Fitzgerald

Border States - based on article by Amy Murrell Taylor

The Border States, Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, and West Virginia, were located between the southern states that had seceded from Union and the Northern states. They were slave-holding states that remained with the free states of the Union. Citizens who supported the Union lived side-by-side with people who supported the Confederacy. Public opinion surrounding slavery was just as divided. Abolitionists set up new organizations and newspapers, while proslavery vigilantes tried to stop them with mob violence. Border States represented nothing less than the warring nation on a smaller scale.

These states tried to remain neutral, but they were strategically important to both the Union and the Confederacy.

* Maryland
  + surrounded Union capital , Washington, D.C., on three sides
  + Baltimore's port and railroads - would be important supply lines for the Union
* Kentucky
  + key to controlling the Ohio River, which ran along its northern border.
    - crossing the Ohio River into Kentucky to invade would also have meant dangerous beach landings for Union troops
  + river and the railroad lines - allow easy movement of union troops into South
* Missouri
  + on the Mississippi River
  + St. Louis was the home to one of the nation's largest arsenals

Maryland was the first to lose its neutrality. In April 1861. A Massachusetts regiment was moving through Maryland on the way to Washington, D.C. A Pro-Confederate mob in Baltimore opened fire as the troops approached. The Massachusetts soldiers fired back, and by the end of the day, 16 people had died. Lincoln wanted to openly invade, but his advisors told him not to. More Union troops were sent to protect the route into D.C. By mid-June, Union feeling dominated, and all six Maryland seats in the U.S. Congress were held by Union supporters.

Kentucky also decided to side with the Union. Kentucky became angry when the Confederacy invaded the state, as the Confederacy claimed it was each state's right to decide whether it was part of the Union or not.

Missouri was also invaded by the Confederacy, so Union troops were invited in by the governor to push Confederate troops out. Neutrality was over and the Border States were now officially attached to the Union.

The state of West Virginia formed in 1863. The citizens, living in this mountainous region of Virginia, had always been subsistence farmers, not slaveholders. They broke away from Virginia with the help of Union troops.

* West Virginia
* held the arsenal John Brown had attacked
* contained key mountain passes
* strategically located along the beginning of the Ohio River.

Even though these states had decided to stay in the Union, not all citizens in them felt the same. Long-standing disagreements rose up with a vengeance, and citizens openly attacked each other. Communities divided. Families divided, too. Sons fled Unionist parents to enlist in the Confederate army. Brothers, such as a Kentucky Senator's own sons, joined the opposing armies. Even husbands and wives avoided talking politics lest they find themselves on the brink of divorce. "There is scarcely a family that is not divided." The fighting in these states was some the most violent of the whole war.

During the war, Lincoln used his power as Commander-in- Chief to suspend the right of habeas corpus. To protect these states from spies among their citizens, anyone suspected of disloyal acts or speech could be arrested and detained in military prison without a hearing in court. But Lincoln would have to be very careful when using this power so as not lose the loyalty of the citizens.

On the Blank Map - Color

* Blue - Union
* Light Blue - Border States