

The Civil War Begins

Main Idea The plan to resupply Fort Sumter triggered the beginning of the Civil War.

Reading Connection If you believed in a cause, what would you do to convince others to join you? Read on to learn how President Lincoln held on to the border states.

In April Lincoln announced that he intended to send needed supplies to **Fort Sumter** in Charleston Harbor, one of the few federal military bases that Southerners had not already seized. The Confederacy now faced a dilemma.

★ An American Story ★

"I do not pretend to sleep," wrote Mary Chesnut of the night of April 12, 1861. "How can I?" Hours earlier, her husband, former South Carolina senator James Chesnut, had gone by rowboat to Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor. He was delivering an ultimatum to U.S. Army Major Robert Anderson to surrender the fort by four o'clock in the morning or be fired upon by the South Carolina militia.

Through the long night Mary Chesnut lay awake, until she heard chimes from a local church ring four times. The hour of surrender had arrived, and, she confessed, "I beg[a]n to hope." But her hopes of a peaceful outcome faded when, a half hour later, she heard the cannons begin to boom. "I sprang out of bed. And on my knees . . . I prayed as I never prayed before."

In a nightgown and shawl, Chesnut ran to the roof, where others had gathered to watch the bombardment of Fort Sumter. The sectional conflict that had brewed in debate and broken out in periodic violence had become a war. On her rooftop, Mary Chesnut shivered and felt the first terrifying evidence of the horrors to come. "The regular roar of the cannon—there it was. And who could tell what each volley accomplished of death and destruction."

—adapted from *Mary Chesnut's Civil War*

President Lincoln had tried to avoid war. In his inaugural speech on March 4, 1861, he addressed the seceding states directly, repeating his commitment not to interfere with slavery where it already existed. Still, he insisted that "the Union of these States is

perpetual." He did not threaten to attack the seceded states, but he did announce his intention to "hold, occupy, and possess" federal property in those states. Lincoln also made an eloquent plea for reconciliation, stating: "The government will not assail *you*. . . . Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection."

When President Lincoln announced his plan to resupply Fort Sumter, Confederate President Jefferson Davis was faced with a problem. To tolerate U.S. troops in the South's most vital Atlantic harbor seemed unacceptable for a sovereign nation. However, firing on the supply ship would undoubtedly provoke war with the United States. Jefferson decided to demand the surrender of Fort Sumter before the supply ship arrived. The fort's commander, U.S. Army Major Robert Anderson, stood fast. Confederate forces then bombarded Fort Sumter for 33 hours on April 12 and 13, until Anderson and his exhausted men gave up. No one had been killed, but the Civil War had begun.

After the fall of Fort Sumter, President Lincoln called for 75,000 volunteers to serve in the military for 90 days. Lincoln's action created a crisis in the Upper South. Many people in those states did not want to secede, but they were not willing to take up arms against fellow Southerners. Between April 17 and June 8, 1861, four more states chose to leave the Union—Virginia, Arkansas, North Carolina, and Tennessee. The Confederate Congress then established Richmond, Virginia, as the capital.

Mary Chesnut ▼



Resources of the Union and of the Confederacy

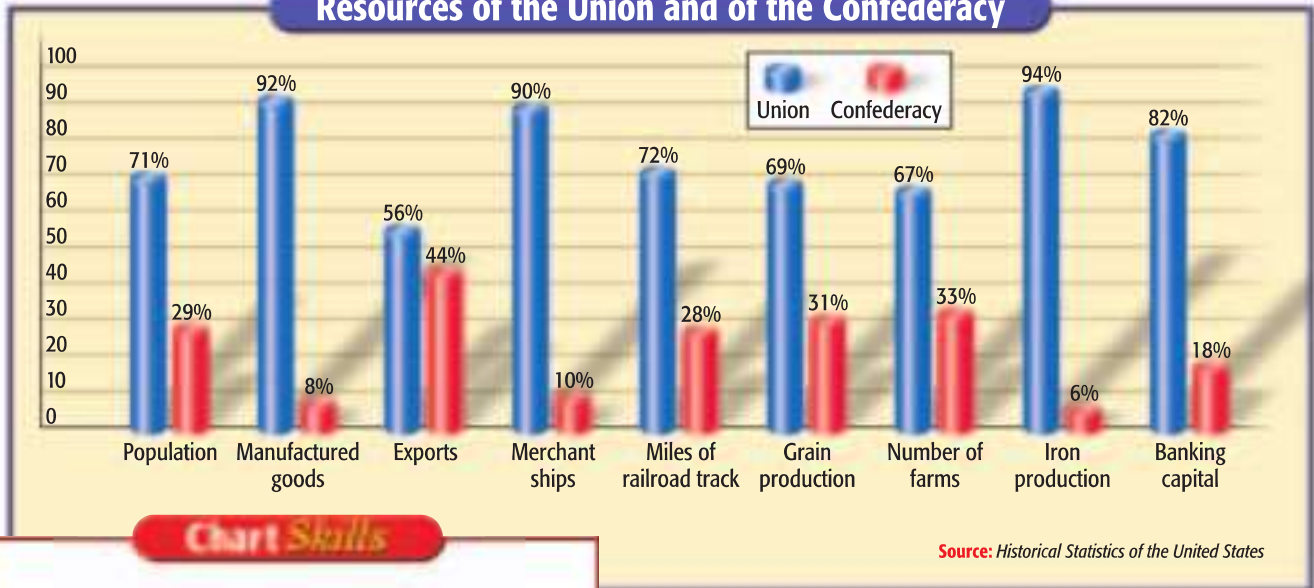


Chart Skills

- Interpreting Graphs** In which category is the difference between the Union and the Confederacy the greatest?
- Making Inferences** What additional factors are not considered when comparing population percentages between the Union and the Confederacy?

With the Upper South gone, Lincoln could not afford to lose the slaveholding border states as well. Delaware seemed safe, but Lincoln worried about Kentucky, Missouri, and particularly Maryland. Virginia's secession had placed a Confederate state across the Potomac River from the nation's capital. If Maryland joined the South, Washington, D.C., would be surrounded by Confederate territory. To prevent Maryland's secession, Lincoln imposed **martial law**—military rule—in Baltimore, where angry mobs had already attacked federal troops. Although many people objected to this suspension of their rights, Maryland stayed in the Union.

Kentucky initially declared neutrality in the conflict, but when Confederate troops occupied part of Kentucky, the state declared war on the Confederacy, and Lincoln sent troops to help. In Missouri, despite strong public support for the Confederacy, the state convention voted to stay in the Union. Federal troops then ended fights between the pro-Union government and secessionists.

The war shattered old loyalties and made enemies of former friends. For the next several years, the bloody war between the states divided Americans and resulted in hundreds of thousands of casualties.

Reading Check **Examining** Why did the call for military volunteers lead more states to secede?

The Opposing Sides

Main Idea The North and South each had distinct advantages and disadvantages at the beginning of the Civil War.

Reading Connection Do you believe the government is justified limiting civil liberties during wartime? Read on to learn how President Lincoln decided to suspend writs of habeas corpus during the Civil War.

On the same day that he learned his home state of Virginia had voted to secede from the Union, **Robert E. Lee**—one of the best senior officers in the United States Army—received an offer from General Winfield Scott to command Union troops. Although Lee had spoken against secession and considered slavery “a moral and political evil,” he refused to fight against the South. Instead, he offered his services to the Confederacy.

Lee was one of hundreds of military officers who resigned to join the Confederacy. In 1860 seven of the nation's eight military colleges were in the South. These colleges provided the region with a large number of trained officers to quickly organize an effective fighting force.

Just as the South had a strong military tradition, the North had a strong naval tradition. More than three-quarters of the Navy's officers came from the North, and the crews of American merchant ships were almost entirely from the North. They provided a large pool of trained sailors for the Union navy as it expanded.

The Opposing Economies Although the South had many experienced officers to lead its troops in battle, the North had several economic advantages. In 1860 the population of the North was about 22 million, while the South had about 9 million people. The North's larger population gave it a great advantage in raising an army and in supporting the war effort.

The North's industries also gave the region an important economic advantage over the South. In 1860 almost 90 percent of the nation's factories were located in the Northern states. The North could provide its troops with ammunition and other supplies more easily. In addition, the South had only half as many miles of railroad track as the North and had only one line—from Memphis to Chattanooga—connecting the western states of the Confederacy to the east. This made it much easier for Northern troops to disrupt the Southern rail system and prevent the movement of supplies and troops.

The Union also controlled the national treasury and could expect continued revenue from tariffs. In order to make more money available for emergency use, Congress passed the Legal Tender Act, creating a national currency and allowing the government to issue paper money. The paper money came to be known as **greenbacks**, because of its color.

The Confederacy did not fare as well. Most Southern planters were in debt and unable to buy bonds. Southern banks were small and had few cash reserves; as a result, they could not buy many bonds either. The best hope for the South to raise money was by taxing trade. Then, shortly after the war began, the Union Navy blockaded Southern ports, which reduced trade and revenues. The Confederacy had to resort to direct taxation of its people, but many Southerners refused to pay.

The Confederacy also printed paper money to pay its bills. This caused rapid inflation in the South, and Confederate paper money eventually became almost worthless. By the end of the war, the South had experienced 9,000 percent inflation, compared to only 80 percent in the North.

The Political Situation President Lincoln had to deal with a number of issues. Although many fellow Republicans were abolitionists, Lincoln wanted to preserve the Union, even if it meant allowing slavery to continue. The president also had to contend with the Democrats, who were divided themselves over a possible war.

One major disagreement between Republicans and Democrats concerned the enactment in 1862 of a militia law that allowed states to use **conscription**—

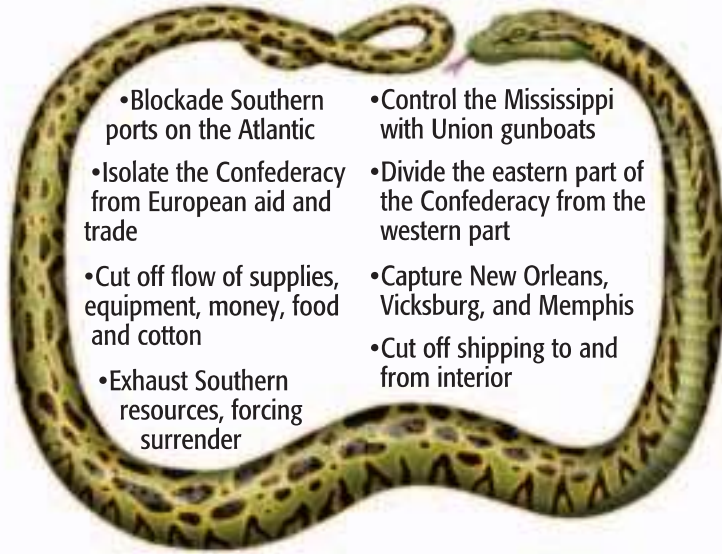
or forcing people through a draft into military service—if this was necessary to fill their regiments. Criticism also greeted President Lincoln's decision to suspend writs of **habeas corpus**. A writ of habeas corpus is a court order that requires the government either to charge an imprisoned person with a crime or let the person go free. When writs of habeas corpus are suspended, a person can be imprisoned indefinitely without trial. In this case, President Lincoln suspended the writ for anyone who openly supported the rebels or encouraged others to resist the militia draft. "Must I shoot a simple-minded soldier boy who deserts," the president asked, "while I must not touch a hair of a wily agitator who induces him to desert?"

Although the South had no organized opposition party, Confederate president Jefferson Davis still faced political problems. The Confederate constitution emphasized states' rights and limited the central government's power. This often interfered with Davis's ability to conduct the war with a united commitment from every Confederate state government. Some Southern leaders opposed Davis when he supported conscription and established martial law early in 1862. They also opposed the suspension of writs of habeas corpus, which the South, like the North, had introduced.

The outbreak of the Civil War put the major governments of Europe in a difficult situation. While the United States government did not want the Europeans interfering in the war, Confederate leaders wanted them to recognize the South and provide it with military assistance. Southern leaders knew that European textile factories depended on Southern cotton. To pressure the British and French, many Southern planters agreed to stop selling their cotton in these markets until the Europeans recognized the Confederacy. Despite these efforts, both countries chose not to go to war against the United States.

The First Modern War The North and South were about to embark on what was, in many respects, the first modern war. Unlike earlier European wars, the Civil War involved huge armies that consisted mostly of civilian volunteers and required vast amounts of supplies. By the 1850s, French and American inventors had developed an inexpensive conoidal—or cone-shaped—bullet that was accurate at much greater distances. This resulted in much higher casualties. **Attrition**—the wearing down of one side by the other through exhaustion of soldiers and resources—also played a critical role as the war dragged on.

The Anaconda Plan



Early in the war, Jefferson Davis imagined a struggle similar to the American war for independence against Britain in which Southern generals would pick their battles carefully, attacking and retreating when necessary to avoid heavy losses. By waging a defensive war of attrition, Davis believed the South could force the Union to spend its resources until it became tired of the war and agreed to negotiate. Instead, President Davis felt pressure to strike for a quick victory, especially since many Southerners believed that their military traditions made them superior fighters. In the war, Southern troops went on the offensive in eight battles, suffering 20,000 more casualties than the Union by charging enemy lines. These were heavy losses the South could not afford.

The general in chief of the United States, Winfield Scott, suggested that the Union blockade Confederate ports and send gunboats down the Mississippi River to divide the Confederacy in two. The South, thus separated, would gradually run out of resources and surrender. Many Northerners rejected the strategy, which they called the Anaconda Plan, after a snake that slowly strangles its prey to death. They thought it was too slow and indirect for certain victory. Lincoln eventually agreed to implement Scott's suggestions and imposed a blockade of Southern ports. He and other Union leaders realized that only a long war that focused on destroying the South's armies had any chance of success.

Reading Check **Comparing** In what areas did the opposing sides have advantages and disadvantages?

The Early Stages

Main Idea With Union casualties rising, President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation.

Reading Connection Do you know someone who lived through the food rationing during World War II? Read on to learn how the war affected daily life.

During the first few months of the war, President Lincoln felt tremendous pressure to strike hard against the South. He approved an assault on Confederate troops gathered near Manassas Junction, Virginia, only 25 miles (40 km) south of Washington, D.C. The First Battle of Bull Run, as it came to be called, started well for the Union as it forced Confederate troops to retreat. Then the tide turned when reinforcements under the command of Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson helped the Confederates defeat the Union forces. This outcome made it clear that the North would need a large, well-trained army to prevail against the South.

Lincoln had originally called for 75,000 men to serve for three months. The day after Bull Run, he signed another bill for the enlistment of 500,000 men for three years. The North initially tried to encourage voluntary enlistment by offering a bounty—a sum of money given as a bonus—to individuals who promised three years of military service. Eventually both the Union and the Confederacy instituted the draft.

The Naval War While the Union and Confederacy mobilized their armies, President Lincoln proclaimed a blockade of all Confederate ports in an effort to cut Confederate trade with the world. Although the blockade became increasingly effective as the war dragged on, Union vessels were thinly spread and found it difficult to stop the blockade runners—small, fast vessels the South used to smuggle goods past the blockade, usually at night. By using blockade runners, the South could ship at least some of its cotton to Europe in exchange for shoes, rifles, and other supplies.

As part of its effort to close Southern ports, the Union navy developed a plan to seize New Orleans and gain control of the lower Mississippi River. In February 1862, David G. Farragut took command of a combined Union force consisting of 42 warships and 15,000 soldiers led by General Benjamin Butler. On April 25, 1862, Farragut arrived at New Orleans. Six days later, General Butler's troops took control of the city. The South's largest city, and a center of the cotton trade, was now in Union hands.