What was the American Civil War?

KS3 Ages 11-14 ⏰ 2 min read

Between 1861 and 1865, the United States fought a war against itself. The **1** wasn't just any conflict — it was families fighting families, and it nearly tore the country apart forever.

Why Did the War Start?

The main cause was **1**. By the 1800s, the Northern states had mostly abolished slavery, but the Southern states still depended on enslaved people to work on huge cotton and tobacco plantations. When Abraham Lincoln became president in 1860, many Southerners worried he would end slavery everywhere.

Eleven Southern states decided they'd rather leave the United States entirely than give up slavery. They formed their own country called the **1**. But Lincoln and the North refused to let them go — they believed the Union had to stay together.

Think of it like a family where half the members want to move out because they disagree with the house rules. The parents (the federal government) say "No, we're staying together as one family," but the rebellious siblings pack their bags anyway.

How the Fighting Began

The first shots were fired at **1** in South Carolina on April 12, 1861. Confederate forces attacked this Union fort, and Lincoln knew he had to fight back to keep the country united.

What followed was four years of brutal warfare. The North had more people, factories, and railroads, but the South had skilled military leaders and were fighting on familiar territory. Major battles like Gettysburg and Antietam became legendary for their fierce fighting and massive casualties.

How It All Ended

The war finally ended when Confederate General Robert E. Lee surrendered to Union General Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox Court House in Virginia on April 9, 1865. The

Union had won, slavery was abolished, and the Southern states rejoined the United States.

But the victory came at an enormous cost. Around 620,000 Americans died in the Civil War — more than in any other American conflict. The country was reunited, but it would take many more decades to truly heal from the wounds of this devastating war.

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