

## Chapter 21: The Furnace of the Civil War (1861-1865)

### Bull Run Ends the “Ninety-Day War”

- President Lincoln called for 75,000 army recruits in his first inaugural address (April 15, 1861)
  - He thought the war would end in only around 90 days and many enthusiastic Northerners thought so too
- At The First Battle of Bull Run (Manassas Junction) (July 21, 1861) 30,000 Union officers fought the Confederate military
  - Lincoln thought it would be a good idea to attack a smaller Confederate force at Bull Run to show their military superiority and then continue to capture Richmond if possible
  - Thomas J. Jackson led the Confederates to victory, and the Union officers fled
- Military defeat of North was actually a political benefit, and vice versa for the South
  - The North knew that their armies had to train harder, that the Civil War would not be a 90-day ordeal like originally thought to be and that the South was tougher than they thought it would be
    - The idea of a stronger South also prolonged the war, which allowed abolitionism to become more accepted as another cause for the war in the North
  - The South became overconfident from this battle, and enlistments decreased

*Politics and Power:* The first major battle of the Civil War at the First Battle of Bull Run was an unexpected defeat of the Union army by the Confederacy. The Union fighters were overconfident in their military before the battle and the Confederacy was more careful; this situation switched after the battle. As a result, the military loss of the North in the First Battle of Bull Run was therefore in some ways a political victory, as it helped the Union focus on strengthening its military and better preparing for a war with the South, while the battle was actually detrimental to the South because it boosted their confidences too much after the battle. This was similar to the first battle of the Civil War at Fort Sumter, in which the indignance of the “He started it!” shout that the Northerners gave about the Southerners helped to increase support for the Northern cause and keep the Border States loyal to the Union (they probably would have left if the North shot first)—this was another example of an unplanned strategic defeat that bolstered the Union militarily.

### “Tardy George” McClellan and the Peninsula Campaign

- George B. McClellan was appointed general of the Army of the Potomac (main army force)
  - Was experienced: went to West Point, fought in Mexican-American war, saw Crimean War
  - Had a high morale but did not dare to do any risky situations (he was overcautious), even when necessary
- Was ordered to attack by Lincoln and went to attack with the Peninsula Campaign (1862)
  - This was an attack on the peninsula between the James and York Rivers near Richmond
  - Won Yorktown (slowly, took a month)
  - Further slowed by lack of reinforcements and feints by Jackson’s army
- General Robert E. Lee launched a counterattack against McClellan, called the Seven Days’ Battles (June 26-July 2, 1862)

- McClellan lost, retreated to sea
- Victory for South again was harmful for themselves
  - By prolonging the war, they allow slavery to establish itself more strongly in the North
  - If McClellan had won and taken Richmond, the war would have been won and little said about slavery
- Union plan of winning the war was:
  1. Blockade the ports of the South
  2. Free the slaves of the South and cripple their economy
  3. Take control of the Mississippi which will divide the South
  4. Capture Georgia and the Carolinas, which are central in the South, in order to break up the South more
  5. Capture Confederate capital (Richmond)
  6. Weaken the South however possible to make them give up
    - This was the ruthless plan by Ulysses S. Grant

#### The War at Sea

- The Union's blockade covered 3,500 miles of Southern coast
  - The fleet was made of whatever boats the North could find, including "converted yachts and ferryboats"
  - The fleet concentrated on main ports for cotton
- The blockade was weak, but Britain did not defy it to trade cotton with the South in order to avoid war with the Union
- Blockade-running was a problem of the blockade
  - Quick, low-lying steamboats were the quickest and often did the job, trading arms for cotton stealthily with the South
  - It was a risky job but could yield 700% profit
  - Blockade-running became less popular and more difficult as the Northern navy improved and the blockade strengthened
  - The North tried to prevent this by seizing any British ship carrying weapons, even if not going to the Confederate states, and claiming that the weapons must be going to the Confederacy
    - This was the idea of "ultimate destination" or "continuous voyage" — a falsely presumed, far-fetched claim of a final destination
    - The British were angry about this tactic but used the same flawed logic during WWI with its blockade
- South took a Union warship, the *Merrimack* and plated its sides with iron to become the Virginia, which was a large threat to the North
  - It easily destroyed wooden ships
  - The Union built their own (smaller) ironclad, the Monitor, that battled the less-seaworthy *Virginia* and came to a stalemate
    - Later the *Virginia* was destroyed so as to avoid its capture by the Northerners

*American and National Identity*: This showed the resourcefulness of the Americans, especially the Yankees of the North. For example, Ulysses S. Grant's strategy of an all-out war to weaken the South whenever possible showed the North's desperate motivation to win, much like the original thirteen colonies' use of guerilla warfare as a somewhat illegitimate but effective fighting tactic against the British during the American Revolution. The North used flotillas made out of many different floating vessels, even ones that were not fitted to be part of the navy and ready for combat, such as yachts and ferryboats. In return, the South showed their resourcefulness as well by refurbishing a captured Union warship into a powerful ironclad, the *Virginia*, and by creating small, fast ships that could break through the barrier without being caught sometimes. These strategic maneuvers taken by both sides made the tide of the war very uncertain for much of the war until its resolution.

#### The Pivotal Point: Antietam

- Robert E. Lee advanced northward after defeating McClellan in the Seven Days' Battle at Richmond
  - He fought General John Pope of the Union at the Second Battle of Bull Run and quickly won
- Lee advanced into Maryland, hoping to encourage foreign intervention to help the South and for Maryland and the other border states to join the Confederacy
  - Maryland did not respond and support the South as the Southerners had hoped; the dishevelled form of the Southerners didn't encourage the Marylanders
- Lee fought General McClellan (was reinstated into power for this battle) at the Battle of Antietam (September 17, 1862), Maryland
  - They found a map of Lee's battle plans
  - They managed to stop Lee and bring the battle to a stalemate; considered somewhat of a Union victory because he had stopped Lee's advance into the North
  - Lee was stopped and returned back across the Potomac River
  - McClellan was removed from power because he had underperformed again
    - Critics say that he should have pursued the retreating Southern troops
  - The battle was very bloody, killed most soldiers in a single day of the war
  - The battle showed the Union's strength at a critical time when Britain and France were about to intervene, probably to aid the South
    - Union show of strength dissuaded them
- The "victory" (stopping the Southerners) of Antietam prompted Lincoln to write the Emancipation Proclamation (January 1, 1863)
  - The timing was strategic: Lincoln believed that if he released the proclamation too early, then it would seem as if he was helpless and needed the help of the Southern slaves for the Union
    - Lincoln therefore decided to wait until the Battle of Antietam concluded, and its victory justified the Union military might, which showed that the Emancipation Proclamation was done out of Union beliefs, not lack of military power
  - The Emancipation Proclamation helped changed the nature and purpose of the war to one about unity to one about slavery

*America in the World:* When the Union was in danger of having to fight multiple nations if Britain and France had supported the South, the victory at the Battle of Antietam was very important. The Union managed to fend off Lee's better-trained army at Antietam, albeit with the heaviest losses in the war. The intensity of the battle showed the U.S.'s military might once again to foreign nations, especially that of the North; as a result, the other nations refrained from engaging in another military conflict with either side. By the fact that both sides persisted after the battle, it also showed the strength of democracy to persist without anarchy in the central governments, even though such great military struggles. The South counted on foreign aid to help them win the war, especially economically because of their strong ties with Britain for cotton; however, after this economic tie was cut and the political and militaristic ties were mostly cut after the Battle of Antietam, the South was isolated from the rest of the world with the blockade and thus the Union had an easier chance of winning, because it maintained positive trade relations with Britain for grains.

#### A Proclamation Without Emancipation

- The Emancipation Proclamation declared that all slaves in the Confederacy that were still in rebellion were “forever free”
  - The border states' slavery was not affected for fear of their disloyalty, as well as those states that were not in rebellion
    - This meant 800,000 slaves were not freed by the Emancipation Proclamation
  - This document was written in a legalistic manner but implied that it achieved a moral cause
- The Proclamation had no real power
  - Where the President could enforce anti-slavery (the border states included) he did not
  - Where the President couldn't enforce anti-slavery (in the South where he had no jurisdiction) he claimed that all slaves were free
    - The rate of slaves fleeing to the North increased
      - 1/7 of Southern slaves escaped to the Union
      - Increase of slaves in Northern camps strengthened the abolitionist movement
  - Proclamation was followed by the Thirteenth Amendment, which formally abolished slavery in all of the U.S. in 1865, after the war had ended
  - Now that slavery was the cause of the war, it would be a “fight to the finish” because both sides felt very strongly at odds with each other on this issue (rather than simple unity)
- Reactions to the Emancipation Proclamation were mixed
  - Anti-slavery advocates supported it
  - Many people, including moderate abolitionists, thought that it had gone too far and that an “abolition war” should not be fought
    - People also argued that they signed up to fight for national unity, not for anti-slavery
    - There were many more desertions in the Union army as a result
    - Many Congressmen went against Lincoln
- The South was outraged, believed that the North was trying to stir up a slave rebellion

- Foreign nations (Britain and France) wanted to intervene on behalf of the South, but the people of those nations believed that the end of slavery was the better cause and therefore intervention did not happen)

*Politics and Power:* With the Emancipation Proclamation, Lincoln put power where he didn't have it, and he didn't exert power where he had it. Practically, this seems disastrous: he couldn't free the slaves he actually had jurisdiction over, and he asked the unwilling South to free their slaves without any offer of compensation. However, this was a political and militaristic deal: by not freeing the slaves in the border states, they remained more loyal to the Unionist cause of keeping the nation together; meanwhile, releasing the slaves in the South exemplified the Northern ideal of anti-slavery, while also siphoning off the black labor force from the South into the North to work in factories and fight in the army. In addition, it was created as a precursor to the Thirteenth Amendment, which officially freed *all* slaves in the U.S., including in the border states—the Emancipation Proclamation was like a test run, something to familiarize American citizens with the idea of total equality. Therefore, the Proclamation battled for the Republican and Union causes in multiple ways: by weakening the human resources in the South, and by bolstering Northern labor and its moral system. All of these contributed to the military success of the North during the war.

#### Blacks Battle Bondage

- Lincoln worked to incorporate African Americans into the Union army
  - At first, the army had no black soldiers, and free blacks were refused
    - The navy enlisted many blacks, but only as servicemen (e.g., cooks, stewards, and firemen, but not as soldiers)
  - After the Emancipation Proclamation and after new recruits for the army started to die out, blacks were allowed to join the army
    - 180,000 African Americans had served in the Union Army, most of which came from the slave states
      - This constituted 10% of the total enlistments
  - African American soldiers fought more against slavery than against disunity
    - They also fought to prove themselves as able and loyal citizens to achieve citizenship by the end of the war
    - They fought very hard, and had many casualties (38,000 dead of the 180,000 enlisted)
- The Confederacy did not incorporate slaves into their army until the last month of the war (when it was already too late)
  - Slaves defied forced labor in many ways, even forced white and able men to stay back as “home guards” to protect against the rebellious slaves
  - Slaves served as spies for the North and helped protect escaped prisoners of war from the North

*Culture and Society:* The idea of including slaves in society was such a strange idea at the time. In the North, however, society was much more liberal than in the South and the people eventually allowed African Americans to serve with them. This was in part because of a military necessity due to the trickling stream of volunteers later in the war, but it was mostly due to the increased anti-slavery

movement in the North. It further helped the anti-slavery cause by showing the bravery of the African Americans, which was often equal to or greater than that of a white soldier because many personally felt strongly against black bondage, and this vindicated them from some of the racism of the day. However, in the South, society was necessarily conservative and pro-slavery as according to the Southern Democrat cause, and the lack of slaves in society and in the army hurt them and contributed to their loss.

#### Lee's Last Lunge at Gettysburg

- General A. E. Burnside replaced McClellan as the main general after Antietam
  - Burnside lost heavily at the Battle of Fredericksburg (December 3, 1862) to Lee
- General Joseph Hooker replaced Burnside as main general after Fredericksburg
  - Hooker lost heavily at the Battle of Chancellorsville (May 2, 1863) to Lee and Jackson
    - Jackson was shot and died, which hurt the Southern command
- General George G. Meade replaced Hooker as main general after Chancellorsville
  - Lee was determined to follow up his attack and take over Pennsylvania
  - Meade was on top of little hill at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania
    - He had 92,000 soldiers, and Lee had 76,000
  - The Battle of Gettysburg (July 1-3, 1863) lasted for three days
    - Only was decided when General George Pickett led the famous Pickett's Charge against the Union soldiers but failed
      - Pickett's Charge was considered the last true attempt of the South at winning the war— after his attempt was foiled, the Southern military was essentially lost
      - Confederate President Jefferson Davis had sent a peace delegation up to the capital, expecting the battle to have been won and the path cleared to the capital; however, Lincoln had won and the land stayed loyal to the Union, so the delegation could not pass
- President Lincoln gave the Gettysburg Address (November 19, 1863)
  - It was only two-minutes long, as opposed to the two-hour speech by another orator
  - The Democrats and the British considered the address silly

#### The War to the West

- General Ulysses Grant became a general of the Union army
  - Grant was not very impressive in stature and he was not successful in business
    - He also drank much alcohol and his drinking was criticizing
  - First victory was at Fort Henry and fort Donelson in Tennessee (February 1862)
    - Success in Tennessee helped bring it and Kentucky closer to the Union
  - Grant tried to take Confederate railroads and lost at Shiloh (April 1862), but counterattacked successfully
- David G. Farragut led a flotilla (fleet of boats) and the Northern army against Vicksburg (July 1863) in Mississippi
  - Grant was given control of the Union forces besieging Vicksburg
  - The battle surrendered on July 4, 1863, the day after the Battle of Gettysburg

- This cut off the Southern control of the Mississippi River
  - The South's economy was further weakened in comparison to the industrial north without their trade on the Mississippi and Ohio river systems
  - Britain and France ended deals with the South to give over ships, and thus ended all foreign help for the South

*Politics and Power:* The Battle of Gettysburg and Grant's early military successes were the turning point of the war. Before, there had been no major Union victories—the closest was Antietam, but that was more of a stalemate than a true victory by the North, who simply kept their ground. Gettysburg stopped Lee similar to at Antietam, and its "Pickett's Charge" was a powerful last-attempt for the South to try to win the battle and advance into the North, but it failed, and the South never recovered militarily from it. Grant's land victories and Farragut's sea victories boosted Northern morale and power, and the South steadily went into decline and didn't win any major battles from then on. The border states and the Mississippi River Valley were secure in the hands of the North, keeping the Confederacy limited in power mostly in the Deep South and Virginia— after Sherman's march, their control lessened even more.

#### Sherman Scorches Georgia

- General Grant was moved to east Tennessee to besiege Chattanooga
  - The siege was successful, and he also had some successful battles in neighboring areas
  - Grant was thus made general in chief of the U.S. army
- General William Tecumseh Sherman was put in charge of taking over Georgia
  - He was ruthless, practiced "total war" strategy
    - The South hated him, called him "Sherman the Brute"
    - Ruthlessness worsened by the low discipline of his army, and because they went through South Carolina and Georgia, who were the first seceders and therefore were believed to be the causers of this conflict
  - He burned the capital city of Atlanta (September 1864)
  - He marched through open country for 250 miles with 60,000 men, leaving his supply base, and ruthlessly ravaged the land, known as Sherman's March
    - 60 miles of country and cities had been destroyed
    - Cities were burned and railroad ties were heated up and bent
    - He also destroyed supplies for the Confederates and meant to demoralize them
  - Georgia had taken Savannah
    - Presented it as a Christmas present to President Lincoln
  - He went into South Carolina, burned its capital city of Columbia
  - By the end of the war, he was pillaging North Carolina as well

*Culture and Society:* Sherman's insensitive pillaging of cities and towns is reminiscent of the American Revolution and guerilla warfare, or the uncivil beating of Senator Charles Sumner by Congressman Brooks—the people went at all odds to achieve physical, military leverage. There was no talk of diplomacy or fair fighting: Sherman went through with many soldiers and victoriously took all of the towns he encountered, burning every one. In hindsight, this "total war" strategy was very ruthless and seemed dictatorial and characteristic of a militaristic regime—which portrayed the North and their

military as a brute—but at the time Sherman believed that it was the only way that the war was to be won, practically. During the war, niceties were not necessarily practiced—in terms of the war and battles, both sides wanted victory, no matter how. This was a sort of societal theme that persisted from the time of Bleeding Kansas—the incivility of Sumner’s accusations, of Brook’s beatings, of Brown’s killings, and of the illegitimate initial elections of Kansas and secondary capital in Topeka warranted this extreme violence by creating a sense of cultural desperation that persisted throughout the Civil War, especially in battle.

#### The Politics of War

- The Republican party initially had some debate over who should be their presidential candidate for the election of 1864
  - Factions in the party and the creation of the Congressional Committee on the Conduct of the War, which consisted mostly of radical Republicans who didn’t believe in expanded presidential power during wartime, challenged Lincoln as a presidential candidate
  - Northern Democrats also threatened the Union
    - However, they were linked with the seceders in the South and generally looked down upon
    - After Douglas died shortly after the war started, the Northern Democrats split because of a lack of leader
      - There were “War Democrats” who sided with Lincoln and wanted war
      - There were “Peace Democrats” who went against the war effort
      - There were the Copperheads, who also went against the war effort but actively sabotaged the Northern war effort by political attacks
        - They attacked the idea of the draft and of emancipation
        - Congressman Clement L. Vallandigham was a prominent copperhead, called the war “wicked and cruel”
          - Eventually he was convicted of treasonable offenses, was evicted, and then tried to run for governor in Ohio but failed
          - Edward Everett Hale was inspired by Vallandigham, wrote a book called *The Man Without a Country*, a popular book in the North that helped increase loyalty to the Union that was about the Aaron Burr conspiracy of 1806 (which was similar to Vallandigham’s cries for insurgency)

#### The Election of 1864

- Lincoln and the Republicans sided with the War Democrats to form the Union Party
  - Lincoln’s vice president was Andrew Johnson, a War Democrat that meant to ensure the War Democrat’s loyalty to the Union party

- Lincoln's running slogan was "Don't swap horses in the middle of a river" — good practical and symbolic advice (don't change your mind in the middle of war, signifying that he should continue with the war effort as before)
- Factions accused Lincoln of "lacking force, of being overready to compromise, of not having won the war, and of having shocked many sensitive souls by his ill-timed and earthy jokes"
- General McClellan was nominated by the Democrats
  - The Democrats denounced the war as a failure but McClellan disagreed
- Although re-election for Lincoln looked unlikely at first, the victories by Farragut in Alabama, Sherman in Georgia, and General Sheridan in Virginia
- Many Northern soldiers cast their votes as well
- Lincoln won by a wide margin with electoral votes, but only 55% in popular vote
  - The defeat of the Democrats in the North greatly decreased the political power of the South — McClellan and the Northern Democrats were the last chance to reconcile or to keep slavery

*American and National Identity:* Despite the military struggle in the nation, a distinctly democratic election system still was underwrought to elect the new president in 1864. The two-party system, party platforms and debates, factions within parties, and campaigning and mudslinging still occurred in the North when the election season came around. The fact that the South lacked this rich assortment of democratic aspects, and therefore its democracy was weak. It was perhaps the very idea of democracy that was one of the most powerful aspects of the North, which still gave people the right to vote and participate in government, no matter what ordeal it was going through; therefore, it was more desirable to fight for the Union and protect its democracy than to fight for the seceding Confederacy, which lacked the strong political system that the North had.

#### Grant Outlasts Lee

- Grant replaced Meade, who had not chased Lee at Gettysburg
  - Grant's strategy was to attack all of the Confederate armies simultaneously so that they could not help each other out
  - Grant underwent the Wilderness Campaign in Virginia, losing about 50,000 men as he marched through the wilderness to Richmond, and Lee lost about as many in proportion
  - Grant took a frontal assault to Cold Harbor, a strong Southern fort, and got many soldiers killed very quickly
    - Grant did what he had to win; Lee was retreating, and therefore he had to follow him into harsh territory
- There were brief peace talks between Lincoln and peace commissioners, but Lincoln wanted unity and emancipation, but the Southerners wanted independence
- The war ended when Grant captured Richmond and captured Lee's army at the Appomattox Courthouse (Virginia, April 1865)
  - Grant gave generous terms of surrender

#### The Martyrdom of Lincoln

- On Good Friday, John Wilkes Booth shot Lincoln in Ford's Theater in Washington D.C., and Lincoln died shortly thereafter
  - This was April 14, 1865, only five days after the war had ended
- Some Southerners cheered for Lincoln's death, but this gradually faded
  - People began to realize that Lincoln's more vindictive treatment of the soldiers after the war would have been the best way to help the nation heal after the war
- Andrew Johnson who was "hot-tempered and impetuous," was very unlike Lincoln and likely put the nation into a lot more trouble than Lincoln would have if he had lived

*American and National Identity:* The surrender of the Confederacy was a great surprise to the Confederates. Lincoln had purposed the resolution to be without bloodshed or hate; General Grant and his men saluted the Confederate soldiers as they walked home. The fact that the Union was still willing to consider the South part of their same nation and offer them this respect is amazing, and it persists throughout American history as a testament to unity, to its title "the *United States of America*." The nation was joined again, albeit unhappily— however, this was not uncommon with the disputes over slavery before the war, but now the war and the conflict over slavery had ended. American identity was thus united again— injured from the war, but healing into one cohesive group.

#### The Aftermath of the Nightmare

- The Civil War killed 600,000 men and injured at least 400,000 more
  - 2% of the nation's population was dead (equivalent of 6,000,000 in today's population)
  - As many people died in this war as in every other American war combined
- Cost of the war was about \$15 billion
  - Doesn't include "continuing expenses, such as pensions and interest on the national debt," as well as the emotional discomfort for millions of Americans
- States' righters lost power and the national government emerged as the main source of power
- Showed the durability of the American democracy
  - The British passed the Reform Bill of 1867, in which Britain became a democracy, only two years after the Civil War
- Slavery was eradicated and a good start towards more equal rights

*Work, Exchange, and Technology:* After the war, changes in the economic system affected the American system. The slaves were gone, leaving Southern plantations unmanned and therefore the Southern economy crippled. The nation was heavily in debt, with \$15 billion gone. This was in addition to the political gaps over the rights of (now freed) African Americans and the emotional trauma that was to be overcome. It is important to realize that the war not only had political (idealistic) and social effects, but that it was a practical matter and resulted in the heavy debt of the nation. Although industry in the North had increased, the economic gap between North and South widened and threatened to rip open another hole in national unity. Thus, healing needed to come not only politically, but economically, by repairing damages and repaying debt.