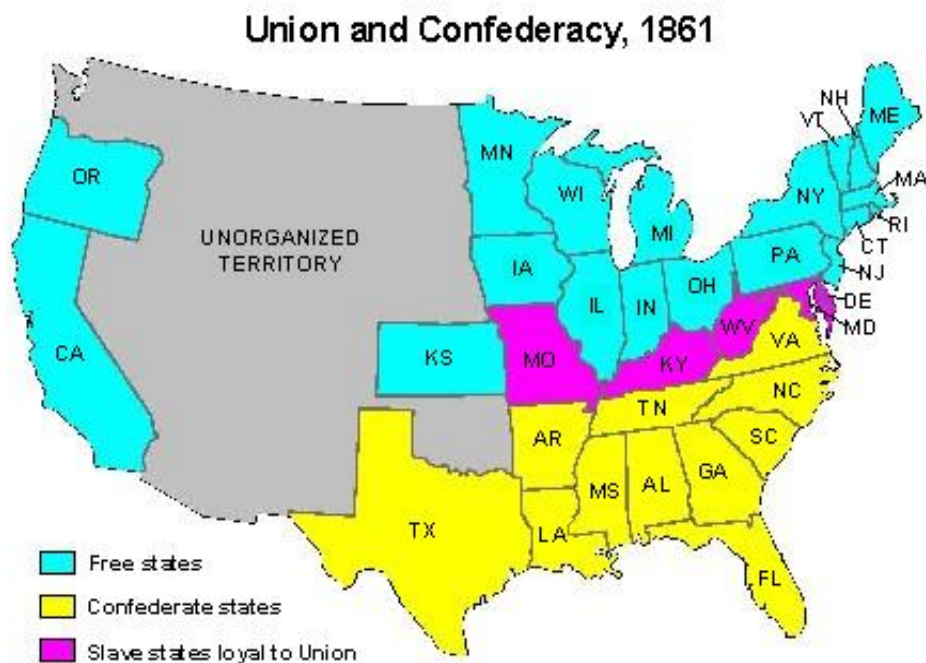


# A NATION DIVIDED (1860–1877)

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## Southern Secession

By 1860 the United States was divided into 18 free states and 15 slave states. In the presidential election of the same year, a country lawyer from Illinois named Abraham Lincoln won with a majority of votes in 17 free states. He received hardly any votes in the slave states because he was considered a dangerous abolitionist. Lincoln had openly stated that the nation could not remain half free and half slave.



After Lincoln's election, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Texas, and Louisiana announced that they were seceding, or withdrawing, from the Union. They formed a southern union called the Confederate States of America. Despite their declaration of a united South, the other slave states refused to break away from the Union.

South Carolina soldiers then captured Fort Sumter, a U.S. base in Charleston harbor. Lincoln called for

all of the loyal states to supply 75,000 soldiers. Rather than meet this demand, Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Arkansas joined the Confederacy. The other slave states—Maryland, Delaware, Kentucky, and Missouri—stayed in the Union for good. They became the Border States.

War was now certain because Lincoln was determined to preserve the Union. The states that remained in the Union had more than 22 million people at this time, compared with the Confederacy's 9 million. The Union also had the factories necessary to produce arms for war and far more railroads than the Confederacy had. This would be the first war in which railroads played an important part.

Neither the North nor the South was prepared for a war. The U.S. army numbered only 16,000 men, and many of them were stationed in far western territories. The Confederacy had to raise an army overnight. Threatened by invasion at any moment, both sides prepared rapidly. In the spring of 1861 Americans waited uneasily for the fighting to start. Few imagined the long and bitter war that was to come.

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# The Civil War

Both the Union (the North) and the Confederacy (the South) entered the war with great confidence. Many people in the North thought they would win in a few months because they were fighting to save the country. The South thought it would win because its cause was just—the idea of states' rights. Southerners believed that any state had the right to ignore federal laws that might hurt the state, including the right to withdraw from the Union.

The war got under way in July of 1861. A Union army marched from Washington, D.C., to Bull Run Creek (Manassas) in Virginia, about 25 miles away. Victory seemed so certain that many Washington citizens followed the army to see the show. But the victory went to the Confederates. The Union soldiers and spectators hastily retreated back to Washington, D.C.

The Battle at Bull Run revealed two important advantages the Confederates had. They were fighting on their home territory, as they did through most of the war, and they had better generals, at least in the early years of the war. President Lincoln had to keep changing his commanding generals until he found Ulysses S. Grant late in 1863. The war went well for the Confederacy in the first two years. Its brilliant general, Robert E. Lee, defeated larger Union armies in battle after battle in Virginia. In the West, large Union armies won few major battles.



*The city of Charleston, SC after a series of battles and sieges*

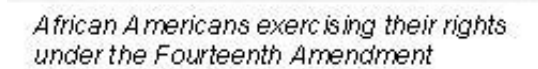
Then, in July of 1863, the tide turned. Lee lost in a three-day battle at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. On the same day, the important Mississippi river town of Vicksburg fell to a Union army under Grant. The fall of Vicksburg gave the Union control of the Mississippi River. This meant the Confederacy was no longer able to get vital supplies from the states west of that river.

Source: Ruins seen from the Circular Church, Charleston, S.C., 1865 (111-B-4667) [Electronic Records]; Battle Areas; Places; Pictures of the Civil War; Select Audiovisual Records; National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC 20408 [Online version on February 18, 2003, available through the online catalog at [http://www.archives.gov/research\\_room/arcS/](http://www.archives.gov/research_room/arcS/)].

From this time on, the Union's larger armies made the difference. Lincoln appointed Grant commander in chief, and Grant pursued Lee's army in Virginia. Many soldiers died on both sides. But Lee's losses were more serious because he had few men to replace them.

Farther south, Union General Sherman captured Atlanta and marched his army through Georgia to the sea. He then moved north through the Carolinas to meet Grant in Virginia. Sherman didn't arrive in time to fight. With short supplies making the Confederate cause hopeless, Lee surrendered to Grant on April 9, 1865.

After the Civil War was over, President Lincoln intended to be fair and generous to the beaten Confederacy. But the war was hardly over when he was assassinated. This tragedy set the stage for twelve long years of misery and uncertainty for the southern states.



Congress proposed the Thirteenth Amendment, which would end slavery forever. Then it proposed the Fourteenth Amendment, giving the freed slaves full rights of citizenship. Both amendments became law. Now African Americans had the right to vote and were even the majority population in some states. Several African Americans were elected to Congress. But many states passed laws that denied African Americans their voting rights. Support for these laws came from white groups such as the Ku Klux Klan. These groups used violence and terror to gain their ends.

Congress divided the Confederate states into five military districts. An army general headed each district. Congress also required each state to accept the Fourteenth Amendment and to write a new state constitution before rejoining the Union. By

**Reconstruction**, the rebuilding of the South, lasted another seven years. Military people from the North oversaw daily events. **Carpetbaggers**, as southerners named them, influenced many southern state governments. Carpetbaggers were northerners who moved to the South after the war. They aimed to make money and force their northern viewpoints on the southerners.

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