

WHAT WAS THE CIVIL WAR?

The Civil War was a war between American states that was fought between 1861 and 1865. The main issue that caused the war was the spread of slavery. Slavery had existed for many years in the United States and all over the world. Some people wanted to keep slavery and allow new states and territories to have it, but others thought the practice was wrong. By the 1860s, people on both sides of the argument had reached their breaking point.

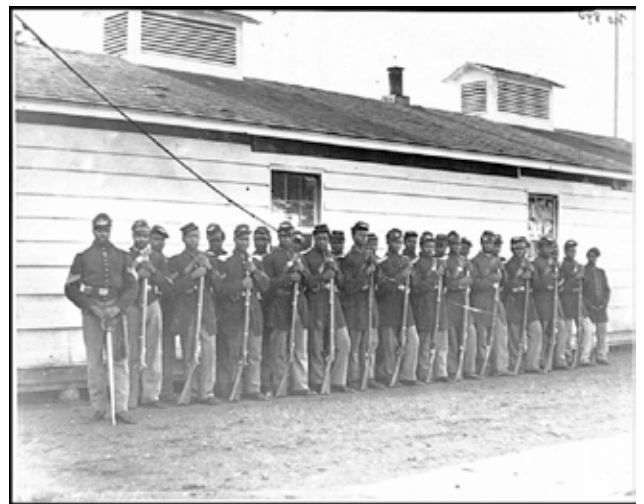
Because of the political problems that the debate over slavery caused, some Southern states wanted to break away from the United States and start their own country. Northern states, however, wanted to keep the country together. Southern states swore that if Abraham Lincoln, an anti-slavery candidate, were to be elected in the 1860 election, they would leave the union. Lincoln was in fact elected, and soon after South Carolina seceded from the Union. Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana and Texas followed.

The war began in April 1861, when the Confederate Army captured Fort Sumter. More serious fighting started the next year, with big battles like the ones at Shiloh and Antietam. As time went on, the battles became even bigger and more deadly: by the end of the war, over 600,000 people had lost their lives on the battlefield. What had started as simply a way to keep the states together slowly turned into a much more serious fight that kept the fate of many slaves and soldiers hanging in the balance.

In 1865, the Confederate Army surrendered and the war ended. The South began the long and difficult process of Reconstruction, and the 13th Amendment abolished slavery in 1865.



Fort Sumter, South Carolina, after taken by the Confederates



A regiment of Union troops



Lincoln visiting a Union camp