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History

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Lecture 11: The Civil War, 1861-1865

John Brown and Harper's Ferry, 1859:

- Midterm year
- Republican party wins a majority in the House of representatives
 - Freaks out radical Southerners
 - Radical Southern "fire-eaters" support secession
 - Believed republicans would vote to take away slavery
- Following year, super radical abolitionist → John Brown
 - Attacks federal arsenal in Harper's ferry, VA
 - He wants to start a slave revolt → needed weapons
 - Attack federal arsenal and distribute to slaves that would show up and be inspired to revolt
 - Fails miserably, and he is sentenced to death, executed (doesn't start revolt)
- Sparks a lot of controversy amongst abolitionists/North
 - Tensions are at a boiling point
 - Some northern abolitionists renounce him as being too radical
 - Other abolitionists celebrate him as a martyrdom
- Pro-slavery factions see this as proof that abolitionists will use force to remove slavery
 - Abolitionists will start attacking us to get rid of slavery

Election of 1860:

- Everything from past lecture is influencing this election (bleeding Kansas, etc)
- This election is ENTIRELY about slavery
- There are 4 major candidates
 - Republicans pick a moderate (Abraham Lincoln) because they don't want to be associated with John Brown
 - Ban expansion of slavery, but not abolish it
 - Lincoln did not have intentions of abolishing at the start
 - Northern Democrats: Stephen Douglas
 - Reject expansion of slavery
 - Southern Democrats: John C. Breckinridge
 - Want to expand slavery and annex Cuba as slave state
 - Democratic party split
 - Constitutional Union Party: Senator John Bell
 - Preserve Union, enforce laws, abide by constitution

Divided USA:

- Candidates divide votes
- Lincoln + Republican party win → by significant electoral votes
- Wins 40% of popular vote, but less than 1% in the South
- Clear majority in electoral votes, but earns 0 in the South
- Southerners saw this as a sign that Republicans would get rid of slavery

Southern Secession

- Direct result of 1860 election
- SC is like peace out A town we're done → secede
- By Feb 1861 → 7 states formed Confederate states of America (president Jefferson Davis)
- Buchanan still president (president takes office in March) → he does nothing
- Lincoln needs to do something to stop secession
 - March 1861 → Lincoln sends supplies to Fort Sumter (SC) to reassert authority (leaving the ball in their court) → allows them to choose whether to start a war
- CSA attacks supply ships → they begin Civil War on April 12, 1861
- Lincoln wants to preserve the union → don't want little broken down countries
 - Calls for volunteers for the army
- 4 other slave states secede, 4 slave states stayed in the US
- West VA gets created because they don't want to secede

Advantages and disadvantages:

- Northern states (union)
 - Think war will be super short (win by Christmas)
 - Much larger population
 - Far greater access to resources and industry
 - More transportation (railroads)
 - Larger navy
- Southern states
 - More prepared → been eyeing this for months, stockpiling weapons and putting an army together
 - More troops, weapons
 - More willing to fight a prolonged war. → war for their whole economic system, way of life, they will defend what they think they have a right to
 - Defending their home territory (they know their turf, advantage in military conflict)
 - Best military leaders → leading army college was WestPoint in VA, which seceded

Major Civil War Battles: 1861:

- Fort Sumter (April 12, 1861)
 - People are shocked that this actually happened
 - "they actually did it?" → actually decided to attack?
 - Uh oh we're about to go into war

- First Bull Run (first Manassas) → July 21, 1861
 - Union says Richmond, VA is technically capital of C → can just take the capital and win the war
 - Will end the war super fast
 - People are so optimistic they take picnics to watch
 - But the C wins → realize that C is actually in this

Bloody Battles: 1862

- Monitor vs. Merrimack → March 9
 - North blockading all of South's ports, South trying to unblock
 - First duel between ironclad ships
- Battle of Shiloh → April 6-7, 1862
 - Initially successful, technically Union victory however
 - Almost 23000 casualties in a 2-day battle → "oh crap"
- Antietam → September 17, 1862
 - Northern general sucks → forces them to flee, but doesn't follow them
 - Bloodiest 12 hours of fighting → same number of casualties as Shiloh
- Fredericksburg → Dec. 11-15, 1862
 - General sucks again, C wins again

The Tide Turns, 1863:

- Chancellorsville → April 30 – May 6, 1863
 - General sucks again, but at least Stonewall Jackson is dead?
- Vicksburg, Dec 1862 – July 1863
 - Grant (actually effective) spends 6 months in siege → splits Confederacy into 2
- Gettysburg (July 1-3, 1863)
 - Union victory
 - Last major Confederate offensive
 - 23000 just for the north, 28000 just for the south (casualties)

Union Army on a Roll: 1864-65:

- Grant punches the world, 1864
 - Wilderness → US victory
 - Spotsylvania → Confederate victory
 - Cold Harbor → confederate victory
 - Petersburg → US victory
- Confederate is forced to be on the defensive (running away)
- Sherman's March to the Sea (Nov. 15 – Dec. 21, 1864)
 - Sherman marches all the way to the sea, burning and stealing everything on the way
 - Total war → Attacking civilians
- Appomattox
 - Lee surrenders, CSA is defeated

Factors in Union Victory

- North

- Grant accepts loss of life as long as they win (much higher casualty rate)
- Industrial supremacy → transport supplies
- Lincoln creates more cooperation and discipline among states
 - Suspends Habeas Corpus
 - Arrests secessionists
 - Limits press (can't say bad things about the north)
- CSA/South
 - Class tensions
 - Most of the south doesn't actually own slaves, why should they be dying for wealthy plantations
 - Davis has limited enthusiasm/loyalty
 - People upset all throughout the war
 - If enslaved people are all gone, what's the point of fighting anymore?
 - Focus on states' rights means no united front