**Sherman’s Atlanta Campaign**

The Atlanta Campaign was a series of battles fought throughout northwest [Georgia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georgia_(U.S._state)) and the area around [Atlanta](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atlanta) during the spring and summer of 1864. By early 1864 most Southerners had probably given up hopes of winning the war by conquering Union territory. The Confederacy had a real chance, though, of winning the war simply by not being beaten. In spring 1864 this strategy required two things: first, Confederate general Robert E. Lee's army in Virginia had to defend its capital, Richmond, and keep Union general Ulysses S. Grant's forces out; and second, the South's other major army, led by Joseph E. Johnston in north Georgia, had to keep Sherman's Union forces from driving south and capturing [Atlanta](http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/counties-cities-neighborhoods/atlanta).

Sherman’s goal was to destroy Johnston’s forces, capture Atlanta and cut off vital Confederate supply lines. At stake was the South’s major manufacturing center and railroad hub. Sherman’s army far outnumbered the Southerners. But he did not use frontal attacks, instead he flanked (maneuvered around) the Confederate strong holds time and again to cut off supply lines. Ultimately, Confederate forces abandoned Atlanta on the night of September 1st and the early morning hours of the 2nd. Federal troops rode into the city the next morning.

Battle casualties for the four month campaign were high, approximately 34,500 for the North and 35,00 for the South. Sherman’s capture of Atlanta was a major blow to the Confederacy.

While Sherman failed to destroy his enemy, the surrender of Atlanta, boosted Northern morale and all but assured President Abraham Lincoln’s re-election bid. With Atlanta under Union control, Sherman began his March to the Sea, which laid waste to the countryside and hastened the Confederacy’s defeat.