

The Civil War

Section 1: The War Begins

1. Where was Fort Sumter located? Who was in charge of the fort? What Confederate general was in charge of troops outside the fort?
2. What was Anderson short of and why did the Confederates fire on the fort?
3. How did the North respond to Lincoln's request for 75,000 volunteers? What did both sides expect?
4. What were the border states?
5. Why was Lincoln determined to hold on to Maryland? What is martial law?
6. Why were Missouri and Kentucky important for the Union?
7. What were the strengths and weaknesses of the South?
8. What were the strengths and weaknesses of the North?
9. What was the Union's strategy to win the war?
10. What was the Confederacy's strategy and why?
11. Who did Lincoln discover as his best general, and what was his experience?
12. Who were the South's generals? What did Lincoln ask Lee, and what was his response?

SECTION 1

The War Begins

SETTING THE SCENE

Read to Learn . . .

- ★ what war strategies developed in the North and the South.
- ★ what advantages the North and the South held in the war.
- ★ how the Union secured the border states.

Terms to Know

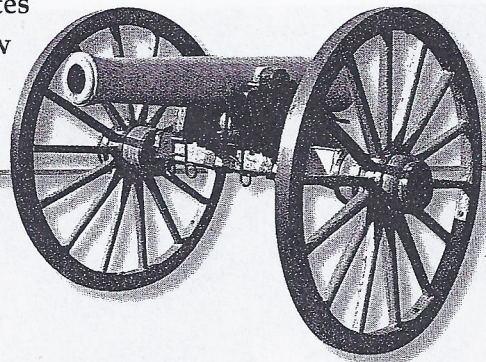
- ★ border states
- ★ martial law
- ★ strategy

People to Meet

- ★ Robert Anderson
- ★ P.G.T. Beauregard
- ★ Winfield Scott
- ★ Ulysses S. Grant
- ★ Albert S. Johnston
- ★ Robert E. Lee

Places to Locate

- ★ Fort Sumter
- ★ Richmond, Virginia
- ★ Baltimore, Maryland



← BATTLEFIELD CANNON

On March 4, 1861, Abraham Lincoln took the presidential oath of office. In his Inaugural Address, Lincoln insisted that the Union was indivisible and that secession was unconstitutional. He called Southerners his “fellow countrymen” and begged all Americans to listen to “the better angels of our nature.” He also warned that the federal government would “hold, occupy, and possess” all its property in the states that had seceded.

When Lincoln spoke of federal property, he meant the post offices, forts, and military supply houses that the federal government controlled in each state. In 1861 many of the seceding states took over these federal operations. They said

they did not want a government of outsiders conducting business on their soil.

★ The Path to War

The federal government still held two federal forts in the South. One of them, **Fort Sumter**, stood on a rocky island in the harbor at Charleston, South Carolina. When the fort ran short of supplies, its commander, Major **Robert Anderson**, informed President Lincoln that he needed more soldiers and provisions.

Meanwhile, a general in the Confederacy’s new army, **P.G.T. Beauregard**, surrounded the harbor with cannons. He

intended to stop any federal reinforcements from reaching the fort. The Confederates waited for Major Anderson to surrender.

Four weeks after his inauguration, Lincoln sent a fleet with supplies to the fort. He decided against sending soldiers knowing it would only anger the Southerners more. Southerners, though, viewed Lincoln's orders to send supply ships as an act of war. When the Confederacy learned of the approaching fleet, Beauregard began to bombard the fort on April 12.

From inside the fort Captain Abner Doubleday described the attack:

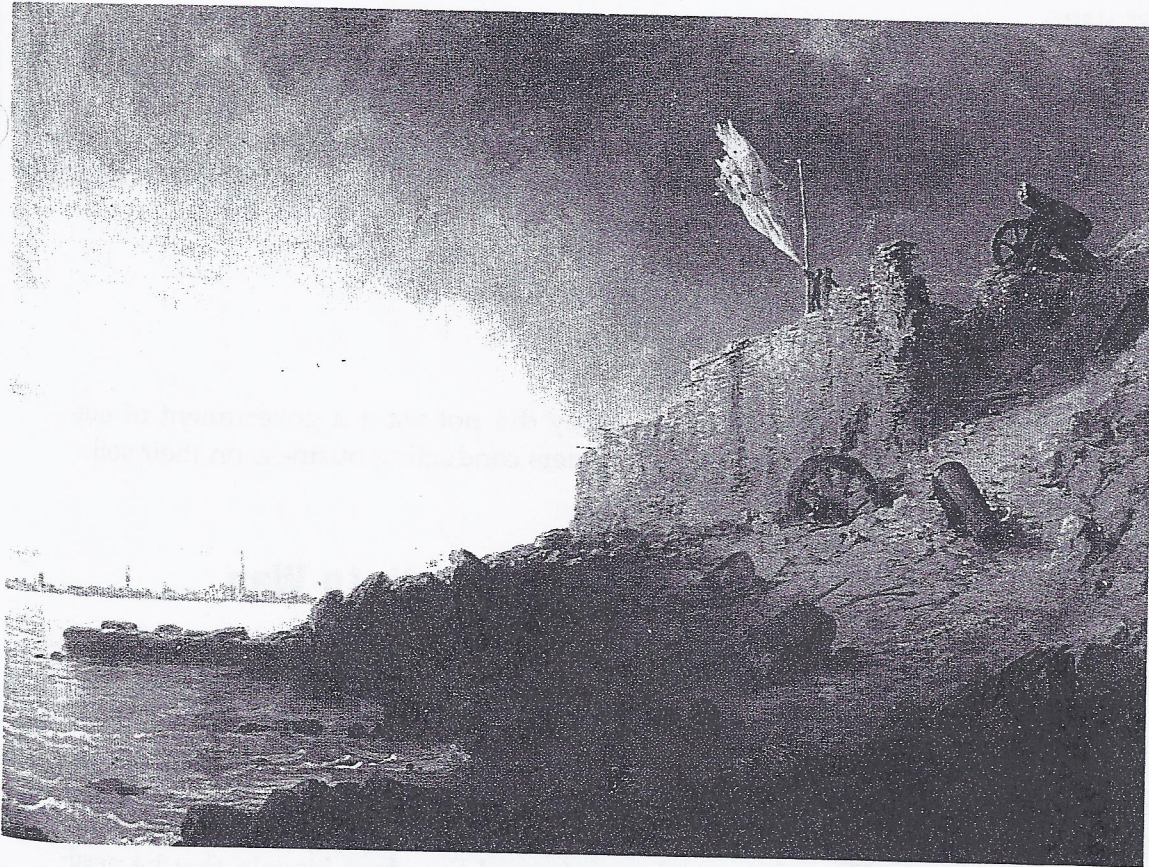
“ Showers of balls . . . and shells . . . poured into the fort in one incessant stream, causing great flakes of masonry to fall in all directions. ”

Anderson Surrenders

On the second day of bombardment, a stout man carrying a white flag stumbled through the rubble at the fort. He came straight to the point:

“ Major Anderson, . . . It is time to put a stop to this, sir. The flames are raging all around you and you have defended your flag gallantly. Will you evacuate, sir? ”

Anderson reluctantly agreed. After 34 hours of bombardment, but with no loss of life, Fort Sumter surrendered. The Confederates hoisted their flag over the fort, and all the guns in the harbor sounded a triumphant salute. Almost immediately Lincoln began mobilizing the North for war. The Civil War had begun.



History
AND
ART

▲ *SUNSET AT FORT SUMTER* by Conrad Wise Chapman, 1864 Chapman, an enlisted soldier, produced some of the most striking paintings of the Civil War. This piece demonstrates Chapman's use of strong light and contrasting shades. **How did the United States react to the capture of Fort Sumter?**

Preparing for War

News of the attack on Fort Sumter stirred nationalist feelings in the North. When Lincoln requested 75,000 volunteers for 90 days to help restore order in the South, more people responded than could be equipped or trained. One Bostonian wrote a friend in England, "I never knew what popular excitement could be. The whole population, men, women, and children, seem to be in the streets with Union flags. . . ."

Although the Confederate states had hoped for a peaceful withdrawal from the Union, the news of the skirmish at Fort Sumter aroused intense emotions. Jefferson Davis called for 100,000 volunteers. A visitor to the South found "revolutionary fever in full sway. . . . Young men are dying to fight." Both sides expected to win and to win quickly.

★ Securing the Border States

President Lincoln wanted to reunite the country. He wanted to avoid making the abolition of slavery a goal of the war, though. In the first place, not all Northerners agreed on abolition. In the second place, Lincoln wanted to hold on to the border states.

More Southern States Secede

The border states lay directly north and south of the line that divided the Union and Confederacy. All of them permitted slavery. The border states on the south side of the line—Virginia, North Carolina,

Arkansas, and Tennessee seceded soon after the attack on Fort Sumter. Western Virginians did not want to secede with their government. In 1863 they organized the state of **West Virginia** and sided with the Union. The border states to the north—Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri supported the Union but not the abolitionist cause.

An Iron Fist in Maryland

Virginia's secession put the federal capital, Washington, D.C., in danger. To its south lay **Richmond, Virginia**, where Jefferson Davis had relocated the capital of the Confederacy. To its north lay Maryland, where many people held slaves and supported the Confederacy. If Maryland seceded, the Union capital would be in enemy territory. Lincoln determined to hold Maryland at all costs.

Some Maryland citizens turned to violence, burning railroad bridges and even taking over the mail. Only a week after the fall of Fort Sumter, a mob sympathetic to the Southern cause attacked Union troops as they passed through **Baltimore, Maryland**, on their way to Washington. Soldiers and civilians opened fire and killed about 16 people. The first fatalities, or deaths, of the Civil War had occurred.

Lincoln responded by placing Baltimore under martial law, a form of military rule that includes suspending Bill of Rights freedoms. Government authorities arrested people who advocated secession or otherwise openly supported the Confederacy and held them without trials. Although tensions remained high throughout the war, Lincoln's action kept Maryland in the Union.

Footnotes to History

Johnny Reb and Billy Yank Northern troops called the Southern soldier *Johnny Reb* or *Reb*, after the term *rebel*. Southerners called the Northerners *Billy Yank*, *Yank*, or *Yankees*.

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Holding Missouri and Kentucky

Lincoln considered the border states of Missouri and Kentucky important to the Union because these states controlled the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers. Kentucky had elected a pro-Union government, by a very narrow margin. Although it declared its neutrality at first, Kentucky remained in the Union. In Missouri, where slaveholders controlled the state, Lincoln supported rebellion against the pro-Confederate elected state government. Although partisan warfare plagued the state for the rest of the war, Missouri did not leave the Union.



▲ UNION SOLDIER

★ A Divided Nation

At the beginning of the war, neither the North nor the South seemed prepared to fight. Each side had advantages and disadvantages.

The South

The Confederacy considered itself an independent nation. The Southerners, fighting for independence on home soil, could win simply by holding out against Union attacks. Davis believed there would be no war unless the Union forced one. Southerners fought to preserve their way of life—the cotton economy and the plantation culture dependent on slave labor.

Southerners, skilled with rifles and horses, had a tradition of military service that made them excellent soldiers. As an agricultural region with poor communications and few big cities, the South could not be paralyzed by a blow at a vital center.

The South proved ill-equipped to wage war, however. The South faced difficulties in producing weapons and other military supplies because it had few factories. The South also possessed few railroads to move troops and supplies. The South's population was much smaller than the North's,

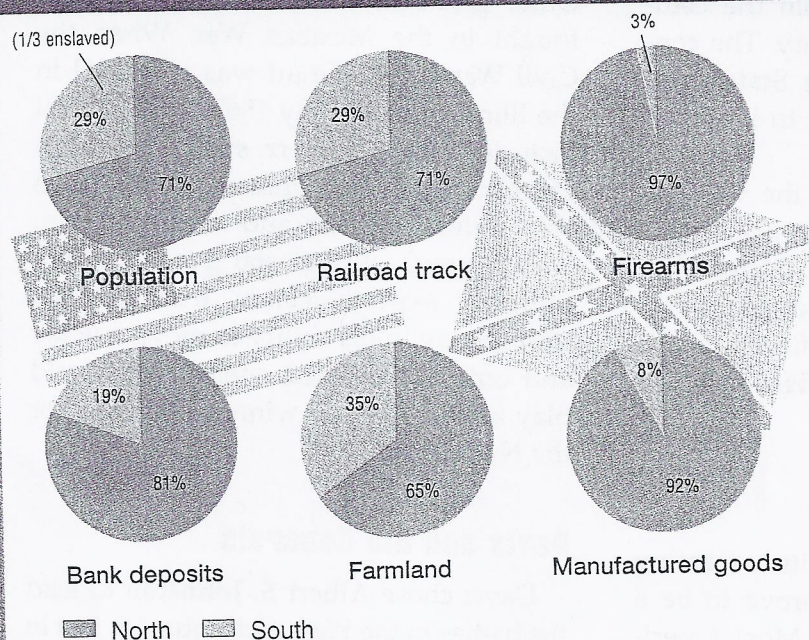
and more than one-third of the population included enslaved African Americans. Reluctant to use slaves as soldiers, the South would find it difficult to raise a large army. The Confederacy remained open to attack along its border with the Union and along its extensive coastline.

The North

Whereas Southerners had a clear, emotional picture of what they fought for, Northerners fought to reestablish the Union. Many Northerners did not consider the elimination of slavery important. The North would need to invade the South to bring it back into the Union. It could lose the war if its people lost the desire to wage war.

The North enjoyed superiority in resources of every sort—population, money, transportation, food, and manufacturing. Industry in the North proved a decisive advantage for the Union army. Factories quickly went from producing peacetime goods to making war supplies. Its vast railroad system provided the means for moving men and supplies.

Resources of the North and South, 1861



The North had a large economic advantage over the South at the start of the Civil War. **By how big a percentage did Northern manufactured goods exceed Southern manufactured goods?**

Source: *Encyclopedia Americana*, 1994; *Historical Statistics of the United States*.

★ Military Strategies

When Fort Sumter fell, the Union army included about 16,000 soldiers—too few to win a war. After Lincoln’s call to arms, so many Northerners tried to join the militia that recruiters had to turn volunteers away. Those who joined the troops organized into regiments and headed to Washington. For the most part, amateurs led amateurs in the Union army. Few, if any, of the soldiers and officers had much fighting experience.

The Union’s Three-Pronged Strategy

The most experienced American general was **Winfield Scott**. Lincoln put Scott in charge of the Union armies. Scott devised a three-step plan, or **strategy**, to defeat the South. Scott planned to: 1) blockade Confederate ports to ruin the South’s economy and cut off supplies from Europe, 2) take control of the Mississippi River to split the South and prevent the Confederacy from

using the river to supply troops, and 3) capture the capital at Richmond to seize the Confederate government.

There would be two main fronts. The Eastern front extended from the Appalachian Mountains to the Atlantic Ocean. The Western front lay between the Appalachian Mountains and the Mississippi River.

The Confederacy’s Defensive Strategy

The Confederate army practiced a very simple strategy—fight a defensive war. To win, the South did not have to do anything except hold out against enemy attacks. Because European nations bought most of their cotton, Southerners were counting on Europeans to provide war materials and other supplies.

★ Military Leadership

To have any chance of winning the war, each side would have to rely on strong

leaders who could make difficult decisions. The Constitution of the United States made President Lincoln the commander in chief of the military. The constitution of the Confederate States also gave the top command post to its president, Jefferson Davis.

During the early years of the war, the South had the better army. Many of its officers had attended the United States Military Academy at West Point before the war began. Most of the top officers in the Union army resigned to fight for the South.

Lincoln and His Generals

President Lincoln had little fighting experience, but he would prove to be a strong leader for the Union. Most Americans considered him cool-headed and fair.

General Scott, the commander of the Union army, earned the nickname "Old Fuss and Feathers" because of his extraordinary neatness and strict adherence to military rules. The elderly Scott would not last as commander of the Union forces. It became evident that Scott felt unprepared to handle the inexperienced recruits, and Lincoln replaced him as the war progressed. Unfortunately, Lincoln would have to go through several leaders before he found one that he could put his faith in.

Eventually Lincoln discovered his best leader, **Ulysses S. Grant**. Grant, born in Ohio, graduated from West Point and fought in the Mexican War. When the Civil War began, Grant was a colonel in the Illinois infantry. By 1863, after several victories in the Western states, President Lincoln finally recognized Grant as an able military leader and rewarded him with the rank of three-star general. Many military experts claim that Grant's strength lay in his ability to move quickly and outmaneuver the enemy. He would play a major role in winning the war for the North.

Davis and His Generals

Davis chose **Albert S. Johnston** to lead the battles in the West and **Robert E. Lee** in the East. Lee understood the battlefield as well as anyone in the military. He seemed able to predict the movements of the Union and knew its weak points. Willing to take risks, Lee did not wait to be attacked. Often he would make the first move.

Lee had rejected Lincoln's offer to lead the Union armies and took command of Confederate forces in Virginia. Although Lee disagreed with slavery and secession, he decided that he could not "raise my hand against my relatives, my children, my home."

★ SECTION 1 REVIEW ★

Checking for Understanding

1. Identify Robert Anderson, P.G.T. Beauregard, Winfield Scott, Ulysses S. Grant, Albert S. Johnston, Robert E. Lee.
2. Define border states, martial law, strategy.
3. How did the goals of the North and the South differ in the Civil War?
4. What was the Union's three-step strategy to win the war?

Critical Thinking

5. Predicting Consequences If you had lived in 1861, would you have said the North or the South would win the war? Why?

ACTIVITY

6. Imagine that you are a Northerner or a Southerner in 1861. Write a journal entry that explains your reasons for joining the Union or the Confederate army.