The Civil War – Create A Living Timeline

Overview
Students will learn about the Civil War through a living timeline activity highlighting the major events occurring, from the 1861 attack on Fort Sumter to the 1865 assassination of President Lincoln. In partners, students will be assigned a particular event to research then develop and will then present a creative three-minute presentation teaching classmates about the significance and impact of their assigned topic. As either an introductory overview of prominent Civil War events, or as a culminating project at the end of a Civil War unit, this activity allows for brief but detailed examination of a very complicated period of history.

Grade
8

North Carolina Essential Standards
• 8.H.2.1 - Explain the impact of economic, political, social, and military conflicts (e.g. war, slavery, states’ rights and citizenship and immigration policies) on the development of North Carolina and the United States.
• 8.H.2.2 - Summarize how leadership and citizen actions (e.g. the founding fathers, the Regulators, the Greensboro Four, and participants of the Wilmington Race Riots, 1898) influenced the outcome of key conflicts in North Carolina and the United States.
• 8.H.2.3 - Summarize the role of debate, compromise, and negotiation during significant periods in the history of North Carolina and the United States.
• 8.E.1.1 - Explain how conflict, cooperation, and competition influenced periods of economic growth and decline (e.g. economic depressions and recessions).
• 8.C&G.1.4 - Analyze access to democratic rights and freedoms among various groups in North Carolina and the United States (e.g. enslaved people, women, wage earners, landless farmers, American Indians, African Americans and other ethnic groups).

Materials
• Civil War Living Timeline Assignment, attached
• Living Timeline Worksheet, attached
• Civil War Living Timeline- Assignment Strips, attached
• Access to research materials (computers with Internet, books, library, etc.)

Essential Questions
• What were the major events that took place during the Civil War?
• What impact did such events have on the war and on the country?

Duration
• 2 or more class periods
  o 1 class period for introduction of assignment and initial student research/work is needed
  o Additional class and/or homework time will be needed for completion of Living Timeline
  o 1 class period will be needed for presentation and discussion of the Living Timeline
**Student Preparation**

Students should have a basic understanding of the period of Southern secession and Civil War. See the Consortium’s “To Secede or Not to Secede: Events Leading to the Civil War,” available in the Database of Civic Resources.

**Procedure**

**Warm Up: A Confederate Constitution**

1. As a warm-up, project or write he following paragraph up front and ask students to silently read and ponder it for a few minutes:
   - We, the people of the Confederate States, each State acting in its sovereign and independent character, in order to form a permanent federal government, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity invoking the favor and guidance of Almighty God do ordain and establish this Constitution for the Confederate States of America.

   **Discuss:**
   - Does this paragraph sound familiar to you? Explain.
   - While it may sound familiar, does any word or phrase strike you as different? Explain.
   - What document do you think this paragraph might be from? What evidence makes you think this?

2. Explain to students that when the Southern states seceded from the Union, they believed that they no longer fell under the law as set forth in the Constitution of the United States, since they no longer acknowledged that they were part of the United States. Thus, the Confederate States of America had to create their own laws and Constitution. On March 11, 1861, the Constitution of the Confederate States of America became the supreme law of the Confederate States of America, and was in effect for the seceded states through the conclusion of the Civil War. This Preamble to the Confederate Constitution, as well as the remainder of the Confederate Constitution, was very similar to the US Constitution, but did contain some major differences in tone and legal content. Ask students to infer what they believe some of those differences may have been, then share a few:
   - The elastic clause in the preamble ("to promote the general welfare") and the powers of congress in Article I section viii ("to provide . . . for the general welfare") are both absent, reflecting the confederate founders' wariness of a growing and too powerful federal government. The words "invoking the favor and guidance of Almighty God" are added to the Confederate Constitution.
   - Amended Article 1, Sec. 1, Clause 1 prohibited persons "of foreign birth" who were "not a citizen of the Confederate States" from voting "for any officer, civil or political, State or Federal." This was likely a safety mechanism the Confederates used to prevent U.S. citizens from moving into the Confederacy and installing pro-union or anti-slavery representatives into the Confederate government.
   - Something students may find surprising is that despite some opposition, the international slave trade was banned in the Confederacy, as it had been in the U.S. Constitution. Delegates feared that European governments would not recognize the Confederate States of America if it did not prohibit the international trade. The international slave trade was ironically distasteful to many slave owners. Prohibition of foreign slave trade also protected the substantial domestic slave trade in Virginia and Maryland, who had yet to join the CSA.
   - The Confederate Constitution deemed that a bill, or any resolution carrying the force of law, could only deal with a single subject, which had to be stated in the title. (Perhaps the Confederates needed things to be a bit more simple to understand them?)
   - Likely the most unsurprising change to the Confederate Constitution dealt with slavery in America. Whereas the US Constitution did not even use the word “slavery,” but rather used the phrase "Person[s] held to Service or Labour," which included whites in indentured servitude, the Confederate Constitution addressed the legality of slavery directly and by name, stating: “No bill of attainder, ex
post facto law, or law denying or impairing the right of property in negro slaves shall be passed [by Congress]"

Create a Living Timeline of the Civil War

3. Tell students that they will be exploring the events that took place after the Southern states seceded by creating a “living timeline” of the Civil War years. Explain to students that working with a partner, they will each be assigned a prominent event that took place during the Civil War years and that they will work to prepare a 3 minute dramatic presentation that will teach the remainder of class about this event. Starting with the 1861 attack on Fort Sumter, and ending with the assassination of President Lincoln, each set of partners will come to the room and present in chronological order, thus creating a “living timeline” of Civil War events.

4. Hand out the attached assignment sheet and go over it in detail with students. Teachers should determine whether to assign or allow students to choose their partners and topics. (Depending on class size, some of the attached Civil War event assignment strips may need to be eliminated, or others can be created.) Also, let students know how much class time and homework time they will have to complete the assignment and when their performance date is. (Teachers who are short on time can simplify the project, removing the mention of costumes and props, and have the class be prepared to present the very next day.)

Presentation of Living Timeline

5. On the day students are to present, begin by reviewing the expectations of respectful audience members and provide each student with the attached timeline handout. Instruct students to fill in the various dates, events, and most important details they learn during each presentation. To ensure students are getting the information that they need regarding each event and its significance, teachers should take a few moments to pose discussion questions after each presentation.

6. Let students know that you will call them up to the front in chronological order and that they should begin by freezing themselves in a particular stance. After a few beats they will then unfreeze and present. Once finished, they should refreeze, which will signal the class that they are done. Teachers can then facilitate a brief discussion regarding key points and call the next set of partners up to repeat the process. Continually remind the class to fill out their timeline worksheets throughout.

7. Once students understand the process for presentations, to set the stage before performances begin, briefly review Southern secession with students. (Teachers may even want to dress up themselves, and present this as a dramatic introduction to the timeline.)

- “When Abraham Lincoln, a known opponent of slavery, was elected president, the South Carolina legislature perceived a threat. Calling a state convention, the delegates voted to remove the state of South Carolina from the union known as the United States of America. The secession of South Carolina was followed by the secession of six more states — Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas — and the threat of secession by four more — Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina. These eleven states eventually formed the Confederate States of America.” (Source: http://www.timelineindex.com/content/view/235)
- In February 1861, the South created a government. “At a convention in Montgomery, Alabama, the seven seceding states created the Confederate Constitution, a document similar to the United States Constitution, but with greater stress on the autonomy of each state. Jefferson Davis was named provisional president of the Confederacy until elections could be held. When President Buchanan -- Lincoln’s predecessor -- refused to surrender southern federal forts to the seceding states, southern state troops seized them. At Fort Sumter, South Carolina troops repulsed a supply ship trying to reach federal forces based in the fort. The ship was forced to return to New York, its supplies undelivered.
• At Lincoln's inauguration on March 4, the new president said he had no plans to end slavery in those states where it already existed, but he also said he would not accept secession. He hoped to resolve the national crisis without warfare.” (Source: http://rs6.loc.gov/ammem/cwphtml/ti1861.html)

8. Begin the living timeline presentations, calling the Fort Sumter students to the front of the room and then continuing in the following order. Let students know that obviously, there were numerous battles and events that took place throughout the harsh years of war, and that their presentations only highlight some of the most prominent events. Located amidst the presentation topics below are brief snippets of information regarding other events that took place, should teachers want to share this information with students as well.

Time Line Presentation Order and Additional Information

• **April 1861 - Attack on Fort Sumter Presentation**
  o Additional information to share with students:
    ▪ The attack on Fort Sumter prompted four more states to join the Confederacy. With Virginia’s secession, Richmond was named the Confederate capitol.
    ▪ In June 1861, West Virginia was created. Residents of the western counties of Virginia did not wish to secede along with the rest of the state. This section of Virginia was admitted into the Union as the state of West Virginia on June 20, 1863.
    ▪ Despite their acceptance of slavery, Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, and Missouri did not join the Confederacy. Although divided in their loyalties, a combination of political maneuvering and Union military pressure kept these states from seceding.

• **July 1861 - First Battle of Bull Run Presentation**
  o Additional information to share with students:
    ▪ On November 7, 1861, U.S. Captain Samuel F. Dupont’s warships silenced Confederate guns in Fort Walker and Fort Beauregard. This victory enabled General Thomas W. Sherman’s troops to occupy first Port Royal and then all the famous Sea Islands of South Carolina.
    ▪ On January 27, 1862, President Lincoln issued a war order authorizing the Union to launch a unified aggressive action against the Confederacy. General McClellan ignored the order.
    ▪ On March 8, President Lincoln — impatient with General McClellan’s inactivity — issued an order reorganizing the Army of Virginia and relieving McClellan of supreme command. McClellan was given command of the Army of the Potomac, and ordered to attack Richmond. This marked the beginning of the Peninsular Campaign.
    ▪ In an attempt to reduce the North’s great naval advantage, Confederate engineers converted a scuttled Union frigate, the U.S.S. Merrimac, into an iron-sided vessel rechristened the C.S.S. Virginia. On March 9, in the first naval engagement between ironclad ships, the Monitor fought the Virginia to a draw, but not before the Virginia had sunk two wooden Union warships off Norfolk, Virginia. (Battle of the “Monitor” and the “Merrimac”)

• **April 1862 - The Battle of Shiloh Presentation**
  o Additional information to share with students:
    ▪ U.S. General Quincy A. Gillmore battered Fort Pulaski, the imposing masonry structure near the mouth of the Savannah River, into submission in less than two days, (April 10-11, 1862).
    ▪ In New Orleans, U.S. Flag Officer David Farragut led an assault up the Mississippi River. By April 25, he was in command of New Orleans.
    ▪ In April, General McClellan’s troops left northern Virginia to begin the Peninsular Campaign. By May 4, they occupied Yorktown, Virginia. At Williamsburg, Confederate forces prevented McClellan from meeting the main part of the Confederate army, and McClellan halted his troops, awaiting reinforcements.
    ▪ In May 1862, Confederate General Thomas J. “Stonewall” Jackson, commanding forces in the Shenandoah Valley, attacked Union forces in late March, forcing them to retreat across the Potomac. As a result, Union troops were rushed to protect Washington, D.C.
- On May 31, the Confederate army attacked federal forces at Seven Pines, almost defeating them; last-minute reinforcements saved the Union from a serious defeat. Confederate commander Joseph E. Johnston was severely wounded, and command of the C.S. Army of Northern Virginia fell to Robert E. Lee.
- **July 1862 - The Seven Days’ Battles Presentation**
  - Additional information to share with students:
    - Union General John Pope suffered defeated at the Second Battle of Bull Run on August 29-30. General Fitz-John Porter was held responsible for the defeat because he had failed to commit his troops to battle quickly enough; he was forced out of the army by 1863.
    - Union General McClellan defeated Confederate General Lee at South Mountain and Crampton’s Gap in September, but did not move quickly enough to save Harper’s Ferry, which fell to Confederate General Jackson on September 15, along with a great number of men and a large body of supplies.
- **September 1862 – Antietam Presentation**
- **December 1862 - The Battle of Fredericksburg Presentation**
- **January 1863 - Emancipation Proclamation Presentation**
- **March 1863 - The First Conscription Act & Draft Riots Presentation**
  - Additional information to share with students:
    - In late April/May of 1863, in the Battle of Chancellorsville, Union General Hooker crossed the Rappahannock River to attack General Lee’s forces. Lee split his army, attacking a surprised Union army in three places and almost completely defeating them. Hooker withdrew across the Rappahannock River, giving the South a victory, but it was the Confederates’ most costly victory in terms of casualties.
- **May 1863 The Vicksburg Campaign Presentation**
- **June-July 1863 - The Gettysburg Campaign Presentation**
- **September - December 1863 - The Battle of Chickamauga. The Battle of Chattanooga. & The Siege of Knoxville Presentation**
  - Additional information to share with students:
    - General Grant, promoted to commander of the Union armies, planned to engage Lee’s forces in Virginia until they were destroyed. North and South met and fought in an inconclusive three-day battle in the Wilderness. Lee inflicted more casualties on the Union forces than his own army incurred, but unlike Grant, he had no replacements.
    - General Grant continued to attack Lee. At Spotsylvania Court House, known as the Battle of Spotsylvania, he fought for five days, vowing to fight all summer if necessary.
    - In July 1864, Confederate troops approached Washington, D.C. Confederate General Jubal Early led his forces into Maryland to relieve the pressure on Lee’s army. Early got within five miles of Washington, D.C., but on July 13, he was driven back to Virginia.
- **August – Nov. 1864 - General William T. Sherman’s Atlanta Campaign Presentation**
- **Abraham Lincoln Is Re-Elected Presentation**
  - Additional information to share with students:
    - In Nov. of 1864, the Republican Party nominated President Abraham Lincoln as its presidential candidate, and Andrew Johnson for vice-president. The Democratic party chose General George B. McClellan for president, and George Pendleton for vice-president. At one point, widespread war-weariness in the North made a victory for Lincoln seem doubtful. In addition, Lincoln’s veto of the Wade-Davis Bill — requiring the majority of the electorate in each Confederate state to swear past and future loyalty to the Union before the state could officially be restored — lost him the support of Radical Republicans who thought Lincoln too lenient. However, Sherman’s victory in Atlanta boosted Lincoln’s popularity and helped him win re-election by a wide margin.
- **January 1865 - Fort Fisher, North Carolina and the Fall of the Confederacy Presentation**
  - Additional information to share with students:
In February 1865, Union General Sherman moved from Georgia through South Carolina, destroying almost everything in his path.

During this same time, a chance for reconciliation was lost. Confederate President Jefferson Davis agreed to send delegates to a peace conference with President Lincoln and Secretary of State William Seward, but insisted on Lincoln’s recognition of the South’s independence as a prerequisite. Lincoln refused, and the conference never occurred.

- **April 1865 - Fallen Richmond Presentation**
- **Surrender at Appomattox Courthouse Presentation**
- **Assassination of President Lincoln Presentation**
  - Additional information to share with students:
    - In May 1865, final surrenders occurred from remaining Confederate troops, who were defeated between the end of April and the end of May. Jefferson Davis was captured in Georgia on May 10. The war was officially over.

9. Once all students have presented and filled out their timelines, culminate the activity with a closing discussion, asking students to comment on which events they think had the biggest impact on the course of the war and why.
Civil War “Living Timeline” Assignment

The purpose of this project is to learn about the major events of the Civil War. You and your partner have been assigned the topic(s) of ____________________________ to research and present in a “living” timeline. Focusing on the major events of the Civil War, from the 1861 attack on Fort Sumter to the 1865 assassination of President Lincoln, each group will use the information you learn about your assigned event to bring our class’s timeline of the Civil War to life by delivering an engaging and educational 3 minute dramatic presentation to the class.

Steps for completion:
1. **Research**: Find the answers to the questions below using your textbook and other resources available in the classroom (books, computers, handouts, notes, etc.). Remember, every group is working on a different event, so your “living timeline” presentation (which will be presented in chronological order) must allow the class to gain a good understanding of your assigned topic. Make sure your presentation includes:
   - The date the event occurred
   - Concise and clear explanation of the event
   - Description of the significance of the event (Why is the event important? What impact did it have on the war?)
   - An interesting fact about the event (something surprising, curious, etc.)

2. **Plan**: Create a short 2 – 3 minute presentation that explains your topic(s)/event(s) to the class, ensuring the required information is conveyed. Be CREATIVE!
   - The way in which you deliver your “living timeline” presentation is up to you and will be determined by your originality (i.e., you might want to present the information in a skit between two Civil War characters; sing a song; etc.)
   - Create props (costume pieces, accessories, etc.) to enhance your presentation.
   - PRACTICE! The more comfortable with your presentation, and the more dramatic it is, the better it will be!

3. **Present**: The living timeline performances will take place in chronological order, beginning with the group presenting the Battle at Fort Sumter and ending with the assassination of President Lincoln. When it is your group’s turn, you will take your place in the front of the room and act out your segment of the “living timeline.” You will then return to your seat and the next group will go. While the actors are presenting, the rest of the class will fill in a blank timeline.
Civil War Living Timeline

Directions: Fill in the date, event title, and key event information on the Civil War timeline as your classmates present. The first date is already completed. On the back of this page, explain what the events are and their significance.

March 4, 1861
- Lincoln’s Inauguration
  - Lincoln sworn in.
  - States that he has no plans to end slavery in states where it already existed.
  - Said he would not accept secession, but that he hoped to resolve the national crisis without warfare.

April 1861
- Attach on Fort

[Blank spaces for additional dates and events]
April 1861 - Attack on Fort Sumter. The first shots that initiated the Civil War were fired here. While there were no casualties, this skirmish served as an indication that the South was willing to fight for federal property it considered to be its own following secession.

July 1861 - First Battle of Bull Run. Public demand pushed U.S. General-in-Chief Winfield Scott to advance on the South before adequately training his untried troops. Scott ordered General Irvin McDowell to advance on Confederate troops stationed at Manassas Junction, Virginia. McDowell attacked on July 21, and was initially successful, but the introduction of Confederate reinforcements resulted in a Southern victory and a chaotic retreat toward Washington by federal troops. Suddenly aware of the threat of a protracted war and the army’s need for organization and training, Lincoln replaced McDowell with General George B. McClellan.

April 1862 - The Battle of Shiloh. On April 6, Confederate forces attacked Union forces under General Ulysses S. Grant at Shiloh, Tennessee. By the end of the day, the federal troops were almost defeated. Yet, during the night, reinforcements arrived, and by the next morning the Union commanded the field. When Confederate forces retreated, the exhausted federal forces did not follow. Casualties were heavy — 13,000 out of 63,000 Union soldiers died, and 11,000 of 40,000 Confederate troops were killed. Fort Pulaski, Georgia

July 1862 - The Seven Days’ Battles. Between June 26 and July 2, Union and Confederate forces fought a series of battles: Mechanicsville (June 26-27), Gaines’s Mill (June 27), Savage’s Station (June 29), Frayser’s Farm (June 30), and Malvern Hill (July 1). On July 2, the Confederates withdrew to Richmond, ending the Peninsular Campaign. On July 11, Major-General Henry Halleck was named general-in-chief of the Union army.

July, 1862 – “Colored Troops” - Congress passed the Second Confiscation and Militia Act, freeing slaves who had masters in the Confederate Army. Two days later, slavery was abolished in the territories of the United States, and on July 22 President Lincoln presented the preliminary draft of the Emancipation Proclamation to his Cabinet members. These acts legalized the enlistment of African Americans, and black volunteers from South Carolina, Tennessee, and Massachusetts filled the first authorized black regiments. In May 1863, to handle the growing number of black enlistees, the U.S. Government established the Bureau of Colored Troops.

September 1862 – Antietam. On September 17, Confederate forces under General Lee were caught by General McClellan near Sharpsburg, Maryland. This battle proved to be the bloodiest day of the war; 2,108 Union soldiers were killed and 9,549 wounded — 2,700 Confederates were killed and 9,029 wounded. The battle had no clear winner, but because General Lee withdrew to Virginia, McClellan was considered the victor. The battle convinced the British and French — who were contemplating official recognition of the Confederacy — to reserve action, and gave Lincoln the opportunity to announce his Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation (September 22), which would free all slaves in areas rebelling against the United States, effective January 1, 1863.

December 1862 - The Battle of Fredericksburg
General McClellan’s slow movements, combined with General Lee’s escape, and continued raiding by Confederate cavalry, dismayed many in the North. On November 7, Lincoln replaced McClellan with Major-General Ambrose E. Burnside. Burnside’s forces were defeated in a series of attacks against entrenched Confederate forces at Fredericksburg, Virginia, and Burnside was replaced with General Joseph Hooker.
January 1863 - Emancipation Proclamation
In an effort to placate the slave-holding border states, Lincoln resisted the demands of radical Republicans for complete abolition. Yet some Union generals, such as General B. F. Butler, declared slaves escaping to their lines “contraband of war,” not to be returned to their masters. Other generals decreed that the slaves of men rebelling against the Union were to be considered free. Congress, too, had been moving toward abolition. In 1861, Congress had passed an act stating that all slaves employed against the Union were to be considered free. In 1862, another act stated that all slaves of men who supported the Confederacy were to be considered free. Lincoln, aware of the public’s growing support of abolition, issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, declaring that all slaves in areas still in rebellion were, in the eyes of the federal government, free.

March 1863 - The First Conscription Act & Draft Riots
Because of recruiting difficulties, an act was passed making all men between the ages of 20 and 45 liable to be called for military service. Service could be avoided by paying a fee or finding a substitute. The act was seen as unfair to the poor, and riots in working-class sections of New York City broke out in protest a few months later in July. A similar conscription act in the South provoked a similar reaction.

May 1863 - The Vicksburg Campaign. Union General Grant won several victories around Vicksburg, Mississippi, the fortified city considered essential to the Union’s plans to regain control of the Mississippi River. On May 22, Grant began a siege of the city. After six weeks, Confederate General John Pemberton surrendered, giving up the city and 30,000 men. The capture of Port Hudson, Louisiana, shortly thereafter placed the entire Mississippi River in Union hands. The Confederacy was split in two.

June-July 1863 - The Gettysburg Campaign. Confederate General Lee decided to take the war to the enemy. On June 13, he defeated Union forces at Winchester, Virginia, and continued north to Pennsylvania. General Hooker, who had been planning to attack Richmond, was instead forced to follow Lee. Hooker, never comfortable with his commander, General Halleck, resigned on June 28, and General George Meade replaced him as commander of the Army of the Potomac.

On July 1, a chance encounter between Union and Confederate forces began the Battle of Gettysburg. In the fighting that followed, Meade had greater numbers and better defensive positions. He won the battle, but failed to follow Lee as he retreated back to Virginia. Militarily, the Battle of Gettysburg was the high-water mark of the Confederacy; it is also significant because it ended Confederate hopes of formal recognition by foreign governments. On November 19, President Lincoln dedicated a portion of the Gettysburg battlefield as a national cemetery, and delivered his memorable “Gettysburg Address.”

September - December 1863 - The Battle of Chickamauga. After September 19, Union and Confederate forces met on the Tennessee-Georgia border, near Chickamauga Creek. After the battle, Union forces retreated to Chattanooga, and the Confederacy maintained control of the battlefield.

The Battle of Chattanooga. After Union General Rosecrans’s debacle at Chickamauga, Confederate General Braxton Bragg’s army occupied the mountains that ring the vital railroad center of Chattanooga. Grant, brought in to save the situation, steadily built up offensive strength, and on November 23-25 burst the blockade in a series of brilliantly executed attacks. Union forces pushed Confederate troops away from Chattanooga. The victory set the stage for U.S. General Sherman’s Atlanta Campaign.

The Siege of Knoxville. The difficult strategic situation of the federal armies after Chickamauga enabled Bragg to detach a force under Longstreet to drive Burnside out of eastern Tennessee. Burnside sought refuge in Knoxville, which he successfully defended from Confederate assaults.
1864 - General William T. Sherman’s Atlanta Campaign
Union General Sherman departed Chattanooga, and was soon met by Confederate General Joseph Johnston. Skillful strategy enabled Johnston to hold off Sherman’s force — almost twice the size of Johnston’s. However, Johnston’s tactics caused his superiors to replace him with General John Bell Hood, who was soon defeated. Hood surrendered Atlanta, Georgia, on September 1; Sherman occupied the city the next day. The fall of Atlanta greatly boosted Northern morale.

General Sherman continued his march through Georgia to the sea. In the course of the march, he cut himself off from his source of supplies, planning for his troops to live off the land. His men cut a path 300 miles in length and 60 miles wide as they passed through Georgia, destroying factories, bridges, railroads, and public buildings.

January 1865 - Fort Fisher, North Carolina
After Admiral David D. Porter’s squadron of warships had subjected Fort Fisher to a terrific bombardment, General Alfred H. Terry’s troops took it by storm on January 15, and Wilmington, North Carolina, the last resort of the blockade-runners, was sealed off.

The Fall of the Confederacy - Transportation problems and successful blockades caused severe shortages of food and supplies in the South. Starving soldiers began to desert Lee’s forces, and although President Jefferson Davis approved the arming of slaves as a means of augmenting the shrinking army, the measure was never put into effect.

April 1865 - Fallen Richmond
On March 25, General Lee attacked General Grant’s forces near Petersburg, but was defeated — attacking and losing again on April 1. On April 2, Lee evacuated Richmond, the Confederate capital, and headed west to join with other forces.

Surrender at Appomattox Courthouse
General Lee’s troops were soon surrounded, and on April 7, Grant called upon Lee to surrender. On April 9, the two commanders met at Appomattox Courthouse, and agreed on the terms of surrender. Lee’s men were sent home on parole — soldiers with their horses, and officers with their side arms. All other equipment was surrendered.

April 1865 - The Assassination of President Lincoln. On April 14, as President Lincoln was watching a performance of “Our American Cousin” at Ford’s Theater in Washington, D.C., he was shot by John Wilkes Booth, an actor from Maryland obsessed with avenging the Confederate defeat. Lincoln died the next morning. Booth escaped to Virginia. Eleven days later, cornered in a burning barn, Booth was fatally shot by a Union soldier. Nine other people were involved in the assassination; four were hanged, four imprisoned, and one acquitted.