CHAPTER

11

Civil War

1861 – 1865

Fort Sumter, in the harbor of Charleston, South Carolina — where the war began.

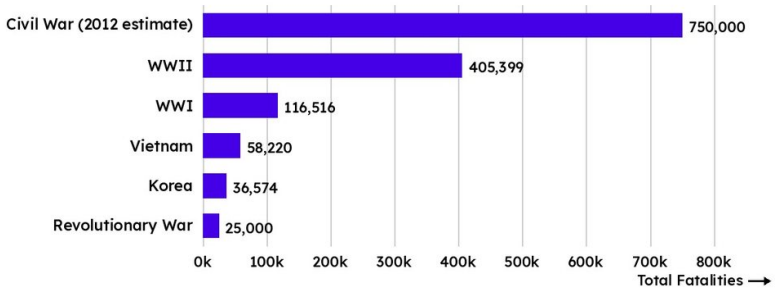
"We, on our side, are praying to Him to give us victory, because we believe we are right; but those on the other side pray to Him, look for victory, believing they are right. What must He think of us?"

— Abraham Lincoln

Stories from Class

> *In 18 hundred and 63 ... Hurrah! Hurrah!*
> *The belated end to slavery ... Hurrah! Hurrah!*
>
> **— Class callout (sung — the whole parody appears later in this chapter)**

My first year teaching, after not seeing Civil War material since high school, 20 minutes before class I realized I confused the Gettysburg Address with the Emancipation Proclamation. I had to suddenly switch what was in my brain and explain how an act from a president to free slaves... purposely did near nothing (except end prisoner exchanges). A student in the front row went nuts trying to wrap her head around how this contradiction could be. The second class that year got a better explanation — her 'rebellion' wasn't in vain. You'll read how the contradiction works — and why it was on purpose — when we reach the Emancipation Proclamation.



American war deaths compared. The Civil War's toll — about 750,000 by a 2012 study — exceeds the Revolution, both World Wars, Korea, and Vietnam combined.

The Civil War is the bloodiest event in American history.[1] More Americans died in it than in the Revolution, both World Wars, Korea, and Vietnam combined — roughly 2% of the country's population, before we even consider how many starved to death or died of disease from problems the war created. On both sides of the war, the dead were Americans. It is the war that decided whether the United States would be one country or two, and whether — as Lincoln would ask at Gettysburg — a nation "conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal" could "long endure." It is also a war full of Jews — on both sides — some of whose stories we will tell. One was a doctor who shaved Lincoln's bunions and spied for him. Another was known as the "Brains of the Confederacy." A third Jewish man fought General Grant's order to expel Jews from Tennessee, Mississippi, and Kentucky.

Timeline: The Civil War, 1860–1865

The war compressed a century's worth of history into five Aprils — from Fort Sumter to Appomattox.

	AMERICAN HISTORY	JEWISH AMERICAN HISTORY
1860	Abraham Lincoln is elected president with under 40% of the vote. No Southern state voted for him. South Carolina secedes on December 20.	Some 150,000 Jews now live in the United States, most in cities, North and South.
1861	April 12: Confederates fire on Fort Sumter. The war begins. Eleven states form the Confederacy. The first Battle of Bull Run (Manassas) shocks the North.	Rabbi Morris Raphall's son loses an arm fighting for the Union; Jews enlist on both sides — more for the South.[2]
1862	Shiloh and Antietam are the bloodiest days yet.	In December, General Grant issues General Order No. 11, expelling all Jews from his military district. Cesar Kaskel telegraphs President Lincoln; the order is revoked within weeks.

[1] In the introduction I wrote about textbooks failing to use modern scholarship. This is an example. I use a 2012 study on the number of Civil War deaths; the previous calculation dates back to 1889 and is now considered inaccurate.

[2] More Jews lived in the South at the time.

January 1: the Emancipation Proclamation takes effect. July: Gettysburg and Vicksburg — the turning point. Lincoln delivers the Gettysburg Address in November.

1863

Congress changes the law so that rabbis may serve as military chaplains; Jacob Frankel becomes the first.

Sherman burns Atlanta and marches to the sea. Lincoln, helped by the victory, defeats McClellan — the former Union general who would have ended the war — and wins re-election.

1864

Judah P. Benjamin, the Confederate Secretary of State, seeks European recognition that never comes.

April 9: Lee surrenders to Grant at Appomattox. Days later, Lincoln is assassinated. Slavery is abolished by the 13th Amendment.

1865

Benjamin flees to England rather than risk what a defeated Jewish Confederate might face.

What does it mean to have "United States"?

Before the battles, the words — because the two sides chose their names carefully, and each name tells you what that side believed the country really was. The North called itself the **Union**: not merely the Northern states, the idea that the United States is *one* nation that cannot be broken apart. You speak of the Union as an **it**. The eleven Southern states that left called themselves the **Confederacy**, from "confederation" — *many* separate things in a loose alliance. You speak of a confederacy as **they**. The Constitution said nothing about which view was right. To **secede** is to formally leave the country; South Carolina said "we're a state and have states rights to secede — leave when we want to." They did on December 20th, 1860, weeks after Lincoln's election. Lincoln said they can't. Four slave states — Missouri, Kentucky, Maryland, and Delaware — never left at all; these were the **border states**, and Lincoln needed them desperately.

Here is something small that hides something huge. In 1790, Americans said "the United States **are**" — many separate states that happened to share a government. Today we say "the United States **is**" — one country. The grammar changed because of the war.[3] The North fought to make "these United States" into "the United States," singular; the South called itself a *confederacy* precisely because it believed the states were many, and that any one of them could walk away. The war was, in part, an argument over a pronoun — **they** or **it** — settled by 750,000 deaths. In the following play, we'll tell the story.

The War Begins: Fort Sumter & Manassas

Scene 1 — South Carolina Secedes

South Carolina: We do not accept Lincoln. Not my president! He won with only 40% of the vote. Not a single Southern state voted for him.

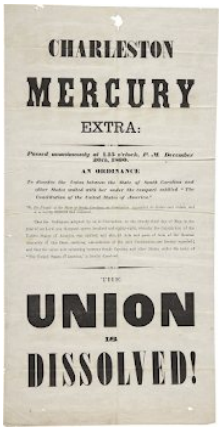
United States: That is how our political system works. That's our constitution. Deal with it.

South Carolina: Fourteen states no longer follow the constitution, which says escaped slaves must be returned. We would not have agreed to the constitution without this. You are denying our state rights.

United States: The constitution still does not give you any right to leave the country.

South Carolina: No. We have zero keys to power in the United States. We can leave and have more power on our own. We're making our own declaration of independence. The short version: we appeal to the Supreme Judge of the world to declare that the Union is hereby dissolved, and that South Carolina has resumed her place among the nations of the world as a separate and independent state.

[3] This idea comes from the famous "The Civil War" documentary by Ken Burns, 1990. Other scholars say the shift was gradual and already underway before the war — I've since come across an article by Benjamin Zimmerman at http://itre.cis.upenn.edu/~myl/languagelog/archives/002663.html arguing it was a gradual process beginning with the Constitution through the Civil War. Still, the war is what finally settled it.


CHARLESTON
MERCURY
EXTRA:
AN ORDINANCE
THE
UNION
DISSOLVED!

The Charleston Mercury announces South Carolina's secession, December 20, 1860.

Scene 2 — Fort Sumter

Anderson: I am Robert Anderson of the United States. My father ran Fort Sumter during the Revolutionary War; now it is my job. We're almost done upgrading the fort and are moving our weapons here to protect the waterway from the Atlantic to Charleston.

Beauregard: I am Major General Beauregard, the first general of the new Confederacy. Your being here insults the dignity and safety of South Carolina. Also, we sank ships in the river so you can't get supplies. Enjoy the winter without more guns or fuel.

Anderson: Beauregard?! You were my student at West Point in New York!

Beauregard: Yes, my old friend. Don't worry — we won't fire the first shot. We'll wait for you, so it'll be your fault, and more states will side with us.

Anderson: I shall await the first shot. If you do not batter us to pieces, we shall be starved out in a few days. You will be blamed — even the people of South Carolina will be on our side.

Scene 3 — Negotiations

South Carolina: President Lincoln, we're here to negotiate. Give up Fort Sumter and we avoid war. Let my people go.

Lincoln: You are not a country. I'm not even talking to you. Talk to the hand.

South Carolina: We will pay for Fort Sumter and this ends in peace.

Lincoln: Years of war because of what you did! The rest because you tried to run!

South Carolina: People do not have to die.

Lincoln: An attempt will be made to supply Fort Sumter with food only. If you don't try to stop us, we won't send weapons — unless you attack.

South Carolina: Surrender now! Prepare for trouble! Make it double! Unite all people in our nation![4]

Scene 4 — Back at Fort Sumter

Beauregard: It's now April 12th. You've been here since before the winter. State the time you will leave Fort Sumter, agree not to use your guns against us, and we will not open fire.

Anderson: We will leave by noon on April 15th, unless our government tells us to stay or sends more food.

Beauregard: No conditions. We have orders to fire on you within the hour.

Anderson: Men, we stay. If we never meet in this world again, God grant that we may meet in the next!

Beauregard: Men, fire one cannon every two minutes for 48 hours.

Anderson: We don't have enough weapons and our cannons can't reach them from here. Use everything to move gunpowder! Use my socks! Be careful — they're firing red-hot cannonballs at our wooden buildings to start fires.

Beauregard: We admire your bravery. Ready to surrender?

Anderson: No! I can hold out without my socks!

[4] ... Jesse, James, team rocket ... nevermind.

The moat of a different fort, for a nice visual.

Inside: a cannon on the parade ground.

Scene 5 — The Surrender

Wigfall: Anderson! I am U.S. Senator Wigfall, from the South! I've watched the whole thing. You have defended your flag nobly. You have done all that is possible. General Beauregard demands that you leave. What terms will you accept?

Anderson: We don't have to surrender? Just leave? Well — we're hungry, haven't slept in days, and everything is on fire. I'm satisfied that we can leave with honor. We call a truce. Also — is that your wife's sheitel[5] you're waving at me, Wigfall?

Wigfall: We accept.

Anderson: One condition. We leave with honor. We demand a hundred-gun salute to the flag of the United States.

Narrator: The hundred-gun salute begins. Before it is even halfway done, a spark sets off the ammunition. Two soldiers die and four are badly wounded. These are the first worthless deaths of the war. The rest are also worthless. I'm opinionated and can't hold back here.

[5] This is Yiddish for a wig — religious Jewish women often wear them.

Scene 6 — The Country Chooses Sides

Lincoln: It is time to call on all the states to send soldiers to take back our forts! We need 75,000 volunteers! We must keep the country together at any cost!

The North: Seventy-five thousand troops volunteer in 90 days. Ohio alone could have filled the number in 16 days.

The South: We're disgusted that Lincoln is calling up troops. Eleven Southern states have now joined South Carolina!

The Middle: Kentucky: we stay in the Union — though we'll give no soldiers to attack our brothers in the South. Missouri: we too stay — yet no man of ours will join this unholy crusade against the South.[6]

[6] Spoiler alert: Many soldiers join from these states to each side. Sometimes brother fights brother.

Scene 7 — The Battle of Bull Run (Manassas)

Northern Woman: This should be fun, fellow Northern families. Let's set out our picnic and watch these boys have their fun. The rebels will be beaten quickly and things go back to normal.

Southern Woman: This should be fun, fellow Southern families. Let's picnic on the other side and watch our Confederate forces march all the way to Washington. Lincoln will *have* to recognize us.

Northern Woman: Where are we again? Bull Run creek? So this is the Battle of Bull Run. All our army has to do is reach Richmond, Virginia — the Confederate capital — and it's over.

Southern Woman: We're near the Virginia town of Manassas. Better name. We'll call it the Battle of Manassas![7]

Beauregard: Remember me! General Beauregard, here again to attack the North! My name is even better than Manassas![8]

Northern Woman: What the— why are all the Northern boys running away? Why are they dropping their guns? One bullet and they don't shoot back? Now they're running through our picnics! Run, everyone, run!

Beauregard: The Confederacy is stronger! Our army need only be *less bad* than the North's! We'll fight harder and win the war!

McClellan: I'm the general for the North, and you can't say that! We didn't lose! We merely *failed to win*![9]

Southern Woman: About 1,700 men die, are wounded, or vanish that day — the most of any U.S. battle up to that point. Tiny, though, next to the 50,000 who would fall in later Civil War battles.

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[7] The South wins the battle for naming things better.

[8] Violet Beauregarde, from *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* — same name. That's the whole joke.

[9] He really said that.

Civil War-era families out on a picnic — crowds came to Bull Run with baskets like these, expecting a show.

When Johnny Comes Marching Home

Patrick Gilmore wrote this song in 1863 for his sister Annie, who was praying for her fiancé, John O'Rourke,[10] to come home from the war. It's a pretty famous song.[11]

Winslow Homer, The Veteran in a New Field, 1865: a soldier home from the war, back in the fields.

[10] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_O%27Rourke_(politician)

[11] I haven't figured this out — some classes barely sang the song while others absolutely loved it and sang the "hurrahs" with much gusto, especially during a fire drill (well, someone had made a fire in the science lab). It didn't matter that the rest of the school watched on while we sung Civil War songs together. Good times.

"When Johnny Comes Marching Home"

When Johnny comes marching home again, Hurrah! Hurrah!
We'll give him a hearty welcome then, Hurrah! Hurrah!
The men will cheer and the boys will shout, the ladies they will all turn out,
And we'll all feel gay[12] *when Johnny comes marching home.*
The old ~~church bell~~ shul's shofar will peal with joy, Hurrah! Hurrah!
To welcome home our darling boy, Hurrah! Hurrah!
The village lads and lassies say, with roses they will strew the way,
And we'll all feel gay when Johnny comes marching home.
In 1861, Hurrah! Hurrah! That is when the war begun, Hurrah! Hurrah!
In 1862, both sides were torn in two,
And we'll all drink snow white when Johnny comes marching home.
In 1863,[13] *Hurrah! Hurrah! The belated end of slavery, Hurrah! Hurrah!*
In 1864, it won't provide us with a thousand more,
In 1865, the day's come — we're barely alive,
And we'll all drink snow white when Johnny comes marching home.

South Carolina vs. Lincoln

South Carolina did not just leave; it wrote down *why* in its Declaration of Secession.

[12] It means "happy." Relax.

[13] This was one of the "choral cheers." I'd say "In 1863" and the class would call out "Hurrah! Hurrah!" I'd then call out "The belated end of slavery!" and they'd do another round of "Hurrah! Hurrah!" It became a form of Hamilaria (thinking a line from the musical, Hamilton, whenever someone says a word or phrase from it). I had these for every chapter, though the first year I only started the cheers when I got to the Civil War, so this cheer was strong in their heads.

> [T]he State of South Carolina having resumed her separate and equal place among nations, [because] . . . the States of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, Pennsylvania,[14] Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin and Iowa, have enacted laws which either **nullify the Acts of Congress** or render useless any attempt to execute them. In many of these States the **fugitive** is discharged from service or labor claimed . . . . The **slaveholding** States will no longer have the power of self-government, or self-protection, and the Federal Government will have become their enemy. . . . We, therefore, the People of South Carolina . . . appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world . . . have solemnly declared that the Union heretofore existing . . . is dissolved.

Notice the actual grievance: the Northern states refused to return escaped slaves. The phrase "state rights" appears, though the *specific* right being defended is the right to own people and to force free states to help recapture them. Notice, too, that New Jersey is missing from the list — recall from Chapter 10 that it was actually still pro-slavery, even though it had simply renamed slavery 'apprenticeship for years.'

Lincoln, however, will say the war is about keeping the country together — mainly Kentucky. He did not want to lose the slave state of Kentucky and all its industry. Midwestern states had also considered seceding for their own reasons.[15] In 1863, to keep Europe out of the war, he makes the war about slavery — and Kentucky stays even at that point.

Recall: The Nullification Crisis of 1832

South Carolina complains about states "nullifying" (failing to follow) federal laws. Interesting. Back in 1832[16] South Carolina wasn't allowed to do that (see Chapter 10). Seems they didn't forget, and are calling out these other states for being hypocrites.

Some Statistics: The Cost of War

The numbers are almost impossible to hold in your head.[17] Roughly 750,000 Americans died — about one in every forty people then alive. More than 40% of the Union dead were never identified;[18] they lie in graves marked "unknown." Desertion, too, drained both armies throughout the war.[19] Photography, which we'll meet later in this chapter, is part of why we even know their faces at all.

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[14] What Northern state is missing?

[15] It should be appreciated that history is full of oversimplifications. We can't write everything, though be it known that the North was not united behind Lincoln. Midwestern "Copperhead" Democrats very much wanted to let the South leave, a preferred alternative over war. Were they right? We'll never know.

[16] The president at the time was Andrew Jackson, a Southern Democrat, by the way.

[17] From gorhistory.com/hist110/unit4/CivilWar.html.

[18] From facinghistory.org/resource-library/statistics-civil-war.

[19] I couldn't find numbers when I wrote this.

North vs. South — the resources of 1861

Want to know why the Civil War deaths were stupid?[20] For roughly half the price of the war, the freedom of every enslaved person in the country could simply have been bought.[21] On paper, too, the North should have won easily — more people, more factories, more railroads, more ships. So why did the war last four years? The South had real advantages of its own — one of them was stubbornness. Dying for a cause was better than giving in knowing, at least after 1863 and the Battle of Gettysburg, you're going to lose. It's called the "sunken cost fallacy," which goes something like, "whelp, I put in this effort so far, so instead of admitting that was stupid, I'm going to keep my pride and keep going down a road to heckfire."

[20] Sorry, I've been doing my best to be unbiased up to this chapter. I can't help myself on this one.

[21] Source: *History of the United States* by Charles and Mary Beard, 1921 — a famous married couple of historians whose books are easy to read and informative. I picked this one up at a used bookstore in Jerusalem long ago and noticed it on my shelf over yom tov. The history of the Civil War hasn't changed since 1865, and I actually prefer older books, which are closer to the source and less filled with modern politics.

The South's Advantages

Its generals were better. Most top officers had trained at **West Point** in New York, and many of the finest — Lee, Jackson, Beauregard — were Southerners who knew the Northern generals personally. The South also counted on **King Cotton**: Europe needed Southern cotton for its mills, and the South was sure that need would force Britain and France to enter the war on its side. There was a hopeful precedent, too. Just as a smaller, weaker America had beaten the mighty British Empire in the Revolutionary War, the South believed it could outlast the stronger North, as if this was the Revolutionary War playing over again.

The cotton gamble failed. The very year war broke out, Southern cotton crops disappeared behind the Union blockade, and Europe simply bought its cotton from **Egypt and India** instead. Britain lost roughly a million textile jobs and France suffered too — yet neither empire went to war over it. The Sassoon family, Baghdadi Jews based in Bombay, grew enormously rich investing in cotton. King Cotton, it turned out, was not king.[22]

> *"Death is nothing compared to dishonor."*
>
> **— Sarah Morgan, a young Southern woman, in her wartime diary**

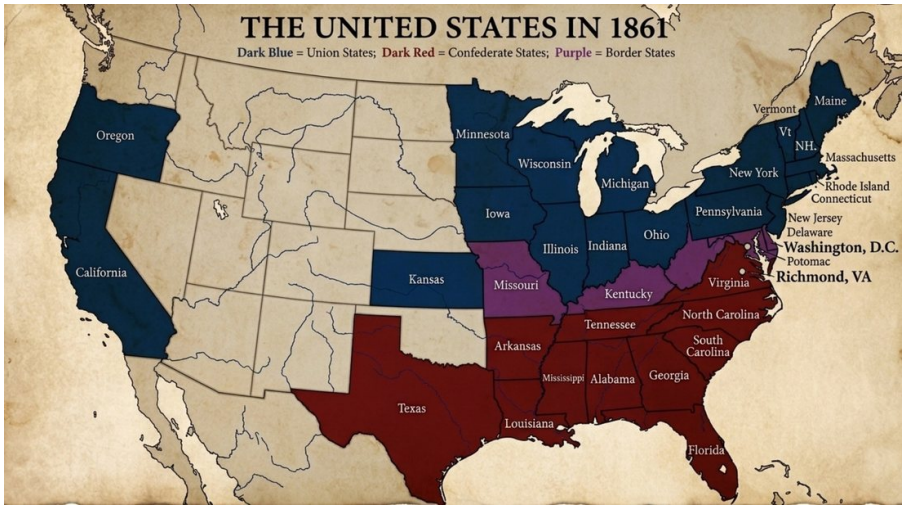
> *"South Carolina is too small for a republic and too large for an insane asylum."*
>
> **— James L. Petigru, a South Carolina Unionist, on his state's decision to secede**

Civil War States

This map will orient you for the rest of the chapter:[23] who was on which side, where the fighting happened, and how the ground around Washington and Gettysburg became where so much blood was spilled.

[22] Putin tried the same thing with the Ukraine war of 2022, figuring Europe needed Russian oil. It turned out to be a very warm winter, so less oil was needed. Other times wars are decided by disease. The yad of Hashem [God] seems visible to me.

[23] Much of this section is taken from pbs.org/kenburns/civil-war.



The nation in 1861. Blue: the Union (free states). Red: the eleven Confederate states. The border states (purple) were all slave states that stayed in the Union (though the Confederacy claimed Missouri as its own, even with a star on their flag for it).

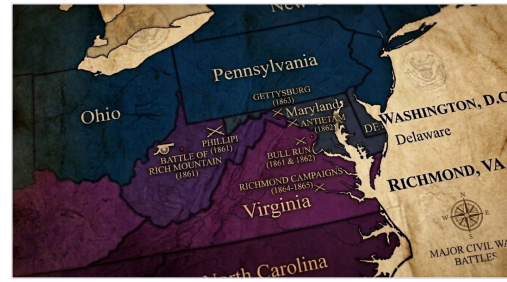
The Border States — slave states that stayed with the Union

State	Why it stayed, and why it mattered
Missouri	Bitterly divided; pro- and anti-slavery militias fought a small civil war of their own. Stayed in the Union, barely.
Kentucky	Lincoln's birthplace. "I hope to have God on my side," he said, "but I must have Kentucky." It controlled the Ohio River and had most of the manufacturing capacity for war materials that Lincoln couldn't let go to the Confederates.
Maryland	Surrounds Washington, D.C., on three sides. If Maryland left, the capital was trapped. Lincoln held it down by force.
Delaware	A slave state in name, with few enslaved people. Never seriously considered leaving.

Why did slave states stay loyal?[24] Some, like Delaware, had little slavery left. Others were held by sheer geography and force — lose Maryland and you lose the capital. This is also why the Emancipation Proclamation, when it came, carefully did *not* free the slaves in these loyal states: Lincoln could not afford to push them out the door.

[24] I thank Akiva Benenson for a very thoughtful comment in class that led me to create this table, to understand what each side was thinking.

The eastern theater — the narrow stretch of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia between the two capitals — saw the war's most famous battles. Washington, D.C., and Richmond, Virginia, sat only about 90 miles apart. Armies marched back and forth across this ground for four years.



Closeup: Maryland, Virginia, and Gettysburg.

A few other facts this map reveals: California and Oregon were already states (gold and the Pacific trade), while the Midwest was still filling in. The Indian Territory (today's Oklahoma) leaned Confederate, partly because the U.S. government had forced those nations west in the first place (Chapter 13). The Union, too, controlled the navy — which made the blockade possible.

Major Battles of the War

The Union's grand strategy was nicknamed the **Anaconda Plan**,[25] after the snake that squeezes its prey to death. It had three parts.

The Anaconda Plan — squeeze the South to death:

- **Blockade the coast** so no cotton could leave and no supplies could enter.
- **Take the Mississippi River** to split the Confederacy in two.
- **Capture Richmond**, the Confederate capital, to end the war.

[25] Much of this section is taken from civilwar.mrdonn.org/battles.html — dedicated to Brocha, for lending me her sister to travel to Manhattan and photograph the General Sherman statue in Central Park.

"Scott's Great Snake," an 1861 map of the Anaconda Plan: blockade the coast, seize the Mississippi, and squeeze the South until it surrenders.

The blockade was the slow squeeze. It was leaky — perhaps only 20% effective at first, and only about half of the swift "blockade runner" ships were ever caught — yet over four years it strangled the Southern economy, partially because for European ships it usually wasn't worth the risk. The age of wooden warships was ending, too: in 1862 the Union's *Monitor* and the Confederate *Virginia* (rebuilt from the captured *Merrimack*) fought the first battle between **ironclads** — armored steamships that made every wooden navy in the world instantly obsolete.

Fort Sumter — April 1861 — Winner: Confederates

Confederate guns fired on the federal fort[26] in Charleston Harbor before dawn on April 12. The fort itself was not that important; to both sides, it was a symbol. This was the war's opening shot.

Bull Run (Manassas) — July 1861 — Winner: Confederates

The first major battle. Spectators came with picnic baskets, certain it would be a quick show. After ten hours and 900 dead, the Union army fled back through the picnickers toward Washington. Both sides realized this would be a long, terrible war.

[26] The cover and fort pictures are actually Fort Pulaski, outside Savannah, Georgia — same idea, a fort placed at a strategic point on the waterway into the city as a line of defense before boats could reach it. I haven't visited Fort Sumter itself; Fort Pulaski keeps mostly original walls, while less of Fort Sumter remains today. The forts stopped being useful after the 1874 Hotchkiss gun — basically a revolver on a cannon.

Shiloh, Tennessee — 1862 — Winner: Union

The bloodiest battle to date: over 23,000 killed, wounded, or missing — more deaths in this one battle than in all of America's previous wars combined. Confederate spies stole Grant's plan, and the South attacked and nearly trapped him; General Buell's troops arrived in time to save him, and the Confederates withdrew. The South lost one of its generals, Albert Sidney Johnston, shot at the knee; the North, even in victory, demoted Grant. After Shiloh, Grant knew the North would not win easily.

Antietam, Maryland — 1862 — Winner: Debatable

The single bloodiest *day* in American history: about 24,000 casualties. Lee invaded the North; a Union soldier found Lee's battle plan wrapped around three cigars; and still the cautious General McClellan[27] failed to destroy Lee's army. Lee withdrew, so the North claimed victory — enough of one that Lincoln used the moment to announce the Emancipation Proclamation. Then he fired McClellan for letting Lee escape.

Lincoln visits McClellan after Antietam.

Gettysburg, Pennsylvania — July 1863 — Winner: Union

The turning point. (Its own story follows below.) Lee's second invasion of the North was stopped over three days of slaughter, and the Confederacy would never again threaten Northern soil.

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[27] Remember him from the Battle of Bull Run? He never got along with Lincoln; Lincoln just had no one better to replace him with. The North had trouble finding good generals throughout the war. As a side point, after the war McClellan becomes the governor of New Jersey.

Vicksburg, Mississippi — July 1863 — Winner: Union

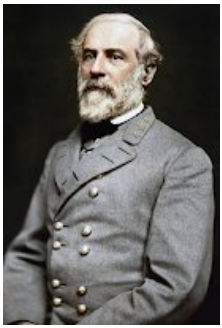
On the very day after Gettysburg, the river city of Vicksburg surrendered to Grant after an 18-month campaign and a long siege that starved it out. Vicksburg sat on a cliff above a hairpin bend in the Mississippi; Grant could not take it by force, so he ran his ships past the guns at night, faked an attack one way, landed another, cut the supply lines, and waited. The Confederate general defending it, Pemberton, was himself a Northerner — born in Pennsylvania. Its fall gave the Union the entire Mississippi River and cut the Confederacy in two.

Atlanta, Georgia — 1864 — Winner: Union

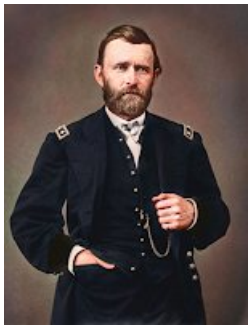
Sherman took the great rail and supply city of Atlanta from Confederate general John Bell Hood and burned it to the ground — the beginning of "total war," aimed at the South's ability to fight rather than only its armies. Without this victory, it is widely believed Lincoln would have lost the 1864 election to McClellan — who might have let the South go. Instead, Atlanta convinced the North that victory was near, and Lincoln won re-election.

Appomattox, Virginia — April 1865 — THE END

General Robert E. Lee surrendered to General Ulysses S. Grant in a private home at Appomattox Court House. Fewer than 10,000 Confederate soldiers remained under arms. Grant let Lee's men keep their horses and go home. The war was over.[28]



Robert E. Lee, the Confederacy's greatest general.



Ulysses S. Grant, who would accept Lee's surrender — and later become president.

Lee surrenders to Grant, Appomattox, 1865.

[28] Sort of. Battles actually continued with side armies. The last battle was in Texas — and the Confederates won it.

> *"It is well that war is so terrible — we should grow too fond of it."*
>
> **— Robert E. Lee, watching thousands of Union soldiers fall at Fredericksburg**

> *"They couldn't hit an elephant at this distance."*
>
> **— Union General John Sedgwick, moments before a Confederate sniper proved him wrong, Spotsylvania, 1864**

The Emancipation Proclamation

After Antietam — a battle he could just barely call a win — Lincoln made the boldest move of the war. Until then, the war was officially about "saving the Union." Now Lincoln changed the subject to *slavery*. Why? Partly conviction, and partly cold strategy: if the war was about ending slavery, no European nation could dare join the slaveholding side. Yet slave states sat *inside* the Union. How do you free slaves without driving the border states out? Read the words carefully.

> Now, therefore I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, by virtue of the power in me vested as Commander-in-Chief . . . and [as] a necessary war measure for suppressing said rebellion, do . . . order and designate as the States and parts of States wherein the people thereof respectively, are this day in rebellion . . . Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana . . . Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, [parts of] Tennessee,[29] and Virginia . . . And . . . I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves within said designated States . . . are, and henceforward shall be free.

Here is the trick, and it is a remarkable one. As Commander-in-Chief, Lincoln could not pass a law — only Congress can — yet he *could* seize enemy property in wartime, and the South called enslaved people "property." So Lincoln freed them as a "war measure" against states "in rebellion." Now look at the list of places. The one obvious place **missing** is the entire North — and the loyal border slave states. The Proclamation freed slaves only where the United States had *no power to free anyone*, and left slavery untouched where it actually could have ended it. On the day it took effect, it freed, in practice, almost nobody.[30]

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[29] Where Andrew Johnson was from. He was the only Senator from the South who stayed in the Union, so Lincoln chose him as Vice President to win broader support — even though Johnson was a pro-slavery Democrat who lobbied Lincoln to leave slavery alone where he was from. He becomes President after Lincoln, which leads to problems we'll discuss in Unit 12.

[30] This is the contradiction that drove my front-row student nuts — see Stories from Class at the start of this chapter.

So was it worthless? No. It changed the *meaning* of the war — for Europe, for history, and for the roughly 200,000 Black soldiers who would now fight in Union blue. It also pointed straight toward the 13th Amendment, which in 1865 would finally end slavery everywhere in the United States, for real and forever.

Reading the Proclamation

1. Why does Lincoln call this a "war measure" instead of a law?

   Because the President can't pass laws — only Congress can. As Commander-in-Chief he could seize enemy "property" in wartime, so he framed freeing slaves that way.

2. What giant, obvious place is missing from his list of where slaves are freed?

   The entire North and the loyal border states — exactly the places where he actually had the power to free people.

3. How many slaves did the order free on the day it took effect?

   In practice, almost none — it applied only to areas the Union did not yet control.

Gettysburg

In the summer of 1863, Lee gambled everything on a second invasion of the North. His Army of Northern Virginia was running out of supplies, so he carried the war onto Northern farmland — hunting, perhaps, for a victory by the Fourth of July that would finally break the Union's will. Two armies, almost by accident, collided in a small Pennsylvania town called Gettysburg.

Day 1 — July 1, 1863

The armies stumble into each other. Lee rushes his forces in and pushes the Union back through the town. The Union retreats to the high ground south of Gettysburg and digs in along a ridge shaped like a fishhook.

Day 2 — July 2, 1863

Lee attacks the ends of the Union line. At a hill called Little Round Top, Colonel Joshua Chamberlain's men run out of bullets — so he orders a bayonet charge *down* the hill, sweeping the Confederates back and saving the Union's flank.

Day 3 — Pickett's Charge

Lee, certain the Union won't expect a blow up the middle, sends about 12,500 men marching across an open field and over a fence, straight at the Union center on higher ground. It is slaughter. A few reach the line; most do not. Afterward Lee tells General Pickett to reassemble his division. Pickett answers: "General, I have no division."

Gettysburg cost more lives than any battle ever fought in North America. It was the turning point: Lee's army was broken. Lincoln had been waiting and waiting for a good win so he could silence critics who wanted to end the war and speak about slavery — once winning, Kentucky and other slave states wouldn't leave to be losers, and now he could keep England and France from fighting for the South. The war's momentum passed permanently to the North, ending General Lee's plan to bring the war to the North, to make Northerners feel the pain of war the Southerners felt in their territory.

The Gettysburg Address

Four months later, at the dedication of the cemetery for the 50,000-plus casualties, a preacher spoke for over two hours about — no one remembers. It was a thing before smartphones and TV to listen to people speak for a really, really long time.

Lincoln gets up afterwards and speaks for barely two minutes. No one remembers the exact words spoken, though this version published in a newspaper 20 years later are close enough. It is perhaps the most famous speech in American history.

> 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. . . . The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. . . . 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.

The Battle of Gettysburg ended months before. Fifty thousand dead were buried by (black) soldiers. This is a graveyard, and Lincoln says, "Four score and seven years ago" — a score is twenty, so 87 years — reaching back to 1776 and the **Declaration of Independence**. A score is also something you have to settle with someone. You shall love the play on words as much as I do. What's the purpose of our country? Lincoln quotes: "all men are created equal," and, by the way, "50,000 people just died for that." Are you going to end the war now? Are you going to vote for McClellan in the next election — the former Union general who wants these people to die in vain? You want Lincoln to look terrible because these deaths were for nothing! No. No you don't. History tells you that you don't, because Lincoln's position won . . . and the speech is amazing and quotable. Heck, my wife had to memorize it in school, and while I didn't make my students do that, some volunteered — like the (black) soldiers burying the dead.

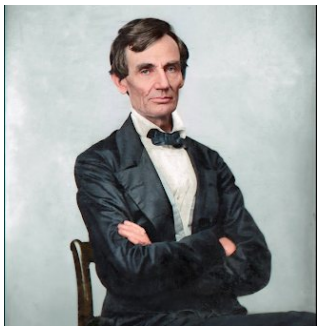
Now, only a jerk would say, "let 50,000 people die in vain" — without purpose. All this death for nothing... or for freedom? Now we're doing that "justice and liberty" thing of Locke and Jefferson (see Chapter 4), connecting it to Christian roots — "A new birth of freedom."

This speech is as amazing as I think it is.

One more thing: Lincoln is a genius with words. (Not a debatable fact — don't believe me.) The speech never once says the word *slavery*, though most everyone knew that's what he was talking about.

Civil War Photography

This was the first war Americans could *see*. Matthew Brady, who had learned photography from Samuel **Morse** — the inventor of Morse code — set out to photograph the whole war, and photographed nearly every president of the 1800s besides. Two of his portraits of Lincoln became the faces on the five-dollar bill and the penny.

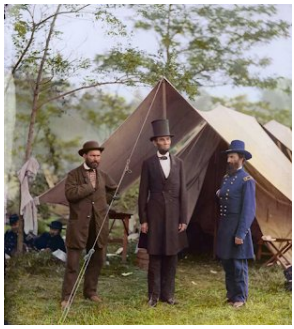


Lincoln in 1860.

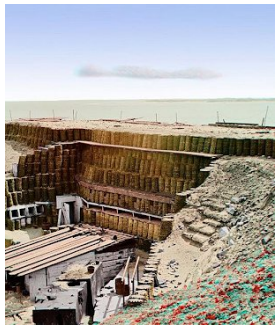
Lincoln in 1865.

Look how much older Lincoln looks after just five years — the war aged him into the face we know. Brady's photographs of the battlefield dead were something new and terrible: for the first time, ordinary people at home could see the bodies.[31] War had always been painted as glorious. Now it looked like what it was. Photography changed minds about war precisely *because* it could not lie the way a heroic painting could.

Here are some of Brady's other war photographs — all of them hand-tinted (colored):



Lincoln at Antietam.



The walls at Fort Sumter.

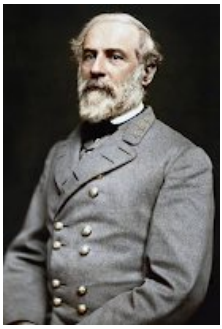
The destruction of Charleston, South Carolina, 1865.

[31] (I'm not showing you those pictures, sorry.)

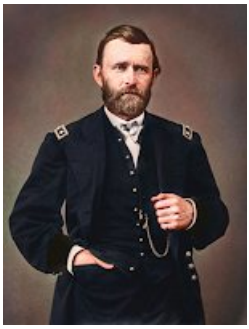
General Custer posing with a Confederate prisoner of war — a former classmate.

Virginia cavalry.

A soldier next to a swing cart.



General Robert E. Lee (South).



General Ulysses S. Grant (North).

General Grant in the field.

Or could it? Brady hired many assistants who took photographs in his name, and many famous "battlefield" images were quietly **staged** — bodies moved, rifles arranged, scenes composed for effect. Because early cameras needed long exposures, too, anything that moved blurred away; soldiers had to hold perfectly still, which is why the people in these photographs never seem to move. Even the camera, the most "truthful" witness of the war, had a point of view.

The Most Powerful Jews of the War

Judah P. Benjamin is the Jew historians turn to when talking about Jewish power held in the Confederacy[32] — and few private citizens were ever as close to a president as Lincoln's Jewish foot doctor. Two remarkable men, on opposite sides, whose lives nearly touched — they actually met once to try and arrange a peace plan.

Judah P. Benjamin, the highest-ranking Jew in North America.

Judah P. Benjamin — "the Brains of the Confederacy."[33] He entered law school at fourteen (and was expelled for misbehavior), represented Louisiana in the U.S. Senate, and once owned a plantation with 140 slaves — though he left the running of it to a partner and called himself 'just' an investor.

When the South seceded, Benjamin became its Attorney General, then Secretary of War, then Secretary of State. His wife said he spent twelve hours a day at Jefferson Davis's side. Davis trusted him completely — in part, cynically, because a Jew could never threaten him for the top job. It was the same bargain Jewish advisors had struck with kings for a thousand years.

Benjamin on the Confederate two-dollar note.

Benjamin's face was so central to the Confederacy that it appeared on its two-dollar bill. Late in the war, he privately urged Lee and others toward a desperate idea: free the slaves who would fight for the South. A Georgian politician, Howell Cobb, gave the famous reply: "If slaves will make good soldiers, our whole theory of slavery is wrong."[34] When the Confederacy fell, Benjamin — unsure whether a defeated *Jewish* rebel would be treated like the others — fled to England, where he calmly became a famous lawyer all over again. He burned all his private papers before he died.

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32 This section is mostly taken from *Jews and the Civil War*, edited by Jonathan Sarna and Adam Mendelsohn, New York University Press, 2010.

33 From an essay by Stanley Falk, 1959, American Jewish Historical Society, page 201.

34 My forehead is now flatter for having smacked my palm against it.

Isachar Zacharie, the president's confidant.

Isachar Zacharie — Lincoln's foot doctor and friend. Zacharie had no formal medical training,[35] yet became the chiropodist (foot doctor) to Lincoln, congressmen, and generals. Lincoln had size-14 feet[36] and constant foot pain, and Zacharie's visits to remove his bunions turned into long talks about everything. He was said to be closer to the lonely president than almost any other private citizen.

Lincoln put that friendship to use. With family in Georgia and connections North and South, Zacharie was sent to occupied New Orleans to **spy** — gathering news from local Jews and even from former Confederate officials whose feet he had treated. He helped Jews stranded in the South reach their families in the North, including Judah Benjamin's own sister. Lincoln even sent him to Richmond to meet Benjamin himself; the two Jews sketched out a peace plan that neither government would accept.

A random fact to sound smart:

- Outside the State of Israel, the largest Jewish military cemetery in the world is in **Richmond, Virginia**[37] — the old Confederate capital. More than 12,000 Jews fought for the Confederacy, and about 7,000 for the Union.

Jews Choosing Sides

Which side a Jew took depended almost entirely on *where he lived*[38] — exactly like everyone else. Jews were not more or less divided than their neighbors. Here are three who were caught in the middle.

[35] You could do stuff like this at the time. It was fine. Today you get arrested for practicing medicine without a license.

[36] Size 14 is huge. I'm Lincoln's height (6'4") and my shoe size is only 12. Oddly enough, costumes of Abraham Lincoln are designed only for people up to 6'3" tall.

[37] Remember Yudel, the first Jew buried in the Jewish cemetery, from earlier in the year?

[38] Based on *Jews and the Civil War* by Sarna and Mendelsohn, jewishvirtuallibrary.org, battlefields.org, and other sources.

Major Alfred Mordecai — caught in the middle.[39] A senior U.S. Army officer with 38 years of service, an expert who designed and tested weapons. He thought slavery the "greatest misfortune and curse" on the country — yet his family lived in Virginia, North Carolina, and Alabama, while his wife's people were Northern.

He begged to be transferred to California to avoid choosing a side; his commander refused. Suspicion grew that a Southerner like him might be smuggling weapons south. In the end he could not bear to fight either his country or his family — so he resigned, moved to Philadelphia, and took poorly paid work to survive. Much of his Southern family never spoke to him again, calling him a traitor for refusing to fight *for* them.

Major Alfred Mordecai.

Rebecca Gratz.

Rebecca Gratz — the woman in the middle.[40] We met her before: the Philadelphia woman who founded the first Jewish Sunday schools (and who may have inspired a character in Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*). She was a Northerner who loved her Southern relatives dearly — nieces in Kentucky and Virginia who wrote to her[41] with fierce pride in the Confederacy.

Rebecca opposed slavery; her nieces defended it. Rather than let politics destroy the family, they agreed to write only about religion, the holidays, and their children. When a Southern relative was killed, she wrote that "outrages perpetrated by kindred on each other" were "too appalling to be realized." The war did not just divide a country; it divided kitchens and letters and families like hers.

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[39] I read his autobiography — he makes very little mention of his Judaism. His father ran a Christian school and he knew no other Jews growing up. At West Point everyone was required to attend Christian services on Sunday; he said he had good talks with the pastor and, like many others, sat in the corner behind a pole and basically slept.

[40] Page 253, *Jews and the Civil War*.

[41] The Union and Confederacy would send a representative on horseback carrying a white flag called a "flag of truce" to have discussions when needed, such as to exchange prisoners. They also did this to send mail between the Union and Confederacy. These men might be killing each other tomorrow; however, they also were men of respect and honor . . . as much as killing people in a civil war can be honorable. (Sigh, my bias again.)

Henry Lehman — of Lehman Brothers.[42] The South was, oddly, often *more* tolerant of Jews than the North — the first Reform congregations in America were Southern,[43] and Southern Jews blended easily into local society.[44] Few Jews owned slaves; in Charleston, more free Black people owned slaves than Jews did. Slavery, though, was simply everywhere, and many treated it as "the law of the land."

Henry and his brothers had come from a small German town and built an international trading network — some refused to buy land at all, remembering how German governments seized Jewish property. Henry settled in Alabama to trade cotton. The war cut him off from his family in the North; he stored his cotton, waiting for peace — and at war's end Union soldiers burned all of it. The firm survived him. You may have heard of it.

Henry Lehman.

General Order No. 11: Grant Expels the Jews

In December 1862, the most powerful general in the western theater — Ulysses S. Grant, the future president — signed an order expelling *every Jew* from a vast stretch of conquered territory across Tennessee, Mississippi, and Kentucky.[45] It is the single most infamous act of official antisemitism in American history. It began, of all things, with cotton.

The problem: cotton

The North needed Southern cotton for tents, uniforms, and bandages, and with the war on, prices had tripled or quadrupled. As Grant's army moved south toward Vicksburg, it burned Southern fields and storehouses — which only made cotton scarcer and more valuable. A huge, illegal trade sprang up: Southerners would rush their cotton to Northern buyers (often for gold, which the South used to fund the war) wherever the Union army had just passed. Some of the traders were Jewish; most were not. The visible ones, though, the ones Grant fixed on, were Jews.

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[42] From *Our Crowd* by Stephen Birmingham, 1967. Lehman Brothers was one of the biggest financial firms until the 2008 financial crisis, when the company was involved in fraud.

[43] In Charleston, South Carolina — Beth Elokim — we learned this in Chapter 6.

[44] Page 227 of *Jews and the Civil War*.

[45] From an essay by Bertram W. Korn.

Then it got personal. Grant's own father, Jesse, showed up at headquarters with three Jewish business partners, hoping Grant would hand them a permit to ship cotton north — with no idea how much the cotton trade was already eating at his son. Grant erupted, threw them out, and sent them back north. Days later came the order to expel the Jews.

> **General Orders No. 11.** The Jews, as a class, violating every regulation of trade established by the Treasury Department, and also Department orders, are hereby expelled from the Department [the military district] . . . . Within twenty-four hours from the receipt of this order . . . [they] will be . . . required to leave, and any one returning after such notification will be arrested and held in confinement . . . . No permits will be given these people to visit Head Quarters for the purpose of making personal application for trade permits.

Read it again: the target was not "dishonest traders" — it was "**the Jews, as a class**." Grant's own advisors begged him not to sign it. His officers pointed out that Jewish merchants were among the army's most reliable suppliers — the Seligman family,[46] Grant's personal friends, sold the Union its uniforms. He signed it anyway.

How people reacted

Enforcement was uneven; one of Grant's own generals in Tennessee simply refused to carry it out, and not a single Jew was expelled in his district. At least one Jewish captain in the Union army resigned in disgust. In the border town of **Paducah, Kentucky**,[47] though, it was enforced to the letter: thirty Jewish families — including the families of two men who had themselves fought for the Union — were given twenty-four hours to leave their homes or go to jail.

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[46] There's a play about the family after the regular chapters of the book.

[47] Students needed to understand that they couldn't trust everything a teacher tells them, because they can make mistakes or just give you their point of view. One girl insisted I show her on the computer that this was a real place, thinking I must have made up "Paducah."

one Jew said, "Nah ah. Aw nahh. Nah way." (My best guess at what he said.) He continued, "I didn't leave the anti-semitism of Europe to put up with this bovine manure." He took a train to Chicago, the nearest place with a telegraph line (see Chapter 9), and sent a message directly to Lincoln.

More than 7,000 Jews fought for the Union; Kaskel's neighbors in Paducah included Union veterans.

> *we are loyal, good citizens; we are outraged and insulted; this is inhumane; we seek your protection*

His next train was to Washington to visit Lincoln himself. This is hard to believe by today's standards, though anyone could walk into the White House and talk to Lincoln during his visiting hours.[48]

Lincoln at first did not believe such an order could be real. Once it was confirmed, he acted at once: "[They] shall have his protection," he said, and ordered the general-in-chief to cancel the order. Kaskel rode the train straight back to Paducah; when the army asked who had given him permission to return, he answered: the President of the United States. General Order No. 11 had lasted only about three weeks. It is the only time in American history that an entire religious group was expelled by the government — and the only time a president personally reversed such an act. Lincoln was cool like that to everyone, and he needed as much support as he could get in a country falling apart. Democracy is also cool like that for Jews for the same reason.

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[48] It might not have been the best idea, after all. Lincoln was shot. After President Garfield was shot, the country changed from an attitude of "the president is just a normal guy, you know?" to "hmm... maybe we don't want presidents murdered anymore..."

Grant's regret

Six years later, in 1868, Grant ran for president — and won, with strong Jewish support, after publicly calling the order a mistake "issued and sent without any reflection." Many Jews said we are voting for his policies, not what he thinks of Jews. Then, as president he appointed more Jews to office than any president before him, protested the violent **pogroms** against Jews in Europe, and sent a Jewish envoy to speak out against them. He even tried to make Joseph Seligman — the uniform-maker — his Secretary of the Treasury. Today Grant is remembered well.

Jewish Chaplains

A chaplain is a religious leader placed in a non-religious setting — an army, a hospital, a prison — to tend to people's souls. When the Civil War began, federal law said an army chaplain had to be a "regularly ordained minister of some Christian denomination." That one word, *Christian*, quietly shut out every rabbi in America.

A Pennsylvania regiment, full of Jewish soldiers, elected one of their own — **Michael Allen**,[49] a student of Isaac Leeser (Chapter 8) — as their chaplain. He was forced to resign for the crime of not being Christian. So the Jewish community pushed back. The Board of Delegates of American Israelites sent Rabbi **Arnold Fischel** to lobby Lincoln directly, and Lincoln agreed the law was wrong. In 1862 Congress changed a single word — from "Christian" to "some religious denomination" — and in 1863 Rabbi **Jacob Frankel**[50] of Philadelphia, a popular and beautiful-voiced cantor, became the first Jewish chaplain in the history of the United States military. Leeser's magazine, the *Occident*[51] (Chapter 8), celebrated the moment. A war fought over who counted as fully human also, in its small way, settled who counted as fully American.

[49] You can find some of his writings at jewish-history.com/civilwar/mmallen.htm.

[50] Page 342.

[51] We learned about it before — it was Leeser's magazine for Jewish thought, connecting Jews around the country. It was also the name of a horse.

Jefferson Davis: President of the Confederacy

Jefferson Davis was, by any honest measure, a monster. He approved the largest mass execution in American history — **thirty-eight men hanged in a single day**. He shipped an entire colony of Black Americans off to an island near **Haiti**, where many of them died of disease and starvation. Under his orders, **tens of thousands** of political opponents were arrested without trial and simply 'disappeared' into military prisons. He kept fighting a war that was grinding his own country into dust long after many believed he could have ended it — a stubbornness that cost hundreds of thousands of additional lives. When a state wanted to switch to the other side, he jailed the entire legislature to prevent them from voting — you know, using democracy. For most of the war, in the very places he actually controlled, he left **slavery itself untouched**. A cruel, power-hungry tyrant who called black people the 'N-word': he hanged the innocent, jailed his critics, exiled the helpless to die, and bled his own nation white rather than admit he was beaten. What kind of man does all that?

Lies.

I just told you that was **Jefferson Davis**, the Confederate president — the "bad guy." Every single one of those facts is true. Not one of them, though, is about Jefferson Davis. They are all about **Abraham Lincoln**.[52]

The 38 hanged men were the Dakota warriors who fought the Americans and whom were executed at Mankato, Minnesota, in December 1862 — the largest mass execution in U.S. history. Lincoln didn't order the killings. In fact, he ordered 265 other men *not* to be killed. The Haiti colony was Lincoln's real 1863 scheme to resettle freed Black Americans on the Île à Vache; it was a disaster, and the few survivors had to be rescued. After Frederick Douglass met with Lincoln, Lincoln changed his position and fought to integrate blacks into the country. He did suspend *habeas corpus* — the right not to be jailed without trial — and tens of thousands were arrested, especially journalists writing the news. He did keep the war going, and the Emancipation Proclamation, as we saw, freed about six people where he had the power to do so. Also, Lincoln did jail the entire legislature of Maryland. If Maryland left, the capital of the country would be surrounded by the Confederacy, and for Lincoln,

[52] At which time the perfectionist students were annoyed to have to cross out "Davis" and write "Lincoln" in their notes, and the rest of the students were in disbelief over the content of the lecture.

keeping the country together was more important than ... a great many things. Maryland, a slave state, was controlled by an army roaming the streets throughout the war. Each fact is real. It just depends who is writing the newspaper.

So why do we revere Lincoln and revile Davis? Partly because **Lincoln won**, and the winners write the textbooks. Don't let me hear you say, "but Mr. Feigin, Jefferson Davis was pro-slavery! We can't honor him!" Refer back to Jim Bowie[53] and the Alamo in Chapter 7 and get back to me.

Historicity

Historicity is a measure of how accurate our knowledge of the past actually is. It is shaped by what survived, by who chose to pass it down, by honest mistakes — and by lies, both the kind you tell (*commission*) and the kind where you simply leave things out (*omission*). I have my own biases, and I tell you so on purpose: the cure for bias is not to pretend you have none;[54] it is to re-examine the past and hear more than one opinion.

Why I despise (most) history textbooks

- The experts who study history usually **don't write the school textbooks** — and many textbooks, made by companies who now compete to have the most multimedia, most pages, and silly questions for students masquerading as deep thought, perpetuate oversimplified or mistaken history that is 50 or more years old.
- Only a handful of large companies control most of the textbook market, so a few editors shape what millions of children learn.
- Let's take an example of **Helen Keller**, who begged not to be remembered merely as a blind, deaf girl who (kinda) learned to speak and write essays that 'coincidentally' got worse after the woman who spoke for her died — she was a fierce radical who attended communist rallies and supported the Bolshevik[55] Revolution. We teach the part of her she didn't want, and bury the part she did.

Try it on Lincoln yourself. What would we say about him if the British *had* helped the Confederacy and the South had won? If the Union army had broken first at Antietam? If Lincoln had lost the 1864 election to his former general McClellan, who would have ended the war? What if he had been killed watching a battle in July 1864 — when the 6′4″ man was

[53] He came to Texas to smuggle about 1,500 slaves, sold double-illegally for money. How many kids owned Bowie knives?

[54] Though I really tried to be objective until I got to Chapters 10 and 11. The Civil War is an inherently fascinating topic which I love learning about. England paid slaveholders to free their slaves; the United States, instead, has a mentality of "stand your ground." In most countries, if someone is attacking you and you can escape, you must. In America... nah. Attack him back. I actually like the policy, though I moved to Israel, where "stand your ground" means "never leave a government office until you get what you want."

[55] This is American history. Go find a Russian history book. I'm not writing it.

told, "Get down, you damn fool" — before the war was won? The facts of his life would be unchanged. Only the ending — and therefore the story — would be different. History is not just what happened. It is what happened, told by someone, for a reason. Read it that way for the rest of your life.

After the War

Less than a week after Lee surrendered at Appomattox, Abraham Lincoln was shot dead in a Washington theater. The man who had asked — on the page that opens this chapter — "What must He think of us?" did not live to see the country he had held together by force begin to heal. The 13th Amendment ended slavery that year, for everyone, at last.[56] Yet the questions the war asked — who is fully a citizen, who holds the keys to power, whose story gets told — were not buried at Appomattox. They are the subject of the next chapter, and, in truth, of every chapter after it.

> *"With malice toward none, with charity for all . . . let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds."*
>
> **— Abraham Lincoln, Second Inaugural Address, March 1865 — six weeks before his death**

[56] Kidding again. Not really. Wait until we get to the next chapter. Some slaves actually had it worse after the war — instead of being worth hundreds of thousands of dollars to their masters, many were hired from jails, and their deaths mattered little to someone who could rent a different guy tomorrow. Then two more constitutional amendments had to be added... that's enough of a preview of the next chapter.