

Civil War Timeline

By CRAIG L. SYMONDS

1860

Nov. 6: Abraham Lincoln of Illinois (below left) elected president of the United States.

Dec. 20: South Carolina announces its secession from the Union.

Dec. 26: Major Robert Anderson moves his small garrison from Fort Moultrie to the still-unfinished Fort Sumter. South Carolinians insist that this is a violation of an understanding they had with the Buchanan administration.

1861

Jan. 10–Feb. 1: Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana and Texas secede.

Feb. 4: A "Peace Convention" assembles in Washington in a last-ditch effort to find a solution to the crisis.

Feb. 8: A convention in Montgomery, Ala., adopts a provisional Constitution for the Confederate States of America.

Feb. 11: Lincoln leaves Springfield for the train trip to Washington, D.C.

Feb. 18: Jefferson Davis (above right) and Alexander Stephens are inaugurated as provisional president and vice president of the Confederacy.

Feb. 23: President-elect Lincoln passes secretly through Baltimore to foil a rumored assassination plot against him; arrives in Washington.

March 4: Abraham Lincoln is inaugurated the 16th president of the United States.

April 6: A relief expedition for Fort Sumter sails from New York. Lincoln notifies Gov. Francis Pickens of South Carolina that it is en route. Pickens passes the information on to Confederate authorities in Montgomery.

April 9: Jefferson Davis orders P. G. T. Beauregard to demand the surrender of Fort Sumter; if the demand is refused, he is to reduce the fort by gunfire.

April 12: Confederate batteries open fire on Fort Sumter. The only fatality in the long bombardment occurs when Union gunners fire a salute to the national flag after the fort's surrender and a cannon explodes killing Daniel Hough.

April 15: Lincoln calls for 75,000 volunteer state militia to suppress illegal "combinations" too powerful for the local constabulary. Much of the South accepts this as a virtual declaration of war.

April 17: Virginia secedes.

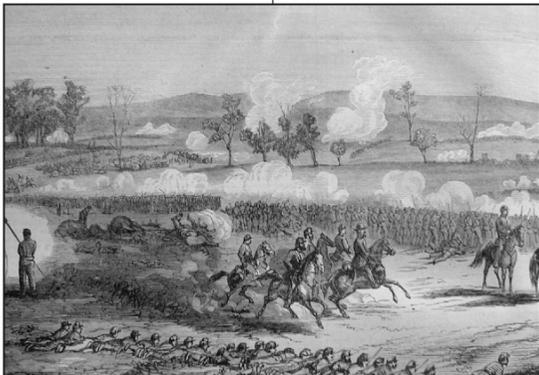
April 19: Lincoln announces a blockade of the seceded states.

May 6–20: Arkansas, North Carolina and Tennessee secede.

July 4: U.S. Congress meets in emergency session and ratifies all of President Lincoln's actions since his inauguration.

July 9: The U.S. Congress ratifies the decision of Maj. Gen. Benjamin Butler that escaped slaves coming into his lines did not have to be returned to their owners because those

owners were using them for military construction work. The men, Butler declared, were "contraband of war." For the rest of the war, escaped slaves are colloquially known as "contrabands."



July 21: The First Battle of Bull Run (Manassas) results in a humiliating rout of the Union army under Maj. Gen. Irvin McDowell. Thomas J. Jackson earns his sobriquet as "Stonewall." Confederate forces are too disorganized to pursue.

Aug. 10: The Battle of Wilson's Creek in Missouri is the first major battle fought west of the Appalachian Mountains. The Union commander, Gen. Nathaniel Lyon, is killed, and the Confederates win another victory. As in Virginia, the victors are unable to pursue.

Aug. 30: Union Maj. Gen. John C. Fremont, commanding in the West, declares the slaves of rebels to be free. Lincoln repudiates the announcement on Sept. 11.

Sept. 6: Confederate forces under Maj. Gen. Leonidas Polk enter "neutral" Kentucky. Soon thereafter, Union forces under Brig. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant occupy Paducah, Ky., whose neutrality comes to an end.

Oct. 21: The Battle of Ball's Bluff on the south bank of the Potomac River results in a humiliating Union defeat. Col. Edward Baker, a close personal friend of Lincoln's, is killed. The debacle results in the establishment of the Congressional Committee on the Conduct of the War.

Oct. 31: Brevet Lt. Gen. Winfield Scott formally retires; Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan becomes commander of all Union armies.

1862

Jan. 19: Battle of Mills Springs, Ky.; Confederate Brig. Gen. Felix Zollicoffer is killed.

Feb. 6: Union forces under Brig. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant and Flag Officer Andrew Hull Foote capture Fort Henry on the Tennessee River.

Feb. 8: Union forces under Maj. Gen. Ambrose Burnside capture Roanoke Island in Pamlico South.

Feb. 16: Union forces under Grant capture Fort Donelson on the Cumberland River in Tennessee and a Confederate army of nearly 15,000 men.

Feb. 22: Jefferson Davis inaugurated to a six-year term as president of the Confederacy.

Feb. 25: Union forces capture Nashville, Tenn., the first rebel state capital to be reclaimed by Union forces.

Feb. 26: The Legal Tender Act is passed by the U.S. Congress marking the beginning of paper money, called "greenbacks."

March 7–8: The Battle of Pea Ridge (or Elkhorn Tavern) in Arkansas results in a Confederate victory and solidifies Union control of Missouri.

March 8: The Confederate ironclad C.S.S. Virginia (formerly the U.S.S. Merrimack) sinks two Union warships in Hampton Roads (front page below).

March 9: The U.S.S. Monitor battles the Virginia to a tactical draw, though the presence of a Union ironclad ends the domination of the rebel ironclad.

March 17: Elements of McClellan's Union army begins a move from Alexandria, Va., to Fort Monroe on the Virginia Peninsula. Eventually, McClellan will bring 121,000 men to the Virginia coast for the so-called Peninsular Campaign.

April 5: McClellan's army is arrayed in front of the Confederate defensive lines near Yorktown, Va. McClellan decides to conduct a siege.

April 6–7: The Battle of Shiloh Church. On April 6, Confederate forces under Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston attack the Union camp of Grant's army at Pittsburg Landing and drive them toward the Tennessee River. On April 7 a reinforced Union army counterattacks and regains the lost ground. Losses are very heavy on both sides; Gen. A. S. Johnston is killed.

May 5: Battle of Williamsburg: a rear guard action as Johnston's rebel army falls back toward Richmond.

May 8–June 9: The Shenandoah Valley Campaign: In a fast-paced and well-executed campaign, Confederate Maj. Gen. Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson fights five battles against elements of three Union armies. The campaign ties down a large number

June 12–15: Confederate cavalry commander J. E. B. Stuart conducts a raid into the rear of McClellan's army on the Peninsula, riding all the way around it to discover its positions.

June 16: The Battle of Secessionville on James Island, S.C., results in the repulse of a Union thrust toward Charleston's back door.

June 25–July 1: The Seven Days Battles. Joined by Jackson's army from the Valley, Robert E. Lee's Confederate army outside Richmond slams into McClellan's forces, fighting six battles in seven days. McClellan acts on the defensive while shifting his base from the York to the James River. The series of battles saves Richmond and destroys McClellan's will to fight, but the Confederate army suffers horrible casualties, especially at Malvern Hill (July 1).

July 7: McClellan hands Lincoln his famous "Harrison's Landing Letter" in which he lectures the president about the conduct of the war.

July 14: Union Maj. Gen. John Pope assumes command of the new Army of Virginia; McClellan sees it as a challenge to his authority.

Aug. 9: The Battle of Cedar Mountain. A portion of Pope's Army of Virginia attacks "Stonewall" Jackson's Corps and enjoys initial success before a Confederate counterattack drives him back.

Aug. 16: McClellan's army begins its withdrawal from Harrison's Landing to end the Peninsular Campaign.

Aug. 30: The Second Battle of Bull Run (Manassas). Pope assails Jackson's forces for most of the day until arriving Confederate reinforcements under Lt. Gen. James Longstreet sweep the field.

Sept. 1: Two Union generals (Kearney and Stevens) are killed in the Battle of Chantilly near Fairfax Court House, Va.

Sept. 2: Lincoln appoints McClellan to command the Union forces regrouping for the defense of Washington.

Sept. 5: Lee's Confederate army crosses the Potomac into Maryland.

Sept. 13: Union soldiers near Frederick, Md., discover a copy of Confederate War Order No. 191, which details the location and marching orders of the Confederate army.

Sept. 15: The Union garrison of Harpers Ferry surrenders.

Sept. 17: The Battle of Antietam: the single bloodiest day of the Civil War. Having fought his way through the passes of South Mountain, McClellan assails Lee's army near Sharpsburg, Md., along the banks of Antietam Creek. Though he has numerical superiority, he attacks piecemeal. Lee's army is hard pressed, but McClellan declines to commit his reserves, and the day ends without a decisive outcome. On Sept. 19, Lee withdraws back into Virginia.

Sept. 22: Lincoln announces the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation.

Oct. 8: The Battle of Perryville, Ky., marks the apogee of the invasion of that state by forces under Confederate Maj. Gen. Braxton Bragg.

Nov. 7: Lincoln dismisses McClellan from his command, replacing him with Ambrose Burnside.

Dec. 7: Union forces win the Battle of Prairie Grove, Ark.

FORT SUMPTER FALLEN.
PARTICULARS OF THE BOMBARDMENT.
The Fort on Fire and the Garrison Exhausted.
NO ATTEMPT AT REINFORCEMENT.
The Cessation of Firing and the Capitulation.



of Union forces, and afterward Jackson manages to move eastward, over the mountains, in time to join in the defense of Richmond.

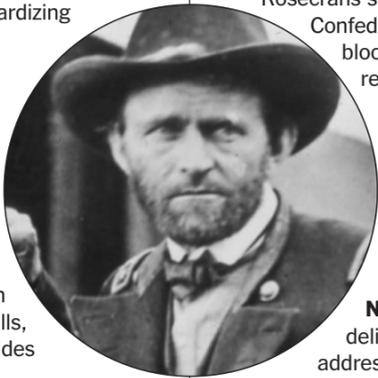
May 10–11: The Confederates evacuate Norfolk and blow up the ironclad Virginia (Merrimack).

May 31–June 1: Battle of Seven Pines (Fair Oaks): Joseph E. Johnston launches a counterattack against McClellan's advancing army outside Richmond. Though the attack drives the Federals back only a mile or two, McClellan believes it proves that he is outnumbered. Johnston himself is badly wounded and is replaced in command by Robert E. Lee who up until then had been acting as Davis's military adviser. Lee will command the Army of Northern Virginia for the rest of the war.

Dec. 13: The Battle of Fredericksburg; Union forces suffer heavy losses.

Dec. 20: Confederate Maj. Gen. Earl Van Dorn attacks the Union supply base at Holly Springs, Miss., jeopardizing Grant's advance into Mississippi.

Dec. 31–Jan. 2: In the Battle of Murfreesboro (Stone's River) in Tennessee, attacking Confederate forces under Braxton Bragg drive in the right wing of William Rosecrans's Union army. The attack soon stalls, and eventually Bragg decides to retreat.



Sept. 19–20: The Battle of Chickamauga. After being reinforced by two divisions from Virginia under James Longstreet, Braxton Bragg attacks the army of William Rosecrans south of Chattanooga. The Confederates triumph after a bloody fight, and Rosecrans retreats back into the city.

Oct. 5: Bragg begins the siege of Chattanooga.

Oct. 23: Grant arrives in Chattanooga and assumes command of Union forces.

Nov. 19: President Lincoln delivers a brief but moving address at the dedication of the Soldiers' National Cemetery in Gettysburg.

Nov. 23–24: The Battle of Lookout Mountain. Joseph Hooker's Corps sweeps Confederate defenders from Lookout Mountain west of Chattanooga.

Nov. 25: Battle of Missionary Ridge. When Sherman's attack on the Confederate right stalls, Grant orders a "demonstration" against the rebel center. The soldiers take matters into their own hands and ascend the ridge,

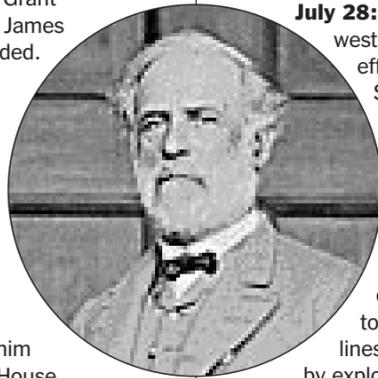
May 5–7: Battle of the Wilderness. Lee (below) assails Grant in the heavy woods south of the Rapidan. Though Lee manages to flank Grant twice in this bloody engagement, Grant continues to push south. James Longstreet is badly wounded.

May 7–13: While Grant advances in Virginia, Sherman's forces attack Confederate positions along Rocky Face Ridge in north Georgia.

May 8–21: The Battle of Spotsylvania Court House. Lee raced to get ahead of Grant and met him near Spotsylvania Court House. For most of three weeks, Grant attacks Lee's position. Both sides suffer very heavy casualties totaling more than 30,000 men before Grant again moves left around Lee's flank.

May 11: In a cavalry battle near Yellow Tavern, Va., "Jeb" Stuart is mortally wounded.

May 13–15: In the Battle of Resaca in Georgia, Confederate forces under Joseph E. Johnston fend off Sherman's effort to cut their line of supply back to Atlanta.



July 22: Hood's second attempt to defeat Sherman in the Battle of Atlanta is also unsuccessful. Union Maj. Gen. James B. McPherson is killed.

July 28: Battle of Ezra Church west of Atlanta: another failed effort by Hood to drive off Sherman.

July 30: In the Battle of Peachtree Creek north of Atlanta, Hood tries unsuccessfully to drive back Sherman's advance. On this same date, Union forces attempt to break through Lee's lines around Petersburg, Va., by exploding a mine under the defensive trenches. The result is a Union debacle when Union troops rushing into the resulting "crater" are badly mauled.

Aug. 5: Union Rear Adm. David G. Farragut dams the torpedoes and enters Mobile Bay.

Aug. 31–Sept. 1: Defeat in the Battle of Jonesboro south of Atlanta convinces Hood that he must evacuate the city. News of the fall of Atlanta bolsters Lincoln's re-election campaign.

Nov. 8: Lincoln re-elected president.

Nov. 15: Sherman leaves Atlanta and begins his "march to the sea." For five weeks, Sherman's army inflicts heavy damage on the southern infrastructure; the march helps redefine modern war.

Nov. 21: Hood, ignoring Sherman, begins an "invasion" of Tennessee.

Nov. 30: Hood attacks an entrenched Union army at Franklin, Tenn., and fails to break through. Six Confederate generals are killed or mortally wounded. Afterward, Hood continues northward to Nashville.

Dec. 15: George Thomas attacks Hood's army outside Nashville. The Confederates are routed and the Army of Tennessee virtually ceases to exist.

Dec. 21: Sherman captures Savannah.

1863

Jan. 1: Lincoln signs the Emancipation Proclamation.

Jan. 20: Burnside tries to execute a flank march around the Confederate forces at Fredericksburg, but heavy rains bog down the army and the move comes to be known as "the mud march."

Jan. 25: Lincoln removes Burnside as army commander and replaces him with Maj. Gen. Joseph Hooker.

April 7: Union Rear Adm. Samuel F. Du Pont attacks Charleston, S.C., with his ironclad fleet. After a lengthy fight, he withdraws and concludes that Charleston cannot be taken by naval forces alone.

April 16: A flotilla of U.S. Navy ships and a few army transports under Rear Adm. David Dixon Porter, run past the Confederate batteries at Vicksburg. Subsequently, they transport Grant's army across the river to begin the Union campaign against Vicksburg.

May 1–3: The Battle of Chancellorsville. Hooker executes a march around Lee's left flank to take up a position in the Virginia wilderness. Lee divides his army, sending Jackson on a 26-mile march around Hooker's flank. The result is another Union defeat, which drives Lincoln to near despair. Stonewall Jackson is mortally wounded by "friendly fire."

May 14: Grant (above left) captures Jackson, Miss.; turns west toward Vicksburg.

May 16: Grant's army forces its way past a defending Confederate army under John C. Pemberton at Champion Hill and closes in on Vicksburg.

June 9: In the Battle of Brandy Station, "Jeb" Stuart's troopers fight off a cavalry probe by Union forces, though the action also demonstrates that Union cavalry is much improved in quality and daring.

June 17: Elements of Lee's army cross the Potomac River into Maryland to inaugurate the Gettysburg campaign.

June 25: "Jeb" Stuart begins a raid into Pennsylvania. Though he hopes to reunite with the infantry soon after crossing the Potomac, his raid takes him to Carlisle, Pa., and he misses the first two day's fighting at Gettysburg.

July 1–3: The Battle of Gettysburg, the bloodiest battle of the Civil War. For three days, Lee assails the Union army under George G. Meade. After the grand infantry assault known as "Pickett's Charge" on July 3, he decides to retreat. The total casualties of killed, wounded and missing exceed 50,000 men.

July 4: John C. Pemberton surrenders both Vicksburg and his defending army to U.S. Grant.

July 7: Port Hudson, La., surrenders; Union forces now control the length of the Mississippi River.

July 13–16: Draft riots in New York City.

Sept. 1: A Union army under Burnside captures Knoxville, Tenn.



punching through the rebel center and putting the Confederates to flight. Bragg's army falls back to Dalton, Ga.

1864

Feb. 3: Sherman leads an expedition out of Vicksburg to Meridian, Miss. The beginning of "hard war" policy.

Feb. 17: Confederate submarine H. L. Hunley sinks U.S.S. Housatonic off Charleston.

Feb. 20: The Battle of Olustee in Florida is a Confederate victory.

March 9: U.S. Grant is promoted to lieutenant general.

March 14: Union forces under Nathaniel Banks ascending the Red River in Louisiana capture Fort de Russey.

April 8: In the Battle of Mansfield or Sabine Crossroads, Banks's army is defeated by Confederate forces under Richard Taylor. Soon after, Banks begins to retreat back down the river.

April 12: Confederate forces under Nathan Bedford Forrest attack Fort Pillow on the Mississippi River. After breaking

ATLANTA.
Fall of the Rebel Stronghold.

HIGHLY IMPORTANT.
A Proclamation by the President of the United States.
The War Still to be Prosecuted for the Restoration of the Union.
A DECREE OF EMANCIPATION
All Slaves in States in Rebellion on the First of January Next to be Free.

Great Battle on the Railroad.
ARMY CUT IN
REBEL GENERAL HARDY
ENTERERS

UNION VICTORY!
PEACE!
Surrender of General Lee and His Whole Army.

May 25–27:

Sherman tries to outflank Johnston in a series of battles at Dallas, New Hope Church and Pickett's Mill northwest of Atlanta. Failing to break through, he moves eastward and continues south.

June 1: At the Battle of Cold Harbor in Virginia, Grant launches a frontal assault at Lee's defense and endures heavy casualties. Afterward, Grant moves southeast again, crossing the James and threatening Petersburg.

June 10: In the Battle of Brice's Crossroads in Mississippi, a Union force under Brig. Gen. Samuel Sturgis is routed by a smaller Confederate force under Nathan Bedford Forrest.

June 19: U.S.S. Kearsarge defeats C.S.S. Alabama off Cherbourg, France.

June 27: At Kennesaw Mountain in Georgia, Sherman tries to fight his way through Johnston's defensive lines. Unsuccessful, he once again moves around Johnston's left flank.

July 5: Lee sends Jubal Early and 12,000 men on a raid into Maryland in the hope of relieving pressure on Richmond. Early brushes aside a Union force at the Monocacy River and closes in on Washington from the northwest.

July 12: Lincoln rides out to Fort Stevens north of Washington and comes under fire from Confederate sharpshooters. That same day, Early begins his withdrawal.

July 17: Jefferson Davis replaces Joseph E. Johnston with John Bell Hood in command of the Army of Tennessee.

1865

Jan. 15: Fort Fisher, guarding Wilmington, N.C., falls to a combined U.S. Army-Navy force.

Feb. 22: Joseph E. Johnston is restored to command in South Carolina.

March 19: In the last major battle of the war, Johnston attacks a wing of Sherman's army near Bentonville, N.C. Despite some early success, the attack is beaten back and Johnston forced to retreat.

March 25: Lee orders an attack on the Union lines near Fort Stedman outside Petersburg. It is unsuccessful.

April 1: In the Battle of Five Forks, the thin Confederate defenses around Petersburg are broken; Lee tells Jefferson Davis that he will have to evacuate Richmond and Petersburg.

April 9: Lee, finding his route to the west blocked by Union soldiers, meets Grant in the farmhouse of Wilmer McLean near Appomattox Court House, and agrees to surrender his army. Most Americans, north and south, consider this the end of effective rebel resistance.

April 14: Lincoln is assassinated at Ford's Theater; he died the next morning.

April 26: Joseph E. Johnston surrenders his army to William T. Sherman near Durham Station, N.C.

May 10: Jefferson Davis is captured by Union cavalry near Irwinville, Ga.

May 26: Edmund Kirby Smith surrenders Confederate forces in the trans-Mississippi Department.

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