

# THE SKIRMISHER



CIVIL WAR TRUST

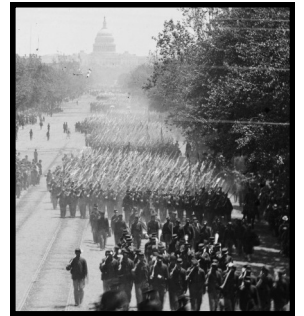
1865: THE STORM SUBSIDES

VOLUME 9

## THE FINAL FORTRESS

By 1865, the Confederacy consisted of little more than small portions of a few states—namely Virginia and the Carolinas. Although ill-fed and poorly supplied, Confederate soldiers fought on against a seemingly endless stream of well-supplied Union soldiers. The Siege of Petersburg continued as Sherman burned a path through the Carolinas.

In early April, Union soldiers broke through Confederate lines at Petersburg with a massive charge. Robert E. Lee's men retreated, allowing the Union army to capture Richmond. One week later, the Lee surrendered his army to Ulysses S. Grant. Almost all of the Confederates not in Lee's army soon surrendered as well.



*The Grand Review  
(Library of Congress)*

## A NATION REUNITED

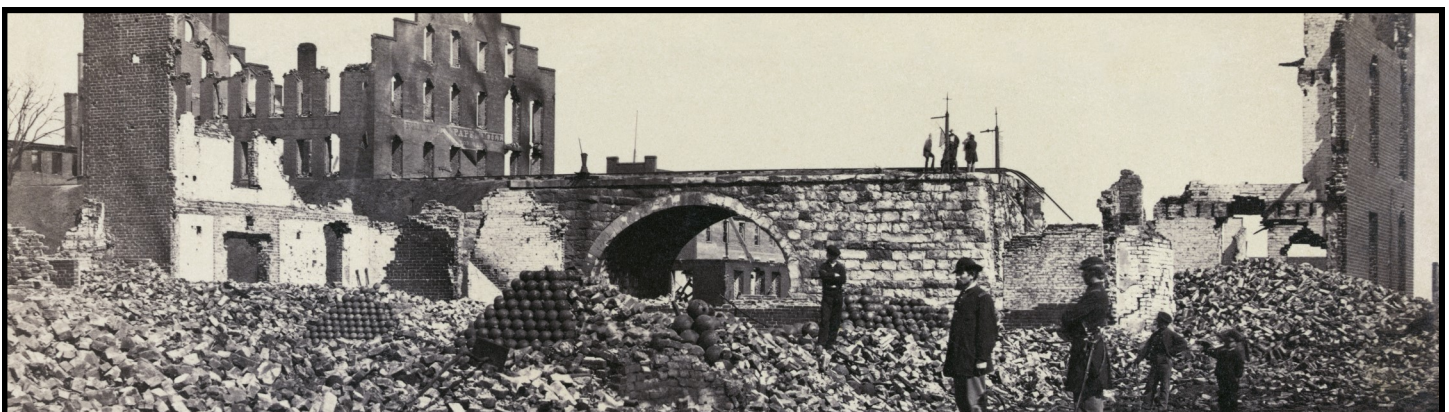
President Lincoln, who had preserved the Union and freed the slaves, was assassinated on April 14, 1865, less than two weeks after the fall of Richmond. Vice President Andrew Johnson, who disagreed with many of Lincoln's policies, assumed the presidency.

The Civil War remains America's bloodiest conflict, resulting in the deaths of more than 620,000 Union and Confederate soldiers. One out of every 50 people in the United States died as a result of the war.

## RECONSTRUCTION BEGINS

In the coming years, the Confederate states were gradually readmitted into the Union. The 14th and 15th amendments were passed, giving former slaves equal protection under the law and the right to vote.

The South had been ravaged by the war. Industry and infrastructure was mostly destroyed in the conflict. Many pre-war Southern politicians and officials were denied their former positions of authority, and their positions were filled by new arrivals from the North and newly freed African-Americans.



*A panorama of destruction in Richmond, Virginia (Library of Congress)*

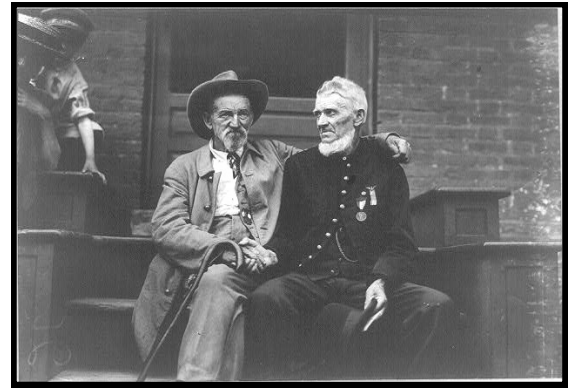
Taxes, which had been historically low throughout the South, skyrocketed as government expenditures were funneled towards repairing the war's damage. The combination of higher taxes and accusations of corruption, in addition to the social and psychological impact of defeat, shaped a lasting feeling of animosity in many Southerners. Nevertheless, the South slowly industrialized over the next decades.

African-Americans, suddenly free, struggled to find a place in the new society. "Jim Crow" laws were passed throughout the country to keep African-Americans separate from the rest of the population. They endured violence, intimidation, and harassment at the hands of many in the North and South.

Civil War veterans continued to shape the nation. By the 1880s, many different regimental societies, veterans groups and Civil War-related newspapers had emerged. Local, state and federal governments were filled with Civil War veterans. Battlefield parks were created and thousands of monuments were erected.

By the war's 75th anniversary, with fewer Civil War soldiers left alive, battlefield preservation and memorialization slowed. But around the war's 125th anniversary, the modern battlefield preservation movement was born, picking up where the Federal government had largely left off decades earlier.

The Civil War was a formative moment in the history of the United States. Social, technological, and political issues were profoundly shaped by the crucible of war. The effects of the conflict are still felt today.



*Civil War veterans at the Gettysburg 75th Anniversary (Library of Congress)*

## VOICES FROM THE STORM

### PRESIDENT ABRAHAM LINCOLN

*In March 1865, Abraham Lincoln delivered his Second Inaugural Address. He closed with a call for charity and peace.*

"With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan to do all which may achieve and cherish a just, and a lasting peace, among ourselves, and with all nations."

*Lincoln was assassinated before Reconstruction began in earnest. Based on the passage, do you think he would have been pleased with its process and result?*

## CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

### CIVIL WAR CEREAL BOXES

- 1) Each student picks from a hat a person who played a role in the Civil War; the list should consist of military folks, political figures, and advocates of social justice. Students will modify a cereal box to reflect the history of their chosen person.
- 2) Each box should include the name of the cereal based on the person, something like, *Custer's Clusters* or *McClellan Munchies*.
- 3) The back of the box should include a game like a crossword puzzle or word search that relates to the person and the Civil War.
- 4) On the panel that usually lists the ingredients have students create a timeline for this person and on the opposite side list this figure's achievements.
- 5) When the projects are complete, arrange the boxes around the classroom as if they are museum exhibits. Craft your Civil War formal assessment around the information presented on the boxes.