

IOWA AND THE CIVIL WAR

1861

January 9– February 1: Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Texas all secede from the Union joining South Carolina who seceded Dec. 20, 1860.

January 9: *Star of the West* an unarmed merchant vessel carrying Federal troops and supplies to Fort Sumter is fired upon by South Carolina artillery at the entrance to Charleston Harbor. Several reports claim a red palmetto flag is flown by the South Carolina troops at this engagement.

March 4: Abraham Lincoln is inaugurated as sixteenth president of the United States

April 12–13: Fort Sumter surrenders to South Carolina troops.

April 15: Lincoln calls for 75,000 volunteers to enlist for three months of service. Iowa Governor Samuel J. Kirkwood led efforts to raise and equip the thousands of Iowa volunteers who answered Lincoln's call.

May: The Keokuk Ladies' Soldiers' Aid Society was formed with Annie Turner Wittenmyer as an active member. She would continue to be a leader in the improvement of hospital conditions throughout the Civil War.

July 21: Confederate forces win a victory at the First Battle of Manassas.

August 5th: Missouri rebels fought with Iowa Union troops over the Des Moines River at Croton, Iowa and Athens, Missouri. It was the only Civil War battle on Iowa land.

1862

February 6: General Ulysses S. Grant captures Fort Henry, Tennessee. Ten days later he accepts the "unconditional and immediate surrender" of Fort Donelson.

March 6-8: Battle of Pea Ridge. Brigadier General Samuel R. Curtis of Keokuk, formerly the Colonel of the 2nd Iowa Infantry, leads Union forces to victory. Following his accomplishments at Pea Ridge, Curtis was promoted to Major General. Iowa suffered 443 casualties at Pea Ridge. 64 dead, 362 wounded, and 17 missing.

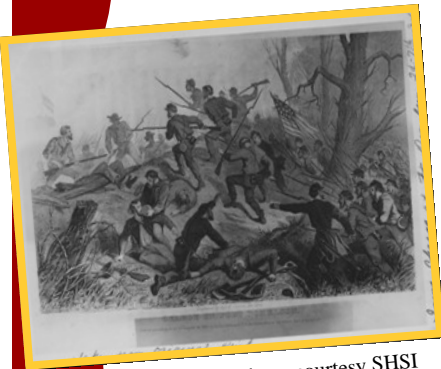
April: A hotel in Keokuk, the Estes House, converted into a hospital for wounded Civil War soldiers.

April 6–7: Union General Ulysses S. Grant prevails at the Battle of Shiloh in Tennessee. Eleven Iowa regiments were engaged in fighting at Shiloh, and more than a third of Iowa participants were casualties. 235 were killed, 999 wounded, and 1147 missing.

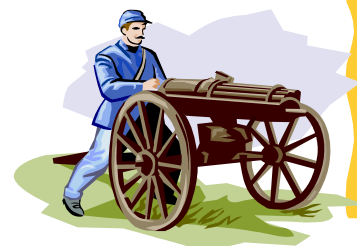
September: The Ninth General Assembly of Iowa appoints Annie Wittenmyer to the Iowa State Sanitary Commission as the state's first Sanitary Agent.

September 17: The Battle of Antietam, Maryland. Antietam was the bloodiest one-day battle of the Civil War. 26,000 men are dead, wounded, or missing.

December 13: Lee wins the Battle of Fredericksburg, Virginia.



Charge on Fort Donelson, courtesy SHSI



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1863

January 1: President Lincoln issues the Emancipation Proclamation.

March 3: President Lincoln signs federal draft act.

July 1–3: The Battle of Gettysburg is fought in Pennsylvania.

July 4: After a long siege, Confederates surrender Vicksburg to Ulysses S. Grant. Many Iowa regiments were fought in the siege of Vicksburg.

November 19: Lincoln delivers his Gettysburg Address.



Atlanta, Georgia. Ruins of depot, blown up on Sherman's departure. 1864. Library of Congress

1864

March 10: President Lincoln appoints Gen. Grant to command all of the armies of the United States.

June: Grenville M. Dodge of Council Bluffs named major general. During the Atlanta campaign General Dodge commanded the 16th Army Corps. The 2nd, 7th, and 39th Iowa regiments served in this corps.

September 2: General William T. Sherman captures Atlanta, a major munitions center for the South.

October 12: Lieutenant James “Bill” Jackson, hoping to prevent the reelection of President Lincoln, leads twelve heavily armed Missouri Partisan Rangers dressed in stolen Union uniforms in a raid through Davis County, resulting in the murder of three local citizens.

November 8: Lincoln is reelected.

November 15: Sherman leaves Atlanta and begins his “march to the sea.” Many Iowa regiments participated in this campaign.



1865

January 31: Congress passes the Thirteenth Amendment, which abolishes slavery throughout the United States.

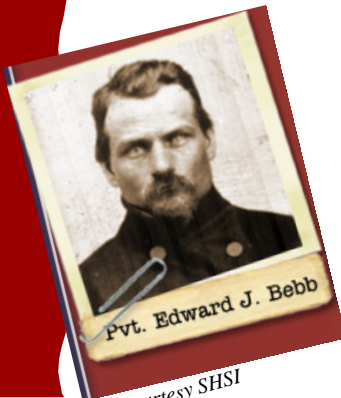
February 17: Columbia, South Carolina almost destroyed by fire set by Sherman’s troops. Many Citadel records which could have provided more information on the “Big Red” flag were destroyed at this time as well.

April 9: Robert E. Lee surrenders to Grant at Appomattox.

April 14-15: President Lincoln is assassinated.

April 16: The 4th Iowa Cavalry capture a fort, 12 pieces of artillery and eight battle flags from Confederate soldiers. Pvt. Edward J. Bebb captures one of the flags. He, along with others in the 4th Cavalry, received the Medal of Honor for his actions.

May 26: In New Orleans, terms of surrender are offered to General E. Kirby Smith, commander of the Trans-Mississippi Department. His acceptance on June 2 formally ends Confederate resistance. By the end of the war 76,534 Iowa men had served, and 13,169 had died. Of those deaths, 8,498 were from disease. It speaks volumes about volunteerism of service to the Union.



courtesy SHSI