

Lesson 6 The War's End

Lesson Summary

After Confederate victories in late 1862 to 1863, the tide of war turned in the North's favor.

General Grant targeted Vicksburg, Mississippi, one of the last cities on the Mississippi River still in Confederate hands. Grant surrounded the fortified city and laid **siege** for two months. Vicksburg surrendered on July 4. Now the entire Mississippi River was under northern control.

Meanwhile, in the East, General Lee once more launched an attack in the North. His forces encountered Union troops led by General George Meade in Pennsylvania, on July 1, 1863. The **Battle of Gettysburg** ended in a Union victory after three days. On the second day, a Confederate attack known as **Pickett's Charge** killed thousands of Confederate troops.

On November 19, 1863, President Lincoln attended a ceremony to dedicate a cemetery to those who had died at Gettysburg. His speech became known as the **Gettysburg Address**. In it, he proclaimed that "all men are created equal" and that the nation would undergo a "new birth of freedom."

After Vicksburg, President Lincoln put Grant in charge of the Union army. Grant ordered General Philip Sheridan to lead a force through Virginia to destroy everything useful to the enemy, including farms, livestock, transportation, and industry. He sent General William Tecumseh Sherman through Georgia with similar orders. Sherman's "March to the Sea" brought devastation from Atlanta to Savannah.

Sheridan's and Sherman's victories helped Lincoln to win reelection in 1864. In Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address, he presented a vision for the nation based on liberty, equality, and union. In contrast to Jefferson Davis's demand for equality and liberty for Southern whites, Lincoln called for a nation based on equality and liberty for all.

Grant began the drive to capture Richmond in May 1864, pursuing Lee's army across eastern Virginia. Union forces laid siege to Petersburg for nine months. On April 2, 1865, the Union army captured both Petersburg and Richmond. One week later, Grant and Lee met in a home in the town of **Appomattox Court House**, Virginia, where Lee surrendered. Grant generously allowed the Confederate soldiers to return home without punishment.

The war was over, but its effects lasted long afterward. Around 250,000 Southerners had died, along with over 360,000 Northerners. The ideas of nullification and secession were also dead. The question of slavery had been settled, but a difficult struggle for equality lay ahead.