

# 1) The North, the South, Slavery, & Sectionalism

## Advanced



Regional differences had existed between the North and South since before the founding of the United States in 1776. The Southern climate and geography was well suited for large-scale plantation agriculture, which required a large workforce for the intensive work required by cash crops like cotton. In contrast, Northern farms were smaller and focused on free labor. As a result, slavery had grown in the South while slowly being phased out, and eventually abolished, in the North.

By the 1850s, sectional tensions had increased dramatically as the United States expanded westward into new territories gained after the U.S.-Mexico War. Northerners and Southerners engaged in increasingly heated debates over whether the new territories in the West should

allow or prohibit slavery. This was a politically significant debate because each new state would have two senators and at least one representative in the U.S. Congress. If new territories joined as slave states, that would give the South more power in the government, while if they joined as free states, the North would have more power.

When an anti-slavery Northerner named Abraham Lincoln was elected president of the United States on November 6, 1860, Southern states began seceding from the Union to form their own country in order to protect their right to maintain slavery. Five months later, Southern troops fired on Union troops at Fort Sumter, South Carolina, beginning four years of the deadliest fighting in American history – the Civil War.

# 2) Secession & the Confederate States of America

## Advanced



South Carolina was the first state to secede from the Union on December 20, 1860. Other Southern states quickly followed suit, holding their own secession conventions beginning in January 1861.

As states like Mississippi, Florida, and Alabama each voted to secede from the Union, people across Texas began calling for their own secession convention. By 1861, Texas' population was primarily composed of people who had migrated to Texas from other Southern states. Additionally, Texas' economy was based on plantation agriculture growing cotton with the use of slave labor. As a result, Texas was deeply connected to the South. Like other Southern states, many in Texas believed it was in their best interest to secede from the United States and join forces with the other Southern slave states.

Sam Houston, who was governor of Texas in 1861, supported slavery and states' rights, but adamantly opposed secession. He attempted to persuade his fellow Texans that secession would lead to a violent war with the North and devastation for the South.

Houston was unsuccessful in his attempts, however, and on February 1, 1861, Texans at a special secession convention voted 166 to 8 in favor of secession. The convention then voted to join the Confederate States of America and required all officers of the state to swear an oath of loyalty to the Confederacy. When Governor Sam Houston refused to take the oath, he was removed from office. Only sixteen years after annexation, Texas was no longer part of the United States.

### 3) The Civil War Across the United States

#### Advanced



Most major battles of the Civil War took place far from Texas in eastern states like Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania. Some Texans participated in the Eastern Theater of the war. A Texas Lieutenant General named John Bell Hood led the famous “Hood’s Brigade” in several significant battles in the east including the battles of Gettysburg, Antietam, and Fredericksburg.

While Hood’s Brigade played an integral role in the battles in the east, the majority of Texans who fought in the war served in the Western Theater in states like Kentucky, Tennessee, and Mississippi. The Eighth Texas Cavalry, known as Terry’s Texas Rangers, took part in significant battles including

Shiloh and Murfreesboro in Tennessee, and Chickamauga, Georgia, in the Western Theater.

Some Texans also took part in military actions in the Trans-Mississippi Theater in Louisiana, Texas, and New Mexico, though very few battles occurred in this theater of the war. Texans successfully defended their state’s eastern border at the Battle of Sabine Pass and fought the Union at Texas’ most significant port at Galveston.

Approximately 60,000 to 70,000 Texans served in the Civil War, primarily in the Confederate army. Texas’ distant location from the majority of the fighting allowed the state to avoid much of the destruction and economic disruption that other Southern states experienced during the war.

### 4) The Civil War in Texas

#### Advanced



Compared to the Eastern Theater of the war, very little military action took place in Texas during the Civil War. Union military force was focused on states like Virginia where the fighting was heaviest. The Union made a few attempts at military actions in Texas but had little success so far from the majority of its army and supply lines.

Early in the war in 1861 and 1862, the Union unsuccessfully attempted to capture Corpus Christi, and later briefly occupied Galveston in October 1862, until Texan forces retook the valuable port city three months later and held it for the rest of the war. Texas forces also successfully defended the state’s eastern border against an attempted Union invasion at Fort Griffin at the Battle of Sabine Pass in April 1863.

Also in 1863, the Union attempted to disrupt Confederate trade routes from Texas to the rest of

the South in an event known as the “Texas Overland Expedition,” however, again the Union was unsuccessful. Then in 1864, the Union briefly occupied the lower Rio Grande at Brownsville and Matagorda Island before vacating the area to focus on New Orleans instead.

Conflict between the Union and the Confederate forces were not the only instances of violence in Texas during the Civil War. Several violent events occurred as a result of Confederate hostility to Texas Unionists during the war. From August to October 1862, Confederates attacked and killed thirty-six German Unionists who were attempting to flee to Mexico. Then in October 1862, forty-two people in Gainesville were accused of Unionist activity and executed in north Texas.

## 5) The Texas Homefront

### Advanced



The great distance separating Texas from the majority of battles allowed the state to play a unique role in the Civil War. While most Southern states in the east experienced economic disruptions due to battles fought on their farmlands, Texas was able to keep producing important crops like cotton and corn which were used to feed and clothe Confederate soldiers and help finance the war effort. Additionally, the Union blockade of Southern ports prevented most Southern states from taking part in trade and shipping. However, Texas was able to get around the Union blockade by transporting its goods across the Rio Grande where Mexican ports could ship out valuable Texas cotton and corn.

Texas prisoners at state prisons like Huntsville made cloth for Confederate uniforms, and Texas slaves were forced to work fortifying the Texas

coastline and building prisoner-of-war camps, like Camp Ford which held captured Union POWs.

In the absence of the United States army patrolling the state's western frontier, Texans in the west volunteered for frontier patrols to protect Anglo settlements from American Indian raids. Meanwhile, the Texas government worked to establish and maintain treaties with Indian tribes like the Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Cherokee.

Texas women and families managed their homes, businesses, and farms while many men were away at war, while many families in other Southern states fled to Texas to escape the violence of the war. Refugees from across the South poured into Texas, often bringing their slaves with them to prevent the enslaved people from seeking their own refuge with the Union armies that passed through southern towns.

## 6) The End of the Civil War

### Advanced



After four years of brutal fighting, the Civil War ended when the Confederate army under General Robert E. Lee officially surrendered at Appomattox, Virginia on April 9, 1865. Some military leaders in Texas initially refused to accept the surrender, taking part in one final battle at Palmito Ranch on May 12, 1865, despite the fact that the war had ended a month earlier.

The Civil War caused massive loss of life for both the North and the South; more than 750,000 Americans died in the war, including nearly 15,000 Texans. Many Southern states, especially in the east, had been devastated by the war, with land, property, and even entire cities destroyed.

In 1863, Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, freeing the enslaved people in the rebelling states. When the war ended two years later, the Confederate States of America ceased to exist, and the federal government was finally able to enforce the emancipation of the slaves. The U.S. army occupied the Southern states and enforced the Emancipation Proclamation, ensuring the freedom of Black Southerners.

On June 19, 1865, U.S. troops landed in Galveston and officially announced the freedom of Black Texans. This date has come to be known and celebrated as Juneteenth. The United States was changed forever as a result of the Civil War, and now, the country faced the challenging task of how to heal and move forward.