

CIVIL WAR 150 • READER #2

RECKONING with the WAR

Introduction by Eric Foner



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CIVIL WAR 150: Exploring the War and Its Meaning Through the Words of Those Who Lived It

is a national public programming initiative designed to encourage public exploration of the transformative impact and contested meanings of the Civil War through primary documents and firsthand accounts.

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Introduction

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RECKONING WITH THE WAR

When Confederate forces fired on Fort Sumter, an outpost of Union control in Charleston Harbor, on April 12, 1861, they inaugurated the deadliest conflict in American history. Estimates of the dead in the four years that followed range upwards of 700,000 (the equivalent of over seven million in today's population). The Civil War preserved the unity of the American nation and destroyed the institution of slavery, which vice president Alexander Stephens had called the “cornerstone” of the Confederacy. In hindsight, these results appear inevitable. But in the early months of the war, no one, North or South, could predict the outcome. This booklet brings together writings by northerners and southerners from the firing on Sumter to the summer of 1862. It reveals how political leaders, soldiers, and ordinary citizens responded to the conflict and viewed its causes, purposes, and possible consequences.

On both sides, the outbreak of war stirred powerful feelings of patriotism. Within days, tens of thousands of recruits, expecting a short, glorious war, heeded the calls of the Union and Confederacy. As the *Pittsburgh Post* reported, “intense excitement” swept over the North. In the election of 1860, the *Post* had supported Abraham Lincoln's Democratic rival, Stephen A. Douglas. Now it called for all Americans, regardless of party affiliation, to defend the integrity of the national government. Most white southerners seemed equally committed to the new Confederacy. “All honor to Carolina!” exclaimed Charles C. Jones Sr., a leading Georgia clergyman. Northern Republicans, he insisted, were arrogant, sinful, and “essentially *infidel*,” and all “conservative” persons, North and South, should support disunion.

Public morale is an essential ingredient of modern war and political leaders on both sides spared no effort in trying to mobilize popular support. The North, not the South, was the

aggressor, declared Confederate president Jefferson Davis in a message to his Congress two weeks after the war began—"all we ask is to be let alone." More bellicose was Henry A. Wise, a former governor of Virginia. Having sent John Brown to the gallows in 1859, Wise now called on Confederates to "take a lesson" from Brown's steely commitment and embrace of violence.

But it was Abraham Lincoln who proved most successful in generating public support for the war effort. In his message to a special session of Congress that convened, symbolically, on July 4, 1861, Lincoln offered a long argument against the legitimacy of secession, and went on to link the conflict with the deepest values of northern society. He drew upon the familiar free labor ideology to argue that only Union victory would guarantee northerners continued opportunity to enjoy economic mobility and "an unfettered start, a fair chance, in the race of life."

War, it has been said, is the midwife of revolution. The Civil War produced far-reaching changes in American life, most dramatically the destruction of slavery. In the first year and a half of the conflict, however, the fate of slavery was anything but clear. "In all this I can but see the doom of slavery," Ulysses S. Grant, soon to offer his services to the Union army, wrote four days after Fort Sumter surrendered. From the outset, northern Radical Republicans and abolitionists pressed the administration for action against slavery. The way to win the war, Frederick Douglass, the fugitive slave turned abolitionist editor and speaker, wrote in May 1861, was to free and arm the slaves: "war for the destruction of liberty must be met with war for the destruction of slavery." Yet believing support for the Union, not abolition, constituted the lowest common denominator of public support, Lincoln declared that slavery was not a target of the military effort.

As slaves by the hundreds, then thousands, fled to Union lines, and military victory eluded northern forces, the early policy slowly unraveled. Even after the failure of his Peninsula campaign in Virginia in July 1862, General George B. McClellan, a Democrat, urged Lincoln to avoid "radicalism" and not to interfere with slavery, although even McClellan by this point favored appropriating slaves for military labor. Other officers, like General William T. Sherman, refused to return run-

aways to their southern owners. At the end of July 1862, responding with thinly-disguised annoyance to a conservative Louisiana Unionist who complained that the war was undermining slavery, Lincoln asked whether he should "give up the contest leaving any available means unapplied?"

Only a few days earlier, Lincoln had informed his cabinet that he intended to proclaim general emancipation in the Confederacy. Although the decision would not become public until September, and the Emancipation Proclamation was not issued until January 1, 1863, a fundamental transformation in the Civil War, and in American society, was at hand.

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FIGHTING "THE MAD REBELLION": APRIL 1861

*Pittsburgh Post: The War Begun—The
Duty of American Citizens*

April 15, 1861

The *Pittsburgh Post* was a Democratic newspaper that had supported Stephen A. Douglas, the Northern Democratic candidate, in 1860. It published this editorial three days after the Confederates opened fire on Fort Sumter.

FOR TWO days the country has been in a condition of the most intense excitement.

The awful catastrophe so long anticipated has at last fallen upon us.

The die is cast. The choice between compromise and battles has been made. Civil war is upon us. "Unto the end of the war desolations are determined."

For two days business has been almost suspended in our streets, and every one, old and young, men and women, have been asking, "What of the battle?"

The telegraph first announced the brief fact that the battle had commenced. Then came statement after statement—contradictory, inconsistent, almost incredible. Fort Sumter was on fire. Its magazines had exploded. Its walls were crumbling. The U. S. vessels were in the offing, not firing a gun. The white flag, the Federal flag, the flag of the Confederate States, were each in turn reported as floating from Fort Sumter. People scarce knew what to believe.

The despatches which we publish this morning leave no doubt that Fort Sumter has unconditionally surrendered to the forces of the Confederate States; that Major Anderson has been driven out by fire within the walls of the fort; that a brisk cannonading from the Charleston batteries has seriously damaged the fort; that Major Anderson and his command have

been compelled to yield; that the United States vessels in the harbor of Charleston looked calmly on and made no effort to reinforce or assist the fort, and, most singular of all, that after two thousand balls had been fired the battle had resulted without the loss of a single man on either side.

Thus much for the facts which may be found in this morning's paper.

The war has begun. The first blow has been struck. The aspect of the question is now wholly changed from what it has hitherto been. Before it was a political one, and all the conservative men deprecating the horrors of a civil war, have earnestly urged a fair compromise granting to the South her just rights under the Constitution. But the South has determined not to wait for the adjustment of the difficulty lawfully and Constitutionally, but has decided upon an armed revolution against the Government. The South has struck the first blow, a successful blow, but one which will unite the North as one man for the Union. The authority of the Government of our country must be maintained and supported by every loyal American citizen. The wrongs of the South are now a matter of minor consideration. The integrity of the Government and the authority of those who hold its power, is now the great object of national consideration.

A civil war has actually commenced between the sections of this once glorious Union. The heart of every patriot bleeds at this solemn truth. The true men of the country have now a great duty to perform. The preliminaries are over—revolution has taken arms and proceeded to the last extremity—and now every man who reveres the memory of Washington, must use his efforts and devote his wealth, his personal services and his life if necessary, in defending the integrity of the Government which the patriots of the revolution handed down as a PERPETUAL BLESSING to their posterity.

However much we may deprecate the political causes which have driven the South to this insane madness—this fratricidal war—the time is past for crimination and recrimination as to what might have been done, and what ought to have been done. The Flag of Our Country—the glorious Stars and Stripes must be supported and defended by every American. The fight has now begun. An appeal has been made to the

God of Battles. The past must answer for itself. Those who have caused the war must answer to their country and their God for what they have done.

The American flag—the flag of our Union—and the honored banner of a government which is bound to protect the interests of the whole country, the North as well as the South—has been fired into by American citizens, disloyal to the government of the country. We have appreciated their wrongs—we have advocated the restoration of their rights—we have not spared their enemies.

But now, they have fired upon the flag of their country, and of ours. No American of true heart and brave soul will stand this. No American ought to stand it.

The integrity of a great government must be maintained. Its power to punish, as well as to protect its children must be used. Political partizanship must now cease to govern men on this issue. Pennsylvania and Pennsylvanians are for the Union. The government which the people have appointed, and which is responsible to the people for its every act, would be derelict of its duty as a government, if it did not protect its property, its citizens, its flag, and its granted rights against all usurpers, all rebels, all traitors—external or internal foes, of whatever character.

We were born and bred under the stars and stripes. We have been taught to regard the anniversary of American Independence as a sacred day. For our whole life we have looked upon our national emblems as tokens of safety and prosperity to us and to our children, and no matter what may have been the wrongs of the South, in the Union, we would have resisted them to the extent of our ability; but when the South becomes an enemy to the American system of government; takes an attitude of hostility to it, and fires upon the flag, which she, as well as we, are bound to protect, our influence goes for that flag, no matter whether a Republican or a Democrat holds it, and we will sustain any administration, no matter how distasteful its policy may be to us personally, in proving to the world, that the American eagle,—the proud bird of our banner—fears not to brave the wrath of foreign foes, or the mad rebellion of its own fostered children.

“INFIDEL” ENEMIES: GEORGIA, APRIL 1861

Charles C. Jones Sr. to Charles C. Jones Jr.

Educated at Andover and Princeton, Charles C. Jones was a Presbyterian clergyman and plantation owner in Liberty County, Georgia, known for his evangelical work among slaves. He wrote to his son, the mayor of Savannah, shortly after the outbreak of the war.

Montevideo, *Saturday*, April 20th, 1861

My dear Son,

We are aware of your numerous engagements, and never think anything of your not writing as frequently as usual, for we know that you will always write us whenever you can. Your two last came last night with the papers.

A kind Providence seems to watch over our Confederacy. Whoever read or heard of so important and desperate a battle as that of Fort Sumter without the loss of a man on the side of the victors or on the side of the vanquished? And how remarkable that the only men killed were killed saluting their own flag as it was lowered in defeat! May this battle be an earnest of all others that shall be forced upon us in its merciful and glorious success. All honor to Carolina! I hope our state may emulate her bravery and patriotism—and *her self-sacrificing generosity*, in that she has borne out of her own treasury the entire expense of her army and fortifications and all matériel of war, and has not and will not call upon our government for one cent of it. Georgia is well able to do the like for her own seaport and her own territory, and there must be some movement of our chief men to secure so honorable an act. It will relieve our new government, and enable it to appropriate its funds in other directions for our honor and our defense.

We are favored again, in providence, by the belligerent acts and declarations of Mr. Lincoln, which have precipitated the border states upon a decision in our favor precisely at the moment most favorable to us. I never believed we should have

war until after Lincoln's inaugural address—and not altogether then, thinking that there were some preventing considerations of interest and self-preservation, and some residuum of humanity and respect for the opinions of the civilized world in the Black Republican party. But in this I have been mistaken. Christianity with its enlightening and softening influences upon the human soul—at least so far as the great subject dividing our country is concerned—finds no lodgment in the soul of that party, destitute of justice and mercy, without the fear of God, supremely selfish and arrogant, unscrupulous in its acts and measures, intensely malignant and vituperative, and persecuting the innocent even unto blood and utter destruction. That party is essentially *infidel!* And these are our enemies, born and reared in our own political family, for whom we are to pray, and from whom we are to defend ourselves!

The conduct of the government of the old United States towards the Confederate States is an outrage upon Christianity and the civilization of the age, and upon the great and just principles of popular sovereignty which we have contended for and embraced for near an hundred years, and brands it with a deserved and indelible infamy. We have nothing left us but to work out our independence, relying, as our good President instructs us, upon “a just and superintending Providence.” The ordering out of such large bodies of men is an easy matter; but to *officer*, to *equip*, to *maintain*, and (*more than all*) to *maneuver and bring these forces into safe action with the enemy*—these are the burdens and the arts and realities of war. And we wait Lincoln's success. He is not training and educating the people up to the point of war gradually and familiarizing them with it, but he plunges them up to their necks in it at once. But enough. What is it all for? Are the people of the free states going to attempt *the subjugation* of our Confederacy under the fanatical and brutal lead of Black Republicans? I agree with you fully in your view of the character and conduct of this party. It would be a sublime spectacle to see the conservative portion of the free states uniting with our Confederacy in overthrowing the present government in Washington and installing a better one in its place—not for us, but for themselves. But I fear that portion of the free states have not the decision and daring and patriotism for the effort. *Douglas* leads off for coercion! A miserable politician and patriot he.

No man can even conjecture where this strife is to end. Yet it is under the control of God. He can “still the tumult of the people,” and we can but cast this care upon Him and humbly await His interposition. It may be long delayed; it may be immediate. We must maintain our equanimity, go to our daily duties and by His help faithfully discharge them as in times past, and stand ready for emergencies when they arise, and keep in good heart all around us. The Lord keep you, my dear son, and strengthen you to serve Him and to fear His great and holy name, and to discharge your various and responsible duties to your family and country with cheerfulness and self-possession, with purity and integrity, and with intelligence, decision, and kindness. Seek to do all things well, and everything in its proper time.

Am glad you have consented to deliver the address to your company the 1st of May. You may do good by it, and should like to come and hear you.

The package from Mr. ——— was his finish of the copy of the first volume of my church history. Arrived safe. . . .

The news from Baltimore and Washington is out here in the form of rumor. The events of the morning are old by the evening. The scenes succeed almost as rapidly as those of a play. Marvelous if Lincoln, who gave us twenty days to disperse, is in less than ten dispersed himself! As our mails North are stopped, send us what news of interest you can spare. Special prayer should be offered for the *life* of our President; I hope he will not expose his person.

Your affectionate father,
C. C. Jones.

“I HAVE BUT ONE SENTIMENT NOW”:
ILLINOIS, APRIL 1861

*Ulysses S. Grant to Frederick Dent,
April 19, 1861, and to Jesse Root Grant,
April 21, 1861*

An 1843 graduate of West Point, Ulysses S. Grant had served in the U.S.-Mexican War before resigning from the army as a captain in 1854. When the Civil War began, he was working as a clerk in his family's leather-goods store in Galena, Illinois. Grant responded to the news of Fort Sumter in letters to his father-in-law, living near St. Louis, and his father, in Covington, Kentucky.

Galena, April 19th 1861

MR. F. DENT;
DEAR SIR:

I have but very little time to write but as in these exciting times we are very anxious to hear from you, and know of no other way but but by writing first to you, I must make time.—We get but little news, by telegraph, from St. Louis but from most all other points of the Country we are hearing all the time. The times are indeed startling but now is the time, particularly in the border Slave states, for men to prove their love of country. I know it is hard for men to apparently work with the Republican party but now all party distinctions should be lost sight of and evry true patriot be for maintaining the integrity of the glorious old *Stars & Stripes*, the Constitution and the Union. The North is responding to the Presidents call in such a manner that the rebels may truly quaik. I tell you there is no mistaking the feelings of the people. The Government can call into the field not only 75000 troops but ten or twenty times 75000 if it should be necessary and find the means of maintaining them too. It is all a mistake about the Northern pocket being so sensitave. In times like the present no people are more ready to give their own time or of their

abundant means. No impartial man can conceal from himself the fact that in all these troubles the South have been the aggressors and the Administration has stood purely on the defensive, more on the defensive than she would dared to have done but for her consiousness of strength and the certainty of right prevailing in the end. The news to-day is that Virginia has gone out of the Union. But for the influence she will have on the other border slave states this is not much to be regreted. Her position, or rather that of Eastern Virginia, has been more reprehensible from the begining than that of South Carolina. She should be made to bear a heavy portion of the burthen of the War for her guilt.—In all this I can but see the doom of Slavery. The North do not want, nor will they want, to interfere with the institution. But they will refuse for all time to give it protection unless the South shall return soon to their allegiance, and then too this disturbance will give such an impetus to the production of their staple, cotton, in other parts of the world that they can never recover the controll of the market again for that comodity. This will reduce the value of negroes so much that they will never be worth fighting over again.—I have just rec'd a letter from Fred. He breathes forth the most patriotic sentiments. He is for the old Flag as long as there is a Union of two states fighting under its banner and when they desolve he will go it alone. This is not his language but it is the idea not so well expressed as he expresses it.

Julia and the children are all well and join me in love to you all. I forgot to mention that Fred. has another heir, with some novel name that I have forgotten.

Yours Truly
U. S. GRANT

Get John or Lewis Sheets to write to me.

Galena, April 21st 1861

DEAR FATHER;

We are now in the midst of trying times when evry one must be for or against his country, and show his colors too, by his every act. Having been educated for such an emergency, at the expense of the Government, I feel that it has upon me superior

claims, such claims as no ordinary motives of self-interest can surmount. I do not wish to act hastily or unadvisedly in the matter, and as there are more than enough to respond to the first call of the President, I have not yet offered myself. I have promised and am giving all the assistance I can in organizing the Company whose services have been accepted from this place. I have promised further to go with them to the state Capital and if I can be of service to the Governor in organizing his state troops to do so. What I ask now is your approval of the course I am taking, or advice in the matter. A letter written this week will reach me in Springfield. I have not time to write you but a hasty line for though Sunday as it is we are all busy here. In a few minuets I shall be engaged in directing tailors in the style and trim of uniforms for our men.

Whatever may have been my political opinions before I have but one sentiment now. That is we have a Government, and laws and a flag and they must all be sustained. There are but two parties now, Traitors & Patriots and I want hereafter to be ranked with the latter, and I trust, the stronger party.—I do not know but you may be placed in an awkward position, and a dangerous one pecuniarily, but costs can not now be counted. My advice would be to leave where you are if you are not safe with the veivs you entertain. I would never stultify my opinions for the sake of a little security.

I will say nothing about our business. Orvil & Lank will keep you posted as to that.

Write soon and direct as above.

Yours Truly
U. S. GRANT.

MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA, APRIL 1861

*Jefferson Davis: from Message to the
Confederate Congress*

Jefferson Davis, who had been inaugurated as provisional president of the Confederacy at Montgomery, Alabama, on February 18, 1861, called the Provisional Confederate Congress into special session on April 29 and sent a message regarding the outbreak of hostilities.

MONTGOMERY, April 29, 1861.

Gentlemen of the Congress: It is my pleasing duty to announce to you that the Constitution framed for the establishment of a permanent Government for the Confederate States has been ratified by conventions in each of those States to which it was referred. To inaugurate the Government in its full proportions and upon its own substantial basis of the popular will, it only remains that elections should be held for the designation of the officers to administer it. There is every reason to believe that at no distant day other States, identified in political principles and community of interests with those which you represent, will join this Confederacy, giving to its typical constellation increased splendor, to its Government of free, equal, and sovereign States a wider sphere of usefulness, and to the friends of constitutional liberty a greater security for its harmonious and perpetual existence. It was not, however, for the purpose of making this announcement that I have deemed it my duty to convoke you at an earlier day than that fixed by yourselves for your meeting. The declaration of war made against this Confederacy by Abraham Lincoln, the President of the United States, in his proclamation issued on the 15th day of the present month, rendered it necessary, in my judgment, that you should convene at the earliest practicable moment to devise the measures necessary for the defense of the country. The occasion is indeed an extraordinary one. It justifies me in a brief review of the relations heretofore existing between us

and the States which now unite in warfare against us and in a succinct statement of the events which have resulted in this warfare, to the end that mankind may pass intelligent and impartial judgment on its motives and objects. During the war waged against Great Britain by her colonies on this continent a common danger impelled them to a close alliance and to the formation of a Confederation, by the terms of which the colonies, styling themselves States, entered “*severally* into a firm league of friendship with each other for their common defense, the security of their liberties, and their mutual and general welfare, binding themselves to assist each other against all force offered to or attacks made upon them, or any of them, on account of religion, sovereignty, trade, or any other pretense whatever.” In order to guard against any misconstruction of their compact, the several States made explicit declaration in a distinct article—that “*each State retains its* sovereignty, freedom, and independence, and every power, jurisdiction, and right which is not by this Confederation *expressly delegated* to the United States in Congress assembled.”

Under this contract of alliance, the war of the Revolution was successfully waged, and resulted in the treaty of peace with Great Britain in 1783, by the terms of which the several States were *each by name* recognized to be independent. The Articles of Confederation contained a clause whereby all alterations were prohibited unless confirmed by the Legislatures of *every State* after being agreed to by the Congress; and in obedience to this provision, under the resolution of Congress of the 21st of February, 1787, the several States appointed delegates who attended a convention “for the *sole and express purpose* of revising the Articles of Confederation and reporting to Congress and the several Legislatures such alterations and provisions therein as shall, when agreed to in Congress *and confirmed by the States*, render the Federal Constitution adequate to the exigencies of Government and the preservation of the Union.” It was by the delegates chosen by the *several States* under the resolution just quoted that the Constitution of the United States was framed in 1787 and submitted to the *several States* for ratification, as shown by the seventh article, which is in these words: “The ratification of the *conventions of nine States* shall be sufficient for the establishment of this Constitution

between the States so ratifying the same.” I have italicized certain words in the quotations just made for the purpose of attracting attention to the singular and marked caution with which the States endeavored in every possible form to exclude the idea that the separate and independent sovereignty of each State was merged into one common government and nation, and the earnest desire they evinced to impress on the Constitution its true character—that of a *compact between* independent States. The Constitution of 1787, having, however, omitted the clause already recited from the Articles of Confederation, which provided in explicit terms that each State *retained* its sovereignty and independence, some alarm was felt in the States, when invited to ratify the Constitution, lest this omission should be construed into an abandonment of their cherished principle, and they refused to be satisfied until amendments were added to the Constitution placing beyond any pretense of doubt the reservation by the States of all their sovereign rights and powers not expressly delegated to the United States by the Constitution.

Strange, indeed, must it appear to the impartial observer, but it is none the less true that all these carefully worded clauses proved unavailing to prevent the rise and growth in the Northern States of a political school which has persistently claimed that the government thus formed was not a compact *between* States, but was in effect a national government, set up *above* and *over* the States. An organization created by the States to secure the blessings of liberty and independence against *foreign* aggression, has been gradually perverted into a machine for their control in their *domestic* affairs. The *creature* has been exalted above its *creators*; the *principals* have been made subordinate to the *agent* appointed by themselves. The people of the Southern States, whose almost exclusive occupation was agriculture, early perceived a tendency in the Northern States to render the common government subservient to their own purposes by imposing burdens on commerce as a protection to their manufacturing and shipping interests. Long and angry controversies grew out of these attempts, often successful, to benefit one section of the country at the expense of the other. And the danger of disruption arising from this cause was enhanced by the fact that the Northern population was

increasing, by immigration and other causes, in a greater ratio than the population of the South. By degrees, as the Northern States gained preponderance in the National Congress, self-interest taught their people to yield ready assent to any plausible advocacy of their right as a majority to govern the minority without control. They learned to listen with impatience to the suggestion of any constitutional impediment to the exercise of their will, and so utterly have the principles of the Constitution been corrupted in the Northern mind that, in the inaugural address delivered by President Lincoln in March last, he asserts as an axiom, which he plainly deems to be undeniable, that the theory of the Constitution requires that in all cases the majority shall govern; and in another memorable instance the same Chief Magistrate did not hesitate to liken the relations between a State and the United States to those which exist between a county and the State in which it is situated and by which it was created. This is the lamentable and fundamental error on which rests the policy that has culminated in his declaration of war against these Confederate States. In addition to the long-continued and deep-seated resentment felt by the Southern States at the persistent abuse of the powers they had delegated to the Congress, for the purpose of enriching the manufacturing and shipping classes of the North at the expense of the South, there has existed for nearly half a century another subject of discord, involving interests of such transcendent magnitude as at all times to create the apprehension in the minds of many devoted lovers of the Union that its permanence was impossible. When the several States delegated certain powers to the United States Congress, a large portion of the laboring population consisted of African slaves imported into the colonies by the mother country. In twelve out of the thirteen States negro slavery existed, and the right of property in slaves was protected by law. This property was recognized in the Constitution, and provision was made against its loss by the escape of the slave. The increase in the number of slaves by further importation from Africa was also secured by a clause forbidding Congress to prohibit the slave trade anterior to a certain date, and in no clause can there be found any delegation of power to the Congress authorizing it in any manner to legislate to the prejudice, detriment, or discouragement of the

owners of that species of property, or excluding it from the protection of the Government.

The climate and soil of the Northern States soon proved unpropitious to the continuance of slave labor, whilst the converse was the case at the South. Under the unrestricted free intercourse between the two sections, the Northern States consulted their own interests by selling their slaves to the South and prohibiting slavery within their limits. The South were willing purchasers of a property suitable to their wants, and paid the price of the acquisition without harboring a suspicion that their quiet possession was to be disturbed by those who were inhibited not only by want of constitutional authority, but by good faith as vendors, from disquieting a title emanating from themselves. As soon, however, as the Northern States that prohibited African slavery within their limits had reached a number sufficient to give their representation a controlling voice in the Congress, a persistent and organized system of hostile measures against the rights of the owners of slaves in the Southern States was inaugurated and gradually extended. A continuous series of measures was devised and prosecuted for the purpose of rendering insecure the tenure of property in slaves. Fanatical organizations, supplied with money by voluntary subscriptions, were assiduously engaged in exciting amongst the slaves a spirit of discontent and revolt; means were furnished for their escape from their owners, and agents secretly employed to entice them to abscond; the constitutional provision for their rendition to their owners was first evaded, then openly denounced as a violation of conscientious obligation and religious duty; men were taught that it was a merit to elude, disobey, and violently oppose the execution of the laws enacted to secure the performance of the promise contained in the constitutional compact; owners of slaves were mobbed and even murdered in open day solely for applying to a magistrate for the arrest of a fugitive slave; the dogmas of these voluntary organizations soon obtained control of the Legislatures of many of the Northern States, and laws were passed providing for the punishment, by ruinous fines and long-continued imprisonment in jails and penitentiaries, of citizens of the Southern States who should dare to ask aid of the officers of the law for the recovery of their

property. Emboldened by success, the theater of agitation and aggression against the clearly expressed constitutional rights of the Southern States was transferred to the Congress; Senators and Representatives were sent to the common councils of the nation, whose chief title to this distinction consisted in the display of a spirit of ultra fanaticism, and whose business was not “to promote the general welfare or insure domestic tranquility,” but to awaken the bitterest hatred against the citizens of sister States by violent denunciation of their institutions; the transaction of public affairs was impeded by repeated efforts to usurp powers not delegated by the Constitution, for the purpose of impairing the security of property in slaves, and reducing those States which held slaves to a condition of inferiority. Finally a great party was organized for the purpose of obtaining the administration of the Government, with the avowed object of using its power for the total exclusion of the slave States from all participation in the benefits of the public domain acquired by all the States in common, whether by conquest or purchase; of surrounding them entirely by States in which slavery should be prohibited; of thus rendering the property in slaves so insecure as to be comparatively worthless, and thereby annihilating in effect property worth thousands of millions of dollars. This party, thus organized, succeeded in the month of November last in the election of its candidate for the Presidency of the United States.

In the meantime, under the mild and genial climate of the Southern States and the increasing care and attention for the well-being and comfort of the laboring class, dictated alike by interest and humanity, the African slaves had augmented in number from about 600,000, at the date of the adoption of the constitutional compact, to upward of 4,000,000. In moral and social condition they had been elevated from brutal savages into docile, intelligent, and civilized agricultural laborers, and supplied not only with bodily comforts but with careful religious instruction. Under the supervision of a superior race their labor had been so directed as not only to allow a gradual and marked amelioration of their own condition, but to convert hundreds of thousands of square miles of the wilderness into cultivated lands covered with a prosperous people; towns and cities had sprung into existence, and had rapidly increased in

wealth and population under the social system of the South; the white population of the Southern slaveholding States had augmented from about 1,250,000 at the date of the adoption of the Constitution to more than 8,500,000 in 1860; and the productions of the South in cotton, rice, sugar, and tobacco, for the full development and continuance of which the labor of African slaves was and is indispensable, had swollen to an amount which formed nearly three-fourths of the exports of the whole United States and had become absolutely necessary to the wants of civilized man. With interests of such overwhelming magnitude imperiled, the people of the Southern States were driven by the conduct of the North to the adoption of some course of action to avert the danger with which they were openly menaced. With this view the Legislatures of the several States invited the people to select delegates to conventions to be held for the purpose of determining for themselves what measures were best adapted to meet so alarming a crisis in their history. Here it may be proper to observe that from a period as early as 1798 there had existed in *all* of the States of the Union a party almost uninterruptedly in the majority based upon the creed that each State was, in the last resort, the sole judge as well of its wrongs as of the mode and measure of redress. Indeed, it is obvious that under the law of nations this principle is an axiom as applied to the relations of independent sovereign States, such as those which had united themselves under the constitutional compact. The Democratic party of the United States repeated, in its successful canvass in 1856, the declaration made in numerous previous political contests, that it would “faithfully abide by and uphold the principles laid down in the Kentucky and Virginia resolutions of 1798, and in the report of Mr. Madison to the Virginia Legislature in 1799; and that it adopts those principles as constituting one of the main foundations of its political creed.” The principles thus emphatically announced embrace that to which I have already adverted—the right of each State to judge of and redress the wrongs of which it complains. These principles were maintained by overwhelming majorities of the people of all the States of the Union at different elections, especially in the elections of Mr. Jefferson in 1805, Mr. Madison in 1809, and Mr. Pierce in 1852. In the exercise of a right so ancient, so well-

established, and so necessary for self-preservation, the people of the Confederate States, in their conventions, determined that the wrongs which they had suffered and the evils with which they were menaced required that they should revoke the delegation of powers to the Federal Government which they had ratified in their several conventions. They consequently passed ordinances resuming all their rights as sovereign and independent States and dissolved their connection with the other States of the Union.

In conclusion, I congratulate you on the fact that in every portion of our country there has been exhibited the most patriotic devotion to our common cause. Transportation companies have freely tendered the use of their lines for troops and supplies. The presidents of the railroads of the Confederacy, in company with others who control lines of communication with States that we hope soon to greet as sisters, assembled in convention in this city, and not only reduced largely the rates heretofore demanded for mail service and conveyance of troops and munitions, but voluntarily proffered to receive their compensation, at these reduced rates, in the bonds of the Confederacy, for the purpose of leaving all the resources of the Government at its disposal for the common defense. Requisitions for troops have been met with such alacrity that the numbers tendering their services have in every instance greatly exceeded the demand. Men of the highest official and social position are serving as volunteers in the ranks. The gravity of age and the zeal of youth rival each other in the desire to be foremost for the public defense; and though at no other point than the one heretofore noticed have they been stimulated by the excitement incident to actual engagement and the hope of distinction for individual achievement, they have borne what for new troops is the most severe ordeal—patient toil and constant vigil, and all the exposure and discomfort of active service, with a resolution and fortitude such as to command approbation and justify the highest expectation of their conduct when active valor shall be required in place of steady endurance. A people thus united and resolved cannot shrink from any sacrifice which they may be called on to make, nor

can there be a reasonable doubt of their final success, however long and severe may be the test of their determination to maintain their birthright of freedom and equality as a trust which it is their first duty to transmit undiminished to their posterity. A bounteous Providence cheers us with the promise of abundant crops. The fields of grain which will within a few weeks be ready for the sickle give assurance of the amplest supply of food for man; whilst the corn, cotton, and other staple productions of our soil afford abundant proof that up to this period the season has been propitious. We feel that our cause is just and holy; we protest solemnly in the face of mankind that we desire peace at any sacrifice save that of honor and independence; we seek no conquest, no aggrandizement, no concession of any kind from the States with which we were lately confederated; all we ask is to be let alone; that those who never held power over us shall not now attempt our subjugation by arms. This we will, this we must, resist to the direst extremity. The moment that this pretension is abandoned the sword will drop from our grasp, and we shall be ready to enter into treaties of amity and commerce that cannot but be mutually beneficial. So long as this pretension is maintained, with a firm reliance on that Divine Power which covers with its protection the just cause, we will continue to struggle for our inherent right to freedom, independence, and self-government.

JEFFERSON DAVIS.

“STRIKE DOWN SLAVERY ITSELF”: MAY 1861

Frederick Douglass: How to End the War

May 1861

Up until the outbreak of hostilities Frederick Douglass worried that the North would resolve the secession crisis by offering new concessions regarding slavery. Once the war began he used his journal *Douglass' Monthly* to advocate that it be waged radically, by enlisting black soldiers and making the destruction of slavery an essential aim.

TO OUR mind, there is but one easy, short and effectual way to suppress and put down the desolating war which the slaveholders and their rebel minions are now waging against the American Government and its loyal citizens. Fire must be met with water, darkness with light, and war for the destruction of liberty must be met with war for the destruction of slavery. *The simple way, then, to put an end to the savage and desolating war now waged by the slaveholders, is to strike down slavery itself*, the primal cause of that war.

Freedom to the slave should now be proclaimed from the Capitol, and should be seen above the smoke and fire of every battle field, waving from every loyal flag! The time for mild measures is past. They are pearls cast before swine, and only increase and aggravate the crime which they would conciliate and repress. The weak point must be found, and when found should be struck with the utmost vigor. Any war is a calamity; but a peace that can only breed war is a far greater calamity. A long and tame war, waged without aim or spirit, paralyzes business, arrests the wheels of civilization, benumbs the national feeling, corrodes the national heart, and diffuses its baleful influence universally. Sharp, quick, wise, strong and sudden, are the elements for the occasion. The sooner this rebellion is put out of its misery, the better for all concerned. A lenient war is a lengthy war, and therefore the worst kind of war. Let us stop it, and stop it effectually—stop it before its evils are diffused throughout the Northern States—stop it on the soil upon which it originated,

and among the traitors and rebels who originated the war. This can be done at once, by “*carrying the war into Africa.*” *Let the slaves and free colored people be called into service, and formed into a liberating army, to march into the South and raise the banner of Emancipation among the slaves. The South having brought revolution and war upon the country, and having elected and consented to play at that fearful game, she has no right to complain if some good as well as calamity shall result from her own act and deed.*

The slaveholders have not hesitated to employ the sable arms of the Negroes at the South in erecting the fortifications which silenced the guns of Fort Sumter, and brought the star-spangled banner to the dust. They often boast, and not without cause, that their Negroes will fight for them against the North. They have no scruples against employing the Negroes to exterminate freedom, and in overturning the Government. They work with spade and barrow with them, and they will stand with them on the field of battle, shoulder to shoulder, with guns in their hands, to shoot down the troops of the U. S. Government.—They have neither pride, prejudice nor *pity* to restrain them from employing Negroes *against white men, where slavery is to be protected and made secure.* Oh! that this Government would only now be as true to liberty as the rebels, who are attempting to batter it down, are true to slavery. We have no hesitation in saying that ten thousand black soldiers might be raised in the next thirty days to march upon the South. One black regiment alone would be, in such a war, the full equal of two white ones. The very fact of color in this case would be more terrible than powder and balls. The slaves would learn more as to the nature of the conflict from the presence of one such regiment, than from a thousand preachers. Every consideration of justice, humanity and sound policy confirms the wisdom of calling upon black men just now to take up arms in behalf of their country.

We are often asked by persons in the street as well as by letter, what our people will do in the present solemn crisis in the affairs of the country. Our answer is, would to God you would let us do something! We lack nothing but your consent. We are ready and would go, counting ourselves happy in being permitted to serve and suffer for the cause of freedom and free institutions. But you won't let us go. Read the heart-rending account we

publish elsewhere of the treatment received by the brave fellows, who broke away from their chains and went through marvelous suffering to defend Fort Pickens against the rebels.—They were instantly seized and put in irons and returned to their guilty masters to be whipped to death! Witness Gen. Butler's offer to put down the slave insurrection in the State of Maryland. The colored citizens of Boston have offered their services to the Government, and were refused. There is, even now, while the slaveholders are marshaling armed Negroes against the Government, covering the ocean with pirates, destroying innocent lives, to sweep down the commerce of the country, tearing up railways, burning bridges to prevent the march of Government troops to the defence of its capital, exciting mobs to stone the Yankee soldiers; there is still, we say, weak and contemptible tenderness towards the blood thirsty, slaveholding traitors, by the Government and people of the country. Until the nation shall repent of this weakness and folly, until they shall make the cause of their country the cause of freedom, until they shall strike down slavery, the source and center of this gigantic rebellion, they don't deserve the support of a single sable arm, nor will it succeed in crushing the cause of our present troubles.

“I REJOICE IN THIS WAR”: VIRGINIA, JUNE 1861

Henry A. Wise: Speech at Richmond

June 1, 1861

In late May 1861 the Confederacy moved its capital from Montgomery, Alabama, to Richmond, Virginia, where President Davis addressed a crowd on June 1. He was followed by former Virginia governor Henry A. Wise, who had been one of the leading secessionists in the state convention earlier in the year.

MY FRIENDS:—You all know that I am a civil soldier only, and that in that capacity I was nearly worn down in the siege of the Virginia Convention. Thank God, however, that with a little rest, some help, and some damage from the doctors, I have been enabled to recruit my exhausted energies.

The time of deliberation has given place to the time of action, and I have taken up my bed as an individual, in common with others, to march to Richmond to meet the President of our now separate and independent republic. I am ready to obey his orders, not only with pride, pleasure, and devotion to the cause, and respect to the office he fills, but with respect to the man himself as one who has our fullest confidence.

You have to meet a foe with whom you could not live in peace. Your political powers and rights, which were enthroned in that Capitol when you were united with them under the old constitutional bond of the Confederacy, have been annihilated. They have undertaken to annul laws within your own limits that would render your property unsafe within those limits. They have abolitionized your border, as the disgraced North-west will show. They have invaded your moral strongholds and the rights of your religion, and have undertaken to teach you what should be the moral duties of men.

They have invaded the sanctity of your homes and firesides, and endeavored to play master, father, and husband for you in

your households; in a word, they have set themselves up as a petty Providence by which you are in all things to be guided and controlled. But you have always declared that you would not be subject to this invasion of your rights.

Though war was demanded, it was not for you to declare war. But now that the armies of the invader are hovering around the tomb of Washington, where is the Virginian heart that does not beat with a quicker pulsation at this last and boldest desecration of his beloved State? Their hordes are already approaching our metropolis, and extending their folds around our State as does the anaconda around his victim. The call is for action.

I rejoice in this war. Who is there that now dares to put on sanctity to depreciate war, or the "horrid glories of war." None. Why? Because it is a war of purification. You want war, fire, blood, to purify you; and the Lord of Hosts has demanded that you should walk through fire and blood. You are called to the fiery baptism, and I call upon you to come up to the altar. Though your pathway be through fire, or through a river of blood, turn not aside. Be in no hurry—no hurry and flurry.

Collect yourselves, summon yourselves, elevate yourselves to the high and sacred duty of patriotism. The man who dares to pray, the man who dares to wait until some magic arm is put into his hand; the man who will not go unless he have a Minié, or percussion musket, who will not be content with flint and steel, or even a gun without a lock, is worse than a coward—he is a renegade. If he can do no better, go to a blacksmith, take a gun along as a sample, and get him to make you one like it. Get a spear—a lance. Take a lesson from John Brown. Manufacture your blades from old iron, even though it be the tires of your cart-wheels. Get a bit of carriage spring, and grind and burnish it in the shape of a bowie knife, and put it to any sort of a handle, so that it be strong—ash, hickory, oak. But, if possible, get a double-barrelled gun and a dozen rounds of buck-shot, and go upon the battle-field with these.

If their guns reach further than yours, reduce the distance; meet them foot to foot, eye to eye, body to body, and when you strike a blow, strike home. Your true-blooded Yankee will never stand still in the face of cold steel. Let your aim, there-

fore, be to get into close quarters, and with a few decided, vigorous movements, always pushing forward, never back, my word for it, the soil of Virginia will be swept of the Vandals who are now polluting its atmosphere.

The band then struck up "Dixie," which was followed by "We may be Happy yet."

WASHINGTON, D.C., JULY 1861

*Abraham Lincoln:
from Message to Congress in Special Session*

In his proclamation of April 15, 1861, calling forth 75,000 militia, President Lincoln had called the new 37th Congress, which was scheduled to meet in December 1861, into session on July 4.

It might seem, at first thought, to be of little difference whether the present movement at the South be called “secession” or “rebellion.” The movers, however, well understand the difference. At the beginning, they knew they could never raise their treason to any respectable magnitude, by any name which implies *violation* of law. They knew their people possessed as much of moral sense, as much of devotion to law and order, and as much pride in, and reverence for, the history, and government, of their common country, as any other civilized, and patriotic people. They knew they could make no advancement directly in the teeth of these strong and noble sentiments. Accordingly they commenced by an insidious debauching of the public mind. They invented an ingenious sophism, which, if conceded, was followed by perfectly logical steps, through all the incidents, to the complete destruction of the Union. The sophism itself is, that any state of the Union may, *consistently* with the national Constitution, and therefore *lawfully*, and *peacefully*, withdraw from the Union, without the consent of the Union, or of any other state. The little disguise that the supposed right is to be exercised only for just cause, themselves to be the sole judge of its justice, is too thin to merit any notice.

With rebellion thus sugar-coated, they have been drugging the public mind of their section for more than thirty years; and, until at length, they have brought many good men to a willingness to take up arms against the government the day *after* some assemblage of men have enacted the farcical pre-

tence of taking their State out of the Union, who could have been brought to no such thing the day *before*.

This sophism derives much—perhaps the whole—of its currency, from the assumption, that there is some omnipotent, and sacred supremacy, pertaining to a *State*—to each State of our Federal Union. Our States have neither more, nor less power, than that reserved to them, in the Union, by the Constitution—no one of them ever having been a State *out* of the Union. The original ones passed into the Union even *before* they cast off their British colonial dependence; and the new ones each came into the Union directly from a condition of dependence, excepting Texas. And even Texas, in its temporary independence, was never designated a State. The new ones only took the designation of States, on coming into the Union, while that name was first adopted for the old ones, in, and by, the Declaration of Independence. Therein the “United Colonies” were declared to be “Free and Independent States”; but, even then, the object plainly was not to declare their independence of *one another*, or of the *Union*; but directly the contrary, as their mutual pledge, and their mutual action, before, at the time, and afterwards, abundantly show. The express plighting of faith, by each and all of the original thirteen, in the Articles of Confederation, two years later, that the Union shall be perpetual, is most conclusive. Having never been States, either in substance, or in name, *outside* of the Union, whence this magical omnipotence of “State rights,” asserting a claim of power to lawfully destroy the Union itself? Much is said about the “sovereignty” of the States; but the word, even, is not in the national Constitution; nor, as is believed, in any of the State constitutions. What is a “sovereignty,” in the political sense of the term? Would it be far wrong to define it “A political community, without a political superior”? Tested by this, no one of our States, except Texas, ever was a sovereignty. And even Texas gave up the character on coming into the Union; by which act, she acknowledged the Constitution of the United States, and the laws and treaties of the United States made in pursuance of the Constitution, to be, for her, the supreme law of the land. The States have their *status* IN the Union, and they have no other *legal status*. If they break from this, they can only do so against law,

and by revolution. The Union, and not themselves separately, procured their independence, and their liberty. By conquest, or purchase, the Union gave each of them, whatever of independence, and liberty, it has. The Union is older than any of the States; and, in fact, it created them as States. Originally, some dependent colonies made the Union; and, in turn, the Union threw off their old dependence, for them, and made them States, such as they are. Not one of them ever had a State constitution, independent of the Union. Of course, it is not forgotten that all the new States framed their constitutions, before they entered the Union; nevertheless, dependent upon, and preparatory to, coming into the Union.

Unquestionably the States have the powers, and rights, reserved to them in, and by the National Constitution; but among these, surely, are not included all conceivable powers, however mischievous, or destructive; but, at most, such only, as were known in the world, at the time, as governmental powers; and certainly, a power to destroy the government itself, had never been known as a governmental—as a merely administrative power. This relative matter of National power, and State rights, as a principle, is no other than the principle of *generality*, and *locality*. Whatever concerns the whole, should be confided to the whole—to the general government; while, whatever concerns *only* the State, should be left exclusively, to the State. This is all there is of original principle about it. Whether the National Constitution, in defining boundaries between the two, has applied the principle with exact accuracy, is not to be questioned. We are all bound by that defining, without question.

What is now combatted, is the position that secession is *consistent* with the Constitution—is *lawful*, and *peaceful*. It is not contended that there is any express law for it; and nothing should ever be implied as law, which leads to unjust, or absurd consequences. The nation purchased, with money, the countries out of which several of these States were formed. Is it just that they shall go off without leave, and without refunding? The nation paid very large sums, (in the aggregate, I believe, nearly a hundred millions) to relieve Florida of the aboriginal tribes. Is it just that she shall now be off without consent, or without making any return? The nation is now in debt for

money applied to the benefit of these so-called seceding States, in common with the rest. Is it just, either that creditors shall go unpaid, or the remaining States pay the whole? A part of the present national debt was contracted to pay the old debts of Texas. Is it just that she shall leave, and pay no part of this herself?

Again, if one State may secede, so may another; and when all shall have seceded, none is left to pay the debts. Is this quite just to creditors? Did we notify them of this sage view of ours, when we borrowed their money? If we now recognize this doctrine, by allowing the seceders to go in peace, it is difficult to see what we can do, if others choose to go, or to extort terms upon which they will promise to remain.

The seceders insist that our Constitution admits of secession. They have assumed to make a National Constitution of their own, in which, of necessity, they have either *discarded*, or *retained*, the right of secession, as they insist, it exists in ours. If they have discarded it, they thereby admit that, on principle, it ought not to be in ours. If they have retained it, by their own construction of ours they show that to be consistent they must secede from one another, whenever they shall find it the easiest way of settling their debts, or effecting any other selfish, or unjust object. The principle itself is one of disintegration, and upon which no government can possibly endure.

If all the States, save one, should assert the power to *drive* that one out of the Union, it is presumed the whole class of seceder politicians would at once deny the power, and denounce the act as the greatest outrage upon State rights. But suppose that precisely the same act, instead of being called “driving the one out,” should be called “the seceding of the others from that one,” it would be exactly what the seceders claim to do; unless, indeed, they make the point, that the one, because it is a minority, may rightfully do, what the others, because they are a majority, may not rightfully do. These politicians are subtle, and profound, on the rights of minorities. They are not partial to that power which made the Constitution, and speaks from the preamble, calling itself “We, the People.”

It may well be questioned whether there is, to-day, a majority of the legally qualified voters of any State, except perhaps South Carolina, in favor of disunion. There is much reason to

believe that the Union men are the majority in many, if not in every other one, of the so-called seceded States. The contrary has not been demonstrated in any one of them. It is ventured to affirm this, even of Virginia and Tennessee; for the result of an election, held in military camps, where the bayonets are all on one side of the question voted upon, can scarcely be considered as demonstrating popular sentiment. At such an election, all that large class who are, at once, *for* the Union, and *against* coercion, would be coerced to vote against the Union.

It may be affirmed, without extravagance, that the free institutions we enjoy, have developed the powers, and improved the condition, of our whole people, beyond any example in the world. Of this we now have a striking, and an impressive illustration. So large an army as the government has now on foot, was never before known, without a soldier in it, but who had taken his place there, of his own free choice. But more than this: there are many single Regiments whose members, one and another, possess full practical knowledge of all the arts, sciences, professions, and whatever else, whether useful or elegant, is known in the world; and there is scarcely one, from which there could not be selected, a President, a Cabinet, a Congress, and perhaps a Court, abundantly competent to administer the government itself. Nor do I say this is not true, also, in the army of our late friends, now adversaries, in this contest; but if it is, so much better the reason why the government, which has conferred such benefits on both them and us, should not be broken up. Whoever, in any section, proposes to abandon such a government, would do well to consider, in deference to what principle it is, that he does it—what better he is likely to get in its stead—whether the substitute will give, or be intended to give, so much of good to the people. There are some foreshadowings on this subject. Our adversaries have adopted some Declarations of Independence; in which, unlike the good old one, penned by Jefferson, they omit the words “all men are created equal.” Why? They have adopted a temporary national constitution, in the preamble of which, unlike our good old one, signed by Washington, they omit “We, the People,” and substitute “We, the deputies of the sovereign and independent States.” Why? Why this deliberate pressing out of view, the rights of men, and the authority of the people?

This is essentially a People’s contest. On the side of the Union, it is a struggle for maintaining in the world, that form, and substance of government, whose leading object is, to elevate the condition of men—to lift artificial weights from all shoulders—to clear the paths of laudable pursuit for all—to afford all, an unfettered start, and a fair chance, in the race of life. Yielding to partial, and temporary departures, from necessity, this is the leading object of the government for whose existence we contend.

I am most happy to believe that the plain people understand, and appreciate this. It is worthy of note, that while in this, the government’s hour of trial, large numbers of those in the Army and Navy, who have been favored with the offices, have resigned, and proved false to the hand which had pampered them, not one common soldier, or common sailor is known to have deserted his flag.

Great honor is due to those officers who remain true, despite the example of their treacherous associates; but the greatest honor, and most important fact of all, is the unanimous firmness of the common soldiers, and common sailors. To the last man, so far as known, they have successfully resisted the traitorous efforts of those, whose commands, but an hour before, they obeyed as absolute law. This is the patriotic instinct of the plain people. They understand, without an argument, that destroying the government, which was made by Washington, means no good to them.

Our popular government has often been called an experiment. Two points in it, our people have already settled—the successful *establishing*, and the successful *administering* of it. One still remains—its successful *maintenance* against a formidable internal attempt to overthrow it. It is now for them to demonstrate to the world, that those who can fairly carry an election, can also suppress a rebellion—that ballots are the rightful, and peaceful, successors of bullets; and that when ballots have fairly, and constitutionally, decided, there can be no successful appeal, back to bullets; that there can be no successful appeal, except to ballots themselves, at succeeding elections. Such will be a great lesson of peace; teaching men that what they cannot take by an election, neither can they take it by a war—teaching all, the folly of being the beginners of a war.

Lest there be some uneasiness in the minds of candid men, as to what is to be the course of the government, towards the Southern States, *after* the rebellion shall have been suppressed, the Executive deems it proper to say, it will be his purpose then, as ever, to be guided by the Constitution, and the laws; and that he probably will have no different understanding of the powers, and duties of the Federal government, relatively to the rights of the States, and the people, under the Constitution, than that expressed in the inaugural address.

He desires to preserve the government, that it may be administered for all, as it was administered by the men who made it. Loyal citizens everywhere, have the right to claim this of their government; and the government has no right to withhold, or neglect it. It is not perceived that, in giving it, there is any coercion, any conquest, or any subjugation, in any just sense of those terms.

The Constitution provides, and all the States have accepted the provision, that "The United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a republican form of government." But, if a State may lawfully go out of the Union, having done so, it may also discard the republican form of government; so that to prevent its going out, is an indispensable *means*, to the *end*, of maintaining the guaranty mentioned; and when an end is lawful and obligatory, the indispensable means to it, are also lawful, and obligatory.

It was with the deepest regret that the Executive found the duty of employing the war-power, in defence of the government, forced upon him. He could but perform this duty, or surrender the existence of the government. No compromise, by public servants, could, in this case, be a cure; not that compromises are not often proper, but that no popular government can long survive a marked precedent, that those who carry an election, can only save the government from immediate destruction, by giving up the main point, upon which the people gave the election. The people themselves, and not their servants, can safely reverse their own deliberate decisions. As a private citizen, the Executive could not have consented that these institutions shall perish; much less could he, in betrayal of so vast, and so sacred a trust, as these free people had confided to him. He felt that he had no moral right to shrink; nor

even to count the chances of his own life, in what might follow. In full view of his great responsibility, he has, so far, done what he has deemed his duty. You will now, according to your own judgment, perform yours. He sincerely hopes that your views, and your action, may so accord with his, as to assure all faithful citizens, who have been disturbed in their rights, of a certain, and speedy restoration to them, under the Constitution, and the laws.

And having thus chosen our course, without guile, and with pure purpose, let us renew our trust in God, and go forward without fear, and with manly hearts.

July 4, 1861.

OUR LATE AWFUL DISASTER": JULY 1861

Horace Greeley to Abraham Lincoln

Beginning on June 26, 1861, Horace Greeley ran a daily "On to Richmond!" editorial in the New York *Tribune*, calling for the capture of the city before the opening on July 20 of the next session of the Confederate Congress. In the aftermath of the Union rout at Bull Run on July 21, Greeley sent this letter to President Lincoln. There is no record that Lincoln ever replied to it, but in April 1864 he would retrieve the letter and show it to his secretaries John Hay and John G. Nicolay. Hay, who called the letter "the most insane specimen of pusillanimity that I have ever read," wrote in his diary that when Nicolay suggested Greeley's rival James Bennett of the New York *Herald* would willingly pay \$10,000 for a copy, Lincoln replied: "I need \$10,000 very much but he could not have it for many times that."

New York, Monday, July 29, 1861.
Midnight.

Dear Sir:

This is my seventh sleepless night—yours too, doubtless—yet I think I shall not die, because I have no right to die. I must struggle to live, however, bitterly. But to business.

You are not considered a great man, and I am a hopelessly broken one. You are now undergoing a terrible ordeal, and God has thrown the gravest responsibility upon you. Do not fear to meet them.

Can the Rebels be beaten after all that has occurred, and in view of the actual state of feeling caused by our late awful disaster? If they can—and it is your business to ascertain and decide—write me that such is your judgment, so that I may know and do my duty.

And if they *cannot* be beaten—if our recent disaster is fatal—do not fear to sacrifice yourself to your country. If the Rebels are not to be beaten—if that is your judgment in view of all the light you can get—then every drop of blood henceforth shed in this quarrel will be wantonly, wickedly shed, and

the guilt will rest heavily on the soul of every promoter of the crime. I pray you to decide quickly, and let me know my duty.

If the Union is irrevocably gone, an Armistice for thirty, sixty, ninety, 120 days—better still, for a year—ought at once to be proposed with a view to a peaceful adjustment. Then Congress should call a National convention to meet at the earliest possible day. And there should be an immediate and mutual exchange or release of prisoners and a disbandment of forces.

I do not consider myself at present a judge of any thing but the public sentiment. That seems to me every where gathering and deepening against a prosecution of the war. The gloom in this city is funereal for our dead at Bull Run were many, and they lie unburied yet. On every brow sits sullen, scowling, black despair.

It would be easy to have Mr. Crittenden move any proposition that ought to be adopted, or to have it come from any proper quarter. The first point is to ascertain what is best that can be done—which is the measure of our duty—and do that very thing at the earliest moment.

This letter is written in the strictest confidence, and is for your eye alone. But you are at liberty to say to members of your Cabinet that you *know* I will second any move you may see fit to make. But do nothing timidly nor by halves.

Send me word what to do. I will live till I can hear it at all events. If it is best for the country and for mankind that we make peace with the Rebels at once and on their own terms, do not shrink even from that. But bear in mind the greatest truth—"Whoso would lose his life for my sake shall save it," do the thing that is the highest right, and tell me how I am to second you.

Yours, in the depths of bitterness,
Horace Greeley

A CONFEDERATE SERMON:
GEORGIA, NOVEMBER 1861

Henry Tucker: from God in the War

November 15, 1861

Tucker, a Baptist minister, delivered this sermon before the Georgia legislature in the state capitol at Milledgeville.

SERMON.

“Come behold the works of the Lord, what desolations He hath made in the earth.

He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; He burneth the chariot in the fire.”

PSALMS XLVI, 8, 9.

Desolation! Desolation! Thousands of our young men have been murdered. Thousands of fathers and mothers among us have been bereaved of their sons. Thousands of widows are left disconsolate and heart-broken, to struggle through life alone. The wail of thousands of orphans is heard through the land, the Ægis of a father's protection being removed from over their defenceless heads. Thousands of brave men are at this moment lying on beds of languishing, some prostrated by the diseases incident to the army and camp, and some by cruel wounds. Every house within reach of the seat of war is a hospital, and every hospital is crowded. Huge warehouses emptied of their merchandize, and churches, and great barns, are filled with long rows of pallets beside each other, containing each a sufferer, pale, emaciated and ghastly. Some writhe with pain; some rage with delirium; some waste with fever; some speak of *home*, and drop bitter tears at the recollection of wives soon to be widows, and babes soon to be fatherless. The nurse hurries with noiseless step, ministering from bedside to bedside. The

pious chaplain whispers of Jesus to the dying. The surgeon is in frightful practice, bloody though beneficent; and as his knife glides through the quivering flesh and his saw grates through the bone and tears through the marrow, the suppressed groan bears witness to the anguish. A father stands by perhaps, to see his son mutilated. Mother and wife and sisters at home witness the scene by a dreadful clairvoyance, and with them the operation lasts not for moments but for weeks. Every groan in the hospital or tent, or on the bloody field, wakes echoes at home. There is not a city, nor village, nor hamlet, nor neighborhood that has not its representatives in the army, and scarcely a heart in our whole Confederacy that is not either bruised by strokes already fallen, or pained by a solicitude scarcely less dreadful than the reality. Desolation! Desolation! Hearts desolate, homes desolate, the whole land desolate! Our young men, our brave young men, our future statesmen, and scholars and divines, to whom we should bequeath this great though youthful empire with all its destinies; the flower of our society,—contributions from that genuine and proper aristocracy which consists of intelligence and virtue,—thousands, thousands of them laid upon the altar! And alas! the end is not yet. Another six months may more than double the desolation. Relentless winter may aid the enemy in his work of death. The youth accustomed at home to shelter, and bed, and fire, and all the comforts of high civilization, standing guard on wintry night, exposed to freezing rain and pealing blasts, and having completed his doleful task, retiring to his tent, to lie upon the bare ground, in clothes encrusted with ice, may not falter in *spirit* in view of his hardships; the fires of patriotism may still keep up the warmth at his heart; when he remembers that he is fighting for the honor of his father, and for the purity of his mother and sisters, and for all that is worth having in the world, he may cheerfully brave the terrors of a winter campaign; but though his soul be undaunted, his body will fail. Next spring when the daisies begin to blow, thousands of little hillocks dotted all over the country on mountain side and in valley, marked at each end with a rough memorial stone, and a brief and rude inscription made perhaps with the point of a bayonet, will silently but ah! how impressively, confirm the sad prophecy of this hour. Thus the work of desolation may go on winter after winter, until the

malice of our foes is satiated, and until our young men are all gone. But let us not anticipate. The present alone presents subjects of contemplation, enough to fill the imagination and to break the heart.

These are the desolations of war. Do you ask why I present this sad, this melancholy picture? Why I make this heart-rending recital of woes enough to make heaven weep? In so doing I am but following the example of the Psalmist when he says, "Come behold the works of the Lord, what *desolations* He hath made in the earth!" If in the midst of victory when the God of Israel had given success to the arms of his people, their leader and king called upon them to forget their successes and meditate on the desolations of war, it must be right for the man of God now, to call upon his countrymen in the midst of a series of victories such as perhaps were never won in a war before, to forget their triumphs, and contemplate for a little the expense of life and of sorrow which those triumphs have cost.

Come then my countrymen, and behold the desolation. What emotion does it excite? What passion does it stimulate? To what action does it prompt? Indignation at the fanaticism, folly and sin of those who brought it all about. Rage at the authors of our ruin. Retaliation! To arms! To arms! Let us kill! Let us destroy! Let us exterminate the miscreants from the earth! Up with the black flag! They deserve no quarter! They alone are to blame for this horror of horrors. We had no hand in bringing it on. We asked for nothing but our rights. Our desire was for peace. They tormented us without cause while we were with them. What we cherish as a heaven-ordained institution they denounce as the "sum of all villainies." They regarded us as worse than heathen and pirates; they degraded us from all equality; they spurned us from all fellowship; they taught their children to hate us; their ministers of religion chased us like bloodhounds, actually putting weapons of death in the hands of their agents with instructions to murder us. They made a hero and a martyr of him, who at Harper's Ferry openly avowed his design, to enact over in all our land the horrid scenes of St. Domingo,—thus by the popular voice dooming us to death and our wives and daughters to worse than death; and when after these outrages, we sought no retaliation

but besought them to let us go in peace, they still clutched us with frantic grasp, in order to filch away our substance, and reduce us to a bondage more degrading than that which they affect to pity in the negro.

“CIVIL AND MILITARY POLICY”:
VIRGINIA, JULY 1862

George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln

George B. McClellan, the commander of the Army of the Potomac, wrote to Lincoln from his headquarters outside Richmond on June 20, 1862, offering to share his views “as to the present state of military affairs throughout the whole country.” The President replied affirmatively the next day, but events soon intervened. In the Seven Days’ Battles, June 25–July 1, Robert E. Lee drove McClellan away from the Confederate capital and made him retreat to Harrison’s Landing on the James River. When Lincoln visited McClellan and his army on July 8, the general handed him this letter. The President read it without comment.

(Confidential) Head Quarters, Army of the Potomac
Mr President Camp near Harrison’s Landing, Va. July 7th 1862
You have been fully informed, that the Rebel army is in our front, with the purpose of overwhelming us by attacking our positions or reducing us by blocking our river communications. I can not but regard our condition as critical and I earnestly desire, in view of possible contingencies, to lay before your Excellency, for your private consideration, my general views concerning the existing state of the rebellion; although they do not strictly relate to the situation of this Army or strictly come within the scope of my official duties. These views amount to convictions and are deeply impressed upon my mind and heart.

Our cause must never be abandoned; it is the cause of free institutions and self government. The Constitution and the Union must be preserved, whatever may be the cost in time, treasure and blood. If secession is successful, other dissolutions are clearly to be seen in the future. Let neither military disaster, political faction or foreign war shake your settled purpose to enforce the equal operation of the laws of the United States upon the people of every state.

The time has come when the Government must determine

upon a civil and military policy, covering the whole ground of our national trouble. The responsibility of determining, declaring and supporting such civil and military policy and of directing the whole course of national affairs in regard to the rebellion, must now be assumed and exercised by you or our cause will be lost. The Constitution gives you power sufficient even for the present terrible exigency.

This rebellion has assumed the character of a War; as such it should be regarded; and it should be conducted upon the highest principles known to Christian Civilization. It should not be a War looking to the subjugation of the people of any state, in any event. It should not be, at all, a War upon population; but against armed forces and political organizations. Neither confiscation of property, political executions of persons, territorial organization of states or forcible abolition of slavery should be contemplated for a moment. In prosecuting the War, all private property and unarmed persons should be strictly protected; subject only to the necessities of military operations. All private property taken for military use should be paid or receipted for; pillage and waste should be treated as high crimes; all unnecessary trespass sternly prohibited; and offensive demeanor by the military towards citizens promptly rebuked. Military arrests should not be tolerated, except in places where active hostilities exist; and oaths not required by enactments—Constitutionally made—should be neither demanded nor received. Military government should be confined to the preservation of public order and the protection of political rights.

Military power should not be allowed to interfere with the relations of servitude, either by supporting or impairing the authority of the master; except for repressing disorder as in other cases. Slaves contraband under the Act of Congress, seeking military protection, should receive it. The right of the Government to appropriate permanently to its own service claims to slave labor should be asserted and the right of the owner to compensation therefor should be recognized. This principle might be extended upon grounds of military necessity and security to all the slaves within a particular state; thus working manumission in such state—and in Missouri, perhaps in Western Virginia also and possibly even in Maryland the

expediency of such a military measure is only a question of time. A system of policy thus constitutional and conservative, and pervaded by the influences of Christianity and freedom, would receive the support of almost all truly loyal men, would deeply impress the rebel masses and all foreign nations, and it might be humbly hoped that it would commend itself to the favor of the Almighty. Unless the principles governing the further conduct of our struggle shall be made known and approved, the effort to obtain requisite forces will be almost hopeless. A declaration of radical views, especially upon slavery, will rapidly disintegrate our present Armies.

The policy of the Government must be supported by concentrations of military power. The national forces should not be dispersed in expeditions, posts of occupation and numerous Armies; but should be mainly collected into masses and brought to bear upon the Armies of the Confederate States; those Armies thoroughly defeated, the political structure which they support would soon cease to exist.

In carrying out any system of policy which you may form, you will require a Commander in Chief of the Army; one who possesses your confidence, understands your views and who is competent to execute your orders by directing the military forces of the Nation to the accomplishment of the objects by you proposed. I do not ask that place for myself. I am willing to serve you in such position as you may assign me and I will do so as faithfully as ever subordinate served superior.

I may be on the brink of eternity and as I hope forgiveness from my maker I have written this letter with sincerity towards you and from love for my country.

Very respectfully your obdt svt
Geo B McClellan
Maj Genl Comdg

His Excellency A Lincoln
Presdt U.S.

SAVING THE GOVERNMENT:
WASHINGTON, D.C., JULY 1862

Abraham Lincoln to Cuthbert Bullitt

Cuthbert Bullitt and Thomas J. Durant, whose letter Bullitt forwarded to the President, were Louisiana unionists. Lincoln replied to Bullitt six days after he read a draft of the preliminary emancipation proclamation to the cabinet. At the meeting on July 22 Lincoln had decided to wait for a Union military victory before issuing the proclamation.

PRIVATE

Cuthbert Bullitt Esq
New Orleans La.

Washington D.C.
July 28. 1862

Sir: The copy of a letter addressed to yourself by Mr. Thomas J. Durant, has been shown to me. The writer appears to be an able, a dispassionate, and an entirely sincere man. The first part of the letter is devoted to an effort to show that the Secession Ordinance of Louisiana was adopted against the will of a majority of the people. This is probably true; and in that fact may be found some instruction. Why did they allow the Ordinance to go into effect? Why did they not assert themselves? Why stand passive and allow themselves to be trodden down by a minority? Why did they not hold popular meetings, and have a convention of their own, to express and enforce the true sentiment of the state? If preorganization was against them *then*, why not do this *now*, that the United States Army is present to protect them? The paralysis—the dead palsy—of the government in this whole struggle is, that this class of men will do nothing for the government, nothing for themselves, except demanding that the government shall not strike its open enemies, lest they be struck by accident!

Mr. Durant complains that in various ways the relation of master and slave is disturbed by the presence of our Army; and he considers it particularly vexatious that this, in part, is done under cover of an act of Congress, while constitutional guaranties are suspended on the plea of military necessity. The

truth is, that what is done, and omitted, about slaves, is done and omitted on the same military necessity. It is a military necessity to have men and money; and we can get neither, in sufficient numbers, or amounts, if we keep from, or drive from, our lines, slaves coming to them. Mr. Durant cannot be ignorant of the pressure in this direction; nor of my efforts to hold it within bounds till he, and such as he shall have time to help themselves.

I am not posted to speak understandingly on all the police regulations of which Mr. Durant complains. If experience shows any one of them to be wrong, let them be set right. I think I can perceive, in the freedom of trade, which Mr. Durant urges, that he would relieve both friends and enemies from the pressure of the blockade. By this he would serve the enemy more effectively than the enemy is able to serve himself. I do not say or believe that to serve the enemy is the purpose of Mr. Durant; or that he is conscious of any purpose, other than national and patriotic ones. Still, if there were a class of men who, having no choice of sides in the contest, were anxious only to have quiet and comfort for themselves while it rages, and to fall in with the victorious side at the end of it, without loss to themselves, their advice as to the mode of conducting the contest would be precisely such as his is. He speaks of no duty—apparently thinks of none—resting upon Union men. He even thinks it injurious to the Union cause that they should be restrained in trade and passage without taking sides. They are to touch neither a sail nor a pump, but to be merely passengers,—dead-heads at that—to be carried snug and dry, throughout the storm, and safely landed right side up. Nay, more; even a mutineer is to go untouched lest these sacred passengers receive an accidental wound.

Of course the rebellion will never be suppressed in Louisiana, if the professed Union men there will neither help to do it, nor permit the government to do it without their help.

Now, I think the true remedy is very different from what is suggested by Mr. Durant. It does not lie in rounding the rough angles of the war, but in removing the necessity for the war. The people of Louisiana who wish protection to person and property, have but to reach forth their hands and take it. Let them, in good faith, reinaugurate the national authority,

and set up a State Government conforming thereto under the constitution. They know how to do it, and can have the protection of the Army while doing it. The Army will be withdrawn so soon as such State government can dispense with its presence; and the people of the State can then upon the old Constitutional terms, govern themselves to their own liking. This is very simple and easy.

If they will not do this, if they prefer to hazard all for the sake of destroying the government, it is for them to consider whether it is probable I will surrender the government to save them from losing all. If they decline what I suggest, you scarcely need to ask what I will do. What would you do in my position? Would you drop the war where it is? Or, would you prosecute it in future, with elder-stalk squirts, charged with rose water? Would you deal lighter blows rather than heavier ones? Would you give up the contest, leaving any available means unapplied.

I am in no boastful mood. I shall not do *more* than I can, and I shall do *all* I can to save the government, which is my sworn duty as well as my personal inclination. I shall do nothing in malice. What I deal with is too vast for malicious dealing. Yours truly

A. LINCOLN

SLAVERY AND THE LAWS OF WAR:
TENNESSEE, AUGUST 1862

William T. Sherman to Thomas Hunton

In July 1862 William T. Sherman became the Union commander at Memphis. Hunton, a West Point classmate of Sherman and owner of a Mississippi plantation, wrote to him, citing their old school ties, to ask for the return of several slaves who had fled to the Union camps. He told Sherman that he was willing to come to Memphis himself, but only if he did not have to take the oath of allegiance.

Memphis Tenn. Aug. 24th 1862

Thomas Hunton Esq.
Coahoma, Panolo Co. Miss.
My dear Sir,

I freely admit that when you recall the times when we were schoolfellows, when we were younger than now, you touch me on a tender point, and cause me to deeply regret that even you should style yourself a Rebel. I cannot believe that Tom Hunton the Companion of Gaither, Rankin, and Irvin and many others long since dead, and of Halleck, Ord, Stevens and others still living can of his own free will admit the anarchical principle of secession or be vain enough to suppose the present Politicians can frame a Government better than that of Washington, Hamilton & Jefferson. We cannot realize this but delude ourselves into the belief that by some strange but successful jugglery the managers of our Political Machine have raised up the single issue, North or South, which shall prevail in America? or that you like others have been blown up, and cast into the Mississippi of Secession doubtful if by hard fighting you can reach the shore in safety, or drift out to the Ocean of Death, I know it is no use for us now to discuss this War is on us. We are Enemies, still private friends. In the one Capacity I will do you all the harm I can, yet on the other if here you may have as of old my last Cent, my last shirt and pants. You ask of me your negroes, and I will immediately ascertain if they be

under my Military Control and I will moreover see that they are one and all told what is true of all—Boys if you want to go to your master, Go—you are free to choose. You must now think for yourselves, Your master has seceded from his Parent Government and you have seceded from him—both wrong by law—but both exercising an undoubted natural Right to rebel. If your boys want to go, I will enable them to go, but I wont advise, persuade or force them—I confess I have yet seen the “Confiscation Act,” but I enclose you my own orders defining my position. I also cut out of a paper Grants Orders, and I assert that the Action of all our Leading Military Leaders, Halleck, McClellan, Buell, Grant & myself have been more conservative of slavery than the Acts of your own men. The Constitution of the United States is your only legal title to slavery. You have another title, that of possession, & force, but in Law & Logic your title to your Boys lay in the Constitution of the United States. You may say you are for the Constitution of the United States, as it was—You know it is unchanged, not a word not a syllable, and I can lay my hand on that Constitution and swear to it without one twang. But your party have made *another* and have another in force. How can you say that you would have the old, when you have a new. By the new if successful you inherit the Right of Slavery, but the new is not law till your Revolution is successful. Therefore we who contend for the old existing Law, contend that you by your own act take away your own title to all property save what is restricted by *our* constitution, your slaves included. You know I don’t want your slaves, but to bring you to reason I think as a Military Man I have a Right and it is good policy to make *you all* feel that you are but men—that you have all the wants & dependencies of other men, and must eat, be clad &c to which end you must have property & labor, and that by Rebelling you risk both. Even without the Confiscation Act, by the simple laws of War we ought to take your effective slaves, I don’t say to free them, but to use their labor & deprive you of it; as Belligerents we ought to seek the hostile Army and fight it and not the people—We went to Corinth but Beauregard declined Battle, since which time many are dispersed as Guerillas. We are not bound to follow them, but rightfully make war by any means that will tend to bring about an end and restore

Peace. Your people may say it only exasperates, widens the breach and all that, But the longer the war lasts the more you must be convinced that we are no better & no worse than People who have gone before us, and that we are simply reenacting History, and that one of the modes of bringing People to reason is to touch their Interests pecuniary or property.

We never harbor women or children—we give employment to men, under the enclosed order. I find no negroes Registered as belonging to Hunton, some in the name of McGhee of which the Engineer is now making a list—I see McClellan says that negroes once taken shall never again be restored. I say nothing, my opinion is, we execute not make the Law, be it of Congress or War. But it is manifest that if you wont go into a United States District Court and sue for the recovery of your slave property you can never get it, out of adverse hands. No U.S. Court would allow you to sue for the recovery of a slave under the Fugitive Slave Law, unless you acknowledge allegiance. Believing this honestly, so I must act, though personally I feel strong friendship as ever, for very many in the South. With Great Respect Your friend

W. T. Sherman
Maj. Genl.

Biographical Notes

Jefferson Davis (June 3, 1808–December 6, 1889) Born in Christian (now Todd) County, Kentucky, the son of a farmer. Moved with his family to Mississippi. Graduated from West Point in 1828 and served in the Black Hawk War. Resigned his commission in 1835 and married Sarah Knox Taylor, who died later in the year. Became a cotton planter in Warren County, Mississippi. Married Varina Howell in 1845. Elected to Congress as a Democrat and served 1845–46, then resigned to command a Mississippi volunteer regiment in Mexico, 1846–47, where he fought at Monterrey and was wounded at Buena Vista. Elected to the Senate and served from 1847 to 1851, when he resigned to run unsuccessfully for governor. Secretary of war in the cabinet of Franklin Pierce, 1853–57. Elected to the Senate and served from 1857 to January 21, 1861, when he withdrew following the secession of Mississippi. Inaugurated as provisional president of the Confederate States of America on February 18, 1861. Elected without opposition to six-year term in November 1861 and inaugurated on February 22, 1862. Captured by Union cavalry near Irwinville, Georgia, on May 10, 1865. Imprisoned at Fort Monroe, Virginia, and indicted for treason. Released on bail on May 13, 1867; the indictment was dropped in 1869 without trial. Published *The Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government* in 1881. Died in New Orleans.

Frederick Douglass (February 1818–February 20, 1895) Born Frederick Bailey in Talbot County, Maryland, the son of a slave mother and an unknown white man. Worked on farms and in Baltimore shipyards. Escaped to Philadelphia in 1838. Married Anna Murray, a free woman from Maryland, and settled in New Bedford, Massachusetts, where he took the name Douglass. Became a lecturer for the American Anti-Slavery Society, led by William Lloyd Garrison, in 1841. Published *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave* (1845). Began publishing *North Star*, first in a series of anti-slavery newspapers, in Rochester, New York, in 1847. Broke with Garrison and became an ally of Gerrit Smith, who advocated an antislavery interpretation of the Constitution and participation in electoral politics. Published *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855). Advocated emancipation and the enlistment of black soldiers at the outbreak of the Civil War. Met with Abraham Lincoln in Washington in August 1863 and August 1864, and wrote public letter supporting his

reelection in September 1864. Continued his advocacy of racial equality and woman's rights after the Civil War. Served as U.S. marshal for the District of Columbia, 1877–81, and as its recorder of deeds, 1881–86. Published *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass* (1881). After the death of his wife Anna, married Helen Pitts in 1884. Served as minister to Haiti, 1889–91. Died in Washington, D.C.

Ulysses S. Grant (April 22, 1822–July 23, 1885) Born in Point Pleasant, Ohio, the son of a tanner. Graduated from West Point in 1843. Served in the U.S.-Mexican War, 1846–48, and promoted to first lieutenant in 1847. Married Julia Dent in 1848. Promoted to captain, 1854, and resigned commission. Worked as a farmer, real estate agent, and general store clerk, 1854–61. Commissioned colonel, 21st Illinois Volunteers, June 1861, and brigadier general of volunteers, August 1861. Promoted major general of volunteers, February 1862, after victories at Forts Henry and Donelson. Defeated Confederates at Shiloh, April 1862, and captured Vicksburg, Mississippi, July 1863. Promoted to major general in the regular army, July 1863, and assigned to command of Military Division of the Mississippi, covering territory between the Alleghenies and the Mississippi, October 1863. Won Battle of Chattanooga, November 1863. Promoted lieutenant general, March 1864, and named general-in-chief of the Union armies. Accepted surrender of Robert E. Lee at Appomattox Court House, April 9, 1865. Promoted to general, July 1866. Served as secretary of war ad interim, August 1867–January 1868. Nominated for president by the Republican Party in 1868. Defeated Democrat Horatio Seymour, and won reelection in 1872 by defeating Liberal Republican Horace Greeley. President of the United States, 1869–77. Made world tour, 1877–79. Failed to win Republican presidential nomination, 1880. Worked on Wall Street, 1881–84, and was financially ruined when private banking firm of Grant & Ward collapsed. Wrote *Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant*, 1884–85, while suffering from throat cancer, and completed them days before his death at Mount McGregor, New York.

Horace Greeley (February 3, 1811–November 29, 1872) Born in Amherst, New Hampshire, the son of a farmer. Learned printing trade in Vermont, upstate New York, and Pennsylvania. Moved to New York City in 1831. Founded and edited weekly *New Yorker*, 1834–41. Married Mary Cheney in 1836. Edited Whig campaign newspapers *Jeffersonian*, 1838, and *Log Cabin*, 1840. Founded *New York Tribune*, 1841, and used it to advocate for social reforms and anti-slavery positions. Served in Congress, 1848–49. Active in Whig and Republican politics. Nominated for president by the Liberal Republicans and the Democrats in 1872, but was defeated by Ulysses S. Grant. Died in New York City.

Charles C. Jones Sr. (December 20, 1804–March 16, 1863) Born in Liberty County, Georgia, the son of a plantation owner. Educated at Phillips Andover Academy, Andover Theological Seminary, and Princeton Theological Seminary. Married first cousin Mary Jones in 1830. Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, Savannah, 1831–32. Returned to Liberty County, where he owned three plantations. Taught at Columbia Theological Seminary, South Carolina, 1837–38 and 1848–50. Published *Catechism of Scripture Doctrine and Practice* (1837) and *The Religious Instruction of the Negroes of the United States* (1842). Lived in Philadelphia, 1850–53, while serving as the corresponding secretary of the board of domestic missions of the Presbyterian Church. Died in Liberty County.

Abraham Lincoln (February 12, 1809–April 15, 1865) Born near Hodgenville, Kentucky, the son of a farmer and carpenter. Family moved to Indiana in 1816 and to Illinois in 1830. Settled in New Salem, Illinois, and worked as a storekeeper, surveyor, and postmaster. Served as a Whig in the state legislature, 1834–41. Began law practice in 1836 and moved to Springfield in 1837. Married Mary Todd in 1842. Elected to Congress as a Whig and served from 1847 to 1849. Became a public opponent of the extension of slavery after the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854. Helped found the Republican Party of Illinois in 1856. Campaigned in 1858 for Senate seat held by Stephen A. Douglas and debated him seven times on the slavery issue; although the Illinois legislature reelected Douglas, the campaign brought Lincoln national prominence. Received Republican presidential nomination in 1860 and won election in a four-way contest; his victory led to the secession of seven Southern states. Responded to the Confederate bombardment of Fort Sumter by calling up militia, proclaiming the blockade of Southern ports, and suspending habeas corpus. Issued preliminary and final emancipation proclamations on September 22, 1862, and January 1, 1863. Appointed Ulysses S. Grant commander of all Union forces in March 1864. Won reelection in 1864 by defeating Democrat George B. McClellan. Died in Washington, D.C., after being shot by John Wilkes Booth.

George B. McClellan (December 3, 1826–October 29, 1885) Born in Philadelphia, the son of a surgeon. Graduated from West Point in 1846. Served in the U.S.-Mexican War. Resigned from the army in 1857 to become chief engineer of the Illinois Central Railroad. Became president of the Ohio & Mississippi Railroad in 1860. Married Ellen Marcy, 1860. Appointed major general in the regular army, May 1861. Commanded offensive that drove Confederate troops from western Virginia, July 1861. Assumed command of the Military

Division of the Potomac on July 25, 1861, following the Union defeat at First Bull Run. Served as general-in-chief of the Union armies, November 1861–March 1862. Commanded the Army of the Potomac on the Peninsula, in the Second Bull Run campaign, and at Antietam. Relieved of command by President Lincoln on November 7, 1862. Nominated for president by the Democratic Party in 1864, but was defeated by Lincoln. Governor of New Jersey, 1878–81. Died in Orange, New Jersey.

William T. Sherman (February 8, 1820–February 14, 1891) Born in Lancaster, Ohio, the son of an attorney. Graduated from West Point in 1840. Served in Florida and California, but did not see action in the U.S.-Mexican War. Married Ellen Ewing in 1850. Promoted to captain; resigned his commission in 1853. Managed bank branch in San Francisco, 1853–57. Moved in 1858 to Leavenworth, Kansas, where he worked in real estate and was admitted to the bar. Named first superintendent of the Louisiana State Seminary of Learning and Military Academy at Alexandria (now Louisiana State University) in 1859. Resigned position when Louisiana seceded in January 1861. Commissioned colonel, 13th U.S. Infantry, May 1861. Commanded brigade at First Bull Run, July 1861. Appointed brigadier general of volunteers, August 1861, and ordered to Kentucky. Assumed command of the Department of the Cumberland, October 1861, but was relieved in November at his own request. Returned to field in March 1862 and commanded division under Ulysses S. Grant at Shiloh. Promoted major general of volunteers, May 1862. Commanded corps under Grant during Vicksburg campaign, and succeeded him as commander of the Army of the Tennessee, October 1863, and as commander of the Military Division of the Mississippi, March 1864. Captured Atlanta, September 1864, and led march through Georgia, November–December 1864. Marched army through the Carolinas and accepted the surrender of Confederate General Joseph E. Johnston at Durham Station, North Carolina, April 26, 1865. Promoted to lieutenant general, 1866, and general, 1869, when he became commander of the army. Published controversial memoirs (1875, revised 1886). Retired from army in 1884 and moved to New York City. Rejected possible Republican presidential nomination, 1884. Died in New York City.

Henry Tucker (May 10, 1819–September 9, 1889) Born in Warren County, Georgia. Educated at the University of Pennsylvania and Columbian College (George Washington University). Admitted to the Georgia bar in 1846. Married Mary Catherine West in 1848; after her death, married Sarah O. Stevens in 1853. Ordained as a Baptist minister in 1851 and became pastor of a Baptist church in Alexandria,

Virginia, 1854. Professor of literature and metaphysics at Mercer University in Penfield, Georgia, 1856–62. Opposed secession initially, but supported the Confederacy during the war; organized the Georgia Relief and Hospital Association to care for sick and wounded soldiers. Served as president of Mercer University, 1866–71, and as chancellor of the University of Georgia, 1874–78. Editor of the *Christian Index*, 1878–89. Died in Atlanta.

Henry A. Wise (December 3, 1806–September 12, 1876) Born in Drummondstown, Accomack County, Virginia, the son of a lawyer. Graduated from Washington College in Pennsylvania, 1825. Married Ann Jennings in 1828; after her death, he married Sarah Sergeant in 1840. Began legal practice in Accomack County, 1830. Served in Congress, 1833–44, and as U.S. minister to Brazil, 1844–47. Governor of Virginia, 1856–60. Supported secession in the Virginia convention, 1861. Appointed brigadier general in the Confederate army, 1861, and served until the end of the war in Virginia and the Carolinas. Resumed legal career. Died in Richmond.

Chronology, 1860–1865

- 1860 Republican candidate Abraham Lincoln wins presidential election, November 6, defeating Stephen Douglas (Northern Democratic), John C. Breckinridge (Southern Democratic), and John Bell (Constitutional Union). Lincoln receives 180 out of 303 electoral votes, all of them from free states. South Carolina convention votes to secede from the Union, December 20.
- 1861 Conventions in Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas vote to secede, January 9–February 1. Delegates meet in Montgomery, Alabama, and elect Jefferson Davis provisional president of the Confederate States of America, February 8. Lincoln is inaugurated, March 4. Confederates open fire on Fort Sumter in Charleston, South Carolina, April 12. Lincoln calls forth 75,000 militia, April 15. Virginia votes to secede, April 17. Lincoln proclaims blockade of southern ports, April 19. Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina join the Confederacy, May 6–20. Confederates win battle of Manassas (Bull Run) in Virginia, July 21. Davis is elected without opposition to six-year term, November 6.
- 1862 Ulysses S. Grant captures Fort Donelson, Tennessee, February 16. Confederate defeat at Pea Ridge in northwestern Arkansas, March 7–8, secures Union control of Missouri. Grant wins battle of Shiloh in southeastern Tennessee, April 6–7. Union navy captures New Orleans, April 25. Robert E. Lee defeats Union army outside of Richmond, Virginia, June 25–July 1, and wins second battle of Manassas, August 28–30. Battle of Antietam, September 17, ends Lee’s invasion of Maryland. Lincoln issues preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, September 22, to take effect in all territory still in rebellion on January 1, 1863. Battle of Perryville, October 8, ends Confederate invasion of Kentucky. Lee defeats Union army at Fredericksburg, Virginia, December 13. Battle of Stones River (Murfreesboro) begins in central Tennessee, December 31.

- 1863 Lincoln issues Emancipation Proclamation, January 1, freeing all slaves in Confederate-held territory and authorizing enlistment of blacks in the Union army. Battle of Stones River ends, January 2, with Confederate retreat. Grant crosses Mississippi River, April 30, beginning campaign to take Vicksburg. Lee defeats Union army in Virginia in battle of Chancellorsville, May 1–4. Grant begins siege of Vicksburg, May 22. Lee is defeated at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, July 1–3. Confederate army at Vicksburg surrenders to Grant, July 4. Victory at Port Hudson, Louisiana, July 9, gives Union control of entire Mississippi River. Confederates win battle of Chickamauga in northern Georgia, September 19–20, and besiege Union army in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Lincoln gives address at Gettysburg, November 19. Grant defeats Confederates at Chattanooga, November 23–25.
- 1864 Grant is named commander of the Union armies, March 10, and begins spring campaign in Virginia, May 4. Lee and Grant fight battle of the Wilderness, May 5–6. William T. Sherman begins Union campaign in northern Georgia, May 7. Grant and Lee fight at Spotsylvania, May 8–20, and Cold Harbor, May 31–June 12, as Union army moves closer to Richmond. After crossing James River, Grant attacks Petersburg, Virginia, June 15–18, then begins prolonged siege. Sherman captures Atlanta, September 2. Lincoln defeats Democratic candidate General George B. McClellan, November 8, winning 212 of 233 electoral votes. Sherman leaves Atlanta, November 16, and begins march through Georgia. Union victory at Nashville, December 15–16, ends Confederate invasion of Tennessee. Sherman occupies Savannah, December 21.
- 1865 Congress proposes Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution abolishing slavery, January 31. Sherman begins march through the Carolinas, February 1. Lincoln delivers his Second Inaugural Address, March 4. Sherman reaches Goldsboro, North Carolina, March 23. Grant assaults Confederate lines at Petersburg, April 2, forcing evacuation of Richmond. Lee surrenders to Grant at Appomattox Court House, Virginia, April 9. Lincoln is shot, April 14, and dies, April 15; Vice President Andrew Johnson becomes president. Remaining Confederate armies surrender, April 26–May 26. Ratification

of the Thirteenth Amendment is declared, December 18. At least 360,000 Union soldiers, 260,000 Confederate soldiers, and 50,000 civilians were killed or died from disease, hunger, and exposure during the war.

Questions for Discussion

1. Judging from the editorial in the *Pittsburgh Post*, a Democratic paper that had supported Stephen Douglas in the election of 1860, how did news from Fort Sumter affect northern Democrats? How does the paper view the sectional conflict now that war has begun?
2. The participant testimony gathered here suggests that many Americans, North and South, approached the secession crisis with well-developed preconceptions of the causes of the conflict, and whom to blame for it. How do Charles C. Jones Sr. and Ulysses S. Grant perceive the reasons for going to war? What do their different ways of construing the war's causes say about how they understand the war's meaning? What, for Jones, is the religious significance of the conflict?
3. In his April 29, 1861, message to the Confederate Congress, Jefferson Davis reviews the origins and history of the American states and the federal union, and President Lincoln's role in bringing about secession. What does he identify as the "lamentable and fundamental error on which rests the policy that has culminated in [Lincoln's] declaration of war against these Confederate States"? How, according to Davis, did Lincoln's election threaten slavery in the South? How does he characterize slavery?
4. Both Frederick Douglass and Henry A. Wise greet the coming of war with energy and enthusiasm. What do they view as the cause of the war? Do they share a vision of the war as a transformative event?
5. How does Abraham Lincoln's July 4, 1861, message to Congress challenge Davis's April 29 address? Why, for him, is the war "essentially a People's contest"? How persuasive is his argument that secession was a threat to democratic government?
6. On July 21, 1861, Union forces suffered a humiliating defeat at Bull Run, the war's first major battle. What does Horace Greeley's reaction say about expectations for the war in the North? How, by contrast, would you characterize Henry Tucker's expectations? Why do Tucker, Davis, and Jones seem to share a common sense of the South as victim?

7. How does Union General George B. McClellan propose that the war should be fought? What does Lincoln's response to Cuthbert Bullitt suggest about how he received McClellan's views?
8. How does William T. Sherman justify the Union army's interference with slavery? How is his view of the war shaped by his sense of history?
9. How does reading these firsthand accounts affect your sense of the purpose and meaning of the war? Does it change how you understand the role of individuals—their words and actions—in historical events? What are the differences between exploring the war through participant accounts and reading a historical narrative of the same events?
10. What did you find most surprising or unexpected about these writings?
11. Choosing one of the pieces, what do you think was the author's purpose for writing it? Do you think it achieves its purpose? How might the act of writing it have helped the author to make sense of his or her experience of the Civil War?
12. How are the experiences of the Civil War reflected in the language, tone, attitude, and style of the writing?