

Unit Packet: A House Divided

Vocabulary Terms

Create two columns. In the left column, define each vocabulary term. In the right column, describe the historical significance of each term.

People and Groups

- Abolitionists
- William Lloyd Garrison
- Harriet Beecher Stowe
- Stephen A. Douglas
- Abraham Lincoln
- John Brown

Events

- Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo
- Compromise of 1850
- Kansas-Nebraska Act
- Dred Scott decision
- Bleeding Kansas
- 1860 Election

Short Answer Questions

Answer each of the following questions in 3-5 complete sentences.

1. What are the “two Americas” described by Alexis de Tocqueville and Charles Darwin?
2. How were the North, South, and West different in terms of their economies?
3. Why did Southerners, even those who did not own slaves, support slavery?
4. What caused the Abolitionist cause to gain strength in the 1830s after nearly 20 years of weakness?
5. What led to the Compromise of 1850?
6. Why did the Kansas-Nebraska Act cause so much controversy in the North?
7. How did John Brown’s raid confirm the worst fears of many Southerners?

Performance Tasks

Choose one of the following tasks to complete to show your understanding of the historical era.

- Task #1 – Research the Lincoln-Douglas debates. Create a comic strip showing the debate using the actual topics that they debated and their actual views on these topics (though not their exact words).
- Task #2 – Research the economic resources available in the three regions of the United States. Create a map that shows these resources (including cotton, tobacco, lumber, sugar, wheat, etc.).
- Task #3 – Create an illustrated timeline of events leading up to the Civil War. You must include a minimum of 10 events, along with brief descriptions of each event.

Supplementary Reading: Poems on History

SLAVERY: THE SOUTH'S PECULIAR INSTITUTION

Now where cotton was king, the southern plantations,
Souls were still subject to cruel deprivations,
As one third of women and as one third of men,
Were forced into labor because of their skin.

With a lash from the whip and beatings most savage,
Should a slave misbehave or try to seek passage
To freedom so cherished, the due right of all
-- And a promise which lay beyond racism's thrall.

As the slave codes, so called, did such actions deny:
Like meeting and reading, and keeping arms in supply.
And so life toiled on with such heartache and fear
Kept chained to harsh Fate by a strict overseer.

Yes, fourteen hours a day at work in the fields,
From "can see to can't", for those high cotton yields.
With meals of cold meat, bits of cornmeal and bread,
While the masters grew flush, and so lavishly fed,

In the Great House on high with such comforts therein,
The fruits of forced labor, the shameful spoils of sin.
Indeed, every fine good, every rich planter's manse,
Was bought on the backs, by a slave's toiling hands.

With families torn through as owners sold them apart,
With no quarter, no pity, seen disturbing their heart!
Now, true, many did run, and some few did revolt,
Braving torture or death as the risk of a bolt.

But most prayed and endured; indeed, what else was left?
-- With their lives and their labor ever subject to theft.
But not all eyes were blind; in fact, some were appalled
That this land of ideals should know cruelty so cold.

And hope beats in all hearts and survives on just crumbs,
Despair will not crush it, for it knows the day comes
When all shackles are rent, when the soul has its chance
To breath freely the air, to have deliverance...

THE ABOLITIONIST MOVEMENT

Now we've heard how slaves fled, risking life, to the North,
All for that chance to go claim their true worth.
As the preachers there told, in a spirit most Christian,
For a man to own men: 'tis not The Lord's plan!

And more *Yankee* hearts, deeply touched by this plight,
Now shouted that freedom is but every man's right!
And that human bondage, this vile condition,
Is the vice most in need of complete *abolition*.

So with keen and brave souls, they did kick up a storm
To improve on their world, to seek true *reform*.
"Let's be rid," they declared, "of this most ancient evil,
And truly honor our creed -- that all folks are equal!"

And *William Lloyd Garrison*, one such fiery voice,
Did so fearlessly write and make lots of noise,
Laying down the drumbeat for such high moral claims,
With an end to all slaving his foremost of aims.

And *Frederick Douglas* who told the hard tale of his life,
Escaping from bondage and its sorrows and strife.
Yes, how it feels to be kept and deprived of your will,
With the dreams of one's own either dashed or born-still.

And the call to decry that slave labor is heinous
Was soon spurred along by a story most famous.
Indeed, the movement afoot began quickly to grow
As folks took to reading *Harriet Beecher Stowe*.

Whose *Uncle Tom's Cabin* did so vividly offer
The mistreatment of slaves and how they did suffer.
And this evil entrenched at the roots of the South
Now left among neighbors a foul taste in the mouth.

And how rancors did mount, from each night to each day,
With eyes and ears turned to what the statesmen would say,
As a conscience was stirred in half of this nation
To behold a new dawn of human liberation...

Supplementary Reading: Poems on History

DRED SCOTT AND JOHN BROWN

And John C. Calhoun, that old breather of fire,
Did insist that the North grant a southern desire
That all fleeing slaves be caught and hauled back
By a law most despised -- *The Fugitive Act*.

With Yankees so ordered to discount their morals,
'Twas a land of foul moods and nothing but quarrels.
And the fate of the nation now loomed in the haze
As goodwill did dwindle like dry wood in a blaze.

And the Supreme Court weighed in, in the case of *Dred Scott*,

That this man once enslaved...a citizen was not!
And that where a slave travelled mattered little to none,
'Twas an owner with rights that no states could shun!

And what a shock they did send, like a cyclone or squall:
Congress cannot ban slavery -- no, not at all!
And how good hearts did cringe to hear these words
spoken,
As ties which were strained now seemed utterly broken.

While in the rough western climes, pro-free and pro-slave
Sent their numbers to vote on this matter so grave.
Who soon vied in the streets over slavery's chances,
And saw violence erupt -- what became *Bleeding Kansas*.

Where the man John Brown, like fury loosed from a cage,
Took up freedom's cause, mixing his passion and rage.
And with sons by his side, they now planned for a raid
To steal ammo and arms -- the harsh tools of crusade!

And at Harpur's Ferry, his first step by design,
They seized a cache of weapons in 1859.
-- But revolts did not follow and the U.S. was forced
To douse the firebrands for either better or worse.

Yes, Brown hanged for his treason, which did little but
pique
The poisonous feelings this toxic issue did wreak.
As northern hearts mourned and so honored Brown's soul,
Despite gasps from the South -- to hear praise for his
goal!...

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

And into this fray strode the noble *Abe Lincoln*
With his plain looks and plain words -- but the weightiest
thinking.

We know him so well, stove-pipe hat and dark beard,
No leader save George is so roundly revered.

Who hailed from Kentucky with a true modest start,
Training long in the law 'til the daylight did part.
-- Indeed his work-ethic is a marvel so bright:
Abe learned how to read by a dim candlelight.

Known as honest by all and one fine story teller,
Friendly, rugged and smart, one heckuva fella',
Abe made a name for himself in the Illinois state
With no inkling as yet for the course of his fate.

With his tall awkward frame and manners so humble,
Abe hardly seemed made for political tumble.
Yet he offered fine speeches as well as plain jokes,
Earning respect all around while still being "jus' folks".

So for Senate he ran in 1858
Against *Stephen A. Douglas* -- no slouch in debate!
From one town to the next, where crowds listened for
hours,
They argued the issues and the use of state powers.

And the Democrat Douglas held that voting was key:
Either free state or slave by *popular sovereignty*.
Whereas Lincoln spoke out with a conviction grown
strong:
Enslavement is evil; it is morally wrong!

And though he did lose, Abe had reason to smile:
The debates brought him fame and proved a good trial,
To lead a new party, the Republicans,
In their quest for high office and political wins.

Indeed, ambition did spark in this formidable man,
And in year 1860 he for the President ran.
A choice that betokened all slavery's doom,
And whose victory meant...a *Civil War* loomed!...

Supplementary Reading: Sectional Conflict

**"A house divided against itself cannot stand.
I believe this government cannot endure
permanently half-slave and half-free."
- Abraham Lincoln**

TWO AMERICAS

No visitor to the United States left a more enduring record of his travels and observations than the French writer Alexis de Tocqueville, whose *Democracy in America* (1835) remains one of the most keen analyses of America society and politics. "The government of a democracy brings the notion of political rights to the level of the humblest citizens," he wrote, "just as the dissemination of wealth brings the notion of property within the reach of all men." Nonetheless, Tocqueville also worried whether such rough equality could survive in the face of a growing factory system that threatened to create divisions between industrial workers and a new business elite.

Other travelers marveled at the growing strength of the country, where they could see "everywhere the most [clear] proofs of prosperity and rapid progress in agriculture, commerce, and great public works." But such optimistic views of America were by no means universal. One skeptic was the English novelist Charles Dickens, who first visited the United States in 1841-42. "This is not the Republic I came to see," he wrote in a letter. "The more I think of its youth and strength, the poorer and more trifling in a thousand respects, it appears in my eyes. In everything of which it has made a boast -- excepting its education of the people, and its care for poor children -- it sinks immeasurably below the level I had placed it upon."

Dickens was not alone. America in the 19th century, as throughout its history, generated expectations that often conflicted with reality. The young nation's size and diversity made generalization difficult and invited contradiction: America was a freedom-loving as well as slave-holding society, a nation of huge and primitive frontiers as well as a nation with cities built on growing commerce and industrialization.

LANDS OF PROMISE

By 1850 the national territory stretched over forest, plain, and mountain. Within its far-flung limits lived 23 million people in 31 different states. In the East, industry boomed. In the Midwest and the South, agriculture flourished. After 1849 the gold mines of California poured their precious ore into the channels of trade.

New England and the Middle Atlantic states were the main centers of manufacturing, commerce, and finance. Major products of these areas were textiles, lumber, clothing, machinery, leather, and woolen goods. Sea trade had reached the height of its prosperity with the result that American vessels traveled across the oceans, trading with a large number of foreign nations.

The South, from the Atlantic to the Mississippi River and beyond, featured an economy centered on agriculture. Tobacco was important in Virginia, Maryland, and North Carolina. In South Carolina, rice was an important crop. The climate and soil of Louisiana encouraged the growing of sugar. But cotton eventually became the dominant crop and the one with which the South was identified. By 1850 the American South grew more than 80 percent of the world's cotton. Slaves, of course, farmed all these crops with all the profits going to their owners.

The Midwest, with its wide prairies and swiftly growing population, flourished. Europe and the older settled parts of America demanded its wheat and meat products. The introduction of labor-saving devices -- notably the McCormick reaper (a machine to cut and harvest grain) -- made possible an enormous increase in grain production.

An important stimulus to the country's prosperity was the great improvement in transportation. From 1850 to 1857 the Appalachian Mountain barrier was pierced by five railway lines linking the Midwest and the Northeast. These links established the economic interests that would support the political alliance of the Union from 1861 to 1865. The South lagged behind. It was not until the late 1850s that a continuous line ran through the mountains connecting the lower Mississippi River area with the southern Atlantic seaboard.

SLAVERY AND SECTIONALISM

One overriding issue intensified the regional and economic differences between North and South: slavery. Resenting the large profits made by Northern businessmen from marketing the cotton crop, many Southerners felt that the lack of large cities and industry in their own section was the result of Northern greed. Many Northerners, on the other hand, felt that slavery -- the "peculiar institution" that Southerners claimed was essential to their economy -- was largely responsible for the region's relative financial and industrial backwardness.

As far back as the Missouri Compromise in 1819, sectional lines had been steadily hardening on the slavery question. In the North, a small group of abolitionists began to push their case to end slavery altogether. Southerners in general felt little guilt about slavery and defended it in increasingly strong terms.

Although the 1860 census showed that there were nearly four million slaves out of a total population of 12.3 million in the 15 slave states, only a minority of Southern whites owned slaves. There were some 385,000 slave owners out of about 1.5 million white families. Fifty percent of these slave owners owned no more than five slaves. Three-quarters of Southern white families, including the "poor whites," those on the lowest rung of Southern society, owned no slaves.

It is easy to understand the interest of the planters in slave holding. But the yeomen and poor whites supported the institution of slavery as well. They feared that, if freed, blacks would compete with them economically and challenge their higher social status. In addition, southern whites defended slavery on racist grounds, arguing that whites are naturally superior to blacks.

As they fought the weight of Northern opinion, political leaders of the South, including most religious leaders, hardened their views. No longer did they apologize for slavery and claim it was a "necessary evil" but they championed it as the best social and economic system in the country.

THE ABOLITIONISTS

In national politics, Southerners pushed for territorial expansion. For one, the wastefulness of cultivating a single crop (cotton) rapidly exhausted the soil, pushing planters to look for new fertile lands. Also, new territory would allow for the creation of new slave states to offset the admission of new free states into the Union. Antislavery Northerners thought that the Southern view represented a conspiracy for a proslavery takeover of the federal government. In the 1830s their opposition became fierce.

An earlier antislavery movement, an offshoot of the American Revolution, had won its last victory in 1808 when Congress abolished the slave trade with Africa. Thereafter, opposition came largely from the Quakers, who kept up a mild and ineffective protest. Meanwhile, the cotton gin and westward expansion into the Mississippi delta region created a huge increase in the demand for slaves.

The abolitionist movement that emerged in the early 1830s was combative, uncompromising, and insistent upon an immediate end to slavery. This approach found a leader in William Lloyd Garrison, a young man from Massachusetts. On January 1, 1831, Garrison produced the first issue of his newspaper, *The Liberator*, which bore the announcement: "I shall strenuously contend for the immediate enfranchisement of our slave population... On this subject, I do not wish to think, or speak, or write, with moderation... I am in earnest -- I will not equivocate -- I will not excuse -- I will not retreat a single inch -- AND I WILL BE HEARD."

Garrison's sensational methods awakened Northerners to the evil in an institution many had long come to view as unchangeable. He recognized no rights of the masters, acknowledged no compromise, tolerated no delay. Other abolitionists, unwilling to subscribe to his aggressive tactics, held that reform should be accomplished by legal and peaceful means. Garrison was joined by another powerful voice, that of Frederick Douglass, an escaped slave who roused Northern audiences with his experiences as a slave.

One activity of the movement involved helping slaves escape to safe places in the North or over the border into Canada. The "Underground Railroad," a network of secret routes, was firmly established in the 1830s in all parts of the North. In Ohio alone, from 1830 to 1860, as many as 40,000 fugitive slaves were helped to freedom.

However, most Northerners either distanced themselves from the abolitionist movement or actively opposed it. In 1837, for example, a mob attacked and killed the antislavery editor Elijah P. Lovejoy in Alton, Illinois. Still, Southern repression of free speech allowed the abolitionists to link the slavery issue with the cause of

civil liberties for whites. In 1835 an angry mob destroyed abolitionist literature in Charleston, South Carolina. When the postmaster-general stated he would not enforce delivery of abolitionist material, bitter debates ensued in Congress.

TEXAS AND WAR WITH MEXICO

Throughout the 1820s, Americans settled in the vast territory of Texas, often with land grants from the Mexican government. However, their numbers soon alarmed the Mexican authorities, who stopped further immigration in 1830. In 1834 General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna established a dictatorship in Mexico and the following year Texans revolted. Santa Anna defeated the American rebels at the celebrated siege of the Alamo in early 1836, but Texans under Sam Houston destroyed the Mexican Army and captured Santa Anna a month later at the Battle of San Jacinto, ensuring Texan independence.

For almost a decade, Texas remained an independent republic, largely because its annexation as a huge new slave state would disrupt the balance of political power in the United States between slave states and free states. In 1845, President James K. Polk, narrowly elected on a platform of westward expansion, brought the Republic of Texas into the Union. The war that resulted between Mexico and the United States ended with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in which Mexico ceded what would become the American Southwest region and California for \$15 million.

With the conclusion of the Mexican War, the United States gained a vast new territory of 1.36 million square kilometers that included the present-day states of New Mexico, Nevada, California, Utah, most of Arizona, and portions of Colorado and Wyoming. The nation also faced a revival of the most explosive question in American politics of the time: Would the new territories be slave or free?

THE COMPROMISE OF 1850

Until 1845, it had seemed likely that slavery would be limited to the areas where it already existed. It had been given limits by the Missouri Compromise in 1820 and had no opportunity to overstep them. The new territories made renewed expansion of slavery a real likelihood.

Many Northerners believed that if slavery was limited, it would ultimately decline and die. To justify their opposition to adding new slave states, they pointed to the statements of Washington and Jefferson, and to the Ordinance of 1787, which forbade the extension of slavery into the Northwest. Texas, which already permitted slavery, naturally entered the Union as a slave state. But the California, New Mexico, and Utah territories did not have slavery.

Southerners urged that all the lands acquired from Mexico should be thrown open to slave holders. Antislavery Northerners demanded that all the new regions be closed to slavery. One group of moderates suggested that the Missouri Compromise line be extended to the Pacific, with free states north of it and slave states to the south. Another group proposed that the question be left to "popular sovereignty." According to this view, the government should permit settlers to enter the new territory with or without slaves as they pleased. When the time came to organize the region into states, the people themselves could decide.

Most Northerners were unwilling to challenge the existence of slavery in the South, but many Northerners were against its expansion. In 1848 nearly 300,000 men voted for the candidates of a new Free Soil Party, which declared that the best policy was "to limit, localize, and discourage slavery." In the immediate aftermath of the war with Mexico, however, popular sovereignty had large appeal.

In January 1848 the discovery of gold in California precipitated a headlong rush of settlers, more than 80,000 in the single year of 1849. Congress had to determine the status of this new region quickly in order to establish an organized government. Kentucky Senator Henry Clay, who twice before in times of crisis had come forward with compromises, advanced a complicated and carefully balanced plan. His old Massachusetts rival, Daniel Webster, supported it. Illinois Democratic Senator Stephen A. Douglas, the leading advocate of popular sovereignty, did much of the work in guiding it through Congress.

The Compromise of 1850 contained the following pieces: (1) California was admitted to the Union as a free state; (2) the remainder of the Mexican cession was divided into the two territories of New Mexico and Utah and organized without mention of slavery; (3) the claim of Texas to a portion of New Mexico was satisfied by a payment of \$10 million; (4) new legislation (the Fugitive Slave Act) was passed to catch runaway slaves and return them to their masters; and (5) the buying and selling of slaves (but not slavery) was abolished in the District of Columbia.

The country breathed a sigh of relief. For the next three years, the compromise seemed to settle nearly all differences. The new Fugitive Slave Law, however, was an immediate source of tension. It deeply offended many Northerners, who refused to have any part in catching slaves. Some actively and violently obstructed its enforcement. The Underground Railroad became more efficient and daring than ever.

A DIVIDED NATION

During the 1850s, the issue of slavery cut the political bonds that had held the United States together. It ate away at the country's two great political parties, the Whigs and the Democrats, destroying the first and deeply dividing the second. It produced weak presidents whose indecision mirrored that of their parties. It eventually discredited even the Supreme Court.

The moral passion of abolitionist feeling grew steadily. In 1852, Harriet Beecher Stowe published *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, a novel provoked by the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law. More than 300,000 copies were sold the first year. Although sentimental and full of stereotypes, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* portrayed with undeniable force the cruelty of slavery and suggested that there was a fundamental conflict between free and slave societies. It inspired widespread enthusiasm for the antislavery cause, appealing as it did to basic human emotions -- indignation at injustice and pity for the slaves who were exposed to ruthless exploitation.

In 1854 the issue of slavery in the territories was renewed and the quarrel became more bitter. The region that now includes Kansas and Nebraska was being rapidly settled, increasing pressure for the establishment of territorial and eventually state governments. Under terms of the Missouri Compromise of 1820, the entire region was closed to slavery. Slave-owners in Missouri objected to letting Kansas become a free territory, for their state would then have three free-soil neighbors (Illinois, Iowa, and Kansas) and might be forced to become a free state as well. Their congressional delegation, backed by Southerners, blocked all efforts to organize the region.

At this point, Stephen A. Douglas enraged all free-soil supporters. Douglas argued that the Compromise of 1850, having left Utah and New Mexico free to resolve the slavery issue for themselves, made the Missouri Compromise irrelevant. His plan called for two territories: Kansas and Nebraska. It permitted settlers to carry slaves into them and eventually to determine whether they should enter the Union as free or slave states.

Douglas's opponents accused him of gaining favor with the South in order to gain the presidency in 1856. The free-soil movement, which had seemed to be in decline, reemerged with greater momentum than ever. Yet in May 1854, Douglas's plan, in the form of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, passed Congress and was signed by President Franklin Pierce. Southerners celebrated with cannon fire. But when Douglas visited Chicago to speak in his own defense, the ships in the harbor lowered their flags to half-mast, the church bells tolled for an hour, and a crowd of 10,000 shouted so loudly that he could not make himself heard.

The immediate results of Douglas's visit to Chicago were momentous. The Whig Party, which had tried to sidestep the question of slavery expansion, sank to its death. In its place a powerful new organization arose, the Republican Party, whose primary demand was that slavery be excluded from all the territories. In 1856, it nominated John Fremont for President. Fremont lost the election, but the new party swept a great part of the North.

Meanwhile, the flow of both Southern slave holders and antislavery families into Kansas resulted in armed conflict. Soon the territory was being called "bleeding Kansas." The Supreme Court made things worse with its infamous 1857 Dred Scott decision. Scott was a Missouri slave who, some 20 years earlier, had been taken by his master to live in Illinois, where slavery was banned. Returning to Missouri and becoming unhappy with his life there, Scott sued for liberation on the ground of his residence on free soil. A majority of the Supreme Court -- dominated by Southerners -- decided that Scott lacked standing in court because he was not a citizen; that the laws of a free state (Illinois) had no effect on his status because he was the resident of a slave state (Missouri); and that slave holders had the right to take their "property" anywhere in the federal territories. The most important consequence of this decision was that Congress could no longer set limits on the expansion of slavery. This last assertion cancelled former compromises on slavery and made new ones impossible to craft.

The Dred Scott decision stirred fierce resentment throughout the North. Never before had the Court been so bitterly condemned. For Southern Democrats, the decision was a great victory, since it gave supported their attempts to expand slavery throughout the territories.

LINCOLN, DOUGLAS, AND BROWN

Abraham Lincoln had long regarded slavery as an evil. As early as 1854 in a widely publicized speech, he declared that all national legislation should be framed on the principle that slavery was to be restricted and eventually abolished. He also argued that the principle of popular sovereignty was false because slavery in the western territories was the concern not only of the local people but of the United States as a whole.

In 1858 Lincoln opposed Stephen A. Douglas for election to the U.S. Senate from Illinois. In the first paragraph of his opening campaign speech, on June 17, Lincoln struck the keynote of American history for the seven years to follow: *A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure permanently half-slave and half-free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved -- I do not expect the house to fall -- but I do expect it will cease to be divided.*

Lincoln and Douglas engaged in a series of seven debates in 1858. Senator Douglas, who was known as the "Little Giant," had a reputation as a strong public speaker. But Lincoln held his ground and forcefully challenged Douglas's concept of popular sovereignty. In the end, Douglas won the election by a small margin, but Lincoln had achieved the status of being a national figure.

By then events were spinning out of control. On the night of October 16, 1859, John Brown, an antislavery fanatic who had captured and killed five proslavery settlers in Kansas three years before, led a band of followers in an attack on the federal arsenal at Harper's Ferry (in what is now West Virginia). Brown's goal was to use the weapons that he seized to lead a slave uprising. After two days of fighting, Brown and his surviving men were taken prisoner by a force of U.S. Marines.

Brown's attempt confirmed the worst fears of many Southerners. Antislavery activists, on the other hand, generally hailed Brown as a martyr to a great cause. Virginia put Brown on trial for conspiracy, treason, and murder. On December 2, 1859, he was hanged. Although most Northerners had initially condemned him, increasing numbers were coming to accept his view that he had been an instrument in the hand of God.

THE 1860 ELECTION

In 1860 the Republican Party nominated Abraham Lincoln as its candidate for president. The Republican platform declared that slavery could spread no farther, promised a tariff for the protection of industry, and pledged the creation of a law granting free homesteads to settlers who would help in the opening of the West. Southern Democrats, unwilling in the wake of the Dred Scott case to accept Douglas's popular sovereignty, split from the party and nominated Vice President John C. Breckenridge of Kentucky for president. Stephen A. Douglas was the nominee of northern Democrats. Diehard Whigs from the border states, formed into the Constitutional Union Party, nominated John C. Bell of Tennessee.

Lincoln and Douglas competed in the North, Breckenridge and Bell in the South. Lincoln won only 39 percent of the popular vote, but had a clear majority of 180 electoral votes, carrying all 18 free states. Bell won Tennessee, Kentucky, and Virginia; Breckenridge took the other slave states except for Missouri, which was won by Douglas. Despite his poor showing, Douglas trailed only Lincoln in the popular vote.

SECESSION AND THE START OF THE CIVIL WAR

Lincoln's victory in the presidential election of November 1860 made South Carolina's secession from the Union a foregone conclusion. The state had long been waiting for an event that would unite the South against the antislavery forces. By February 1, 1861, five more Southern states had seceded. On February 8, the six states signed a constitution for the Confederate States of America.

Less than a month later, March 4, 1861, Abraham Lincoln was sworn in as president of the United States. In his inaugural address, he declared the Confederacy "legally void." His speech closed with a plea for restoration of the bonds of union, but the South turned a deaf ear. On April 12, Confederate guns opened fire on the federal garrison at Fort Sumter in the Charleston, South Carolina, harbor. A war had begun in which more Americans would die than in any other conflict before or since.