

The Mudcat

The Online Mississippi History Newsletter for Students

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**Special
Extended
Issue!**



"THAT WAS A GOOD CATFISH,"

The Civil War

April 12, 1861 — April 9, 1865

As the 150th anniversary of the Civil War comes to a close, take a moment to trace its history in Mississippi. From secession in January of 1861 to its devastating and liberating aftermath, the Civil War challenged all Mississippians and left a rich history throughout the state for modern-day Mississippians to explore.

Slavery and Secession

"Our position is thoroughly identified with the institution of slavery – the greatest material interest of the world." — opening line to the *Declaration of the Immediate Causes Which Justify the Secession of the State of Mississippi from the Federal Union*

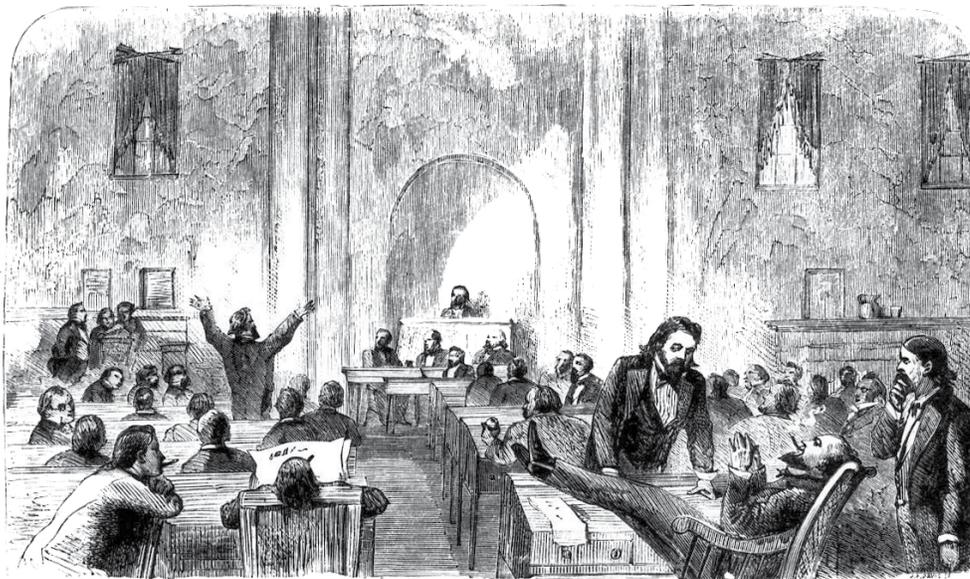
Slavery grew rapidly in the South in the years leading up to the Civil War and by 1860, slaves accounted for over half of the population of Mississippi. Republican Abraham Lincoln won the 1860 presidential election despite not being on the ballot in nine slave-holding states. Fearing that Lincoln and the Republicans would bring about the end of slavery and begin a race war, delegates from across Mississippi met at the state-

house in Jackson to hold a **secession** convention on January 7, 1861.

Most delegates favored immediate secession. Should war come, they argued, the disruption in the cotton trade would force European nations to intervene on the South's behalf. Other delegates favored gradual secession, urging the convention to wait until other slave

states seceded. A small number of delegates, some of whom were slave owners, opposed secession, fearing war would disrupt their businesses. John Wood of Kosciusko argued, "If secession is carried out, there will be nothing but ruin and desolation to follow in its path." In the end, the fear of losing slavery proved too strong. On January 9,

the delegates voted 84 to 15 in favor of leaving the Union, making Mississippi the second state to secede. The following month, Mississippi joined other seceding Southern states in forming the **Confederate States of America**. Jefferson Davis, a former U.S. senator from Mississippi, was chosen President of the Confederacy.



Mississippi's Secession Convention. MDAH Old Capitol Museum.

Mississippi's Civil War Timeline



Jefferson Davis*

January 9, 1861
Mississippi secedes from the Union

March 29, 1861
Mississippi ratifies the Confederate Constitution

May 30, 1862
Siege of Corinth ends after one month. Federal forces attacked the city, only to find the Confederates had left the previous night.

February 10, 1861
Jefferson Davis is chosen President of the Confederacy

May 12, 1862
Natchez surrenders to Union forces



General Ulysses S. Grant****

July 15, 1862
The Confederate ironclad CSS *Arkansas* destroys three Union ships on the Mississippi River.

October 3 - 4, 1862
Battle of Corinth. Union forces successfully defend the city from a Confederate attack.

September 19, 1862
Battle of Iuka ends with a Confederate withdrawal.



"A Scene in One of the Battles Before Vicksburg," *Harpers Weekly*, March 7, 1863 (depiction of Chickasaw Bayou)**

November 2 - December 20, 1862
Union General Ulysses S. Grant's first campaign against Vicksburg. He is forced to turn back after Confederate forces destroy his supply line.

December 29, 1862
Battle of Chickasaw Bayou. Union forces fail to drive the Confederates from Vicksburg's northern defenses.

May 14, 1863
Battle of Jackson. Confederate troops abandon the city and retreat to Canton.



Illinois Memorial, Vicksburg National Battlefield Park**

March 11 - May 13, 1863

Grant's second Vicksburg campaign. Union forces cross the Mississippi River on April 30 and defeat the Confederates at Port Gibson (May 1) and Raymond (May 12).



"Raising the Stars and Stripes over the Capitol of the State of Mississippi," *Harpers Weekly*, June 20, 1863***

May 18 - July 4, 1863

Siege of Vicksburg. After defeating Confederate forces at Champion's Hill (May 16) and Big Black River (May 17), Grant surrounded Vicksburg and laid siege to it for over a month. The city surrendered on July 4, giving the Union control of the Mississippi River.



"Destruction of Rebel Property at Jackson, Mississippi, May 15," *Harpers Weekly*, June 20, 1863***

February 14, 1864
Union forces capture Meridian, badly damaging the city.

July 17 - 23, 1863

Jackson is captured again and endures its longest occupation. The city is badly damaged, earning the nickname "Chimneyville."



Monument at Brices Cross Roads National Battlefield Site**



Governor Charles Clark*

June 10, 1864
Battle of Brices Cross Roads. Confederate cavalry rout Union forces and take hundreds of prisoners.

May 4, 1865
Confederate General Richard Taylor surrenders all forces in Alabama and Mississippi.

July 14, 1864
Battle of Tupelo. The last major battle in Mississippi ends in a Union victory.

May 22, 1865
Governor Charles Clark surrenders all state property to the Union Army, officially ending the Civil War in Mississippi.

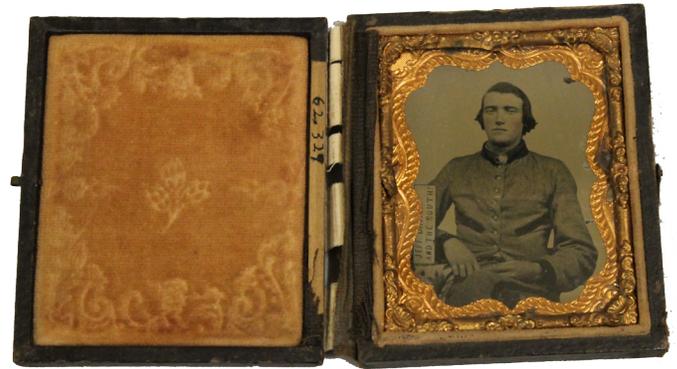
Civil War Life in Mississippi

Almost every white Mississippi family had a son, husband, brother, father, or friend away at war. With so many men at war, women took on more responsibilities, not only running their homes, but also family farms and businesses. On large plantations, slaves continued to work in the fields and perform house work such as cleaning and cooking. Others were taken by their male owners into battle or **conscripted** to work for the Confederate military. Some ran away, seeking freedom and protection with federal forces.

Many families faced shortages of every kind as both sides struggled to supply their troops. It was not uncommon to see Civil War soldiers wearing homemade uniforms, known as homespun. Newspaper reading and letter writing reached an all-time high as people were eager for any bit of news about their loved ones. New advances in photography allowed many soldiers the opportunity to have their photograph taken, images that oftentimes became cherished possessions to their family members back home.



Left: Hand stitched homespun coat worn by Captain T. Otis Baker, Company B, 10th MS Infantry, CSA. **Below:** Photograph of an unknown Confederate soldier. It was found buried beneath a Jackson house in the 1920s where it had been placed during the Civil War. **MDAH Museum Division Collections.**



The Aftermath of War



The end of the Civil War brought about the Reconstruction era. The Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was passed in 1865 and outlawed slavery, **emancipating** over 400,000 Mississippi slaves. The Southern economy was in ruins, and many poor whites and blacks became low paid **sharecroppers**.

Of the 78,000 Mississippians who fought for

the Confederacy, approximately 12,000 were killed in combat and an additional 15,000 died from disease. The actual numbers will never be known since many records were incomplete or lost. One year after the war ended, twenty percent of the state's budget was spent on artificial limbs.

Left: Artificial leg made and worn by CSA veteran William T. Robertson. **MDAH Museum Division Collections.** **Above:** Jackson in ruins. **MDAH Archives and Records Services.**



**Do you
know these
Civil War Facts?**

Members of Mississippi's Choctaw Nation sent several battalions to fight for the Confederacy.

The 1st Regiment Mounted Rifles fought for the Union.

From May 1863 to the end of the war, the state legislature was forced to meet in cities other than Jackson. Temporary capitals included Enterprise, Meridian, Macon, and Columbus.

Investigate More

You can visit sites and museums across the state to learn more about the Civil War!

The Only Confederate President's Final Home



Jefferson Davis was serving as a United States senator from Mississippi when the state seceded in 1861. Born in Kentucky in 1808, Davis moved to Mississippi with his family in 1812. He graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1828 and distinguished himself as a colonel during the Mexican War (1846-48). He served in the U.S. House of Representatives, U.S. Senate, and as Secretary of War under President Franklin Pierce.

After Mississippi seceded, Davis resigned from the U.S. Senate and was chosen president of the Confederate States of America in February 1861. On April 3, 1865, Davis fled the Confederate capital of Richmond as it fell into Union hands. He was captured on May 10 in Irwinville, Georgia, and spent two years imprisoned at Fortress Monroe in Virginia. In his later years, he gave speeches favoring **reconciliation** between the North and South and lived at the estate of Beauvoir in Biloxi. He died in 1889.

After Davis' death, his widow sold the property to the Mississippi Division of the Sons of Confederate Veterans with the provision it be turned into a Confederate Veteran's Home and memorial to Jefferson Davis and the Confederate soldier. Today the property is open to the public for tours. Learn more about how to visit Beauvoir at <http://www.beauvoir.org/>

All images from MDAH Museum Division Education.

Vicksburg: The Key to the South



The capture of the river city of Vicksburg was essential to Union success in the South. A 47-day **siege** of the town occurred between May 18 and July 4, 1863, when Union troops relentlessly shelled the town. Meanwhile, Confederate troops and civilians trapped in Vicksburg hid in caves, survived on cornmeal, and printed regular newspapers on wallpaper. Learn more about the battle, siege, and the torpedoed Union gunboat USS *Cairo* at <http://www.nps.gov/vick/index.htm>



There's more to learn about the Civil War! Check out the following websites for more information:

<http://www.civilwar.org/>

<http://www.ms civilwar150.com/index.php>

Civil War Corinth



Show What You Know!
Match it Up!
Answer Key

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. P | 9. J |
| 2. F | 10. C |
| 3. I | 11. N |
| 4. L | 12. O |
| 5. M | 13. D |
| 6. E | 14. A |
| 7. H | 15. K |
| 8. B | 16. G |

There are several sites in Corinth that tell the story of the Civil War. The Corinth Civil War Interpretive Center at 501 West Lindon Street features exhibits about American life in the 1860s, the war's western theater, and wartime hospitals. It also tells the story of newly free African Americans who were known as "contraband of war." The site of their well-organized village is now a park located at 902 North Parkway Street. Both sites are free and open to the public.



The Confederate victory at Brices Cross Roads outside of Tupelo is legendary. Prepare for your visit at <http://www.nps.gov/brcr/index.htm> where you can learn about the battle and other nearby sites related to the Civil War.



Grand Gulf was the site of a battle during the Vicksburg Campaign where Confederates destroyed a large ammunition magazine to prevent it being captured by the Yankees. Located just north of Natchez, the park includes a museum, observation trail, historic buildings, hiking trails, and campground. Learn more at <http://www.grandgulfpark.state.ms.us/>



On the Gulf Coast visit Ship Island, home of Fort Massachusetts. Begun in 1859, the Army struggled to build this military defense in a harsh climate, through hurricanes and yellow fever epidemics, and the Civil War. During the war the fort saw a naval battle, was occupied by Confederate and Union forces, and housed Confederate prisoners guarded by U.S. Colored Troops. Learn how to visit at <http://www.nps.gov/guis/historyculture/fort-massachusetts.htm>

Show What You Know!

Vocabulary

Campaign: a large scale military plan that involves a series of battles or operations during a war.

Confederate States of America: alliance of 11 slave holding states that seceded from the United States to form their own country, lasting from 1861-1865.

Conscription: mandatory enrollment of a person for military or naval service; draft.

Contraband: during the Civil War, this was a black slave within Union lines.

Delegate: a person who represents another or others, such as in a political convention.

Emancipation: the act of freeing those in slavery.

Reconciliation: when former enemies agree to a friendly truce.

Secession: the act of formally withdrawing from membership in a federation, particularly a political state.

Sharecropper: someone who lives on and farms a section of someone else's land and is paid with a share of the crop sales.

Siege: a military operation in which enemy forces surround a town or building, cutting off essential supplies, with the aim of compelling the surrender of those inside.

Match it Up! Civil War soldiers had a wide variety of nicknames for their equipment, experiences, and other soldiers. Many of these expressions were based on military terms, lighthearted humor, or biblical references. See how many you know by matching the word or phrase on the left to its correct meaning on the right.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 1. _____ Bombproof | A. The surgeon of the regiment |
| 2. _____ Bones | B. Food or rations |
| 3. _____ Yank | C. Sewing kit |
| 4. _____ Dog Robber | D. A guard or guard duty |
| 5. _____ Dog Tent | E. New recruits |
| 6. _____ Fresh Fish | F. Dice |
| 7. _____ Greenbacks | G. Shelter of poles and branches |
| 8. _____ Vittles | H. Money |
| 9. _____ Haversack | I. Union soldier, to a Confederate soldier |
| 10. _____ Housewife | J. Cloth sack for carrying rations |
| 11. _____ Johnny | K. A man's first experience in combat |
| 12. _____ Jonah | L. Soldier who cooks for everyone |
| 13. _____ Picket | M. Small, two-man tent |
| 14. _____ Sawbones | N. Confederate soldier, to a Union soldier |
| 15. _____ Seeing the Elephant | O. Soldier who brought bad luck with him |
| 16. _____ Shebang | P. Officer who never went to the front |

Create a Catfish Competition

How **would you like to see a catfish of your own creation on the cover** of the *Mudcat*? If you're an artist — or even if you're not — **craft a cool catfish graphic**, send it in to the *Mudcat*, and **YOUR catfish could win a coveted spot on the cover** of the next issue! Send all entries via mail or email to:

Outreach Programs Coordinator ♦ Museum Division, MDAH
P.O. Box 571 ♦ Jackson, MS 39205-0571
Phone: 601-576-6997 ♦ outreachprograms@mdah.ms.gov

**Congratulations
to Rosie G.
from Jackson
for creating this
issue's catfish
cover art!**