

In November 1862, Lincoln replaced McClellan with General Ambrose Burnside. Burnside set out to cross the Rappahannock at Fredericksburg and take Richmond. Before getting pontoon bridges forced a postponement of the attack until December 13; by that time, Lee's army had been able to occupy good defensive positions above the city. In an ill-conceived direct assault, Burnside's troops were cut down before Mary's Heights and suffered nearly 13,000 dead or wounded.

Joseph Hooker soon replaced Burnside upon his appointment as commander of the Army of the Potomac, he boasted, "May God have mercy on General Lee, for I will have none." Before Hooker could attack, however, Lee and Jackson surprised Union forces at a crossroads called Chancellorsville. Lee brilliantly outmaneuvered Hooker and won a decisive victory, but it was tempered by the loss of Stonewall Jackson, who had been accidentally shot by his own troops.

Lee's military reputation soared. He convinced Davis to authorize an invasion of the North, reasoning that such an action would humiliate Hooker, discredit Lincoln, and allow the Confederate army to seize badly needed food and supplies from Northern cities and farms. In June of 1863, Lee moved his army north into Pennsylvania. Southerners took cattle, horses, clothing, shoes, foodstuffs, and money from banks all paid for with Confederate IOUs.

Meanwhile, Job Stuart was screening Lee with three brigades of cavalry and gathering intelligence on Hooker's movements. On June 9, Stuart's troops beat back an attack by Northern horsemen at Brandy Station, Virginia, in what would prove the biggest cavalry action of the entire war. The course for Gettysburg was now set.

Critical-Thinking Question:

How might you infer from the map that the main goal of Lee's incursion into the North was to gather food and supplies?



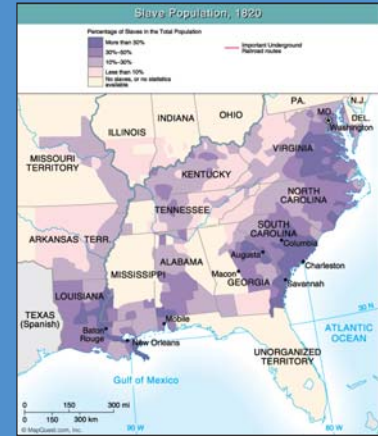
In 1820, cotton farming had existed primarily in Georgia and South Carolina. By 1860, cotton had spread all across the South and became the region's primary commodity. Cotton was the premier "cash crop," fetching high prices in both domestic and international markets. Cotton, however, quickly depleted the soil in which it was grown; the soil also took a long time to recover. Many plantation owners, who had initially used only part of their land for cotton and the rest for food crops, began to devote more and more of their acreage to growing cotton. Other planters looked to expand cotton and slavery to new lands in the west, where the soil remained rich.

The Fugitive Slave Law (a provision of the Compromise of 1850) injected the reality of slavery into the everyday lives of Northerners, some of whom became active in aiding slaves to escape via the Underground Railroad. While the Underground Railroad coagulates up images of mass numbers streaming north toward freedom, only a small portion of slaves ever managed to escape—especially from the deep South, but the mere idea of "outsiders" undermining the institution of slavery angered Southerners and spurred demands that runaway slave laws be strengthened and enforced more stringently.

Democratic Senator Stephen Douglas championed the idea of "popular sovereignty"; the idea that residents of a territory, at the time they petitioned for statehood, would vote on whether the new state would be slave or free. In the Dred Scott case of 1857, however, the Supreme Court essentially declared that Congress had no power to ban slavery in the territories, a ruling that further exacerbated sectional conflict. The Democratic Party split along sectional lines, opening the door for Abraham Lincoln's election as president in 1860.

Critical-Thinking Question:

Why do you think the percentage of slaves in Alabama, Mississippi, and Georgia shows such a significant increase between 1820 and 1850?



In 1820, the slave population in the U.S. was concentrated in areas where cotton growing was the main farming activity. By the terms of the Missouri Compromise (1820), slavery was restricted to the area below latitude 36° 30' except for Missouri itself, where slavery was allowed. The Missouri Compromise enacted largely under the leadership of Henry Clay provided for the admission of Maine as a free state, Missouri as a slave state, and a ban on slavery in the rest of the territory of the Louisiana Purchase south of 36° 30', with Missouri as the noted exception.

The invention of the cotton engine or "gin" in 1793 a device for separating cotton fibers from the seeds revolutionized cotton growing in the South and spurred growth of the plantation system and a demand for more slave labor. As the map indicates in deep purple shading, these plantations were located in a swath from Virginia to Georgia and then west into Louisiana. The profitability of cotton and other staple crops made plantation owners fiercely protective of their investment in "human capital."

While estimates differ, one source puts the slave population at around 900,000 in the year 1800. By 1820, the figure had grown to more than 1.5 million.

Critical-Thinking Question:

Why do you think a large rectangular portion of Georgia (shown in yellow) had a lower slave population than other regions of the state?



The bombardment of Fort Sumter raised war fever, and the populace on both sides clamored for a quick victory. In July 1861, Union forces set out to capture the rail center at Manassas, Virginia, but Confederate troops held them off. This first major battle of the Civil War (known as "First Manassas" or the "First Battle of Bull Run") dashed Northern hopes of quickly snuffing out the rebellion. Days after the battle, Lincoln called for a million new enlistments while the South celebrated its newest hero, General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson.

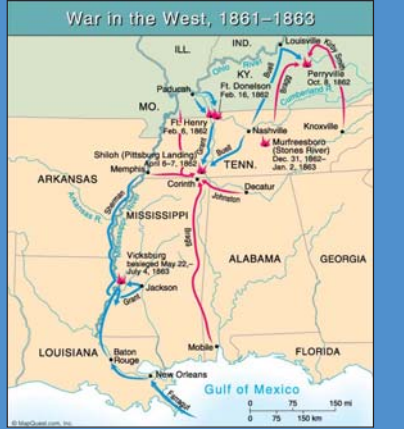
Following First Manassas, Lincoln named General George McClellan to command the Army of the Potomac. McClellan devised a strategy to attack Richmond from the south, moving troops by sea to Yorktown and then up the peninsula between the James and York Rivers. McClellan's "Peninsular Campaign" was halted in a series of battles south and west of the Confederate capital. After General Joseph Johnston was wounded at Seven Pines, President Davis replaced him with Robert E. Lee.

To stop reinforcements from reaching McClellan, Lee sent Jackson into the Shenandoah Valley, where he won a series of victories in the spring of 1862. Fearing Washington would be attacked, Lincoln diverted troops from McClellan in order to protect the capital.

In the fall of 1862, Lee invaded Maryland. At Sharpsburg (which lay just north of the Potomac, Union and Confederate armies fought along Antietam Creek in the bloodiest single day of the Civil War. Lincoln had been waiting for a major Union victory so that he could issue the Emancipation Proclamation. He needed a victory because to issue it after a defeat would be seen as an act of desperation. Though he only narrowly prevailed at Antietam, it was enough of a victory for Lincoln to issue the proclamation.

Critical-Thinking Question:

Sharpsburg lies less than 20 miles from the border between Maryland and Pennsylvania. Had Lee not been turned back at Antietam, what strategy might he have pursued?



One key part of the Union's war strategy involved gaining control of the Mississippi River and its tributaries, which would essentially split the Confederacy in two. In February 1862, Grant, with the aid of gunboats, captured Fort Henry on the Tennessee River and Fort Donelson on the Cumberland River. Grant's victory at Donelson forced the Confederates to evacuate Nashville and regroup at Corinth, Mississippi, to defend a vital rail center. Before Grant could hit the enemy at Corinth, Southern forces under General Johnston moved to attack him first. The savage two-day battle at Shiloh Church resulted in a clear Union victory. Southern hopes of regaining western Tennessee and holding Corinth and Memphis vanished.

By the fall of 1862, Union Admiral David Farragut captured New Orleans, putting almost the whole length of the Mississippi into Union hands. Vicksburg, Mississippi, however, remained a formidable obstacle that Grant was determined to remove. Situated on a high bluff above the river, Vicksburg's combination of natural and manmade defenses made a direct assault nearly impossible. Supported by gunboats, Grant occupied high ground on the Yazoo River north of Vicksburg. From this position, he launched a series of probing attacks and rained down cannon and mortar fire on Vicksburg, which was now running short on food and medical supplies. On July 4, 1863, Vicksburg surrendered, and President Lincoln announced, "The Father of Waters again goes unimpeded to the sea."

Critical-Thinking Question:

Why was it so important for the Union to control the entire length of the Mississippi River?



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Critical-Thinking Question:

Geographically, what is the difference between the states that succeeded before the aftermath of the Battle of Antietam and the states that succeeded after the battle? Why do you think this difference existed?

The Road to Appomattox 1864–1865

General Ulysses Grant, with Lincoln's quick approval, undertook the destruction of Lee's army. In May, Grant crossed the Rapidan River and started to advance through a wooded area called the Wilderness. He hoped to force battle in open country farther south. Lee jumped the federals before they could clear the woods, and the two armies fought fiercely with heavy casualties and no clear winner.

Instead of retreating as Hooker had done at Chancellorsville, Grant headed toward a crossroads at Spotsylvania Court House. Lee, however, made an all-night march, got to Spotsylvania first, and held out against constant Union assaults. Unable to break through, Grant moved left to fight smaller battles along the North Anna River in a thwarted attempt to take a rail junction. At another crossroads, called Cold Harbor, Grant again tried frontal assaults to punch through Lee's defenses. Beaten back with terrible losses, Grant side-slipped across the James River to lay siege to the city of Petersburg, which lay south of Richmond.

Petersburg-site of the famous Battle of the Crater-was encircled, forcing Lee to abandon it and Richmond in early April. The South took another blow on April 1 at a junction called Five Forks. Cavalry under Phil Sheridan routed Confederate troops commanded by George Pickett. With Richmond taken, its government all but disbanded, and his army in tatters, Lee saw no purpose in going on. The end came when he surrendered to Grant at Appomattox on April 9, 1865.

Critical-Thinking Question:

Grant lost approximately 7000 men in the assault at Cold Harbor-about the same number as Lee lost with Pickett's charge at Gettysburg. Compare the two actions. In your opinion, did Grant or Lee have the better chance of success? What factors were at play that doomed each to failure?

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War in the Southeast: 1863–1865

Confederate General Joseph Johnston knew he could not hold the Army of the Potomac and more modern than Lee's army. He had to retreat to the south. Johnston's army was routed at the Battle of Gettysburg. In the summer of 1863, Lee's army moved from the Shenandoah Valley to the James River. Lee's army moved to the James River. Lee's army moved to the James River. Lee's army moved to the James River.

Critical-Thinking Question:

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Gettysburg, July 1–3, 1863

In June of 1863, General Robert E. Lee advanced into Pennsylvania with his Army of Northern Virginia. Leading the Army of the Potomac was General George Meade, Lincoln's choice to replace General "Fighting Joe" Hooker. Manoeuvring to keep his army between Lee and Washington, Meade unbeknownst to Lee crossed the Potomac in late June and marshaled his forces at Frederick, Maryland. When Lee belatedly learned the enemy's location, his troops at the time were stretched from York to Chambersburg, with Meade moving rapidly toward his flank. To stop Meade, Lee concentrated his forces at a small town in Pennsylvania named Gettysburg.

Following clashes on July 1, Union troops retreated to defensive positions south of Gettysburg. On July 2, both sides rushed reinforcements onto the field. Lee mounted unsuccessful attacks to dislodge the Yankees from Culp's Hill and Cemetery Hill. By that evening, the federals controlled a line from Culp's Hill to Big Round Top while Confederates were positioned at Seminary Ridge.

The next day, Lee tried to break the Union center with a frontal infantry charge. Following massive artillery fire, General George Pickett led a head-on assault on the main Union positions that became known as Pickett's Charge. The assault failed: the Union line held and the Confederates were beaten back with heavy casualties. After losing nearly a third of his army, Lee retreated south across the Potomac. Meade followed, but his pursuit was so slow an exasperated Lincoln said that the chase reminded him of "an old woman trying to shoos her geese across a creek."

Critical-Thinking Question:

Corps Commander James Longstreet urged Lee not to attack Union forces to his front but instead to turn the Union flank and maneuver between Meade and Washington. Why do you think Longstreet advocated this course, and why did Lee reject it?

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