**Civil War Vocabulary**

American Civil War 1861 – 1865

Vocabulary: Important People, Events, Places and terms

* **Civil War** - A War between regions or groups within the same country.
* **Abolitionists** - People who wanted to do away with slavery
* **Confederacy** - An association of people united for a common cause. During the Civil War, this word refers to the South or the Confederate States of America (CSA); a Confederacy of eleven (11) Southern states.
* **Secede** - To withdraw from a country
* **Cavalry** - Soldiers on horseback, they were the “eyes and ears” of the army
* **Infantry** - Foot soldiers who made up the majority of the fighting forces for the North and the South
* **Artillery** - Large mounted guns (cannons, mortars, Gatling guns [new guns like machine guns]) used for bombardment and to cover the advance of the infantry against the enemy lines.
* **States’ Rights** - The belief that each state had the right to determine whether or not to follow the laws of the United States with which they did not agree. It also refers to the idea held by Southern states that they could exercise their “State’s Right” to secede from the United States because they had joined the Union freely, and could freely “unjoin” or secede.
* **Unionist** - Someone who lived in the South but supported the North during the Civil War. They were not well liked or treated during the War. In Texas, Unionists were mostly German immigrants and other who opposed slavery. Some Free Blacks and Unionists fought in the Union army as an active way to support their cause.
* **Union** - The North during the Civil War; also called the US and the United States.
* **Yankee** - The nickname given to a resident and/or army person who was in the Union. The Yankee army invaded Virginia and attacked Richmond.
* **Rebel** - The nickname for people in the South, particularly the soldiers in the Confederate army. They were also called “Johnny Reb”.
* **Blue** - The color associated with the North during the Civil War because of their blue uniforms.
* **Gray** - The color associated with the South during the Civil War because of the gray color of the Confederate officers uniforms (and some infantry)
* **Washington, DC** - The capital city for the North during the Civil War.
* **Richmond, VA** - The capital city for the South during the Civil War. Richmond and Washington, DC are only 90 miles apart, so much of the fighting in the war took place in and around these cities.
* **Abraham Lincoln** - President of the USA (North) during the Civil War
* **Jefferson Davis** - President of the CSA (South) during the Civil War
* **Ulysses S. Grant** - The most important commanding general for the Northern armies first in the West (until after Vicksburg) and then for the Army of the Potomac in the Washington, DC – Virginia campaign.
* **Robert E. Lee** - The most important Confederate general. He commanded the Army of Northern Virginia for the South during the Civil War
* **Fort Sumter, SC** - Attacked by Confederate (Southern) forces on April 12, 1861 to begin the Civil War
* **Appomattox Courthouse, VA** - The place in central Virginia where Lee surrendered to Grant to end the Civil War on April 9, 1865
* **Anaconda Plan** - The Northern plan for winning the Civil War:
1. Blockade Southern ports and cut off trade – especially of cotton;
2. Capture the Confederate capital at Richmond, VA;
3. Take control of the Mississippi River and “cut” the Confederacy in half;
4. Move the Northern Army of the West and the (eastern) Army of the Potomac together to “strangle” the life out of the Confederacy.

 This plan never entirely worked well.

* **Vicksburg, Mississippi & Gettysburg, Pennsylvania** - Two of the most important battles of the entire War. They both occurred in early July of 1865 and marked the turning point in the war. In both of these battles, the Confederate troops were badly defeated with significant losses on both sides. At the Battle of Gettysburg (July 1 – 3, 1865) more than 52,000 men were killed. Lincoln later dedicated a cemetery there to honor those who died in that battle and made his famous Gettysburg Address.
* **Shiloh, Tennessee & Antietam, Maryland** - Two more important battles of the Civil War. These battles are most remembered for how bloody they were and that at the end of the fighting nothing significant had been won. At the Battle of Shiloh (April, 1862) almost 25,000 men died in the fighting. A famous Texas general, Albert Sydney Johnston, was killed there. The Antietam Battle saw 18,000 men die in one day of fighting in September of 1862.
* **John Brown** - A violent abolitionist who led an attack on the federal arsenal at Harper’s Ferry in Virginia to steal guns to give to slaves so that they could kill their masters. He was captured, put on trial, found guilty of treason against the United States of America, and hanged.
* **Uncle Tom’s Cabin** - A book written by Harriet Beecher Stowe, a non-violent abolitionist, which described the evils and hardships of slavery.
* **Emancipation Proclamation** - This document, issued in January of 1863, proclaimed freedom for slaves. It wasn’t fully enacted until after the War ended.