

CIVIL WAR TIMELINE 1865

- n.d. By the beginning of 1865 about 180,000 African American men (over 20% of the adult male black population between 20 and 45) have served in the Union Army, and many more in the Navy.
[http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/reconstruction/states/sf_timeline.html]
- n.d. **African-American soldiers** comprise 10% of the entire Union Army. These troops suffer extremely high losses: approximately one-third of all African-Americans enrolled in the military will lose their lives in the Civil War. [<http://americancivilwar.com/colored/histofcoloredtroops.html>]
- n.d. **TN Four Freedmen's Savings and Trust Company Bank** branches will operate in Tennessee (in Chattanooga, Columbia, Memphis, and Nashville) between 1865 and 1874. A significant resource for the black community, the bank will fail in 1874 following the economic depression of the 1870s, largely through mismanagement and fraud by the white managers of an important Washington, D.C. branch.
- Jan. **TN** William Scott begins publication of *The Colored Tennessean*, the first black newspaper in Nashville. [<http://www.tngenweb.org/tncolor/ads.htm>]
- Jan. 1 **TN** “[Still] we are under the clouds—as dull and gloomy as ever—perhaps even more so. There seems but little to live for—yet we live on.... Life to us is devoid of pleasures—and is made up of endurances.... To look back is most saddening—to look forward, even more disheartening for it seems we have nothing for which to hope.... I feel discouraged in every way—our cause seems to be sinking day by day.... [As] a family we merely get along, as agents for any good anywhere—we are powerless.” [Lucy Virginia French journal]
- Jan. 2 General **Sherman**’s troops cross into **South Carolina**, intending to destroy everything of military value in his path. He is particularly interested in causing havoc in this state, the first to secede from the Union, because of the effect it will have on Southern morale. Sherman will face limited resistance from Johnston, who is grudgingly respectful of the speed with which the Union general moves his army: “There [has] been no such army in existence since the days of Julius Caesar.” [J. D. Cox, *Military Reminiscences of the Civil War*, Vol. 2]
- “ **TN** John Mercer Langston, founder and dean of the Howard University Law School, speaks at Nashville’s Second Annual Emancipation Day celebration.
- Jan. 8 **TN** “The sentiment among officers and men caused them to say, ‘There will yet be a Confederacy!... I do not see that the prospect is very brilliant at present.... I do want to improve myself during all these years we are compelled to live under the cloud of war.... But yet I almost despair of being able to accomplish anything.’” [Lucy Virginia French journal]
- Jan. 9 **TN** The remains of the Army of Tennessee, still commanded by **Hood**, arrives in Tupelo, Mississippi.
- “ **TN Fisk Free Colored School** opens in the buildings of a former U. S. Army hospital. Tennessee Gov. W. G. “Parson” Brownlow advises students to be “mild and temperate” in their behavior toward white people, and warns teachers to be “exceedingly prudent and cautious.” The school will number 600 students by

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February and will continue to expand for some time.

[<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/singers/timeline/index/html>]

- Jan. 12 **TN** The Tennessee General Assembly amends the state constitution to prohibit **slavery**; voters will ratify the amendment in March. Tennessee was exempted from the conditions of the Emancipation Proclamation, and the state's own law (March 26) will predate the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (ratified on December 6) by several months.
- Jan. 14 **TN** The Tennessee Union State Convention nominates **Parson Brownlow** for Governor by acclamation. He cheerfully accepts.
- Jan 15 **TN** 23rd Army Corps embarks for the East on the steamer *Clifton*.
- “ Famed orator, Senator, and former Secretary of State **Edward Everett** dies in Boston. The official announcement comes from the President's office.
- Jan. 15 Waiting until after the election, Gen. Grant has asked the President to remove **Gen. Benjamin F. Butler** from his post. Butler's decisions have often been controversial, but he prepares a defense based on his failure to take **Fort Fisher** in Wilmington, NC, saying he was right and Grant was wrong – the Fort is impregnable. As he makes this argument before a Congressional Committee, word arrives that Gen. Terry has taken the fort. Butler's military career is over.
- Jan. 16 Under Union Gen. Sherman's **Field Order No. 15**, 40-acre plots of land are set aside in coastal SC, GA, and FL for the exclusive use of freed blacks, who can claim “possessory title” with option to purchase. [This is often termed “40 acres and a mule.”] Sherman's primary motive is to get rid of the multitudes of refugees following his army – they are not only impeding his military operations, but they are also consuming rations he needs for his troops. [Hunt]
- Jan. 17 **TN** General P.G.T. Beauregard assumes temporary command of the Army of Tennessee at Tupelo.
- “ To the delight of Southern newspapers, which herald the announcement, **Robert E. Lee** accepts the position of Commander-in-Chief of the Confederate Army.
- Jan. 20 Robert E. Lee requests that **Gen. Joe Johnston** be reinstated as commander of the combined armies of the Carolinas, Georgia, Florida, and Southern Virginia.
- Jan. 21 **TN** A report from Nashville states that, as battle casualties fall off significantly in the area, some of the buildings co-opted for use as hospitals are being closed. “All the churches have been restored to their owners, and will be swept, garnished and fitted up for religious worship.” [*New York Times*]
- Jan. 22 Gen. Sheridan, at his winter quarters in the Shenandoah Valley, requests 50,000 pairs of woolen mittens for his army, who are suffering from the cold; Thomas's troops have also gone into winter quarters.
- Jan. 23 A fire in the main building of the **Smithsonian Institution** in Washington, D.C., destroys a large number of irreplaceable paintings, documents, and other items.
- Jan. 24 Writing in her journal, Tennessean Lucy Virginia French considers some of the rumors that are circulating within the state: “There is a contraband camp [near

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McMinnville] where ... poor wretches literally freeze to death by dozens during this severe weather—they have no clothes scarcely—bedding, shelter, and food the same, while their friends the Yankees curse and abuse them for everything low and vile and no account. Of course, who expected anything else? The papers at present are full of Peace rumors. I think the Yanks are becoming quite as weary of the war as Rebs are reported to be.... A more important rumor is the old one revived—Intervention of England and France. It is stated that they will ... recognize Mr. Lincoln as President only of the States which elected him—thus recognizing the Confederacy.”

- Jan. 25 Gen. Lee sends out a call to the public to send in their “carbines, revolvers, pistols, saddles, and other accoutrements” to help outfit his impoverished forces.
- Jan. 28 **TN** Action at Athens.
- Jan. 28-31 **TN** Expedition from Strawberry Plains to Clinch Mountain, with skirmishes along the way.
- Jan. 31 U.S. Congress approves the abolition of slavery and involuntary servitude, sending the **13th Amendment** to the states for ratification.
- Feb. 1 **TN** Skirmish in McLemore’s Cove.
- Feb. 2 Gen. Grant orders all his field hospitals cleared and the patients sent to City Point General Hospital, starting rumors of an intended forward movement. [NYT]
- Feb. 3 Confederate Maj. Gen. McLaws tries to prevent Sherman’s forces from crossing the Salkehatchie River. Union Gen. Blair attacks McLaws’ flank in the **Battle of Rivers’ Bridge**; the Confederate troops withdraw, causing only a one-day delay.
- Feb. 4 Word comes from Fortress Monroe (Hampton, VA) that three Confederate commissioners have arrived to begin **peace talks** with President Lincoln and Secretary Seward. The commissioners are Confederate Vice President Alexander Stephens; Judge John Archibald Campbell, U.S. Supreme Court member from 1853 until his resignation in 1861; and Robert Mercer Taliaferro Hunter, former U.S. Senator and Speaker of the House; and Confederate Secretary of State (1861-62) and Senator. Jefferson Davis quickly announces at a public meeting in Richmond that he will “never consent to a reunited country.” [New York Times]
- Feb. 5 **TN** Skirmish near McMinnville.
- “ Southern newspapers carry editorials and letters critical of **Jefferson Davis**, blaming recent military losses on his poor judgment. It is widely reported that Robert E. Lee’s promotion – an event long called for by the public – was held up by Davis’s unwillingness to sign the orders. One report says that Davis could not sign earlier because of an attack of neuralgia in his writing hand. [NYT]
- Feb. 6 **TN** Affair at Corn’s Farm in Franklin County
- “ The *Richmond Whig* reports that the Army of Tennessee, which “needs rest and reorganization very much,” will winter at Tupelo and Slatillo, Mississippi.
- Feb. 7 Sherman’s forces continue their inexorable progress. Some of his troops are now only twenty miles from Columbia. Resistance is said to be feeble.

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- Feb. 8 Martin Robinson Delany, a writer, publisher, and physician, becomes the first African American to receive a regular army commission when President Abraham Lincoln promotes him to the rank of major in the U. S. Army. [<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USASdelaney.htm>]
- Feb. 9 **TN** Skirmish near Memphis.
- Feb. 10 **TN** Affair near Triune.
- “ The Army of the Potomac reports two days of intense fighting with Lee’s forces near Petersburg. Around 800 Union troops are listed as killed, wounded, or missing; the number of Confederate casualties is estimated to be about the same.
- “ Commodore Vanderbilt is arrested in New York for running over a woman with his carriage; the charges are dismissed when the complainant fails to appear.
- “ Gen. **Sherman**’s forces capture Branchville, South Carolina, thus isolating both Augusta and Charleston. Richmond newspapers announce that the evacuation of Charleston is underway as one of Sherman’s columns moves toward that city, and the other presses toward Columbia. Charleston residents destroy tons of their own munitions along the waterfront, but to everyone’s surprise, Sherman chooses not to attack the city.
- Feb. 13 A mass meeting takes place in Richmond with much discussion of the question of arming and freeing slaves, the point being that the white population is nearly exhausted, and the South must now make new sacrifices for independence. [*NYT*] An article on the same subject in the *Richmond Whig* quotes Gen. Forrest as being in favor of arming 200,000 black soldiers, but he also says he desires peace and is tired of scenes of blood.
- Feb. 16 **TN** Attacks on garrisons at Sweetwater and Athens. The Nashville suburbs are under attack by small bands of Confederate cavalry, raiding homes on the Murfreesboro and Nolensville Pikes, robbing residents, and taking prisoners.
- Feb. 17 Sherman captures **Columbia**, South Carolina, which is almost completely destroyed by fire overnight and the next day. [To this day it is not clear how the fires began – some blame Sherman’s troops, but others suggest that retreating residents set cotton bales on fire as they left the city.]
- Feb. 20 **TN** Col. N. G. Taylor is traveling through Boston and other Northern cities soliciting aid for the destitute citizens of East Tennessee. [*NYT*]
- Feb. 21 Having destroyed their own arsenals, cotton warehouses, quartermaster’s stores, railroad bridges, and two iron-clads, Charleston surrenders without a fight to Maj. Gen. Gillmore and his troops.
- Feb. 21-22 **TN** Skirmishes near Greeneville as 4,000 Confederate troops advance from Knoxville, reportedly to raid the Virginia and Tennessee railroad.
- Feb. 22 **TN** A public referendum ratifies an amendment to the State Constitution **abolishing slavery** in Tennessee. [Note that the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution will not be enacted until December 6, almost a year later.]
- Feb. 26 **TN** “Last Wednesday was the 22nd Feb.—the day appointed by the Johnson and Brownlow Convention for the people of Tenn. to vote the State back in the Union

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as a free State!... A sadder day and sadder faces I think I never saw. It was an understood thing ... that everybody should vote 'Ratification.' Federal bayonets were on hand—the motive power—and men marched doggedly into [McMinnville], voted, and immediately slunk home again—as if saddened—perhaps ashamed.” [Lucy Virginia French journal]

- “ The **Southern slave trade** is dwindling, according to the *Salisbury (NC) Watchman* – buyers are now more likely to lease a slave for a few months than to purchase one, since the hiring rates are more economical than the selling prices.
- Mar. 1 Richmond newspapers admit that guns and stores are being removed from the city in case evacuation becomes necessary. The *Richmond Examiner* reports what the *New York Times* will call the “Wild Skedaddle of the Rebel Congress.” So many members have now left the city, the legislature is finding it difficult to raise a quorum. Jefferson Davis urges everyone to stay and defend the city, which he says “has become the symbol of the Confederacy.”
- Mar. 1-4 **TN** Skirmish near Philadelphia, Tennessee. Operations near Athens.
- Mar. 3 A joint resolution of Congress frees the wives and children of black soldiers, regardless of their owners’ loyalty. [Berlin, *Families and Freedom*, p. 50]
- “ The U.S. Congress establishes the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands (to be known as the Freedmen’s Bureau); its function is to ease the transition from slavery, offering shelter, medical care, legal services, and educational facilities to former slaves. Though authorized to function for only one year, the bureau will continue in operation until 1868.
- “ Gen. Forrest warns his troops against “being allured by syren songs of peace.” He lists their efforts for the year: 50 battles, in which they have killed or captured 16,000 of the enemy; captured 2000 horses and mules, 67 pieces of artillery, 14 transports, 20 barges, 300 wagons, 50 ambulances, and 105 stands of arms; and destroyed 36 railroad bridges, 2,000 miles of track, 6 locomotives, and 100 railroad cars, amounting to \$15,000,000 in property. [Jackson, MS, newspapers]
- Mar. 4 **TN** On a rainy morning, the city streets almost impassable with mud, **Abraham Lincoln** is inaugurated for a second term, with Tennessean **Andrew Johnson** as Vice President. Lincoln pledges “malice toward none and charity for all.”
- “ **TN** Three days of heavy rains cause the Cumberland River to **flood** – the lower part of Nashville is “completely submerged,” and several bridges have been washed away. “It is believed the flood will be the greatest ever known.” [NYT]
- Mar. 5 **TN** Skirmish at Tazewell.
- “ Having crushed Early’s forces, Federal troops led by Sheridan and Custer occupy **Charlottesville**, where they destroy the Woolen Mills and several key railroad bridges before moving on to join Grant’s army near Petersburg.
- Mar. 7 The *Philadelphia Bulletin* announces the arrest of Thomas Clemens for a plot to assassinate President Lincoln on Inauguration Day.
- Mar. 7-10 In the **Battle of Wyse Fork**, Gen. Bragg’s troops are briefly able to slow Union Gen. Cox’s advance from New Bern to Goldsboro, NC., but poor communication

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hampers Bragg's efforts, and Union reinforcements force him to withdraw across the Neuse River, from which position he will be unable to prevent the fall of **Kinston** to General Schofield on March 14.

- Mar. 8 As the weather improves and the mud recedes, Grant indicates that he is only awaiting dry roads to commence his assault on Confederate forces at Petersburg. Lee's army is expected to take advantage of wet weather to evacuate Richmond.
- “ **TN** Skirmish in Jackson County.
- Mar. 10 The *Richmond Examiner* reports that Sherman's troops in South Carolina “have completely devastated the country through which they have passed. They have not spared a single house along their track, and have wreaked their vengeance upon that State with a most savage and murderous spirit ... [They] have spared nothing on their march which could be devoured by fire and sword.”
- Mar. 13 **TN** The Confederate Congress finally authorizes the recruitment of black soldiers to serve in the Confederate Army, too late, however, to actually prepare any black troops for battle. Some scholars believe that as many as 65,000 African Americans may have served the Confederate Army in some fashion during the war: slaves were impressed or leased to work on fortifications and other projects; some individual slaves accompanied their masters (usually officers) into war as personal servants; and a few (including future Tennessee legislator **Sampson W. Keeble**) actually fought, generally to protect their own farms or neighborhoods.
- Mar. 14 According to the *Washington Chronicle*, Andrew Johnson, complaining that he was ill and not fit to make the trip, had asked to remain in Nashville during the Inauguration, saying “he would rather remain at home to assist in the regeneration and restoration of Tennessee, than to be Vice President.” Friends in Washington had insisted he come, but he was so weakened by the trip he was required to spend several days in bed recuperating. Lincoln himself will suffer from a severe case of influenza during mid-March.
- Mar. 16 **TN** In her journal, Lucy Virginia French of McMinnville scoffs at Lincoln's “second Ignoral (I beg pardon, I should have said Inaugural).”
- “ In the **Battle of Averasborough**, Hardee's corps manages to hold up the Union advance for two days, but is finally forced to retreat.
- Mar. 18 **TN** Skirmish at Livingston.
- Mar. 19-21 Union forces under Maj. Gen. Mower confront General Joe Johnston in the **Battle of Bentonville**. After three days of fierce fighting, Johnston withdraws, cutting off Federal pursuit at Hannah's Creek. Sherman soon begins a pursuit of Johnston toward Raleigh.
- Mar. 19-22 **TN** Skirmishes at Celina.
- Mar. 20 The first Confederate company of black soldiers is scheduled to parade in public on the Capitol Square in Richmond, but the parade is postponed until the new recruits can be supplied with uniforms and equipment. [*Richmond Whig*]
- Mar. 21 General Schofield's troops occupy Goldsboro, North Carolina; Sherman's left is near Bentonville, and his right is moving into Mount Olive.

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- Mar. 25 Lee, his lines weakened by Grant's constant attacks, takes the offensive. He attacks **Fort Steadman**, east of Petersburg, hoping that Grant will shorten his lines and allow Lee's troops to get away and join Joe Johnston against Sherman. Then, having defeated Sherman, the combined forces would return to inflict major damage on Grant. Lee does attack and take the fort, but unfortunately, a quick Union counterattack not only regains the lost ground, but also destroys a portion of the Confederate front lines. Lee loses 5,000 men (including 2,700 prisoners) to Grant's 2,000 and can't get past the Union army to move south.
- “ **TN** Skirmish at Brawley Forks.
- Mar. 26 **TN** Tennessee voters ratify the new **state constitution**, which includes an anti-slavery amendment.
- “ Gen. **Sheridan** arrives from Washington with his troops to join the Army of the Potomac near Petersburg in time for the opening of the Appomattox campaign.
- Mar. 28 **TN** Skirmish at Germantown.
- Mar. 29 The **Appomattox campaign** begins, as Grant moves against Lee's defenses at Petersburg, Virginia.
- “ **TN** The combined troops of Generals **Thomas** and **Gillem** are close to Greeneville and moving toward the Virginia line, accompanied by an engineer's corps of 2,000 men who are rebuilding the railroads as they go.
- Mar. 30 **TN** “The Yankees look upon the Rebellion as having all its legs now broken all to pieces—its backbone which has been cut in two—‘chawed up’ and otherwise demolished ... is not annihilated, & the whole Confederacy like an over-ripe pear, falling to pieces of its own inherent weakness is about to precipitate itself piece-meal into the victorious arms of Sherman and Grant.” [Lucy V. French journal]
- Mar. 31 **TN** Skirmish at Magnolia. Forrest orders all cotton being shipped to Federal ports to be burned and urges his raiders to stop traffic on the Mississippi.
- Apr. 1 Grant sends **Sheridan** to attack Lee's right flank. Lee, his forces seriously depleted, sends Gen. Pickett with 10,000 men to block the Union troops from destroying the **Southside Railroad**, which Lee has planned to use as an escape route. This is the opening Grant has been waiting for – a chance to attack the Confederate infantry away from their entrenchments. Sheridan's men break through the Confederate lines at **Five Forks**, taking out at least half of Pickett's men and, under Gen. Wright, cutting the railroad.
- “ **TN** Skirmish at White Oak Creek.
- Apr. 2 Grant finally launches an attack against Lee's entire front line, which is too thin to stop it. **Petersburg** falls, and, when Lee telegraphs Richmond that he can no longer hold the city, the Confederate government evacuates **Richmond**. Lee's army sets out on the bleak march westward that will end at Appomattox, their only hope that Johnston's forces will move north to join them. That prospect, of course, is tempered by the fact that the Union generals Sherman and Thomas are also within striking distance.

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- Apr. 3 **Union troops occupy Richmond.** President Lincoln himself is said to be in the city, but his decision to go there is criticized by many news editors who feel he is putting himself in harm's way: "He has no right to put [his life] at the mercy of any lingering desperado in Richmond, or of any stray bullet in the field, unless some special service can be rendered by his personal presence." [NYT] Gen. Stoneman's forces capture the town of Boone, North Carolina.
- Apr. 3 & 14 **TN** Skirmishes at Mount Pleasant.
- Apr. 4 A dispatch to Washington from **Grant** says, "The army is pushing forward in the hope of over-taking or dispersing the remainder of Lee's army, Sheridan with his cavalry and the Fifth Corps is between this and the Appomattox, Gen. Meade, with the Second and Sixth, following . . . I shall continue the pursuit as long as there appears to be any use in it." [New York Times]
- Apr. 5 **TN Parson Brownlow** is inaugurated as Governor of Tennessee. The Tennessee General Assembly ratifies the 13th Amendment.
- " Gen. Sheridan intercepts a letter from Confederate Col. W. B. Taylor to his mother that says, in part, "Our army is ruined, I fear. . . . We are in line of battle this evening. . . . My trust is still in the justice of our cause and in God."
- " **Secretary of State William Seward** is seriously injured in a carriage accident, sustaining a concussion, a broken jaw, a broken arm, and other injuries.
- Apr. 7 Gen. **Sheridan** continues to batter away at Lee's retreating army. He has captured Generals Ewell, Kershaw, Button, Corse, Custis Lee, and others, as well as several thousand prisoners and a large number of cannons, wagons, horses and mules, and supplies ranging from cooking utensils to ammunition. General **Sherman's** attention now turns to keeping Gen. Johnston from moving north to reinforce Lee's troops. Grant predicts that Lee will soon surrender.
- Apr. 9 Gen. Robert E. **Lee surrenders** to Grant at Appomattox Court House, VA. Grant's terms are surprisingly liberal: "Rolls of all the officers and men to be made in duplicate...; the officers to give their individual paroles not to take arms against the Government of the United States..., and each company or regimental commander sign a like parole for the men of their commands; the arms, artillery, and public property to be packed and stacked and turned over to the officers appointed by me to receive them; this will not embrace the side-arms of the officers, nor their private horses or baggage; this done, each officer and man will be allowed to return to their homes, not to be disturbed by United States authority so long as they observe their parole and the laws in force where they reside." It is learned over the next several days that the Confederate Army might have surrendered sooner but for the mistaken belief that all their prominent officers would be executed as traitors. The generous conditions of surrender as outlined by Grant are unexpected and undoubtedly have a strong influence on the opening of negotiations between Sherman and Johnston over the next several days.
- Apr. 11 In his final speech, Lincoln makes a rare public endorsement of limited voting rights for black voters: "It is also unsatisfactory to some that the elective franchise is not given to the colored man. I would myself prefer that it were conferred on the very intelligent, and on those who serve our cause as soldiers."

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- “ Several newspaper editorials question what Gen. Johnston will do now that Lee has surrendered: “He commands the only army of any magnitude now left in the Southern Confederacy. . . . It has no tradition of success. . . . Opposed to Johnston is the powerful and magnificent army of Gen. Sherman. It is utterly impossible that Johnston should cope with it. He knows it would be ruin for him to try.” ... This week will doubtless wind up Johnston, one way or another. [NYT]
- “ The *New York Times* points out that “three rebel armies have surrendered to Gen. Grant – that under Buckner at Fort Donelson [16 Feb. 1862], that under Pemberton at Vicksburgh [4 July 1863], and that under Gen. Lee [9 Apr. 1865]. He is the only one of our Generals who has ever induced a rebel army to surrender; and he has induced three of them.” It is this reputation for unparalleled leadership that will guarantee Grant’s popularity for many years.
- Apr. 14 **Lincoln is shot** by John Wilkes Booth while attending a play at Ford’s Theatre. The bed-ridden Secretary of State **William H. Seward is stabbed** and wounded by Lewis Powell, a member of the same conspiracy, in an assassination attempt inside his Washington home. Powell also injures five others in the Seward household, who have tried to come to the Secretary’s aid. A jaw splint Seward has worn since his carriage accident on April 5 saves his life by deflecting the assassin’s knife from his throat. A third conspirator, Lewis Atzerodt, apparently loses his nerve and fails to carry out his task of assassinating **Andrew Johnson**.
- “ **TN Joseph E. Johnston**, now back in command of a consolidated C.S. force built around the remains of the Army of Tennessee, asks **Sherman** for terms of surrender.
- Apr. 15 **Lincoln dies**. Vice President **Andrew Johnson**, a Tennessee Democrat, becomes President (1865-1869). Having broken his leg jumping from the balcony at Ford’s Theatre, assassin John Wilkes Booth stops at the house of Dr. Samuel Mudd near Bryantown, MD, to have his leg splinted and bandaged.
- Apr. 16 In the **Battle of Columbus, Georgia**, part of the operation known as **Wilson’s Raid**, and widely regarded as the last battle of the Civil War, Union General James H. Wilson, having defeated Nathan Bedford Forrest at Selma, captures Columbus, the largest surviving supply city in the South.
- Apr. 17 President Johnson makes a speech threatening the leaders of the Confederacy: “When you ask me what I would do [with these traitors]..., my reply is, I would arrest them; I would try them; I would convict them; and I would hang them.”
- Apr. 18 **Sherman** and **Johnston** sign an armistice near Durham Station, NC. Because of some confusion over the terms, which Sherman has designed without consulting Grant or the Secretary of War, the final truce will not be signed until Apr. 26.
- “ **TN** Skirmish near Germantown.
- “ The following description of **John Wilkes Booth**, still a fugitive, is circulated to law enforcement agencies: “Height, five feet eight inches; weight, 160 pounds; compact build; hair jet black, inclined to curl, of medium length, and parted behind; eyes black, and heavy, dark eyebrows; wears a large seal ring on his little finger; when talking inclines his head forward and looks down.”

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- Apr. 19 **TN** Brownlow's *Whig* issues this statement in black-bordered columns:
"With profound sadness we announce the death of Abraham Lincoln—an event which will startle the world. . . . The sad end of Mr. Lincoln, at the very moment when all men were inclining to mercy and forgiveness, will arouse afresh a stern spirit of indignation and call up the endless list of wrongs inflicted on an outraged country."
- “ **TN** Sally Wendel Fentress writes in her diary: “Abraham Lincoln is reported to have been murdered together with Seward and his son. Andrew Johnson is suspected.”
- Apr. 21 Lincoln's body leaves Washington in a 9-car funeral train to return to Illinois. Several cities along the route – Philadelphia, New York, Buffalo, Cleveland, and Chicago – hold funeral processions as the train passes. By now most of the assassination conspirators have been arrested.
- Apr. 23 **TN** Lucy Virginia French's journal shows how long it takes for news to make its way around the country—this is more than a week after Lincoln's death, and, of course, Seward and Johnson were not killed: “A great tragedy has been enacted ... in the assassination of Lincoln and Seward.... I was out in the front yard clipping some cedars when the Col. [her husband] came to the door ... and he said very quietly, ‘Well, Lincoln is dead.’ I had not the smallest idea it was true.... The story [we read was] that Lincoln and Johnson had been at the theatre together—a man had rushed up and stabbed both—killing Lincoln and mortally wounding Johnson, and the assassin had himself been killed on the instant.... We are told that about 30 citizens of Nashville were arrested because they implicated Andy [Johnson] in the assassination of ‘Honest Abe.’”
- Apr. 25 **TN** Senator Peart submits a petition to the State Senate “from the colored men of East Tennessee,” asking for equal rights and protection under the law: “Without our political rights, our condition is very little better than it was before.” [NYT]
- Apr. 26 Confederate Gen. Joe Johnston meets with General William T. Sherman in North Carolina to negotiate **the surrender of the Army of Tennessee** and all remaining Confederate forces still active in North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida – it is the largest surrender of the war (89,270 soldiers). [Interesting note: Sherman provides Johnston's hungry troops with ten days' rations, earning Johnston's astonished gratitude and making the two men friends for life. When Sherman dies in 1891, Johnston will be a pallbearer.] Although CSA President Jefferson Davis is firmly set against surrender, and many commanders (including Forrest in Alabama and Kirby-Smith in Texas) still know nothing of either surrender, the loss of both Lee's and Johnston's armies – the largest remaining forces – essentially means that **the Civil War has ended**.
- “ **John Wilkes Booth** is surrounded and shot in Virginia.
- Apr. 27 **TN** The Mississippi River paddle wheeler *Sultana* is lost when its boilers explode near Memphis, resulting in the greatest maritime disaster in U.S. history. An estimated 1,800 of the 2,400 passengers are killed, either in the explosion or by drowning or hypothermia. A large number of the passengers are former prisoners of war who have just been released.
- “ **TN** Sally Wendel Fentress comments in her journal on the Lincoln assassination:

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“Saw a paper this evening continuing a letter from John Wilkes Booth in which he intimated his intention of doing some desperate act in revenge for the tyranny practiced upon the people of the South. His name should be written on the highest pinnacle of fame for that one deed. He has sacrificed more than any of his contemporaries, sacrificed his profession which brought him twenty thousand a year, home, friends, family, all for ridding the world of the most consummate villain under the sun.”

- April **TN** Abraham Jobe writes in his memoirs: “I must hasten on to give a very short account of a few of the many things which took place...during the War of Rebellion. This was popularly called a Civil War, but I think it was a Secessional War.... I espoused the cause of the Union very early, when the war clouds first began to rise. Although born and reared in the South, I could see nothing but disaster [in the campaign for secession].”
- April **TN** Few love letters can compare with this gem sent by A.R.V., a Tennessee soldier in Pensacola as he contemplates returning home to his beloved: “Dear sweet Mollie Oh my love of loves clarified and oil of citron, white loaf sugar of my hopes. And molasses of my expectation you have been absent from me three years The sun is dark at midday the moon and stars are black when you are absent. Thy step is the muse of the spheres, and the wind of thy gown when you pass by as a Zephyr from the garden of Paradise in the spring time of earthly flowers! I kissed you when last we met and my whole frame thrilled with sweetness! One of your “curls” touched me on the nose and that organ was transmuted to loaf sugar. Oh spices, garden of delight! Send me a lock of your hair send me anything your blessed fingers have touched. And I will go raving mad with exstasy [sic]. One look from thy bright eyes would transmute me _____ with the third heaven. Your words are molten pearl dropping from your mouth. My heart blazes at the thought of your being my bride wilt thou consent? _____ sincere lover A.R.V.”
- May 1 By the end of the Civil War, approximately 56,000 Union and Confederate soldiers have died in enemy military prison camps. Both Union and Confederate prisons are condemned for their callous handling of captives. [LSU Press]
- May 4 Abraham Lincoln’s body is laid to rest in Oak Ridge Cemetery, Springfield, IL.
- May 8 **TN** Sally Wendel Fentress has reconsidered her earlier harsh comments about the assassination: “Papers of a late date give an account of Mr. Lincoln’s funeral. Everything went off in grand style. His death was, as bad, the worst blow the South has ever sustained. Although I am not an admirer of Mr. Lincoln yet I still deplore his loss to the people of the North. He was always so much more lenient to his fellow countrymen...than any other Northerner. But it may be for the better that this great tragedy has been enacted at the closing scenes of this bloody drama. If we are treated as a magnanimous foe everything may now be settled amicably, but if persecutions such as hanging, robbing, taunts, jeers and inhumanity are to be practiced, trouble has only commenced.” [Diary, 1865]
- May 9 Having failed to defend Alabama against Wilson’s Raid, and finally having surrendered, **Nathan Bedford Forrest** makes his **farewell address** to his troops, closing with these words: “You have been good soldiers, you can be good

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citizens. Obey the laws, preserve your honor, and the Government to which you have surrendered can afford to be, and will be, magnanimous.”

- May 10 **Jefferson Davis** is taken prisoner near Irwinville, Georgia. The fact that he has attempted to disguise himself in his wife’s dress and shawl provides delicious fodder for editorial cartoonists.
- “ **TN** Lucy Virginia French writes in her journal: “Mollie was carried away to Tullahoma—she and Mrs. McMillan having been arrested.... The charge was ‘rejoicing over the death of Lincoln.’”
- “ The Lincoln assassination conspirators are tried by an army military commission.
- May 14 **TN** “Poor fellows [soldiers] – four long years of service – hardship and suffering, and all for what? And some are sleeping here in our crowded graveyard – and many will never even be so near in death – they sleep among strangers in unknown graves, on dreary battlefields. Oh! For what? For what? Did God permit this war? Shall we ever find out why it was allowed?” [Lucy Virginia French journal]
- May 26 In New Orleans, terms of surrender are offered to General E. **Kirby Smith**, the commander of the Trans-Mississippi Department. His acceptance on June 2 formally ends Confederate resistance.
- May 29 **TN** Pres. Johnson issues his **Amnesty Proclamation**; Johnson’s Reconstruction strategy disenfranchises large land-owners (anyone with taxable property over \$20,000) and former Confederate military leaders until their individual petitions for amnesty are approved; the federal government also now requires all states to ratify the 13th Amendment; only 10% of the voting population of any Southern state must take a loyalty oath in order for the state to be readmitted to the Union [http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/reconstruction/states/sf_timeline.html] Johnson also intends that each state convention declare secession null and void and repudiate the debt each Confederate state has acquired during the war. Unfortunately, the state conventions and leadership will openly defy or circumvent him, thus cutting off their best ally in Washington, since Johnson stands between the ex-Confederate states and the congressional Republicans. As a Democrat in a Republican administration that has no respect for him, he is ineffectual against the political realities of 1865-66, even though he has proved himself an anti-secessionist and a convert to the cause of emancipation in Tennessee. [Hunt]
- June Southern white men excluded from the general amnesty are first allowed to begin their appeals for individual pardons during this month. [http://itw.sewanee.edu/reconstruction/html/chronology.html]
- June 9 **TN** Explosion of ordnance building at Chattanooga.
- June 19 “Juneteenth,” the oldest known celebration commemorating the end of slavery – word of Emancipation finally reaches slaves in isolated areas of Texas. [http://www.tnstate.edu/library/digital/document.htm]
- June 30 All eight conspirators are convicted by an army military commission for the

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assassination of President Lincoln; four are sentenced to death.

- July 4 William L. B. Lawrence writes in his diary: "Peace, Glorious Peace once more smiles upon our distracted Country, swords will be sheathed & the artillery cease to belch forth its destructive contents, but yet it is dreadful to reflect upon the number of Gallant Spirits that have been sacrificed in the bloody contests that I hope never to see renewed again."
- July 7 George Atzerodt, David Herold, Lewis Paine, and Mary Surratt are executed by hanging at the Old Penitentiary in Washington, D.C., for their roles in the assassination conspiracy. Mrs. Surratt thus becomes the first woman executed by the U.S. government.
- August Southern states open Constitutional Conventions to renounce secession, disavow the Southern debt, & ratify the 13th Amendment. Tennessee's delegates have already completed their task – the voters ratified the new constitution on March 26. [<http://itw.sewanee.edu/reconstruction/html/chronology.html>]
- Aug. **TN** The first State Colored Men's Convention meets at St. John's African Methodist Episcopal Church in Nashville. Delegates call for the final ratification of the 13th Amendment, as well as full citizenship and black suffrage. There is no apposite response from the Tennessee General Assembly. [<http://www.tnstate.edu/library/digital/document.htm>]
- Aug. **TN** Night riders expand their terrorist activities throughout Tennessee, causing Major General George H. Thomas to increase the Union presence in the state. [<http://www.tnstate.edu/library/digital/document.htm>]
- September President Johnson demonstrates a greater tendency to align himself with white Southern land owners, declaring "white men alone must manage the South." He issues a controversial order to return appropriated land to its former owners, even lands granted to freedmen by Sherman's January 16 Field Order No. 15. Because many freedmen have already settled in and begun farming the land, some are stubbornly resistant to leaving. [http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/reconstruction/states/sf_timeline.html]
- Oct. 5 **TN** Six months after both Lee and Johnston have surrendered, there is **one more skirmish** in Tennessee, at the Stones River Railroad Bridge in Murfreesboro.
- October Southern states put local, state, and congressional elections in process, anticipating full restoration to the Union as soon as they comply with Johnson's order [<http://itw.sewanee.edu/reconstruction/html/chronology.html>]
- Nov. 10 **Henry Wirz**, commandant at Andersonville, is hanged. Wirz thus becomes the only Confederate official to be tried and convicted of war crimes resulting from the Civil War.
- Nov. 16 The Memphis Home for the Homeless Association merges with the Southern Soldiers Relief Society. [Brock, p. 128]
- Nov. 25 Issuance of Mississippi's first "Black Codes." Other states also pass laws imposing restrictions on black citizens: freedmen can work only as field hands;

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unemployed black men can be auctioned to planters as laborers; black children can be taken from their families and made to work; blacks refusing to sign labor contracts can be penalized. Strict laws control vagrancy, apprenticeship, and public transportation. In addition, blacks are forbidden to testify against whites in court, and they cannot serve on juries, bear arms, or hold large meetings.

[<http://web.gc.cuny.edu/ashp/toer/toer-timeline.html>]

[<http://afroamhistory.about.com/library/weekly/aa121900a.htm>]

December Ulysses S. Grant makes a victory tour of an unexpectedly friendly South and recommends lenient Reconstruction policies.

[http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/reconstruction/states/sf_timeline.html]

Dec. 4 U.S. Senate and House form a Joint Committee on Reconstruction; More than sixty newly-elected Senators & Representatives from Southern states (all but Mississippi have consented to the presidential requirements for readmission to the Union) are denied their seats in the 39th Congress when the Clerk refuses to include their names in the roll call.

[<http://itw.sewanee.edu/reconstruction/html/chronology.html>]

Dec. 6 **The 13th Amendment**, abolishing slavery, is ratified.

[<http://itw.sewanee.edu/reconstruction/html/chronology.html>]

Winter Southern cities begin to experience an influx of freedmen that will double the black population of the South's ten largest cities within five years.

[http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/reconstruction/states/sf_timeline.html]

The Statistical Cost of the Civil War

An estimated 620,000 soldiers died between 1861 and 1865. That number is roughly equal to the total American fatalities in the Revolution, the War of 1812, the Mexican War, the Spanish-American War, World War I, World War II, and the Korean War, combined. A similar rate of death today – about 2 percent of the population of the United States – would mean six million fatalities.

As the new southern nation struggled for survival against a wealthier and more populous enemy, its death toll reflected the disproportionate strains on its human capital. Confederate men died at a rate three times that of their Yankee counterparts; one in five white southern men of military age did not survive the Civil War. [Faust. Preface, xi.]

Afterwards “James K. Polk, a Democrat elected in 1844, managed to pass the Walker tariff of 1846 by uniting the rural/agricultural factions of the country behind lower taxes. They preferred a “tariff for revenue only” that would not show favoritism to any particular geographic or economic sector, while still funding government costs. In 1857 a non-partisan coalition lowered tariffs again to 18% (Tariff of 1857). Thus, before the Civil War the new lower tariff policy distinctly favored the agricultural South. Once the conflict began, however, tariffs increased dramatically in order to help finance the war effort, eventually reaching a whopping 49% for European goods. Southern states were not affected by the higher tariffs during the War, since they were under a blockade and any salable goods they produced were considered contraband. At the end of the war, as the Southern states rejoined the Union, they, too, became subject to the new, higher tariff rates, a factor which undoubtedly slowed their recovery rate and complicated any efforts to industrialize.” [Terrill, Tom E. *The Tariff, Politics, and American Foreign Policy 1874-1901* (1973)]

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Afterwards **TN** Confederate Private Marcus B. Toney of Nashville was in the Federal military prison in Elmira, New York, when he heard about Lincoln's assassination. A prisoner who cheered at the news was hung by his thumbs until he fainted – everyone else had the good sense to keep quiet. Much later, looking back on that grim April day, Toney wrote, "I believe it was very unfortunate for the South that President Lincoln was assassinated. [If he had remained in office] I do not believe we would have had the . . . carpetbag rule and other trouble incident to the reconstruction policy adopted by the government. I believe President Lincoln would have said, 'The South has made a mistake in secession, and you have not seceded because you cannot draw an imaginary line separating this country. We are Americans; let us be friends and brothers again.' Of course we were uncertain as to our fate, and would have felt easier if President Lincoln rather than President Johnson was guiding the affairs of the nation, for the reason that we knew President Johnson hated and had no use for Rebels or, as he called them, 'secessionists.'" [Toney, p. 109]

Note: 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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