

# The Struggle Begins

**Overview** Throughout the 1850's, the North and the South grew further apart. By 1860 it looked unlikely that the Union would survive. After the presidential election of 1860, South Carolina seceded—withdrew—from the Union. Efforts at compromise were made, but other states soon followed. These seceded states declared their independence and formed the Confederate States of America. A Confederate attack on the Federal troops at Fort Sumter began the Civil War. This bloody and costly war was to last for four years.

**The Election of 1860 and Secession.** By 1860 the country was deeply divided by sectional differences. This was clearly apparent in the divisions within the political parties. When the Democratic party met in 1860 to choose a candidate to run for the presidency, a split developed. It could not agree on a platform for slavery in the territories. This caused the Democratic party to split into northern and southern sections. The northern section nominated Stephen Douglas for President. His view was that slavery should be decided upon by the people in the states and the territories. The southern section chose John Breckinridge of Kentucky to run for the presidency. His view was that the *Dred Scott* decision of the Supreme Court meant that all territories were open to slavery.

The leading contender for the Republican nomination for President was William Seward. However, after much discussion and bargaining at the Republican Convention in Chicago, Abraham Lincoln was nominated. Another candidate was chosen by a new party, the Constitutional Union party. This party stood for the preservation of the Union and the upholding of the Constitution. The Constitutional Union party offered no position on slavery. John Bell of Tennessee was their candidate.

In the presidential election no candidate had a majority of the popular vote. The votes in the South were split between Breckinridge and Bell. Lincoln was able to win all the northern states but one and was elected.

Before the election South Carolina had said that it would secede from the Union if Lincoln

was elected President. One month after the election South Carolina seceded. Attempts at compromise were made to prevent other states from seceding. But these failed, and six more states—Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas—soon followed. These seven states declared their independence and formed their own government. They called themselves the Confederate States of America. They adopted their own constitution and chose Jefferson Davis to be their president.

President Lincoln made his Inaugural Address in March of 1861. In his speech he made it clear that he believed a state had no right to secede. He also said that federal laws would be enforced in the seceded states. Lincoln also stated that all federal property in these states would be protected.

**The War Begins.** By March of 1861 the Confederate states had seized most of the federal property within their boundaries. But they had not taken Fort Sumter, in Charleston Harbor. The Confederates decided to starve out the Union troops in the fort. Lincoln had to take action. His close advisers gave him many suggestions. Some said he should let the fort be taken. Others said he should send armed reinforcements. But Lincoln decided to send supplies. The Confederates decided to take the fort before it could be resupplied. If they allowed the supplies to go through, it would appear that they were accepting Lincoln's authority.

The Confederate troops, under General P.G.T. Beauregard, bombarded the fort for two days. Finally, on April 14, 1861, the Union commander, General Robert Anderson, surrendered. President Lincoln then issued a call for 75,000 volunteers to help put down the "rebellion" in the South. Within weeks four more states—Arkansas, Tennessee, North Carolina, and Virginia—seceded and joined the Confederacy.

However, not all the people in Virginia wanted to leave the Union. In the western part of Virginia most people wished to stay in the Union. This area broke away from Virginia and two years later became the state of West Virginia. Several other border states decided to remain in the Union. These were Delaware,

Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri. A similar decision had to be made by several Indian tribes. The Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creeks, Seminoles, and Cherokee all supported the Confederacy. But a group of Cherokee, led by Chief John Ross, and most of the Plains Indians favored the Union.

No major battles were fought for several months as both sides formed their armies. Then, in July 1861, the two forces met at the Battle of Bull Run (see map on page 300). This was called the Battle of Manassas by the Confederates. Many battles of the Civil War have two names. This is because the Union army named battles after the nearest river. The Confederate army, however, named battles after the nearest town.

At Bull Run, both the Union and the Confederate generals were sure that they would defeat their enemy on the first day. People in Washington were so confident the Union army would win that they took picnic baskets to the battlefield.

When the battle began, about 30,000 Union troops, led by General Irvin McDowell, faced an equal number of Confederates commanded by General P.G.T. Beauregard. The Union troops managed to break through the Confederate lines, and a Union victory looked certain.

But the Confederate troops were rallied by General Thomas Jackson. A Confederate general said that Jackson stood "like a stone wall against the enemy." After the battle Jackson became known as Stonewall.

After holding their line, the Confederates mounted a counterattack. The Union troops were beaten back and began to retreat. The retreat soon turned into a rout, and the Union troops fled toward Washington.

Bull Run meant little in terms of the final outcome of the war. But it was an important battle. It boosted the Confederates' spirit, and it left the Union army dejected. The battle also showed that the war would not be won in a few days.

**Confederate and Union War Plans.** At the outset of the war it appeared that the Union had many advantages over the Confederacy (see chart on page 298). The Union had a larger population. It also had most of the

country's natural resources and industries. And the North's transportation systems were better than those in the South. The South, however, seemed to have the best generals. Many were former United States Army officers who had decided to fight for their state rather than for the Union. The Confederates also had another advantage in that often they were fighting on their home soil.

Both sides needed a plan by which to fight the war. The Confederate plan, for the most part, was to fight a defensive war. It was thought that if Union attacks could be defeated, people in the North would grow tired of fighting. President Lincoln, on the other hand, felt that the North had to fight an aggressive war—one of attack and conquer. The Union's plan, developed by General Winfield Scott, was then to attack on two fronts. One front would be in the west. The goal there would be to gain control of the Mississippi River. This would cut the Confederacy in half. The other front would be in the east, where the main goal would be the capture of Richmond, Virginia, the Confederate capital. In addition, all southern ports were to be blockaded by the Union navy. This would cut the Confederacy off from trade with other countries.

**The Blockade.** An effective blockade of southern ports was an important part of the Union war effort. However, enforcing a blockade was a difficult task. The Union navy had about 3,500 miles of Confederate coastline to patrol. But very few ships were available. At first, all types of ships were pressed into service. Later, as the war progressed, the Union was able to add more ships built specially for the blockade.

The Confederates, in turn, used specially built ships-called blockade runners-in their attempt to break the blockade. Often these ships were built in European ports.

Most of the Confederate blockade runners sailed out of Nassau, in the Bahamas. Ships from Europe brought goods to Nassau. There the goods were transferred to the blockade runners. If a blockade runner was successful, a cargo of cotton was carried on the return journey.

As the war went on, the Union tightened its blockade on most Confederate ports. In time,

fewer blockade runners managed to reach the Confederate ports. By 1864 the Union blockade had effectively cut the South off from outside help.

**Early Campaigns in the West.** The Union plan to gain control of the Mississippi River began in 1862. In February 1862, Union troops moved south from Illinois. They were commanded by a bearded, somewhat shabbily dressed general named Ulysses S. Grant.

Grant's troops first invaded Tennessee and took Forts Henry and Donelson. These were important Confederate strong points on the Cumberland and Tennessee rivers. After taking these forts, Grant wanted to move on to Corinth, Mississippi. This was an important railroad junction. But Confederate troops, led by General Albert Sidney Johnston, made a surprise attack at Shiloh. Grant was caught completely unprepared. However, he was able to hold his ground, and at the end of the day fresh Union troops arrived. The Confederates were beaten back and retreated to Corinth.

At Shiloh, Grant's troops had suffered heavy losses. General Halleck, commander of the Union troops in the west, removed Grant from the direct fighting. Some of Lincoln's advisers wanted Grant removed from the army altogether. But Lincoln had been impressed with Grant's fighting spirit. "I cannot spare this man," he said. "He fights." Shortly after this Grant was again given a battle command.

The Union campaign in the west continued. In April 1862, a Union fleet, commanded by David Farragut, captured New Orleans. By June 1862, Union troops had entered Memphis, Tennessee. But, by the end of 1862 Union forces had still not gained control of the Mississippi River. The success of the Union plan was still in the balance.

**Early Campaigns in the East.** While fighting was going on in the west, Union forces were trying to put their eastern plan into effect. The Union goal in the east was to capture Richmond. With the center of the Confederate government in Union hands, Union leaders hoped that the Confederates would stop fighting. In March 1862, the Union general George McClellan moved toward Richmond. He transported his men by water to the peninsula

formed by the York and James rivers. His plan was to attack Richmond from the southeast (see map on page 300). Progress to the peninsula was delayed when the Union transport ships were attacked by the Confederate ironclad ship, the *Merrimac*. A Union ironclad ship, the *Monitor* was sent to help. After a long fight, both ships withdrew, and the Union troops were able to move forward.

McClellan moved his troops slowly up the peninsula. Their progress was further slowed by a Confederate attack at Seven Pines. Confederate troops, led by General Robert E. Lee, turned back McClellan's advance at the Seven Days' Battle (June 25 to July 1, 1862). Lee, and his second in command, Stonewall Jackson, outfought and outwitted the Union generals. The Union troops fell back to Harrison's Landing, on the James River.

In August 1862, a second move on Richmond was begun. Once again the Union troops were stopped by the Confederates. At the second Battle of Bull Run (Manassas), Lee and Jackson again outwitted the Union generals.

Fearing that Lee would attack Washington, McClellan started to strengthen its defenses. But Lee did not attack the capital. Instead, he took his troops north into Maryland. Lee's plan was to invade the North and in this way persuade the Union to end the fighting. In September 1862, McClellan brought his troops out to meet the Confederate invasion. The Confederate advance was stopped at the Battle of Antietam (Sharpsburg). Lee withdrew the Confederate troops and retreated southward. But McClellan hesitated and did not pursue the retreating Confederates.

Antietam was another battle where losses were great. Total losses for both sides amounted to 23,000 killed or wounded. But it was the first real Union victory in the east. People in the North were encouraged by this victory, and President Lincoln's popularity increased.

## The People At War

**Overview** By 1862 most people saw that the war was going to be a long and bitter struggle. Many people, both in the North and in the South, soon began to grow tired of the fighting.

There was growing opposition to the way President Lincoln was handling the war. Jefferson Davis was also criticized for his war policies. The North's support for the war increased when President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation in 1862. Nine months later the turning point came with the Union victory at the Battle of Gettysburg-in July 1863. But it was nearly two more years after Gettysburg before the war finally ended.

**The Emancipation Proclamation.** In 1862 President Lincoln was faced with opposition to his war policies. Some people wanted the war to end immediately. They felt that too many lives and too much money had been lost already. These people demanded that President Lincoln make peace with the Confederacy as soon as possible.

President Lincoln also faced opposition from other people. Some of them were members of his own political party. These people wanted him to state that the war was being fought to end slavery. President Lincoln was unwilling to do this because some border states that had remained loyal to the Union still allowed slavery. President Lincoln feared that these states might secede if he announced that the Union was fighting to end slavery in all states.

But President Lincoln was looking for an opportunity to make a *proclamation-an* announcement-about the freeing of slaves in the seceded states. The Union victory at the Battle of Antietam, in September 1862, gave him that opportunity. He issued the Emancipation Proclamation soon after. The proclamation did not become effective until January 1, 1863. It declared that all slaves were freed in all the states that had seceded.

The Emancipation Proclamation was an important document. The North was now fighting to end slavery, as well as to preserve the Union. It lessened the opposition to President Lincoln from his own political party. And the proclamation gained for the Union the support of many people in foreign countries. Also, an important result of the proclamation was that it involved many more black people in the struggle for the Union.

The extent of black involvement is not well-known. Many blacks served in the Union army. By the end of the war about 180,000 blacks

had served in the Union army and navy. Generally, black soldiers were not as well treated as white soldiers. They were put into all-black regiments and were commanded by white officers. Black soldiers also received less pay than white soldiers. But these black soldiers fought very bravely. About 38,000 of them died in the war. And 21 blacks were awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor-our nation's highest award for bravery.

**President Lincoln Faces More Problems.** As well as having to oversee the war on the battlefield, President Lincoln faced problems on the home front. There was opposition to the way he was handling the war. Some of his top cabinet ministers, such as Secretary of State Seward and Secretary of War Stanton, were critical of his actions. The leader of the Union's army, General George McClellan, also thought that President Lincoln was unable to organize the fighting of the war.

Many members of the President's own party were unhappy with his handling of the war. These Radical Republicans formed a committee in Congress-the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War. Through this committee the Radical Republicans held hearings that resulted in demands that President Lincoln take action to win the war quickly. In addition, some Democrats were totally against the war. They wanted President Lincoln to end the war and make peace with the Confederacy. These Peace Democrats were called Copperheads, after a kind of poisonous snake. One outspoken Copperhead was Clement L. Vallandigham of Ohio. His criticism of the war led to his arrest and eventual banishment to the Confederacy. Other Copperheads were arrested when Lincoln suspended *habeas corpus* and declared martial law in some parts of the North. But Lincoln was often lenient in his treatment of people arrested under these conditions.

Opposition to the war also arose in some areas of the North. At the beginning of the war, the Union army had depended on volunteers to boost its size. But the number of volunteers could not replace the losses suffered in the early battles. So, in 1863, Congress passed a conscription act. This act called for the drafting of males between the ages of 25 and 40. But draftees could hire substitutes to serve for

them. Or, if a draftee paid the government \$300, the draftee did not have to serve at all. To many people the war appeared to be "a rich man's war, and a poor man's fight." The \$300 needed to avoid the draft represented more than two thirds of the average worker's yearly earnings. As a result, most men had no choice but to fight. Because of this, riots against the draft broke out in a number of cities.

Another problem for President Lincoln was finding money to pay for the war. He did this in a number of ways. First, tariffs on all imported goods were raised. Taxes on business profits were increased, and a personal income tax was introduced. Also, government bonds were sold to banks. But even these ways could not provide enough money to meet the costs of the war. To meet these costs, President Lincoln ordered that more paper money should be printed. Soon, many people in the North lost faith in this paper money. After a short time its value decreased. The North suffered a growing inflation-rising prices.

**Problems With Foreign Countries.** President Lincoln also had problems with some foreign countries. He wanted to stop European countries from giving support to the Confederacy. But he also needed to trade with these countries to get guns and ammunition to fight the war. A number of bad harvests in Europe led to a shortage of food in some countries, such as Great Britain. This enabled President Lincoln to trade wheat to Great Britain in return for war materials.

But the Union's relations with Great Britain were threatened by the *Trent* Affair. Jefferson Davis had appointed James M. Mason and John Slidell to represent Confederate interests in Europe. They were to be transported to Europe on a British ship, the mail steamer *Trent*. A Union ship, the U.S.S. *San Jacinto*, stopped the *Trent* and arrested the two Confederates. Great Britain was ready to go to war over this. But President Lincoln prevented war by freeing the two Confederate representatives.

**Problems for the Confederacy.** Jefferson Davis faced the same kind of problems as President Lincoln. He was criticized by many people. His vice-president, Alexander

Stephens, was often critical of Davis's actions. Some state governors argued constantly with Davis over their state's rights. Also, some of Davis's closest advisers were opposed to the way he handled the war.

Davis also had problems with some foreign countries. He was interested in gaining the support of these countries. Davis considered that "cotton was king." That is, he thought that European countries, such as Great Britain, would break the Union blockade to get cotton for their textile mills. But this was not the case. These countries simply found other sources of cotton, such as Egypt.

But the Confederacy's most pressing problem was the need for money to pay for the war. The Union blockade made it difficult to raise money through import duties. Income taxes were collected, as was a tax in kind. The tax in kind amounted to about one tenth of each farmer's production. The Confederacy also had to borrow a large amount of money to pay war costs. However, like the Union, the Confederacy was forced to print large amounts of paper money. As the war went on, this paper money lost its value. As in the North, inflation ran at a high rate, and life in the Confederacy became more difficult.

**The Battles Continue.** While Lincoln and Davis tried to solve these problems, the battles continued. The first major battle of 1863 was at Chancellorsville, Virginia (see map on page 300). Again, Lee mastered the Union generals, and the Confederates won another victory. But this victory was very costly. The Confederates lost more than 12,000 men, including Stonewall Jackson.

In an attempt to finish the war, Lee decided to attack the North. He thought that a Confederate victory on northern soil might force the Union to stop fighting. He took his men northward into Pennsylvania. Some of his men clashed with a unit of Union cavalry at Gettysburg. Both sides called for reinforcements. The battle raged for three days, from July 1 to July 3. The Union troops, led by General George Meade, held a strong position on high ground just outside Gettysburg. The Confederates bombarded the Union position with artillery throughout the battle. Wave after wave of infantry attacked. But the Union lines held. On

July 3, a Confederate charge of 15,000 men, led by General George Pickett, was turned back.

The Confederates had suffered heavy losses. Lee re-formed his men, and they retreated southward across the Potomac. Although he held the advantage, Meade did not pursue the retreating Confederates. But the Union had won a major victory. Gettysburg marked a turning point in the war. From that time the Confederacy was always on the defensive.

The day after the victory at Gettysburg, the Union won another victory. Grant captured the town of Vicksburg, on the Mississippi River. The Union now controlled all of the Mississippi River. President Lincoln rewarded Grant by giving him the command of all the Union troops in the west. Grant went on to win an important victory at Chattanooga, Tennessee, in November.

Grant's successes in the west led to his appointment as leader of all Union troops in March 1864. He immediately took charge of the Union effort to capture Richmond. But Lee checked Grant's progress toward Richmond in a number of battles. Lee eventually put up strong defensive lines at Petersburg, Virginia, and Grant put the town under siege.

In August and September 1864, more Union victories were recorded. David Farragut's fleet captured the port of Mobile, Alabama. And General William T. Sherman took Atlanta, the state capital of Georgia.

**The Election of 1864.** Sherman's victory at Atlanta came at an important time—just before the presidential election of 1864. During 1864 President Lincoln's popularity had been declining. Again people began to think that he could not win the war. Although Grant was making progress toward Richmond, he seemed unable to beat Lee in battle. Also, the war in the west appeared to be at a standstill.

In June 1864, Lincoln was nominated for President by the National Union party, an alliance of Republicans and Democrats who supported the war. Pro-war Democrat Andrew Johnson of Tennessee was chosen as Vice-President. To oppose Lincoln, the Democratic party nominated General George McClellan. Lincoln had sensed the feeling of the people in

the North, and he expected to be defeated in the election. But Sherman's victory at Atlanta, and his march through Georgia to the sea, changed things. Final victory now seemed in sight. As a result in November 1864, Lincoln was easily reelected. Lincoln now began to work on a quick end to the war and a fair and lasting peace.

**Appomattox and the End of the War.** The Union's army continued to march on to victory. After taking Atlanta, Sherman took his men through Georgia toward Savannah and the sea. Sherman waged a *total war*. This meant the war was being fought against civilians as well as the military. Anything that could be used for the Confederate war effort was either captured or destroyed. Sherman's troops left a 60-mile-wide trail of devastation behind them. Sherman captured Savannah on December 21, 1864. He offered it as a Christmas gift to President Lincoln. Sherman then turned his men northward, and they began to march through the Carolinas.

In the east Grant was still laying siege to Petersburg. He did not want to make a frontal attack. Lee's position was *too* strong. Also, the casualties resulting from a frontal attack would be very heavy. So Grant extended his siege lines. By doing this, he hoped to stretch the Confederate defense lines to the breaking point. This he managed to do on April 2, 1865. The Confederates retreated from Petersburg. This left Richmond open to capture.

Lee's troops were now few in number. They were tired and hungry. On April 9, 1865, Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox Court House, Virginia. The terms of surrender were simple. Lee's troops were to lay down their guns and never take them up again to fight the Union. When they had done this, they could go home.

After Lee's surrender, the rest of the Confederate forces soon followed. General Joseph E. Johnston surrendered to Sherman on April 16, 1865, at Raleigh, North Carolina. General Kirby-Smith surrendered all the Confederate troops west of the Mississippi River on May 26, 1865. The last Confederate general to surrender was the Cherokee chief Stand Watie. He surrendered his men on June 23, 1865. The war was now over.

# The Impact of the War

**Overview** The Civil War ended with General Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appomattox Court House. But the war left its mark on the country. Thousands of soldiers had been killed in the bitter, four-year struggle. The economy of the South had been almost destroyed, and plans were needed for rebuilding. President Lincoln had definite ideas about how the former Confederate states were to be readmitted to the Union. He also had plans to help the former slaves. But he was assassinated before these plans were fully put into effect.

**The End of the Confederacy.** General Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appomattox Court House in April 1865 signaled the end of the Confederacy. Other Confederate armies soon laid down their arms. But Jefferson Davis and some other members of the Confederate government hoped to continue the fight. When Richmond fell to Union troops, they fled southward through the Carolinas to Georgia. But in May 1865, Jefferson Davis was captured. He was taken to Virginia and imprisoned at Fortress Monroe. He was held for trial on charges of treason. During the war, northerners had threatened to hang Davis "to a sour apple tree." But after the war ill-feeling toward Davis faded. Two years after his arrest he was freed on bail. His trial was never held.

A number of other prominent southern citizens also were imprisoned for a short time. But they too were never tried. In fact, only one Confederate officer was tried for war crimes. He was Major Henry Wirz, the commandant of the prison camp at Andersonville, Georgia. He was found guilty and was executed in November 1865. At the end of the war, Confederate soldiers were allowed to return to their homes. But most returned to a land damaged by the long and bitter struggle.

**The Impact of the War in the South.** Nearly everybody in the South was affected in some way by the war. About 900,000 men served as Confederate soldiers. More than 150,000 of these soldiers lost their lives during the war.

The majority of the battles were fought on southern soil, and this left large areas of the South devastated. In some places the North had followed a policy of total war. Everything that could be used by the Confederate army was destroyed. For example, General William T. Sherman, in his march across Georgia in 1864, destroyed farms, factories, and railroads. In addition, retreating Confederate forces often destroyed anything that might be useful to the enemy. Richmond, Virginia, the Confederate capital, for example, was burned by retreating Confederate troops.

Thus by 1865, much of the South was in ruins. The southern economy had collapsed. It had cost the South about two billion dollars to fight the war. To recover from the war would take many more billions of dollars and years of work. The defeat of the Confederacy also left many people in the South feeling bitter and uncertain. Before the war, life in the South had been based on the institution of slavery. The Union's victory in the war brought an end to slavery. In the years that followed, blacks and whites had to find new ways to live together.

**The Impact of the War in the North.** People in the North were also affected by the war. About 1,500,000 men had served in the Union army. More than 350,000 of these soldiers died in the war. But, since few battles were fought on northern soil, the North was left in a much better condition than was the South. In some ways the North actually prospered from the war. For example, the North's industries grew during the war. New factories had been built to provide the Union army with war materials. In 1864, sixty-five new factories were opened in Philadelphia alone. New farming machinery was used to produce more food. More reapers and mowers were made during the war than in all the years between 1833 and 1860. Also, nearly 4,000 more miles [6437 kilometers] of railroad track were laid during the war.

Although often overlooked, women played an important part in the war on both sides. Union and Confederate forces employed women as spies. Women also served as nurses in the armies. One nurse, Clara Barton, later helped to found the American Red Cross. A few women dressed as men and actually fought in some battles. But perhaps more important was

that women in the North and the South often ran the farms and took jobs in factories when men left to serve in the army.

In the North, the combined efforts of men and women led to economic growth and victory. In the South, the war left destruction in its wake. The job of rebuilding the South fell heavily upon those that remained. The Union also needed to be re-formed. This time of rebuilding is known as the *Reconstruction*.

**Lincoln's Plan for Reconstruction.** At the end of the war, President Lincoln was faced with two problems. First, he had to decide how the *freedmen*- former slaves- were to be helped in adjusting to freedom. Second, he had to decide how the former Confederate states were to be readmitted to the Union.

President Lincoln knew that the freedmen had to adjust to a new way of life. To help solve the problem, the Freedmen's Bureau was established. The bureau provided free food for needy freedmen after the war. The bureau also helped to set up schools for black children. It also helped many freedmen to find jobs.

To help solve the second problem, President Lincoln planned to bring the former Confederate states back into the Union as quickly as possible. In his second Inaugural Address, in March 1865, he said he hoped to treat the South "with malice toward none, with charity for all." His Reconstruction plan was simple. A former Confederate could become a United States citizen again by taking an oath. In the oath, the former Confederate would swear loyalty to the Union and to the Constitution. In addition, the Emancipation Proclamation would also have to be accepted. Then, when 10 percent of the people in the state who were eligible to vote in 1860 had taken this oath, the former Confederate state could set up a new state government. The state could then be readmitted to the Union by Congress. Tragically, President Lincoln was assassinated before his plan could be put fully into effect.

**Lincoln's Assassination.** The days after Lee's surrender at Appomattox were a busy time for President Lincoln. On Good Friday, April 14, 1865, he decided to relax by watching a play at Ford's Theater. During the play, John Wilkes Booth, a well-known actor and a Confederate

sympathizer, shot President Lincoln once in the head. Booth then leaped to the stage, breaking his leg. But he still managed to escape.

President Lincoln was taken to a house near the theater. He died early the next morning.

A wave of grief hit the country. Even those who had opposed him were shocked and saddened at President Lincoln's death. Many thousands of people viewed the funeral procession that took his body from Washington to Springfield, Illinois.

Secretary of War Stanton personally took charge of the hunt for those responsible for President Lincoln's death. A few days later, Booth was trapped in a barn and shot. A number of people stood trial for conspiring with Booth to kill the President. Four of them were executed. But, to this day, a mystery surrounds the true circumstances of the assassination of President Lincoln.

Even though the country was grief stricken, the work of Reconstruction had to go on. Vice-President Andrew Johnson was sworn in as President. He hoped to follow Lincoln's plans for Reconstruction.