

ABRAHAM LINCOLN – The Presidential Years (part 2)

Secession

Following Abe's election, the state of South Carolina seceded from the Union on December 20, 1860. Florida, Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama, Texas, and Georgia would secede in the following weeks. These states formed the Confederate States of America (CSA) and declared themselves an independent nation. Upon entering office, Abe was faced with the most pressing crisis in the history of the young nation.

Abe's road to the White House was not easy either. According to some accounts, he had to ride through Baltimore on a secret train in disguise to evade would-be assassins on his way to inauguration in Washington. After Abe's inauguration, the Confederacy continued to mobilize. It elected Jefferson Davis as president and set up its capital headquarters in Montgomery, Alabama. War was imminent.

War Begins

As war approached, President Lincoln sent provisions to American forts that were now in Confederate territory, including Fort Sumter, near Charleston Harbor, South Carolina. Secessionists in South Carolina considered this an act of war and began bombarding the fort on April 12, 1861. Union forces at Fort Sumter surrendered and thus, the American Civil War began. On April 15, Abe requested the mobilization of 75,000 troops from the states for the purposes of "preserving the Union." In the following days, North Carolina, Tennessee, Arkansas, and Virginia seceded from the Union, refusing to mobilize against their Southern neighbors. The secession of Virginia, one of the most populous states in the country, was a major prize for the Confederacy. To reward it, the Confederate capital was moved from Montgomery, Alabama, to Richmond, Virginia.

Managing the War

As Union troops descended from Massachusetts to the nation's capital, pro-secession residents of Baltimore, Maryland, attacked Union soldiers and destroyed railroads linking Washington to the North. In response, President Lincoln suspended the writ of habeas corpus in Maryland, allowing the government to arrest suspected perpetrators and keep them in jail indefinitely without a trial or conviction. He also authorized the blockades of Southern ports. During this difficult time, Abe was also suffering depression likely caused by the stresses of the war, the death of his son Willie, and the increasingly erratic behavior of his mourning wife.

Later in 1861, Abe endured an embarrassing and potentially dangerous episode when the British ship *Trent* was intercepted by the Union Navy in the Atlantic Ocean. Two Confederate agents on their way to England and France were seized and brought back to America as prisoners. Although the American public was in full support of the illegal seizure, England considered it an act of war. Eventually, Lincoln was compelled to release the Confederate agents to avert the British threat. Despite the demands of England, however, Abe never issued a formal apology, and hostilities between England and America died.

Abe had other things to worry about as well. Union forces had been routed in the war's first major battle at Manassas, just thirty miles west of Washington. This was a major blow to the morale of the North, which underestimated the resolve and fight of the Confederacy. After the devastation at Manassas, Abe realized the war would not end any time soon. Throughout 1861 and much of 1862, Abe became dissatisfied with the progress of the war and turned his attention to leadership in the major branch of the Union Army, the Army of the Potomac. Early in 1862, Lincoln replaced War Secretary Simon Cameron with Edwin M. Stanton. Stanton would prove an excellent choice. His tireless work effort and superb managerial skills helped organize the massive military efforts of the Union.

1.) Which of the following states did not secede from the Union?

- a.) Florida
- b.) New York
- c.) Alabama
- d.) Mississippi

2.) Why did Abraham Lincoln ride through Baltimore in disguise?

- a.) There was no military support for him in Baltimore.
- b.) There were supposedly assassins waiting for his train in Baltimore.
- c.) He needed to get to Washington quickly.
- d.) He was afraid of large crowds.

3.) What does "imminent" mean in the following paragraph?

After Abe's inauguration, the Confederacy continued to mobilize. It elected Jefferson Davis as president and set up its capital headquarters in Montgomery, Alabama. War was imminent.

- a.) unlikely
- b.) definite
- c.) likely
- d.) possible

4.) When did the Civil War begin?

- a.) When the Southern states seceded
- b.) When Lincoln had to ride through Baltimore in disguise
- c.) At Lincoln's inauguration
- d.) When Fort Sumter was bombarded by the Confederacy

5.) Why did North Carolina, Tennessee, Arkansas, and Virginia secede?

- a.) They opposed slavery.
- b.) They refused to fight other Southern states.
- c.) There was no way out for those states.
- d.) They were angry about the bombardment of Fort Sumter.

6.) Which of the following was NOT true about Baltimore, Maryland?

- a.) Lincoln had to ride through the city in disguise to evade would-be assassins.
- b.) The city was full of pro-secessionists.
- c.) Baltimore was blockaded by the Union Navy.
- d.) Residents of the city attacked Massachusetts troops on their way to the Union capital, Washington.

7.) Which of the following is a GOOD example of the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus?

- a.) Prisoners in jail get new trials.
- b.) Prisoners who were previously in jail are released.
- c.) Nobody can be arrested.
- d.) People become prisoners without a trial if they are suspected of committing crimes.

8.) Which of the following WAS NOT a reason why President Lincoln was likely suffering from depression?

- a.) His wife was in mourning.
- b.) He was embarrassed by what happened in Baltimore.
- c.) His son died.
- d.) The war was very stressful.

9.) Why was England so angry about the seizure of the Confederate agents aboard the *Trent*?

- a.) President Lincoln refused to apologize to them.
- b.) It started a war between England and France.
- c.) President Lincoln was unpopular in England.
- d.) They thought the Union did not have the right to seize agents traveling to their country on their boat.

10.) What did the Battle of Manassas prove?

- a.) The North would win the war.
- b.) The war would not be short.
- c.) The war would not be long.
- d.) The South would win the war.