

AMERICAN CIVIL WAR 1861–1865

By the mid-1800s, the United States was badly divided. The North and South strongly disagreed about questions of states' rights and ownership of slaves.



Ulysses S. Grant (1822–1885) was appointed commander of the Union forces in 1863. He was a tough and determined general.



Robert E. Lee (1807–1870) was in the U.S. army when civil war broke out. He resigned, and first advised, then took command of, the Confederate troops.

In 1850, the North had almost all of the manufacturing industries, thriving cities, and a growing railroad system. The South was a land of farms, and of large cotton and tobacco plantations that relied on slave labor. Slavery had long been banned in the northern states.

This division caused hostility between North and South. The Kansas–Nebraska Act (1854) gave new states the right to choose whether or not they allowed slavery. The Compromise of 1850 helped northern states protect the rights of runaway slaves—the South felt threatened.

The southern states were sure that the economy of the South would be ruined if the slaves were freed. Furthermore, the southern states believed that they had the right to make their own laws without interference from the federal government.

In 1860, Abraham Lincoln (1809–1865) was elected president. He belonged to the Republican Party, which opposed slavery, although he himself was not an abolitionist. Many southern states refused to live under such a government, and led



Union soldier

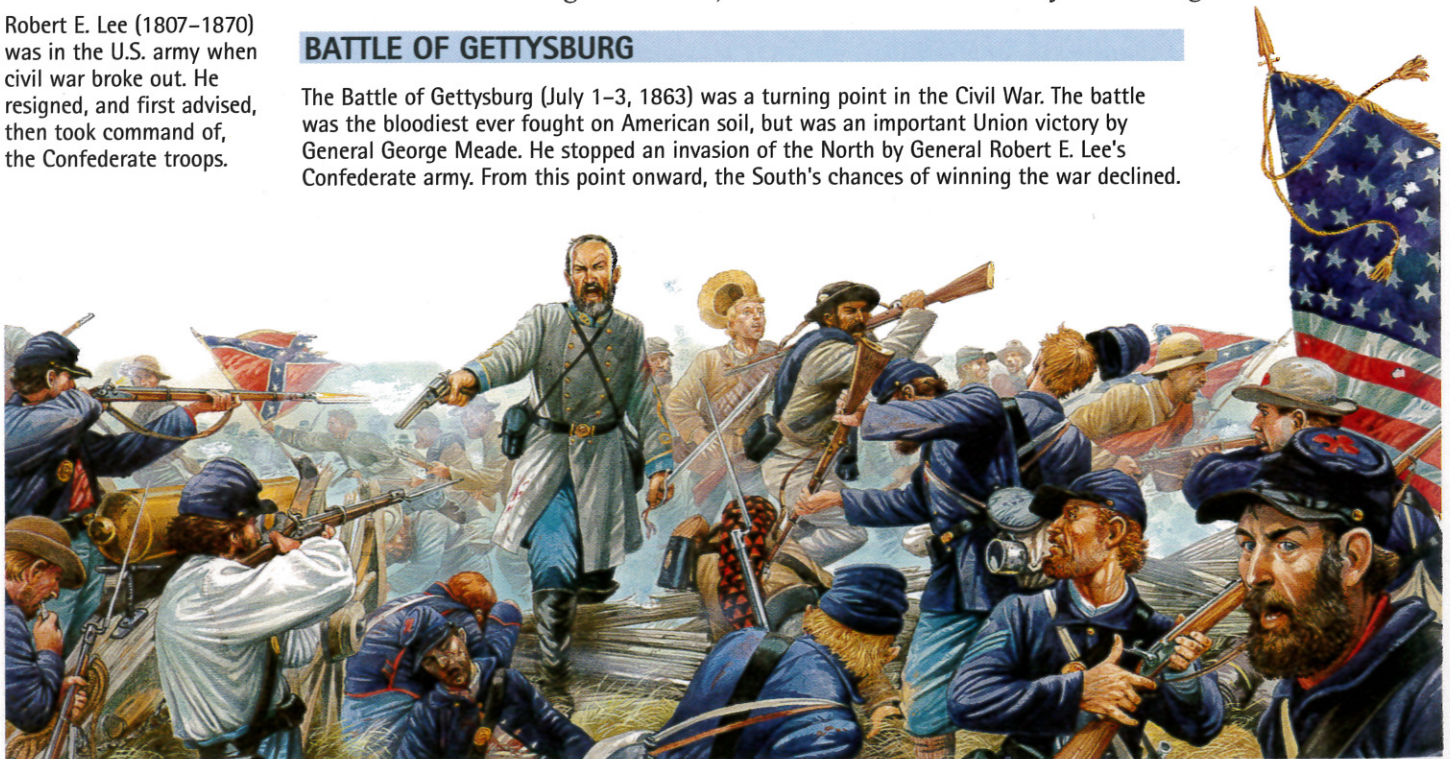
Confederate soldier

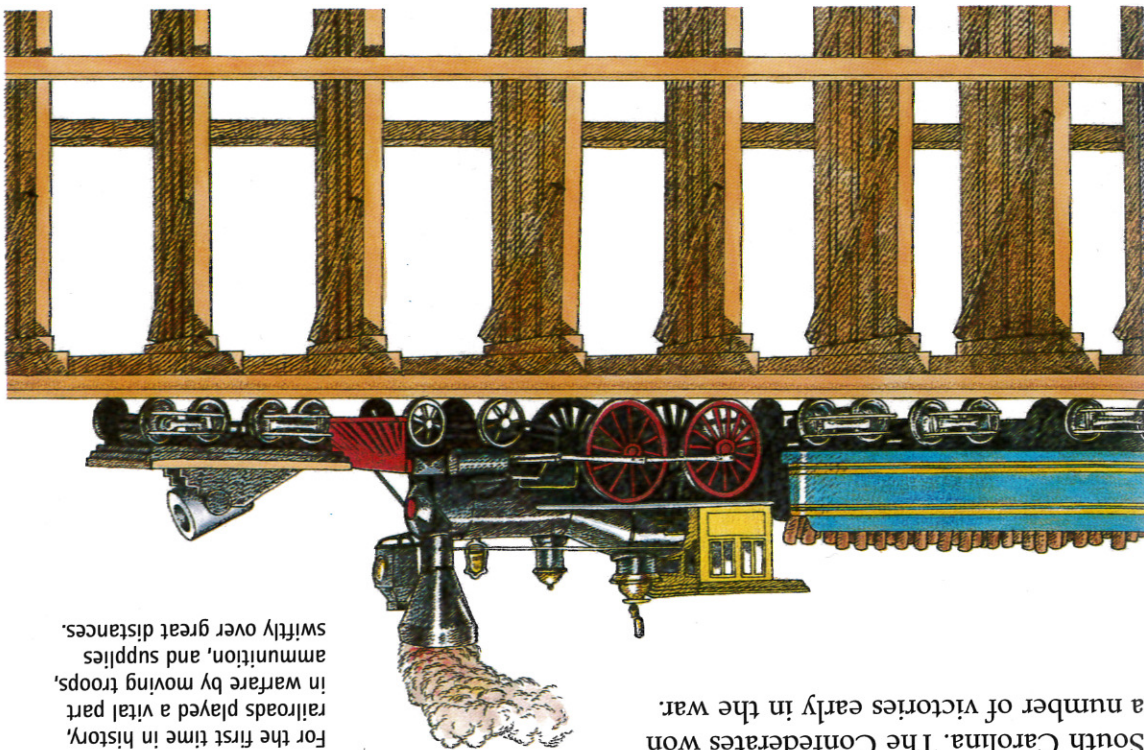
Union soldiers wore the blue uniform of the U.S. army. The Confederates usually wore gray.

by Jefferson Davis (1808–1889), they announced in December 1860 that they were seceding from (leaving) the Union and forming the Confederate States of America. The United States government declared they had no right to do this.

BATTLE OF GETTYSBURG

The Battle of Gettysburg (July 1–3, 1863) was a turning point in the Civil War. The battle was the bloodiest ever fought on American soil, but was an important Union victory by General George Meade. He stopped an invasion of the North by General Robert E. Lee's Confederate army. From this point onward, the South's chances of winning the war declined.





For the first time in history, railroads played a vital part in warfare by moving troops, ammunition, and supplies swiftly over great distances.

The North (Union), made up of 23 states, had more men, more money, and more industry than the South. The North also controlled the navy and started a naval blockade that prevented the South from receiving help or supplies from abroad. The 11 states of the South (the Confederacy) were much weaker, but they had the benefit of good generals and a great fighting spirit. Civil war broke out on April 12, 1861 when the forces of the South opened fire on Fort Sumter in South Carolina. The Confederates won a number of victories early in the war.

THE TWO SIDES

The South won the first battles in 1861, including Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville, but the turning point in the struggle came in July 1863, when the North won the biggest battle of the war, at Gettysburg. The Union forces, under the command of General George Meade, stopped an invasion of the North by General Robert E. Lee's Confederate army. Each side had over 20,000 soldiers killed or wounded.



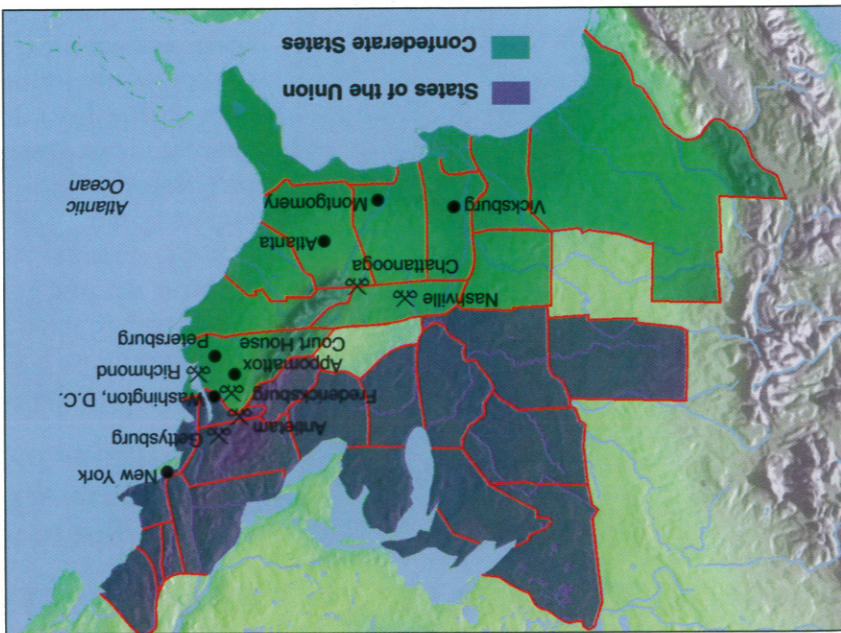
Union flag



Confederate flag

During the Civil War, the Confederates rejected the Stars and Stripes and adopted their own flag.

Harriet Tubman (1820-1913) was an escaped slave who made trips through southern territory, helping slaves escape.



► This shows the division of the United States at the beginning of the Civil War. Eleven of the 34 states made up the Confederacy. Most of the battles were fought in the east and southeast.

► The Battle of Spotsylvania, Virginia, in May 1864, was one of the many Union victories of the Civil War. In all, more than 600,000 soldiers died on both sides in the conflict.

