

American Civil War,
1861 to 1865,
Volume II
The Union

A historical simulation

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HISTORICAL FACT.....5
HISTORICAL ANALYSIS.....28
HISTORICAL SIMULATION.....54
REFERENCES.....165

As a Military Historian I rely on a summary of the historical fact, I analyze and highlight the decisive factors, before simulating hypotheses "what if..." hypotheses through a board game. In the simulation, all possibilities of the purpose of the study are completed, when the past of history is analyzed based on the theory of the present and projected for similar situations in the future. Since 2010 I have published the following series of simulations: I. Historical Simulation of the Wars of the First Empires; II. Historical Simulation of the Wars in Classical Greece; III. Historical Simulation of the Roman Wars; IV. Historical Simulation of Wars in the Medieval Era; V. Historical Simulation of Wars in the Modern Era (1453 to 1774); VI. Historical Simulation of Wars in the Age of Revolutions (1775 to 1860); VII. Historical Simulation of Wars in the Industrial Age (1861 to 1913); VIII. Historical Simulation of the First World War; IX. Historical Simulation of World War II; X. Historical Simulation of the Cold War (1917 to 1991); and XI. Historical Simulation of Contemporary Wars (1991 to ...).

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HISTORICAL FACT

AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

Root Cause and Onset

Between April 12, 1861, and May 26, 1865, in the United States, between the Union (“the North”) and the Confederacy (“the South”), which was formed in 1861 by states that had seceded from the Confederacy. The central cause of the war was a dispute over whether slavery should be allowed to expand into the western territories, leading to more slave states, or be outlawed, which many believed would set it on a course toward eventual extinction.

The future of slavery in the territories caused a series of political crises. These crises led to a series of legislative compromises designed to assuage Southern fears that slavery would be abolished. These compromises were designed to maintain a provisional Southern equality in the Senate. The South believed that as long as this balance of votes was maintained, they would legally have the power to prevent the emancipation of slaves.

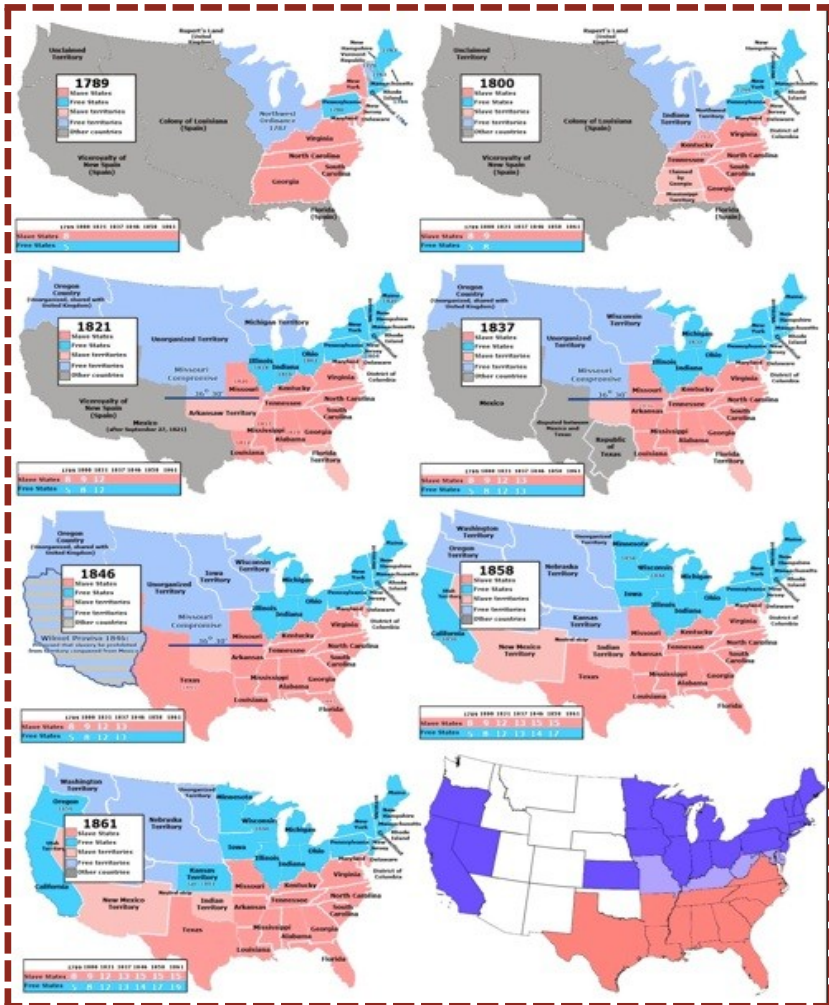
From this series of political compromises and public debates, four basic positions evolved. The hard-line Southern perspective was that slavery should be allowed to expand without restriction. The “home rule” position, as

articulated by Stephen Douglas, was that each local community should decide whether the state should be slave or free. The Republican Party platform, as represented by Abraham Lincoln, was that slavery could continue where it already existed, but no expansion into the territories was tolerable. Finally, the abolitionist position was that the institution should be eliminated immediately. It was the evolution of these four basic positions that caused the collapse of the two-party system when the Whig Party fractured in the 1850s.

Out of the ashes of the Whig Party emerged the Republican Party, which focused and sharpened the regional issues associated with slavery. The 1860 election saw each of the four candidates represent one of these positions, except abolition. The moderate appeal of the Republican position in the North culminated in the election of Abraham Lincoln to the presidency. Lincoln's election sparked a secession crisis when South Carolina declared that it had withdrawn from the United States. Before Lincoln's inauguration, President Buchanan did little, as several other states followed South Carolina's lead, resulting in the formation of the Confederate States of America.

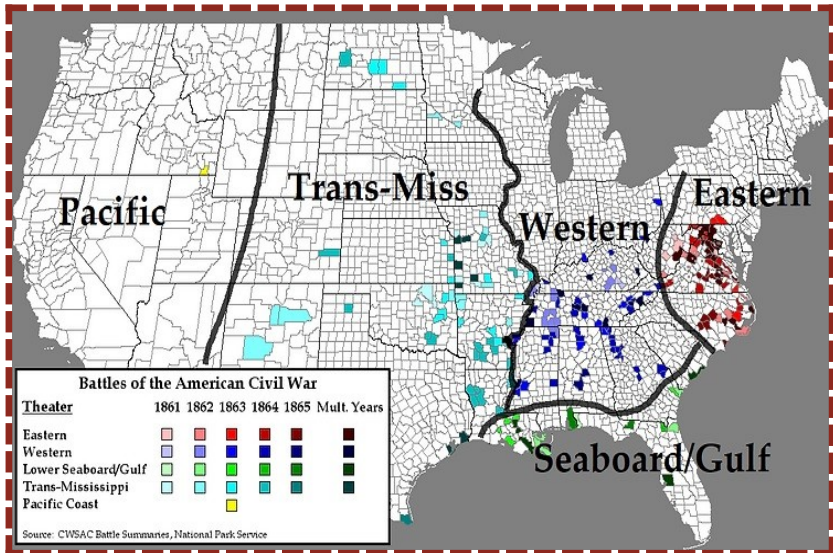
Playing it safe, Lincoln did not act immediately after his inauguration, instead attempting to keep the border states in the Union while maneuvering the newly declared Confederate States of America into open hostilities and rebellion. The firing at Fort Sumter gave Lincoln the casus

belli he needed. With his call for volunteers, Virginia and other states left the Union, and the Civil War began.



Img 1: United States until the First Civil War.

In Img 1: evolution of the border, with the slave states (in red) and abolitionist states (in blue), from 1789 to 1861; and in the last map, below right, the Union with the states in blue and the Confederacy with the states in red.



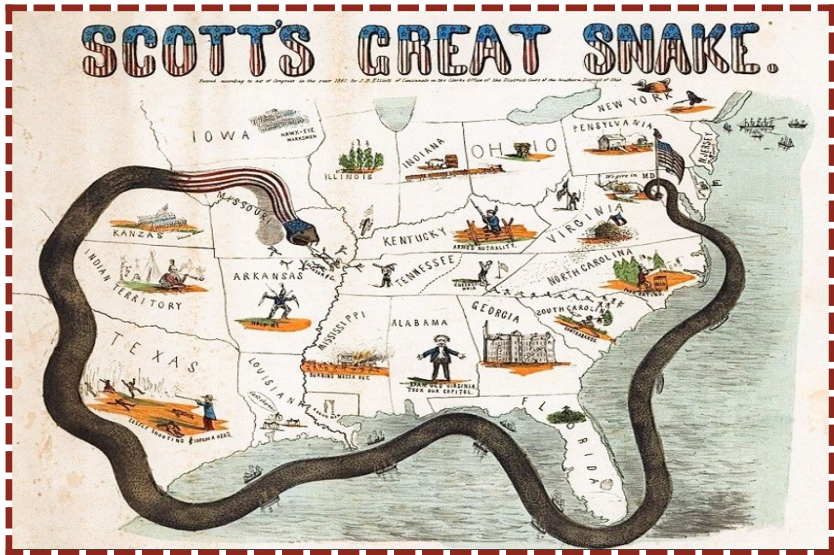
Img 2: Theaters of the War.

Theaters of the War

The Western Theater of the American Civil War encompassed major military operations in the states of Alabama, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, and Tennessee, as well as Louisiana east of the Mississippi River.

Operations on the southern coasts of these states, except Mobile Bay, were considered part of the Lower Coast

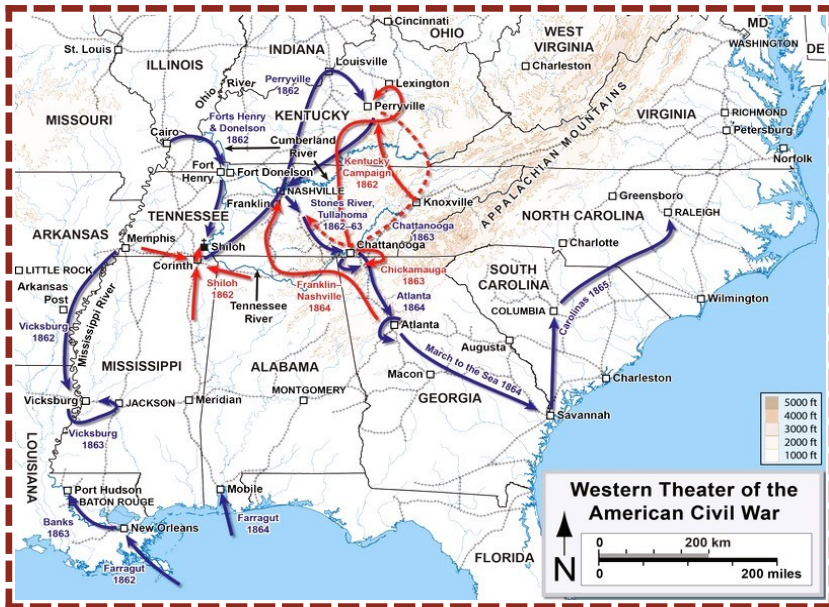
Theater. Most other operations east of the Appalachian Mountains were part of the Eastern Theater. Operations west of the Mississippi River occurred in the Trans-Mississippi Theater.



Img 3: Anaconda Plan.

Western Theater (Western in Img 2)

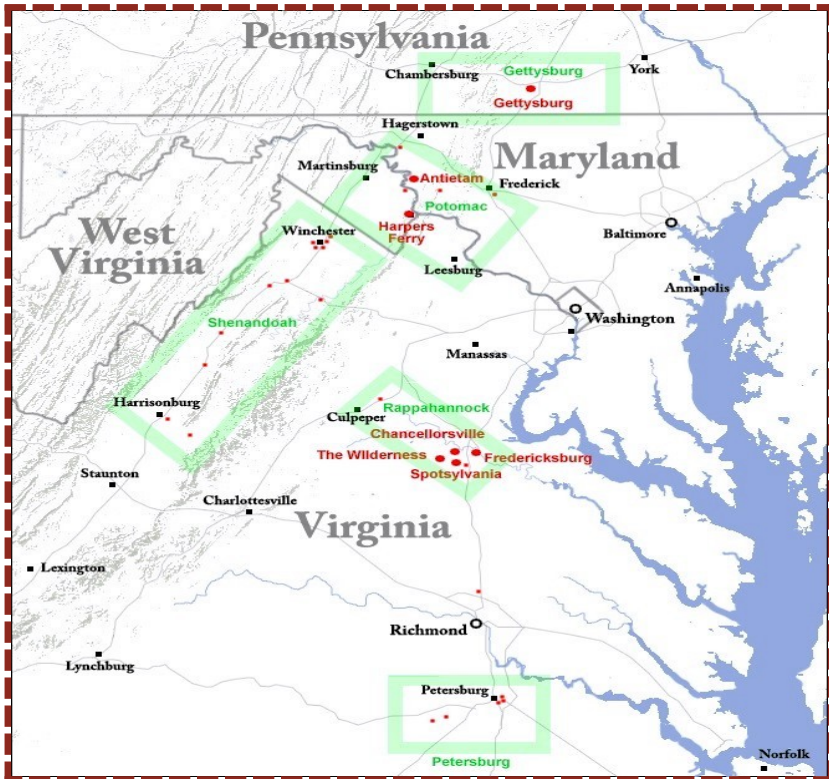
It was, in some ways, the most important theater of the war. Control of the Mississippi River was a key tenet of the Anaconda Plan (Img 3) of the first Union commander in chief, General Winfield Scott (1786–1866). Military historian J. F. C. Fuller described the Union invasion as a massive strategic envelopment movement that began in Kentucky, moved south along the Mississippi River, and then east through Tennessee, Georgia, and the Carolinas.



Img 4: Western Theater.

In Img 4 the blue lines represent the northern maneuvers (of the Union), the red ones those of the southerners (of the Confederacy).

With the exception of the Battle of Chickamauga and a few daring raids by cavalry and/or guerrilla forces, the four years in the West marked a series of almost continuous defeats for the Confederates; or, at best, tactical draws that eventually turned into strategic setbacks. The Union generals — I single out Halleck, Grant, and Sherman — consistently outmaneuvered most of their Confederate opponents, with the exception of cavalry commander Nathan Bedford Forrest.



Img 5: Eastern Theater.

Eastern Theater (Eastern in Img 2)

It included the campaigns that are generally most famous in the history of warfare, if not for their strategic importance, then for their proximity to the major population centers, major newspapers, and capitals of the adversaries. It consisted of land and naval operations in the states of Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, the national capital district in Washington, and

the coastal fortifications and seaports of North Carolina. The interior of the Carolinas was considered part of the Western Theater, and other coastal areas along the Atlantic Ocean were part of the Lower Coast Theater.

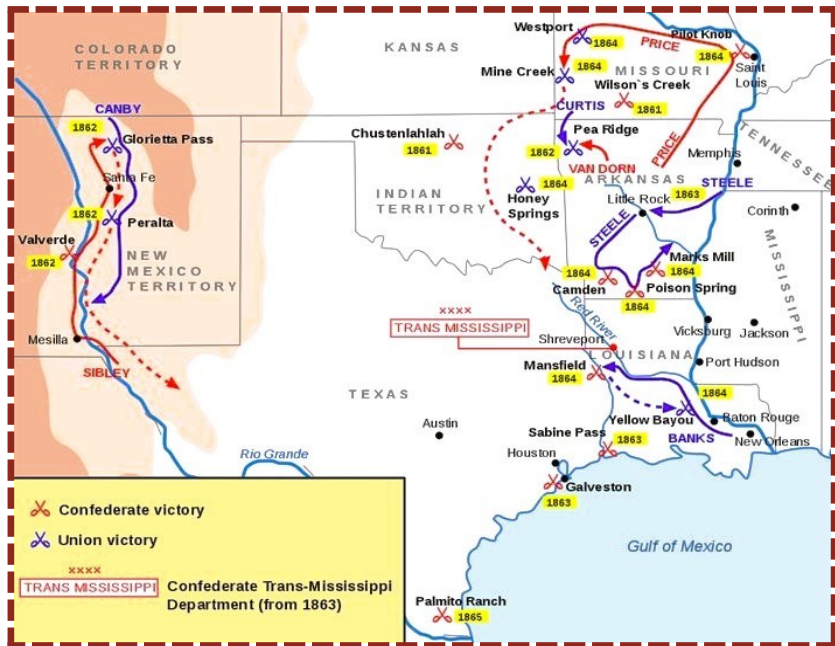
The Eastern Theater was the scene of several major campaigns launched by the Union Army of the Potomac to capture the Confederate capital of Richmond, Virginia. Many of these were thwarted by the Army of Northern Virginia, commanded by General Robert E. Lee, as part of the Confederate States Army.

President Abraham Lincoln responded by seeking a general who would match Lee's boldness and successively appointed Generals Irvin McDowell, George B. McClellan, John Pope, Ambrose Burnside, Joseph Hooker, George G. Meade, and finally U. S. Grant.

Trans-Mississippi Theater (Trans-Miss in Img 2)

It was the scene of major military operations west of the Mississippi River. In 1863, General Edmund Kirby Smith assumed command of the Confederate Trans-Mississippi Department and attempted unsuccessfully to relieve Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant's siege of Vicksburg on opposite banks of the Mississippi River. As a result of the long campaign, siege, and surrender in July 1863 by Confederate General John C. Pemberton, the Union gained control of the entire Mississippi River, dividing the Confederacy in two and leaving the Trans-Mississippi

Department isolated from the rest of the Confederate states to the east.



Img 6: Tran-Mississippi Theater.

In Img 6, the blue lines represent the northern maneuvers (of the Union), the red lines represent the southern maneuvers (of the Confederacy).

Pacific Coast Theater (Pacific in Img 2)

It consisted of military operations in the states and territories west of the Continental Divide and were directed primarily against Native Americans. Regular

Union and Confederate forces did not directly encounter each other within the Department of the Pacific, except in the New Mexico Territory. Operations were directed primarily against Confederate irregulars in California. Confederate Navy warships operated in the Pacific Ocean, but these naval operations failed to disrupt trade to the eastern United States.

Gulf of Mexico Theater (Seaboard in Img 2)

It encompassed naval and amphibious operations that occurred near the coastal areas of the southeastern United States: Alabama, South Carolina, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas. Inland operations are included in the Western Theater or Trans-Mississippi Theater, depending on whether they were east or west of the Mississippi River. Coastal operations in Georgia, such as the end of General Sherman's "March to the Sea", are included in the Western Theater.

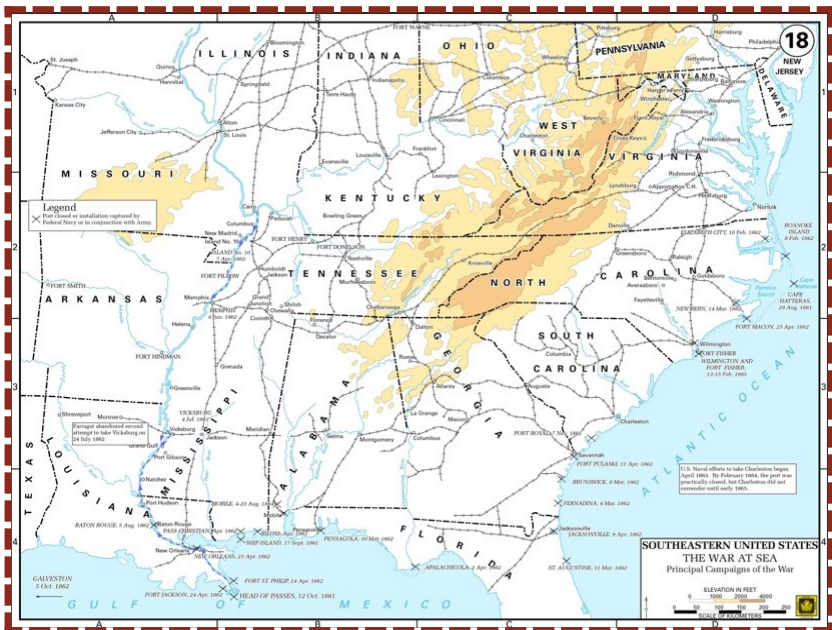
Some Highlights

In chronological order.

Maritime Blockade

The blockade was a Union naval strategy to prevent the Confederacy from trading. The blockade was proclaimed by President Abraham Lincoln in April 1861 and required monitoring of 3,500 miles (5,600 km) of the Atlantic and Gulf coasts, including 12 major ports, notably New

Orleans and Mobile. Confederate blockade-running ships, which were fast enough to evade the Union Navy, could carry only a small fraction of the supplies needed. They were operated largely by British citizens, using neutral ports such as Havana, Nassau, and Bermuda. The Union commissioned about 600 vessels, which destroyed or captured about 1,500 blockade-running ships over the course of the war.



Img 7: Maritime Blockade.

The blockade was largely successful in reducing the South's cotton exports by 95% from pre-war levels, devaluing its currency, and severely damaging its economy. However, it was less successful in preventing

war materiel from being smuggled into the South. Over the course of the conflict, at least 600,000 weapons (mostly British Model 1853 Enfield rifles) were smuggled by blockade runners into the Confederacy, 330,000 of them to Gulf ports. Historians have estimated that supplies brought to the Confederacy by these runners prolonged the duration of the conflict by as much as two years.

Mobilization

As the Confederate states organized, the United States Army had grown to 16,000 troops. The Confederate Congress authorized up to 100,000 troops in February. By May, Jefferson Davis was pushing for an additional 100,000 for a year, and the Union Congress responded in kind. In the first year of the war, both sides had more volunteers than they could effectively train and equip.

After the initial enthusiasm wore off, relying on young men who came of age each year was not enough. Both sides then enacted conscription laws to encourage or force volunteers. European immigrants joined the Union Army in large numbers, including 177,000 German-born and 144,000 Irish-born. And between the Emancipation Proclamation (January 1, 1863) and the end of the war, some 200,000 former slaves served in the Union armies. From a small frontier force in 1860, the Union and Confederate armies grew to be among the "largest and most efficient in the world" within a few years. Some European observers at the time dismissed them as