels in commission. Most of these were patrolling far from the South. It was a deep-water cruising navy, not skilled in coastal or riverine warfare.
- II. The Confederacy also possessed significant advantages.
- A. War aims favored the Confederacy.
1. The Confederacy had only to defend itself to win independence.
 2. The American Revolution offered an example of a weaker power winning over a stronger power.
 3. The Confederacy could win by demoralizing the northern people.
 4. The North faced the prospect of invading and conquering the Confederacy to restore the Union.
- B. Defending home ground conveyed advantages to the Confederacy.
1. The side defending its homes often exhibits greater motivation than an invader.
 2. Confederates usually would know the terrain and roads better than Northerners.
 3. The Confederates would also enjoy the military advantages of “interior lines.”
- C. Geography often favored the Confederacy.
1. The sheer size of the Confederacy (more than 750,000 square miles with 3,500 miles of coastline) posed a daunting obstacle to the North.
 2. Access for commerce was provided by more than 200 mouths of rivers and bays.
 3. The Appalachian Mountains presented an obstacle, and the Shenandoah Valley provided a protected corridor for military action against the North.
 4. Rivers were a mixed bag—they sometimes served as avenues of advance for the Federals (as in the Western Theater along the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers) and at other times posed barriers to northern armies (as in Virginia).
 5. The poor southern transportation network would complicate northern logistics. The Vicksburg campaign of 1863 is one example and the infamous “mud march” in Virginia (January 1863) is another.

Essential Reading:

Hattaway and Jones, *How the North Won: A Military History of the Civil War*, chapters 1–2.

McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*, chapter 10.

Supplementary Reading:

Nevins, *The War for the Union: The Improvised War, 1861–1862*, chapters 4–5.

Questions to Consider:

1. Considering the factors covered in this lecture, how would you assess each side’s chances for victory?
2. Is it possible to gauge accurately the possible impact of intangibles, such as fighting to defend home and hearth?

Lecture Six

The Opposing Sides, II

Scope: This lecture continues the discussion begun with our last lecture. The analysis shifts to the topics of pools of trained officers available to each side, political leadership, and the wild card of foreign intervention. Although it remains a common idea that the Confederacy had better generals, we will see that each side drew from a pool that essentially mirrored the others. In terms of political leadership, I will argue that Jefferson Davis provided capable direction to the Confederate war effort, although his performance inevitably suffers in comparison to Lincoln's deft leadership.

Unknown at the time hostilities opened and a subject of intense Union and Confederate interest for at least two years thereafter, the attitudes of England and France represented a potentially significant element in any reckoning of strengths and weaknesses. Should the Confederacy win the kind of support the colonies received from France during the Revolution, the entire balance sheet of the war would be upset. Absent major intervention from abroad, the victory would go to the side that mustered its resources and exploited its advantages most effectively to maintain national morale and purpose while convincing the opposing population that the war was not worth the cost.

Outline

- I. Despite the "myth" that the South had better generals, each side drew on similar resources of military command.
 - A. Officers trained at West Point held the top positions in both armies. Arguably, the South had the advantage in the Eastern Theater and the North had the edge in the West.
 - B. There were 824 officers on the active list at the outbreak of the war. Of this total, 640 stayed with the North and only 184 went with the Confederacy. Of the approximately 900 professional officers then in private life, 114 served the North while 99 served the South. Several factors largely offset the fact that roughly three-quarters of all West Pointers and other pre-war professional officers fought for the North.
 1. Larger Union armies required more officers.
 2. Professional officers were kept in Regular United States units rather than being spread out among volunteer regiments for the first part of the war.
 3. Southern state schools, such as the Virginia Military Institute (VMI) and the Citadel (Charleston, South Carolina), sent a large number of trained officers into the Confederacy's armies. A total of

2,000 men had trained at VMI and about 1,700 served in the Confederate States Army (CSA), especially in the Army of Northern Virginia.

- C. Professional officers on both sides shared a common heritage. Drawn from this pool of professionals, there were 583 general officers in the Union Army during the war and 425 general officers in the CSA.
 1. These officers learned from the same professors at West Point.
 2. They learned the same lessons during the Mexican War under Generals Scott and Taylor.
 3. The officers tended to subscribe to the same strategic and tactical ideas concerning the power of rifled muskets and cannons giving advantages to the defender; the need to avoid frontal assaults; the desirability of trying to turn an enemy's flank, if possible; and the advantage of exploiting interior lines of movement, both strategically and tactically. The officers also had similar ideas about communication, supply, and the use of field fortifications as a defensive tactical measure.
 - D. Political realities forced both sides to use politicians as generals.
 1. Lincoln appointed these "political generals" based on party affiliation and nationality.
 2. There were many famous, albeit not overly capable, political generals during the Civil War.
- II. Lincoln and Davis both did well as war leaders.
- A. Lincoln began the conflict with little military knowledge (he was a company grade officer during the Black Hawk War in the 1830s), but he learned quickly.
 1. He grasped strategic ideas well, listened to his military advisers, and read about strategy.
 2. He was willing to grant wide authority to generals if necessary to win.
 3. He was willing to grow and change his ideas about what kind of war needed to be fought.
 - B. Davis had considerable military experience and put it to good use.
 1. He was a West Point graduate (class of 1828).
 2. He had been a colonel in the Mexican War.
 3. He had been Secretary of War under President Franklin Pierce.
 4. He never found a second able army commander to do in the Western Theater what Lee did in the Eastern Theater.
 5. He sometimes was reluctant to step aside and allow Lee to have wider authority.
- III. The possibility of foreign intervention constituted a wild card.
- A. The eventual decisions of England and France were crucial.
 - B. The example of the American Revolution impressed both sides.

- C. Military events would largely determine the decisions of European powers.

Essential Reading:

Hattaway and Jones, *How the North Won: A Military History of the Civil War*, chapters 1–2.

McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*, chapter 10.

Supplementary Reading:

Boritt, ed., *Why the Confederacy Lost*, Essays One and Three (by James M. McPherson and Gary W. Gallagher, respectively).

Questions to Consider:

1. Which factors favoring one side or the other likely would change as the war developed? Which would remain relatively constant?
2. Do you think human or material factors loomed larger in the balance sheet of strengths and weaknesses?

Lecture Seven The Common Soldier

Scope: This lecture examines several elements of the common soldier's experience. Approximately 3 million men served in the Union and Confederate military forces, and they mirrored their respective societies in terms of occupation, class, and other demographic categories. They served in units with strong regional identification—often in companies raised from the same town or area and regiments from the same part of a state—and frequently shared tents with relatives or friends. Roughly one-quarter of the Union soldiers were foreign born; German and Irish were the two most common nationalities (African American soldiers, who made up almost 10 percent of the Union army, will be discussed in a later lecture). Soldiers left a mass of letters, diaries, and other evidence that enables us to reconstruct their lives in the army and gain at least some understanding of their motivations and attitudes. A number of factors prompted them to enlist and remain in the ranks; ideology and patriotism ranked highest among men who volunteered in 1861 and 1862. Quite understandably, men who enlisted because they feared being conscripted and those drafted directly into the army often exhibited less enthusiasm and willingness to fight hard and make sacrifices than the early volunteers did.

Soldiers spent most of their time in camps, where they contended with boredom, seemingly endless drill, poor food (especially for the Confederates), and a range of physical discomforts. They engaged in various amusements, many of which did not conform to religious teachings. Disease took a horrible toll, killing twice as many soldiers as enemy fire. Poor camp hygiene, exposure to childhood diseases (a particular problem among rural soldiers), the deadly effects of such afflictions as dysentery and diarrhea, and the inability of mid-nineteenth-century medicine to deal effectively with many types of battlefield wounds contributed to a stark picture of men at risk. Although desertion plagued both armies (rates were nearly the same on each side—12 to 14 percent), most soldiers served competently in camp and in battle.

Outline

- I. Civil War soldiers mirrored the societies from which they came.
 - A. Many men enlisted in regiments raised from one geographical area, thus providing a sense of stability and motivation for men in the ranks.
 - B. Approximately 3 million men served on both sides.

1. Approximately 2.1 million served in the North (roughly 50 percent of the military-age pool).
 2. A total of 750,000 to 850,000 served in the Confederacy (roughly 75 to 85 percent of the white military-age pool).
 3. The “average” soldier was a native-born, white, Protestant farmer between the ages of 18 and 29.
 4. About 25 percent of the North’s soldiers were foreign born, with Germans and Irish predominating (more than 30 percent of the military-age white males in the North were foreign born).
 5. About 9 to 10 percent of the Confederate soldiers were foreign born (7.5 percent of the military-age white males were foreign born).
 6. A few Native Americans fought on each side (more fought for the Confederacy).
 7. Approximately 180,000 blacks served in the United States Army; some blacks served in the CSA but in noncombatant roles.
- C.** The breakdown of soldiers by class reflected that in society at large.
1. Farmers were the largest group in each army.
 2. Skilled laborers were the next largest group.
 3. Professional men and white-collar workers combined were slightly underrepresented in the armies.
- D.** It was not a rich man’s war and a poor man’s fight.
- II.** Various factors motivated soldiers to enlist and remain in the ranks.
- A.** Those who volunteered in 1861–62 were more likely to be motivated by ideology and patriotism (Professor James McPherson is a leading advocate of this assertion).
- B.** Other factors included peer or community pressure, a search for adventure, masculine identity, the desire to be a hero, hatred of the enemy, and the lure of money (e.g., enlistment bounties in the North). This was the general view of the pioneering Civil War historian Bell Wiley.
- C.** How did slavery factor in?
1. Slavery was a part of southern society, even though most soldiers did not own slaves.
 2. On the Union side, probably only a very small percentage of soldiers fought for emancipation. The key reason for fighting for the most part was to restore the Union.
- D.** Most soldiers probably combined several of these factors in their decisions to serve.
- III.** Soldiers spent most of their time in camp.
- A.** They contended with a number of problems and unpleasant duties in this environment.

1. Boredom was a common phenomenon.
 2. They drilled frequently.
 3. They resisted strict military discipline.
 4. They suffered from homesickness.
- B.** Soldiers engaged in various amusements to dispel camp boredom.
1. They gambled and played cards.
 2. They read and wrote letters.
 3. They played a variety of games (chess, checkers, and so on).
 4. They sang and played music (sentimental songs were the favorites).
 5. They chased animals.
 6. They engaged in enormous snowball fights.
- C.** Soldiers complained most often about the food.
1. Confederates often lacked enough to eat.
 2. Hardtack (Union), cornbread (Confederate), and problematical meat were staples.
 3. Fresh vegetables and fruit were often in short supply.
- IV.** Soldiers suffered terribly from disease and poor medical care.
- A.** Disease killed two soldiers for each man killed or mortally wounded in battle.
- B.** Childhood diseases, such as measles, chickenpox, and mumps, were great problems (especially among rural men and early in the war).
- C.** Poor food and contaminated water complicated health.
1. Latrines were often poorly situated.
 2. Soldiers drank from rivers, creeks, and ponds.
- D.** Inadequate clothing caused poor health in winter, and dysentery, diarrhea, and malaria were scourges.
- E.** Medicine could not treat many battlefield injuries effectively.
1. Physicians were most successful in treating wounds to the limbs through amputation but could not do much for torso wounds.
 2. Soldiers often waited many hours (or even days) to receive treatment for wounds.
- V.** Most soldiers served honorably and well despite desertion rates of about 12 to 14 percent in each army.

Essential Reading:

McPherson and Cooper (eds.), *Writing the Civil War: The Quest to Understand*, Mitchell essay.

Supplementary Reading:

McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War*.

Mitchell, *Civil War Soldiers*.

Wiley, *The Life of Billy Yank: The Common Soldier of the Union*.

Wiley, *The Life of Johnny Reb: The Common Soldier of the Confederacy*.

Questions to Consider:

1. To what extent did Union and Confederate soldiers share a common experience? To what extent did their wartime service differ?
2. What do you think it would take to motivate modern Americans to undertake the type of service rendered by Civil War soldiers?

Lecture Eight**First Manassas or Bull Run**

Scope: After the Upper South's secession and the transfer of the Confederate seat of government from Montgomery, Alabama, to Richmond, Virginia, both sides sought to mobilize men and resources and plot military strategies. The North had to mount an active campaign to force the Confederate states back into the Union; the Confederacy had the easier task of countering the North's moves. If the Lincoln government did nothing, the Confederacy would win by default.

The crucial figure in the North was General Winfield Scott, a brilliant soldier who formulated a long-range strategy that came to be called the "Anaconda Plan." This called for blockading the Confederate coast, seizing control of the Mississippi River, and if necessary, invading the South with a large army. Scott argued that it would take months to train and equip soldiers for battle, but public opinion insisted that the northern army move quickly—the first example of how important politics and public opinion would be in shaping Civil War military affairs. Lincoln believed that a battle could be won immediately, and he prodded General Irvin McDowell into action. The result was the campaign of First Manassas or Bull Run, which climaxed on July 21, 1861, in the war's first major clash. The Confederates won the battle, a fumbling affair that saw commanders on each side trying to apply lessons they had learned about flank attacks and interior lines. Although relatively modest by the standards of later battles of the war, First Manassas had a major impact on civilian morale and persuaded people on both sides that the war would not be won or lost in a matter of a few months.

Outline

- I. The North faced the task of planning a military strategy that would force the Confederate states back into the Union.
 - A. Lieutenant General Winfield Scott formulated the so-called "Anaconda Plan" to constrict the South. Scott was a distinguished military man whose career went all the way back to the War of 1812 and included brilliant service in the Mexican War. Old and infirm by the time of the Civil War, he still had a good strategic grasp.
 1. He argued for pressure on the coasts, along the Mississippi River, and possibly against the Confederate hinterlands.
 2. He argued that the North would have to be patient while the military built and trained a large force, perhaps as large as 300,000 men.

- B. Northern politics and public opinion influenced military planning.
 1. The northern public clamored for an immediate march against Richmond, the Confederate capital.
 2. Lincoln accepted the idea that a climactic early battle made sense, because the North had more soldiers (who, like their Confederate counterparts, were untrained) and because an early success might end the war.
- II. The campaign of First Manassas or Bull Run pitted four forces against one another.
- A. The battle has two names, because the North named battles after terrain features (Bull Run Creek) while the South used the nearest town or railroad junction (Manassas Junction).
 - B. The disposition of forces is important to understand.
 1. Confederate Joseph E. Johnston with 12,000 men faced Union General Robert Patterson with 18,000 men in the lower, or northern end of, the Shenandoah Valley.
 2. Confederate General P. G. T. Beauregard (20,000 men) faced Union General Irvin McDowell (35,000 men) near Washington, D.C.
 - C. Union success depended on keeping the Confederate forces divided.
 1. A railroad connection gave the Confederates the advantage of interior lines.
 2. Patterson's goal was to tie Johnston down in the valley while McDowell struck Beauregard.
 3. McDowell wanted to avoid a direct assault and planned to turn the Confederate flank.
 4. McDowell marched from Washington, D.C., on 15 July 1861. By 20 July, the Confederates had concentrated near Manassas Junction.
- III. The Battle of First Manassas or Bull Run on 21 July 1861 yielded a major Confederate triumph.
- A. The initial Union moves promised victory.
 1. A strong Confederate defense under General Thomas J. Jackson on Henry House Hill bought time.
 2. Johnston's troops eluded Patterson and joined Beauregard's force in time to turn the tide of battle.
 - B. The battle demonstrated the similarity between generalship on both sides.
 1. McDowell and Beauregard both planned to strike the other's flank rather than mount direct attacks.
 2. Both sides were well aware of the Confederacy's interior lines.
 - C. The Federal retreat turned into a rout hampered by civilians who had come out to watch the battle; however, the Federal army showed

resiliency after the initial rout, a pattern that would be repeated (e.g., after Chancellorsville and Chickamauga).

- IV. The battle had important results.
- A. As the largest battle in American history to that point, it made people on both sides think in terms of a bloodier contest. The North suffered 2,700 casualties; the South, about 2,000 (casualties included men killed, wounded, missing, and captured).
 1. The northern public suffered a major disappointment and no longer expected a quick resolution to the war.
 2. The Confederate public took heart and expected to win independence.
 - B. The battle may have had long-term influence on expectations of success in the Union and Confederate armies in Virginia.

Essential Reading:

Hattaway and Jones, *How the North Won: A Military History of the Civil War*, chapter 2.
 McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*, chapters 10–11.

Supplementary Reading:

Michael C. C. Adams, *Our Masters the Rebels*, chapter 4.
 William C. Davis, *Battle at Bull Run*.

Questions to Consider:

1. What lessons should each side have learned from the First Manassas campaign?
2. What factors are crucial to a proper evaluation of the importance of a military campaign?

Lecture Nine

Contending for the Border States

Scope: We know now that the four slaveholding border states (Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, and Delaware) remained in the Union, but in the summer and autumn of 1861, no one could predict this with certainty. Both the Lincoln and Davis Administrations devoted considerable attention to the border states, all of which witnessed internal debates of varying intensity about the question of secession. Rich in manpower and material resources, the border states stood as a prizes of enormous strategic value. The loss to the Union of Missouri and Kentucky would dramatically alter the strategic situation west of the Appalachians; the loss of Maryland would place Washington, D.C., inside Confederate territory. In the end, a combination of effective northern policy (including heavy-handed interference with Maryland's internal political affairs), southern blunders, and strong Unionist sentiment prevented any of the border states from embracing the Confederacy. Union military success and a strong internal movement to break away from Virginia and the Confederacy created, in effect, a fifth border state when several trans-Allegheny counties formed West Virginia.

Outline

- I. A key northern goal was to keep the four border states loyal to the Union, so they would not follow the four states of the Upper South into the Confederacy.
 - A. Kentucky suffered severe internal strife before electing to remain in the Union.
 1. It had strong economic and social ties with both the North and the South. It was the birthplace of both Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis. It did permit slavery.
 2. It had a history of working for compromise during sectional crises. It was the home state of the "Great Compromiser" Henry Clay and of John J. Crittenden.
 - B. It sought to maintain a neutral stance for the first months of the war. It sent soldiers into both side's armies and traded with both the North and the South.
 1. Confederate military incursions under Leonidas Polk in September 1861 decided the issue in favor of the North.
 2. Pro-secessionists created a shadow Confederate government and sent representatives to the Confederate Congress.
 - C. Missouri experienced some of the worst violence of the war.
 1. Antebellum "border war" strife carried over into the Civil War.

2. Military clashes between pro-Union and pro-Confederate Missourians marked the first months of the conflict.
 3. Union forces under Nathaniel Lyons captured southern militia at Camp Jackson in May 1861.
 4. Confederates under Sterling Price won a victory at the Battle of Wilson's Creek on 10 August 1861. Brigadier General Lyons (Union) was killed in this battle.
 5. John C. Fremont entered the picture to take overall command of the Union forces.
 6. Pro-Confederates formed a shadow government when the state convention failed to embrace secession. Missouri sent 90,000 men into the Union forces and 30,000 into the Confederate army.
 7. The state experienced vicious guerrilla fighting for the entire war (e.g., the depredations of Quantrill's Raiders).
- D. Maryland posed a special problem to Lincoln because of its location.
 1. Baltimore and parts of eastern Maryland favored the Confederacy; the Union 6th Massachusetts Regiment was attacked in Baltimore in April and pro-Confederates isolated Washington by destroying bridges and cutting telegraph wires.
 2. Lincoln acted decisively after the Maryland state legislature voted to recognize the Confederacy. He sent troops to Baltimore, suspended the *writ of habeas corpus* in part of the state, watched as Federals arrested pro-Confederate Marylanders, and took strong measures to ensure a Unionist victory in the 1861 governor's race.
 3. Maryland remained in the Union but sent troops to both side's armies, 40,000 to the North and 20,000 to the South.
 - E. Delaware's loyalty to the Union was never in doubt.
 1. There were very few slaveholders in the state.
 2. The state's economic orientation was toward the North.
 3. Only a handful of Delaware men joined the Confederate army.
- II. Western Virginia counties broke with the rest of the state and formed West Virginia.
 - A. This part of the state had few slaves and strong economic ties to the North.
 - B. Trans-Allegheny counties met in convention following Virginia's secession on 17 April 1861.
 1. Union military successes in the area during June and July strengthened their hand.
 2. The delegates declared themselves the legitimate government of Virginia on 2 August 1861.
 3. They drew boundaries of the proposed new state of Kanawah.
 4. They set up a mechanism for approving their work that left pro-Confederates unrepresented.

- C. The new state of West Virginia was created in May 1862 and accepted by Congress in 1863.

III. Retention of the border states proved invaluable to the Union.

- A. The North controlled strategic access to important rivers, such as the Tennessee, the Cumberland, and the Mississippi itself.
- B. The Confederacy was denied control of vital military resources, such as animals, minerals, food, and manpower.
- C. Retention of the border states was a key strategic victory for the North.

Essential Reading:

McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*, chapter 9.

Nevins, *The War for the Union: The Improvised War, 1861–1862*, chapters 6–7.

Supplementary Reading:

Fellman, *Inside War: The Guerrilla Conflict in Missouri during the American Civil War*.

Questions to Consider:

1. How important was it for the Lincoln Administration to keep the border states in the Union?
2. Why did the border states react differently to Fort Sumter and Lincoln's call for 75,000 troops than the four states of the Upper South?

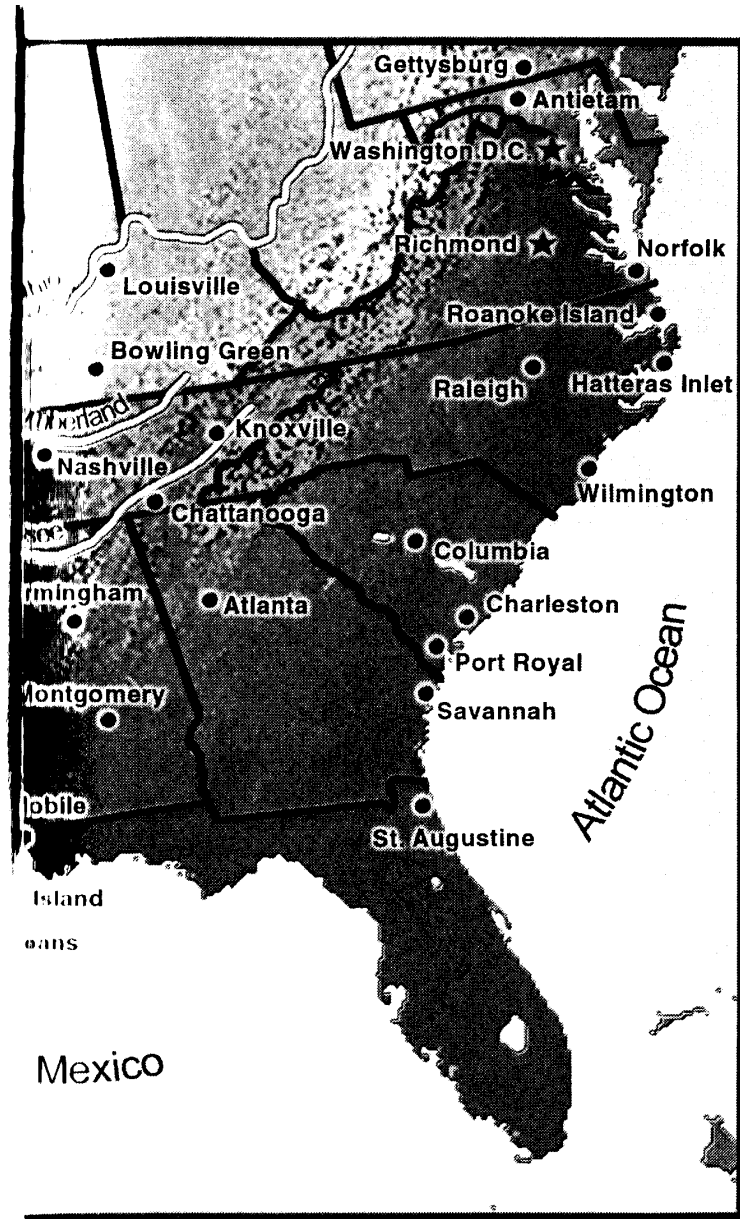
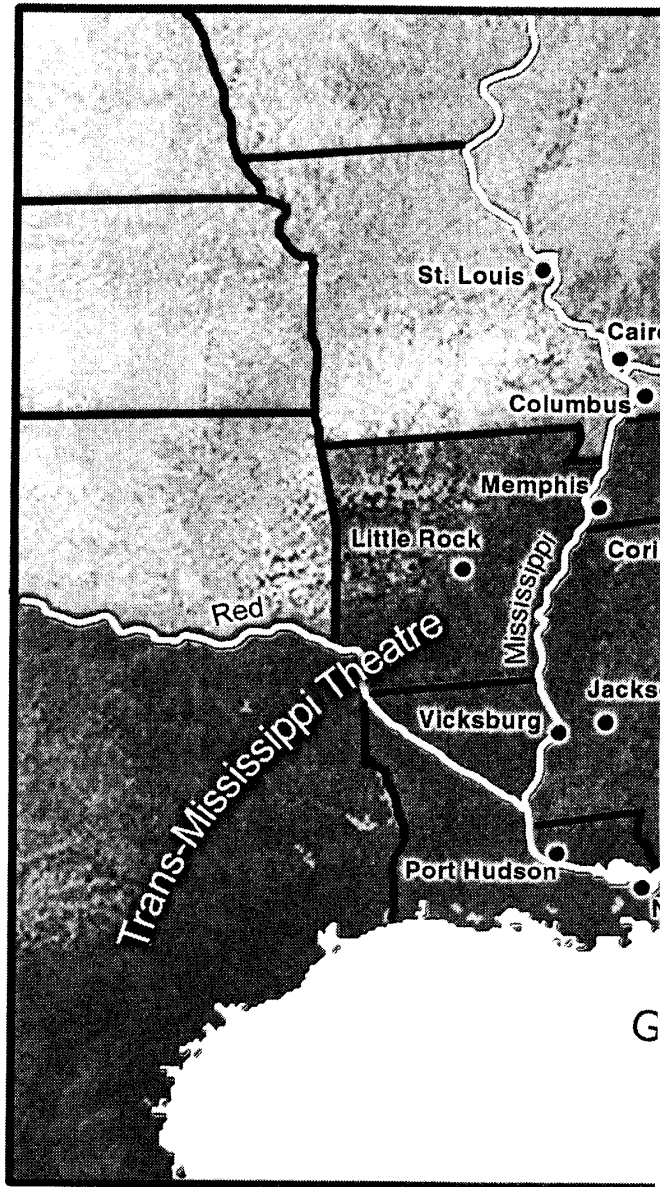
Lecture Ten

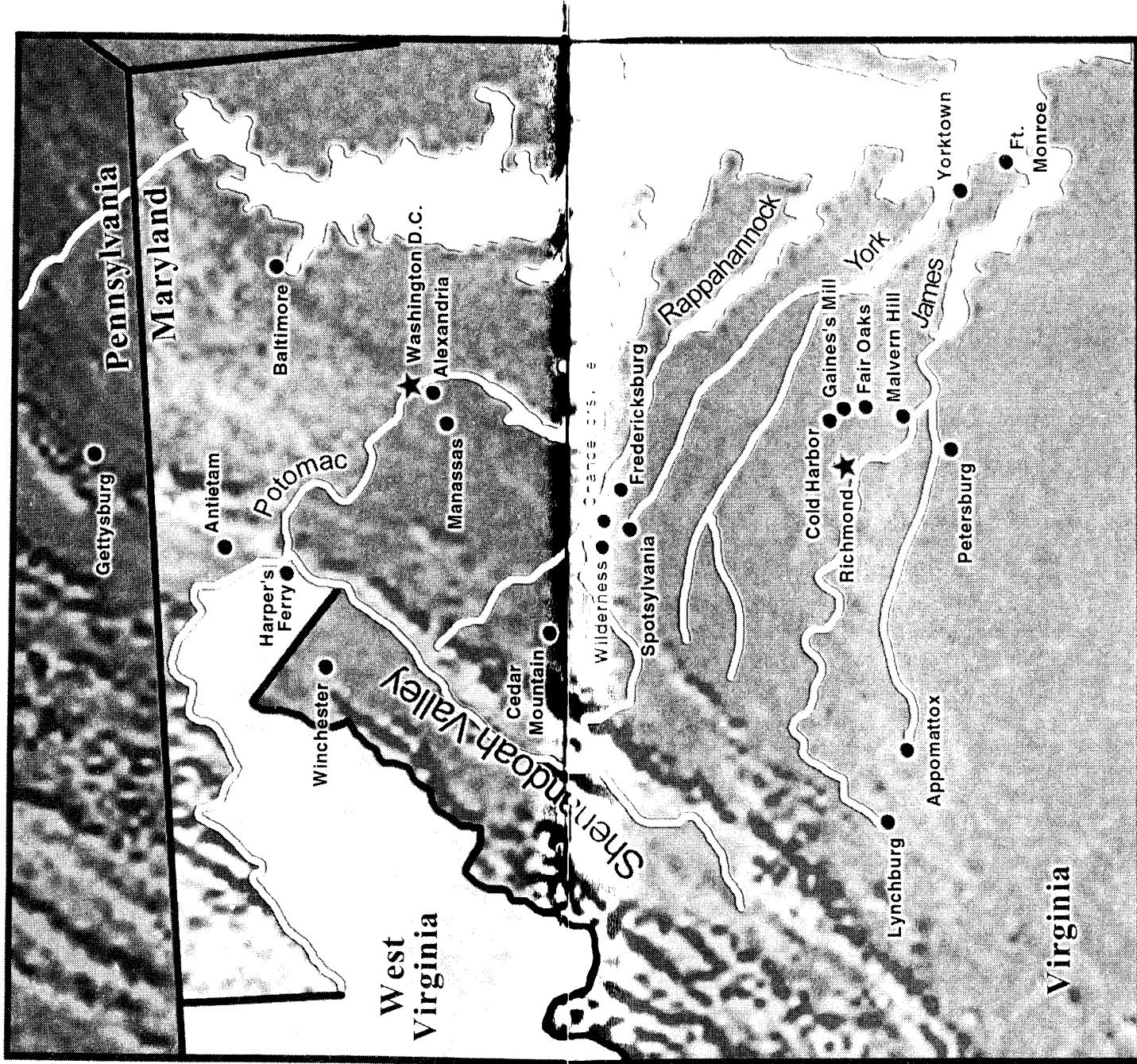
Early Union Triumphs in the West

Scope: The battle of First Manassas captured the imagination of citizens in both the United States and the Confederacy, and most people almost certainly still looked to Virginia as the critical military arena. But a number of generals on both sides believed that the war would be decided in the vast Trans-Appalachian Theater, a view Abraham Lincoln quickly came to share. The first important battles of 1862 would be fought in the West, and the Union would develop a group of officers there who would eventually win the war. The next two lectures will address the Western Theater between the autumn of 1861 and the summer of 1862, describing a remarkable series of Union victories and introducing major military figures, such as Henry W. Halleck, Ulysses S. Grant, Albert Sidney Johnston, and Don Carlos Buell. The first lecture will set the western stage and carry the story through Grant's capture of Forts Henry and Donelson and the crumbling of the Confederate defensive line in Kentucky and Tennessee. The second lecture will focus on Shiloh, an enormous battle that anticipated the scale of future fighting, and the Union capture of the vital rail junction at Corinth, Mississippi.

Outline

- I. The Union shuffled its high command in the autumn of 1861.
 - A. Thirty-four-year old George B. McClellan replaced the aged Winfield Scott as General-in-Chief. McClellan also took field command of the Army of the Potomac.
 - B. Generals Henry W. Halleck and Don Carlos Buell took command in the West.
 1. Halleck (known as "Old Brains") was to pacify Missouri and seize control of the upper Mississippi west of the Cumberland River.
 2. Buell, in command east of the Cumberland, was to liberate eastern Tennessee and sever rail connections between Virginia and Tennessee.
- II. The Confederacy faced a difficult situation in the West.
 - A. Albert Sidney Johnston held overall command of a vast theater that stretched from the Appalachians to the Mississippi River.
 1. He had been trained at West Point and had served in the United States Army.
 2. He had also fought in the Texas Revolution and had risen to be the Commander-in-Chief of the Army of the Republic of Texas.
 3. He was the ranking field general of the Confederacy.





- B. Johnston's theater was vulnerable along four avenues of advance available to the Union.
 1. The Mississippi River flowed through the Confederate heartland.
 2. The Tennessee River sliced through Tennessee into northern Mississippi.
 3. The Cumberland River flowed to Nashville.
 4. The Louisville and Nashville Railroad ran through Kentucky and Tennessee to Nashville.
 - C. Johnston placed his forces to cover all four lines of advance.
 1. Troops stationed at Columbus, Kentucky, under General (and Episcopal bishop) Leonidas Polk blocked the upper Mississippi on Johnston's left.
 2. Troops at Bowling Green, Kentucky, blocked the L&N Railroad and anchored Johnston's right.
 3. Weaker positions in the center were at Fort Henry (blocking the Tennessee River) and Fort Donelson (blocking the Cumberland River).
 4. Other smaller forces were also available to Johnston in the theater.
- III. Each side held two advantages in the Western Theater.
- A. Johnston had interior lines with a good rail connection from Memphis, Tennessee, to Bowling Green, Kentucky, and a unified command
 - B. Halleck and Buell had superior numbers and four good avenues of advance.
- IV. The North mounted a generally effective offensive in early 1862 to attack Johnston where he was the weakest, in the center.
- A. Buell achieved mixed success
 1. Some of his troops under George Thomas won the Battle of Mill Springs (Logan's Crossroads) in January 1862 and compelled the Confederate forces to abandon eastern Kentucky.
 2. However, Buell proved unable to liberate eastern Tennessee.
 - B. Halleck's forces achieved excellent results.
 1. All major Confederate influence in Missouri was eliminated.
 2. General Ulysses S. Grant captured Fort Henry (on the Tennessee River) in February. He cooperated successfully with Flag Officer Foote and his gunboat flotilla.
 3. Grant then broke the Confederates' railroad connection and attacked Fort Donelson on the Cumberland River.
 4. General Floyd, the Confederate commanding officer, was not competent to defend against a concerted attack. In fact, he and his second-in-command, General Pillow, fled the fort and command

devolved on S. B. Buckner, who surrendered the fort unconditionally to Grant.

5. During this campaign, the Confederates abandoned Columbus and Bowling Green; Nashville and much of middle Tennessee fell to the Union. Johnston's entire line was gone and he lost over one-quarter of his forces.

C. Halleck was promoted to supreme command in the West.

Essential Reading:

Hattaway and Jones, *How the North Won: A Military History of the Civil War*, chapter 3.

McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*, chapter 13.

Supplementary Reading:

Connelly, *Army of the Heartland: The Army of Tennessee, 1861–1862*, chapters 1–7.

Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson: The Key to the Confederate Heartland*.

Questions to Consider:

1. What does campaigning in the Western Theater in early 1862 tell us about communications and logistics during the Civil War?
2. Could the Confederates have mounted a more effective defense of the region or were numbers and terrain too strongly against them?

Lecture Eleven

Shiloh and Corinth

Scope: Northern forces built on the successes at Forts Henry and Donelson by pressing southward in Tennessee. Grant continued to move up the Tennessee River, and Buell marched overland from Nashville to join him. The Confederates responded with a major concentration of power and hoped to defeat the Federals in detail before Grant and Buell united. To that end, Johnston marched north from Corinth and struck Grant's army at Pittsburg Landing on April 6, 1862. Vicious fighting (some of it near a small country church named Shiloh) brought tactical gains for the Confederates, but Johnston was mortally wounded and Grant patched together a good defensive position guarding the landing. Buell reinforced Grant that evening, setting the stage for a successful Union counteroffensive on April 7. The Confederates, now commanded by P. G. T. Beauregard, retreated to Corinth. Halleck built an army of 100,000 men and moved inexorably toward Corinth, which fell in late May. By that time, New Orleans had fallen to a Union naval force commanded by David G. Farragut, and Memphis capitulated to another Union flotilla shortly thereafter. The first six months of 1862 saw breathtaking Union success in the Western Theater.

Outline

- I. Union and Confederate planning set the stage for a major confrontation at Shiloh (Tennessee).
 - A. Union forces under Grant and Buell were ordered by Halleck to unite on the Tennessee River, just north of the Mississippi border.
 - B. Before describing the campaign, we should look at Ulysses S. ("Sam") Grant, the person and the general.
 1. Up to the start of the war, Grant had an unremarkable record at West Point, in Mexico, and in the regular army.
 2. He left the army in 1854 after a posting to the West Coast (Fort Humboldt in northern California).
 3. He was successful in a variety of civilian jobs.
 4. His early successes in the Civil War earned him advancements.
 - C. Southern leaders orchestrated an impressive concentration of troops drawn from many parts of the Confederacy at the vital railroad junction of Corinth.
 1. The use of railroads and interior lines helped this concentration.
 2. The Confederate plan was to strike Grant before he united with Buell's forces.
 - D. Each side had ambitious goals.

1. Halleck hoped to push the Confederates entirely out of Tennessee and into central Mississippi.
 2. The Confederates hoped to defeat Grant's force at Pittsburg Landing, then turn against Buell's army approaching from Nashville.
- II. Shiloh (or Pittsburg Landing) unfolded as a chaotic battle that set a new standard for slaughter and ended in Union victory.
 - A. The Confederate advance from Corinth was slow and poorly masked.
 1. The timetable for the attack was too optimistic.
 2. General Beauregard counseled Johnston to call off the attack.
 - B. Grant's army was surprised by the Confederate attacks on April 6, 1862.
 1. The Confederates drove Grant's army back to the banks of the Tennessee River in the morning fighting.
 2. The fighting was savage; the center of the Union line managed to hold out in a spot that came to be known as "the Hornet's Nest."
 3. The delay in the Confederate advance enabled Buell to come up to supporting distance across the Tennessee.
 4. Thousands of green soldiers on each side failed to fight well.
 - C. Grant, William Tecumseh Sherman, A. S. Johnston, and other senior officers made a number of mistakes.
 1. Grant and Sherman were sloppy in taking precautions against a Confederate attack.
 2. Johnston mismanaged the Confederate attacks on April 6 and failed to seize Pittsburg Landing itself. He was wounded while on the Confederate right and died at about 2:30 p.m. Command devolved on Beauregard, who called off the attacks in the evening.
 - D. Grant's resolve and Buell's reinforcements eventually won the day for the Union.
 1. On 7 April, Beauregard, unsupported and with no reinforcements from General Van Dorn, was unable to stop Union counterattacks.
 2. Grant's forces regained the ground lost the day before, and Beauregard abandoned the field.
 - E. Casualties at Shiloh exceeded those suffered by Americans in all wars before April 1862 combined.
 1. Confederate casualties numbered 11,000, and Union casualties, 13,000.
 2. This carnage shocked people in both the North and the South.
 - III. The momentum of Union success in the West continued after Shiloh.
 - A. New Orleans fell to Admiral Farragut on 25 April 1862.
 - B. Corinth capitulated to Halleck in late May, giving Halleck a good base for operations.

- C. Memphis fell after a naval battle in early June.
- IV. Five months of campaigning had witnessed substantial Union progress in the West and fulfilled part of the Anaconda Plan.
 - A. The North held the upper and lower reaches of the Mississippi.
 - B. Four important southern cities were in Union hands:
 1. New Orleans—the largest city and biggest port.
 2. Nashville—a center of communications and industry.
 3. Memphis—a major port on the Mississippi.
 4. Corinth—a major rail center.
 - C. Additionally, large parts of Tennessee were in Union hands, and 100,000 Federals at Corinth stood ready for further movements.

Essential Reading:

Hattaway and Jones, *How the North Won: A Military History of the Civil War*, chapter 7.

McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*, chapter 13.

Supplementary Reading:

Connelly, *Army of the Heartland: The Army of Tennessee, 1861–1862*, chapters 8–9.

Daniel, *Shiloh: The Battle That Changed the Civil War*.

Questions to Consider:

1. As a Confederate leader, would you worry more about the civilian or military repercussions of events in Tennessee during the first six months of 1862?
2. What does the Confederacy's ability to maintain a defense after the loss of such crucial cities as New Orleans, Nashville, and Memphis suggest about the magnitude of the North's problem in subduing the rebellion?

Lecture Twelve

The Peninsula Campaign

Scope: The next pair of lectures keeps the focus on military events but shifts from the Western Theater to Virginia. The first will concentrate on George B. McClellan, who dominated events from late autumn 1861 through mid-summer 1862. He built the Army of the Potomac into a formidable instrument, sparred with Lincoln and other Republicans, and after considerable prodding from Washington, transferred his army by water from northern Virginia to the peninsula southeast of Richmond to begin an offensive against the southern capital. Politics and military affairs were intertwined during this period: The Democrat McClellan made known his disdain for Republican policies (especially emancipation), and a small clash at Ball's Bluff fueled considerable northern debate about the loyalty of Democratic generals. On the Confederate side, Jefferson Davis had problems with Joseph E. Johnston, who commanded the largest southern army in Virginia and added little luster to his reputation during these months. Nine months of relative quiet following the Battle of First Manassas or Bull Run finally gave way to active campaigning when McClellan inaugurated a slow advance up the peninsula toward Richmond in April. By the end of May 1862, Union forces menaced Richmond from two directions and Confederate prospects for victories that would offset the dreary news from the West looked bleak. "Stonewall" Jackson supplied the first glimmer of hope for Confederates with his Shenandoah Valley campaign of May–June 1862, but the odds remained strongly against Confederate success.

Outline

- I. General George B. McClellan wielded immense influence over the conduct of the war in late 1861 and early 1862.
 - A. He became General-in-Chief because of his victories in 1861 and his reputation as a gifted soldier.
 1. He was a West Pointer (class of 1846) who had fought in the Mexican War and traveled to Europe as a military observer.
 2. He had effective command presence and charisma.
 3. He came to think of himself as more knowledgeable than either Scott or Lincoln and essentially forced Scott into retirement in November of 1861.
 - B. He built the Army of the Potomac into a formidable force of over 100,000 men.
 1. He was a master organizer but didn't move his forces rapidly or bring on battle.

2. He motivated his men and made them feel like soldiers; for this, he was the best-loved Union commander in the war, inspiring his men with the kind of devotion that the Army of Northern Virginia gave to General Robert E. Lee.
- II.** McClellan and Lincoln clashed repeatedly over the army's inaction.
- A.** Lincoln wanted an offensive in 1861 and the early spring of 1862.
 - B.** However, McClellan refused to move against Joseph E. Johnston's forces in northern Virginia.
 1. He exaggerated the Confederate strength and asked for reinforcements.
 2. He showed contempt for Lincoln's military views, often ignoring him completely.
 3. He expressed disdain for Republicans who sought to add emancipation to the cause of restoring the Union as a war aim of the North.
- III.** The Battle of Ball's Bluff (21 October 1861) underscored the political nature of the war.
- A.** A small Federal force suffered a humiliating defeat near Leesburg, Virginia, near Washington, D.C.
 1. Lincoln's friend Colonel Edward D. Baker (U.S. Senator from Oregon) was killed in the battle.
 2. Nearly 1,000 Union soldiers were casualties.
 - B.** Republicans blamed Baker's superior, Charles P. Stone (a Democrat) for the defeat.
 1. Republicans in Congress created the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War.
 2. Congress began a pattern of examining Federal officers in the wake of military campaigns, often targeting Democrats, such as George B. McClellan and, later, George G. Meade. This sensitized senior officers to the possibility that they might be removed from command for political reasons.
 3. General Stone was kept in prison for six months without any charges being brought and without being sent to a court martial. His career and reputation were ruined.
- IV.** The Federals mounted a major threat in Virginia in April–May 1862.
- A.** McClellan moved his army to the peninsula between the James and York Rivers after extensive delays.
 1. He was secretive with Lincoln about his plans.
 2. Lincoln finally ordered him to move but still got no immediate action.
 3. Lincoln removed McClellan as General-in-Chief but left him in command of the Army of the Potomac.

4. Joe Johnston fell back from northern Virginia to protect Richmond, negating McClellan's initial plan for an attack via the Rappahannock.
- B.** Irvin McDowell commanded another substantial Union force at Fredericksburg, and there were smaller forces under Generals John C. Frémont and Banks in the Shenandoah Valley and western Virginia.
 - C.** The Confederates responded on two fronts to Union movements in Virginia, using their advantage of interior lines.
 1. Johnston withdrew to the peninsula from Fredericksburg and joined other forces already there.
 2. Stonewall Jackson launched his Shenandoah Valley campaign with a very small force.
 3. General Robert E. Lee (chief military adviser to President Jefferson Davis) gave Jackson broad instructions and goals, and Jackson conducted a brilliant campaign that tied down Banks and Frémont and inspired the Confederate people.
 4. He was aided by Jedediah Hotchkiss, a cartographer; Jackson took the initiative, moved fast, struck hard, and effectively tied down superior Union forces.
 - D.** By early April, McClellan had 70,000 men before Yorktown, Virginia, against only 20,000 Confederates under John B. Magruder.
 1. Magruder bluffed McClellan into thinking that he had a much larger force.
 2. McClellan laid siege to Yorktown for a month.
 3. The Confederates finally abandoned their positions and fell back toward Richmond; McClellan followed them up the peninsula.

Essential Reading:

Hattaway and Jones, *How the North Won: A Military History of the Civil War*, chapter 7.

McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*, chapters 13, 15.

Supplementary Reading:

Catton, *Mr. Lincoln's Army*, parts 2–3.

Freeman, *Lee's Lieutenants*, vol. 1, chapters 10–16, 21–29.

Sears, *To the Gates of Richmond: The Peninsula Campaign*, chapters 1–5.

Tanner, *Stonewall in the Valley: Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson's Shenandoah Valley Campaign of 1862*.

Tap, *Over Lincoln's Shoulder: The Committee on the Conduct of the War*, chapter 2.

Questions to Consider:

1. Should the Republicans have allowed McClellan to plan and execute his strategy without interference?
2. Is it possible to achieve true balance between military and political imperatives in a war waged by a democratic people?

Timeline

General

1787.....	Framers of the Constitution compromise on issues related to slavery.
1820.....	Missouri Compromise admits Missouri as a slave state but prohibits slavery elsewhere in the Louisiana Purchase territory above 36°36' north latitude.
1831.....	Nat Turner's rebellion in Virginia sends shockwaves through the South.
1831.....	William Lloyd Garrison founds his abolitionist newspaper <i>The Liberator</i> .
1840.....	Liberty Party fields a presidential candidate.
1845.....	Texas admitted to the Union.
1846–48.....	War between the United States and Mexico.
1846.....	Wilmot Proviso calls for barring slavery from lands acquired from Mexico.
1848.....	Free Soil Party fields a presidential candidate.
1850.....	Compromise of 1850 includes admission of California as a free state (giving free states a permanent majority in the United States Senate) and enactment of a tough Fugitive Slave Law.
1852.....	Whig Party fields its last serious presidential candidate, signaling breakdown of the second-party system.
1852.....	Publication of Harriet Beecher Stowe's <i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i> makes many previously unengaged northerners sensitive to the issue of slavery.
1854.....	Kansas-Nebraska Act inflames sectional tensions.
1856.....	Abolitionist Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts is caned by Preston Brooks of South Carolina on the floor of the Senate

	after delivering his "Crime against Kansas" speech.
1857.....	The Supreme Court's <i>Dred Scott</i> decision opens federal territories to slavery and outrages many people in the North.
1859.....	John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry, Virginia, intensifies sectional tensions.
1860.....	A series of fires in Texas during the summer spreads rumors of slave insurrection across the South.
Nov. 1860.....	Abraham Lincoln elected as the first Republican president.
Dec. 20, 1860.....	South Carolina secedes from the Union.
	1861
Jan. 9–Feb. 1.....	The remaining six states of the Lower South secede (Mississippi, Jan. 9; Florida, Jan. 10; Alabama, Jan. 11; Georgia, Jan. 19, Louisiana, Jan. 26; Texas, Feb. 1).
Feb. 4–March 11.....	A convention of delegates from the seven seceded states, meeting in Montgomery, Alabama, writes a constitution and selects Jefferson Davis and Alexander H. Stephens as provisional President and Vice President of a new slaveholding republic called the Confederate States of America.
March 4.....	Lincoln's First Inaugural Address declares that the "momentous issue of civil war" lay in the hands of secessionists.
April 12–13.....	Confederate bombardment results in the surrender of Fort Sumter in Charleston, South Carolina.
April 15.....	Lincoln calls for 75,000 volunteers to suppress the rebellion.
April 17–June 8.....	Four states of the Upper South secede in response to Lincoln's call for volunteers (Virginia, April 17; Arkansas, May 6; North Carolina, May 20; Tennessee, June 8).
April 19.....	The Sixth Massachusetts Infantry is attacked by a mob in Baltimore.

Early May.....	General Winfield Scott briefs President Lincoln and others about a strategy that came to be known as the "Anaconda Plan."
May 20.....	Confederate Congress votes to move the national government from Montgomery to Richmond.
May 24.....	Benjamin F. Butler declares fugitive slaves at Fort Monroe, Virginia, "contraband of war" and refuses to return them to their Confederate owners.
June 11.....	Unionist delegates from 26 counties convene in Wheeling, Virginia, to begin a process that eventually results in the creation of the state of West Virginia.
July 21.....	Battle of First Manassas or Bull Run yields a flashy Confederate victory that builds confidence in the South and convinces many northerners that the war will be longer and harder than first thought.
Aug. 6.....	U.S. Congress passes the first Confiscation Act, which frees fugitive slaves who have been employed in the Confederate war effort.
Aug. 10.....	Battle of Wilson's Creek, Missouri, delivers a blow to anti-secessionists in the state.
Aug. 30.....	John C. Frémont declares free the slaves of pro-Confederate owners in Missouri; Lincoln instructs him to modify the order to make it conform with existing congressional legislation.
Sept. 3.....	Confederate military forces enter Kentucky to occupy the strong position at Columbus, an act that spurs Kentucky to stand firmly with the Union.
Oct. 21.....	Union forces suffer a debacle at Ball's Bluff, near Leesburg, Virginia, that helps prompt creation of the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War.
Nov. 1.....	George B. McClellan replaces Winfield Scott as General-in-Chief of the U.S. Army.

Nov. 8 Confederate diplomats James M. Mason and John Slidell are removed from the British vessel *Trent*, precipitating a diplomatic crisis between the United States and Great Britain.

1862

Feb. 6 U. S. Grant captures Fort Henry on the Tennessee River.

Feb. 16 U. S. Grant captures Fort Donelson on the Cumberland River.

Feb. 25 Union forces occupy Nashville, Tennessee.

Feb. 25 President Lincoln signs the Legal Tender Act, which creates national treasury notes, soon dubbed "greenbacks."

March 6–7 Union victory at Pea Ridge, Arkansas, helps solidify Missouri's status as a loyal state.

March 9 U.S.S. *Monitor* and C.S.S. *Virginia* fight the first naval engagement between ironclad vessels.

March 16 U.S. Congress abolishes slavery in the District of Columbia, offering compensation to loyal owners.

April 5 George B. McClellan begins a month-long siege of Yorktown, Virginia, marking the first important event in his Peninsula campaign.

April 6–7 U. S. Grant wins the Battle of Shiloh (Pittsburg Landing), completing a series of Union triumphs that denies the Confederacy control of major sections of Tennessee.

April 16 C.S. Congress passes the first national conscription act in American history; acts passed on Sept. 27, 1862, and Feb. 17, 1864, supplement the original legislation.

April 25 New Orleans falls to Union forces under David G. Farragut, giving the United States control of the lower Mississippi River.

May 8 "Stonewall" Jackson wins the Battle of McDowell, the first of several victories in his Shenandoah Valley campaign; triumphs

at Front Royal (May 23), First Winchester (May 25), Cross Keys (June 8), and Port Republic (June 9) follow.

May 9 General David Hunter declares free all slaves in South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida; President Lincoln nullifies Hunter's proclamation ten days later.

May 15 U.S. Congress passes the Homestead Bill.

May 30 Confederates abandon the key railroad center of Corinth, Mississippi.

May 31–June 1 The Battle of Seven Pines or Fair Oaks is fought near Richmond; Joseph E. Johnston is wounded on the first day of action, and command of the Confederate army defending Richmond against George B. McClellan's Army of the Potomac passes to Robert E. Lee.

June 6 Memphis, Tennessee, falls to Union military forces.

June 17 U.S. Congress passes the Land Grant College Bill (Morrill Act).

June 19 U.S. Congress prohibits slavery in the territories.

June 25–July 1 The Seven B reverses a tide of Union military success as Robert E. Lee drives George B. McClellan away from Richmond in action at Mechanicsville (June 26), Gaines's Mill (June 27), Savage Station (June 29), Glendale or Frayser's Farm (June 30), and Malvern Hill (July 1).

July 12 Lincoln appeals to the border state congressmen to support gradual, compensated emancipation, warning that the war may destroy slavery without compensation if they do not act; two days later, they reject his proposal.

July 17 U.S. Congress passes the Second Confiscation Act, which frees all slaves of owners who support the Confederacy.

July 22 Lincoln tells his cabinet that he intends to issue an emancipation proclamation.

July 22 The Union and the Confederacy agree to a cartel providing for the exchange of prisoners of war and the parole of excess captives held by either side.

Aug. 28–30 Robert E. Lee wins a victory over John Pope’s Army of Virginia at the Battle of Second Manassas or Bull Run.

Sept. 17 Union victory at the Battle of Antietam or Sharpsburg ends Robert E. Lee’s first invasion of the North.

Sept. 22 Lincoln issues his preliminary Emancipation Proclamation.

Oct. 8 The Battle of Perryville marks the climax of a Confederate invasion into Kentucky by armies under Braxton Bragg and E. Kirby Smith; the Confederates withdraw from the state after the battle.

Oct. 11 C.S. Congress exempts from conscription one white male on each plantation that has twenty or more slaves; this alienates many non-slaveholding white southerners.

Nov. 4 Democrats score gains in the northern off-year elections.

Nov. 5 Lincoln replaces George B. McClellan with Ambrose E. Burnside as Commander of the Army of the Potomac.

Dec. 13 Robert E. Lee defeats Burnside at the Battle of Fredericksburg.

Dec. 20–30 Destruction of U. S. Grant’s supply base at Holly Springs, Mississippi, and William Tecumseh Sherman’s repulse in the Battle of Chickasaw Bayou frustrate an initial attempt to capture the Confederate stronghold at Vicksburg.

Dec. 31–Jan. 2, 1863 Battle of Stones River, or Murfreesboro, fought in middle Tennessee, results in the retreat of Braxton Bragg’s Confederate army

and the beginning of six months of inactivity on this front.

1863

Jan. 1 Lincoln issues his Emancipation Proclamation.

Feb. 25 U.S. Congress passes the National Banking Act.

March 3 U.S. Congress passes the Enrollment Act, which institutes a national draft; the Union will issue four calls under this legislation, in July 1863 and March, July, and December 1864.

April 2 Women take to the streets in the Richmond “bread riot” to protest food shortages.

April 24 C.S. Congress enacts the tax-in-kind law, a highly unpopular measure requiring agricultural producers to give a portion of the annual production of various crops to the national government.

May 1–4 Robert E. Lee defeats Joseph Hooker (who had replaced Ambrose E. Burnside as commander of the Army of the Potomac in late January 1863) in the Battle of Chancellorsville.

May 1–17 U. S. Grant wins battles at Port Gibson (May 1), Raymond (May 12), Jackson (May 14), Champion Hill (May 16), and the Big Black River (May 17) en route to bottling up John C. Pemberton’s army in the Vicksburg defenses.

May 26 Anti-war Democrat Clement L. Vallandigham of Ohio is banished to Confederate lines near Murfreesboro, Tennessee.

June 20 West Virginia joins the Union as a new state.

June 23–July 3 William S. Rosecrans’s Tullahoma campaign compels Braxton Bragg’s Army of Tennessee to withdraw from middle Tennessee.

- July 1–3George G. Meade’s victory in the Battle of Gettysburg ends Robert E. Lee’s second invasion of the North.
- July 4The Confederate army at Vicksburg surrenders to U. S. Grant.
- July 8The Confederate garrison at Port Hudson, Louisiana, surrenders, opening the Mississippi River to full Union control.
- July 13Anti-draft riots begin in New York City and rage for several days.
- Sept. 2Union forces under Ambrose E. Burnside occupy Knoxville, Tennessee.
- Sept. 5The British government decides to detain the Laird rams being built for the Confederacy, thus averting a diplomatic crisis with the United States.
- Sept. 9Union forces under William S. Rosecrans occupy Chattanooga, Tennessee.
- Sept. 19–20The Battle of Chickamauga, just south of Chattanooga, gives the Confederacy its greatest tactical victory in the Western Theater and compels William S. Rosecrans’s Army of the Cumberland to retreat to Chattanooga.
- Nov. 23–25Union victory at the Battle of Chattanooga lifts the Confederate siege and opens the way for a campaign against Atlanta.
- Dec. 8Lincoln issues his Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction as a blueprint for restoring the Union; this first presented the President’s “10 percent plan” for reconstruction.

1864

- Jan. 2Confederate General Patrick R. Cleburne circulates a proposal that would free large numbers of slaves and enroll thousands of them in the Confederate Army; his proposal meets with staunch opposition.
- March 12U. S. Grant named General-in-Chief of Union forces; he plans simultaneous offensives designed to pressure Confederate military forces on a broad front.
- April 8–9Battles of Mansfield, or Sabine Crossroads, and Pleasant Hill, fought near Shreveport, Louisiana, mark the climax of Nathaniel P. Banks’s unsuccessful Red River campaign.
- April 12Confederates under Nathan Bedford Forrest capture Fort Pillow, Tennessee, killing a number of black and white Union troops who try to surrender.
- April 17U. S. Grant ends the prisoner exchange agreement.
- May 5–6Battle of the Wilderness opens the “Overland campaign” between U. S. Grant and Robert E. Lee; Grant’s goal is the destruction of the Army of Northern Virginia.
- May 7William Tecumseh Sherman begins his Atlanta campaign against Joseph E. Johnston’s Army of Tennessee.
- May 8–20Battles around Spotsylvania Court House, Virginia, continue the struggle between Grant and Lee; heaviest fighting occurs on May 12 in the Confederate salient known as the “Mule Shoe.”
- May 15Battle of New Market blunts Franz Sigel’s Union campaign in the Shenandoah Valley; this battle included the famous charge of the cadets from the Virginia Military Academy.
- May 16Battle of Drewry’s Bluff stops progress toward Richmond of Benjamin F. Butler’s Union Army of the James; Butler retreats to

Bermuda Hundred and is effectively bottled up.

June 1–3 Battles at Cold Harbor between Grant and Lee include massive and unsuccessful Union assaults (the heaviest attacks occurred on June 3).

June 12–18 Grant orchestrates a brilliant crossing of the James River but fails to capture Petersburg; his troops begin what will become a nine-month siege.

June 15 U.S. Congress makes pay for black and white soldiers equal.

June 19 U.S.S. *Kearsarge* sinks C.S.S. *Alabama* off Cherbourg, France, ending the career of the most successful Confederate commerce raider.

June 27 Bloody repulse of Union attacks at Kennesaw Mountain, Georgia, after which Sherman resumes his campaign of maneuver against Johnston as he closes in on Atlanta.

July 2 The Wade-Davis Bill passes the U.S. Senate, presenting an alternative to President Lincoln’s “10 per-cent Plan” for reconstruction; Lincoln kills it with a pocket veto on July 4, and supporters of the bill answer with the “Wade-Davis Manifesto,” criticizing the President’s actions.

July 17 Jefferson Davis replaces Joseph E. Johnston with John Bell Hood as commander of the Confederate army defending Atlanta; Hood launches unsuccessful offensives against Sherman’s investing forces in the battles of Peachtree Creek (July 20), Atlanta (July 22), and Ezra Church (July 28), before the two armies settle into a siege.

July 30 The Union loses a good opportunity at the Battle of the Crater to break the stalemate at Petersburg.

Aug. 5 David G. Farragut’s Union fleet wins the Battle of Mobile Bay, closing the last major Confederate port on the Gulf of Mexico.

Sept. 2 Sherman’s Union forces enter Atlanta, providing a critical Union victory that virtually guarantees President Lincoln’s reelection in November.

Sept. 19–Oct. 19 Climactic phase of the 1864 Shenandoah Valley campaign, during which Philip H. Sheridan wins decisive victories over Jubal A. Early’s Confederate army in the battles of Third Winchester (Sept. 19), Fisher’s Hill (Sept. 22), and Cedar Creek (Oct. 19).

Nov. 1 A new Maryland state constitution abolishing slavery takes effect.

Nov. 7 Jefferson Davis proposes enrolling slaves in the Confederate military and freeing all who served faithfully; this touches off an acrimonious debate that continues for several months.

Nov. 8 Abraham Lincoln reelected; Republicans gain large majorities in both houses of Congress and do well in northern state races.

Nov. 16–Dec. 21 Sherman’s army makes its famous “March to the Sea” from Atlanta to Savannah, leaving a wide path of destruction in its wake.

Nov. 30 John M. Schofield wins a Union victory over John Bell Hood’s Army of Tennessee at the Battle of Franklin, a short distance south of Nashville.

Dec. 15–16 George H. Thomas routs Hood’s Army of Tennessee in the Battle of Nashville, the final significant engagement in Tennessee.

1865

Jan. 11 The Missouri state constitutional convention abolishes slavery.

Jan. 19 William Tecumseh Sherman begins his march from Savannah into the Carolinas.

Jan. 31 U.S. House of Representatives approves a constitutional amendment abolishing slavery.

Feb. 17.....Columbia, South Carolina, falls to Sherman's army; fires sweep through the city.

Feb. 17.....Charleston, South Carolina, evacuated by Confederate military forces.

Feb. 22.....Amendment to Tennessee's state constitution abolishes slavery.

March 13.....C.S. Congress authorizes President Davis to recruit slaves as soldiers (but not to offer them freedom if they serve).

March 19–21.....Battle of Bentonville near Raleigh, North Carolina, marks the end of significant fighting on Sherman's front.

April 1.....Union victory in the Battle of Five Forks sets the stage for the Union capture of Richmond and Petersburg.

April 2.....Confederate government abandons Richmond; Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia evacuates Richmond-Petersburg lines and begins its retreat westward.

April 9.....Lee surrenders the Army of Northern Virginia to U. S. Grant at Appomattox Court House.

April 14.....President Lincoln is shot in Ford's Theater; he dies the next morning.

April 26.....Joseph E. Johnston surrenders his army to Sherman at Durham Station, North Carolina.

May 4.....Richard Taylor surrenders Confederate forces in Alabama, Mississippi, and East Louisiana to E. R. S. Canby at Citronelle, Alabama.

May 10.....Jefferson Davis is captured near Irwinville, Georgia.

May 12–13.....The final land battle of the war takes place at Palmito Ranch, near Brownsville, Texas.

May 26.....Confederate forces in the Trans-Mississippi Theater are surrendered in an agreement signed in New Orleans.

Dec. 18.....The Thirteenth Amendment is ratified; it abolishes slavery throughout the United States.

Glossary

abatis: A tangle of felled trees or brush in front of an entrenched position, with branches facing the enemy's lines to retard an attacking force.

blockade: A force of naval vessels placed to intercept shipping into or out of an enemy's ports.

bounty: A cash payment by the national, state, or local government designed to attract volunteers to the armed forces.

breastworks: A barricade of dirt, logs, sandbags, or other materials designed to protect soldiers fighting on the defensive.

breechloader: A shoulder weapon that is loaded at the breech, or rear of the barrel.

brevet rank: An honorary promotion of a military officer to a rank above his regular rank, given to reward exceptional service but conveying no increase in authority.

bummer: A soldier in William Tecumseh Sherman's army during the Georgia and Carolinas campaigns who operated beyond the effective control of superiors, often confiscating civilian property without regard to its possible military value.

cavalry screen: A body of cavalymen charged with protecting the front and flanks of an army from probes by the enemy's cavalry.

commissary: The military department dealing with the supply of food.

company-grade officers: Those who hold the commissioned ranks of captain or lower.

contraband: Material belonging to an enemy subject to seizure by a belligerent power in time of war. During the Civil War, the term most often applied to slaves in the Confederacy who made their way to Union lines.

demonstration: A military term for a maneuver intended to hold the enemy's attention while a major assault or movement is made elsewhere.

earthworks: Fortifications constructed of dirt, sand, and other materials (a term often used interchangeably with breastworks or field works).

enfilade: To fire against an enemy's position from the side or flank. Such fire is especially effective, because the defenders are unable to bring a large volume of counterfire to bear.

entrenchments: Defensive works prepared either in the field or as part of more permanent fortifications around cities or other crucial positions (also often called, simply, trenches).

envelop: To move around an enemy's flank, placing troops in position to render a defensive posture untenable.

feint: A movement intended to hold the enemy's attention while a larger attack or maneuver is carried out on another part of the field (a term often used interchangeably with "demonstration").

field-grade officers: Those who hold the commissioned ranks of colonel, lieutenant colonel, or major.

fire-eaters: Outspoken advocates of southern rights who took extreme positions regarding the protection of slavery. Many of them, such as Edmund Ruffin, played a prominent role in the secession movement.

flank: The end of a line of troops on the field of battle or in a fortified position. To "flank" an enemy's position involves placing troops on its side or rear. A "flanking march" is a maneuver designed to give the troops in motion either a tactical or a strategic advantage.

fleet: A group of naval warships and support vessels operating as a unified force.

flotilla: Similar to a fleet but usually consisting of a smaller number of vessels.

forage: The feed for horses and mules. As a verb, "to forage" means to procure hay, grains, or grass necessary to feed an army's animals. The verb also applied to soldiers' search for food to feed themselves.

forced march: A movement made at a rapid pace to meet a dire threat (either real or perceived).

guerrilla: A combatant who operates in small units or bands beyond the control of major organized military forces. These men often carried out raids and small attacks behind enemy lines.

logistics: Military activity dealing with the physical support, maintenance, and supply of an army.

martial law: Temporary government of civilians by military authorities, typically involving the suspension of some civil liberties.

Minié ball: More properly called a Minié bullet, this hollow-base lead projectile of cylindro-conoidal shape was the standard round for infantrymen on both sides who were armed with rifle shoulder weapons.

mortar: An artillery piece designed to fire projectiles in a high arc that could strike targets behind fortifications. Mortar boats deployed this type of artillery piece in naval actions.

muzzleloader: A shoulder weapon that is loaded at the muzzle, or front of the barrel.*

non-commissioned officers: Those who hold the ranks of sergeant and corporal.

ordnance: The military department responsible for the supply of arms and ammunition.

parole: An oath taken by a captured soldier not to bear arms again until formally exchanged for one of the captor's soldiers; given in return for release from captivity. As a verb, "to parole" means to obtain such an oath from a prisoner as a condition of releasing him.

partisan: A combatant operating in small groups beyond the control of major military forces. Sometimes used interchangeably with "guerrilla" but during the Civil War, partisans often were viewed as better disciplined and less likely to commit outrages against civilians or enemy soldiers.

picket: A soldier assigned to the perimeter of an army camp or position to give warning of enemy movements.

popular sovereignty: The doctrine that provided for the voters in a federal territory to decide whether they would accept slavery (rather than having Congress decide for them). An attempt to find a middle ground between those who wanted to exclude slavery from all territories and those who wanted it protected by Congress, the doctrine figured prominently in the Compromise of 1850 and the Kansas-Nebraska Act.

prisoner cartel: An agreement between warring governments to exchange captured soldiers rather than sending them to prisoner-of-war camps. If one side had a surplus of prisoners, those men would typically be paroled until a sufficient number of the enemy's troops was captured to make an exchange.

prize: An enemy vessel or neutral ship carrying contraband captured by a privateer or naval vessel. Prizes were taken to a port controlled by the captor.

quartermaster: The military department responsible for the supply of clothing, shoes, and other equipment.

reconnaissance-in-force: A probing movement by a large body of troops intended to reveal the enemy's position and likely intentions.

repeating firearm: A weapon that can be fired more than once without reloading.

salient: A portion of a defensive line that protrudes toward the enemy and is thus potentially vulnerable on three sides.

specie: Coined money, usually gold or silver. Specie payments are payments in coin, or the redemption of paper money on demand with coin equivalent.

strategy: The branch of warfare involving the movement of armies to (1) bring about combat with an enemy under favorable circumstances or (2) force the retreat of an enemy.

tactics: The branch of warfare involving actual combat between attackers and defenders.

trains: The wagons accompanying armies that carried food, forage, ammunition, and other supplies (not to be confused with railroad rolling stock).

transport: An unarmed vessel carrying troops or supplies.

trooper: A cavalryman.

volley: The simultaneous firing of their weapons by a number of soldiers in one unit.

works: A generic term applied to defensive fortifications of all types.

* One of the most common muzzleloaders used by both sides in the Civil War was the Enfield rifled musket. The replica .58 calibre Enfield ("three-bander") visible on the set in the video version of the course was graciously provided by Mrs. Mary Ritenour of Fairfax, VA in memory of her late husband, Corporal Ken Ritenour of the 3rd U.S. Infantry, Inc., a major re-enacting group.

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