Civil War Timeline

Key Events and Battles

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| Event | Date | Location | Significance |
| Election of Abraham Lincoln | Nov. 1860 | Washington, DC | Won the electoral vote, but didn’t get the popular majority. This foreshadows the problems he would face with a divided nation. |
| Secession of South Carolina | Dec. 1860 | South Carolina | Upon learning of Lincoln’s election, the SC legislature votes to secede from the Union. |
| Formation of Confederate States of America (CSA) | Feb. 1861 | Montgomery, AL | Seven states joined the Confederacy and created their own Constitution that protected states’ rights, banned tariffs and allowed for nullification |
| Lincoln’s Inauguration | March 1861 | Washington, DC | Lincoln is forced to enter DC in disguise for his own safety. Southerners begin to seize federal posts. |
| Attack on Ft. Sumter | April 1861 | Charleston, SC | CSA wants Union soldiers out of the fort and claimed it was Confederate property. Lincoln wants CSA to fire the first shot. |
| 1st Battle of Bull Run (Manassas) | July 21, 1861 | Northern Virginia | McDowell (Union) fought against Johnston (CSA). CSA won, Union launched an embarrassing retreat. Lincoln replaced McDowell with McClellan. |
| Battle at Ft. Henry and Ft. Donelson | Feb. 1862 | Tennessee | Grant (Union) captured 2 forts on the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers. CSA forced out of Kentucky and most of Tennessee. |
| Monitor v. Merrimac | March 1862 | Off coast of Virginia | First battle of ironclad ships in history. Ends in a draw, but Union maintains Southern blockade. |
| Battle of Shiloh (Pittsburg Landing) | April 1862 | Tennessee | Union victory led by Grant, but heavy casualties on both sides. |
| Battle of New Orleans | April 1862 | Louisiana | Admiral Farragut (Union) seized control of New Orleans and sunk 11 CSA ships. |
| Peninsular Campaign (Seven Oaks, Seven Days) | March-July 1862 | Southern Virginia | McClellan attacked Richmond, but doesn’t get a decisive victory. |
| 2nd Battle of Bull Run (Manassas) | August 1862 | Northern Virginia | Lee and Jackson (CSA) defeat Union. |
| Antietam | September 1862 | Maryland | Heavy casualties (23,0000). Union victory, Lee retreated. |
| Emancipation Proclamation | September 1862 | Washington, DC | Lincoln announced freedom for slaves in rebelling states on 1/1/1863. Didn’t affect border states. Discouraged European states from taking sides. |
| Fredericksburg | Dec. 1862 | Central Virginia | Confederate victory. |
| Chancellorville | May 1863 | Northern Virginia | Confederate victory, but Stonewall Jackson is accidentally shot by his own men. |
| Vicksburg | July 1863 | Mississippi | Grant seizes Vicksburg and Union gained control over MS River (part of Anaconda Plan) |
| Gettysburg | July 1863 | Pennsylvania | Largest battle in Western Hemisphere history (over 165,000 soldiers). Union victory and CSA retreat. |
| Chattanooga | Nov. 1863 | Tennessee | Grant pushed CSA troops back and prepared for an attack on Atlanta. Promoted to head of Union army. |
| Wilderness and Spotsylvania | May 1864 | Central Virginia | Grant resumed march to Richmond and forces CSA to retreat. |
| Petersburg | June 1864-April 1865 | South of Richmond, VA | Grant attacked important railroad junction. Long siege of Petersburg resulted in troops living in trenches that stretched over 50 miles. |
| “March to the Sea” | Sep. – Dec. 1864 | Georgia | Sherman destroyed Atlanta then marched troops over 300 miles to Savannah. Destroyed rail lines, crop destruction, demoralized South. |
| Surrender at Appomattox | April 9, 1865 | Appomattox Courthouse, Virginia | Lee surrendered to Grant (didn’t want his troops to suffer any more). Grant offered generous terms of surrender to CSA. |