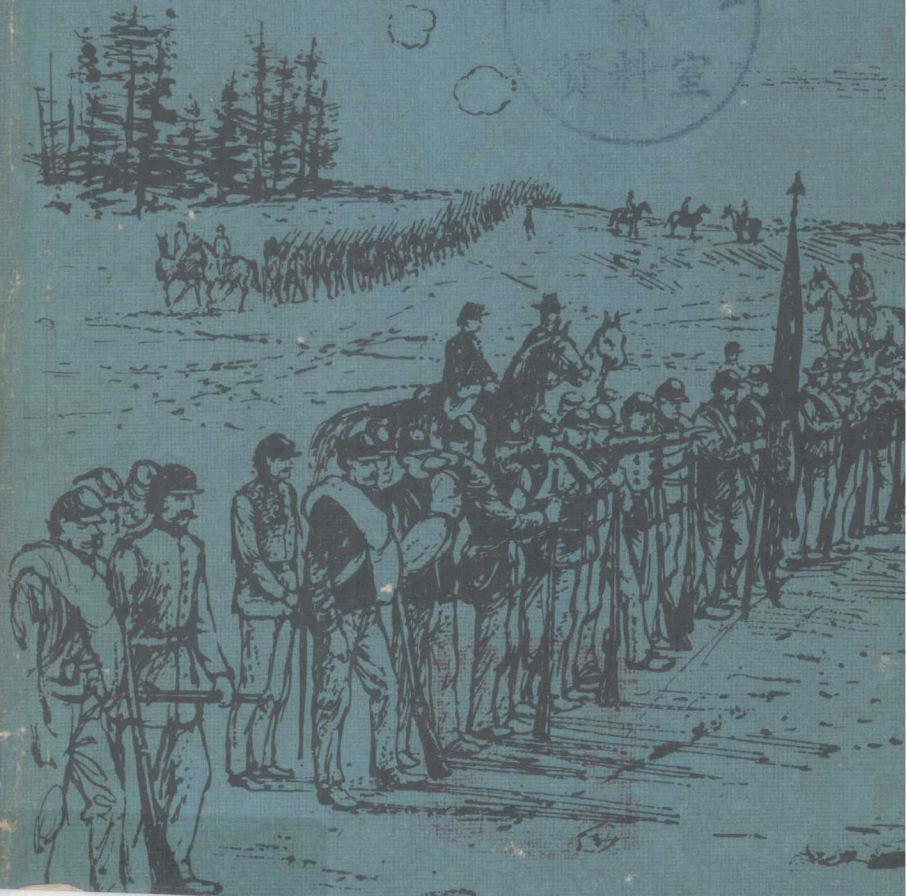


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The American Civil War

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A. H. Allt



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GENERAL EDITOR

MARJORIE REEVES, M.A., Ph.D.

外语系



The American Civil War

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A. H. ALLT, M.A.

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TO THE READER

DURING the sixteenth century many groups of people from England crossed the Atlantic Ocean to settle on the coast of North America. Each group had its own land where it formed a colony, ruled by a Governor sent out by the King of England. These colonists chose men to represent them in their colonial *Assemblies*.¹ In 1783, after a war with Britain, the American colonies became separate countries, or states, making all their laws in their own Assemblies, now called *Legislatures*. But soon it became clear that it was better for these thirteen states to work together in some things, so they formed a new country, called the United States. The head of this new country was a President elected by the people; the states and the people were represented in a Parliament, called *Congress*. Laws made by this Congress were to be obeyed by the people of all the states. But the states still elected their own Governors, and kept their Legislatures. It was agreed that Congress should pass laws about important things affecting everybody, like regulating foreign trade; that it should decide on making war, and of course it should control the army and navy, of which the President was supreme commander. Laws about things which were not mentioned, like business, marriage and education were to go on being made by the states themselves. In Britain, Parliament makes the laws for everybody, but allows counties to arrange for small, local matters. In a *Federal government* like the United States has, the states only

¹ You will find the meaning of words printed like *this* in the Glossary on page 96.

allow Congress to make laws about certain particular things.

In the nineteenth century many settlers moved from the coastal states into the land, or *territories*, to the west. When there were enough settlers in any area they could form a new state and unite with the rest on the same terms. These people, especially those in the north, were very proud of the unity and strength of their new country and wanted it to be a success. In the poor log cabins of two such families, barely 100 miles apart, two boys were born within a year of each other (1808-9). The one, Jefferson Davis, moved south-west to Mississippi, which became a state in 1818. The other, Abraham Lincoln, went north-west, to Illinois, which entered the Union in 1819. Both boys grew to be leaders in their states. Soon after their fifty-second birthdays a civil war broke out among the states. Davis led one side and Lincoln the other. This book tells you something of what happened.

You will find a list of states on each side on page 17 and a list of prominent leaders on each side on page vi.

Prominent leaders on each side

GENERALS IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY

Ambrose B. BURNSIDE	Ulysses S. GRANT	John POPE
Daniel BUTTERFIELD	Joseph HOOKER	Philip H. SHERIDAN
Joshua L. CHAMBER- LAIN	George B. McCLELLAN	William T. SHERMAN
George A. CUSTER	George G. MEADE	George H. THOMAS

ADMIRALS IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY

John A. B. DAHLGREN	Andrew H. FOOTE
David G. FARRAGUT	David D. PORTER



Abraham LINCOLN, President of the United States (1861-1865)
Andrew JOHNSON, President of the United States (1865-1869)
Edwin M. STANTON, U.S. Secretary of War
Gideon WELLES, U.S. Secretary of the Navy

GENERALS IN THE CONFEDERATE STATES ARMY

Lewis ARMISTEAD	Ambrose P. HILL	Joseph E. JOHNSTON
Pierre G. T. BEAU- REGARD	Daniel H. HILL	Robert E. LEE
Braxton BRAGG	John B. HOOD	James LONGSTREET
Jubal A. EARLY	Thomas J. JACKSON	George E. PICKETT
John B. GORDON	Albert S. JOHNSTON	James E. B. STUART

ADMIRAL IN THE CONFEDERATE STATES NAVY

Raphael SEMMES, commander of the *Alabama*



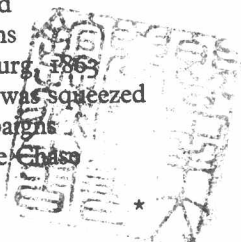
Jefferson DAVIS, President of the Confederate States (1861-1865)

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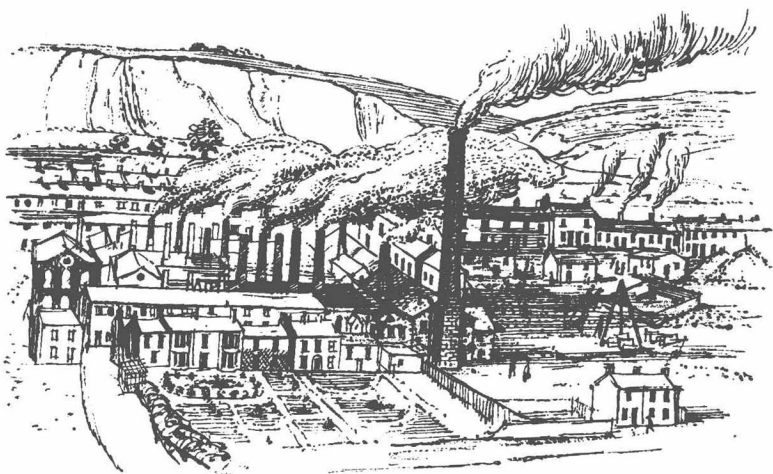
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WHY THE WAR CAME

THE United States is a very big country, and we get a better idea of its size if we think of it as compared with Europe, rather than with Great Britain. If we leave out Russia, the area of Europe is less than that of the United States and its territories as they were in 1865. The states themselves are more like the countries of Europe: the area of the United Kingdom is less than that of Oregon; England and Wales are together smaller than Georgia or Michigan. The climate of Wisconsin is like that of Scandinavia, Louisiana is like the south of France, and the states of New England in the north-east are very like our England. There are great differences in the way people live, the things they grow, and what is important to them, in the various states.

In the period before the Civil War these differences in ways of life became more clearly marked. In New England there were busy factories making iron and cloth, where four million people worked by 1860. The seaport towns harboured five million tons of shipping, nearly the size of Britain's merchant navy. Two-thirds of the country's money was found in the north-east, and New York was a big banking centre. Business men built comfortable homes modelled on European ones, with thick stone walls and imposing fronts; less wealthy people built good wooden ones. Charles Dickens described in the suburbs of Boston: "The white wooden houses (so white that it makes one



A New England Mill town

wink to look at them) . . . and the small churches and chapels are so prim and bright and highly varnished . . . ” while “The city is a beautiful one, and cannot fail, I should imagine, to impress all strangers very favourably. The private houses are, for the most part, large and elegant; the shops extremely good; and the public buildings handsome.” Similarly New York, with its high buildings and glittering shop windows, and Philadelphia with its big squares, broad shady streets and red-brick houses, were much admired by visitors. There were indeed slum areas near the docks and factories, but the general impression was one of bustle and prosperity. In the countryside were rich farmlands, with log-rail fences, big barns and neat wooden farmhouses. The farmer and his family worked in the fields, helped by a hired man or two, who would hope to move out west later and settle on land of their own.

In the South, by contrast, tobacco and cotton were

grown on big plantations worked by slave labour. Some of these were very big, of 10,000 acres with 1,000 slaves. These estates provided most of their needs themselves. A visitor described one in Mississippi: "The mansion house was four miles from the nearest neighbour. There were 1,400 acres *tilled* by a plough-gang of thirty men, and a larger hoe-gang of women, all slaves, of whom there were 135 altogether. These included three mechanics, two *seamstresses*, four *teamsters*, and two nurses. The owner was often away and a white *overseer* was in charge; he kept a pack of hounds to hunt runaways. The slaves worked from sunrise to sunset, with week-ends usually free, when they could tend vegetables and chicken on their own allotments, or cut wood." There was much for the mistress to do in managing the servants, looking after sick negroes and running the home.

There were only a few hundred big plantations in the South, but their owners set the fashion for the rest, which



A southern cotton plantation



A big plantation house in South Carolina

would include “little one-horse cotton plantations”, as Mark Twain called them, with less than six slaves. But such properties produced half the total cotton crop. The owner of one of these might have been an overseer, or the younger son of a wealthy family, and his standard of living was usually below that of a comparable farmer in the North. Even so, less than 350,000 out of the six million white southerners owned slaves. There were many poor whites who scratched a living from bad soil—the ‘clay-eaters’, ‘mud-sills’, or ‘piney woods folk’, as they were sometimes called. These had little in common with rich planters except their colour, felt themselves despised, and thought that any change could only be for the better.

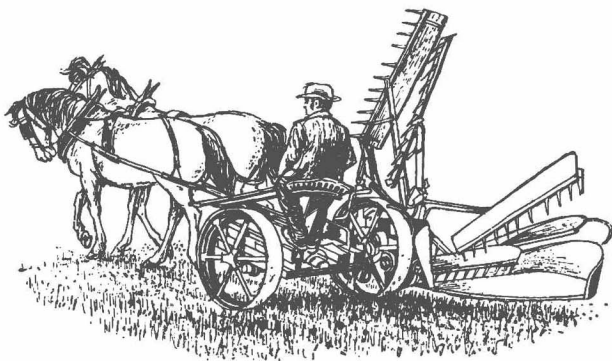
Both northern and southern landowners had their eyes on the new lands to the west. Canals, river steamers and railways had all helped to open them up for settlers. The government made it more and more easy to buy land and

work it. But the life was often tragic. One of Lincoln's friends recalled: "Just as our corn was ripe, the bears would strip the ears; just as the *pumpkins* grew golden, herds of deer would hollow out the *gourds*." An English settler wrote home: "I am just building a cottage on our land, and enclosing a few acres round it. It was a solitude two months ago when we explored the country, and now there are twenty families settled or intending to settle about us; probably many more." They would build log cabins like this one. Across the Mississippi thousands of



Building a log cabin

wagons pushed westwards in spite of the dangers of starvation and thirst, through Indian territory, to the gold-fields of California or the forests of Oregon. Many were refugees from Europe who poured into the prairies seeking a new life and land of their own. A new reaping machine invented by McCormick helped them, and 100,000 of these new reapers were in use in 1860. Enormous quantities of grain were sent to the east by rail, or down the river by



McCormick's improved reaper (1850)

steamboat. All these farmers were against the idea of big slave estates coming to the territories.

These differences in outlook led to arguments about what laws should be passed. The northern manufacturers wanted customs duties put on foreign goods which they could make. The southern planters traded cotton with Europe and wanted free importation of goods. As the population of the North grew, the South feared that it would always be outvoted in Congress. When vast new areas of land were taken from Mexico in 1848, the case for the South looked hopeless. In 1850 it was agreed that the settlers there should choose for themselves between freedom or slavery. In return the North undertook to return all slaves who escaped from the South. In New England this roused strong objections, while in South Carolina it was felt to be better to leave the *Union* at once before the North got any stronger. But most states were content to agree to this *compromise*. Unhappily a series of events increased distrust between North and South.

In 1854 the Territory of Kansas was opened for settlement by pioneers. They were to choose between slave or

free cultivation. But it was a border area. The map inside the front cover will help you to understand the significance of this. Both North and South sent men, money, arms and ammunition to secure it for their own side. Events in 'Bleeding Kansas' kept the matter constantly in the public eye, while tempers rose. A new party—the Republicans—was formed to stop the spread of slavery in the territories; Abraham Lincoln became one of its leaders. At this time Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote her book, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, about the wrongs of slavery and this became a best seller. Years afterwards President Lincoln said to her: "So you're the little woman who wrote the book that made this great war." Two years later a slave called Anthony Burns escaped to Boston and was caught there. So many local people felt sorry for him that the police, the state troops, the U.S. Army and Navy were called in to make sure he was sent back to his master. As a result many northern states passed laws defying the Fugitive Slave Act, by which the North had promised to return escaped slaves. In 1857 the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court gave a judgment openly favouring slavery, and next year the whole country eagerly followed the debates on slavery between Lincoln and Douglas, rival candidates in the Illinois elections for the *Senate*.

Most spectacular of all was John Brown's raid on the *arsenal* at Harper's Ferry in Virginia. John Brown had lived in Kansas, where he and his sons had fought bitterly against settlers who wanted slavery. Now he determined on a bold plan to make war on slavery with a group of whites and fugitive slaves, from the mountains of Virginia. As a first step, with thirteen whites and five negroes, he captured the store of arms and ammunition at Harper's Ferry on the night of the 16th October 1859. When the



Douglas and Lincoln in the Illinois election campaign (1858)

local *militia* arrived he retreated to an engine-house and there withstood a siege for two days before Colonel Robert E. Lee and a company of marines took it. He was convicted of murder, conspiracy and treason, and hanged on 2nd December. Although government officials and politicians repudiated his action, many northerners thought he was a martyr in a sacred cause. "That new saint", said Emerson, "will make the gallows glorious like the cross." You probably know the song with its chorus:

John Brown's body lies a-mouldering in the grave
But his soul goes marching on!

Within eighteen months it was sung by northern armies marching into Virginia.

The South now felt its worst fears realized. If the new Republican party won the elections, and its candidate, Abraham Lincoln, became President of the United

States, then indeed the North would triumph. The country was now widely split: the Democrat party, the churches, societies, even families, were divided on the slavery question and all that was bound up with it. When Lincoln's election as President was announced in November 1860 several southern states decided to leave the Union and form another country. Starting with South Carolina in December, seven states had left the Union within nine weeks. It was now no longer a question of slavery alone, but the far more serious one of whether the states should remain united. Was the South free to go? Or would the newly elected government force it to remain in the Union against its will? There were good arguments for each case. All depended on the attitude of the new President from the West, who took his oath of office on the 4th March 1861.



Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States 1861-1865

HOW THE WAR CAME

No President of the United States has ever had to face such a crisis as Lincoln did at his *Inauguration* on 4th March 1861. Seven states had left the Union, formed a separate country called the Confederate States of America, and set up a government under their own President, Jefferson Davis. This had been done in the four months after the election. Efforts at reconciliation had failed, largely because the extremists on both sides had overruled any compromise suggested by men from border states, who realized that if war came, it would be fought on their soil. At the election Lincoln's opponents had together polled a million more votes than he had; he had not a single southern vote, and in the North the opposing party, called Democrats had run him a close race. Of the states still loyal to the Union, eight permitted slavery, and thus had many people who sympathized with the South. He must therefore get support from the northern Democrats and keep the doubtful border states in the Union. "He would like God on his side" remarked a politician, "but he must have Kentucky." Map 2 on page 16 shows you why this was an important border state. He had to assert the authority of his government, yet wished to leave the door open for the southern states to return if a settlement could be reached. Above all he must give a firm lead to the country after the powerlessness of Buchanan, the retiring President, whose government had been seriously weakened by the southerners in his cabinet.