

## Chapter 20: Girding for War: The North and the South (1861-1865)

### The Menace of Secession

- Lincoln stated that there “would be no conflict unless the South provoked it”
  - He believed that the two sections could not separate and survive apart
    - The Mississippi River and the Appalachian Mountains were two physical features that both the North and the South had in common, held them together
- If the North and the South split, then there would be large debates about which side owned what, including:
  - National debt
  - Federal territories
- Anti-slavery efforts would be split and confusing
  - The Underground Railroad would probably work harder to try and abolish slavery in the very pro-slavery South
  - The Fugitive Slave Law in the North would have to be discussed (because it was previously nullified by the people and only encouraged by the South)
- **A united U.S. was the strong power of the Americas, and its division would greatly weaken it and make it less of a threat to the Europeans**
  - The European nations could provoke one aspect of their disunity in order to strengthen the conflict and weaken the colonies to their liking
  - Britain and other imperial powers could worry less about America being a serious threat to their other colonies in the Americas
  - The European nations would more easily be able to defy the Monroe Doctrine and therefore claim more land in the Americas

*America in the World:* Keeping America united was not only a selfish interest that would benefit only the North; it was an endeavor meant to strengthen America against foreign powers. United, the U.S. had defeated Britain twice (in the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812) and Mexico, and it had successfully made peaceful negotiations with Mexico and European nations. Separated, foreign powers were keen on violating the Monroe Doctrine without fear of retaliation from the Americans and better protect existing colonies in the Americas such as Canada. Therefore, the secessionist movement was a cause not only for the South, but for the colonial powers of the world; the Union cause was the more American movement, hoping to keep united a strong republic in a predominantly monarchical world.

### South Carolina Assails Fort Sumter

- When Lincoln became office, Fort Sumter was one of two U.S. forts in the South that was still loyal to the North
  - It had less than a hundred men (not too large) but watched over a major port (Charleston harbor)
  - It only had provisions to last a few weeks, so the Southerners could easily lay siege and win
    - On the other hand, if the North were to provide more provisions, it would likely provoke war

- Lincoln decided to send provisions, not reinforcements (he carefully distinguished the two, with the former only being in supplies but the latter being in military force)
  - He sent a naval force to send the supplies to the fort
  - The South saw the use of the navy as a military expedition to reinforce the fort, and therefore opened fire on the fort
    - Fort Sumter surrendered after a brief barrage by the South (April 12, 1861)
- **Surrender of Fort Sumter greatly raised the Northern cause for unity**
  - Many Northerners had previously been saying, “Wayward sisters, depart in peace,” indicating that they were okay with peaceful secession
  - After the defeat, many Northerners cried “Remember Fort Sumter” and “Save the Union,” which indicated a strong call for unity
  - Lincoln made a speech (April 15, 1861) that called upon 75,000 volunteers to fight for the Union
    - Many people joined, so many that some even had to be turned away
    - These troops were called to blockade some of the South’s ports
- **The South felt that Lincoln’s call for troops was a declaration of war upon them and therefore retaliated against the North**
  - Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina switched over to support secession
  - New Confederate capital was Richmond, Virginia (very close to the Union capital Washington, D.C., which made tensions high between both sides)

*Politics and Power:* The first shots of the war at Fort Sumter were the beginning of the Civil War.

Interestingly, despite their military loss at the fort, the Northerners turned this into a political victory by making it a point to rally up support for their cause. They could say that the Southerners started the fight by firing the first shells, and that the fight of Fort Sumter — and the rest of the Civil War — was simply to protect and preserve the Union. In other words, the North only is trying to force the South back into the Union because they provoked the conflict and therefore the North is justified in their cause. In retaliation for the North, more states— Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina— joined the secessionist effort. This shows the dangerous and volatile reactions to any event during a high-tension time such as during the Civil War and the possibility of any decision to backfire. This helps to explain the uncertainty of the situation that led to rash or extreme decisions such as Lincoln’s decision to make unconstitutional acts such as creating a blockade without Congress, because extreme action was necessary in dire and uncertain situations like this.

Brothers’ Blood and Border Blood

- The border states were very influential during the war — the balance of power teetered upon them
  - The border states included Missouri, Kentucky, Maryland, and Delaware — slave states that remained loyal to the Union and straddled the line between Union and Confederacy
  - They probably would have joined the Confederacy if the North had fired the first shots against the Confederacy (instead of the South having first attacked Fort Sumter)
  - West Virginia, which tore itself from Virginia to become a free state (1863), became a border state

- Sometimes Lincoln used military force in order to keep the border states legal
  - He put troops in West Virginia and Maryland in order to keep a clear path to Washington D.C.
- **The (initial) official cause of the war was to keep the Union together and *not slavery* because of the border states**
  - If the cause had been anti-slavery from the start, the border colonies (and some other slave-owning regions such as Ohio) would likely join the seceding states
- In the West, the slave-owning Native Americans went against the North (which was anti-slavery), and many of them went to the Confederate side
  - The Confederacy also gave federal payments to the tribes and encouraged Native American delegates to enter their politics in exchange for Native American troops
- **Southern men often fought for the North and vice versa**
  - 50,000 men from West Carolina fought for the North, and 300,000 from the loyal slave states fought for the North
  - Many families were split, sending sons to both sides of the war
    - North and South were characterized as “Billy Yank” and “Johnny Reb” because of their intimacy — they were closely related

*Politics and Power:* The appeal of the border states helped to shape the cause of the war for the Northerners. Rather than being a war to end slavery, the advantage of gaining the middle states pressured the North into making the cause of the war a war for unity rather than for emancipation. The border states in return would greatly weaken the cause of the seceding states by taking away. This was a delicate power balance that could easily be thrown away as Lincoln became progressively more anti-slavery throughout the war, eventually to give the Emancipation Proclamation that proclaimed all slaves free in the South and to pass the thirteenth amendment, which abolished slavery in the U.S. The decision to keep the border states and avoid being radical on the idea of slavery shows the political strategy necessary, and, while its intentions were not totally honest, it helped the North achieve its joint intentions of winning the war (by taking the border states away from the South) and winning slavery (which was negotiable after the South was defeated).

#### The Balance of Forces

- **The South had great advantages at the beginning of the war**
  - They were on the defensive — they only had to hold off the Northerners from their land, and didn't have to conquer land themselves; they also had the home field advantage
  - They had great military generals, such as Robert E. Lee and Thomas J. Jackson
  - Many Southerners were born to a more rugged life (e.g., more in hard conditions like that of war and with horses and guns)
  - The South seized many Northern factories and created artillery from there
- **The North ended up having a great strength in its economy and other facets that outweighed the Southern advantages**
  - The South had an economy based only on farming; the North had an economy based on trade and industry

- The North was able to keep up a steady supply of manufactured goods coming in for their armies, including weaponry and imported goods from Europe
  - The North created the mortar, which was a powerful long-range weapon
- The North blockaded many Southern ports
- The North had 22 million people, compared with the 9 million in the South
  - The North also had a greater rate of immigrants entering the nation, which further increased the population gap between North and South
- While the Northerners were less accustomed to war life at first, many became accustomed to it
- While the North had few great commanders, Lincoln discovered Ulysses S. Grant, who led the Northern military

### Dethroning King Cotton

- Most successful revolutions depended on foreign aid, and the South probably lost because of a lack of foreign aid
  - **The wealthy ruling class of Great Britain wanted to help the South because it hated the democracy of America (which was especially strong in the North), but the ordinary people of Britain didn't want slavery in the U.S. and supported the Union cause because it would likely abolish slavery**
    - Many of the British had read Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and were influenced by it and therefore wanted to end slavery in the U.S.
    - The masses in Britain and France pressured the governments not to take official action to support the South in the Civil War for slavery reasons
- **British cotton dependency on the South's cotton failed**
  - The South depended on cotton to ensure a strong relationship with Britain ("Cotton is King," and many Britons were dependent on the textile industry)
  - Britain had a surplus of cotton, and therefore it did not need a strong importation of cotton at the time, which alleviated some of the "cotton famine"
    - Some Americans also sent over food to help the people unemployed from the decrease of the cotton industry
    - The North seized a lot of cotton from the South and traded that with Britain
    - Egypt and India increased their supply of cotton now that the competition from the Southern U.S. had greatly fallen into decline
- **The North's harvests of wheat and corn were more important to Great Britain**
  - Britain had bad harvests during this time period
  - The North had the cheapest and most abundant supply of staple grains, and therefore Great Britain could not close off its amiable trade with the North

*Work, Exchange, and Technology*: Trade with Great Britain may have decided the war. Britain was America's greatest trading partner, and the side (North or South) that successfully continued positive economic relations with Great Britain would have a much greater advantage. Keeping a strong economic relation would also guarantee a strong militaristic backing, since Britain would want to protect a strong trade. Therefore, when the Confederacy's cotton trade with Great Britain became unimportant and

other parts of the world such as Egypt and India began to produce greater amounts of cotton to meet Great Britain's voracious demand for it, the Confederacy's relevance to Britain lost a lot of its importance. On the other hand, the North, which was more stable and had a booming grain (corn and wheat) agriculture, grew a stronger relationship with Great Britain. As a result, Britain never tried to break Northern blockades on Southern ports because it relied more heavily on the North for a trade market, and therefore the North gained a huge advantage over the South that helped it win the war. Without trade, the South greatly faltered in its spending and industrial abilities, and it fell behind the North in terms of production of supplies, because the North had strong industry and trade.

### The Decisiveness of Diplomacy

- **Trent Affair was when a Union warship captured a British ship and demanded that two Confederate diplomats be released**
  - Enraged Britain, who thought that the Americans were in no place to demand from their ships
  - Eventually cooled down because of slow response from Britain across the Atlantic and Lincoln's compliance to return the prisoners
- **There were many British-built Union-raiders**
  - Most notable one was the *Alabama*, which captured over sixty Northern ships
    - In total, over 250 Northern ships were lost to these "Confederate pirates"
  - They didn't have to enter the blockaded ports of the South, instead docking in Great Britain
  - Eventually this was outlawed by the British government because of concerns of backfiring on themselves in the future

### Foreign Flare-Ups

- **The two Laird rams, strong British-built warships intended to be sold to the Confederates, posed a threat to the Union**
  - They could more easily break the blockade of the South, which would weaken the North significantly and help the Southerners
  - The British government saw that this would probably cause the American to make war on Canada, however, and bought up the ships for their own navy
- **Many Northerners planned to attack Canada as well**
  - Some Southerners were in Canada and threatened to attack northern cities
    - One attack in Vermont plundered three banks and killed a Northerner
  - Irish Americans were the strongest advocates for attacking Canada
    - They launched invasions in 1866 and 1870
  - Dominion of Canada (1867) was formed to help strengthen Canada against the possibly vengeful U.S.
- **In the South, Napoleon III of France took over Mexico**
  - He instated archduke Maximilian as emperor of Mexico
    - This violated the Monroe Doctrine, but Napoleon believed that the U.S. was too weak to fend off the French

- After the American Civil War, Secretary of State Seward prompted Napoleon and the French to leave when the Americans began to march south against the French to protect the Monroe Doctrine

*America in the World:* Interestingly, the Civil War was not the only attention-gainer in the Americas, not even amongst Americans. Some Americans, especially Irish-Americans, threatened to invade Canada to attack any Confederates who might have been harbored there, and the Southerners did make some raids on the Northerners along the Canada-U.S. border, and vice versa. This increased tensions between the U.S. and Canada, which resulted in Canada becoming the Dominion of Canada, which gave it greater freedom and power against the raids of the Americans. On the southern side of the U.S., the French Napoleon III took over Mexico because he believed that the U.S. would be too weak divided after the war; however, he was wrong and the French retreated. More tensions arose with Britain during the war because they sometimes tried to help the Confederates, which greatly angered the Unionists, such as with the building of the Laird rams that were originally intended to serve for the Confederates, as well as the fleet of British "Confederate pirates." All of these simply added more turmoil to the situation for the North and the South during the Civil War, but because Britain generally backed off on provocative stances in the Civil War to prevent extra conflict, all of these events were relatively insignificant during the war. This showed America's establishment in the Americas as a dominant power, strong enough to fend off the Europeans (such as the French in Mexico and the British Confederate pirates) even while fighting a Civil War.

#### President Davis Versus President Lincoln

- **The Confederacy had troubles staying united**
  - They were a nation that seceded, and therefore nothing prevented states from seceding (secession was a part of their national identity)
  - States' rights were the greatest opposition to the Confederacy
- Confederate President Jefferson Davis was very stern and harsh on himself
  - He was a little too imperious sometimes and he worked very hard, perhaps too hard to try to get his cause
  - He was never immensely popular with the Confederates which made it harder for the people to work with together with him
- President Lincoln and the North were more united and had a history of a relatively stable economy
  - Lincoln was also known to have a flexible and forgiving character

#### Limitations on Wartime Liberties

- **Lincoln was somewhat unlawful and dictatorial in his powers in order to keep the Union together**
  - He believed that after the war was over, these high-handed powers would cease (they were only necessary in the emergency of war)
  - Lincoln created a blockade, increased the size of the army, spent \$2 million for the military, all of which were not his legal right

- He suspended the privilege of writ of habeas corpus, which protected people from being arrested without reason (and therefore secessionists in the North could be arrested arbitrarily)
- He created “supervised voting” in the border states, which forced citizens to publicly show their party to the guards
- Jefferson Davis had less power than Lincoln to do such unconstitutional acts, because the South was accusing the North of being unconstitutional and couldn’t be hypocritical
  - There was also the strong cry for states’ rights, which would overturn any dictatorial measures Davis might pass

*American and National Identity:* While Davis was having troubles keeping the Confederacy together because of his inflexible personality, Lincoln embodied the American spirit with his ability to dynamically decide what was best for his nation, even if it was technically not legal. He decided to do a few slightly unconstitutional acts during his presidency, but all of which were later approved by Congress, showing that this still was with the consent of the people (which is what is more important than rule of law, according to the Freeport Doctrine and popular sovereignty). However, he still had the audacity to make these motions, despite their illegality, similar to early Americans who decided to secede from Great Britain and form their own independent nation. It was also decided from the engendering of the Constitution and the flaws of the Articles of Confederation that a strong president would be necessary to carry out these drastic acts in a practical way— if there was no president, then Congress would never have passed these actions, and the military would have been a lot weaker, even if it was totally legal. Therefore, the idea of a strong president dates back to the founding principles of the Framers and also supports the fundamental national identity of the U.S.

Volunteers and Draftees: North and South

- **In 1863, Congress passed its first national draft**
  - Volunteers were the initial source of the fighting men, but eventually they began to run out
  - Draft could be avoided by paying \$300; a system that favored the rich
    - The rich boys who could avoid the draft were known as the “three-hundred dollar men”
    - The poorer people were angry because it sounded like an easy way for the government to make profit — the government demanded “three hundred dollars or your life”
  - In Democratic areas in the North, there were riots by people who didn’t like the draft
    - This was especially strong with Irish Americans
    - The largest riots were the New York draft riots in NYC
    - It included “a rampaging, pillaging mob ... and the victims included many lynched blacks”
  - Over 90% of Union troops were volunteers, but enthusiasm began to wear out
- **In order to create incentive for people to join the army, the government began to create bonuses for the people**
  - Soldiers could legitimately earn up to \$1,000 from bonuses

- Some people (“**bounty boys**”) joined the army just for the bonus, deserted, and joined somewhere else for another bounty
  - There were 200,000 deserters in the Union army in the Union
- **In the South, the population was much lower than that of the North, and the draft started one year earlier (1862)**
  - Also favored the wealthy: slaveowners with twenty slaves or more could exempt themselves from the draft
    - This caused people to claim that the war was “a rich man’s war but a poor man’s fight” — it was high in idealisms (the “rich man’s war”) but fought by the poor people who were drafted

*Culture and Society:* The ability for rich men and slaveowners to avoid the draft showed the aristocratic influence that there was on American politics, and the social divide between the rich and poor that continues to today. The middle- and lower-class families of the North were furious when “three-hundred-dollar men” were allowed to escape the duties of the nation by essentially bribing themselves out of it, and poorer Southerners were angry about wealthy slaveowners avoiding the draft. As a result, many people considered the Civil War “a rich man’s war but a poor man’s fight,” indicating the difference between the high societal norms and the reality of the situation. There was talk of equality of all men, yet in truth even men of the same race were fighting amongst themselves over wealth. This is the corruption in government favoring the aristocratic class that inspires the poorer classes to rise up in revolt and ask for more equal treatment, such as with worker’s strikes.

#### The Economic Stresses of War

- The North had some dishonestly rich people
  - Inflation harmed the wage slaves of the factories
    - **However, it helped the rich factory owners, some of whom became part of the first millionaire class of the U.S.**
      - Many of these millionaires were “noisy, gaudy, brassy, and given to extravagant living”
  - Many people were dishonest in order to gain profit
    - Some people sold poor-quality products (such as blind or old horses to government purchasers or shoes and clothing made of bad materials)
- The North prospered in general
  - New protective tariffs in the North helped factories in the North by weakening foreign competition
  - New machinery helped replace jobs that had been lost by men who were fighting in the war
    - The reaper allowed farmers to go fight, and it harvested much food that was essential in feeding the armies and for trading abroad
    - The sewing machine greatly eased the clothing-making process
      - Standard clothing sizes were invented during this time period of mass production of clothing, especially for the military, for sake of practicality



- In Pennsylvania in 1859, new “fifty-niners” rushed in to seek oil (similar to the “forty-niners” of the California gold rush, but with petroleum)
  - This led to the birth of the petroleum industry
- The Homestead Act (1862) gave Western settlers free land
- Only the shipping industry was harmed (by the British Confederate attacker ships)
- Women played a prominent role in the war effort
  - Many government jobs opened up by men fighting in the war and many women rose to fill the spots
  - Many more women became employed in industry, especially the clothing industry, to meet the demand for supplies from the war effort
    - “Before the war one industrial worker in four had been female; during the war the ratio rose to one in three”
  - Over 400 women pretended to be men and fought in the war
  - Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell (first female doctor) helped create the U.S. Sanitary Commission to help medical help and nursing for the army
    - Clara Barton and Dorothea Dix (who also helped to improve prison conditions in the U.S.) helped to make nursing more respectable in the U.S.
    - Sally Tompkins ran a hospital in the South
  - Many women “organized bazaars and fairs that raised millions of dollars for the relief of widows, orphans, and disabled soldiers”
    - Organizing these events and fundraising and training helped women to gain confidence and helped lead to stronger women’s rights advocates

#### A Crushed Cotton Kingdom

- The South greatly lost wealth during the war
  - The average Southern per capita income dropped from  $\frac{2}{3}$  that of a Northerner to  $\frac{1}{3}$  of that of a Northerner over the course of the war
  - The South resorted to “economic cannibalism,” in which products were lost for more important ones (e.g., taking up railroad parts from lesser-used railroads to give to the more important ones)
  - Eventually, industry in the North, especially with the success of the Industrial Revolution, triumphed over the agricultural system of the South
- Women helped with the war enthusiasm, trying to prop up the men
  - Even tried to start a campaign to sell their hair abroad for money

*Work, Exchange, and Technology:* While the South went increasingly into decline from the blockade and the lack of the cotton industry, the North soared in its economic ability. Factories and agriculture boomed with increased trade with Great Britain. Women filled many factory and government jobs that men had left when fighting for the war. Machinery increased output in both the fields and in factories. The petroleum industry was born in the U.S. when oil was found in Pennsylvania. All of these economic advancements in the North increased the economic gap between North and South, a difference that would split the two sides until at least the end of the century, keeping tensions high and perhaps keeping race relations and segregation at undesirable levels until well into the 20th century.