The Civil War Notes

Section 1 – The War Begins

* Abraham Lincoln took the Presidential oath of Office on March 4, 1861
  + In his address, President Lincoln insisted that the Union was indivisible and that secession was unconstitutional.
  + He called Southerners “fellow countrymen” and begged them to listen to reason.
  + He warned that the Federal Government would “hold, occupy, and possess: all of its property in the states that seceded (forts, post offices, & military supply houses).
* In 1861, many of the seceding states took over operations of federal facilities in their states because they didn’t want the government of outsiders conducting business on their soil.

The Path to War:

* Fort Sumter – a federal fort in the South located in the harbor of South Carolina
  + When the fort ran short of supplies, Major Robert Anderson sent a request to President Lincoln for more supplies.
  + The Confederacy would not allow supply shipments to arrive at Fort Sumter.
  + The Southerners viewed President Lincoln’s orders to send supply ships to the fort as an act of war
  + The Confederacy began to bomb the fort and continued to bomb it for 34 hours straight.
  + Major Anderson surrendered the fort on day two of the bombing.
  + **The attack on Fort Sumter and its takeover by the Confederacy began the Civil War.**

**The Basics:**

* President of the United States of American = Abraham Lincoln
* South Carolina was the first state to secede.
* The South formed The Confederate States of America.
* President of the Confederacy = Jefferson Davis

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| Causes of the Civil War:   * Economic and social differences between the North & the South * Sectionalism and Emotions * States’ rights vs. Federal rights * Slavery * The Abolitionist movement * The Election of Abraham Lincoln * Protective tariffs that the South thought would hurt their agricultural economy |

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| The North | The South |
| * Industrial Economy with factories * The Northern soil and climate favored small farms only – subsistence farms * Large cities * Slavery had nearly died out – the majority of the labor was provided by immigrants * Transportation was primarily by railroad * The Whigs/Republicans were the primary political groups in the North * Most children attended some form of public or private education | * Agriculture based economy – crops like tobacco and cotton supported the economy * The fertile soil and warm climate made the South idea for large farms and plantations * Few large cities * 2/3rd of Southerners did NOT own slaves but slavery was tied to the economy and culture of the South * Slaves provided the labor on the large plantations * Transportation was primarily by water (rivers) between the few larger cities * There were very few train tracks in the South * The Democratic party was the primary political group in the South * Southern children generally spent less time in formal school than their counterparts in the North |
| The North | The South |
| The Eastern & Midwest States:   * Kansas * Minnesota * Iowa * Wisconsin * Illinois * Ohio * Pennsylvania * New York * Vermont * New Hampshire * Maine * Massachusetts * Rhode Island * Connecticut * New Jersey * West Virginia * Missouri (union slave state) * Kentucky (Union slave state) * Maryland (Union slave state) * Delaware (Union slave state) | The States:   * South Carolina * North Carolina * Virginia * Georgia * Florida * Alabama * Mississippi * Louisiana * Texas * Arkansas * Tennessee |
| Border States: (States that were directly north and south of the line that divided the Union and the Confederacy.   * Virginia * North Carolina * Arkansas * Tennessee * West Virginia * Delaware * Maryland * Kentucky * Missouri | |

Securing the Border States:

* President Lincoln did not want to make the abolition of slavery a goal of the war. His main goal was to reunite the country
* All of the border states permitted slavery
* West Virginia Was organized when Western Virginians didn’t want to secede with their government in Virginia
* **It was important for President Lincoln to keep Maryland in the Union because it was so close to the United States Capital of Washington D.C. Virginia, D.C.’s southern neighbor had already seceded and if Maryland followed, the capital would be surrounded by the “enemy”.**

A Divided Nation: At the beginning of the war neither side was prepared to fight. Both sides thought it would be a short war.

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| North | South |
| Advantages:   * Plenty of resources * Large population * Plenty of food, ammunition, weapons, and other needed supplies * Plenty of money to fund the fight * Vast railroad transportation for moving troops and supplies * Factories could switch from producing goods to producing war supplies   Disadvantages:   * Fought to reestablish the Union which was less emotional than the South’s motivation * Many Northerners did not think ending slavery was important * The North would have to invade the South to wage war – they would be away from home * If its troops lost the desire to fight, it would lose the war.   Strategy:   1. Blockade Confederate ports and cut off supplies from Europe 2. Take control of the Mississippi to split the South & prevent troop and supply movement 3. Capture the Capital of Richmond to seize the Confederate government   Main Leaders:   1. President Lincoln   President Lincoln had originally asked southerner Robert E. Lee to lead the Union Army but Lee, though he was against slavery, did not want to fight against his family and friends.   1. Ulysses S. Grant became the Union leader 2. George McClellan | Advantages:   * Fighting for their independence on their “home field” * There were fighting to preserve their way of life – emotional cause and desire * Southerners were skilled with rifles and horses * Southerners had a tradition of military service and were good soldiers * Agricultural region without communication and big cities   Disadvantages:   * Poorly equipped * Few factories to make weapons and supplies * Few railroads to move troops and supplies * Smaller population than the North * Would not use slaves as soldiers * Could not raise a large army * The border with the union and the coast were open to attack   Strategy:   1. Fight a defensive war 2. Hold out against enemy attack 3. Ask Europeans (Great Britain) for supplies   Main Leaders:   1. President Jefferson Davis 2. General Albert Johnson led western forces 3. General Robert E. Lee led the eastern forces 4. General Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson |

Section 2 – The War in the East

The Fighting Begins:

The First Battle of Bull Run –

* **Rebels** (The Confederate Army) vs. **Yankees** (The Union Army)
* July 21, 1861 near Manassas, Virginia next to a stream called Bull Run
* 31,000 Union troops against 35,000 Confederate troops
* People came from surrounding areas to watch the battle. They brought picnic baskets, blankets, and binoculars. They thought that the Union army would easily overpower the Confederate forces.
* General Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson of the Confederacy and his group of Virginians held their ground. Jackson earned the nickname “Stonewall” because he stood like a stone wall against the Yankees.
* The Confederates were better organized and had access to reinforcements.
* The Union got tired and retreated - through the crowd of picnickers.

During the beginning of the war, the South had many victories and seemed to have the ability to get the Union to retreat.

The War at Sea:

* The Union Navy controlled the sea.
* They would blockade the coast and **commandeer** (seize) Southern boats and ships.
* **Blockade runners** – fast ships that outran the federal ships and slipped through the blockade
* The South captured a Union ship, fitted it with iron armor and renamed it the Virginia. This ship was called an **ironclad** because of its new iron plates.

The Battle of Antietam:

* The Union army found a copy of Confederate battle plans and was able to use the information to their advantage.
* September 17, 1862 – near Sharpsburg, Maryland the battle of Antietam occurred
* It was the bloodiest single day of fighting in the entire war.
* The battle ended in a draw (tie) but the Union is credited with a victory

The Emancipation Proclamation:

* The Union victory at Antietam led President Lincoln to issue the Emancipation Proclamation
* The proclamation:
  + Declared slaves in seceded states as free
  + Discouraged Great Britain from helping the South
  + Gave the North support from anti-slavery groups
  + Turned the Civil War from a battle about states’ rights into a battle about slavery.
* The Proclamation DID NOT:
  + Actually free any slaves
  + Apply to lands in federal control
  + Did not get the South to free the slaves

African American Soldiers:

* Until the very end of the war, the South did not allow African Americans to join the military
* African Americans were used to cook. clean, dig tranches, and drive wagons
* The Emancipation Proclamation permitted African Americans in the Union Army
* 200,000 African Americans served in the Union Navy and 180,000 served in the Union Army.
  + 2/3 of them had been slaves in the South.

The Battle of Gettysburg:

* Robert E Lee’s army was encouraged by their recent victories at Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville
* Lee decided to invade the North again and bring a swift end to the war
* On Lee’s way, there was an accidental clash between Northern and Southern units at Gettysburg that ended up turning into a bloody battle that was the turning point of the war.
* The battle lasted 3 days and the Union won but there were heavy casualties on both sides.
* The battle weakened the Confederate forces and changed the direction the war had been heading.

The Gettysburg Address:

* After the Battle of Gettysburg, President Lincoln attended the dedication ceremony of the cemetery built to honor all the dead at Gettysburg.
* Lincoln gave a speech that lasted only 3 minutes but one that has become one of the greatest and most famous speeches in U.S. History.
* He reminded Americans that their nation was “…conceived in Liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal”.
* He finished with: “We here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain…and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from Earth”.

Section 3 – The War in the West

Taking the Mississippi Valley:

* In 1862, the Union Army was able to take Fort Henry in Tennessee and Fort Donnellson on the Cumberland River.
* 13,000 Confederate troops surrendered to Union forces and the Union victory broke the Confederate line of defense in the Mississippi Valley.
* This opened the South up for invasion by the Union forces.
* By the end of 1862, Union armies occupied all of western Tennessee and had moved south into Mississippi.
* Grant wanted to capture Vicksburg, a major Confederate supply center. It took him over a year to do it and it was only accomplished after a siege (blockade) of the city.
* Vicksburg surrendered to the Union on July 4, 1863 and did not celebrate the National 4th of July holiday until 1944 because it was the same day as the surrender of Vicksburg to the Union.
* The Union had much success in the west and by 1863 had accomplished two of its three war goals: cut off European supplies and control the Mississippi River, and split the Confederacy, taking rivers and railways.

Section 4 – Behind the Lines

* The Civil War was the largest war ever fought on the North American continent.
* More Americans lost their lives in the Civil War than in any other conflict in the history of the United States. More Americans died during this war than all other wars combined. There were more than 600,000 casualties.
* About half of those who died in the Civil War died from disease.

Wartime Government:

* There was much political unrest during the war
* Many Northerners criticized Lincoln for not making the end of slavery a goal of the war
* Many Republicans (Lincoln’s own party) were critical of him
* There was a group of radical Democrats called **Copperheads:** who wanted the war to end even if that meant welcoming the South back and allowing slavery or letting the slave states leave the Union. They just wanted the war to end at any price.
* Lincoln suspended the right of **habeas corpus:** the guarantee a person who is arrested has the right to appear before a judge on a court of law.
* During this war time, the federal government implemented income tax for the first time.
* The South had its own problems, including those who opposed the war, those who refused to recognize the Confederate government, and discontent with Jefferson Davis’ strong central government.

**Raising the Armies:**

* In the beginning, both sides relied on volunteers to fight
* By 1863, both sides had enforced **conscription:** drafting of men for military service. This was because of the large number of casualties and the lack of volunteers. This was the first time in the nation’s history that a military draft was used.
* In the North, the Enrollment Act required that men between the ages of 20 and 45 join the military for three years.
* There was a **quota:** a fixed number required from each state
* A man could get out of serving by paying $300 or by hiring a substitute to take his place
* The draft was unpopular on both sides and both sides were plagued by the desertion of soldiers

**Hardships of War:**

* Wounded soldiers faced the horrors of crude medical care. Few doctors understood that germs spread infection.
* Doctors did boil medical instruments that were used in surgery.
* If a wounded person survived an operation, there were nurses who tried to nurse them back to health.
* More than half the people who died in the Civil War died from disease not from battle injuries.
* In both the North and the South women played an important role in taking care of wounded and dying soldiers.
* Women also volunteered to prepare food, knit socks, make clothing, and a few were even spies.

Section 5 – Surrender at Appomattox

Wearing down the South:

* By the beginning of 1864, the southern railroad system was in ruins and their army lacked supplies.
* The northern armies had the advantage.
* General Grant had been promoted to the commander on chief of the Union forces
  + He planned to wage **total war**: the destruction of southern resources, armies, and civilians
  + He targeted the southern cities of Richmond and Atlanta and ordered General William T. Sherman to destroy the farmlands that supplied food to the Confederate army.
  + In Sherman’s March to the Sea campaign, he destroyed everything in his path. Sherman and his army burned Atlanta to the ground and destroyed the main railroad line.
  + Sherman than preceded to march to the Georgia coast – foraging and destroying as he went. Sherman’s troops burned a strip 60 miles wide as they went.
  + Sherman was one of the most hated men in the South.
  + Slaves greeted Sherman and his troops along the way.

The Election of 1864:

* A Presidential Election took place during the war
  + The Republicans nominated President Lincoln for reelection while the Democrats nominated George McClellan – the general who Lincoln had removed from command twice.
  + Lincoln did not expect to win but Sherman’s capture of Atlanta and McClellan’s refusal to support a peace platform secured a victory for Lincoln.

Ending the War:

* As Sherman marched to Atlanta, Grant’s forces fought Lee’s troops at three places. In all three battles, there were enormous losses on both sides with the bigger toll being on Grant’s side.
* The two armies battled for Petersburg, Virginia. Grant realized the only way to win was to place a siege on Lee’s troops and wait for them to run out of supplies and soldiers.
* The siege lasted 9 months.
* Grant finally broke through Lee’s lines on April 2, 1865 and the Confederate government evacuated the nearby capital of Richmond.
* On April 9, 1865, Grant and Lee met at the little settlement of Appomattox Court House in Virginia and Lee surrendered to Grant.
* Eventually, all other Confederate generals surrendered and Confederate President Jefferson Davis fled, eventually being captured in Georgia.
* The war officially ended on May 26, 1865, more than a month after Lee surrendered his troops.

Abraham Lincoln Assassinated:

* President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated (killed) on April 14, 1865 by John Wilkes Booth while the President and his wife attended a play at Ford’s Theater.

Reasons for Union victory in the Civil War:

1. More soldiers
2. More money to fund the war effort
3. More factories to make war supplies
4. Better government – more experience
5. More miles of Railroad for supplies and troop transport