

## American civil war : Abraham Lincoln

By 1860, decades of friction over slavery had deeply divided the nation. In the 1840s and '50s, Northern opposition to the extension of slavery in the western territories increasingly caused the Southern states to fear that existing slaveholdings, which formed the economic base of the South, were also in danger

When Abraham Lincoln, candidate of the explicitly antislavery Republican Party, won the 1860 presidential election, seven Southern states (South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas) seceded from the Union to protect what they saw as their right to keep slaves.

The Southern states organized as the Confederate States of America. Jefferson Davis was named president of the Confederacy. The Northern states of the federal Union, under Lincoln, commanded more than twice the population of the Confederacy and held greater advantages in manufacturing and transportation capacity.

The war began in Charleston, South Carolina, when Confederate artillery fired on Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861. Within weeks, four more Southern states (Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina) left the Union to join the Confederacy.

On July 21, 1861, the Confederates routed overconfident Union forces in the First Battle of Bull Run, near Manassas in northern Virginia. The defeat shocked the Union and provided an early indication that the conflict would last a long time.

In 1862 General Robert E. Lee took command of the Confederate army, which he renamed the Army of Northern Virginia. Under Lee the Confederates claimed victories in the Seven Days' Battles (June–July 1862), in the Battle of Fredericksburg (December 1862), and in the Battle of Chancellorsville (April–May 1863).

President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863. This order declared that slaves in the Confederate states were free. The proclamation influenced foreign opinion, persuading the British and French to not offer the Confederates the diplomatic recognition or military aid they sought.

The Emancipation Proclamation also allowed the Union to recruit black soldiers. By the end of the war about 180,000 African Americans were in the army, which amounted to about 10 percent of the troops in that branch, and another 20,000 were serving in the navy. Twenty-five black soldiers and sailors were awarded the Medal of Honor for their actions during the American Civil War.

After the Confederate victory at Chancellorsville, Virginia, Lee invaded the North and engaged Union forces under George G. Meade at the Battle of Gettysburg in Pennsylvania in July 1863. Momentum swung to the Union side after this battle. Lee was pushed back into Virginia and from then on was forced to fight a defensive war. Lincoln delivered his famous Gettysburg Address the following November.

The war's turning point in the West occurred with Ulysses S. Grant's success in the Vicksburg Campaign (1862–63), which brought the entire Mississippi River under Union control. In March 1864 Lincoln gave Grant supreme command of the Union armies. Grant began a strategy of attrition and, despite heavy Union casualties at the battles of the Wilderness and Spotsylvania Court House in Virginia, began to surround Lee's troops.

Meanwhile, in Georgia, William T. Sherman captured and burned Atlanta in September 1864 and then began his devastating March to the Sea to capture Savannah, leaving a trail of near-total destruction.