

The Civil War and Reconstruction 1861-1865: A New Birth of Freedom

Section 1: Introduction to the Civil War

1.0: Introduction

This course focuses on the political, social and economic changes that took place during the Civil War, but to begin with we will take a broad look at the military choices and strategies of the two antagonists; how they evolved and the influence they would have on the course and outcome of the War. Also, we consider the sweeping assumption (made by some historians) that the Civil War should be considered "the first modern war".

1A: The Union and the Confederacy

1.1 The First Modern War?

- ❖ Soldiers mostly young men – probably 3 million fought at one time or other out of a population in the North and South of about 30 million
- ❖ Most recent evidence suggests 700,000-720,000 died, and that is more Americans than all other conflicts combined.
- ❖ Horrendous medical care and hygiene conditions meant many did not die on the battlefield but in the aftermath of injury or sickness.
- ❖ Sometimes referred to as “the first modern war”
 - mass armies intent on total victory (i.e. no compromise) using weapons created through the Industrial Revolution – powerful and deadly
 - but it is also a war of one society against another – the war can only be won when one society chooses not to fight, when an economy collapses
 - and that is why this war can never be interpreted from just a military point of view

1.2: The Two Antagonists

- ❖ In terms of population, resources, infrastructure, etc. the North had an immense advantage – victory is assured one would think
- ❖ But like in the war of independence where the British had more of everything, where the colonies rarely won on the battlefield, but the war ended because popular support in Britain evaporated. Vietnam is another example.

- ❖ What advantages did the South have?
 - they were fighting for independence – this galvanizes popular support
 - fighting on their own territory - home ground advantage
 - & also meant the supply routes out of the North for the Union army was complicated
 - also the South is very big & had to be conquered – the Confederates fought out of the defensive position
 - also, the South had few major cities so the North struggled to find offensive options and were often countered by confederate guerilla like activity in the countryside.
 - Some have even argued that in fact all the advantages lay in the South
- ❖ What then was the defining attribute? Some (many) would say political leadership – not resources, military assets. And the North had Lincoln (& the South Jefferson Davis). Therein lay the difference.
- ❖ The important point is: the result was NOT inevitable.

1.3: Military Unpreparedness

- ❖ The Union was especially disorganized and unprepared for war – there had been a series of weak presidents, the governmental structures accordingly; there was no federal banking or finance system to channel finances; no tax base, disparate rail systems, no reliable maps, no statistics.
- ❖ In terms of the military:
 - The very size was a problem – the military did not have the command structures nor the resource management to cope with such an immense army.
 - The regular army in 1861 had 14,000 men – conscription came in 1863 in the North (and 1862 in the South)
 - The Union navy was also poorly placed to be effective
 - a blockade would need to cover the confederacy coastline - 4000 miles in length with many river outlets, bays, etc.
 - at the beginning of the war it had 90 vessels – half steam, half sail – and many were outside of America
- ❖ Just as important, is the mental unpreparedness of the military leaders of both sides – they had been brought up with traditional ideas about warfare, whereby they are often short term affairs fought by professionals and won on the basis of strategic maneuver and occupation. Many of the generals were skeptical of the abilities of “citizen soldiers”
- ❖ In 1861 there were 900 officers in the US army – one-third were allowed to resign and join the confederacy (!) Many saw war to be something to be fought separate to the social and economic questions (begs the question: what exactly did they think they were fighting for?!)

1B: The Nature of Warfare

1.4: Technology of War

- ❖ All the officers had been trained at West Point and their training emphasized
 - short, rapid attacks
 - the methods of Baron Henri Jomini – small army, offensive tactics, almost chivalric approach.
- ❖ These methods were made obsolete, not just by the size and non-professional structure of the armies, but also in the wake of the technological advancements.
 - railroads become a major factor
 - for troop movement
 - as a target of attack – especially railroad junctions.
 - telegraph – instantaneous transmission of information
 - iron-clad ships
 - photography – made visible to the public the horrors of the war
- ❖ But the most important technological development was the modern rifle and bullet
 - grooves in the barrel to spin the bullet
 - the bullet conical shape
 - a much more deadly weapon than the musket (the musket had a max. range of about 50 yards) – much greater range (approx. 250 yards) and velocity
 - battles were therefore fought from trenches (as in WW 1 50 odd years later)
- ❖ In this new warfare the party in the defensive position (& that is the Confederate army) was able to better adapt and had the upper hand
- ❖ And it is this brand of warfare (fought at a distance) that made the armies into mass killing machines and led to the massive death toll (400,000 Union; 300,000 Confed.) – incl. injured perhaps 2 million. (e.g. Antietam Sept. 20, 1862 4,800 deaths i.e. the bloodiest single day in American history.)

1.5: Civil War Strategies

- ❖ The Confederate strategy was basically defensive
- ❖ Their commander, General Robert E. Lee,
 - was mostly concerned with the battles in the east, especially his native Virginia, ignoring possibilities elsewhere
 - a brutal man and slave owner
 - a great tactician on the battlefield but not a good coordinator of the big picture

- ❖ Why didn't the Confederacy fight more of a guerrilla war?
 - Such requires the support of civilian population
 - but slaves still accounted for a majority of the population and they in fact were able to sometimes sabotage Confederate plans and inform the Union insurgents.
 - they made a mistake of moving their new capital from Montgomery to Richmond (only 90 miles from Washington) and then had to concentrate too much effort on holding it
- ❖ And the Union?
 - also spent too long fighting for Richmond and individual places instead of a simultaneous line of attack
 - the generals took the traditionalist line of territorial gain at all costs
 - held off when it came to slavery or the society
- ❖ But Lincoln was a quick learner – recognized that a cordon offense would be more effective and that the superior manpower had to be used to their advantage.
- ❖ Only in 1864 with Ulysses S. Grant did Lincoln have a general who shared his strategic vision.
- ❖ Lincoln also understood the importance of the border states that had not seceded - & that they must not be given any reason to do so – he therefore moved cautiously in terms of the slavery issue
 - and this is just one example of how Lincoln was able to blend his political and military objectives
 - but he also knew that he had to satisfy the northern radicals

1.6: Grant, Sherman, and Total War

- ❖ Not until 1864 does the Union have the two leaders that would turn the tide – Ulysses S. Grant and William T. Sherman
- ❖ Grant
 - went to West Point but did not hold with the traditional military practices taught there
 - had little interest in military theory and literature
 - possessed incredible self-reliance, self-control, attentiveness
 - he had an extraordinary power of memory and visualization
- ❖ Sherman
 - lived in the South before the war
 - suffered from depression
 - knew how to focus on breaking Southern morale (Atlanta to the Sea campaign)

[edX - ColumbiaX: HIST1.1x The Civil War and Reconstruction - 1861-1865: A New Birth of Freedom](#)

- ❖ Both knew that the fight had to be taken into the midst of society – that is, a total war.
- ❖ The Civil War shaped modern America
 - a new birth of freedom
 - destroyed institutionalized slavery
 - the rise of the powerful national state
- ❖ What it should have done but didn't, is put pay to the idea of exceptionalism, that is, of America as being the only nation governed by consent. America of course is governed by power.

Section 2: The First Year of the War

2.0: Introduction

We first look, beginning with the attack on Fort Sumter, at the first year of the Civil War – the initial response from both sides, the development of military strategy and the standing and of the four border slave States that remained in the Union. This latter was a priority of Lincoln's government in 1861 and, as slaves began to seek refuge behind Union lines, the issue of slavery and emancipation as intricately entwined in the conflict reentered the public arena.

2A: Securing the Border

2.1: The War Begins

- ❖ The Fort Sumter attack galvanized support for the Federal Government
 - Douglas went to Washington and pledged the support of Northern Democrats for Lincoln – should be noted Douglas died soon after without a successor as leader to unite his party and the Northern Democrats began to splinter.
 - The abolitionists (including the so-called Garrisonians who actually had pleaded for a secession of the North so as to totally disassociate from slavery) even rallied behind the war effort in the interests of the Union.
 - Emancipation begins by some to be touted as a weapon to be used in the War – others oppose this
- ❖ Lincoln declares an insurrection and calls up 75,000 troops for three months – an indication that the thinking was that the war would be limited in time and scope – and declares a blockade of southern ports.
- ❖ and declares a blockade of southern ports – an act contrary to international law (to blockade a port within your own country) – and in doing so acknowledges the South as a separate entity and a belligerent power
- ❖ the four upper states of Arkansas, Tennessee, North Carolina and Virginia secede in the wake of the call up of troops – unifying then the greater part of the South.

2.2: Lincoln and the Border

- ❖ When Virginia secedes from the Union the western counties (now West Virginia) secede from Virginia – a mountainous area with little slavery (only about 5%), poor and white and more dependent economically on Ohio and Pennsylvania than on the rest of Virginia, a dislike of the Virginia plantation-owning elite. Virginia repudiates their secession.
- ❖ This raises the question of self-determination. Is it regional? And if, then how regional – state wise? many state wise? county wise?
- ❖ Four slave states, the so-called Border States, remain in the Union – Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky and Missouri – and they become pivotal to the actions of the Union and Confederacy during the first years of the war.

- ❖ Lincoln must consider the conservative interests of the border states alongside those of the more radical elements of the North. In the first two years of his Presidency, Lincoln must act as a unifying broker between these two factions.
- ❖ Lincoln sees he must concentrate to a large degree on the weakest link. Radical Republicans will support the war anyway (and more stridently) but the loyalty of the border states is very tenuous
- ❖ Most of the black population of Maryland and Delaware are free, Kentucky and Missouri have a more slaves but a lot less than in states of the Deep South. There are industrial cities (like Baltimore and St. Louis) that are dependent on easy access to the North. There is a much higher immigrant population. They are of course racist states – they don't want to see an end to slavery, nor the freeing of slaves.
- ❖ The border states have a white population of 2.5 million which is about a half of the population of the Confederacy – in numbers alone their secession would be seen as a defining moment.
- ❖ Lincoln sees Kentucky (his birthplace and that of his wife) as key – the Governor is not a secessionist but nor does he want to go to war against the South
 - so, they declare neutrality & do not call up troops and refuse to participate in battle
 - Lincoln can not accept the opt out publicly, but privately agrees that they will not force Union control upon them as long as they do nothing to assist the Confederacy
 - Through 1861 both sides though are trying to influence them – the funneling of arms to pro-Unionists; the stirring up of secessionist sentiments by the Confederates.
 - But the Confederacy sends troops into Kentucky in the fall of 1861, breaching their neutrality, and Kentucky responds by throwing their lot behind the Union. The danger of Kentucky's secession fades.
- ❖ Kentucky though is representative of the notion of “brother vs. brother” – about 100,000 fought for the Union and 40,000 for the Confederates – many families had soldiers on different sides (e.g. Sen. Crittenden had one son as a major-general in the Union army and another as the same in the Confederate army, Mary Lincoln had relatives on the Confederate side.)

2.3: Maryland, Missouri, West Virginia

- ❖ In Maryland, Lincoln took a harder stance
 - to counter saboteur and outlaw activity suspends the writ of habeas corpus
 - troops are sent in to occupy Maryland – almost a state of martial law
 - a new pro-Union government is elected (with Northern soldiers voting)
- ❖ Delaware is just a very small state bordering Maryland – if Maryland doesn't secede neither will they.
- ❖ Missouri is more problematic
 - has a significant pro-slavery population
 - was heavily involved in “Bleeding Kansas” – manipulating elections, militia activity
 - industrial city of St. Louis: large immigrant population (mostly German, anti-slavery)
 - they begin arming themselves – on both sides – very early. A civil war of sorts within Missouri is basically happening concurrent to the larger war.
 - Governmentally, Missouri is in Union hands – but they can not really govern!

- ❖ By the fall of 1861 the border states are governed by pro-Unionists and are not going to secede, but
 - the Unionists themselves are divided between pro-slavery and anti-slavery groups
 - as the federal government moves closer to abolition, the governments of these border states become more resistant and resentful
 - eventually allegiances will split, there are internal revolutions, and new people will come to power (e.g. slavery is abolished in Maryland by 1864)
- ❖ West Virginia, which actually doesn't become a state until 1863 – at first they declare themselves the legitimate government of Virginia, and this recognized by Lincoln
 - is strategically well placed – near Ohio and Pennsylvania, the east-west railroad link passes through
 - becomes the site of the first battle of the Civil War
 - the Governor of Virginia sends in troops to try to cut off the Baltimore and Ohio railroad line
 - and they are countered by Union troops led by George B. McClellan

2.4: Lincoln and Congress

- ❖ For three months from Sumter to 4th July 1861 and the calling of a special session of Congress, Lincoln runs the government alone – Congress does not meet, nor the judiciary, Lincoln appropriates funds alone, he calls up troops, suspends habeas corpus in Maryland, etc.
- ❖ Lincoln claims his actions to be valid and correct, as the Constitution does not take into consideration the situation faced – secession, civil war.
- ❖ Retroactively, Congress endorses and legitimizes the measures he has taken – with the exception of his habeas corpus suspension (that Lincoln continues with anyway!)
- ❖ Lincoln sends a message to the new Congress in which
 - he justifies the Northern position on the war and his actions
 - on the basis of the deeply held values of political democracy and equality of opportunity
 - he asked the question of how one is to balance the strength of the government against the liberties of the people
 - on the legality of his actions, he counters that (in his opinion) one law may have to be violated in the interests of holding up the greater edifice of law. (An argument used by many presidents in generations to come (& to this day) to justify the curbing of civil liberties at times of war)
- ❖ Lincoln makes the war into a world historical event – maintaining its significance goes beyond the particular to be about the very essence of a (any) government that offers people a fair chance in life and the opportunity to improve their circumstances.

2B: Seeking a Union Strategy

2.5: Bull Run and its Impact

- ❖ The first battle of real significance is the Battle of Bull Run in July, 1861.
 - Confederates called it the Battle of Manassas – Union named battles after the nearest river & Confederates after the nearest town
- ❖ Much of the war takes place in a 90 mile area approximately between Washington DC and Richmond, Virginia.
- ❖ Both armies are still untrained and unprepared for action but the commanding General in Washington, Irvin McDowell decides to enter Virginia and engage with the Confederate army
 - the two armies meet about 30 miles southwest of Washington at the small Manassas railroad junction
 - many hundreds of by-standers – wagons, picnics, politicians, tourists, etc. – are in attendance expecting just this one battle and war would be over!
 - firstly it is a stalemate, then Confed. reinforcements come and force the breaking of the Union line – the soldiers panic and run back to Washington! (And the crowd of spectators not far behind!)
 - July 21st 1861 – a debacle!
 - 800 people were killed – more than in any other battle the United States had fought.
- ❖ Despite their retreat, panic did not break out in the North, rather it heightened Union resolve -
 - to mobilize, to train, to coordinate
 - to realize the fragile geography of Washington DC & its necessary defense
 - leads to the Crittenden Resolution in Congress
 - which passes both Houses; basically stating that the war is not being fought on the grounds of interfering with the rights and institutions of the south (that is, slavery and the society that is built around it)
 - countered by a bill from Owen Lovejoy whereby fugitive slaves will not be returned (in defiance of the Fugitive Slave Act) – this passes the House, but does not go to the Senate.
 - there is the realization that this will not be a short war
- ❖ Lincoln calls up 500,000 troops to serve for three years
- ❖ In August, Congress passes the first Confiscation Act
 - which basically allows that slaves being used by the South for military purposes may be “confiscated” (as with any other property!)
 - and once seized by the Union army are to be freed
 - this is the first step towards emancipation

2.6: Beginnings of Emancipation

- ❖ As the Union begins its incursions into Virginia, slaves flee to find sanctuary behind Union lines – the internal disintegration of slavery begins
- ❖ The slaves understand that the war and the Union presence in a slave state changes the balance of power – and away from the plantation and slave owners
- ❖ Mostly the command and particularly their soldiers wanted nothing to do with rounding up fugitive slaves
- ❖ General Benjamin Butler at Fortress Monroe in Norfolk sets a precedent by not returning runaway slaves and getting approval from Washington to do so.
- ❖ Monroe becomes a place of refuge not just for slaves with a military purpose (contraband) but women and children and elderly slaves. Butler is not certain of their status but gives them work and pays them a wage – by 1862 this is the situation across the Union
- ❖ Firstly, this is the end of the Underground Railroad - escaped slaves no longer need to flee to Canada, sanctuary is to be had nearer at hand
- ❖ And secondly, this puts slavery on the national political agenda – policies to deal with the slaves' new circumstances have to be devised
 - the Confiscation Act is the first of these
 - the second in August 1861 comes when John C. Fremont, unable to unify Missouri, frees all slaves in the State, and rejects Lincoln's demand that he make his order compliant with the Confiscation Act, that is, freeing of slaves only for military purposes.
 - in the end Lincoln must rescind the order himself and make it compliant
 - amongst other things he feared the reaction of Kentucky - which must be held within the Union
 - what Fremont's actions do though is further emmesh the slave issue in the politics of war
- ❖ Another controversy was arose in November 1861 when the secretary of war, Samuel Cameron, called for the arming of black soldiers – again rejected by Lincoln, and replaced Cameron with Edwin Stanton

2.7: Lincoln, McClellan, Grant

- ❖ In November, 1861, the Union navy takes control of the Sea Islands off the South Carolina coast; the plantation owners who own residences there flee but the slaves refuse to – so now there were almost 10,000 slaves in one episode behind Union lines, and the need for a policy to regulate the situation is growing.
- ❖ Because they had only 1,800 slaves, Lincoln calls upon Delaware to be the first state to institute emancipation (a trial case, so to speak) and his plan to do so is pretty much the same as he is to stick to for the whole country during the next year
 - 1. it is to be gradual – could be until 1900
 - 2. monetary compensation to the slave owners, i.e. the federal government will buy out the owners as they would do so for any other property, and
 - 3. colonization – for instance, to Africa, Central America - will be strongly encouraged

[edX - ColumbiaX: HIST1.1x The Civil War and Reconstruction - 1861-1865: A New Birth of Freedom](#)

- ❖ Delaware declines! Lincoln continues to promote his idea during the next year, but it becomes increasingly clear that if he can not successfully sell it to a small State with few slaves like Delaware, he would have little chance with South Carolina or Mississippi, etc., in the aftermath of the war. Meanwhile the War continues.
- ❖ General McClellan had built up the Potomac army into a fighting force, but he was disinclined to fight, rather, took the stance that it was better to maneuver the Confederates into a position whereby they would recognize that they had no chance, and then a peace would be negotiated whereby the Union could be preserved and the slavery society of the South held in tact.
- ❖ At the same time, to the West in southern Illinois, Ulysses S. Grant emerges. In February 1862 using Union gunboats he attacks and overruns two Confederate forts on the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers. This important victory opens up Tennessee to the penetration of the Union army
- ❖ Under orders from Lincoln, McClellan moves into Virginia to confront Confederate forces; Richmond is within the Union's grasp.

Section 3: The Coming of Emancipation

3.0: Introduction

Together with the preservation of the American nation, the abolition of slavery was the most overriding consequence of the Civil War. The coming of Emancipation was the result of the mass transformations brought on by the war – the enormous military, political, societal and moral pressures as they played out and influenced the Lincoln administration. And the Emancipation Proclamation itself, whilst not immediately ending slavery, transformed the whole trajectory of the war and made it the overt and public aim of Lincoln and the Union.

3A: Why Emancipation?

3.1: Introduction to Emancipation

- ❖ What is the right time frame in which to consider the end of slavery?
 - the Civil War? or
 - the so-called “**long emancipation**”
 - beginning with the revolution
 - the end of slavery in the North
 - the runaway slave factor
 - the abolitionist movements
 - And what about the geographical, global framework?
 - the abolition in the British Empire,
 - in the new nations that became independent from Spain in the 19th century
- ❖ The problem with the “long” theory is that one can be led into accepting a teleological position – that is, an inexorable path towards the end of slavery – but figures alone tell us this wasn’t the case in America – again – in 1860 there were more slaves in the United States than at any other time! Slavery was not “dying out”!
- ❖ Between 1834 (British emancipation begins) and 1866 (abolition in Brazil) some 6 million slaves were freed, the greatest proportion in the US (about 4 million). The proportion of slaves to white people though was considerably smaller than in many places.
- ❖ In the aftermath of the war and emancipation, only the United States attempted a period of **radical reconstruction** – that is, a means of incorporating the freed slaves as equal members of society.
- ❖ Slavery does not end on **January 1st 1863** but that is the pivot of the story of the end of slavery.

3.2: McClellan and the Peninsular Campaign

- ❖ In the East, and in Spring 1862, under pressure from Lincoln and the North, McClellan embarks on the Peninsular Campaign
- ❖ His army goes heads for Richmond but by ferry via the Potomac and Chesapeake Bay, Norfolk and to Fortress Monroe with the intent of attacking Richmond from the south and east
- ❖ He marches up the peninsular with his huge army of 100,000
 - but he is slow and (overly) cautious – besieging little towns and outposts on his way – and allowed the Confederates time to consolidate
- ❖ Finally the Seven Days Campaign between the Union army and that of the newly appointed Confederate commander, Robert E. Lee.
- ❖ McClellan procrastinated, greatly exaggerated the opposing forces, and in the end the battle was deadlocked. McClellan got within five miles of Richmond before retreating back down to Harrison's Landing near Norfolk.
- ❖ McClellan blamed the government - lack of trained troops, lack of support; on having to leave troops to guard Washington DC against a potential attack by the Confederates
- ❖ In July 1862 Lincoln visits McClellan at Harrison's Landing, and McClellan gives him a letter demanding
 - the war be fought with high Christian principles
 - that civilians must under no circumstances be involved
 - that property (including slaves) could not be confiscated
- ❖ McClellan was duly ordered back to Washington – his short tenure a failure – he didn't understand the politics of war, he was not anti-slavery nor saw the relationship of slavery as an issue to the war
- ❖ Meanwhile in the West, in mid-1862 the Union momentum had also stalled. In April they had taken New Orleans
 - from the Gulf and up the Mississippi making use of their naval superiority
 - New Orleans interesting in that it was the largest Confederate city but it had significant pro-Union sentiment – immigrants, merchants, a significant free black population (because of an agreement made with Napoleon in the Louisiana Purchase)
- ❖ Almost concurrently Grant finds himself surprised by a Confederate attack that leads to the battle of Shiloh north in Tennessee
 - first truly horrendous battle of the war
 - immense casualties – 2000 dead and 10000 wounded or missing – over two days
 - Grant manages to hold out
 - but advancement is halted
- ❖ These two setbacks – both in the East and West – indicate that this is a war that cannot be won with traditional warfare and paves the way for emancipation as the means to do so in a different way.

3.3: Lincoln, Congress, the Slaves

- ❖ Question: Who freed the slaves? Answer: Everybody freed the slaves.
 - Lincoln, Congress, the army, the slaves themselves
 - All had something to do with the end of slavery
 - [may I suggest also: public opinion]
- ❖ Slavery is disintegrating wherever the Union army is present – western Tennessee, eastern Virginia, the sugar belt around New Orleans, the Sea Islands
- ❖ The slaves had created an almost Biblical narrative around their situation – like the Israelites they maybe condemned to slavery but one day God will set them free. The Civil War was seen by many of them as an act of God’s will; a vehicle of their emancipation.
- ❖ The slaves recognize that the presence of the Union army destroys the coercive power of the planters – this is especially the case because many of the patriarchs have gone to war and often the plantations are left to be run by women or the elderly and infirm. They feel more empowered to challenge authority, and do.
- ❖ Another factor are the Radical Republicans – from the beginning they have agitated for a non-conventional war; for the Southern economy to be targeted, that is, what holds it together – and that is slavery.
 - the lack of military success gives credence to their idea – and more and more are listening to them
 - the radicals push for emancipation, the enlistment of black men in the army
 - latter they will call for black suffrage
 - in September 1862 Thaddeus Stevens articulates this radical vision – a revolution is required that will replace the old Republic with one without slavery (or racism)
- ❖ Lincoln was not a Radical but he had a good relationship with some, and understood that they represented a significant part of Northern public opinion.
- ❖ But he had to balance different impulses and factions
 - the war Democrats – who were for the Union but not emancipation
 - the border States were firmly on side now (and therefore not as influential in policy considerations) but were also against emancipation
 - his own loyalty to the greater Republican Party.
- ❖ So, in summary, by the end of summer 1862, the following have made it clear that a change in policy and direction is required
 - the failure of the military efforts
 - the rising pressure of the Radical Republicans
 - the decreasing importance of the border states
 - the growing disintegration of slavery

3.4: The Rising Tide of Emancipation

- ❖ Lincoln had approached Delaware about Emancipation in November 1861 and in the Spring 1862 he brings his plan to Congress for all of the border states and any Confederate states that wished to participate
- ❖ Again, the same plan
 - gradual emancipation
 - monetary compensation to the owners
 - colonization of the former slaves outside of the United States
- ❖ He requests constitutional amendments to allow for the passage
- ❖ Congress is moving forward on its own initiative
 - they abolish slavery in Washington DC in Spring 1862
 - the first law in US history to grant freedom to slaves
 - coupled with compensation to the owners – about \$300 per slave
 - only loyal owners, not Confederate sympathizers were compensated – this was determined on the basis of testimony before a commission (blacks were not allowed to testify in court) by the slaves themselves.
 - strange perhaps, but is indicative of how much the times are changing
 - also includes compensation to the slaves for voluntary colonization (nobody takes it up!)
 - slavery (not much of it) is abolished in the territories – no compensation because in the eyes of the Republican Party it was illegal in the territories anyway
 - a bill was passed prohibiting the army from returning fugitive slaves
 - the Fugitive Slave Law was not repealed until 1864 – though it was not enforced in the North anyway
 - and in July 1862 the Second Confiscation Act
 - now any slave (beyond those in a military capacity, as stated in the First Confiscation Act) of a Southern rebel who comes within Union lines will be free
 - So, it is clear, if the war had continued without the Emancipation Act, many slaves would have been freed under this Act.
- ❖ Lincoln signs every one of the bills passed by Congress
- ❖ When did Lincoln decide upon Emancipation?
 - the Secretary of the Navy, Gideon Wells, says on July 13th 1862, on their way to the funeral of one of Stanton's children, Lincoln tells him he is preparing a proclamation of general emancipation (validated by two sources – a retrospective diary entry by Wells and a letter to his wife on the same day)
 - Nine days later on July 22nd Lincoln broaches this with his cabinet and in the context of changing the way the war is being fought
 - allowing the army to live off the land – seize property, goods, livestock etc., whatever required in order to live. Civilian property. Total war.
 - & by the way after a certain date **all** slaves in the rebel states will be free!
 - the Cabinet is stunned, and Seward convinces Lincoln that he shouldn't issue the proclamation right away because it could be seen as an act of desperation, rather it should be issued in tandem with a major military victory.
 - Lincoln agrees – says he will wait.

3B: Lincoln, The Proclamation, and the War

3.5: The Preliminary Proclamation

- ❖ Some doubted Lincoln's commitment to emancipation for a number of reasons
 - his meeting with African-American DC black ministers (the first president to do so) in which he tries to push his case for colonization – he affirms the great wrong being done to them but says that the prejudice in America is so great that they would be unable to ever achieve equality – this is firmly rejected.
 - also the border states reject his plan of gradual emancipation, and their reaction unknown and whether Lincoln would try to accommodate them
 - and, Lincoln is adamant that his first priority must be, and is, the saving of the Union – and this must stand before the pros and cons of slavery
- ❖ The problem with this latter is, of course, that if this is what Lincoln believed, he could have granted the South their slave society within the Union, and spared all the war.
- ❖ This dichotomy between Union and emancipation is not clear cut. In the end, Lincoln goes with emancipation not because of an overwhelming moral commitment to the black population but because he thought it was the right thing to do to win the war.
- ❖ The preservation of the Union as his sole purpose, may have been a bit of a ruse to pacify the more conservative elements in the North.
- ❖ In the Summer of 1862 the army was still suffering reversals
 - the Second Battle of Bull Run – McClelland now relieved by General Pope – a defeat again at the hands of Lee (and Stonewall Jackson)
- ❖ Lee decides for a two prong offensive into Union territory –
 - the incursion into Kentucky doesn't work nor
 - Maryland. McClellan is brought back and at Antietam the Unions push back Lee in the bloodiest battle of US history – 4000 killed in one day – September 17th.
- ❖ This victory gives Lincoln the opportunity on September 22nd 1862 to issue the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation.
 - In short, it says:
 - Should the Confederacy not stop fighting by January 1st 1863 all slaves in areas under rebellion will be declared “forever free” – it all so reiterates his compensation (to owners) and colonization (of freed slaves) position.
 - This is a warning to the South – stop fighting and talk about conditions or there will be a general emancipation, non-conditional and immediately.

3.6: Politics, Diplomacy, Emancipation

- ❖ The Preliminary Proclamation becomes a major issue in the Fall 1862 election campaign - McClellan encourages his troops to vote against the Proclamation, that is, to vote Democrat – the Democrats run a highly racialized campaign – North will be flooded with black people: take your wives, jobs, etc.
- ❖ The Republicans hold onto their majority in Congress but the Democrats make substantial gains

- ❖ Diplomacy is another factor, especially in respect to Britain
 - the South had been trying to get Britain to recognize its independence – but they saw it as an American matter of self-determination and not about abolishing slavery so were unwilling
 - Britain is dependent on cotton out of the south for its cloth making factories
 - There is considerable pro-Confederate sentiment in Britain but also Union, and specifically anti-slavery, support, from labor organizations - so with divided public opinion and also worried about what this may mean to Canada, the British government took a “wait and see” stance
- ❖ The Proclamation may also have been aimed in part at preventing British intervention
- ❖ There was also a European effort (they saw the United States as a counter balance to the British empire) to mediate started by Napoleon III – but Russia didn’t go along with it, the British were divided and the interests of individual countries too disparate, and it eventually broke down.
- ❖ In December Lincoln sends a message to Congress with the famous words: "Fellow-citizens, we cannot escape history. We of this Congress and this administration, will be remembered in spite of ourselves....The fiery trial through which we pass, will light us down, in honor or dishonor, to the latest generation....In giving freedom to the slave, we assure freedom to the free."

3.7: The Emancipation Proclamation

- ❖ On January 1st 1863 Lincoln issues the Emancipation Proclamation
- ❖ It did not apply to all slaves
 - not in the four border states (with half a million slaves) because they were in the Union
 - it does not apply to certain parts of the south
 - West Virginia which is soon to be a free state
 - Tennessee – after the capture of Nashville a pro-Union government has been set up there
 - Southern Louisiana and a few counties in eastern Virginia – under Union control so not longer in a state of rebellion
- ❖ So the proclamation does not affect about ¾ million slaves but about 3.2 million slaves are declared free – the largest emancipation on one day in world history
- ❖ Many of these slaves of course were in the South, and so emancipation was out of the control of the Union, but in some places (that weren’t exempted) they did enforce the proclamation – the Sea Islands, eastern Arkansas
- ❖ It should be noted the Proclamation applied to individuals – it did not abolish slavery as an institution (the 13th Amendment will later do this)

- ❖ And what right does Lincoln have to issue this Proclamation
 - Lincoln says he does it in his capacity as Commander in Chief – this is a military measure
 - and it is written in very military-like language; only at the insistence of Sec. Chase does he add any moral sentiment “...believed to be an act of justice”
 - Lincoln, as a lawyer, understood that under the guise of a military edict he could circumvent the possibility of long litigation through various courts
 - As a military act in the interest of winning the war, it requires that war to be won by the Union. It follows, the Union army is now an agent of emancipation.
- ❖ Important is, it is contrary to Lincoln’s previous proposals
 - it is immediate not gradual
 - there is no compensation
 - colonization is no longer on the table
- ❖ In the Proclamation he addresses the slaves directly – urges them to refrain from violence, but he also says: except in defense of your freedom; he encourages them to find work and earn wages (in the United States), and “reasonable” wages. Also, it is stated, that black men will now be allowed to enroll in the Union army (this will in time be one of the measures that will radically change Lincoln’s opinion on the position of African Americans in society)
- ❖ The Confederates denounced the Proclamation!
- ❖ The Proclamation fundamentally changed the character of the war
 - it united the aim of emancipation with that of the Union
 - if the North wins the war, slavery would perish
- ❖ Only 18 months after the start of the Civil War, emancipation has been decreed, and it presages the end of an elite class in the South and a radical change in social relations throughout the nation. In some ways the Proclamation closes the door on slavery, but many issues emerge from it; coming to the fore during the War and resonating long afterwards – freedom, equality, governance of a multi-racial society, etc.

Section 4: The Black Soldier

4.0: Introduction

In this section we will examine, in the wake of the Proclamation, the role of black soldiers in the Civil War; in a military sense but also in respect to how their inclusion affected race relations within the army, their struggle for equality alongside white soldiers, and how all this influenced Lincoln and federal government policy. We will also consider the Confederacy response, and, more generally, how the service rendered by black soldiers in the conflict affected a change in racial attitudes in the North.

4A: Blacks and the Army

4.1: Blacks and the Military in US History

- ❖ The service of the black soldiers played a role in decreasing racism in the North during the Civil War and into Reconstruction.
- ❖ From the Revolution through to World War II African Americans fought for the right to fight
- ❖ Seen by black leaders as an affirmation of their claim for citizenship and equal rights.
- ❖ With the exception of the aftermath of WW I, the black participation led to advancements in racial integration
 - After the revolution – the abolition of slavery in the North
 - After the Civil War – the total emancipation promised by the Proclamation
 - The Civil Rights movement’s momentum after WWII
- ❖ This situation has changed in the post-WWII conflicts. In Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan, African Americans have been over proportionally represented. Mechanisms of the draft and socio-economic status have often led to the unfair induction of more young African American men.
- ❖ The black contribution to the Civil War was until relatively recently almost erased from history, and a narrative was developed whereby they had little to do with the winning of their freedom. Very few monuments in the North honor black soldiers.
- ❖ But during the war, people were very well aware, and Lincoln stated that without the black soldiers the war would not have been won.
- ❖ By the end of the war 180,000 black men had served in the Union army and 20,000-30,000 in the navy (about 10%) – a significant amount.
- ❖ The question of citizenship arises – but should citizenship be a reward for military service?

4.2: Fighting for the Right to Fight

- ❖ The Militia Act of 1795 limited service to white men (with the exception of New Orleans because of the treaty with the French) and became the rubric for the regular army which did likewise in the decades preceding the civil war.

edX - ColumbiaX: HIST1.1x The Civil War and Reconstruction - 1861-1865: A New Birth of Freedom

- ❖ At the beginning of the war there were about 220,000 blacks in the North and only a fraction of those were of an age or gender whereby they could be in the army. Many attempted to volunteer but were turned down.
- ❖ Through 1861-62 black leaders, especially Frederick Douglass, insisted on the necessity of black men being allowed to enlist: "...good enough to fight under George Washington, but [...] not under McClellan" says Douglass – though actually Washington also excluded them, and only after the British began recruiting blacks did Washington counter.
- ❖ Washington's army though was the last integrated army until the Korean War - Truman having integrated the army in the late 40s. – in the interim blacks were either excluded or racial segregation was practiced.
- ❖ Some blacks though were against serving – why? they don't want us, we don't have any rights, we can't vote, can't go to school. Also, with young white men being enlisted more jobs and opportunities were opening up in the North
- ❖ There is the flux of Southern slaves coming across Union lines, and while not allowed into combat, they are doing lots of other things - military laborers, cooks, teamsters – an encampment will have any number of black workers.
- ❖ Likewise on the Confederate side, but for a different reason; many officers brought a black slave with them.
- ❖ The Union navy did in fact allow black men to serve; before the war many black men were sailors – on whaling ships, cargo ships – and therefore had nautical experience. They were of the lowest rank and could not be promoted but obviously nor could they be segregated.
- ❖ In 1862 the debate intensifies as the casualties grow, enlistments decrease and enthusiasm declines.
 - some were still opposed – an unwanted step towards racial equality, degrading for the white soldiers, skeptical of the aptitude and capabilities of black men, saw them as naturally timid, subservient/uncontrolled, undisciplined
 - the border states were very much opposed – this would begin the process of undermining the slavery in their states
 - But support was growing in the North - if for no other reason than the fact so many white men were dying but black men not didn't seem right.
- ❖ In July, 1862, Lincoln calls on the states to volunteer 300,000 troops

4.3: The First Black Soldiers

- ❖ In July 1862, the Confiscation Act is being passed, slavery in Washington DC is abolished, and they repeal the "whites only" portion of the Militia Law.
- ❖ By the Fall, the first steps towards enrollment are taking place.
- ❖ Ben Butler, now in command in New Orleans, integrates the black militia in the Union army – about 1000, mostly light skinned (descendants of French)
- ❖ In Kansas, General James Lane, without authorization begins recruiting black men from Missouri and Kansas to help fight in the inner Missouri conflict (also Native Americans)
- ❖ In South Carolina the abolitionist General David Hunter wants to enroll blacks but because he makes a public matter of it, is stopped by Lincoln.
- ❖ This is not government policy yet!

edX - ColumbiaX: HIST1.1x The Civil War and Reconstruction - 1861-1865: A New Birth of Freedom

- ❖ In September at the time of the Battle of Antietam, the Confederates threaten Cincinnati – this has a significant free black population who help to successfully defend the city and this is widely publicized.
- ❖ Finally, in late September Secretary Stanton authorizes the enlistment of black soldiers in the Sea Islands. Lincoln says nothing. They use Hunter's disbanded troop as the core of the First South Carolina Volunteers under the command of Thomas Wentworth Higginson (one of the "secret six" abolitionists who had aided John Brown).
- ❖ Higginson, though a radical abolitionist, embraced the racialism of the time, whereby the African Americans were seen as docile, religious, playful. With rigor, an improved diet and military drill he molded a fighting unit.
- ❖ By November they were involved in marauding expeditions off the islands and coastal areas - early 1863 they became officially a unit of the Union army.

4.4: Emancipation and Black Soldiers

- ❖ After the Proclamation the process of enlisting black men starts, first in the North
 - 54th and 55th Massachusetts – Governor John Andrew was a radical Republican but there weren't that many black men in Mass. so recruitment comes from all over the North – e.g. New York, Ohio. Frederick Douglass helps recruiting men.
- ❖ Recruitment was not always easy
 - the Confederates announced that captured black soldiers would be treated as runaway slaves not as prisoners of war and put into (or returned to) slavery
- ❖ Douglass and others used patriotic arguments and the promise of citizenship, also language about "proving manhood" – that had been so often denied, belittled. This latter a thematic that comes up (in negative and positive ways) to this day in the narrative of the African American experience. (Something whites mostly do not have to do – some of the baggage of racism and slavery.)
- ❖ The 54th finally enlisted about 1000 men; under the command of the abolitionist Robert Gould Shaw were given a fanfare parade in Boston in 1863 to see them on their way.
- ❖ In July they participated in an attack on Fort Wagner in South Carolina – of the 600 from the 54th 250 were killed including Shaw – usually officers' bodies were returned for burial but the Confederates contended that Shaw was not an officer because his men were not soldiers!
- ❖ Fort Wagner may have been a defeat but it disproved many of the stereotypical reasoning that existed even amongst those of good will – the black soldiers showed courage, discipline, fortitude.
- ❖ Following the capture of Vicksburg (1863), the whole Mississippi valley fell into the hands of the Union and thousands of black soldiers were recruited (& sometimes just dragged off the plantations and put in the army!)
- ❖ General Lorenzo Thomas was sent by Stanton to raise troops – and 75000 had been recruited by 1864.
- ❖ Grant (in command in the Mississippi valley) is actively supportive of the effort, and orders his subordinates to follow suit, further he insists that black soldiers be treated as any other.
- ❖ These troops have the title USCT (US Colored Troops) – unlike those out of the North that were formed on the initiative of States, these were federal US troops.

4B: Black Soldiers and Their Impact

4.5: Blacks in the Army

- ❖ The press in the North gives a lot of positive attention to the black soldiers, and this counters some of the initial prejudice.
- ❖ However, the black soldiers were not equally treated
 - mostly used as labor troops not combat – many commanders remained reluctant to put them into a battle situation
 - on the other hand, there is evidence they were also used as cannon fodder in impossible situations
 - they served only in segregated units (that is the case also in Spanish American war, WWI and WWII.) and under white officers – blacks could not become commissioned officers (they could become non-commissioned officers – sergeants). Some white officers saw this as an insult, and some were abusive.
 - they were not paid equally – a white recruit got \$13 plus \$3 clothing allowance per month, a black recruit a flat \$10
 - The 54th Mass. actually refused their pay for months – irrespective of the hardships - contending they should be paid the same as a white soldier
 - they further refused (on principle!) the Mass. legislature offer to make up the difference
 - in 1864 Congress passed a bill whereby they would henceforth receive equal pay – this the 54th and other black units also refused, demanding that it should be retroactive
 - In March, 1865, at the end of the war Congress finally passed an equal pay bill that was retroactive (perhaps the first US law based on the equal treatment of blacks and whites!)
- ❖ And then there was the terrible treatment by the Confederates
 - some commanders just refused to take black prisoners
 - Fort Pillow in Tennessee in 1864 where a black unit was massacred after they had surrendered.
 - law was passed whereby any captured black soldier would not be treated as a prisoner of war rather as a fugitive slave - put to hard labor and returned to slavery or even executed.
- ❖ Lincoln planned retaliation (e.g. an execution for an execution), but in the end this last law was not really enacted. The only retaliation came in terms of prisoner exchanges – the Confederates did not allow this for black soldiers – so Lincoln ceased all exchanges (which angered some white Union families) in the last two years of the war out of solidarity.

4.6: Impact of Black Soldiers

- ❖ The Emancipation Proclamation made clear that there would be no return to the pre-War Union
 - black people begin to have more confidence in voicing their opinion, testing how far Lincoln, the government, society could be drawn
 - black soldiers suffered a high percentage of casualties - of the 180,000 odd about 38,000 lost their lives – and, especially in the border states, their service was invaluable in the last two years of the war
 - Black soldiers recruited out of the border states were freed, and at the end of the war, in March 1865, the families of these black soldiers also –
 - this implying for the first time the legal recognition of black families
 - It follows: service in the army plays an important part in destroying the institution of slavery
 - Service was not just a political act, it was also psychologically liberating
 - They may have been erased from the white historical narrative, but the black soldiers and their stories were treasured within the African American families and communities.

4.7: The Confederacy and Black Troops

- ❖ Myths persist of “thousands” of blacks serving in the Confederate army.
- ❖ It is true, that in late 1864, because of a chronic shortage of manpower, Lee himself raised this as a prospect.
- ❖ Even some Confederates recognize, that the war has imbued the African Americans with volition – they can choose between the Confederates or the Union
- ❖ Others were adamantly opposed – should one make good soldiers out of slaves one would be in fact admitting that the whole theory of slavery was built on a false premise (i.e. black inferiority)
- ❖ In March 1865, one month before the end of the war and with Lee’s endorsement, the Confederate Congress enacts a law calling for the enlistment of thousands of black men.
- ❖ Jefferson Davis adds that those that enlist will be freed.
- ❖ This of course had nothing to do with the abolition of slavery only the granting of individual privileges.
- ❖ So how many did fight on the Confederate side?
 - There is evidence of only a couple of companies – e.g. Battle of Petersburg near Richmond in April, 1865
- ❖ But even if only out of desperation, the law enlisting black men is symbolic of how radically the War has changed the norms.

4.8: Race in the North

- ❖ Though hard to quantify, the Civil War seems to have diminished the extent of racial prejudices in the North.
 - the Proclamation infused the war with some moral purpose
 - there was less fear of an influx of emancipated slaves from the South
- ❖ Racism though remained rampant and people's attitudes contradictory
- ❖ For instance, rioting and rampaging in New York City in July 1863 – beginning as an uprising against conscription it then turned into a general assault upon the anti-slavery movement – against the Republicans, the newspapers, and especially the black community – 12,000 odd strong – burning, looting, etc. Many had to seek refuge in Central Park, New Jersey. Troops had to be sent directly from the Battle of Gettysburg to end the situation.
- ❖ But only one year later the 20th US Colored Troops raised in New York were celebrated as they marched down the Battery before heading South to war
- ❖ The Civil War put the question of black citizenship on the agenda – by fighting and dying for the Union they stake a claim to their rights in a post-War America.
- ❖ This is the opening of the struggle of Reconstruction – a national African American convention in Syracuse in October 1864 puts those issues on the agenda – equal civil rights, right to vote

Section 5: The Confederacy

5.0: Introduction

In this section we consider more specifically the Confederacy - examining the political history, the political leadership of Jefferson Davis (vis-à-vis Lincoln in the North), the financing of the war (dependent on cotton) and the military decisions made.

We will also look at how public dissent arose, especially amongst the non-slaveholding whites and women from all social spheres (who saw many of the burdens of the conflict falling on them.) And how the internal divisions grew as the war progressed, and were ultimately a major factor in the defeat of the South.

5A: Creating a New Nation

5.1: Why the Confederacy Lost

- ❖ Some would say that the Confederacy lost because they were overwhelmed by the greater manpower, ammunition, supply lines, etc. of the Union
- ❖ Others, that the defeat was the result of internal divisions within the Confederacy
 - poor political leadership – especially that of Davis
 - state's rights which inhibited co-ordination and mobilization
 - desertion by poorer white soldiers
 - the waning enthusiasm of women in the South
 - bad financial decisions
 - lack of command structures and discipline
- ❖ There were though internal divisions in the North also – is this then a sufficient reason?
- ❖ Were the plantation owners so committed to preserving slavery, that they were unprepared to make the sacrifices necessary for a military victory?
- ❖ Were they fighting the wrong war? Doing so as if they were already an established nation, instead of in a revolutionary sense to earn their nationhood?

5.2: The Confederate Nation

- ❖ The Confederate States of America proclaimed itself and adopted a constitution in February, 1861.
 - largely modelled on the US Constitution
 - but greater protection of slavery; a one term, six year presidency; the Cabinet would sit in Congress (linking the legislature & the executive)
 - like the US Constitution it retained a strong central government which was in control of foreign policy and could override the States on some things.
 - it said nothing about secession – whether a Confederate state may in the future secede
 - they reserved seats in the Confederate Congress for loyal Native American tribes

- ❖ The Confederacy modelled itself then as an independent pro-slavery nation
 - they name the institution as “slavery” and use none of the euphemisms of the US Constitution but refer to “slaves”.
 - citizenship is specifically limited to “white persons”
 - The Three-Fifths clause from the US Constitution is retained – individual states also had the same clause for the apportionment of legislative seats.
- ❖ The African slave trade was prohibited – Virginia would not join should the African slave trade be reopened; nor would they gain foreign recognition.
- ❖ A strong fugitive slave clause – including transit of slaves between the individual states.
- ❖ A clause also guaranteed slavery in any territories that may be acquired in the future.

5.3: Confederate Politics

- ❖ The President is Jefferson Davis – former Senator from Mississippi, former Secretary of War
- ❖ His Vice-President was Alexander Stephens from Georgia.
 - Stephens had been a Whig before the war (Davis a Democrat)
 - was opposed to secession until it was voted for in Georgia
 - did not know each other, nor did they develop a rapport – they had disagreed on major issues over the last twenty odd years
- ❖ Most historians see Davis as a failure
 - he lacked political acumen and leadership qualities, he loathed criticism, he was aloof and had no rapport with ordinary people, he could not delegate authority
 - the danger here is to think that another political leader could have succeeded (but were not the problems more inherent than that?)
- ❖ One suggestion has been that the Confederacy suffered from not developing a two party political system.
 - instead of the desired politic for the public good without the divisiveness and factionalizing inherent in party politics, the effect was the opposite
 - it prevented the formulation of alternative options and policies
 - it was deprived of the benefits of party support and structures (Lincoln in the North used the Republican Party to cement his power base) – loyalties were then very individual person-based affairs.
 - also, without parties sustained links, cooperation and loyalties between different social classes are difficult to achieve
- ❖ An extension of this is that Davis’ cabinet being largely nonentities (as opposed to the powerful men who occupied Lincoln’s cabinet)
- ❖ Elections in 1863 went down mostly on individual sympathies and regional sensibilities and said very little about public sentiments (Lincoln on the other hand could “read” election results and factor that into his policies.)

5.4: Confederate Finances

- ❖ Beyond political structures, there is the argument that the main problem of the Confederacy lay in the organization of Southern society itself.
- ❖ The power of the plantation owning elite determined the execution of the war.
- ❖ In terms of financing, both the North and South used the conventional methods available to them
 - taxation
 - borrowing – issuing bonds
 - paper money – leads to inflation
- ❖ The Union deprived its income from a higher percentage of tax revenue (tariffs etc.) than that of the South. There, most of the wealth was in the hands of the planters and they did not want to pay higher taxes.
- ❖ In the North, paper money was declared legal tender. In the South, not.
- ❖ In 1863 a tax-in-kind appropriation system was initiated which meant goods, equipment, etc. could be appropriated and receipted for. This caused a lot of resentment especially amongst the small farmers.
- ❖ The main economic resource was cotton
 - some suggested that the gigantic 1860 cotton crop should be confiscated and sold to finance the war, but that was rejected in favor of
 - withholding the cotton from Britain, who were dependent on it for their mills and factories, in an attempt to force them into recognizing the Confederacy. This embargo strategy did not work for a couple of reasons
 - in 1859 the crop had also been a bumper crop, and meant that the British had stockpiled enough cotton to see them through a few years – until about 1862
 - some from the South were secretly shipping cotton anyway - breaking through the blockades, or via the North, or in fact to the North – this increased once the Mississippi Valley was taken by the Union and planters quite openly sold their produce to the North
 - a consequence of the embargo was of course higher prices if one could get the cotton into the marketplace – the planters saw no contradiction in capitalizing on this.
 - Another consequence of the tactic, was that Britain sought other sources – especially Egypt and India – and after the war the South no longer had the monopoly on cotton that they had previously enjoyed. In fact by the 1890s the immense global overproduction meant that cotton prices plummeted to almost nothing.
- ❖ As the war progresses, and more areas fall under Union control, the economic circumstances in the South deteriorate
 - scarcity of goods and food – incl. things like salt (as a preservative) and bread which hit the poor people the hardest
 - inflation increased – excessive issuing of paper money

5B: Internal Dissent and the Fate of the Confederacy

5.5: The Divided Confederacy

- ❖ Army policies created a lot of internal divisions and most of it focused on the draft
- ❖ The Confederacy institutes the first conscription in American history in 1862 (the US follows in 1863)
 - eventually extended to cover all able bodied men from ages 17-50 with some exemptions like critical workers – railroad, miners – and for religious and conscientious objectors – like the Moravians in North Carolina. Or (this also in the North) pay for a substitute or pay the Government for exemption – obviously therefore a class-based means!
 - in 1862 the 20 Negro Law was passed which stated for every 20 slaves one white may be exempted – this again favored the slave owner who could “buy” with 40 slaves for instance the exemption of his two sons, or a couple of overseers - and this was important because many of the plantations were being left in the hands of women and the elderly and discipline was breaking down and slaves becoming more assertive. This of course further enraged the poorer white population who had little recourse.
- ❖ An appropriate syllogism:
 - Slavery creates the Confederacy.
 - But the war leads to the disintegration of slavery.
 - The disintegration of slavery leads the Confederate government to adopt policies to strengthen and preserve slavery.
 - Those policies sunder white society.
- ❖ In other words the Confederacy was not fighting a war for nationhood or state’s rights, they were fighting a war for slavery, and a lot of white Southerners did in fact not benefit from slavery.
- ❖ Another internal conflict came from (as in the North) the suspension of habeas corpus – rounding up of people with no or spurious charges – mostly to do with conspiring with the Union
- ❖ Another was, so-called, impressment: confiscating goods and paying with paper money that was sure to devalue. It comes to include the taking of slaves for military labor – in this respect many slave owners go out of their way to remove themselves and their slaves (“refugeeing”) not just from the Union army but also from the Confederates.
- ❖ Some of the internal discord is reflected in Southern politics – some Governors (e.g. Gov. Joe Brown of Georgia) become obstructionists – representing poorer whites and fighting for “state’s rights”, opposed to the draft.

5.6: Confederate Women

- ❖ Another important aspect is how the Civil War pushes the Confederate women – the white women – into new roles
 - for the upper class woman this means a disruption to the traditional role
 - the men are at war, involved in matters of war
 - they must come to terms with supporting the family, the plantation perhaps
 - they were very much pro-slavery, but now as the system begins to collapse they withdraw their support
 - for the lower class Southern woman
 - most of the Confederate army are non-slave holding white men – these are their husbands, fathers, brothers, etc.
 - these women are suddenly in a position of power
 - as the wives of soldiers the government is obliged to them and their families for assistance – food, for small farms and businesses
 - as the situation deteriorates they demand that their rights be honored
- ❖ The Government recognizes the problem
 - and begins to exempt poorer families from taxes
 - creates a welfare system (the first in the US!) of direct aid
- ❖ The disaffection of the women reverberates and affects the morale of the men in their camps and on the battlefield

5.7: The Inner Civil War

- ❖ Yeoman farmers in West Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee – Appalachian Mountains, in northern Alabama, Arkansas - the Ozarks (mostly areas with little slavery) are opposed to slavery; they are
 - white, poor, non-slave owners, previously not politically motivated
- ❖ They become more and more convinced that the war is not in their interest or the interest of a new nation with state's rights at its center
 - rather one being fought purely in the interest of slavery and plantation owners' interests, and a relatively small elite
- ❖ They form bands of resistance, perform acts of sabotage against the Confederates, desert the army or harbor deserters, aid the Union army.
- ❖ There are about 50,000 Southerners actually enlisted in the Union army (plus 200,000 black men, that is, a quarter of million odd from the South!)
- ❖ To maintain broad public support sacrifices have to be shared, as the war continues many in the South – and this group particularly – see that as not being so, instead they see
 - that they are doing a greater share of the fighting
 - are not being exempted from service (for spurious reasons) as some of the elite, nor being able to buy their way out
 - bearing the greater burden of tax-in-kind and impressment
- ❖ These internal problems are much more debilitating than those faced in the Union; they are not based on political preference but inherent in the structure of Southern society.
- ❖ And where their alliance will fall once the war is over is an important aspect.

Section 6: The Impact of the Civil War

6.0: Introduction

Here we examine the overall effect of the Civil War on the American nation, especially the transformation wrought on the politics and society of the North in the midst of the conflict. The War produced radical changes in all aspects of life – political, economical and social. There is the rise of patriotic and nationalist sentiment, a consolidation of Republican Party dominance, the imposition of new finance and banking systems, and an enormous expansion of industry.

And then, of course, the internal dissent and fault lines within Northern society (as in the South) that these vast changes brought to the fore.

6A: War, Politics, and Reform

6.1: Midwife of Revolution

- ❖ War is the midwife of revolution – big wars produce enormous changes, fundamental and mostly unanticipated, and having lasting effects on society – the Civil War was such a war.
- ❖ Firstly, nationalization
 - before the War the federal government was a very weak institution
 - limited, it spent very little money
 - it was disconnected from the everyday life of most Americans (with the exception of the Post Office)
 - the focus of political power was in the States
 - other than matters to do with Native Americans or foreign powers it had little political involvement
 - with the Civil War the federal role expanded into almost every area – and with it came a new national loyalty that superseded that for State or locality.
 - growing patriotism and glorification of combat become evident.

6.2: Lincoln, the Republican Party, and the War

- ❖ When Lincoln is elected the Republican Party had existed for only five years or so and was a conglomerate of factions and State interest groups – Radicals, Abolitionists, ex-Whig, ex-Democrat, etc. Now it is a national party –
 - it becomes central to the war effort – mobilizing public support for the government and the war
 - Lincoln presides over this change – power in the party also moves from State to Federal level – not only Lincoln but other members of the Cabinet and Congress

- it follows that the States become more reliant on the federal government for support
 - there is the so-called “soldier vote” whereby soldier’s from their camps can vote in State and local elections – tend to be a deciding factor and tend to be Republican.
 - States increasingly look to Washington for financial support (eg. Indiana in 1862: the Democrats won the legislature and refused to fund the state government & so the Republican Governor was funded by the War Department for a year)
 - the army began as State units but as the war progressed the federal government took more and more control over recruitment and financing
- In short there is a massive centralization of power – intellectual, political, militarily
- Unlike Jefferson Davis, Lincoln is able to connect the war with the deepest values of Northern society – free labor, markets and opportunity - and hence garners the public support necessary.
- Some historians also see Lincoln as a part of the ideology of nation building that was changing the face of Europe – Bismarck in Germany, Mazzini and Garibaldi in Italy – and elsewhere. Coincidental or Causation?
 - Whichever, what is different is that the European instances are about the unifying of people with common ethnic or cultural heritage
 - Lincoln’s America is based on universal values - political democracy, human liberty, not on ethnic or religious heritage
 - this is summed up in his Gettysburg address where he dates the founding of the nation to the Declaration of Independence (not the Constitution) with the principal of equality at its essence and links that with democracy and and liberty
 - ◆ interesting, in the 269 words the word “union” is not mentioned – he speaks of “nation” – a war that began as a fight for the union will end in a peace defined by nation.

Bliss Copy of The Gettysburg Address

Ever since Lincoln wrote it in 1864, this version has been the most often reproduced, notably on the walls of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington. It is named after Colonel Alexander Bliss, stepson of historian George Bancroft. Bancroft asked President Lincoln for a copy to use as a fundraiser for soldiers (see "Bancroft Copy" below). However, because Lincoln wrote on both sides of the paper, the speech could not be reprinted, so Lincoln made another copy at Bliss's request. It is the last known copy written by Lincoln and the only one signed and dated by him. Today it is on display at the Lincoln Room of the White House.

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate -- we can not consecrate -- we can not hallow -- this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us -- that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion -- that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain -- that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom -- and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

*Abraham Lincoln
November 19, 1863*

6.3: The Transformation of Reform

- ❖ Prior to the War, Northern reformers were alienated from the government, now they were able to work from the inside of the institution to help institute change – there is a new institutional identity.
- ❖ In the decades that followed reformers look to governments to instigate change through policy, laws and actions not through the moral suasion and localized agitations that had defined them previously.
- ❖ Emancipation has shown what national power can achieve when it is focused and supported by the greater public.
- ❖ On the other hand, this collective new patriotism and loyalty to the government and the war effort is at the expense of individual dissent.
- ❖ Women became increasingly visible in the war effort – sanitary fairs, meetings, etc.
 - Women's suffrage issues that preceded the War are put on hold and the War and Emancipation are the sole preoccupation
 - but those women active in the "fight" learn a lot about organization, political agitation, etc. that will hold them in good stead in the years to come
 - even in the North though this is a minority – after the war, like women in the South, many wanted only to return to their old lives of family and domesticity.
- ❖ The end of the War though fails to unite everyone – some see Emancipation and the end to slavery as a fulfillment of what they had been fighting for (e.g. Garrison) others (Frederik Douglas, Wendell Phillips) see it as only a milestone on the road to freedom for African Americans – what about, for instance, an equal chance of betterment in society, the right to vote?

6.4: The Second American Revolution

- ❖ Charles and Mary Beard called the Civil War "the second American Revolution"
 - in that there was a definitive shift in class power
 - before the War the Southern planter class ran the government
 - during the War, the Northern industrial class
- ❖ Beards' claim that all the economical changes that Federalists and Whigs had been trying to achieve for a generation was achieved in four years
 - very high tariffs (taxes) on foreign imports
 - the Homestead Act – free land for westward settlers
 - a national currency for the first time
 - a national banking system
 - government funding of transcontinental railroad
- ❖ All the initiatives blocked by the South before the War were now pursued
- ❖ The Northern industry, the Republican Party and the national state are linked in their economic power
- ❖ Many of the initiatives are sectional in terms of who they benefit, and some are in conflict – land for farmers or for the railroad? And they are in the interest of financing the War – the economic consequences after the war were not considered.

6B: The Transformation of the North

6.5: Financing the War

- ❖ The government was basically bankrupt in 1861 – their income mainly came from selling of land in the west and very low tariffs.
- ❖ First they begin **issuing bonds** but the interest rate has to be high in order to encourage people to buy them - so they could not sell enough
- ❖ They **issue legal tender** – that is paper money that must be accepted as currency (the so-called “greenbacks”) – but many are suspicious and so it is used
 - to pay soldiers’ wages
 - by the the government to buy supplies
- ❖ However, to encourage banks to buy bonds, the government must commit to the interest being paid in gold (because paper money may deteriorate in value)
- ❖ So there is a dual currency – gold for the bankers and greenbacks for the people
- ❖ By 1865 \$500 million worth of paper money has been issued to finance the war
- ❖ This centralization of currency flow is a major shift towards sovereign power and a hallmark of the modern national state
- ❖ An enormous amount of **new taxes** are enforced
 - excise tax – consumer goods, whiskey, etc.
 - stamp tax
 - manufacturing tax
 - occupation tax
 - and the **first income tax** in American history – beginning at 3% of annual income from a certain level of income
- ❖ Taxation creates again a basis for the national state, and though the income tax disappears at the end of the War many of the others remain in force
- ❖ Long term, this expanded tax base will allow for more flexibility in financing the federal government in the years following
- ❖ It also brings the average citizen into a more direct relationship with the government
- ❖ Finally, there is the **National Banking Acts of 1863 and 1864**
 - a national bank is one operating under the charter of the federal government
 - to receive a charter to operate a bank must commit to buying bonds, i.e. to loan money to the federal government
 - in order to encourage banks to go this route they place a 10% levy on bank notes issued by state banks – which essentially makes state banks unviable
 - By 1870 two-thirds of banks in the US are national banks and are bound by the policy of the federal government
- ❖ When the South returns to the union it is to a totally different financial system, a Northern system – specifically one (already) dominated by Wall Street. The consolidation of fiscal power in Wall Street is another of the outcomes of the Civil War.

- ❖ The proliferation of currency causes inflation but also helps to stimulate the economy – credit is easy to get, money is available.
- ❖ In the middle of the war, the government begins **marketing bonds to individuals**
 - in small denominations to ordinary citizens
 - the marketing strategy focuses on patriotism – buy bonds: support your government and the war effort & make money in the process
- ❖ Again, this creates a mutual interest between people and government – as an owner of bonds one has a vested interest in a strong and stable government that will be able to pay you back and with interest.

6.6: A Society at War

- ❖ While the South suffered from economic decline during the War, the North's economy expanded – more prosperity, higher production, higher exports, more land cultivated.
- ❖ Industries grow rich by fulfilling war contracts and there is massive infrastructure expansion – especially the railroads
 - essential in transporting military supplies
 - another nationalization aspect – uniform gauges across the system
- ❖ For the ordinary workers in the North, the situation is different
 - because of inflation real wages fall
 - the war creates a millionaire class of industrialists and a stressed labor market
 - the labor union movement at the end of the century was born out of the problems arising for workers in the North during the war
- ❖ All of the changes – consolidation of the the national state, the rising power of the industrialists, the Emancipation and the changing condition of African Americans in society – produce countervailing dissent and protest.
- ❖ “Copperheads” was the name given to those who wanted the Union but more on the terms that it existed before the War. Mostly Democrat – from the Northwest (e.g. small farmers from southern parts of Illinois, Ohio) and in the Eastern cities, for instance, immigrant Irish workers.
 - Nativism is actually diminished during the war as people of different religions and heritages fight alongside one another - the Irish Catholics for instance.
 - Racism was definitely a factor in the anti-war, anti-administration sentiment
 - in 1862 the Democrats had used racist arguments in their election win directly after the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation
 - Emancipation was seen as a threat to jobs and wages in the North.

6.7: Civil Liberties, and the Legacy of the War

- ❖ A draft law for conscription was passed in 1863. As in the Confederacy there were exemptions
 - buy your way out \$300 (about the annual wage of a worker in New York) or provide a substitute
 - as in the South, this provides for a significant class advantage
 - of the 2 million odd that fought in the Union army there were only about 40,000 draftees and 120,000 substitutes
 - the draft though encouraged people to volunteer – a volunteer got a bonus
- ❖ The New York City draft riots begin in early July 1863 and lasted four days
 - homes of prominent Republicans, newspaper buildings, factories were attacked
 - violence was aimed towards the black population – there were fires, lynchings
 - nobody knows exactly but about 100 people were killed – many of them African Americans
 - many more fled the city
- ❖ The riots were a reflection of the bitter race and class conflicts that had been simmering
- ❖ **Civil liberties** were also an issue of contention, for instance
 - arbitrary arrests and habeas corpus
 - temporary closure of some newspapers
 - political dissenters were targeted
- ❖ The consequences of the Civil War were to play out for years after it ended
 - the national consolidation factors
 - the new power of the bankers and industrial class
 - the consolidation of business and mechanization (including in agriculture, where the debt caused by having to invest in the new equipment leads to agitation after the war)
- ❖ The War cements the power of the Republican Party (between 1860 and 1932 there are only two Democratic presidents) – the consequence of which is a federal government that consistently favors the industrial and banking interests of the North.
- ❖ The main issues on the agenda as the war ends
 - what is going to be the status of the 4 million odd slaves
 - how is the South going to be reconstructed on the bases of free labor
 - But also: issues relating to the tariff, how the bond holders were to be paid, the future of paper money

Section 7: Toward Union Victory

7.0: Introduction

Returning to the battlefield, we look now in more depth at the course of the war during 1863 and 1864. The military progress of the Union, after significant victories at Gettysburg and Vicksburg, began to stall amidst the horrendous levels of casualties, especially in Virginia where Grant's troops were engaged in bitter battle with Lee's Confederate army. Furthermore, public sentiment was turning - from the initial enthusiasm riding upon a wave of patriotism to dissatisfaction and war weariness; so much so that Lincoln began to fear for his chances of reelection, and Emancipation (as a bargaining chip to secure peace) became again an issue for the North. The tide was only to turn again in 1864 with the capture of Atlanta by General Sherman and Lincoln's reelection, after which the Thirteenth Amendment was ratified by Congress, and slavery was irrevocably abolished.

7A: The War's Progress, 1863-64

7.1: The Peace Democrats

- ❖ The Emancipation Proclamation of January 1863 changed significantly the nature of the war
 - it was now a war absolutely about the future of Southern society, and a future without slavery
 - the war was no longer of the conventional, traditional nature rather moved into a state of "hard war", that is
 - not one of discrete and dispersed engagements at specific places
 - rather a war fought in the civil society – confiscating supplies, occupying private property, freeing slaves – the boundary between military and civil interests was becoming increasingly hard to discern.
- ❖ In the Spring of 1863 antiwar sentiment in the North (Copperheads and others) is rising
 - there is no sign of the end of the war, battles are being lost or not won (stale mate) despite overwhelming manpower, the draft is being introduced
 - after more Confederate wins in Virginia (Chancellorsville) the Northern newspapers are touting Lee as invincible
 - The morale of the Union army has reached a low point, and is reflected in the growing feelings of dissatisfaction in the North
- ❖ The Congressman Clement Vallandigham, the leader of the so-called "Peace Democrats" is arrested in Ohio for giving antiwar speeches
 - he is sentenced to prison, but Lincoln commutes this and sends him into Confederate exile (so to speak) – where he was also unwanted and ended up in Canada
 - In absentia Vallandigham is nominated as the Democratic candidate for Governor of Ohio – on an agenda of armistice, free trade between North and South, revocation of the Emancipation proclamation and new Presidential elections; that is basically back to the status that held in 1860.
 - What happens in the fall elections is dependent on what happens on the battlefield.

7.2: Gettysburg, Then and Now

- ❖ In June/July 1863 the tide turns (temporarily) in favor of the Union
 - Robert E. Lee makes a huge mistake (or takes a huge gamble!) and invades the North
 - his rationale: going on the offensive and a win on Northern soil would further destroy the Union morale
 - he takes his army north through Virginia and Maryland and into Pennsylvania
 - one of his aims – to destroy the North’s major east/west rail link
 - tracked by the Union army under the command of General George Meade, the two armies meet at the tiny town of Gettysburg in Pennsylvania
- ❖ July 1st to 3rd 1863 the greatest battle of the war is fought – on the third day Lee charges his army towards the entrenched Union lines – from this position of defense the Union is able to repel the Confederates and eventually they had to retreat out of Pennsylvania.
- ❖ This was the first and last time that the Confederates would set foot in Union territory.
- ❖ At the end of the battle, each side had about 4000 dead (4000 is also about the entire casualties of the Revolution), 20000 wounded or missing on each side.
- ❖ Today the Gettysburg Battlefield is a national monument under the auspices of the National Park Service – previously without explanation or documentation that places the battle into perspective, it now has an excellent museum. It still may be seen as a celebration of a purely “white” reconciliation – that is, North and South devoid of the issue of Black slavery and Emancipation.
- ❖ Lincoln travels to Gettysburg in November 1863 to dedicate the military cemetery and gives his famous speech on equality, democracy, nationhood.

7.3: Vicksburg and After

- ❖ Simultaneously the Union capture Vicksburg in Mississippi
 - A central command post of the Mississippi River, it was a hindrance to Union movement on the River; its capture would be of primary importance.
 - After a long siege by Ulysses S. Grant’s army Vicksburg surrenders on July 4th.
 - An example of the “hard war” that had now set in.
 - Unsuccessful in his assault of the city, Grant surrounds it – a very swampy and difficult terrain that the Union can master only with the help of the knowledge of local slaves.
 - Cut off from his supply line out of Nashville, his army must live off the land, so to speak – which means confiscating from local farms what they need in the way of food, etc.
 - And they destroy the railroad junction at Jackson to inhibit an important Southern transportation hub.
- ❖ These two victories then at Gettysburg and Vicksburg greatly improve the morale in the North – at least for the rest of the year.

- ❖ The Republican Party is mobilizing more pro-war support in the North – private groups, like the Union League, the Loyal League sponsored by wealthy business men – flooding the North with propaganda through leaflets, pamphlets, newspapers, billboards.
 - Anybody who opposes the war, criticizes war policy, is a traitor, treasonous – especially Democrats, hence the Vallandigham case. There are rumors of secret societies, especially in the North-West, who are aiding the Confederacy.
 - Even long after the war is over, the Republicans are still able to associate the Democratic Party with secession and treason.
- ❖ This leads to large Republican wins in the fall elections of 1863
 - Vallandigham loses big to the Republican candidate for Governor of Ohio
 - basically reverses the gains of the Democrats in 1862
 - this not just because of the military victories and the propaganda, but also a growing acceptance in the North of Emancipation – of giving this war that is causing so much death and suffering a moral purpose.
- ❖ But ultimately, public morale is only as strong as the military success, and in 1864 there is nothing much that follows up the two great victories of the previous year.
- ❖ There is less and less support for Lincoln in the Congress in the election year 1864
 - there is a distrust, fear that he is too undecided
 - the Radical Republicans consider whether it would not be best to have a real radical rather someone they have to negotiate with and cajole.

7.4: Politics and War, 1864

- ❖ In May 1864 the Radical Republicans convened in Cleveland
 - they nominated their own Presidential candidate – John C. Fremont – to run on a platform that includes
 - a Constitutional amendment to end slavery
 - congressional control of Reconstruction
 - national protection of the rights of freed people (but not the right to vote)
 - confiscation of land in the South from rebels and redistribution among soldiers and settlers
- ❖ The war is not yet over, but the issues facing the post-war America and what a Reconstruction of the South may look like are already very much on the agenda – land, civil rights, suffrage, governmental oversight.
- ❖ Though urged by the Republican Party to do so, Fremont refuses to withdraw his candidacy.
- ❖ By the Summer of 1864 Lincoln's reelection prospects diminish, more because of what happens on the battlefield than any of the machinations of the Radicals.
 - Lincoln brings Grant to the East to command the Potomac army and facedown Lee.
 - A multi pronged scheme of attack in the first instance, that is not successful
 - In May 1864 Grant's army in Virginia is in battle every day – by the end of May the Union has 50000 casualties (dead, wounded, missing)

7B: Lincoln's Reelection and the End of Slavery

7.5: The Crisis of 1864

- ❖ Grant is committed to bringing this battle to an end irrespective of the costs – the public in the North though is horrified at the ever-growing casualties.
- ❖ By June nothing seems to have been accomplished & Lee is diminished but is still fighting
- ❖ Grant moves towards Petersburg just south of Richmond to destroy a railway junction but Lee is there first, and a siege begins that is to last nine months
- ❖ General Early decimates the Shenandoah Valley (again, “hard war”), Gen. Sherman is in northern Georgia and making little progress towards Atlanta
- ❖ Suggestions to negotiate an end to the war are made
 - and in which Lincoln holds firm with the bottom line – reunion and the end of slavery.
 - The Democrats make their case in the North that it is Emancipation that is inhibiting a peace settlement – the Confederates would be willing to return if the Emancipation proclamation is rescinded.
- ❖ In August 1864 even some Republicans are suggesting to Lincoln that he reconsider the slavery issue.
- ❖ Lincoln ponders sending an emissary with an unconditional proposal, talks with Frederik Douglass about getting as many black people out of the South as possible in case he should not be reelected.
- ❖ Ultimately though, Lincoln will not renege on his promise of Emancipation.

7.6: Sherman's March

- ❖ We know from a memo that on August 23rd Lincoln is convinced he will not be reelected
- ❖ The next week the Democrats meet to nominate their Presidential candidate – General McClellan, a war Democrat opposed to emancipation. But peace Democrats write the platform which calls for an immediate armistice, so the Democrats are split and the Republicans use the opportunity to suggest that the Democrats are selling out the Union.
- ❖ In early September General Sherman finally captures Atlanta
 - this changes the mood in the North and the dynamic of the presidential election
- ❖ After the election, on November 10th, Sherman sets off on his famous March to the Sea.
 - cutting his army off from supply lines, they march through the heart of Georgia
 - they live off the land as they go, destroy property and resources (they do not hurt civilians – mostly women and children)
 - thousands of slaves leave the plantations to follow Sherman’s army
 - nobody in the North knows exactly where is or if his army is intact
 - On December 21st 1864 they emerge at Savannah on the coast

- Sherman's idea (which he shared with Grant) was to injure Confederate morale by showing that the Union could at will march right through their heartland.
- In January Sherman meets with a group of black ministers and asks what can be done for them. It comes down to: slavery is the taking of labor without consent, freedom is being able to enjoy the fruits of one's labor, and to do that one needs land.
- They are allocated 40 acres per family in the Low Country for settlement and the hoard of (rather decrepit) mules that had been carrying supplies during the march
 - there was of course no mean amount of self-interest involved here – Sherman couldn't continue with all these people tagging along - having to be fed, etc., and interfering with operations
 - also, it seems, Sherman was genuinely grateful for their loyalty to the Union

7.7: The Thirteenth Amendment

- ❖ The fall of Atlanta changes the political calculus in the Republican Party
 - and Fremont withdraws his candidacy
 - but as late as October 1864 Lincoln was calculating only the slimmest of majorities – in fact, Nevada was only admitted as a State in October to ensure another three electoral votes
- ❖ The Democrats ran a highly racist campaign
 - the word miscegenation was invented by the Democrats in 1864 – the so-called Miscegenation Ball; an illustration and narrative constructed to suggest that white men/black women would become the norm should the Republicans be reelected
- ❖ But Lincoln had a resounding victory – he carried almost all the States - 212 electoral votes to McClellan's 21
- ❖ Right after the election Congress goes into session and have to consider the 13th Amendment to abolish slavery
 - the campaign to abolish slavery through a constitutional amendment was initiated by abolitionists and especially Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton at the beginning of 1864
 - Fremont's platform in May endorsed it
 - Initially, Lincoln did not – rather, was of the opinion; States created laws enabling slavery so they should now do the same to abolish it.
 - Also, it would be difficult to pass – requiring 2/3 of Congress and ¾ States.
 - The Senate had ratified it in the Spring, but it was defeated in the House

[edX - ColumbiaX: HIST1.1x The Civil War and Reconstruction - 1861-1865: A New Birth of Freedom](#)

- So it is to be voted on again in January, and Lincoln is now for ratification – on January 31st it is ratified by the House and goes out to the States.
- Why was it necessary? The Emancipation Proclamation frees individuals but it says nothing about the legal status of slavery. The 13th Amendment abolishes slavery, and simply reads as follows:
 - **Section 1.** Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction. **Section 2.** Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.^[1]
 - This is the first mention of the word slavery in the Constitution
- The abolition is without exception, but the 13th Amendment doesn't answer what exactly "slavery" is – individual and/or institutional?, the social structures and racial injustices that resulted from slavery? How, and to what extent, will the legislation be enforced?
- These questions and more will be crucial during the period of Reconstruction.

Section 8: Beginnings of Reconstruction and the End of the War

8.0: Introduction

In this final section, we explore further how the issues surrounding postwar Reconstruction actually emerged during the Civil War itself; setting the stage for the turbulent postwar years to come. We then consider events leading to Lee's surrender and the end of the war in 1865, and also how Lincoln, armed with his newly evolved ideas concerning race and ways towards reconstruction, sought to help the nation reconcile the tragedy behind them with a new path towards unity. Further, we consider the traumatic effect the assassination of Lincoln on April 14, 1865, only days after Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appomattox, had upon the nation, and contemplate a little what of "might have been" had it not occurred.

We complete this course by looking at the the war's profound consequences for American life, and ask questions, that remain contentious amongst historians, like: what were the consequences of the abolition of slavery? how is Lincoln's leadership to be assessed? And then finally look forward to the era of Reconstruction (the subject of the third and final course in this series).

8A: Defining Reconstruction

8.1: Restoration or Reconstruction?

- ❖ Officially from the end of the war in 1865 until 1877, Reconstruction did in many ways of course begin even during the war years
- ❖ At the beginning of the war, the expression "Restoration" was more commonly applied to what a post-war South may look like.
 - this at least suggests that the Southern states would return to the Union with pretty much the legal and political status they had before secession – a scenario that even Lincoln imagined in the first instance
- ❖ Radical Republicans on the other hand did tend to use the word "reconstruction"
 - suggesting certainly the end of slavery, but also the planter class, and all the social structures these implied and the establishment of a system of free labor
 - Senator James Ashley of Ohio put forward a bill that reverted the secession States to territorial status
 - Thaddeus Stevens wanted it such that the secession states be considered as conquered lands without any constitutional status
- ❖ By 1862 many abolitionists and radicals say that Reconstruction must come with black male suffrage – that would allow, in terms of population, for a loyal, committed to the Union, South.
- ❖ The Emancipation Proclamation changes the debate, specifically in that the idea of "restoration" is nullified.

- ❖ Also Emancipation intensifies a split amongst Unionists in the border states
 - the supportive Radicals
 - and the conservatives who are opposed to secession but want to maintain slavery in their states
 - by war's end, through internal revolutions Maryland and Missouri had in fact banned slavery
 - but slavery remains in Delaware and Kentucky
- ❖ From the outset, Lincoln tries to encourage pro-Union governments amongst the southern states
 - appoints military governors in Louisiana and Tennessee
 - encourages civil efforts to return to the Union – in fact offers exemption from the Emancipation proclamation in parts of eastern Virginia and southern Louisiana.

8.2: Lincoln, Louisiana, and Reconstruction

- ❖ Lincoln focuses a lot of his attention on Louisiana, especially around New Orleans
 - pro-Union sentiment amongst many of the sugar planters near by (wanted the benefits of tariffs on sugar)
 - large foreign born population – Irish, Germans who were not aligned with the Confederates
 - many merchants who were dependent on the North for trade
 - an important free black community – Louisiana Purchase agreement with the French – educated, qualified, demanding of their rights
 - leads to a split amongst pro-Unionists because giving them the right to vote would lead to alienation in the white populace.
- ❖ Lincoln appoints a new military governor - General Nathaniel Banks - to replace General Butler (who had become unpopular)
 - and instructs him to set up a new state government with a constitution abolishing slavery
 - also, contrary to the Radicals, Lincoln is convinced that there is a substantial white population which can be brought back into the fold so to speak
- ❖ This leads in December, 1863, to Lincoln's first public pronouncement on Reconstruction through a letter to Congress (concerning all southern states, but predominately relating to Louisiana)
 - he offers amnesty to any white who promises future allegiance to the United States and accepts the end of slavery
 - a restoration of government if 10 percent of voters (compared to 1860 election) signed this oath of allegiance
 - further, their rights to property would be restored – as a counter to the Confiscation Act.
 - he also offered something like a transition from slave labor – whereby slaves would still have to work for some period of time

8.3: Plans of Reconstruction

- ❖ Similar to Lincoln's idea, Andrew Johnson similarly has an attempt at grass-roots government in Nashville, with little success.
- ❖ Lincoln's plan though is more a war measure, than a serious proposition for the time after – for this, he knows that he must have the support of Congress
- ❖ In Louisiana, Banks enrolls voters who then elect a Governor – Michael Hahn, a German immigrant, is elected Governor of the Free State of Louisiana. The black suffrage matter, quietly hinted at by Lincoln, is rejected at the Constitutional Convention, but this is important as it is the first time any President has mentioned the possibility of black people voting. The Convention is all white, pro-Union; it abolishes slavery and does add a clause stating that the legislature has the right to later expand suffrage.
- ❖ Freed blacks are given few rights under this new constitution – in fact, in terms of power dynamics, the white Confederate planter class has been replaced by pro-Unionists of the same ilk. This raises the question of whether a Reconstruction will run along the lines of loyalty to the Union or on the empowerment of the freed slaves in a new free labor society.
- ❖ Banks has set up a system whereby former slaves have to go to work for **loyal planters** - for a miniscule wage - along the rich banks of the Mississippi.
 - the army can enforce discipline on the plantations.
 - a school has to be provided
 - family relations have to be allowed
 - the whip can not be used
 - but the black people have to stay there, and if necessary will be returned by force.
- ❖ In the end, nobody is happy with the arrangement. The planters say they cannot enforce discipline (without the whip!) and the freed blacks say: we thought we were free!
- ❖ In the North, the Radicals are becoming disgruntled with the developments in Louisiana, and in 1864 Congress passes their own Reconstruction bill – the Wade-Davis Bill (named for the responsible Republican Congressmen), and it says:
 - Reconstruction can not start until 50% of voters from 1860 have signed an “ironclad oath” swearing to **past** loyalty, that is, that they have never supported the Confederacy.
 - abolition of slavery is central to Reconstruction
 - it does not allow for black suffrage
 - it allows for military rule until civil governments are established.
- ❖ It passes Congress, but Lincoln (pocket) vetoes it (this is the only bill relating to slavery that Lincoln ever vetoes), and Wade and Davis issue a manifesto denouncing Lincoln. The issue of Reconstruction is becoming more and more volatile within the Republican party.

8.4: From Slave Labor to Free Labor

- ❖ The transition from slave labor to free labor is being contemplated upon, fought over and rehearsed upon with three major initiatives
 - First, on the Sea Islands after it was captured by the Union in 1861
 - a band of Northern abolitionists and teachers, called the Gideonites, went down there and started schools, and assisted with the transition
 - also cotton investors who hope to take over the plantations and employ the black people under wage and free labor conditions
 - the attitude is very paternalistic, but the freed blacks seem to come to terms with the teachers - not so with the investors, they were more interested in having their own land than remaining at work on the plantations
 - and a few did in fact get land – some of the land seized by the government because of taxes not paid was partitioned into small plots and given to former slaves
 - Secondly, in the Mississippi Valley under General Banks.
 - the plantations are leased to either Northerners or loyal planters
 - former or escaped slaves are put to work for low wages – 3 to 5 dollars a month
 - neither party is happy with the result
 - And thirdly, at Davis Bend on the Mississippi River in Miss.
 - this was where Jefferson Davis and his brother Joseph had big cotton plantations
 - “enlightened” slaveowners! Joseph Davis was a follow of the French utopian socialist Fourier and tried to run his plantation like a sort of commune and cooperative - slaves had their own hierarchy and claims court
 - After the Union army arrives and Davis flees Grant appoints John Eaton as his so-called Superintendent of Negro Affairs
 - and was instructed to divvy up the plantation land amongst the former slaves and let them run it
 - this initiative was in fact successful
- ❖ The inter-related issues of labor and land are on the agenda as the war nears its end
 - being debated in Washington – the War Department sets up the American Freedmen’s Inquiry Commission which comes to conflicting conclusions
 - they are free - let them live their freedom without interference
 - or, give them land – without which they will not be totally free
 - Congress in March 1865 establishes The Bureau of Freedmen, Refugees and Abandoned Lands (Refugees being displaced whites) and thereby linking the fate of the people with land; the bill stating that the government would rent confiscated land to former slaves.

8B: Now He Belongs to the Ages

8.5: The End of the War

- ❖ Just as Congress is debating the 13th Amendment, General Sherman is entering South Carolina
- ❖ Inspired, slaves are rising up in South Carolina, seizing or burning plantations
- ❖ Sherman takes the South Carolina capital of Columbia
- ❖ on route into Virginia to close the trap on Lee who is still being besieged by Grant at Petersburg
- ❖ In the meantime though in April, 1865, Grant had broken through the lines of Lee who has to abandon Petersburg leaving the way clear for Grant to take Richmond.
- ❖ Lee tries to flee westward to join the only other Confederate army commanded by Johnston in North Carolina – but Grant intervenes
- ❖ And on April 9th, at the Appomattox Court House, Lee surrenders.
- ❖ While some military activity continues, this is considered the end of the Civil War
- ❖ In the last days, the Confederacy does enlist some black soldiers who were sent to Petersburg – though there was still no assurance that this would lead to their freedom, and should not be confused with any intent of emancipation
- ❖ The day after Richmond is taken, Lincoln comes to Richmond and is lauded by black people on the streets – the white population is conspicuously absent.

8.6: Lincoln's Last Days

- ❖ In March 4th 1865 delivers his legendary Second Inaugural Address :

Fellow-Countrymen:

At this second appearing to take the oath of the Presidential office there is less occasion for an extended address than there was at the first. Then a statement somewhat in detail of a course to be pursued seemed fitting and proper. Now, at the expiration of four years, during which public declarations have been constantly called forth on every point and phase of this great conflict which is of primary concern to the nation as a whole, little that is new could be presented. The progress of our arms, upon which all else chiefly depends, is as well known to the public as to myself, and it is, I trust, reasonably satisfactory and encouraging to all. With high hope for the future, no prediction in regard to it is ventured.

On the occasion corresponding to this four years ago all thoughts were anxiously directed to an impending civil war. All dreaded it, all sought to avert it. While the inaugural address was being delivered from this place, devoted altogether to saving the Union without war, insurgent agents were in the city seeking to destroy it without war—seeking to dissolve the Union and divide effects by negotiation. Both parties deprecated war, but one of them would make war rather than let the nation survive, and the other would accept war rather than let it perish. And the war came.

One-eighth of the whole population were colored slaves, not distributed generally over the Union, but localized in the southern part of it. These slaves constituted a peculiar and powerful interest. All knew that this interest was somehow the cause of the war. To strengthen, perpetuate, and extend this interest was the object for which the insurgents would rend the Union even by war, while the Government claimed no right to do more than to restrict the territorial enlargement of it. Neither party expected for the war the magnitude or the duration which it has already attained. Neither anticipated that the cause of the conflict might cease with or even before the conflict itself should cease. Each looked for an easier triumph, and a result less fundamental and astounding. Both read the same Bible and pray to the same God, and each invokes His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces, but let us judge not, that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered. That of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has His own purposes. "Woe unto the world because of offenses; for it must needs be that offenses come, but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh." If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South this terrible war as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to Him? Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said "the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.

—[Abraham Lincoln](#)

[edX - ColumbiaX: HIST1.1x The Civil War and Reconstruction - 1861-1865: A New Birth of Freedom](#)

- ❖ He names slavery as the cause of the war, and that all of American is responsible, not just the South – as an evil for which we all have and will be punished.
- ❖ Religious, visceral. Violence did not begin with the war in 1861, but began with slavery 250 years before.
- ❖ Lincoln is asking that the people of America to think about the legacy of slavery, to consider the nation’s responsibility and what is owed for the violence and injustices perpetrated.
- ❖ At the time the speech was quite unpopular, the people were looking towards a more victorious and celebratory tone.
- ❖ By April, Lincoln had probably realized that his ideas for Reconstruction have failed to various degrees, and in his last speech at the White House on April 11th
 - he invites Charles Sumner to share the balcony with him include the Radicals
 - he talks about Louisiana – how they have abolished slavery & have a new constitution and we should work towards getting them back into the Union
 - he publicly states, what he privately had said to Hahn the year before, that intelligent, loyal black people and black Union soldiers should be able to vote
 - some say John Wilkes Booth was in the audience – some evidence that the original plan to take Lincoln hostage was changed because of the content of this last speech of Lincoln’s that the conspirators interpreted as a call for “negro equality”.
- ❖ Lincoln was mostly unconcerned with security, and on April 14th goes to the Ford theater
 - and is shot by the actor, very famous actor, John Wilkes Booth
 - it is Good Friday, which encourages the apotheosis of Lincoln as a Christ-like figure who has died for the sins of his people
- ❖ His successor, the VP, Andrew Johnson, is a racist and without standing in the Republican Party. Things do not bide well for Reconstruction.

8.7: The World the War Made

- ❖ A month after Lincoln's assassination a grand parade and review of the victorious armies was held in Washington
 - a spectacle to highlight the new military power of the national state
- ❖ Most of the mistakes and inadequacies of the Confederacy could have been avoided (except manpower) but that which could not was slavery
 - slavery created the Confederacy and slavery doomed the Confederacy
 - slavery was inherent to the Southern society it sought to preserve.
- ❖ The irony of the Civil War – both sides lost something they set out to preserve
 - the South seceded to preserve slavery & the War destroys slavery
 - and the War was the death knell also of Lincoln's America – the free labor world of small, decentralized farms and producers has been irreversibly transformed economically, politically, intellectually by the war. Capital, industrial expansion, the booming cities are now central in determining the path of post-War America.