# The American Civil War

In the closing days of 1860, South Carolina secedes from the United States after Abraham Lincoln is elected the 16th President of the United States. As compromises continue to fail, the early days of 1861 sees Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas also leave the Union, and together with South Carolina, they form the Confederate States of America. In response, the U.S. government quickly granted Kansas statehood and admitted it to the Union. After hostilities break out at Fort Sumter in April, Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina also leave the Union to join the Confederacy. In late 1861, 50 counties in northwest Virginia form a breakaway government, and in early 1862, they form the new state of West Virginia, thus splitting Virginia between the two American nations.

Queen Victoria issues a declaration of neutrality in May, 1861, that serves as recognition of Southern belligerency, a status that provides Confederate ships the same privileges in foreign ports that U.S. ships receive. During a tour of the United States in the Summer of 1861, Prince Napoleon, the cousin of Emperor Napoleon III, meets with Lincoln at a disastrous dinner party, speaks with Union and Confederate generals, and visits the Western campaign’s battle for Missouri, The Prince is highly impressed with the Confederate Army. Despite the poor impression of the Union and the prospect of Confederate aid in France’s Imperial ambitions for Mexico, France maintains an official stance of neutrality.

In November 1861, two Confederate diplomats are illegally seized from a British ship en route to the UK and France. The situation provides the Southerners with leverage to push for full recognition of the Confederate States, and in February, 1862, they successfully petition for joint French-British diplomatic recognition of the C.S.A. With Anglo-American relations already strained, and not wanting to risk war with the European powers while the South was in open rebellion, in addition to the economic risks associated with such a war, Lincoln has the captured diplomats freed and issues a formal apology to the British.

In Europe, the British are also against the idea of war. The ambitions of Napoleon III and the rise of Bismarck in Prussia are enough to keep watch over; however, a weakened United States would provide economic and strategic opportunities in Central America that could be beneficial to British power in Europe. Though officially maintaining a policy of neutrality in the war, the United Kingdom and France begin to provide unofficial help to the Confederates in the form of financing and covert naval operations to allow trade to continue through the Northern blockade of Southern ports, keeping the Southern economy strong enough to maintain the war effort.

Realizing that Washington could not intervene in Mexico as long as the Confederacy controlled Texas, France invaded Mexico in December, 1861. With the aid of the French and Spanish, the French take initial control of the main Mexican port of Veracruz, but when the Spanish and British realize that the French ambition is to conquer Mexico, they withdraw their forces. In the ensuing war, the United States declares support for the democratically elected government of the Mexican Republic, and the Confederate States offers support to the French cause of establishing the Second Mexican Empire as a monarchist ally in the Western Hemisphere. Mexico is drawn into the larger conflict of the American Civil War, with conservatives in Mexico supporting the French forces, while liberals support the republican government-in-exile. With the inability to maintain a policy of neutrality between the U.S.A. and C.S.A. while waging open war in Mexico against forces supported by the U.S. government, the French send forces to aid the Confederates in breaking the Northern blockade. When the Northern blockade is broken in late 1862, the British begin shipping humanitarian aid to both of the American governments, and with the aid of the French, begin negotiations for a ceasefire. French forces take control of Mexico City in the Summer of 1863 and proclaim a Catholic Empire, offering the crown to the Austrian Prince Maximilian, the younger brother of Austrian Emperor Francis Joseph I. Maximilian I of Mexico is crowned in the Spring of 1864, and the Mexican government-in-exile is disbanded.

With negotiations opened between the U.S. and C.S. governments, and fears of the war spreading into other parts of the Western Hemisphere, threatening the security of not only the remaining territorial claims of European powers, but the balance of power in Europe itself, the remaining European powers declare diplomatic recognition of the Confederate States and find a de facto establishment of independence, eliminating the U.S. position that the Southern states are nothing more than rebels. A ceasefire is declared in July of 1863, a week after French forces capture Mexico City. Official hostilities are resolved with the Treaty of Mexico City in the Summer of 1864, ending the war and opening diplomatic relations between the U.S. and C.S. governments. All seceded states will remain a part of the C.S.A.; the U.S.A. is allowed to admit West Virginia as a state; the Indian territory is granted to the C.S.A. due to support of the Confederacy by the natives living there; the New Mexico Territory is split between both nations, with the western half becoming the Union territory of Arizona; the remaining border states of Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri are to hold public referendums within one year to decide whether to join the Union or the Confederacy. Maryland and Kentucky join the Confederacy in 1865, while Delaware votes overwhelmingly to remain in the Union, as did Missouri, though by a narrow margin. Everything else north of the 37th Latitude would remain U.S. territory. The treaty also stipulated that the Confederacy must abolish slavery within 25 years; failure to do so would result in the immediate termination of trade agreements between the C.S.A. and European nations, who were quickly finding other places to source cotton from, such as Egypt.

# End of the Victorian Era

This section is next.

# The Great War

This section is also next.