



more money than all other U. S. exports combined. White Southerners came to believe that cotton could be grown only with slave labor. Over time, many took for granted that their prosperity, even their way of life, was inseparable from African slavery.

In the decades preceding 1860, Northerners increasingly supported the right of farmers and workers to enjoy the fruits of their labor and try to better themselves. Slavery did not fit with this view. Many

Northerners opposed its presence in the territories, which were viewed as the birthright of ambitious, free white men. The proposed admission of Missouri as a slave state in 1820 provoked a national debate over slavery. After much discussion, the 1820 Missouri Compromise was worked out. Under its terms, Maine was admitted as a free state at the same

time that Missouri came in as a slave state, maintaining the balance between slave and free states. Additionally, Congress prohibited slavery in all western territories lying above 36° 30' latitude (the southern boundary of Missouri).

The Missouri Compromise quieted agitation over slavery for only a while. In the 1830s, concerns over the issue resurfaced for several reasons. One was the appearance in the North of a tiny number of very persistent agitators calling for the immediate abolition of slavery (the abolitionists). Another was the bloody 1831 Nat Turner slave rebellion in Virginia. White Southerners believed Northern abolitionists encouraged slave revolts, while Southern efforts to silence the abolitionists aroused Northern fears about freedom of speech.

Later, U.S. victory in the Mexican War of 1846-1848 brought the nation vast new acreage in the West. Once again, the status of slavery in the territories became a hot issue. A new agreement, the Compromise of 1850, was required when the California Territory sought to join the Union. Aspects of the compromise included 1) admission of California as a free state; 2) a stronger fugitive slave law; 3) assurance that Congress would not interfere with the interstate traffic in slaves in the South; and 4) prohibition of the slave trade in the District of Columbia. The compromise left open the status of slavery in the other areas won from Mexico. Then, in 1854, the Kansas-Nebraska Act effectively repealed the Missouri Compromise, causing more violent disputes over slavery. Pro-slavery and anti-slavery factions turned the Kansas Territory into a bloody battleground.

Mostly as a result of tensions over slavery, a new party, the Republicans, arose in the North in the 1850s. The Republicans made prohibition of slavery in the territories their chief issue.

The party was the first in the nation's history to draw its support from one section only. Inevitably, the party aroused deep anger in the South. Attitudes in the two sections of the nation continued to harden in the late 1850s. In 1857, the U.S. Supreme Court in the Dred Scott decision ruled that Americans of African descent were not U.S. citizens. A failed effort to start a slave uprising in

Dred Scott, subject of a notorious Supreme Court decision.

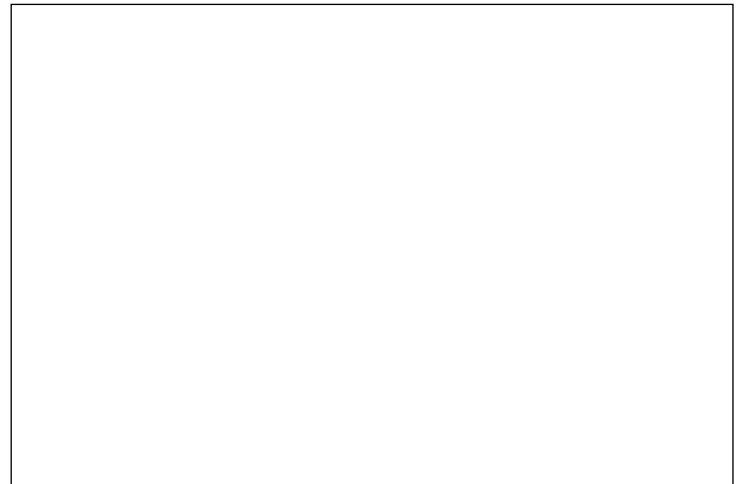
Virginia by abolitionist John Brown in 1859 spread fear and distress across the South.

The presidential election of 1860 was fought entirely along sectional lines. The Democratic Party finally splintered over slavery, with the party fielding two candidates. The Republicans nominated Abraham Lincoln of Illinois. His platform included government support of road and harbor projects and higher tariffs (import taxes) to protect American industry, in addition to keeping slavery out of the territories. Lincoln won the election by sweeping the Northern states, while failing to gain a single electoral vote in the Deep South. Spurred by South Carolina, the states of the Deep South decided that limitation of slavery in the territories was the first step toward a total abolition of slavery.

One by one, seven states—South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana, and Texas—left the Union. Lincoln hoped desperately to maintain the Union without war. When he decided to resupply the U.S. army at Ft. Sumter in Charleston Harbor, Confederate forces fired on the fort. Lincoln then asked for 75,000 volunteers to put down the rebellion. This prompted Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Arkansas to join the Confederacy. Civil war had come.



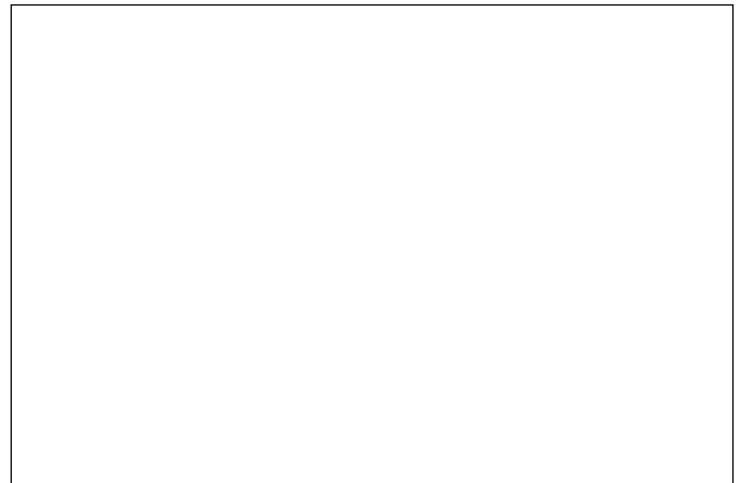
Republican Party slogan from the 1860 election.



A secession meeting in Charleston, South Carolina.

There were many sectional differences in 19th-century America. Differences over slavery were the only ones that could not be settled by peaceful means. Much evidence from that time shows that the secession of seven Deep South states was caused mostly by concerns over the future of slavery. When Mississippi seceded, she published a Declaration of the Immediate Causes which Include and Justify the Secession of the State of Mississippi from the Federal Union. It stated:

•Our position is thoroughly identified with the institution of slavery. If utter subjugation awaits us in the Union, if we should consent longer to remain in it. It is not a matter of choice, but of necessity. We must either submit to degradation, and to the loss of property worth four billions of money [the estimated total market value of slaves], or we must secede from the Union framed by our fathers, to secure this as well as every other species of property. Ź



The Civil War begins as Confederate forces fire upon Fort Sumter.