Chapter 14
Descent Into War
1861-1862

Lincoln Calls for Troops
• The attack on Ft. Sumter was an act of war.
• The Union was unprepared for war.
• Lincoln calls for 75,000 militiamen to help suppress the Confederate rebellion.
• Recruited to “Save the Union.”
• Lincoln erroneously doubted the control the slave holders had on Southern politics.

The States Divide
• Not all slave states join the Confederacy.
• Maryland’s people supported slavery but so many federal troops there it was impossible.
• Maryland units join rebellion in Virginia.
• Missouri a slave state but was divided.
• Kentucky had federal troops present too.
• Kentucky’s star placed in Rebel flag.

North vs. South
• Union: North had most of the factories.
• Rebels: South had better generals.
• Union: Best seaports were in the North.
• Rebels: Had no navy whatsoever.
• Union: It must attack the Confederacy.
• Rebels: The advantage of defending region.
• Union: Had a large population; no slaves.
• Union: North had a better railroad system.

War Strategies
• At first the Union planned to just wait out South Carolina’s foolishness.
• When other states joined and border states threatened to join direct action was required.
• The South hoped that by only defending itself it would inflict great casualties.
• The South’s strategy almost works.

Selling War to Poor Whites
• Why would poor whites die so rich whites could own human beings and be rich?
• Promoted the notion of state pride.
• Yankees are attacking our state.
• Regional hatred promoted, still exists today.
• Elite sold the war that benefitted only their interests by obfuscating real reasons for war.

The Generals
• Lee was the best general in the U.S. Army.
• Lee asked to head Union army; declines.
• South had always had a greater proportion of men in the military; it still does.
• Primogeniture and absence of industry leads many Southern men into military service.
• Most generals knew each other from service.

**The First Battles**
• Initially Union thought the war would be short and battles would all be routs.
• At Bull Run Union spectators from D.C. travel to watch Rebels defeated; they win.
• Overconfidence, poor training, no planning.
• Regional hatred, jealousy promoted are effective motivators for Rebel soldiers.

**General McClellan**
• Poor choice made by Lincoln; few good generals left on Union side; many retire.
• Too cautious, more interested in his reputation than in gaining military advantage
• Pinkerton provides military intelligence; it was usually wrong, often falsified.
• Could have ended war quickly if acted.

**Defending the Confederacy**
• Military leaders whose experience was gained in the War with Mexico, know that defending one’s homeland is an advantage.
• You know the terrain; you know the roads.
• The white people would be hostile.
• The black people would be afraid to act.
• It takes fewer men to defend than to attack.

**Military Disparities**
• The South had only a handful of factories.
• Existing military equipment remained with the U.S. Army which was the Union.
• Union soldiers were drafted into existing units
• Southern State militias became the Rebel army
• The Confederacy had no navy; only privateers.
• The South had multiple railroad gauges.

**Reaching Out to Great Britain**
• The Rebels thought that England’s dislike of American extended only to the Union.
• Confederate leaders thought that raw cotton materials from South important to English.
• Correctly believed England would want a weaker, divided United States in world.
• Rebels did not understand that slavery was an embarrassment to British who opposed it.

**The Trent Affair**
• A diplomatic crisis that almost brought Great Britain in on the side of the rebels.
• Confederate diplomats on their way to gain support from England & France are captured
They were traveling on a British ship in the Caribbean from Cuba to the Virgin Islands.

England still the most powerful navy in the world.

**The Diplomatic Crisis**
- The boarding of a British ship produces a diplomatic crisis; it was an insult to England.
- British politicians clamored for war.
- Knowing that if Great Britain entered war on Rebels side it could be devastating.
- Lincoln engages in furious diplomatic effort to undo the damage; English are placated.
- The captured Rebel diplomats are released.

**Ruling the Mississippi River**
- The rebelling states are divided by the Mississippi River; which flows into the North.
- The capture of New Orleans was critical.
- Rebel fort controlled river 75 miles below New Orleans.
- Union navy unable to take fort merely dashes past the fort in the middle of the night.
- Union navy proceeds onto New Orleans unabated.

**Military Technology**
- Many military historians see the Civil War as the first modern war.
- The use of telegraph for messages.
- Transporting troops with trains on railroads.
- The use of armored fighting equipment in the naval ships used by both sides.
- The trench warfare that dominated last months.

**The Peninsular Campaign**
- In 1862, Major General McClellan, commander of the Union forces, devised a simple plan to end the rebellion.
- The Army of the Potomac would sail south down the Potomac to the peninsula between the York and James Rivers in Virginia.
- There he would fight a decisive battle, capture Richmond, the Confederate capital, and end the war.

**McClellan Outsmarted**
- Union army arrives with 100,000 soldiers.
- Fearing he was outnumbered McClellan remained outside Richmond waiting for help.
- Stonewall Jackson faints attack on Union capital which draws away anticipated help.
- Rebel army so mobile it creates the illusion that it was much larger than it really was.
- Pinkerton’s intelligence was faulty & false.
Battle of Shiloh

- April 6, 1862 Union forces led by Grant who was trying to divide Confederacy in half.
- The rebel attack was a great surprise to the Union forces which were greater in number.
- The Union forces were nearly defeated only saved by the arrival of reinforcements.
- First indication of the carnage this war would bring on the opposing armies.

Occupation of New Orleans

- On April 28, 1862 Admiral Farragut received the surrender of the City of New Orleans.
- The soldiers defending the Confederacy’s largest city and port had gone to Shiloh.
- City surrendered without a fight.
- Union army begins the delicate operation of occupying a major Southern city.

The Seven Days’ Battles

- The week-long Confederate counter-offensive (June 26-July 2, 1862) near Richmond, Va., that ended the Peninsular campaign of General McClellan.
- Whenever Union forces either repelled or defeated the Rebels, McClellan would not pursue to take advantage of defeat.
- Cautiousness prolongs the war by years.

Ending Slavery Made War Issue

- Coastal islands with large slave populations occupied by Union soldiers.
- Slaves working while young men fought kept Southern economy afloat.
- Slaves were fleeing to Union lines to be free.
- Freeing Slaves had been downplayed to keep Slaves state still part of Union happy.
- This leads to the Emancipation Proclamation.

No Side is Winning

- The incompetence of Union leadership and the creativeness of Rebel generals leads to a series of mixed results or outright losses.
- The losses have political implications for Lincoln; he’s the reason for the losses.
- Lincoln goes through several generals.
- Union soldiers are abusive occupiers.

Stalemate Benefits Confederacy

- The carnage is enormous, the number of wounded is appalling; a new kind of war.
- The cost of the war is harming the United States Treasury; though a boon for business.
- The political repercussions of losses; the carnage and Lincoln a minority president.
- Northern Democrats had placated South all along and begin to oppose the war altogether.