

With each side still determined to win, the bloodiest months of the Civil War were still to come.

The Union Closes In

SS.8.A.5.3, SS.8.A.5.5, SS.8.A.5.6, SS.8.A.5.7, LA.8.1.6.1, LA.8.1.6.2, LA.8.1.6.3

What events occurred at the end of the war?

By 1864, Union forces had the South surrounded. Union ships blocked the Confederate coast, reducing the trade goods getting out and supplies getting in. The Union also controlled the Mississippi River, cutting off the western Confederate states from those in the East. The South seemed ready to fall—if the Union could come up with the right plan of attack. General Grant would be the one to draw up such a plan.

General Grant Takes Charge

Ulysses S. Grant had been only an average student. He failed as a farmer and in business. Yet he became a brilliant soldier. He led Union troops to victory at Shiloh and Vicksburg and at another key battle in Chattanooga, Tennessee. In March 1864, President Lincoln put General Grant in charge of all the Union armies.

President Lincoln liked that Grant was a man of action. Now in charge, Grant wasted little time coming up with a plan to finish the war. He would deliver killing blows from all sides. His armies would move on to Richmond, the Confederate capital. At the same time, General William Tecumseh Sherman would lead attacks across the Deep South.

Grant soon put his strategy into action. In May and June of 1864, Grant's army confronted Lee's smaller force in a **series** of three battles near Richmond, Virginia. These were the Battles of the Wilderness, Spotsylvania Court House, and Cold Harbor. At each battle, Confederate lines held at first, but Grant quickly renewed the attack. "Whatever happens, there will be no turning back," Grant promised Lincoln. He was determined to march southward, attacking Lee's forces relentlessly and in spite of heavy losses until the Confederacy surrendered.

Grant Moves South Toward Richmond

The Wilderness was a densely wooded area about halfway between Washington, D.C., and Richmond, Virginia. Here, on May 5, 1864, the six bloodiest weeks of the war began. For two days, Union and Confederate forces struggled among a tangle of trees through which they could hardly see. A Union private said, "It was a blind and bloody hunt to the death."

At the Battle of the Wilderness, Lee had only about 60,000 men, while Grant had more than 100,000. Both sides suffered huge casualties. Grant, who lost 17,000 men, cried in his tent at the end of the second day. Meanwhile, brushfires raged through the forest. The fires burned alive 200 wounded men. On the morning of the third day, with no clear winner, Grant moved his forces south toward Richmond.

The next battles took place at nearby Spotsylvania Court House and at Cold Harbor. On June 2, the night before this third battle began, a Union general observed that men were "writing their names and home addresses on slips of paper and pinning them to the backs of their coats" to help people identify their bodies. The war seemed hopeless. Grant, however, was determined. He explained to the White House, "I propose to fight it out on this line, if it takes all summer."

In a space of 30 days, Grant lost 50,000 of his own troops. His critics in the North called him a "butcher." Lincoln, however, stood by his general. "I can't spare this man," Lincoln is reported to have said. "He fights." As he fought, the Confederates were also losing men—losses their smaller army could not survive.

Siege at Petersburg

Grant made steady progress. He next arrived at Petersburg, a railroad center vital to the Confederate movement of troops and supplies. If Grant could take Petersburg, Richmond would be cut off from the rest of the Confederacy. Grant laid siege. The Confederates defended the city, but they could not break the Union's grip. Trains brought food and more troops to the Union side. The Confederates could get neither. Determined, they refused to give up.

Sherman in Georgia

Meanwhile, William Tecumseh Sherman headed for Georgia. In early July, his troops circled Atlanta. There they faced the brilliant Confederate general, John Hood. Hood's forces put up major **resistance** (rih • ZIHS • tuhnts). Sherman laid siege, finally forcing Hood to abandon the city on September 1. The mood in the white South became desperate as the prospect of defeat became more certain. Mary Chesnut, a South Carolinian who kept a diary throughout the war, wrote, "There is no hope, but we will try to have no fear."

Farragut Blockades Mobile Bay

The highest-ranking officer in the Union navy was David Farragut. The son of a Spanish military man, Farragut had joined the navy when he was only 12 years old. In August 1864, he led a fleet of 18 ships through a narrow channel into Mobile Bay in Alabama. His mission was to gain control of the bay. Faced with stiff resistance, Farragut prepared for battle. To make sure he had a good view, he climbed high into the ship's rigging and had himself tied in place.

The Confederates had forts on both sides of the channel, and they had mined the water with torpedoes. Unwilling to back down, Farragut shouted his famous order: "Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead!" The mission succeeded in blocking the last Southern port east of the Mississippi.

Battles in Florida

In February 1864, Union forces landed in Jacksonville. They moved into the state's center. The Union wanted to cut off Florida's supplies from the rest of the Confederacy. As 5,500 Union soldiers marched west, Confederate general Joseph Finegan positioned 5,200 troops at Olustee Station, located about 13 miles (21 km) east of Lake City. On February 20, the two armies fought a furious battle. The fighting left nearly 2,000 Union soldiers and 1,000 Confederates dead, wounded, or captured. The Battle of Olustee, also known as Ocean Pond, forced Union troops to retreat to Jacksonville.

The Confederates also won the Battle of Natural Bridge in southern Leon County. In March 1865, Union army and naval forces landed near St. Mark's Lighthouse. They prepared to move inland to take St. Marks, and then to march on to Tallahassee. The people of Tallahassee began building Fort Houston. Men of all ages volunteered to defend the capital. Meeting at Natural Bridge, Confederate soldiers turned back the veteran Union forces. The Battle of Natural Bridge was one of the last significant Confederate victories of the war.

The Election of 1864

In the North, opposition to the war grew stronger through much of 1864. It seemed unlikely that Lincoln could win reelection in November. His loss could mean an end to the war and recognition of the Confederacy as an independent country. White Southerners clung to this hope.

After Union troops captured Atlanta and blocked Mobile Bay, however, weary Northerners began to believe again that victory was possible. In November, President Lincoln won a second term. He took 55 percent of the popular vote and 212 to 21 electoral votes over the Democratic candidate, General George B. McClellan.

Many interpreted Lincoln's reelection as a clear sign from the voters: They wanted a permanent end to slavery. On January 31, 1865, Congress passed the Thirteenth Amendment, which banned slavery in the United States.

Explaining Why did it seem unlikely that Lincoln would be reelected in the early part of 1864?

The War Ends

SS.8.A.5.3, SS.8.A.5.6

What is total war?

From the beginning of the war, a goal of the Union army was to capture the Confederate capital at Richmond. Petersburg had been the last roadblock in Grant's path. After a nine-month siege, Grant finally drove Lee's army out of that city. Jefferson Davis knew that Richmond was doomed.

Sherman's March to the Sea

Still, the Confederacy fought on. The Union was determined to break the South's will to continue the fight. To break this will, Sherman burned much of the city of Atlanta in November 1864. Sherman then had his troops march across Georgia toward the Atlantic, burning cities and crops as they went. This trail of destruction is known as Sherman's March to the Sea.

Sherman continued his march through the Carolinas to join Grant's forces near Richmond. Union troops took food, tore up railroad lines and fields, and killed livestock. General Sherman's march was part of a strategy called total war. Total war involves destroying not only the enemy's army, but also its land and people. Sherman hoped that by bringing the horrors of the war to the Southern population, he could help end the war.

White Southerners were outraged by Sherman's march. Thousands of African Americans, however, left their plantations to follow the protection of his army. For them, the March to the Sea was a march to freedom.

Richmond Falls

In March 1865, Lincoln delivered his second Inaugural Address. At the same time, Grant was pressing in on Richmond. General Lee realized the situation was hopeless. He told President Davis he could no longer defend Richmond. The Confederate government fled south, and Lee's army evacuated the city. By April 4, 1865, President Lincoln was able to walk through the streets of the former Confederate capital.

A Meeting at Appomattox Court House

The formal end of the war came on April 9, 1865. Two days earlier, Grant had asked Lee to surrender, writing, "The result of last week must convince you of the hopelessness of further resistance." At first, Lee had believed he must fight on. Then, the Union captured the train carrying food to his starving troops and completely surrounded his army. He knew it was over.

Grant met with Lee in a small Virginia town called Appomattox Court House. The two men shook hands and talked a little. Then Grant offered his terms: Lee's officers could keep their small firearms, and any soldier with a horse could keep it. No one would disturb the

soldiers as they made their way home. Grant also gave 25,000 rations to feed Lee's troops. America's deadliest war ended with dignity and compassion.

The Toll of War

More lives were lost in the Civil War than in any other conflict in American history. The war cost billions of dollars and left many Southern cities and farms in ruins.

The North's victory saved the Union. The war also made clear that the national government was more powerful than the states. Finally, the war freed millions of African Americans. As you will read, however, the end of slavery left unresolved many problems that newly freed African Americans were to face.

Many questions remained. No one yet knew how to bring the Southern states back into the Union, nor what the status of African Americans would be in Southern society. Americans would struggle to answer these questions in the years ahead—an era known as Reconstruction.

Explaining Why did General Lee finally surrender?

LESSON 5 REVIEW

Review Vocabulary

1. How did *total war* affect civilians of the Confederacy?

LA.8.1.6.1

Answer the Guiding Questions

2. **Explaining** How did events on the battlefield affect Lincoln's reelection?

SS.8.A.5.3, SS.8.A.5.6

3. **Identifying Cause and Effect** Why did Sherman burn and destroy the South's land?

SS.8.A.5.3, SS.8.A.5.6

4. **Evaluating** Why did the war leave the United States government stronger than ever before?

SS.8.A.5.3, SS.8.A.5.6

5. **NARRATIVE WRITING** You are a reporter covering Lee's army at the time of his surrender. Write a brief article describing the events surrounding his meeting with Grant.

SS.8.A.5.3, SS.8.A.5.6