Using Chronicling America for Historical Research
The United States Civil War: The Atlanta Campaign.

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Webinar Tips

Use the Q&A panel to ask questions.
This presentation will be recorded.

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National Digital Newspaper Program (NDNP)

A joint venture between the Library of Congress and the National Endowment for the Humanities
What is in Chronicling America?

- Part of the National Digital Newspaper Program (NDNP)
- Newspapers from 49 states and Puerto Rico and US Virgin Islands.
- 20+ million pages from 3901 titles.
- We will soon have all 50 states and more US territories.
- We will continue to expand the collection for the foreseeable future.

https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/
Years available, 1770-1963
Who decides what is included?

- In most cases, title selection is done by a local institution (one per state).
- They also oversee digitization.
- National Digital Newspaper Program (NDNP) partners.
- Usually a state historical society, library, or archive, or public university library.
- Criteria for selection varies.
Some considerations for inclusion

- Availability: does the title still exist and in what condition?
- Is it a “paper of record?”
- Historical significance.
- Diversity: geographic, ethnic, religious, political.
Newspapers in the 1860’s

- Most are about four pages.
- Small Staff: only a few have professional reporters.
- What gets covered is often at the whim of the editor.
- Often associated with a political party.
- No official government censorship.
- No photos or illustrations.
The United States Civil War 1861-1865

- 11 of the 33 United States seceded and formed the Confederate States of America.
- Fighting was mostly in the South.
- About 620,000 died
Spring of 1864

- Union
  - Success in the West.
  - Stalemate in the East.
  - High casualties.
  - War weariness.
  - They must win.

- Confederate
  - Defeat in the West.
  - Stalemate in the East.
  - Loss of the Mississippi River.
  - Still no foreign recognition.
  - Man power shortages.
  - They have to not lose.
Ending slavery is now a war aim of the North.

Prior to this, it had been a simply to “restore the Union”.

This has both national and international implications.
Why the Atlanta campaign

- This is a pivotal part of the war.
- The city is a critical rail juncture.
- The loss would be a serious blow to the Confederates.
- A failure by the Union would likewise be a serious problem.
- There is also a Presidential election in November.
Confederate Commander: William S. Johnston

- Cautious and Deliberate.
- Popular with his troops.
- Planned to rely on defense hoping to wear down his opponent and wait for him to make a mistake.
- He wanted to exploit Northern anti-war sentiment.
Union Commander: William T Sherman

- Cautious and Deliberate.
- Popular with his troops.
- Planned to use his superior numbers and material to overwhelm his opponent.
- Hated the press.
Sherman’s hostility to the Press

- Cleveland morning leader, May 17, 1864
- Orders the arrest, trail and execution of a “correspondent”
- The definition of “journalist” was different.
A minor fight in north Georgia
Not mentioned in the Northern Papers.
It is mentioned in the a Memphis paper.
The article also mentions the execution of Confederate deserters.
Battle of Rasacca, Rassica, Rassicca (Resaca)

- First major clash of the campaign May 13-15.
- Union Casualties 4000
- Confederate Casualties 3000
- Battle of Bull Run/Manassas 1861
- Union 2700 Confederate 1900
More battles, more casualties

- New Hope Church
- 1665 Union 400 Confederate
- Pickett’s Mill
- 1600 Union 500 Confederate
- Dallas
- 379 Union 1200 Confederate
- Gilgal Church
- 650 Union 450 Confederate
The newspapers frequently published the names of soldiers who were killed or wounded. These are usually from local regiments. Officers often get the most detailed coverage.
He is running for reelection as a Republican.
The war has been going for three years.
People in the North still support the war but are weary of it.
Generals can not ignore the political situation.
His northern Democrat opponents are focusing on the war and abolition

- Abolition is more popular now than it was in 1861.
- There is still “discomfort” with in the North.
- The war had been about saving the Union.
- Now it is about something else.
- Holmes County farmer Millersburg, Ohio
Former leader of the Army of the Potomac.
He is running as the “peace candidate”.
He appears willing to “compromise” on slavery.

His Democratic opponent: George B McClellan
The President of the Confederacy also has problems
Abolitionist fight back

- Slavery was the cause of the war.
- Therefore, slavery had to be eliminated.
The enslaved in the war zone

- They are often used as conscripted labor by the Confederate Army.
- Some stay, some flee.
- A few find work with the Union Army.
- It was dangerous, even in Union territory.
- Terms used: Negro or Colored
The Battle of Kennesaw Mountain June 22-July 3

- Actually several smaller battles spread out over several days
- Eventual Union success but again at a high price.
- 3000 Union casualties.
- 1000 Confederate.
General Hood: Battle of Kolb’s Farm

- Hood goes on the offensive.
- Suffers 1500 casualties as a result.
- Does slow Sherman’s advance.
- This wins him publicity
- The papers do not mention Kolb’s Farm
The name is a later invention from the historians.

So will not find it in contemporary accounts.

The place name is “near Marietta”.

Near Marietta, June 23.—Stevenson, supported by Stewart's and Hindman's divisions of Hood's corps, attacked the enemy's right at five o'clock yesterday (Wednesday) evening, at Manning's Mill, five miles West of Marietta, carrying two lines of the enemy's works, we holding the enemy's position and capturing sixty prisoners. Stevenson's charge was gallant and bloody, losing considerable. Hindman's and Stewart's loss slight. Colcock, commanding Brown's brigade, was mortally wounded; Lieut. Thomas Thompson killed. This morning our batteries are shelling from Keohesaw.

Marietta, June 23.—The details of the great fight on Wednesday afternoon are as follows: Hood's corps, held in reserve, was ordered at noon to the extreme left. When it got in position a battery of the enemy opened fire upon it. Considerable skirmishing ensued, when our line, under Hood, with Brown's brigade in advance, was ordered forward. It moved out with cheering and a furious battle ensued. We drove the enemy two miles and took possession of two lines of fortifications, captured twelve guns and a large number of prisoners. The loss upon both sides was frightful for the numbers engaged. Gleburne's division also engaged the enemy with success on the right. Gen. Pettus, of Mississippi, was killed. Colonels Walker and Stair, of Tennessee, are killed, and Colonel Clark, of Tennessee, mortally wounded.
July 17, Hood takes command

- Johnston is relieved of command.
- Hood takes over leadership.
- Johnston had failed to stop Sherman.
- They hope Hood can.
Hood does what Hood does
He attacks
He suffers about 2500 casualties
Union loses about 1750
This is a geographic feature so it is mentioned.
The Battle of Atlanta July 22 Hood Attacks Again

- 5500 Confederate casualties
- 3722 Union
- Battle of Ezra Church July 28
- Battle of Jonesburg August 31
- Union cavalry raids around the city
The Confederates burn some rail cars loaded with ammunition.

The fire spreads and causes a great of damage.

The next day Sherman is able to tell Washington that “Atlanta is ours and fairly won”.

September 1: Hood abandons Atlanta
Aftermath

- Lincoln is re-elected in November.
- Sherman starts his march to the sea.
- Grant takes Richmond April of 1865.
- The Confederate naval raider CSS Shenandoah surrenders on November 7, 1865.
People start publishing their “reminiscences”.
These are usually first hand accounts but from memory.
They want to influence how public and history remembers them.
Post war monuments and reunions
Army Newspapers
Atlanta Campaign Resources in the Digital Library of Georgia

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Georgia Historic Newspapers

- Three Million Newspaper Pages
- Over 1,000 Titles from 193 Georgia Cities
- Keyword Searchable
- Utilizes the LOC’s Chronicling America Platform

https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/
Dozens of Georgia papers published during the Civil War

Published reports from the front, correspondence from locals, and reprinted stories from other papers
America’s Turning Point Collection

Archival collections documenting the Civil War experience in Georgia from the Atlanta History Center, Georgia Historical Society, and UGA’s Hargrett Library.

Includes government records, correspondence, military documents, field reports, diaries, photographs, etc.

https://dlg.usg.edu/collection/dlg_turningpoint
Barnard’s Photographic Views of the Sherman Campaign

Albumen prints captured by a Matthew Brady studio photographer, circa 1866

This Hargrett Library collection features battlefield images from Atlanta, Resaca, Kennesaw Mountain, and New Hope Church.

Courtesy of Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library
Sherman’s Special Field Order No. 67

After Union forces occupied the city, Sherman called for all Atlanta citizens to leave the city.
Location: Geographic Limits
Date limits: Decade, Year, Month, Day
Search Fields: Names
Other military newspapers
Questions

National Digital Newspaper Program (NDNP)
https://www.loc.gov/ndnp

Chronicling America
https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/

Ask a Librarian (Research Questions)
https://ask.loc.gov/newspapers-periodicals

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