

Secession and War

American History before 1877

Secession Crisis

Election: Nov. 6, 1860

Lincoln wins without a single Southern state

Not even on the ballot in 11 Southern states

1860 census: North +41%, South +27%

South Carolina secedes, Dec. 20

Divided cabinet paralyzes Buchanan

Condemns Northern troublemakers; secession illegal

Crittenden Compromise

Extend 36°30" Missouri Compromise line to Pacific

Slavery protected where it is

Lincoln opposes

Cotton states secede

Union holds Fort Sumter in Charleston harbor

Buchanan sends secret ship to reinforce

Rumors: Buchanan sending invasion force

Reinforcement of Ft. Sumter prevented, Jan. 11

Jan. 9-Feb. 1: Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Texas secede, seize federal property

Feb. 7: Constitution of the Confederate States of America

President: one 6-year term

Constitutional protection for slavery

No internal improvements; no tariffs

Convention chooses Jefferson Davis as President

Slavery or States' Rights?

Texas

. . . We hold as undeniable truths that the governments of the various States, and of the confederacy itself, were established exclusively by the white race, for themselves and their posterity; that the African race had no agency in their establishment; that they were rightfully held and regarded as an inferior and dependent race, and in that condition only could their existence in this country be rendered beneficial or tolerable.

That in this free government all white men are and of right ought to be entitled to equal civil and political rights; that the servitude of the African race . . . is mutually beneficial to both bond and free, and is abundantly authorized and justified by the experience of mankind, and the revealed will of the Almighty Creator, as recognized by all Christian nations; while the destruction of the existing relations between the two races, as advocated by our sectional enemies, would bring inevitable calamities upon both and desolation upon the fifteen slave-holding states.

By the secession of six of the slave-holding States, and the certainty that others will speedily do likewise, Texas has no alternative but to remain in an isolated connection with the North, or unite her destinies with the South.

Cornerstone of the Confederacy

Confederate Vice President Alexander Stephens's "Cornerstone Speech," Mar. 21, 1861

The new Constitution has put at rest forever all the agitating questions relating to our peculiar institutions—African slavery as it exists among us—the proper status of the negro in our form of civilization. This was the immediate cause of the late rupture and present revolution. . . . Those ideas [that slavery was evil and must pass away] were fundamentally wrong. They rested upon the assumption of the equality of races. This was an error. It was a sandy foundation, and the idea of a Government built upon it—when the "storm came and the wind blew, it fell."

Our new Government is founded upon exactly the opposite ideas; its foundations are laid, its cornerstone rests, upon the great truth that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery, subordination to the superior race, is his natural and moral condition.

Lincoln's Inauguration

Long trip to Washington

Reports of assassination plot; sneaks through Baltimore

A plea for peace: the First Inaugural Address, March 4, 1861

In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow-countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. The Government will not assail you. You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors. You have no oath registered in heaven to destroy the Government, while I shall have the most solemn one to "preserve, protect, and defend it."

I am loath to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.

Firm, but not aggressive

Delicate task: holding on to 8 other slave states

Public non-military resupply ship to Fort Sumter

April 4: Virginia votes against secession!

Pressure on Confederate government

April 12: Confederacy attacks Fort Sumter

Lincoln calls for 75,000 volunteers for 3 months

Perhaps a million volunteer

Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Arkansas secede

The Civil War begins