



Decisive Battles

Objectives

1. Describe the significance of the battles at Vicksburg and Gettysburg.
2. Explain how Union generals used a new type of war to defeat the Confederacy.
3. Explain how the war ended.

Prepare to Read

Reading Skill

Relate Events in a Sequence

Events in sequence are often connected by a cause-and-effect link. One event causes an event that occurs next. This event in turn can cause another to occur. As you read Section 5, look for sequential events, and then determine if they have a cause-and-effect relationship. Remember, however, that not all events in sequence have this link.

Vocabulary Builder

High-Use Words

encounter, p. 534

exceed, p. 535

Key Terms and People

siege, p. 535

William Tecumseh Sherman, p. 536

total war, p. 536

Background Knowledge By 1865, four years of Civil War had produced hundreds of thousands of deaths. In this section, you will learn how the Civil War finally came to an end.

The Tide Turns

After the Union victory at the 1862 Battle of Antietam, the war again began to go badly for the North. As before, the problem was poor leadership. When McClellan failed to pursue Lee's beaten army, Lincoln replaced him with General Ambrose Burnside.

Confederate Victories Burnside knew McClellan had been fired for being too cautious. So Burnside decided on a bold stroke. In December 1862, he marched his army of 120,000 men directly toward Richmond. Lee massed 75,000 men at Fredericksburg, Virginia, to block their path. Using traditional tactics, Burnside ordered charge after charge. The Union suffered nearly 13,000 casualties in the Battle of Fredericksburg and the Confederates nearly 5,000.

Lincoln next turned to General Joseph Hooker, nicknamed "Fighting Joe." "May God have mercy on General Lee, for I will have none," Hooker boasted as he marched the Union army toward Richmond. In May 1863, Hooker's army was smashed at the Battle of Chancellorsville by a force that was half its size. But the victory was a costly one for the South. During the battle, Stonewall Jackson was shot and wounded. A few days later, Jackson died.

Main Idea

After suffering some defeats, Union forces gained the upper hand by winning major battles at Gettysburg and Vicksburg.

Union General Joseph Hooker



The Battle of Gettysburg These Confederate victories made Lee bolder. He was convinced that a major victory on Union soil would force northerners to end the war. In June 1863, Lee's troops crossed Maryland and marched into Pennsylvania. The Union army, which was now commanded by General George Meade, pursued them.

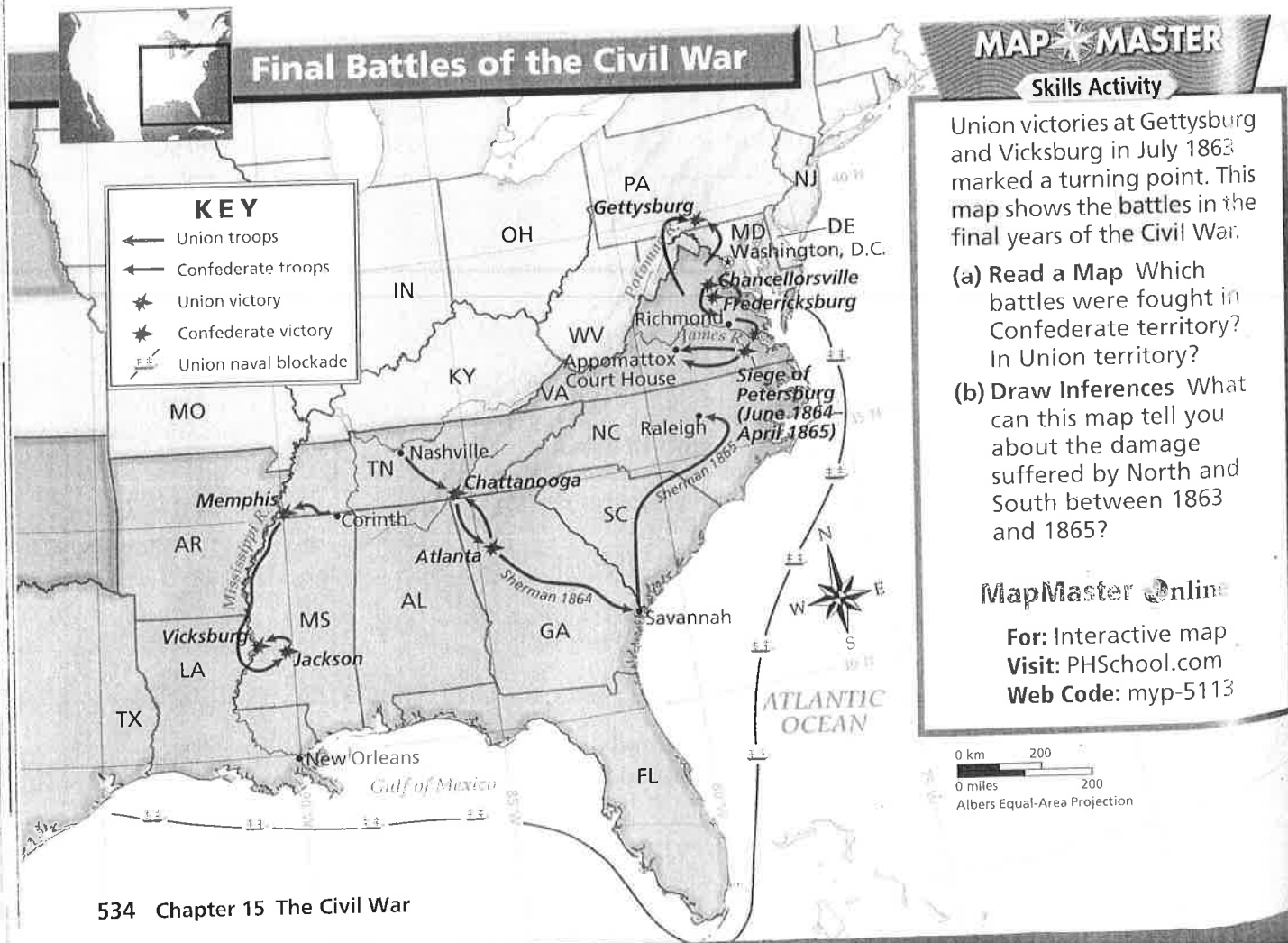
On July 1, some Confederate soldiers approached the quiet town of Gettysburg. They were looking for shoes, which were in short supply in the South because of the Union blockade. Instead of shoes, the Confederates encountered part of Meade's army. Shots were exchanged. More troops joined the fight on both sides. By evening, the southerners had pushed the Union forces back through Gettysburg.

The next day, more than 85,000 Union soldiers faced some 75,000 Confederates. The center of the Union army was on a hill called Cemetery Ridge. The center of the Confederate position was nearly a mile away, on Seminary Ridge. The fighting raged into the next day as Confederate troops attacked each end of the Union line.

On the afternoon of July 3, Lee ordered an all-out attack on the center of the Union line. General George E. Pickett led about 15,000 Confederates across nearly a mile of open field toward Cemetery Ridge. As they advanced, Union artillery shells and rifle fire rained down on them. Only a few hundred men reached the Union lines, and they were quickly driven back. About 7,500 Confederates were killed or wounded in what is known as Pickett's Charge.

Vocabulary Builder

encounter (ehn kOWN ter) v. to meet in an unexpected way; to experience



In all, the Confederacy suffered more than 28,000 casualties during the three-day Battle of Gettysburg. Union losses exceeded 23,000. For a second time, Lee had lost nearly a third of his troops. "It's all my fault," he said as he rode among his surviving soldiers. "It is I who have lost this fight."

The Fall of Vicksburg On July 4, 1863, as Lee's shattered army began its retreat from Gettysburg, the South suffered another major blow far to the south and west. Vicksburg surrendered to General Grant. It had been one of the last cities on the Mississippi River to remain in Confederate hands. Unable to take Vicksburg by force, Grant had begun a siege of the city in May 1863. A siege is an attempt to capture a place by surrounding it with military forces and cutting it off until the people inside surrender.

Day after day, Union guns bombarded Vicksburg. Residents took shelter in cellars and in caves they dug in hillsides. They ate mules and rats to keep from starving. After six weeks, the 30,000 Confederate troops at Vicksburg finally gave up. A few days later, the last Confederate stronghold on the Mississippi River, Port Hudson, Louisiana, also gave up. The entire river was now under Union control.

These events, coupled with Lee's defeat at Gettysburg, make July 1863 the major turning point of the Civil War. Now the Union had the upper hand.

The Gettysburg Address In November 1863, about 15,000 people gathered on the battlefield at Gettysburg to honor the soldiers who had died there. In what is now known as the Gettysburg Address, Lincoln looked ahead to a final Union victory. He said:

"We here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

—Abraham Lincoln, Gettysburg Address, November 19, 1863

Checkpoint Identify two events that marked turning points in the Civil War.

Closing In on the Confederacy

In Ulysses S. Grant, President Lincoln found the kind of commander he had long sought. In 1864, the President gave him command of all Union forces. Grant decided that he must attack Richmond, no matter how large the Union losses.

Grant versus Lee Grant's huge army hammered at the Confederates in a series of battles in northern Virginia in the spring of 1864. Grant was unable to break through Lee's troops. But Grant did not retreat. Instead, he continued the attack.

Vocabulary Builder

exceed (ehks SEED) v. to go beyond what is expected; to be greater than what was planned



Union General Ulysses S. Grant

Main Idea

With Grant in command, Union forces carried the war to the heart of the Confederacy.

Cause and Effect

CAUSES

- Issue of slavery in the territories divides the North and South.
- Abolitionists want slavery to end.
- Southern states secede after Lincoln's election.

THE CIVIL WAR

EFFECTS

- Lincoln issues the Emancipation Proclamation.
- Total war destroys the South's economy.
- Hundreds of thousands of Americans killed.

Reading Charts

Skills Activity

The Civil War had multiple causes—and multiple effects.

- (a) **Analyze Cause and Effect** Why did the North fear the extension of slavery to the West?
- (b) **Draw Conclusions** Which effects were felt mainly in the South? Which effects were felt mainly in the North?



Relate Events in a Sequence

What happened first, the Union's victory in Atlanta or President Lincoln's reelection? Explain how these events are related in sequence.

Main Idea

Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox, putting an end to the long and bloody war.

After seven weeks of fighting, Grant had lost about 55,000 men; the Confederates had lost 35,000. Grant realized that his army could count on a steady stream of men and supplies. Lee, on the other hand, was running out of both.

The two armies clashed at Petersburg, an important railroad center south of Richmond. There, in June 1864, Grant began a siege, the tactic he had used at Vicksburg.

While Grant besieged Lee, another Union army under General William Tecumseh Sherman advanced toward Atlanta. Like Grant, Sherman was a tough soldier. He believed in total war—all-out attacks aimed at destroying an enemy's army, its resources, and its people's will to fight. Sherman later said:

“We are not only fighting hostile armies, but a hostile people, and must make young and old, rich and poor, feel the hard hand of war.”

—William T. Sherman,
Memoirs, 1886

March to the Sea The Confederates could not stop Sherman's advance. The Union army marched into Atlanta on September 2, 1864. Atlanta's capture gave President Lincoln's reelection campaign a boost. In the months before the capture of Atlanta, many northerners had grown

tired of the war. Support for Lincoln had been lagging. But after Atlanta's fall, Lincoln won a huge election victory over General George McClellan, the Democrats' candidate.

In November, Sherman ordered Atlanta burned. He then marched east toward the Atlantic Ocean. Along the way, Union troops set fire to buildings, seized crops and livestock, and pulled up railroad tracks. They left a path of destruction up to 60 miles wide. In February 1865, the army headed north across the Carolinas.

Checkpoint How did Sherman show “the hard hand of war”?

Peace at Last

In March 1865, Grant's army still waited outside Petersburg. For months, Grant had been extending his battle lines east and west of Petersburg. Lee knew it was only a matter of time before Grant would capture the city.

Lincoln, too, saw that the end of the war was near. In his Second Inaugural Address in March 1865, he asked Americans to forgive and forget. "With malice toward none; with charity for all; . . . let us strive together . . . to bind up the nation's wounds," said Lincoln.

Surrender at Appomattox On April 2, Grant's troops finally broke through Confederate lines. By evening, Richmond was in Union hands. Lee's army retreated to the town of Appomattox Court House. There, on April 9, 1865, his escape cut off, Lee surrendered.

Grant offered Lee generous surrender terms. The Confederates had only to give up their weapons and leave in peace. As Lee rode off, some Union troops started to celebrate the surrender. But Grant silenced them. "The war is over," he said. "The rebels are our countrymen again."

The War's Terrible Toll The Civil War was the bloodiest conflict the United States has ever fought. About 260,000 Confederate soldiers gave their lives in the war. The number of Union dead exceeded 360,000, including 37,000 African Americans. Nearly a half million men were wounded. Many returned home disfigured for life.

The war had two key results: It reunited the nation and put an end to slavery. However, a century would pass before African Americans would begin to experience the full meaning of freedom.

Checkpoint Why did Lee finally decide to surrender?

Looking Back and Ahead With Lee's surrender, the long and bitter war came to an end. In the next chapter, you will read how U.S. leaders tried to patch the Union together again.

Section 5 | Check Your Progress

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Comprehension and Critical Thinking

- (a) Identify** Why are the battles at Gettysburg and Vicksburg considered a turning point?
(b) Understand Sequence How did the advantages of the North at the start of the war continue to be advantages?
- (a) Classify** President Lincoln called for "charity for all." How would you classify his words to the country?
(b) Distinguish Facts From Opinions Write three facts and three opinions Grant might have stated about the Civil War.

Reading Skill

- 3. Relate Events in a Sequence** What events led to the turning point of the Civil War in July 1863? How did those events change the war?

Vocabulary Builder

Complete each of the following sentences so that the second part further explains the first part and clearly shows your understanding of the key term.

4. Grant placed Vicksburg under a siege; _____.
5. Sherman pursued a total war; _____.

Writing

- 6.** This section says that the Civil War took more than 620,000 American lives. Research and record the number of American deaths in World War I, World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. Compare the total number of American lives lost in these wars to the number lost in the Civil War. Then, write a paragraph to make a point about your findings. Also, credit the sources of published information you used.