

The American Civil War

The American Civil War took place between 1861 and 1865. The war caused over 620,000 American deaths. It was the bloodiest in American history because of these deaths. The years between 1820 and 1860 were full of increasing strain between two areas (the south and the north) of the United States. The major issues were the legality of slavery, the nature of state's rights, and the increasing tariffs by the Federal government.

In 1860, there were approximately 4 million slaves in the fifteen states where owning slaves was legal. These states were generally the ones which relied on agriculture for their economy. Maintaining crops like cotton and tobacco was labor intensive, and the slaves worked the farms for the plantation owners. Many states, however, had decided that owning slaves was illegal. These states were nicknamed Free States and abolished slavery in their territories. The Slave States, however, believed that they had a right to determine whether or not slavery was legal in their own state and disagreed with the Federal government imposing laws on each state. The Slave States depended on slave labor for their economy and viewed the push to abolish slavery as damaging to their economy.

In December, 1860, South Carolina seceded from the United States. By February of 1861, six more states seceded: Mississippi, Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana, and Texas. These states formed the Confederate States of America. They declared their independence from the United States of America. The United States Federal government, however, did not recognize the Confederate States and did not recognize their secession from the Union.

President Abraham Lincoln was inaugurated on March 4, 1861, and he said that he would not invade the Confederate States. He said he would not try to abolish slavery in these, even though he did not recognize their secession. Lincoln did insist that the United States would maintain ownership over land and property that was located in the Confederate States. The Confederate States sent politicians to the Federal government in an attempt to buy the properties that Lincoln said would remain owned by the United States. The Federal government said that they could not, however, negotiate with the Confederate States. On April 12, 1861, the army of the Confederate State of South Carolina attacked Fort Sumter which was being held by the Union's army. The Union army surrendered the fort on April 14th.

Four more states seceded after Lincoln declared war on the Confederate States: North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and Arkansas. In July of 1861, Union troops marching through Manassas, Virginia were halted by the Confederate army. The Union troops were forced to return to Washington, D.C. One of the famous Confederate generals, General Thomas Jackson, was nicknamed "Stonewall" during this battle because he and his troops stood like a stone wall against the Union forces. The U.S. Federal government was shocked by their loss and was concerned that more states would leave the Union.

Name _____

Date _____

The American Civil War (Cont'd)

They passed the *Crittenden-Johnson Resolution* which stated that the war was fought not for "overthrowing or interfering with the rights or established institutions of those States," but to "defend and maintain the supremacy of the Constitution and to preserve the Union." The war would end when the seceding states returned to the Union with slavery being intact.

In July, 1863, the Battle of Gettysburg was fought. It was the bloodiest battle of the War, causing the deaths of over 50,000 Americans. The Union Army defeated the Confederate army led by General Robert E. Lee. Lee's army had been trying to march on Washington, D.C. This was the turning point in the war, because the Union began to gain control over the territories. In September of 1863, the Battle of Chickamauga was fought. It was one of the largest Union defeats of the War. It was the second deadliest battle of the War. The Confederate army suffered heavy losses, but put an end to the Unions' battle plans in Tennessee.

In 1864, President Lincoln made General Ulysses S. Grant the commander of all the Union forces. Along with General William T. Sherman, Grant followed a plan of attack that was known as "total war." This meant that it was a plan that used all available resources as options to defeating the enemy. It is nicknamed a "scorched earth" plan, because it would use any option to destroy any resources of the enemy, including burning farms and destroying infrastructure. The plan of the Union army was to strike from multiple directions. Their plan worked, and the Confederacy surrendered to the Union in Virginia on April 9, 1865.

Name _____

Date _____

The American Civil War Questions

Multiple Choice:

1. The major issues of the American Civil War were all of the following EXCEPT:
 - a. the legality of slavery
 - b. the nature of state's rights
 - c. the right to bear arms
 - d. the increasing tariffs by the Federal government
2. The bloodiest battle of the American Civil War was:
 - a. The Battle of Gettysburg
 - b. The Battle of 1812
 - c. The Battle of Valley Forge
 - d. The Battle of Vietnam
3. The first state to secede from the Union was:
 - a. Virginia
 - b. South Carolina
 - c. North Carolina
 - d. Georgia

Fill In:

4. _____ was president during the American Civil War.
5. In 1864, _____ became the commander of all the Union forces.
6. The states that seceded from the Union formed the _____ States of America.
7. This plan meant using all available resources as options to defeating the enemy, including burning farms and destroying infrastructure: _____.

True or False:

- ____ 8. General Thomas Jackson was nicknamed "Stonewall" during because he and his troops stood like a stone wall against the Union forces.
- ____ 9. States that had slaves were generally states that on agriculture for their economy.

The American Civil War Answers

Multiple Choice:

1. The major issues of the American Civil War were all of the following EXCEPT:
 - a. the legality of slavery
 - b. the nature of state's rights
 - c. the right to bear arms
 - d. the increasing tariffs by the Federal government
2. The bloodiest battle of the American Civil War was:
 - a. The Battle of Gettysburg
 - b. The Battle of 1812
 - c. The Battle of Valley Forge
 - d. The Battle of Vietnam
3. The first state to secede from the Union was:
 - a. Virginia
 - b. South Carolina
 - c. North Carolina
 - d. Georgia

Fill In:

4. Abraham Lincoln was president during the American Civil War.
5. In 1864, Ulysses S. Grant became the commander of all the Union forces.
6. The states that seceded from the Union formed the Confederate States of America.
7. This plan meant using all available resources as options to defeating the enemy, including burning farms and destroying infrastructure: total war or scorched earth.

True or False:

- T 8. General Thomas Jackson was nicknamed "Stonewall" during because he and his troops stood like a stone wall against the Union forces.
- T 9. States that had slaves were generally states that on agriculture for their economy.