

**May 5,
1864**
*Battle of the
Wilderness*

**June 3,
1864**
*Battle of Cold
Harbor*

**Sept. 2,
1864**
*Sherman occupies
Atlanta*

**Dec. 22,
1864**
*Sherman captures
Savannah*

**April 9,
1865**
*Lee surrenders to
Grant at Appomattox*

**April 14,
1865**
*President Lincoln
assassinated*

1864

1865

1866

4 A New Birth of Freedom

SECTION PREVIEW

Objectives

- 1 Explain Grant's and Sherman's strategies for defeating the South.
- 2 Summarize the issues and the outcome of the election of 1864.
- 3 Describe the end of the war and the assassination of President Lincoln.
- 4 **Key Terms** Define: Battle of the Wilderness; Battle of Spotsylvania; Battle of Cold Harbor; Thirteenth Amendment; guerrilla.

Main Idea

After years of fighting and countless casualties, the South surrendered in April 1865.

Reading Strategy

Arranging Events in Order As you read, create a time line that lists in order the major events in the section. Beneath each entry write a brief sentence or phrase that connects each event to the entry that follows it.

The Confederates' war strategy for 1864 was a simple one—to hold on. They knew the North would have a presidential election in November. If the war dragged on and casualties mounted, northern voters might replace Lincoln with a President willing to grant the South its independence. "If we can only subsist," wrote an official in the Confederate War Department, "we may have peace."

Grant Takes Command

President Lincoln understood that his chances for reelection in 1864 depended on the Union's success on the battlefield. In March he summoned Ulysses S. Grant to Washington and gave him command of all Union forces. Grant's plan was to confront and crush the Confederate army and end the war before the November election.

Placing General William Tecumseh Sherman in charge in the West, Grant remained in the East to battle General Lee. He realized that Lee was running short of men and supplies. Grant now proposed to use the North's superiority in population and industry

to wear down the Confederates. In the West he ordered Sherman to do the same.

Battle of the Wilderness In early May 1864 Grant moved south across the Rapidan River in Virginia with a force of some 120,000 men. Lee had about 65,000 troops. The Union army headed directly toward Richmond. Grant knew that to stop the Union advance, Lee would have to fight. In May and June the Union and Confederate armies clashed in three major battles. This was exactly what Grant wanted.

The fighting began on May 5 with the two-day **Battle of the Wilderness**. This battle occurred on virtually the same ground as the Battle of Chancellorsville the year before.[†] The two armies met in a dense forest. The fighting was so heavy that the woods caught fire, causing many of the wounded to be

[†] The Confederate forces felt a sense of repetition when General Longstreet, Lee's second-in-command, was accidentally shot and wounded by his own soldiers only three miles from where Stonewall Jackson had been shot the year before.

burned to death. Unable to see in the smoke-filled forest, units got lost and fired on friendly soldiers, mistaking them for the enemy.

Grant was badly beaten at the Wilderness. However, instead of retreating as previous Union commanders had done after defeats, he moved his army around the Confederates and again headed south. Despite the high number of casualties, Union soldiers were proud that under Grant's leadership they would not retreat so easily.

Spotsylvania and Cold Harbor Two days later, on May 8, the Confederates caught up to the Union army near the little town of Spotsylvania Court House. The series of clashes that followed over nearly two weeks are called the **Battle of Spotsylvania**.

The heaviest fighting took place on May 12. In some parts of the battlefield the Union dead were piled four deep. When Northerners began to protest the huge loss of life, a determined Grant notified Lincoln, "I propose to fight it out on this line [course of action] if it takes all summer." Then he moved the Union army farther south.

In early June the armies clashed yet again at the **Battle of Cold Harbor**, just eight miles

from Richmond. In a dawn attack on June 3, Grant launched two direct charges on the Confederates, who were behind strong fortifications. Some 7,000 Union soldiers fell in less than an hour.

The Siege of Petersburg Unable to reach Richmond or defeat Lee's army, Grant moved his army around the capital and attacked Petersburg, a railroad center south of the city. He knew that if he could cut off shipments of food to Richmond, the city would have to surrender. The attack failed, however.

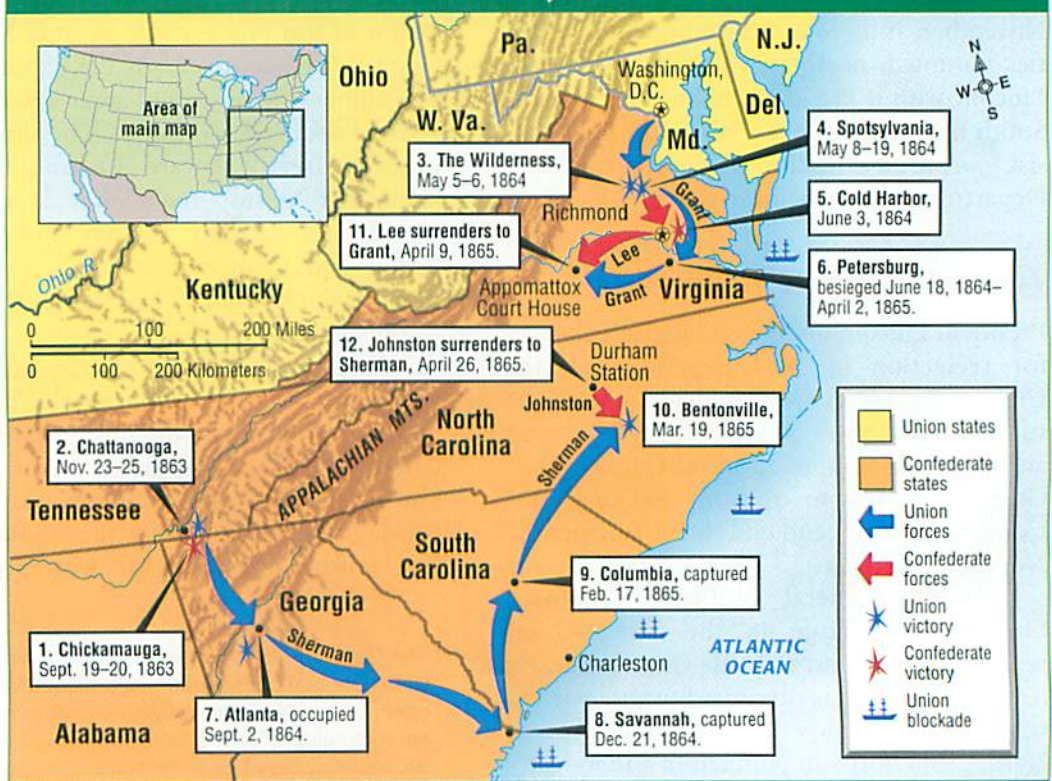
In less than two months, Grant's army had suffered some 65,000 casualties. The toll had a chilling effect on the surviving Union troops. At Cold Harbor, many soldiers pinned their names and addresses on their uniforms so their bodies could be identified.

Grant then turned to the tactic he had successfully used at Vicksburg. On June 18, 1864, he began the siege of Petersburg. Lee responded by building defenses. While he had lost many fewer men than Grant, it was becoming difficult for Lee to replace all his casualties. He was willing to stay put and wait for the northern election in November.



Grant's stubbornness and Sherman's campaign of total war brought the Civil War to a bloody close. Compare the relative forces of the Union and the Confederacy in the final months of the Civil War. **Movement** Why do you think Sherman met with little resistance?

Final Battles of the Civil War, 1863–1865



Sherman in Georgia

As Grant's army advanced against Lee, Sherman began to move south from Chattanooga, Tennessee, to threaten the city of Atlanta. Sherman's strategy was identical to Grant's in Virginia. He would force the main Confederate army in the West to attempt to stop his advance. If the southern general took the bait, Sherman would destroy the enemy with his huge 98,000-man force. If the Confederates refused to fight, he would seize Atlanta, an important rail and industrial center.

The Capture of Atlanta Sherman's opponent was General Joseph Johnston, the Confederate commander who had been wounded at the Battle of Seven Pines in Virginia in 1862. Johnston's tactics were similar to Lee's. He would engage the Union force to block its progress. At the same time, he would not allow Sherman to deal him a crushing defeat. In this way, he hoped to delay Sherman from reaching Atlanta before the presidential elections could take place in the North.

Despite Johnston's best efforts, by mid-July 1864 the Union army was just a few miles from Atlanta. Wanting more aggressive action, Confederate president Jefferson Davis replaced Johnston with General James Hood.

The new commander gave Davis—and Sherman—exactly what they wanted. In late July, Hood engaged the Union force in a series of battles. With each clash the southern army lost thousands of soldiers. Finally, with the Confederate forces reduced from some 62,000 to less than 45,000, General Hood retreated to Atlanta's strong defenses. Like Grant at Petersburg, Sherman laid siege to the city. Throughout the month of August, Sherman's forces bombarded Atlanta. In early September the Confederate army pulled out and left the city to the Union general's mercy.

Sherman Marches to the Sea "War is cruelty," Sherman once wrote. "There is no use trying to reform it. The crueler it is, the sooner it will be over." It was from this viewpoint that

FACT
Finder

Civil War Casualties

	<i>Killed and Mortally Wounded</i>	<i>Dead of Disease</i>	<i>Prisoner-of-War Dead</i>	<i>Wounded</i>	<i>Total Casualties</i>
Union	110,100	224,580	30,192	275,175	640,047
Confederacy	94,000	164,000	31,000	194,026	483,026
Total	204,100	388,580	61,192	469,201	1,123,073

Source: *Blood Brothers: A Short History of the Civil War*, by Frank E. Vandiver

Interpreting Tables After four years and more than 10,500 engagements, the Civil War claimed well over a million casualties. **Science and Technology** What was the leading cause of death in the Civil War? What role did science and technology play in the high death tolls of this war?

the tough Ohio soldier conducted his military campaigns. Although a number of Union commanders considered Sherman to be mentally unstable, Grant stood by him. As a result, Sherman was fiercely loyal to his commander.

Now, Sherman convinced Grant to permit a daring move. Vowing to "make Georgia howl," in November 1864, Sherman led some 62,000 Union troops on a march to the sea to capture Savannah, Georgia. Before abandoning Atlanta, however, he ordered the city evacuated and then burned.

After leaving Atlanta in ruins, Sherman's soldiers cut a nearly 300-mile long path of destruction across Georgia. The troops destroyed bridges, factories, and railroad lines. They seized and slaughtered livestock. Grain that had recently been harvested for the Confederate troops went to Union soldiers instead.

As the Northerners approached Savannah, the small Confederate force there fled. On December 22 the Union army entered the city without a fight. "I beg to present you, as a Christmas gift, the city of Savannah," read General Sherman's message to Lincoln. For the President, it was the second piece of good news since the November election.

The Election of 1864

"I am going to be beaten," Lincoln said of his reelection chances in 1864, "and unless some great change takes place, *badly* beaten." In an attempt to broaden Lincoln's appeal, the Republicans dumped Vice President Hannibal Hamlin and nominated Andrew Johnson of

Tennessee to run with the President. Johnson was a Democrat and a pro-Union Southerner.

The Democrats nominated General George McClellan as their candidate. McClellan was only too happy to oppose Lincoln, who had twice fired him. The general was still loved by his soldiers, and Lincoln feared that McClellan would find wide support among the troops. McClellan promised that if elected, he would negotiate an end to the war.

Sherman's capture of Atlanta, however, changed the political climate in the North. Sensing victory, Northerners became less willing to support a negotiated settlement. In November, with the help of ballots cast by Union soldiers, Lincoln won an easy victory, gathering 212 out of a possible 233 electoral votes.

By reelecting Lincoln, voters not only showed their approval of his war policy, but also their increasing acceptance of his stand against slavery. Three months later, in February 1865, Congress joined him in that stand and passed the **Thirteenth Amendment**

to the Constitution. It was ratified by the states and became law on December 6, 1865. In a few words, the amendment ended slavery in the United States forever:

KEY DOCUMENTS

“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.”

—*Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution*

As President Lincoln prepared to begin his second term, it was clear to most Northerners that the war was nearly over. In his Second Inaugural Address, in March 1865, Lincoln reflected on the meaning of the previous four years:

KEY DOCUMENTS

“Both [North and South] 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 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.”

—*Lincoln's Second Inaugural, March 1865*

The End of the War

As Grant strangled Richmond and Sherman prepared to move north from Savannah to join him, Southerners' gloom deepened. President Davis claimed that he had never really counted on McClellan's election, or on a negotiated peace. “The deep waters are closing over us,” Mary Chesnut observed in her diary.

Sherman Moves North In February 1865 General Sherman's troops left Savannah and headed for South Carolina. As the first state to secede, many Northerners regarded it as the heart of the rebellion. “Here is where the treason began and, by God, here is where it shall end,” wrote one Union soldier as the army marched northward.

Unlike Virginia and many other Confederate states, the Carolinas had seen relatively little fighting. Sherman had two goals as he moved toward Grant's position at

CAUSE AND EFFECT: The Civil War

CAUSES

- Regional differences between the largely industrial North and the agrarian South grow stronger.
- The question of slavery in the territories widens the gap between Northern and Southern interests.
- The Compromise of 1850 and the Kansas-Nebraska Act inflame passions on both sides of the slavery issue.
- An antislavery candidate, Abraham Lincoln, is elected President.
- The Lower South secedes to form the Confederate States of America.
- The Confederacy attacks Fort Sumter.

THE CIVIL WAR

EFFECTS

- The Union is preserved.
- Slavery is abolished.
- More than half a million people are dead.



Interpreting Charts Slavery was at the center of the dispute between Northern and Southern interests. The central issue of the Civil War, according to President Lincoln, was the preservation of the Union. In the end, the Union prevailed. **Government** How did the Civil War resolve the question of slavery? Do you think the war could have ended without a resolution of the issue?

Petersburg: to destroy the South's remaining resources and to crush Southerners' remaining will to fight. In South Carolina he did both. The Confederate army could do little but retreat in front of Sherman's advancing force.

South Carolina was treated even more harshly than Georgia. In Georgia, for example, Union troops burned very few of the houses that were in their path. In South Carolina, few houses were spared.

On February 17 the Union forces entered the state capital, Columbia. That night a fire burned nearly half of the city to the ground. Although no one could prove who started the fire, South Carolinians blamed Sherman's troops for the destruction. When the Union army moved into North Carolina, all demolition of civilian property ceased.

Surrender at Appomattox By April 1865, daily desertions had shrunk the Confederate army defending Richmond to less than 35,000 starving men. Realizing that he could no longer protect the city, on April 2 Lee tried to slip around Grant's army. He planned to unite his troops with those of General Johnston, who was retreating before Sherman's force in North Carolina. Lee hoped that together they would be able to continue the war.

Units of General Grant's army tracked the Confederates as they moved west. Each time Lee tried to turn his soldiers south, Grant's troops cut them off. On April 9, Lee's army arrived at the small Virginia town of Appomattox Court House. There the Confederates were surrounded by a much larger Union force. Some of Lee's officers suggested that the army could scatter and continue to fight as **guerrillas**—soldiers who use hit-and-run tactics. Lee rejected this idea, fearing it would bring more devastation to Virginia. Reluctantly he admitted, "There is nothing left for me to do but go and see General Grant, and I would rather die a thousand deaths." He knew the war was over.

That afternoon Lee and Grant met in a private home in the town. General Lee was in his dress uniform, a sword at his side. Grant, wearing his usual private's uniform, was splattered with mud. They briefly chatted about the weather and their service in the Mexican War.

Then Lee asked Grant about the terms of the surrender. These were generous. Southern soldiers could take their horses and mules and go home. They would not be punished as traitors as long as they obeyed the laws where



Lee's surrender to Grant was both solemn and civil.

Government
How would you characterize the terms of the surrender?

they lived. Grant also offered to feed the starving Confederate army. After the two men signed the surrender papers, they talked for a few more minutes. Then Lee mounted his horse and rode away.

As news of the surrender spread through the Union army, soldiers began firing artillery salutes. Grant ordered the celebration stopped. He did not want rejoicing at the Southerners' misfortune because, as he pointed out, "the rebels are our countrymen again."

Main Idea **CONNECTIONS**

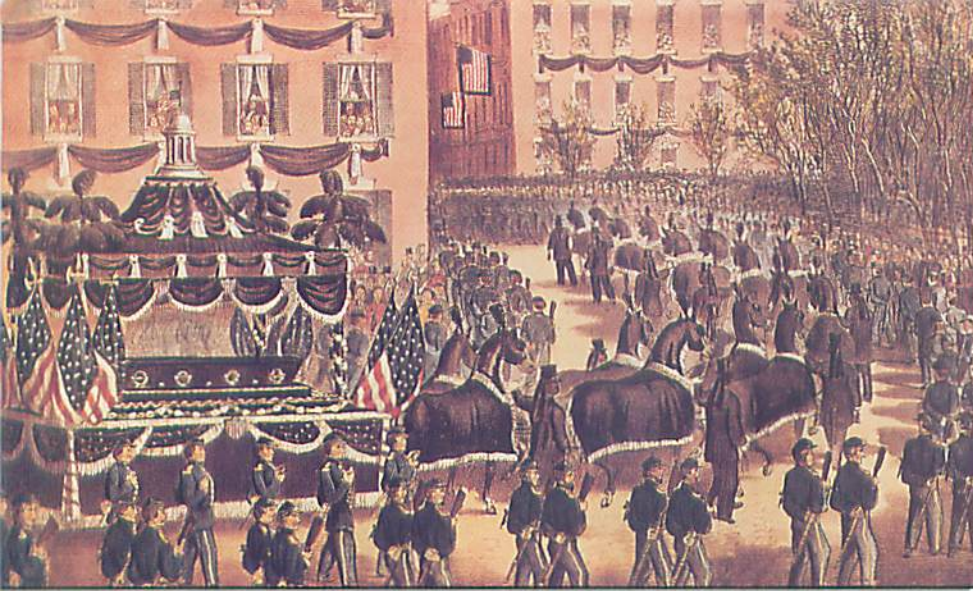
Why was Lee finally forced to surrender?

Lincoln's Assassination

A few weeks after Lee's surrender, General Johnston surrendered to Sherman in North Carolina. Throughout May, other Confederate forces large and small also gave up.

Tragically, Abraham Lincoln did not live to see the official end of the war. Throughout the winter of 1864–1865 a group of southern conspirators in Washington, D.C., had worked on a plan to aid the Confederacy. Led by John Wilkes Booth, a Maryland actor with strong southern sympathies, the group plotted to kidnap Lincoln and exchange him for Confederate prisoners of war. After several unsuccessful attempts, Booth revised his plan. He assigned members of his group to kill top Union officials, including General Grant and Vice President Johnson. Booth himself would murder the President.

On April 14, 1865, Booth slipped into the back of the President's unguarded box at



Lincoln's body was displayed in several major cities, such as New York shown here, on its way from Washington, D.C., to its resting place in Springfield, Illinois. **Culture** Why do you think Lincoln was given such an elaborate and lengthy funeral?

Ford's Theater in Washington, D.C. Inside, the President and Mrs. Lincoln were watching a play. Booth pulled out a pistol and shot Lincoln in the head. Leaping over the railing, he fell to the stage, breaking his leg in the process. Booth then limped off the stage and escaped out a back alley.

The army tracked Booth to his hiding place in a tobacco barn in Virginia. When he refused to surrender, they set the barn on fire. In the confusion that followed, Booth was shot

to death, either by a soldier or by himself.

Mortally wounded, the unconscious President was carried to a boarding-house across the street from the theater. While doctors and family stood by helplessly, Lincoln lingered through the night. He died early the next morning without regaining consciousness.

In the North, citizens mourned for the loss of the man who had led them through the war. Lincoln's funeral train took 14 days to travel from the nation's capital to his hometown of Springfield, Illinois. As the procession passed through

towns and cities, people lined the tracks to show their respect. Both the North and the South had suffered great losses during the war, but they also both gained by it. They gained an undivided nation, a democracy that would continue to seek the equality Lincoln had promised for it. They also gained new fellow citizens—the African Americans who had broken the bonds of slavery and claimed their right to be free and equal, every one.

SECTION 4 REVIEW

Comprehension

- Key Terms** Define: (a) Battle of the Wilderness; (b) Battle of Spotsylvania; (c) Battle of Cold Harbor; (d) Thirteenth Amendment; (e) guerrilla.
- Summarizing the Main Idea** What strategies did Grant and Sherman use to finally bring victory to the Union?
- Organizing Information** Create a flowchart that shows the battles leading up to Lee's surrender at Appomattox. Label the first box *Battle of the Wilderness*. Label the last box *Lee surrenders at Appomattox Court House*.

Critical Thinking

- Analyzing Time Lines** Review the time line at the start of the section. Which event, in your

opinion, had the greatest impact on the outcome of the Civil War?

- Drawing Conclusions** At the end of the Civil War, General Sherman was called a traitor to the North because of his generosity to the defeated South. Yet many people believe his hatred for the South prompted Sherman's destructive actions in South Carolina. How could the same person be so unforgiving during the war yet generous after it?

Writing Activity

- Writing a Persuasive Essay** In your view, would Lincoln have won the election of 1864 if the South had continued to triumph on the battlefield? Write an essay explaining your opinion. Support it with specific examples.