

## **Episode 1. 1861: The Cause.**

This introductory episode begins with a quote: "We have shared the incommunicable experiences of war..." , Oliver Wendell Holmes. Then we move on to the haunting theme music for the series, and David McCoullough begins to narrate about how Wilmer McLaine had the right to say that the Civil War started in his front yard, and ended in his front parlor, because the Battle of Bull Run was fought on his farm in 1861, and Lee surrendered to Grant at McLaine's house at Appamatox Court House. The Civil War was fought in 1000 places, and Americans fought each other and killed each other wholesale, right here, in America. We learn the cause of the war was rooted in the Constitution and in slavery, and states rights, but mainly slavery. There are moving scenes in this episode, and one of the few actual movies we will see in this film, that is of some of the last Civil War veterans at the 50th anniversary of the battle of Gettysburg. We are also introduced to Shelby Foote, who tells us that any understanding of this country has to be based on an understanding of the Civil War. Shelby Foote is an individual who seems as if he was really there. Ken Burns' choice of using him was fantastic. In this episode, we cover the election of Lincoln, and the resulting secession by the southern states. We also cover the first battles of the war, including Bull Run, or Manassas. This is a wonderful introductory episode.