



# The North Takes Charge

## MAIN IDEA

Key victories at Vicksburg and Gettysburg helped the Union wear down the Confederacy.

## WHY IT MATTERS NOW

These victories clinched the North's win and led to the preservation of the Union.

## Terms & Names

- Gettysburg
- Chancellorsville
- Vicksburg
- Gettysburg Address
- William Tecumseh Sherman
- Appomattox Court House

## One American's Story

Shortly after three o'clock on the afternoon of July 3, 1863, from behind a stone wall on a ridge south of the little town of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, Union troops watched thousands of Confederate soldiers advance toward them across an open field. Union officer Frank Aretas Haskell described the scene.

### A PERSONAL VOICE

FRANK ARETAS HASKELL

**“More than half a mile their front extends . . . man touching man, rank pressing rank. . . . The red flags wave, their horsemen gallop up and down, the arms of [thirteen] thousand men, barrel and bayonet, gleam in the sun, a sloping forest of flashing steel. Right on they move, as with one soul, in perfect order without impediment of ditch, or wall, or stream, over ridge and slope, through orchard and meadow, and cornfield, magnificent, grim, irresistible.”**

—quoted in *The Civil War: An Illustrated History*

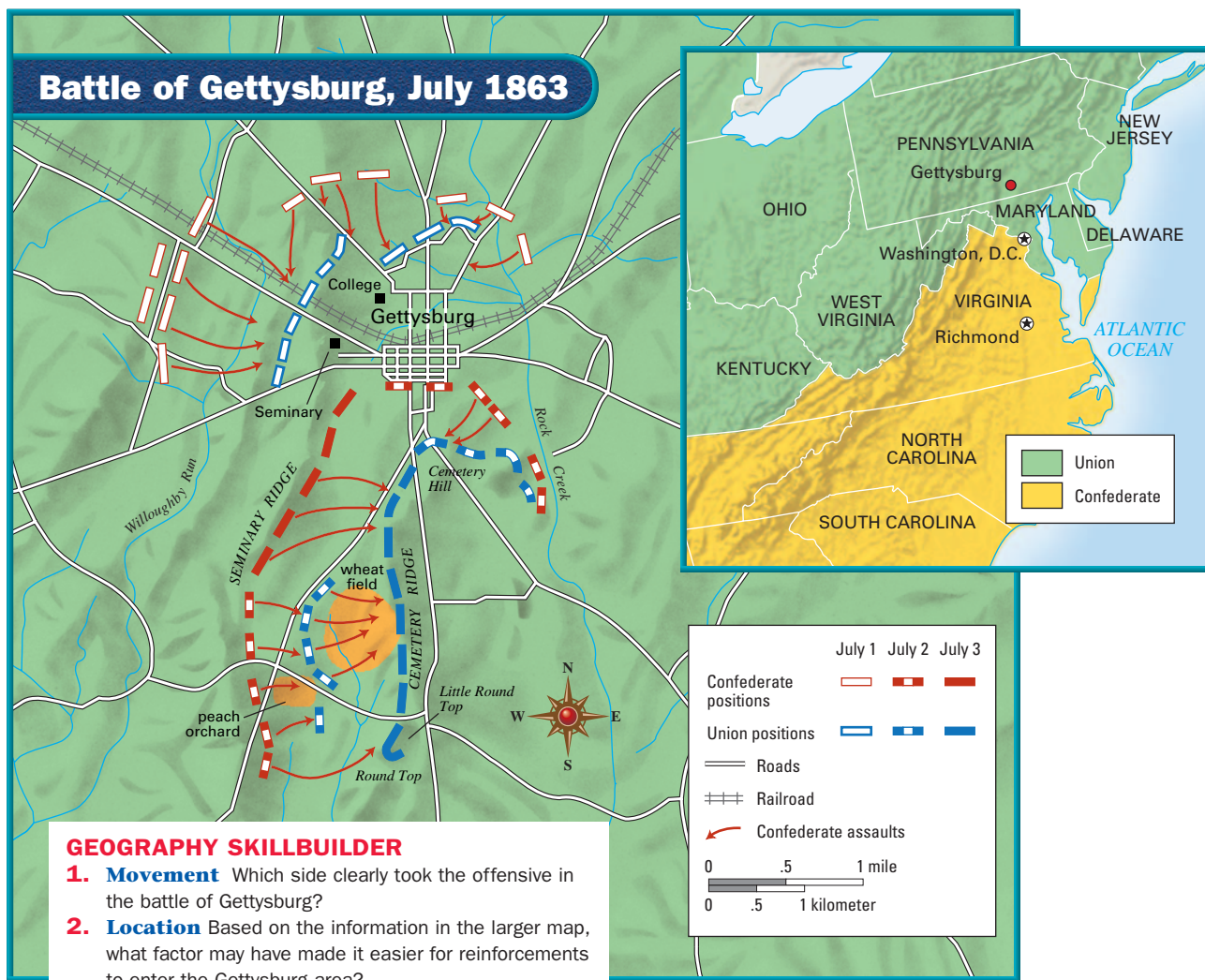
An hour later, half of the Confederate force lay dead or wounded, cut down by crossfire from massed Union guns. Because of the North's heavy weaponry, it had become suicide for unprotected troops to assault a strongly fortified position.



▲ A Confederate charge during the battle of Gettysburg

## Armies Clash at Gettysburg

The July 3 infantry charge was part of a three-day battle at **Gettysburg**, which many historians consider the turning point of the Civil War. The battle of Gettysburg crippled the South so badly that General Lee would never again possess sufficient forces to invade a Northern state.



**PRELUDE TO GETTYSBURG** The year 1863 actually had gone well for the South. During the first four days of May, the South defeated the North at **Chancellorsville**, Virginia. Lee outmaneuvered Union general Joseph Hooker and forced the Union army to retreat. The North’s only consolation after Chancellorsville came as the result of an accident. As General Stonewall Jackson returned from a patrol on May 2, Confederate guards mistook him for a Yankee and shot him in the left arm. A surgeon amputated his arm the following day. When Lee heard the news, he exclaimed, “He has lost his left arm, but I have lost my right.” But the true loss was still to come; Jackson caught pneumonia and died May 10.

Despite Jackson’s tragic death, Lee decided to press his military advantage and invade the North. He needed supplies, he hoped that an invasion would force Lincoln to pull troops away from Vicksburg, and he thought that a major Confederate victory on Northern soil might tip the political balance of power in the Union to pro-Southern Democrats. Accordingly, he crossed the Potomac into Maryland and then pushed on into Pennsylvania. **A**

**GETTYSBURG** The most decisive battle of the war was fought near Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. The town was an unlikely spot for a bloody battle—and indeed, no one planned to fight there.

Confederate soldiers led by A. P. Hill, many of them barefoot, heard there was a supply of footwear in Gettysburg and went to find it, and also to meet up with forces under General Lee. When Hill’s troops marched toward Gettysburg, they ran into a couple of brigades of Union cavalry under the command of John Buford, an experienced officer from Illinois.

**MAIN IDEA**

**Analyzing Motives**

**A** What did Lee hope to gain by invading the North?



Buford ordered his men to take defensive positions on the hills and ridges surrounding the town, from which they engaged Hill's troops. The shooting attracted more troops and each side sent for reinforcements.

The Northern armies, now under the command of General George Meade, that were north and west of Gettysburg began to fall back under a furious rebel assault. The Confederates took control of the town. Lee knew, however, that the battle would not be won unless the Northerners were also forced to yield their positions on Cemetery Ridge, the high ground south of Gettysburg. **B**

#### MAIN IDEA

#### Analyzing Effects

**B** Why was it important that the Union held on to the high ground in Gettysburg?

**THE SECOND DAY** On July 2, almost 90,000 Yankees and 75,000 Confederates stood ready to fight for Gettysburg. Lee ordered General James Longstreet to attack Cemetery Ridge, which was held by Union troops. At about 4:00 P.M., Longstreet's troops advanced from Seminary Ridge, through the peach orchard and wheat field that stood between them and the Union position.

The yelling Rebels overran Union troops who had mistakenly left their positions on Little Round Top, a hill that overlooked much of the southern portion of the battlefield. As a brigade of Alabamans approached the hill, however, Union leaders noticed the undefended position. Colonel Joshua L. Chamberlain, who had been a language professor before the war, led his Maine troops to meet the Rebels, and succeeded in repulsing repeated Confederate attacks. When his soldiers ran short of ammunition and more than a third of the brigade had fallen, Chamberlain ordered a bayonet charge at the Confederates.

The Rebels, exhausted by the uphill fighting and the 25-mile march of the previous day, were shocked by the Union assault and surrendered in droves. Chamberlain and his men succeeded in saving the Union lines from certain rebel artillery attacks from Little Round Top. Although the Union troops had given some ground, their lines still held at the close of day.

**THE THIRD DAY** Lee was optimistic, however. With one more day of determined attack, he felt he could break the Union defenses. Early in the afternoon of July 3, Lee ordered an artillery barrage on the middle of the Union lines. For two hours, the two armies fired at one another in a vicious exchange that could be heard in Pittsburgh. When the Union

### History Through

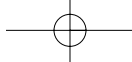
#### Art

#### GETTYSBURG CYCLORAMA (detail) (1884)

Twenty years after the fact, French artist Paul Philippoteaux depicted the battle of Gettysburg in a giant painting. To ensure that the 360-foot-long and 26-foot-high work was realistic, Philippoteaux studied the battle site and interviewed survivors.

**What details in the painting contribute to its realism and sense of action?**





## “It’s all my fault”

GEN. ROBERT E. LEE ON THE  
FAILURE OF PICKETT’S CHARGE

artillery fell silent, Lee insisted that Longstreet press forward. Longstreet reluctantly ordered his men, including those under the command of General Pickett, to attack the center of the Union lines. Deliberately, they marched across the farmland toward the Union high ground. Suddenly, Northern artillery renewed its barrage. Some of the Confederates had nearly reached the Union lines when Yankee infantry fired on them as well. Devastated, the Confederates staggered back. The Northerners had succeeded in holding the high ground south of Gettysburg.

Lee sent cavalry led by General James E. B. (Jeb) Stuart circling around the right flank of Meade’s forces, hoping they would surprise the Union troops from the rear and meet Longstreet’s men in the middle. Stuart’s campaign stalled, however, when his men clashed with Union forces under David Gregg three miles away.

Not knowing that Gregg had stopped Stuart nor that Lee’s army was severely weakened, Union general Meade never ordered a counterattack. After the battle, Lee gave up any hopes of invading the North and led his army in a long, painful retreat back to Virginia through a pelting rain.

The three-day battle produced staggering losses. Total casualties were more than 30 percent. Union losses included 23,000 men killed or wounded. For the Confederacy, approximately 28,000 were killed or wounded. Fly-infested corpses lay everywhere in the July heat; the stench was unbearable. Lee would continue to lead his men brilliantly in the next two years of the war, but neither he nor the Confederacy would ever recover from the loss at Gettysburg or the surrender of Vicksburg, which occurred the very next day. 🕒

### MAIN IDEA

#### Analyzing Effects

🕒 Why was the battle of Gettysburg a disaster for the South?

## Grant Wins at Vicksburg

While the Army of the Potomac was turning back the Confederates in central Pennsylvania, Union general Ulysses S. Grant continued his campaign in the west. **Vicksburg**, Mississippi, was one of only two Confederate holdouts preventing the Union from taking complete control of the Mississippi River, an important waterway for transporting goods.

U. S. Grant,  
photographed in  
August 1864 ▼



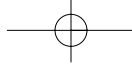
**VICKSBURG UNDER SIEGE** In the spring of 1863, Grant sent a cavalry brigade to destroy rail lines in central Mississippi and draw attention away from the port city. While the Confederate forces were distracted, Grant was able to land infantry south of Vicksburg late on April 30. In 18 days, Union forces whipped several rebel units and sacked Jackson, the capital of the state.

Their confidence growing with every victory, Grant and his troops rushed to Vicksburg. Two frontal assaults on the city failed; so, in the last week of May 1863, Grant settled in for a siege. He set up a steady barrage of artillery, shelling the city from both the river and the land for several hours a day and forcing its residents to take shelter in caves that they dug out of the yellow clay hillsides.

Food supplies ran so low that people ate dogs and mules. At last some of the starving Confederate soldiers defending Vicksburg sent their commander a petition saying, “If you can’t feed us, you’d better surrender.”

On July 3, 1863, the same day as Pickett’s charge, the Confederate commander of Vicksburg asked Grant for terms of surrender. The city fell on July 4. Five days later Port Hudson, Louisiana, the last Confederate holdout on the Mississippi, also fell—and the Confederacy was cut in two.





## The Confederacy Wears Down

The twin defeats at Gettysburg and Vicksburg cost the South much of its limited fighting power. The Confederacy was already low on food, shoes, uniforms, guns, and ammunition. No longer able to attack, it could hope only to hang on long enough to destroy Northern morale and work toward an armistice—a cease-fire agreement based on mutual consent—rather than a surrender. That plan proved increasingly unlikely, however. Southern newspapers, state legislatures, and individuals began to call openly for an end to the hostilities, and President Lincoln finally found not just one but two generals who would fight.

**CONFEDERATE MORALE** As war progressed, morale on the Confederacy's home front deteriorated. The Confederate Congress passed a weak resolution in 1863 urging planters to grow fewer cash crops like cotton and tobacco and increase production of food. Farmers resented the tax that took part of their produce and livestock, especially since many rich planters continued to cultivate cotton and tobacco—in some cases even selling crops to the North.

Many soldiers deserted after receiving letters from home about the lack of food and the shortage of farm labor to work the farms. In every Southern state except South Carolina, there were soldiers who decided to turn and fight for the North—for example, 2,400 Floridians served in the Union army.

Discord in the Confederate government made it impossible for Jefferson Davis to govern effectively. Members of the Confederate Congress squabbled among themselves. In South Carolina, the governor was upset when troops from his state were placed under the command of officers from another state.

In 1863, North Carolinians who wanted peace held more than 100 open meetings in their state. A similar peace movement sprang up in Georgia in early 1864. Although these movements failed, by mid-1864, Assistant Secretary of War John Campbell was forced to acknowledge that active opposition to the war “in the mountain districts of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama menaces the existence of the Confederacy as fatally as . . . the armies of the United States.” **E**

### KEY PLAYERS



**ULYSSES S. GRANT**  
1822–1885

U. S. Grant once said of himself, “A military life had no charms for me.” Yet, a military man was what he was destined to be. He fought in the war with Mexico—even though he termed it “wicked”—because he believed his duty was to serve his country. His next post was in the West, where Grant grew so lonely for his family that he resigned.

When the Civil War began, Grant served as colonel of the Illinois volunteers because General McClellan had been too busy to see him!

However, once Grant began fighting in Tennessee, Lincoln recognized his abilities. When newspapers demanded Grant's dismissal after Shiloh, Lincoln replied, “I can't spare this man. He fights.”



**ROBERT E. LEE**  
1807–1870

Lee was an aristocrat. His father had been one of George Washington's best generals, and his wife was the great-granddaughter of Martha Washington. As a man who believed slavery was evil, Lee nonetheless fought for the Confederacy out of loyalty to his beloved home state of Virginia. “I did only what my duty demanded. I could have taken no other course without dishonor,” he said.

As a general, Lee was brilliant, but he seldom challenged civilian leaders about their failure to provide his army with adequate supplies. His soldiers—who called him Uncle Robert—almost worshiped him because he insisted on sharing their hardships.

#### MAIN IDEA

#### Analyzing Effects

**E** How did discontent among members of the Confederate Congress affect the war?



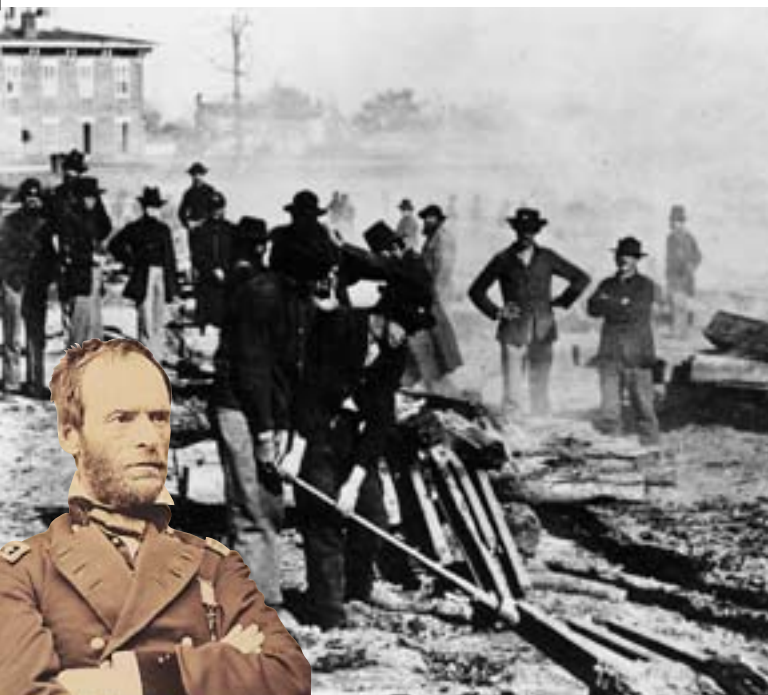
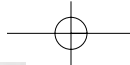
**GRANT APPOINTS SHERMAN** In March 1864, President Lincoln appointed Ulysses S. Grant, the hero of the battle at Vicksburg, commander of all Union armies. Grant in turn appointed **William Tecumseh Sherman** as commander of the military division of the Mississippi. These two appointments would change the course of the war.

Old friends and comrades in arms, both men believed in total war. They believed that it was essential to fight not only the South's armies and government but its civilian population as well. They reasoned, first, that civilians produced the weapons, grew the food, and transported the goods on which the armies relied, and, second, that the strength of the people's will kept the war going. If the Union destroyed that will to fight, the Confederacy would collapse.

**GRANT AND LEE IN VIRGINIA** Grant's overall strategy was to immobilize Lee's army in Virginia while Sherman raided Georgia. Even if Grant's casualties ran twice as high as those of Lee—and they did—the North could afford it. The South could not.

Starting in May 1864, Grant threw his troops into battle after battle, the first in a wooded area, known as the Wilderness, near Fredericksburg, Virginia. The fighting was brutal, made even more so by the fires spreading through the thick trees. The string of battles continued at Spotsylvania, at Cold Harbor (where Grant lost 7,000 men in one hour), and finally at Petersburg, which would remain under Union attack from June 1864 to April 1865.

During the period from May 4 to June 18, 1864, Grant lost nearly 60,000 men—which the North could replace—to Lee's 32,000 men—which the South could not replace. Democrats and Northern newspapers called Grant a butcher. However, Grant kept going because he had promised Lincoln, "Whatever happens, there will be no turning back."



**SHERMAN'S MARCH** After Sherman's army occupied the transportation center of Atlanta on September 2, 1864, a Confederate army tried to circle around him and cut his railroad supply lines. Sherman decided to fight a different battle. He would abandon his supply lines and march southeast through Georgia, creating a wide path of destruction and living off the land as he went. He would make Southerners "so sick of war that generations would pass away before they would again appeal to it." In mid-November he burned most of Atlanta and set out toward the coast. A Georgia girl described the result.

**A PERSONAL VOICE** ELIZA FRANCES ANDREWS

"The fields were trampled down and the road was lined with carcasses of horses, hogs, and cattle that the invaders, unable either to consume or to carry away with them, had wantonly shot down, to starve out the people and prevent them from making their crops. . . . The dwellings that were standing all showed signs of pillage . . . while here and there lone chimney stacks, 'Sherman's sentinels,' told of homes laid in ashes."

—quoted in *Voices from the Civil War*

▲ Sherman (front) instructed his troops in Atlanta to destroy train tracks by heating and bending the metal rails.

After taking Savannah just before Christmas, Sherman's troops turned north to help Grant "wipe out Lee." Following behind them now were about 25,000 former slaves eager for freedom. As the army marched through South Carolina in 1865, it inflicted even more destruction than it had in Georgia. As one Union private exclaimed, "Here is where treason began and, by God, here is where it shall end!" The army burned almost every house in its path. In contrast, when Sherman's forces entered North Carolina, which had been the last state to secede, they stopped destroying private homes and—anticipating the end of the war—began handing out food and other supplies. **F**

**THE ELECTION OF 1864** As the 1864 presidential election approached, Lincoln faced heavy opposition. Many Democrats, dismayed at the war's length, its high casualty rates, and recent Union losses, joined pro-Southern party members to nominate George McClellan on a platform of an immediate armistice. Still resentful over having been fired by Lincoln, McClellan was delighted to run.

Lincoln's other opponents, the Radical Republicans, favored a harsher proposal than Lincoln's for readmitting the Confederate states. They formed a third political party and nominated John C. Frémont as their candidate. To attract Democrats, Lincoln's supporters dropped the Republican name, retitled themselves the National Union Party, and chose Andrew Johnson, a pro-Union Democrat from Tennessee, as Lincoln's running mate.

Lincoln was pessimistic about his chances. "I am going to be beaten," he said in August, "and unless some great change takes place, badly beaten." However, some great change did take place. On August 5, Admiral David Farragut entered Mobile Bay in Alabama and within three weeks shut down that major Southern port. On September 2, Sherman telegraphed, "Atlanta is ours." By month's end, Frémont had withdrawn from the presidential race. On October 19, General

**MAIN IDEA**

**Analyzing Motives**

**F** What were Sherman's objectives in marching his troops from Atlanta to Savannah?





◀ Thomas Lovell's *Surrender at Appomattox* is a modern rendering of Lee's surrender to Grant.

Philip Sheridan finally chased the Confederates out of the Shenandoah Valley in northern Virginia. The victories buoyed the North, and with the help of absentee ballots cast by Union soldiers, Lincoln won a second term.

**THE SURRENDER AT APPOMATTOX** By late March 1865, it was clear that the end of the Confederacy was near. Grant and Sheridan were approaching Richmond from the west, while Sherman was approaching from the south. On April 2—in response to news that Lee and his troops had been overcome by Grant's forces at Petersburg—President Davis and his government abandoned their capital, setting it afire to keep the Northerners from taking it. Despite the fire-fighting efforts of Union troops, flames destroyed some 900 buildings and damaged hundreds more.

Lee and Grant met to arrange a Confederate surrender on April 9, 1865, in a Virginia village called **Appomattox** (ăp'ə-măt'əks) **Court House**. At Lincoln's request, the terms were generous. Grant paroled Lee's soldiers and sent them home with their personal possessions, horses, and three days' rations. Officers were permitted to keep their side arms. Within two months all remaining Confederate resistance collapsed. After four long years, at tremendous human and economic costs, the Civil War was over.



## ASSESSMENT

**1. TERMS & NAMES** For each term or name, write a sentence explaining its significance.

- Gettysburg
- Vicksburg
- William Tecumseh Sherman
- Appomattox Court House
- Chancellorsville
- Gettysburg Address

### MAIN IDEA

#### 2. TAKING NOTES

Create a time line of the major battles and political events relating to the final two years of the Civil War. Use the dates already plotted on the time line below as a guide.



Which event was the turning point? Why?

### CRITICAL THINKING

#### 3. EVALUATING

Do you think that a general's win-loss record on the battlefield is the best gauge of measuring greatness as a military leader? Why or why not? **Think About:**

- Grant's campaign in Virginia, Sherman's march to Atlanta, and Lee's surrender
- Democrats' and Northern newspapers' criticism of Grant
- the criteria you would use to evaluate a military leader

#### 4. EVALUATING DECISIONS

Grant and Sherman presented a logical rationale for using the strategy of total war. Do you think the end—defeating the Confederacy—justified the means—causing harm to civilians? Explain.

#### 5. ANALYZING MOTIVES

Why do you think Lincoln urged generous terms for a Confederate surrender?