

Key Events and Battles of the Civil War

Event	Date	Location	Significance
Lincoln elected president	November 1860	U.S.	Though winning in the electoral college, Lincoln's lack of a popular majority (1.9 million out of 4.7 million votes cast) is an indication of the problems he would face with a divided nation
South Carolina secedes	December 1860	South Carolina	On news of Lincoln's election, South Carolina (site of nullification fight in 1830s) secedes
Confederacy formed	February 1861	Montgomery, Alabama	Seven states form Confederacy, write their own constitution, and plan for an independent nation
Lincoln inaugurated	March 1861	Washington, D.C.	Lincoln enters Washington D.C. in disguise because of unrest. Southerners begin seizing federal posts.
Ft. Sumter attacked	April 1861	Charleston, South Carolina	Lincoln decides to supply Ft. Sumter, but wants the South to fire the first shot.
Bull Run (Manassas), 1st battle	July 21, 1861	Northern Virginia	Gen. McDowell leads 30,000 men against Gen. Johnston's 22,000 Southern troops in an attempt to crush the rebels and go "On to Richmond." South scores victory as Union troops flee back to Washington in disarray. McDowell replaced by Gen. McClellan
Ft. Henry & Ft. Donelson	February 1862	Tennessee rivers	Gen. Grant captures two forts on the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers. Confederates forced out of Kentucky and yield much of Tennessee
Monitor vs. Merrimac	March 1862	Off Hampton Roads, Virginia	First ironclad battle in history ends in a draw as the Merrimac withdraws after daylong exchange of fire. Union blockade of South is maintained
Shiloh (Pittsburgh Landing)	April 1862	Tennessee	Grant overcomes Southern forces with heavy losses for each side: 13,000 Union casualties, 11,000 for South

New Orleans	April 1862	Louisiana	Farragut seizes New Orleans for Union after boldly attacking Southern position. 11 Southern ships sunk
Peninsular Campaign (Yorktown, Seven Days' Battle, Fair Oaks)	March-July 1862	Southern Virginia	After continual prodding by Lincoln, McClellan decides to attack Richmond via the South. He moves his large army down the Potomac, marches on Richmond, and then assumes a defensive position rather than pushing for victory. Gen. Lee takes command of Southern troops
Bull Run (Manassas) 2nd battle	August 1862	Northern Virginia	McClellan replaced by Gen. Pope. Lee and Gen. Stonewall Jackson defeat Union troops again at Manassas and Pope is replaced by McClellan
Antietam	September 1862	Maryland	Heavily outnumbered, Lee's troops face McClellan in bloody fighting. Over 23,000 casualties (more than all previous American wars combined). Lee retreats to Virginia
Emancipation Proclamation	September 23, 1862	Washington, D.C.	With victory at Antietam, Lincoln announces that on 1/1/63, all slaves in the rebelling states would be free. Does not affect border states. Forces European nations to recognize that choosing sides in the Civil War is to take a stand on slavery
Fredericksburg	December 1862	Central Virginia	Gen. Burnside attacks Lee's fortified position and suffers 10,000 casualties (to Lee's 5000).
Chancellorsville	May 1863	Northern Virginia	Gen. Hooker defeated by Lee, but Jackson is mistakenly shot by his own men and killed.
Vicksburg	July 1863	Mississippi	After a long siege, Vicksburg surrenders to Grant. All of Mississippi River is now in Union control

Gettysburg	July 1863	Pennsylvania	Over 165,000 soldiers participate in the largest battle in the Western Hemisphere. After three days of fighting, Lee retreats, leaving 4,000 dead Confederates. Total casualties: 23,000 Union, 28,000 Confederates
Chattanooga	November 1863	Tennessee	Reinforced with troops from the East, Grant is able to push Southern troops back and prepare for assault on Atlanta and the heart of the Confederacy
Grant promoted to Lt. General and given command of all Union troops	March 1864	Washington, D.C.	Grant prepares for assault on Richmond. When Lincoln's Cabinet complains that Grant is a drunk and seeks to interfere with his command, Lincoln gives him unconditional support and asks not to notified of his plans.
Wilderness & Spotsylvania	May 1864	Central Virginia	Lee stops Union troops at the Wilderness, but Grant resumes march to Richmond Though suffering huge losses (55,000 men to South's 31,000), Grant states "I propose to fight on this line if it takes all summer"
Petersburg	June 1864--April 1865	South of Richmond, Virginia	Grant focuses on important railroad junction and communication outside Richmond. Long siege of Petersburg begins with troops living in trenches which stretched for 50 miles
Atlanta to Savannah	September-December 1864	Georgia	Gen. Sherman destroys Atlanta and then sends troops on 300 mile destructive march to the sea. Railroads torn up, buildings destroyed, crops burned in an attempt to break the will of the South
Lee surrenders	April 9, 1865	Appomattox Court House, Virginia	Lee, refusing to see his troops suffer any further, surrenders to Grant. Southern troops given generous terms of surrender