

## CIVIL WAR TIMELINE 1861

- Early 1861      Although the country has feared war for years, no one truly expects the horror the Civil War will become – in fact, South Carolina Senator **James Chesnut** boldly promises to drink all the blood that might be shed as a result of secession. He could never have imagined that in the South, between 1861 and 1865, three out of four white men of military age will take up arms . . . or that twice as many soldiers will die of disease as of wounds of battle. As one Iowa veteran would later observe, dying of illness offered “all of the evils of the battlefield with none of its honors.” [Faust, 4]
- Jan. 1      **President-elect Lincoln declares slavery in Confederate states unlawful.**
- “      Louisiana Senator Benjamin’s statement that “The South will never be subjugated” is met with “disgraceful applause, screams and uproar” by the crowds in the Senate gallery. [*New York Times*, p. 7] Rumors continue to circulate about Lincoln’s cabinet appointments. **Fortifications in Charleston’s harbor** are increased as tension mounts.
- “      **TN** “Jan. 1<sup>st</sup> finds the American Eagle in great distress. . . .The politicians cannot save the Union, the people are divided, business [is] stagnant & nothing but the powers of Almighty God can save us from that destruction to which we are so rapidly hastening.” [*Diary of William L.B. Lawrence, Nashville attorney*]
- Jan. 2      South Carolina seizes inactive **Fort Johnson** in Charleston Harbor. The governor of North Carolina sends troops to seize **Fort Macon**, the forts at **Wilmington**, and the **U.S. Arsenal at Fayetteville**.
- “      Georgia state troops occupy the **U.S. Arsenal in Savannah** and forts in **Pulaski** and **Jackson**. [*NYT*, p. 8] Reports from Virginia suggest that its citizens are leaning toward secession to a much greater degree. [p. 8]
- Jan. 4      Delaware rejects Mississippi’s proposal to join the Confederacy. [p. 8]
- Jan. 5      Alabama troops seize **Forts Morgan and Gaines** in Mobile Bay. President Buchanan sends 250 Federal troops from New York to **Fort Sumter**.
- Jan. 6      **TN** The South Carolina students in the medical department of the University of Nashville have been telegraphed to leave for home to join the army. Five left on the train Friday morning, and seven on the train yesterday morning. They go, like dutiful sons, to defend their mother. [*Nashville Daily Gazette*]
- Jan. 7      **TN** Governor Isham Harris calls the Legislature into session to adopt a resolution asking Tennesseans to vote for or against a **convention** to consider the possibility of secession. He recommends the organization of a state militia and the purchase of arms, and states that “the remedy for the present evils exists only in constitutional amendments.” [*NYT*, p. 1]
- “      Florida troops have taken over **Fort Marion at St. Augustine** and the **Federal arsenal at Apalachicola**. Georgia counties are voting whether to secede: the total is 70 for immediate secession, 29 to remain in the Union, and 5 divided. [8]
- “      Editorial writers express skepticism at the ability of the South to sustain a military campaign against the Federal government, on economic grounds alone: growing primarily cotton, tobacco, and corn, it could not feed itself; second,

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without Northern and British markets for its cotton and tobacco, or with its fields destroyed by warfare, it could not maintain a military force. [NYT, p. 4]

- Jan. 8      Huge meetings are held in Chicago and other northern cities in which citizens express their support of the Union.
- Jan. 9      **TN** The vote on a secession convention fails, nearly four-to-one. On the same day, **Mississippi becomes the second state to secede from the Union.** (South Carolina seceded on December 20, 1860.) Louisiana elects a slate of pro-secession candidates. Members of President Buchanan's cabinet continue to resign, one by one. Several Naval officers resign their commands; one surrenders his ship, the U.S. Revenue Cutter *Aiken*, to the Confederacy. [NYT, p. 1]
- “      **TN** “We cannot see how any Southern man, who is at all familiar with the history of the times, can . . . solemnly declare it inexpedient for the people of his State to hold a convention and determine whether they will resist or submit to the Abolition rule now about to be inaugurated. . . .Tennessee will resist.” [Nashville Daily Gazette]
- “      The first shots of the Civil War are fired: *Star of the West*, an unarmed merchant vessel secretly carrying federal troops and relief supplies to **Fort Sumter**, is fired upon by South Carolina artillery at the entrance to Charleston harbor. Major Anderson and Governor Pickens exchange messages accusing each other of warlike acts, and Anderson sends dispatches to Washington to determine what he should do. [NYT, p. 1]
- Jan. 10      Southern states take issue with President Buchanan's appointment of a new Secretary of War. **Florida is third to secede from the Union**, by a vote of 62-7. [p. 1] Lincoln, who will be inaugurated on March 4, announces that he will appoint **William H. Seward** as his Secretary of State. [p. 5] Newspapers across the country carry several reports of Southern slave insurrections.
- Jan. 11      Thousands of pounds of food and other supplies are sent to **Kansas** from around The country to aid those suffering from famine conditions. President Buchanan, who has excused his previous inactivity with the statement, “Time is a great conservative power,” becomes more assertive. “His declaration of the ‘clear and undeniable right’ and duty of the National Government to use military force defensively against those who resist the Federal officers in the execution of their legal functions, and against those who assail the property of the United States” is much more resolute. **Alabama secedes from the Union.**
- Jan. 12      **TN** The House calls a **State Convention** for February 18; if the Convention resolves to withdraw from the Union, its action will be put to a popular vote. Meanwhile, several rallies in Kentucky seem to indicate strong support for remaining in the Union.
- Jan. 14      **TN** A quote from an 1858 Lincoln speech denouncing states that withheld the right to vote from their black citizens is tracked to the Nashville *Union* and *American*. The quote is proven to have come from a speech by Salmon P. Chase instead. [New York Times, p. 4]
- “      **Fort Pickens** is surrendered to Florida troops. Virginia sets February 18 as the date of its State Convention to consider secession. The South Carolina House

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of Representatives passes a resolution stating that “any attempt by the Federal Government to reinforce Fort Sumter will be regarded as an act of open hostility and a declaration of war. [NYT, p. 1]

- Jan. 16      The *Golden Star*, traveling from Mobile to Liverpool, goes down near the coast of Ireland, taking with her the captain, his wife, sixteen crew members, and 3,750 bales of cotton. [NYT, p. 5] The Georgia Convention begins; Arkansas schedules a state convention for February 18, the same day as Tennessee’s.
- “      The **Pennsylvania** state legislature, and presumably the legislatures of other border states, begins efforts to maintain peaceful relationships with neighboring slave states that may join the Confederacy. [Lancaster, Pennsylvania, *Express*]
- Jan. 18      Ex-President Tyler writes a letter to the Richmond *Whig* expressing his views that secession is a state’s legal right and is far preferable to rebellion.
- Jan. 19      **Georgia secedes from the Union**, quickly denying that its decision has been prompted in any way by a desire to restore the slave trade. Mississippi troops take Fort Massachusetts on Ship Island.
- “      **TN** The House accepts the Senate’s amendment to elect delegates on the 9<sup>th</sup> and to assemble in Convention on the 25<sup>th</sup> of February. [New York Times, p. 1]
- Jan. 21      **Jefferson Davis** of Mississippi and four other Southern Senators resign. The Philadelphia *Pennsylvanian* publishes a letter from South Carolina which describes their volunteer army as consisting of “at least 3,000 men under arms on the coast,” with “more provisions than can be consumed.” The Kentucky Legislature adopts verbatim the anti-coercion resolutions of the Tennessee Legislature, while many Kentuckians hold firm to their belief in the Union.
- “      **TN Memphis** follows the example of Mississippi and Louisiana and begins to set up blockades and cannons along the Mississippi. [*Memphis Avalanche*] A couple of near-misses with freight and passenger ships create a mood of indignation and outrage among those traveling on the river. [*Vicksburg Sun*]
- Jan. 22      **TN** “About 7 o’clock last night fifteen guns were fired from Capitol Hill in honor of the secession of Georgia.” [*Nashville Daily Gazette*]
- Jan. 24      The Confederacy seizes the Arsenal at Augusta, Georgia. Rumors spread that Secessionists plan to seize the Capitol and thus prevent the inauguration of Lincoln. [Philadelphia *Press*] The Governor of Louisiana issues a strong Statement making it quite clear that the people of the state “are not to be cajoled into an abandonment of our rights, and not to be subdued. All hopes are at an end that the dissensions between the North and South can be healed.” [NYT, p.1]
- “      **TN** The Tennessee House responds to New York’s offer of men and money to the Federal Government “to be used in coercing certain sovereign States of the South into obedience to the Federal Government” by saying “It is the opinion of this General Assembly, that whenever the authorities of that State shall send armed forces to the South for the purpose indicated in said resolutions, the people of Tennessee, uniting with their brethren of the South, will welcome them with bloody hands to hospitable graves.” The resolution passes by a vote of 59-7.
- “      **TN** “Yes, we are all for fighting. Everybody is willing—even the ladies. . . . I

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think there is enough patriotism & bravery in this state to sustain the Southern confederacy against the United States troops and all the Yankees who dare accompany them. . . .The South will never unite with the North again—never.”  
[from a January 24, 1861, letter of W.W. Fergusson, Riddleton, TN]

- Jan. 26      **Louisiana secedes from the Union.** There is considerable discussion in Northern newspapers about whether secession constitutes an act of treason. Meanwhile, the Georgia Convention offers a resolution insisting that no state be admitted to the Southern Confederacy that is not a slave-holding state.
- Jan. 27      **TN** A salute of fifteen guns was fired from Capitol Hill last evening, on the reception of the news of the secession of Louisiana. [*Nashville Daily Gazette*]
- Jan 28      The South Carolina Legislature proposes a War Tax to fund the coming military action. The state has introduced a new flag to assert its independent status: it features a white palmetto and a white crescent on a blue ground.
- Jan. 29      **Kansas is admitted to the Union.** Now that so many Southern states have withdrawn from Congress, the vote to admit Kansas as a free state passes easily. The Texas Legislature favors secession by a vote of three to one, as rumors spread of an intended take-over of the arsenal at San Antonio. [p. 1]
- Jan. 31      **TN** “Notwithstanding the recommendation of the Governor of Tennessee that Commissioners be sent to Montgomery, Ala., the Legislature to-day instructed their Commissioners to go to Washington.” [*New York Times*, p. 1] Meanwhile, New York and other states begin to organize volunteer Union battalions.
- Feb. 1      **TN** Kentucky is experiencing a deep split as its citizens discuss what choice to make. **John Bell urges both Tennessee and Kentucky to remain in the Union.** [*New York Times*, p. 2]
- “      **The Texas State Convention agrees to secede from the Union by a vote of 166-7.** Northern newspapers are united in their indignation, since the cost to annex the state only 15 years earlier was so high (50,000 killed and nearly \$70,000,000 expended). Meanwhile, Pensacola and Charleston, expecting Federal attack, work on building up the defensive capabilities of their harbors. Drought and famine continue to plague Kansas.
- Feb. 4      The Confederate Constitutional Convention opens in Montgomery, Alabama. Louisiana seizes the Mint and Sub-Treasury at New Orleans, including \$350,000 the Philadelphia Mint had requested to be returned to that city. [*NYT*, p. 1]
- Feb. 5      This news item is sent to newspapers from Virginia: “While a large proportion of the delegates elected to the State Convention are called Unionists, very few of them are Submissionists. It is known that they intend to exhaust all honorable means to preserve the Union, but that unless their rights are fully guaranteed they will go for secession. If the Peace Congress fails to effect a settlement, the Convention will probably consider further exertions hopeless.” [*NYT*, p. 1]
- “      With 50,000 people facing starvation after a prolonged drought, Kansas appeals for aid. Arkansas state troops have taken possession of the Little Rock Arsenal, and word has arrived that Texas troops are preparing an assault on Forts Washita, Cobb, and Arbuckle in the Indian Territory.

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- Feb. 6      **TN** An immense torch-light procession in support of the Union takes place in **Memphis**. Another large meeting of Union supporters convenes in St. Louis. Destructive winter storms paralyze much of the Northern part of the country.
- Feb. 7      **The Confederate Constitution is adopted.** President-elect Lincoln meanwhile is entertaining visitors, including Horace Greeley, at his home in Springfield. He has made no comment on the secessions or other issues. [NYT, p. 1] The North Carolina House approves a bill that arms 3,000 volunteers and completely reorganizes the State military.
- Feb 9      **Jefferson Davis** is inaugurated President of the Confederacy in Montgomery, Alabama, where the provisional government has been established; **Alexander Stephens** is named Vice President. In Washington, D.C., the Peace Conference begins, but it is already apparent that the voices of moderation will be drowned out by more extreme views from both Northern and Southern regions.
- “      **TN** “If ... the people of the South ... [do] not arouse [their] brethren of the North to a sense of justice & right, & honor demands a separation, we would still have the same claims upon the ‘colors of Washington, great son of the South, and of Virginia, mother of the States.’ Let us not abandon the stars and stripes, under which Southern men have so often been led to victory.” *Nashville Daily Gazette*
- Feb. 11      **TN Tennessee votes against holding a secession convention.** Memphis and Nashville elect Union candidates by overwhelming majorities. [NYT, p. 1]
- “      The **Electoral College** begins its deliberations in Washington, D.C., amid fears of a show of force against the election of Lincoln. Gen. Winfield Scott reinforces the city, and the meeting occurs as planned. Vice-President John C. Breckinridge (who is third in the popular vote and second in the electoral vote) declares **Lincoln** the winner. The U.S. House passes a resolution not to interfere with slavery in any state. Meanwhile, the train carrying President-elect Lincoln to Washington leaves Springfield and arrives in Indianapolis. Georgia seizes five New York ships in Savannah Harbor, and five American war vessels are reported to be standing off Pensacola. [NYT, p. 1]
- Feb. 13      The U.S. Electoral College makes Lincoln’s win official. Lincoln’s train moves from Cincinnati to Columbus. Reporters hang on his every word, hoping for some indication of what his policies will be. He does not make a strong commitment to any policy: “Would marching an army into South Carolina *with hostile intent* be an invasion? I think it would, and it would be coercion also if South Carolina were forced to submit. But if the United States should merely hold and retake its own forts, collect duties, or withhold the mails, where they were habitually violated, would any or all of these things be invasion or coercion?” [New York Times, p. 4]
- “      Another speech by Lincoln, delivered to Ohioans and Kentuckians, and widely quoted in newspapers, foreshadows his future attitude toward Reconstruction: “We mean to leave you alone, and in no way to interfere with your institutions; to abide by all and every compromise of the Constitution . . . . We mean to remember that you are as good as we; that there is no difference between us, other than the difference of circumstances. We mean to recognize and bear in mind always that you have as good hearts in your bosoms as other people, or as we claim to have, and treat you accordingly.” [NYT, p. 1]

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- Feb. 14 Lincoln arrives in Pittsburgh. Over the next few days he will move on to Cleveland (15<sup>th</sup>), Buffalo (16<sup>th</sup>), Albany (18<sup>th</sup>), and New York City (19<sup>th</sup>).
- Feb. 15 The extreme cold in **Kansas**, added to the extreme famine there, has made the lives of the settlers desperate. Both people and livestock are dying from the cold and lack of food; Indian attacks on individual settlers are becoming more common. Other states are urged to send aid. [NYT, p. 5]
- Feb. 18 The Confederate Convention in Montgomery is considering several possible **flag** designs. Jefferson Davis declares, "If other States join our Confederacy, they can freely come in on our terms. Our separation from the old Union is complete. No compromise, no reconstruction can now be entertained." [NYT, p. 8] Reaction to the speech is quick – many of the delegates to the Peace Conference consider Davis's words to be a declaration of war.
- Feb. 19 **Jefferson Davis is inaugurated** President of the Southern Confederacy. In his address he quotes from the U.S. Constitution and makes many references to armed conflict, primarily in regard to defense of Southern lands. [NYT, p. 8]
- Feb. 20 As **Queen Victoria** addresses the opening of Parliament, she takes note of the American conflict: "It is impossible for me to look without great concern upon any events which can affect the happiness and welfare of a people purely allied to my subjects by descent, and closely connected with them by the most intimate and friendly relations. My heartfelt wish is that these differences may be susceptible of satisfactory adjustment." [NYT, p. 2]
- “ **TN** Word comes from **Arkansas**, "united closely by ties of trade, consanguinity and local interests with the gallant Union-State of Tennessee," has voted to remain in the Union. [NYT, p. 4]
- Feb. 23 Three more New York ships are seized in Savannah Harbor; meanwhile, the Confederate Congress passes an act declaring the establishment of free navigation on the Mississippi. [NYT, p. 8] Reports from the Virginia State Convention begin to sound more and more as though the state will secede.
- “ In the face of a credible assassination threat, Lincoln and his entourage bypass a planned stop in Baltimore and go straight to the Capital. [NYT, p. 1] Reports surface of two previous attempts on Lincoln's life during the trip to Washington.
- Feb. 27 Lincoln makes an unprecedented informal visit to both Houses of Congress with William H. Seward. A few Democratic Senators refuse to greet him; House members of both parties are more welcoming.
- Mar. 1 **TN** En route to Washington to take his seat in the 37<sup>th</sup> Congress, Congressman **Thomas A. R. Nelson** is arrested by Confederate scouts and conveyed to Richmond as a prisoner. Later paroled, he is allowed to return to Tennessee.
- Mar. 2 Texas secession is declared to be in effect. In secret session, the Southern Congress confirms the nomination of Peter G. Beauregard of Louisiana as Brigadier-General of the Provisional Confederate Army. [NYT, p. 1]
- Mar. 4 **Abraham Lincoln is inaugurated President**, with Hannibal Hamlin of Maine as his Vice President. Huge crowds throng the Capital. Lincoln's Inaugural Address attempts to soothe the tensions between opposing factions. He insists

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“ In *your* hands, my dissatisfied fellow-countrymen, and not in *mine*, is the momentous issue of civil war. The Government will not assail *you*. You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors. *You* have no oath registered in heaven to destroy the Government, while I shall have the most solemn one to ‘preserve, protect, and defend it.’”

“ The new **Confederate flag** first flies over the Capitol at Montgomery.

Mar. 5      **TN** The response to Lincoln’s Inaugural Address comes in from around the country. From Knoxville: “Mr. Lincoln’s Inaugural, if reported correctly, is universally condemned. Tennessee will fight him to the bitter end.” From Nashville: “The opinions on the Inaugural at Nashville are unfavorable. It is believed that Mr. Lincoln is determined to retake the forts and forcibly collect the revenue . . . . The people are awaiting the document in full.” To the Congress of the C.S.A., meeting in Montgomery, “Mr. Lincoln’s Inaugural Address is regarded here as a virtual declaration of war against the seceded States.”

Mar. 6      President Davis calls for 100,000 **volunteers** for one year of military service. Meanwhile, word arrives that Texas citizens have ratified the Ordinance of Secession by 45,000-40,000 votes. [*New York Times*, p. 8] It is rumored that Governor **Sam Houston** opposes joining the Confederacy and that he is raising troops on his own account. Plans are made to replace him if he refuses the oath of allegiance to the Confederate States.

Mar. 8      **North Carolina** votes against holding a secession convention, the elected representatives standing two-to-one in favor of the Union.

Mar. 11      The Confederate States of America – at this time consisting of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Texas – adopts a **Constitution**. [<http://www.pinzler.com/ushistory/timeline6.html>] Louisiana and most of the other states quickly decide not to submit the acceptance of the Constitution to a popular vote, primarily because, in every state where secession has been submitted to a popular vote, it has been voted down. The Confederate Congress quickly passes a military bill establishing and organizing its army: 50,000 men will soon be ready to take the field.

Mar. 15      Stories come from Charleston that a “floating battery,” known as the “Slaughter Pen” has been developed and tested.

Mar. 20      As the **Virginia** State Convention grinds on, a secessionist in Richmond, VA, amuses a crowd by describing Lincoln as a “misshapen ape, occupying the pedestal where once stood the proud Washington.” [*NYT*, p. 1]

Mar. 21      **Alexander H. Stephens**, Vice President of the Confederacy, gives a speech in Savannah declaring slavery to be the natural condition of blacks and the “cornerstone of the Confederacy.” He also calls the secessions “one of the greatest revolutions in the annals of the world ... signally marked, up to this time, by the fact of its having been accomplished without the loss of a single drop of blood.” The speech raises both Northern and Southern hackles and causes a brief falling out with Jefferson Davis. The C.S.A Postmaster makes a selection of postage stamps.

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- “ **TN** Andrew J. Donelson calls for a convention of delegates from the Border States to devise a plan of adjustment to changing circumstances. [*NYT*, p. 8]
- Mar. 25 When **Sam Houston** refuses to take the oath of allegiance to the C.S.A., the Texas State Convention declares the office of Governor vacant; Houston and the Secretary of State retire from their offices and surrender the state archives. As Federal troops are withdrawn from Texas, Indian attacks on settlers increase.
- “ **TN** Congressman Thomas A. R. Nelson reports on a meeting with Lincoln: “[I] had it from his own lips ... that he was for peace, and would use every exertion in his power to maintain it .... He expressed a strong hope that, after a little time is allowed for reflection, [the Confederate states] will secede from the position they have taken .... [I was] well pleased with the President’s frankness.” [*NYT*, p. 2]
- Mar. 29 **Great Britain** takes steps to recognize the Confederate government; England and France “are fitting out a powerful fleet of war steamers for the United States,” although the purpose of these ships is not announced. [*NYT*, p. 1]
- April **TN** From the memoirs of Jeremiah Walker Cullom, a Methodist minister: “I felt much concern on the subject of volunteering as a soldier. . . . There was one thing that troubled me greatly. That was whether a preacher of the Gospel ought or had the right to take up arms and engage in the strife. . . . [*He eventually joins the army in Murfreesboro.*] As we had to elect a Chaplaincy my name began to be spoken of. . . . Col. Peebles remarked that he had never heard such tremendously patriotic preaching in his life. . . . I was almost unanimously elected Chaplain of the 24<sup>th</sup> Tenn. [Volunteer] Regiment.”
- Apr. 1 The Charleston *Mercury* reports that Secretary Chase has issued orders for **raising African American regiments** – “arming the free blacks of the North to aid insurgent negroes in the South.” Northern newspapers call this a “monstrous invention” and accuse the South of “manufacturing a sectional hostility that has no existence outside of their own selfish and ambitious breasts.” [*NYT*, p. 4]
- “ Reports from Charleston suggest that if the Administration does not withdraw Federal troops from Fort Sumter soon, “the Fort will be attacked and captured.” [*New York Times*, p. 8] Meanwhile, Kansas prepares to elect its first Senators.
- Apr. 5 Mortar batteries on Morris Island fire three shots at an unknown schooner that is attempting to enter the **Charleston harbor** without displaying her colors. Later in the day two Federal officers land from Fort Sumter under a white flag; one returns to the Fort; the second leaves for Washington. [*NYT*, p. 1] Meanwhile, although the Secessionists in the Richmond Convention claim to be making headway, most of the population is still said to favor remaining in the Union.
- Apr. 6 In **Charleston** every man has been ordered on duty; the state is said to be prepared for any emergency. The *New York Times* reports, “A terrible moment is evidently at hand. The news from Washington and New York to-night corroborates the general impression that within twenty-four hours war will be upon us .... The excitement throughout is intense, and everything wears a war-like aspect.” [p. 1]
- Apr. 8 Eight companies of **Confederate troops** leave Macon, Georgia, for Pensacola.



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In Charleston, a reported 5,000 Southern troops are ready to take the field within 24 hours. No formal demand for the surrender of Fort Sumter has yet been made, but everyone now expects an attack on the fort. Gen. Beauregard is stationing new companies of volunteers all around the harbor. In Montgomery, the Confederate Cabinet remains in session all day.

- Apr. 11      The Floating Battery is towed into position between Sullivan's Island and Fort Sumter. About 7,000 Confederate troops are now at the fortifications. When a formal demand is finally made for the unconditional surrender of the fort, Major Anderson refuses.
- “              Meanwhile, the citizens of the **Arizona Territory** vote themselves out of the Union. Unfortunately, the dismantling of the Federal forts will leave many of the white settlers at the mercy of the Apache, who quickly gain control of the area and force surviving settlers to seek safety in Tucson.
- Apr. 12      Confederate shore batteries under General Beauregard fire on the Union-held **Fort Sumter** in Charleston, South Carolina, in the first engagement of the **Civil War**. After a 34-hour bombardment, Major Anderson surrenders the fort. Unified by their response to this attack on their flag, Republicans and Democrats in the Northern tier of states suddenly form what would previously have been an unattainable coalition and come together as Unionists, instantly uniting against this “treason by force.” [Hunt]
- Mid-Apr.     **TN** When Governor Harris calls for another election to consider secession, Tennesseans take sides, the East tending to support the Union, the West leaning toward secession. In Memphis, banners proclaim:
- We have exhausted argument; we now stand by our arms.
  - Secession our only Remedy.
  - Anti-Coercion, Southern Rights, and Southern Honor before Union.
  - A United South will prevent Civil War
- Apr. 15      **As Fort Sumter surrenders, Lincoln declares a state of insurrection and issues a call for 75,000 troops to quell the Southern rebellion.** Recruitment and military training begin in earnest.
- Apr. 17      Following a day during which the Convention meets in secret session, **Virginia effectively secedes from the Union.** A voter referendum will follow on May 23, at which point secession becomes official, but the state's position is now clear as state troops begin to seize Federal property. Less clear are the positions of crucial border states Maryland and Kentucky, whose populations are deeply split.
- “              **TN** Tennessee Governor Isham Harris notifies Secretary of War Cameron that the state will not honor President Lincoln's demand for two regiments of **Tennessee Militia.** Kentucky likewise refuses to send troops to Washington.
- “              **TN** A Memphis letter to the editor tells of Miss Mary L. Bayless, “An exemplification of the true Southern woman,” who turned over her bracelet to Col. Preston Smith of the 154<sup>th</sup> Regiment of TN Volunteers, saying, “I call upon the young ladies of Memphis to spare one bracelet, or other piece of jewelry, for the benefit of the noble 154<sup>th</sup>.” [Brock, p. 3]

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- “ **TN** A letter to a newspaper editor from “Ladies of Memphis” vows, “Though we cannot bear arms, yet our hearts are with you, and our hands are at your service to make clothing, flags, or anything that a patriotic woman can do for the Southern men & Southern independence.” Women’s groups form sewing circles to make flags, uniforms, and bandages, under such names as “the Methodist Episcopal Church’s Ladies Military Sewing Society.” Newspapers even print lists of recommended items for volunteers to make. [Brock, pp. 3-11.]
- Apr. 19 False reports circulate concerning a Southern troop movement toward Washington. Troops from Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, and the New England states begin to assemble. Even Quebec sends 600 men. Virginia forces take control of Harper’s Ferry. **Lincoln orders a blockade of all Confederate ports.**
- Apr. 20 **TN** “All this week the City intensely excited—waves of revolution tempestuous.” [Lindsley] **Col. Robert E. Lee** resigns his commission in the U.S. Army. The Virginia militia seizes the Norfolk Navy Yard. Three Pennsylvania soldiers are killed in Baltimore when pro-secession rioters attack them. [NYT, p. 1] By Presidential order, troops will no longer move through Baltimore.
- Apr. 21 Several railroad bridges in Maryland are destroyed and wires and tracks in Delaware and Pennsylvania are damaged. The manufacturers of Sharp’s rifles & Colt revolvers announce that they will sell no weapons to the South. [NYT, p. 5] Several reports surface about slave uprisings in Southern and Border States. The Army expects to have 25,000 troops under arms at the Capital within the week. Women are encouraged to help by raising money for the Union, preparing lint (wound dressings) and bandages for hospitals, and serving as nurses.
- Apr. 22 **TN** The *Richmond Dispatch* reports on the rude treatment of **Andrew Johnson** by a large crowd in Lynchburg, Virginia, as he passed through on his way from Washington to Tennessee – “A large crowd assembled and groaned him, and offered every indignity he deserved, including pulling his nose.” The conductor and others intervene, and Johnson is eventually able to continue on his way.
- “ Senator Breckinridge denounces Lincoln’s proclamation as illegal until after a declaration of hostilities is approved by Congress. [New York Times, p. 1]
- Apr. 24 Word comes that Jefferson Davis is transferring his Capital to **Richmond**, and that Virginia is his chosen battleground. [New York Times, p. 4] General Lee, with 5,000 Virginia troops, is said to be holding Arlington Heights.
- Apr. 25 **TN** “I have joined the Nashville Guards commanded by Major Heiman, a gallant officer who has seen service in the wilds of Mexico.” [William L. B. Lawrence diary – Note: Adolphus Heiman, a prominent Nashville architect, designed St. Mary’s Catholic Church and the Belmont Mansion, the Giles County Courthouse, and many other buildings and monuments. A Colonel in the 10<sup>th</sup> TN Regiment, he was taken prisoner in 1862 and died later that year.]
- Apr. 26 Arkansas State troops have taken Fort Smith. A large store of weapons is moved from the St. Louis arsenal (Missouri’s loyalties are still unclear.) to Illinois. [NYT, p.8] Over 500 slaves have fled from Maryland into Pennsylvania.
- Apr. 30 **TN** The Tennessee State Legislature has convened in secret session. Rumors say they have adopted a secession ordinance, which they will announce after an

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attack on Washington that is expected to take place on May 4.

- May 1      The *Louisville Journal* reports a speech by **John Breckinridge** urging Kentucky to join with the seceded states, saying the Union is “wholly broken up.”
- May 6      **Arkansas secedes from the Union.** The New Orleans *Bulletin* reports on plans to blockade Southern ports on the Mississippi after May 25. Foreign vessels entering port previous to the actual blockade will be given 15 days to leave, with or without cargo. England worries whether cotton will be exempted from the blockade, or, if not, whether it can be sent over interior routes to free Northern ports. The Southern States are the chief source of cotton supply for the world.
- “      **TN** The Tennessee General Assembly approves **secession** subject to ratification. Making a speech at Cleveland, TN, Andrew Johnson is threatened by members of the crowd. He claims to be ready for a fight and eventually wins over most of the audience, telling them, among other things, that Jeff Davis ought to be hanged.
- May 7      **TN** Tennessee enters into a “military league” with the Confederate government. Unfortunately, the state treasury is empty, and the state deeply in debt.
- May 9      **TN** East Tennessee complains that the Legislature does not represent the will of the people and threatens to secede from the state. East Tennesseans Andrew Johnson and Congressman Nelson swear allegiance to the Union. [*NYT*, p. 1]
- May 10      Most of the damaged Maryland bridges have been repaired, and Union troops continue to pour into Washington. [*NYT*, p. 1] A number of Confederate volunteers have passed through Baltimore. New Orleans newspapers carry this comment: “A letter has been received from the **Indian Nation**, giving assurances of the kind reception which the Choctaws, Chickasaws, Cherokees, Seminoles and Creeks, gave the Commissioners appointed to visit them by the Texas State Commission. The tribes are slaveholders and favor secession and the Southern Confederacy.”
- May 13      Travelers to Washington confirm accounts of large forces in Virginia; there are Unconfirmed rumors of skirmishing at Alexandria involving a company of Virginia cavalry. [*New York Times*, p. 1] Baltimore, the scene of recent violence instigated by Southern sympathizers, is occupied by Federal troops; martial law is expected to be enforced. There are now 31,000 troops in the Capital.
- May 15      **TN** The Tennessee General Assembly passes a Military law authorizing the Governor to call up 25,000 men into immediate service, with a reserve corps of 30,000, and to issue \$5,000,000 in state bonds. The Nashville *Union* says, “We understand that the Banks of the State will take all of the bonds .... However, if we go into the Southern Confederacy, of which there is no doubt, the Confederate States assume and pay all the indebtedness of the war.” On the same day, 10,000 Enfield rifles are delivered to the U.S. Government from England.
- May 16      **Kentucky proclaims its neutrality.** The state requests that both the Union and Confederacy refrain from moving troops through its territory. An announcement from Harrisburg indicates that John C. Breckinridge will take a Union command under Col. Anderson. (In fact, Breckinridge will become a Confederate general.)
- May 17      The Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church takes a strong stand against

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slavery, denouncing secession “in the severest terms.” [NYT, p. 5] British ships approaching Charleston are turned away by the blockade.

- May 20      **North Carolina secedes from the Union.** Governor Ellis telegraphs Jefferson Davis that the state has unanimously passed the ordinance of secession.
- “              **TN** The Nashville *Banner* reports on a speech given by the Hon. **John Bell** in which he clearly advocates a military alliance with the Confederacy, while arguing against complete secession.
- “              **TN** Following the recommendation of Major General **Gideon Pillow**, the Memphis Military Board authorizes monthly subsistence payments to the families of volunteer soldiers. This aid to suffering families will be sporadic and inconsistent. [Brock, pp. 132-136]
- May 23      Virginia’s voter referendum confirms secession. General **Benjamin F. Butler**, in command of Virginia’s Fortress Monroe, declares fugitive slaves “**contraband of war**” and says they can no longer be returned to their owners. On the same day, Union troops cross the Potomac River from Washington and capture Alexandria, Virginia, and vicinity. Colonel Elmer E. Ellsworth is killed by a local innkeeper and becomes the first officer to die in the war. He becomes a martyr for the North. [Smithsonian Civil War timeline]
- May 25      **TN** From William L.B. Lawrence diary: “Was mustered in to the State Service, am holding the exalted position of 2<sup>nd</sup> corporal & C & C.”
- May 27      **TN** The Louisville *Journal* reports on an assembly in Elizabethton, TN, where ardent Union supporters enthusiastically cheer anti-Confederate speeches by Andrew Johnson and Congressman Nelson.
- “              In a letter published in the *Louisville Democrat*, Italian revolutionary leader Giuseppe **Garibaldi** writes, “It pains my heart to see that you are dissolving your great nation into fragments and initiating civil war. May God save you from such a calamity. You may rely on it, no good, but universal evil will come of the dissolution of your Union.”
- “              General Benjamin F. Butler, in command of Fort Monroe in Virginia, refuses to surrender three slaves, declaring them “contraband of war.” He was the first to use this phrase in reference to human beings.
- May 29      **Richmond becomes the capital of the Confederacy.**
- May 31      **TN** Tensions mount between sections of Tennessee as war begins to seem inevitable. Stuart McClung writes the Comptroller from the office of the East Tennessee and Georgia Railroad Co. in Knoxville: “You must give us a secession majority of over 10,000 west of the mountains or I fear East Tenn. will defeat us.” [RG 61, Correspondence]
- June        **TN** The Southern Mothers Hospital is organized in Memphis. Beginning with 30 patients in a borrowed building on 2<sup>nd</sup> and Union and later moving to the Irving Block building before merging with the Overton Hospital, it will become the hospital most recognized for female involvement, at a time when many women are entering the nursing profession in order to help with the war effort.

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The Memphis Military Board supplies the medicine; other needs (ice, fuel, etc.) are donated. The Southern Mothers group will also provide burial services and tend military graves. [Brock, pp. 14-15]

- June 3      **Stephen A Douglas**, who lost to Lincoln in the 1860 Presidential election, dies of typhoid fever in Chicago. According to the *Chicago Journal*, his last words to his sons are said to be, “Tell them ... Tell them to obey the laws and support the Constitution of the United States.” Union troops under Col. Benjamin F. Kelley attack Col. George Porterfield’s forces at **Philippi**, resulting in a Confederate retreat. Many historians consider this to be the first land battle of the Civil War.
- June 8      **TN** “Election day on Separation & Representation or versus – passed off very quietly. Regarding the whole matter as null from illegality, I did not vote. In Middle & West Tennessee no canvass was allowed – the speaking & printing being all on one side. It is said that in East Tennessee a full & free canvass took place.” [Lindsley]
- “      **TN** The citizens of **Tennessee** vote 105,000 to 47,000 to **secede** from the Union, despite the fact that many Tennesseans – possibly a majority – are opposed to secession. [<http://www.tnstate.edu/library/digital/document.htm>] Out of the 7000+ votes cast in Shelby County, only 4 are for “no separation” and 5 for Union. Only five West Tennessee counties (Carroll, Decatur, Hardin, Henderson, and Weakley) deliver majority votes for the Union. Three Middle Tennessee counties (Franklin, Lincoln, and Humphreys) vote unanimously to secede. In Nashville the vote is 3,033 for Separation, 249 against. In East Tennessee the vote is more than two-to-one against secession. Arkansas, Virginia, and North Carolina have also seceded, following the events at Fort Sumter. **Tennessee has become the final state to join the Confederacy.** Five Border Slave States will ultimately elect not to secede: Missouri, Kentucky, West Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware.
- June 10      Rebel troops destroy two more **railroad bridges** in Maryland. Skirmishes are reported along the Potomac River And the C&O Canal, and near Harper’s Ferry. Federal troops start moving up the Potomac; the 11<sup>th</sup> Indiana Zouaves take possession of Cumberland, MD.
- June 12      Fighting continues at **Clear Spring** following attempts by Virginia troops to destroy Dam No. 5 on the C&O Canal. The New Orleans *Bee* reports that several British & Confederate ships have been boarded and held by Union troops.
- June 14      The Memphis *Appeal* lists the Tennessee counties in which a majority voted to remain in the Union. They are Anderson, Bradley, Campbell, Carter, Claiborne, Cocke, Grainger, Greene, Hamilton, Hancock, Hawkins, Jefferson, Knox, Marion, Monroe, Roane, Sevier, Sullivan, Union, Washington, all in East Tennessee; and Decatur, Macon, and Wayne counties farther west. The same edition reports that a state warrant has been issued for the arrest of Andrew Johnson for treason to Tennessee.
- June 15      Reports indicate that Confederate troops have abandoned Harper’s Ferry, have burned the armory, most government buildings, and the railroad bridge, and are in retreat toward Manassas Junction.
- June 16      The Mobile *Mercury* stirs up unexpected conflict over “Dixie’s Land,” elsewhere

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described as “the inspiring melody which the Southern people, by general consent, have adopted as their ‘national air’ – a sort of cotton ‘Yankee Doodle.’” The *Mercury*’s editor grumbles that it is “absurd to imagine that **Dixie**, a dancing, capering, rowdyish, bacchanalian negro air, will ever be the music of such words as a nation of *free* men can sing with any respect for themselves.”

- June 16      **TN** The Louisville *Journal* writes indignantly: “Twenty or thirty Louisville steamboats, bound up from New Orleans, have been seized at Memphis, by order of Gen. Pillow .... Our State can no longer send a boat down the Mississippi and expect her return. Our commerce upon that mighty thoroughfare is annihilated.” Reports arrive of skirmishes in Missouri between Union troops and secessionists.
  
- June 17      **TN** From William L.B. Lawrence Diary: “The **Secession** Flag now waves in triumph from our State Capitol, it was hoisted today amid much enthusiasm. Farmers are cutting wheat and rye.”
  
- June 22      **TN** In a speech in Cincinnati **Andrew Johnson** reaffirms his loyalty to the Union: “I characterize session as an odious doctrine, a heresy, a political absurdity.... Where it is admitted, no government, political, moral, or religious, can stand. It is disintegrating in its nature, and a kind of universal solvent..”
  
- June 24      **TN Bishop Otey** of Tennessee publishes his letter to Secretary Seward in the *Memphis Appeal*: Oh, Sir, speak but the words of gentleness and conciliation to your countrymen ... and who knows but that God ... by his mighty power [may] ‘still the noise of the waves and the madness of the people.’ Go to the President and urge him to desist from all hostile measures and efforts to compel an unwilling obedience to his Government.” Meanwhile an agent of the B&O Railroad the loss of 48 locomotives and even more gondolas and coal cars, which have been burned by rebel sympathizers in Baltimore.
  
- June 26      **TN** At the **Greenville Convention**, all East Tennessee counties except Rhea meet to petition the General Assembly to allow them to secede from the now-Confederate State of Tennessee and remain in the Union. Their request is denied.
  
- June 27      **TN** The *Memphis Avalanche* reports that \$2,000,000 has been offered by European buyers as an advance on the **cotton** crop, and that France and England will soon recognize the Confederacy.
  
- June 28      **TN** The Tennessee General Assembly **authorizes a draft of free black men** into the Confederate army. Most free black men will manage to evade both the Confederate draft and the local sheriffs compelled to enforce it.  
[<http://www.africanamericans.com/MilitaryChronology1.htm>]
  
- “              A reporter from the Richmond *Whig* writes from **Manassas** Junction: “I should not be surprised at any moment if this place were attacked, and yet I should not wonder if it were a month before a battle takes place in this region. It will be upon this spot, I think, and I tell you it will be a desperate one.”
  
- July 1        **New Orleans** protests the blockade of ships leaving its port. The Governor of Mississippi proclaims his state in danger and calls for additional arms.
  
- July 3        **TN** The *Memphis Argus* announces, “Yesterday Tennessee was admitted into The Confederacy. By proclamation of the President the Confederate laws are

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extended.” Tennessee takes control of the Nashville end of the L&N Railroad, to the great dismay of Kentuckians, who are now concerned about losing the entire railroad and all its rolling stock to the Confederacy.

- July 8      **TN Parson Brownlow**, writes in the Knoxville *Whig* of the reported conspiracy to capture him, Andrew Johnson, Thomas Nelson, and others and carry them in chains to Montgomery as traitors to the Confederacy. He bellows, “Let the fires of patriotic vengeance be built upon the Union altars of the whole land, and let them go where these conspirators live, like the fires of the Lord that consumed Nadab and Abihu, the two sons of Aaron, for presumption less sacrilegious! If we are incarcerated at Montgomery, or executed there or even elsewhere, all the consolation we want is to know that our partisan friends have visited upon our persecutors, certain secession leaders, a most terrible vengeance! *Let it be done, East Tennessee, though the gates of Hell be forced, and the Heavens fall!*”
- July 9      Circus entrepreneur **P. T. Barnum** is seriously injured by a runaway horse. In Skirmishing near Great Falls on the Potomac, two Union and eight Confederate soldiers are killed; a number on both sides are wounded. [NYT, p. 2]
- July 11     Col. Siegel and Col. Solomon, with about 1,200 men, drive back a much larger rebel force (6,000 men) near Mt. Vernon, **Missouri**. [New York Times, p. 8] It is also reported that 1,500 National troops are engaged in a battle with 10,000 rebels at Brier Forks, Missouri. [p. 1] Lincoln has visited several of the military camps – today he spends part of the afternoon with the Rhode Islanders.
- July 12     Word comes from Cambridge, Mass., of the death of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s wife, who was fatally burned when her clothing caught fire. Her husband, the famous poet, was badly burned in his efforts to save her. She leaves 5 young children. [Because of his facial burns, **Longfellow** is unable to shave, so he will grow the beard which becomes his trademark.]
- July 13     Gen. McClellan and Col. Rosecrantz win decisive victories against Confederate troops in skirmishes in the area around **Cheat Mountain**, West Virginia. Deaths and injuries are reported on both sides, and a number of prisoners have been captured. The problem of what to do with prisoners of war now becomes a hot topic in newspapers over the next few months. [New York Times, p. 1] Severe tornados in Illinois and New Hampshire leave widespread damage.
- July 16     **TN** The Tennessee General Assembly passes legislation authorizing the use of Confederate funds only, and outlawing the payment of all debts to non-slaveholding states, regardless of when they were entered into. [NYT, p. 2] New troops arrive daily in Washington from as far away as Maine and Wisconsin.
- July 18     Union troops under Cols. Porter & Burnside easily occupy **Fairfax**, VA, routing skirmishers. Newspapers reporting skirmishes throughout Virginia make an early Union victory seem easily achievable, particularly since Confederate forces are characterized as poorly organized & under-rationed. [NYT, p. 9]
- July 19     Fierce fighting begins at **Manassas Junction/“Bull’s Run.”** [NYT, p. 1]
- July 20     Orders from Washington prohibit harboring of fugitive slaves in military camps or permitting such slaves to accompany troops on the march.

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- July 21 To the surprise of Washingtonians who have come out to watch, Confederate forces (which include the 3rd Tennessee Infantry) win a victory at the **First Battle of Bull Run**. Southern General **Thomas J. Jackson** earns the name "Stonewall" for his tenacity in the battle. The terrified sightseers ("a number of members of Congress, and even ladies") flee back to Washington in their carriages as Union forces sustain significant losses. New skirmishes are reported in Missouri. The Ohio border is in a state of "continual excitement," as Union sympathizers flee North to escape persecution. [NYT, p. 3]
- " **TN** "The Great Battle of Manassas was fought today, with great slaughter on Both sides & victory perched upon the Confederate Standard." [William L.B. Lawrence Diary]
- July 23 **TN** The Nashville *Union*, telling the story of Bull Run from the Southern perspective, writes: "Gen. **Beauregard** commanded in person. The enemy was repulsed three times in great confusion and loss. The Washington Artillery of New Orleans, with seven guns, engaged Sherman's fifteen guns, and, after making the latter change position fifteen times, silenced and forced them to retire. Large quantities of arms were taken. Our loss was trifling." Much credit for the Southern victory is given to rebel sharpshooters.
- " **George B. McClellan** is named commander of the Army of the Potomac.
- July 29 **TN** The Memphis *Avalanche* reports, "We are gratified to learn that Gen. **Pillow** will in a few days lead a brigade of Tennesseans [*sic*] into some one of the fields of active service .... The known bravery and prowess of this distinguished Tennessee General ... give us the assurance that wherever his brigade shall be brought into action, feats of valor will be performed, and services rendered to our cause, which will shed imperishable glory alike on the chivalry of Tennessee and on the Southern arms."
- July 30 The Washington correspondent to the *New York Times* writes, "The hotels are again almost cleared of politicians—the most striking indication I have seen of danger to the Capital. Meanwhile, word comes from Illinois of a regiment made up entirely of schoolmasters.
- " Gen. **Benjamin F. Butler** writes to the Secretary of War on the subject of what to do with the former slaves whom his army has employed to dig entrenchments, and who fled with them when Hampton was evacuated: "What shall be done with them...? Are these men, women, and children slaves? Are they free? Is their condition that of men, women, & children, or that of property, or is it a mixed relation...? Are they property? If they were so they have been left by their masters and owners ... abandoned, like the wrecked vessel upon the ocean.... But we ... will not hold such property, and will assume no such ownership. Has not, therefore, all proprietary relation ceased? Have they not become thereupon men, women and children...? I confess that my own mind is compelled by this reasoning to look upon them as men and women. If not free born, yet free, manumitted, sent forth from the hand that held them never to be reclaimed."
- Summer **TN** I was too young at the beginning of the war, to realize the danger and trouble that threatened our country, but the memory of my mother's tear-strained [sp.?] face, and the anxious, fearful look that shone on my father's brow, will never be erased from my memory. [Hawkins memoir, p. 3]



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- Aug. 1      **TN** Letter from James M. Drane, 14<sup>th</sup> Tennessee, written to “My Dear Father,” Nashville: “Tell mother If she hears of our getting in a fight, not to make herself uneasy—for if we fall it will be in defence of our country.”
- Aug. 4      **TN** According to the *Chicago Tribune*, General Pillow, with 20,000 Tennessee troops, has moved into southeastern Missouri.
- Aug. 6      Lincoln signs the First Confiscation Act, authorizing Union seizure of rebel property and ordering Union officers not to return escaped or confiscated slaves who are working or fighting for the rebel forces.
- Aug. 10     Union General Nathaniel Lyon, credited with protecting the St. Louis Arsenal from take-over by state forces six months earlier [*see April 26*], meets a large Confederate army near Springfield, Missouri. Lyon’s 6000 men are defeated by Gen. Benjamin McCulloch’s much larger forces (12,000 troops) in the **Battle of Wilson’s Creek**, the first major Civil War battle west of the Mississippi. Lyon is shot in the fierce fighting, becoming the first Union general killed in the Civil War. Losses are heavy on both sides, and the Southerners, although victorious on the field, are unable to pursue the Union troops. In spite of his defeat, Lyon’s quick and decisive action is credited with neutralizing the effect of secessionist forces in the state. Missouri remains under Union control.
- Aug. 12     President Lincoln declares a National Fast Day, to be held the last Thursday in September. The Proclamation reads in part: “*And whereas, when our own beloved Country, once, by the blessing of God, united, prosperous and happy, is now afflicted with faction and civil war, it is peculiarly fit for us to recognize the hand of God in this terrible visitation, and in sorrowful remembrance of our own faults and crimes as a nation and as individuals, to humble ourselves before Him, and to pray for His mercy, -- to pray that we may be spared further punishment, though most justly deserved; that our arms may be blessed and made effectual for the re-establishment of law, order and peace, throughout the wide extent of our country; and that the inestimable boon of civil and religious liberty, earned under His guidance and blessing, by the labors and sufferings of our fathers, may be restored in all its original excellence.*”
- Aug. 13     The Nashville *Union and American* reports the arrest of the Hon. Thomas A.R. Nelson has been arrested in Lee County, Virginia, and is expected to be tried for treason. The *New York Times* protests, “If he is condemned and slain, his death will preach louder against the accursed rebellion than ever did his life.” [p. 4] A report from Knoxville claims that Gen. **Zollicoffer** of the Tennessee troops has suppressed Parson **Brownlow**’s Knoxville *Whig*. Balloon ascensions from Fortress Monroe in Hampton, Virginia, provide military intelligence about the placement of Confederate encampments in Virginia.
- Aug. 14     **TN** Gov. Isham Harris calls for 30,000 volunteers to make up a reserve corps. Supreme Court Justice **John C. Catron**, of the U.S. Supreme Court, is expelled from Nashville by the Vigilance Committee because of his refusal to resign his judgeship. He is forced to leave his ailing wife behind. [*NYT*, p. 81]
- Aug. 15     A number of skirmishes are reported throughout Virginia. The Confederate government passes a law for the expulsion of all U.S. citizens from the South. The Richmond *Whig* reports that a large number of Union prisoners are being housed in three large tobacco factories in that city. [*NYT*, p. 2]

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- Aug. 22 With increasing numbers of Indian attacks on stagecoaches and settlers, U.S. forces in the Southwest are rapidly being diminished by the large numbers of Southern soldiers who are resigning their posts and returning to the South to support the Confederacy. [*New York Times*, p. 3]
- Aug. 23 TN Gov. Harris declares Kentucky's policy of armed neutrality a hostile act.
- Aug. 25 TN A letter from **Parson Brownlow** to a friend in Washington is widely published. It says, in part: "An order has been made, at Richmond, to *suppress the publication of the Knoxville Whig*, but the notice has not been served on me yet. I have given them the devil in this day's paper, and I shall continue to say just what I please, until my office is closed or destroyed by brute force .... I will starve, or beg my bread of Union men, before I will surrender to this vile heresy of secession." [*New York Times*, p. 3]
- Aug. 27 TN **Jefferson Davis** announces the release of Congressman Thomas A.R. Nelson in return for "satisfactory pledges to the authorities respecting his future conduct." [*Richmond Whig*] Meanwhile, General **Zollicoffer** issues orders to his troops to respect the personal and property rights of all citizens of East Tennessee, regardless of their political opinions. [*New York Times*, p. 3]
- Sept. 1 **Ulysses S. Grant** assumes command of Federal forces at Cape Girardeau, Missouri. A strong earthquake rattles Cincinnati and Louisville. Citizens of East Tennessee write to Andrew Johnson for help from "vandalism" to person and property by the occupying rebel forces, "the violators of law and order."
- Sept. 2 Word arrives that Federal troops under Benjamin Butler captured **Forts Hatteras and Clark** on August 29, thus reducing Confederate interference with Northern maritime trade and providing the first notable Union victory of the war, giving the North a boost after the Federal loss at Bull Run.
- Sept. 3 TN The Memphis *Argus* reproves **Gen. (Bishop) Leonidas Polk** for impressing local laborers into service as Confederate "volunteers."
- Sept. 4 TN Gov. **Isham Harris** fires off an angry letter to Jefferson Davis, Maj. Gen. Polk, and Kentucky Governor Magoffin, expressing his displeasure with Gen. Gideon Pillow's actions at Hickman, Kentucky, the previous day: "This is unfortunate as the President and myself are pledged to respect the Neutrality of Kentucky. . . . Unless absolutely necessary there would it not be well to order their immediate withdrawal?" [*Gov. Harris Papers, Box 3, f. 1*]
- Sept. 6 Gen. Polk seizes two Kentucky border towns; Gen. Grant anticipates Polk's designs on **Paducah, Kentucky** and brings in Union troops to occupy it, thus controlling the mouth of the Tennessee River. Although Kentucky will officially remain in the Union, during the course of the war almost as many men from Kentucky will fight for the South as for the North.
- Sept. 9 TN As winter approaches, Gov. Isham G. Harris issues a call "to the Patriotic Mothers, Wives and Daughters" of Tennessee for "jeans, linseys, socks, blankets, comforts, and all other articles which will contribute to the relief, health and comfort of the soldier in the field."
- Sept. 10 Following the June 3 Union victory at Philippi, Virginia (now West Virginia),

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Rosecrans's advance forces attack Confederate troops under Generals John Floyd and Henry S. Wise, both former Virginia governors, near **Carnifax Ferry**. Despite a higher number of Union casualties, the superior numbers of Union soldiers force a rebel retreat. The Union victory gives the North control of **West Virginia** for the remainder of the war and paves the way for statehood.

- Sept. 11-15 **Battle of Cheat Mountain.** Gen. Robert E. Lee, in his first offensive of the war, is repulsed attempting to retake western Virginia. Three Confederate brigades, which far outnumber the Federals, are handicapped by insufficient intelligence reports and failure to coordinate their attacks. They ultimately withdraw rather than pressing their attack.
- Sept. 14 Some of the Southern ships that have been confiscated in Northern ports are to be refitted as gunboats. [NYT, p. 8]
- Sept. 16 The **U.S. Navy** calls home its African squadron, which has been apprehending slave ships off the coast, in order to increase its strength at home. [NYT, p. 4]
- Sept. 18 Despite a proclamation by Kentucky's governor that both Confederate and Union troops must withdraw from the state, Gen. Zollicoffer announces that the safety of Tennessee depends on the occupation of the **Cumberland Gap** and refuses to leave. Meanwhile, Lt. Governor Reynolds of Missouri presses Kentucky to take a stand on the Union blockade of the Mississippi River below the mouth of the Ohio in violation of the state's neutrality. [NYT, p. 1]
- Sept. 18-20 The **First Battle of Lexington** (Missouri), also known as the Battle of the Hemp Bales. Pro-Southern forces (10,000-12,000 men) under Maj. Gen. Sterling Price surround and attack a much smaller (2,700) Federal garrison. When the Union troops surrender, out of water and most of their officers wounded, Price captures a number of horses and weapons. [Missouri State Parks website]
- Sept. 25 **John C. Breckinridge**, still a U.S. Senator, flees into Tennessee. He will shortly emerge a Brigadier General in the Confederate Army and in December will be expelled by resolution from the Senate for support of the rebellion.
- Sept. 26 This is the day proclaimed by Lincoln to be observed by national **prayer and fasting**. All offices and businesses are closed, and the people are asked to offer "fervent supplications to Almighty God for the safety and welfare of these States, His blessings on their arms, and a speedy restoration of peace." Newspapers cover major sermons across the country: many are preached on the subject of repentance for national sins.
- Sept. 29 **TN Affair at Travisville** (Pickett County) This is the first military conflict in Tennessee and also brings about the first civil War fatalities in Tennessee, when four Confederate soldiers are killed, and four more captured.
- Oct. 3 **Chief John Ross** has urged the Cherokee to maintain neutrality in the War, fearing that they would lose the rights granted them by government treaties, but he finally succumbs to pressure to join the Confederacy. It will be a costly choice for the **Cherokee nation**, who will eventually return to the Union.
- Oct. 4 Fearing that the Civil War will prevent any cotton trade, England works to develop a commercial relationship with India, which has already seen a three-

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fold increase in its cotton exports. [*New York Times*, p. 8] Later news stories report attempts to develop substantial cotton crops in Jamaica and Peru.

- Oct. 8      **TN** The Memphis *Avalanche* takes over the *Bulletin*; a fire on the corner of Washington street and Centre alley destroys \$30,000 of property. Nashville merchants agree to take Treasury notes at par for debts and goods. Confederate soldiers are said to be “suffering from the want of tobacco.” [*NYT*, p. 1]
- Oct. 9      Union Gen. **Fremont** mounts a massive force and moves in pursuit of Gen. Sterling **Price**. Although Fremont will be replaced as commander before the end of this campaign, Price nevertheless has little choice but to retreat back to south-west Missouri, leaving Lexington and the Missouri River valley in Union hands.
- Oct. 12      **TN Andrew Johnson**, exiled to Kentucky, promises, “The time shall soon come when we wanderers will go home!” [*NYT*, p. 8]
- Oct. 18      Attacks and skirmishes are reported across Missouri, at Lebanon, Shanghai, Pilot Knob, and Wilson’s Mill. Sporadic fighting continues near Harper’s Ferry. The Petersburg (Va.) *Express* reports a naval engagement at New Orleans. General Zollicoffer’s troops conduct a series of raids on southern Kentucky.
- Oct. 20      **TN** The **Tennessee General Assembly** passes laws to repeal penalties against soldiers for carrying Bowie knives; authorizes tax collectors to receive Confederate Treasury notes; and makes it a capital offense for slaves to burn a barn or other outbuilding. A bill to makes slaves real property for taxable purposes does not pass.
- Oct. 21      In the disastrous **Battle of Ball’s Bluff**, Federal troops under Col. Edward Baker, who have not scouted the enemy, attempt to attack Confederate forces at Leesburg, Virginia, but are trapped and picked off after crossing the Potomac. Baker and more than 200 of his 1700 men are killed, and 700 captured.
- “      Union troops recapture **Lexington, Missouri**. On the eastern & southern coasts, an occasional Southern ship manages to run the blockade, but on the whole the **Naval blockade** is highly successful in keeping Southern goods from being shipped to European markets and preventing supplies from coming in.
- Oct. 24      **TN** The Nashville *Union and American* publishes a speech by Gov. Harris: “Our people have done more in the work of raising, organizing, arming and equipping an army than was ever before accomplished by any State in the same length of time .... within less than two months ... thirty thousand volunteers were organized and thrown into the field ... making in the aggregate thirty-eight infantry regiments, seven cavalry battalions, and sixteen artillery companies, which Tennessee has contributed to the common defence.”
- “      The Richmond *Whig* tells its readers to be prepared for a long war. “We of the South, who were to attack, have adopted a system of defence, and, so far, have uniformly awaited the advance of the foe .... Our conviction is, that a victorious advance into the enemy’s country is the only road to a lasting and honorable peace. We must fight, and we must conquer, before we can make a treaty.”
- Oct. 30      The War Department, responding to concerns expressed by Gen. Butler (see entry for July 30) issues an order encouraging the **employment of contraband**

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**labor**, compensating them or their masters (if they are Union loyalists) for their work. “This does not, however, mean a general arming of them for military service.” [*New York Times*, p. 1]

- Nov. 1      Thirty-four-year-old **George B. McClellan** replaces the aging Winfield Scott (75) as commander of the Union armies.
- Nov. 7      **Battle of Belmont.** This is the first combat test of the war for Brigadier General U.S. Grant, whose troops in this battle are the nucleus of the Army of the Tennessee. Grant has come to drive Confederate forces from Columbus, Ky., finds them already across the Mississippi in Belmont, Mo., and attacks and destroys their camp. The Confederates counter-attack, and Grant retreats to Kentucky, having made a positive impression on his superiors.
- Nov. 7      On the same day a U.S. Naval fleet captures Port Royal Sound, S.C. Reinforced by army forces, the Federals take Forts Walker and Beauregard in what comes to be known as the **Battle of Port Royal**, which may be seen as the first encounter in the Siege of Charleston, which will continue until the last days of the war.
- Nov. 8      The **Trent Affair**, also known as the **Mason & Slidell Affair** – The Confederacy has embarked on an effort to establish diplomatic relations with Great Britain and France, hoping to gain military allies. When the Union navy seizes two Confederate commissioners (James Murray Mason and John Slidell) from the *Trent*, a British steamer, tensions increase between the United States and Great Britain. Union sympathizers regard this as a victory against the Confederacy; Britain sees it as an illegal violation of their neutrality – the incident nearly precipitates an American war with Britain.
- Nov. 9      TN U.S. Maj. Gen. **Henry Halleck** is given command of the states east of the Mississippi and Brig. Gen. **Don Carlos Buell**, a West Point graduate with 20 years of military service, is put in command of eastern Kentucky and Tennessee.
- Nov. 10      TN Gov. Harris asks the people of Tennessee to donate “every double-barrel shot-gun and rifle they have, to arm the troops now offering their services.” [*Nashville Union and American*]
- Nov. 13      TN The Philadelphia *Inquirer* says that Union sympathizers in **East Tennessee** “have burned numbers of railroad bridges and telegraph wires to prevent the transportation of troops.” **Parson Brownlow** has been arrested and taken to Nashville to stand trial for treason against the Confederacy. The Tennessee Legislature authorizes Gov. Harris to seize all private arms and call 10,000 additional men into service.
- Nov. 15      **William Tecumseh Sherman** is replaced by **Don Carlos Buell** at the head of the reorganized Department of Ohio. Sherman had assumed command as senior officer when Anderson was relieved of duty.
- “      **Arctic** explorer Dr. J.S. Hayes reports to the New York Geographical Society on his most recent expedition. Hayes believes he has arrived at the “open polar sea,” but, in fact, what he saw was probably the Kennedy Channel, which separates Greenland from Ellesmere Island. He will make a third expedition in 1869.
- “      Jefferson Davis proclaims this day, November 15, as a day of fasting, humiliation and prayer and asks the clergy “to implore the blessing of Almighty God upon

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our arms, that he may give us victory over our enemies, preserve our homes and altars from pollution, and secure to us the restoration of peace and prosperity.”  
[*New York Times*, Nov. 17, p. 2]

- Nov. 19      **Battle of Round Mountain**, Oklahoma. Confederate Col. Douglas H. Cooper moves against a band of Unionist Creeks and Seminoles, who drive the C.S. troops back and then disappear. This is the first of three battles between the Confederates and the Native American bands under Chief Opothleyahola, who will ultimately flee to Kansas.
- Nov. 21      Accomack and Northampton Counties in Virginia are occupied by Federal forces under Gen. John Adams Dix. The **Virginia Eastern Shore** will remain in Union hands for the duration of the war. An explosion at the **DuPont** powder mills in Wilmington, Delaware, destroys three mills and takes the lives of several workers. [*New York Times*, p. 1]
- Nov. 24      Captain John Brown Jr.’s Company of Sharpshooters join Col Jennison’s command at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. As they march into camp they sing the “John Brown’s” song, which brings enthusiastic cheers from the troops.
- Nov. 26      **TN** Rumors abound that the Confederate Capital will be moved to **Nashville**.
- Nov. 29      A letter from a Massachusetts officer who is being held in a military prison in Richmond suggests for the first time that the Confederate government is willing to discuss an **exchange of prisoners** with the Federals. [*New York Times*, p. 1]
- Dec. 2      **TN** The Memphis *Avalanche* reports, “A large body of Unionists attacked the Confederate forces at Morristown, Eastern Tennessee, yesterday, killing a large number, and completely routing them.” Other papers say that the Federal forces, 3,000 strong, were led by **Parson Brownlow**, and that Major General George Crittenden has arrived at Knoxville to take command of the rebel forces. Over The next several days, Northern newspapers will make much of “the gallant” Brownlow’s win as “the most brilliant Union victory of the year.” [*NYT*]
- Dec. 3      In his first **State of the Union** address, Lincoln says, “A disloyal portion of the American people have during the whole year been engaged in an attempt to divide and destroy the Union.” He expresses concern about the damage the Southern rebellion has done to the country’s dealings with foreign countries, with Native Americans, and with business interests in general. He ends the speech by saying, “The struggle of to-day is not altogether for to-day; it is for a vast future also. With a reliance on Providence all the more firm and earnest, let us proceed in the great task which events have devolved upon us.”
- Dec. 6      **TN** The Memphis *Appeal* publishes a letter from Gen. Pressevant criticizing the Confederate defenses at and above Memphis. He insists that, if Columbus were lost, **Memphis** would be “entirely defenceless and indefensible.” A letter from Gen. Pillow to the Memphis *Press* insists that “we can and will hold the position against any force the enemy can bring against it,” he asks that all volunteers “remain in Memphis until they organize into companies and battalions. They must also understand that they must submit to military discipline and government.”
- Dec. 8      Brig. Gen. **Rosecrans**, West Virginia under his control, makes Wheeling his

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winter headquarters. [NYT, p. 3] Gen. **Hooker**'s Division, facing unpleasant weather on the Lower Potomac, adds four new regiments to its strength. [p. 8] A prisoner exchange is arranged, to trade 11 officers and 240 men from a North Carolina regiment for an equal number of Union prisoners from Richmond.

- Dec. 9      A communication received from **Parson Brownlow** casts doubt on the hero stories of the previous week: "I have never, at any time, left Knoxville or elsewhere with any guns .... I voluntarily signed a communication to Gen. Zollicoffer, weeks ago, together with 15 or 20 other gentlemen, pledging ourselves to promote peace, and to urge Union men not to rebel ... or to commit any outrages whatever .... I signed it in good faith, and I have kept that faith. [NYT, p. 1]
- Dec. 11      **TN** Martial law is declared in **East Tennessee**. Gen. **Zollicoffer** continues to haunt the southern Kentucky border. Skirmishing continues on the upper Potomac along the Maryland border. Garrett Davis is elected the new U.S. Senator from Kentucky, taking the seat formerly held by Breckinridge.
- Dec. 12      Army Command publishes a list of the deaths among Gen. Sherman's command since leaving Annapolis. There are 70 – none from fighting, most from typhoid fever, congestive fever (malaria), or pneumonia. [New York Times, p. 1] A railroad agent brings word from Nashville that there are 3500 sick soldiers there.
- Dec. 14      Southern Presbyterians appoint commissioners to a meeting in Augusta, Georgia, to form a new Assembly for the Confederate States. [NYT, p. 2]
- Dec. 15      A troop of Union men from Williamsburgh, Kentucky, march on Huntsville TN, capture five rebel troops, tear down the Confederate flag, and raise the stars and stripes. They capture horses and equipment, and return to Kentucky. Kentucky newspapers carry frequent stories about refugees from Tennessee – Union sympathizers seeking sanctuary, like the 1500 recently arrived from Weakley County.
- Dec. 19      Skirmishing continues in Virginia, Kentucky, Missouri, and West Virginia. **Washington, D.C.**, remains in a state of near-siege, as National troops fight back incursions along the Potomac River. Rumors of the mental instability of Gen. Wm. T. Sherman are hotly denied. [NYT, p. 4]
- Dec. 20      **TN** The Cincinnati *Gazette* quotes from a letter received from a reader who has just traveled from Tennessee: "There is no place between Bowling Green and Nashville that admits of defence. At Nashville they are making preparations to resist the anticipated attack, and ... if we wait on them till next year, they will probably be able to make a successful defence ... [but] the progress is very slow. On Capitol Hill a few cannon have been mounted, but now there are no defences that would more than momentarily delay our army."
- Dec. 21      **TN** The following day, the *New York Times* carries this information: "The only fortification on the Tennessee River, of much importance, is **Fort Henry** .... The armament of the fort consists of eight 32-pounders, four 12-pounders, and two 6-pounders .... At Dover, about a day's march from Fort Henry (westward), is the principal fortification on the Cumberland, below Clarkesville. [Note: the writer is referring to **Fort Donelson**.] It mounts twelve 32-pounders. Some 3,000 troops are reported to be at this point, with some field artillery.... Steps are also being taken for the erection of fortifications near Nashville; but not much has yet been done."

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- Dec. 24      In St. Louis **Gen. Halleck** issues an order that anyone caught burning bridges or destroying railroads and telegraphs will be immediately shot, and the towns and counties in which such destruction takes place will be made to pay the expenses of all repairs, unless it is proved that they could not prevent it. [NYT, p. 5] Word arrives that **Prince Albert**, consort of Queen Victoria, has died after a brief illness. The couple, married 21 years, have nine children. [p. 1]
- Dec. 31      The *New York Times* publishes an account of the Mississippi **gunboat & mortar fleet**, “a thing of such vast proportions and of so formidable a character, that it seems almost incredible that it should have been got to its present stage of readiness in five short months. The whole flotilla, consisting of twelve enormously strong gunboats, mounting nearly two hundred of the heaviest guns, and sixty-six mortarboats and their aids, are now at Cairo, taking aboard the powder and shot that will soon burst as thunder and lightning over the heads of the rebels of the Great Valley.” [p. 4]

Note 1: Many of the stories reported by newspapers during 1861, as the war begins, are little more than gossip and rumor – reports of deaths (especially of generals and war heroes) that must later be rescinded; efforts to revise reality in order to establish that the favored side has won battles that clearly were lost; emotion-laden tales of pain and suffering, or of implausible heroism and sacrifice, that reek of fiction and are obviously fashioned to generate “patriotism” (i.e., enmity and vengeance) in the hearts of readers.

Note 2: Most Tennessee battles and skirmishes named here have been taken from a list compiled by the State of Tennessee Civil War Centennial Commission, Stanley F. Horn Chairman. Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, TN, or from “A Survey of Civil War Era Military Sites in Tennessee” by Samuel D. Smith and Benjamin C. Nance, published by the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, Division of Archaeology, Research Series No. 14, 2003.



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