

# Some History

Class 4

American Civil War, also called War Between the States, four-year war (1861–65) between the United States and 11 Southern states that seceded from the Union and formed the Confederate States of America. “Secede” means to withdraw formally from

(<https://www.britannica.com/event/American-Civil-War>)

membership of a federal union, an alliance, or a political or religious organization.





The Civil War is the central event in America's historical consciousness. While the Revolution of 1776-1783 created the United States, the Civil War of 1861-1865 determined what kind of nation it would be. The war resolved two fundamental questions left unresolved by the revolution: whether the United States was to be a dissolvable confederation of sovereign states or an indivisible nation with a sovereign national government; and whether this nation, born of a declaration that all men were created with an equal right to liberty, would continue to exist as the largest slaveholding country in the world.

(<https://www.battlefields.org/learn/articles/brief-overview-american-civil-war>)



Northern victory in the war preserved the United States as one nation and ended the institution of slavery that had divided the country from its beginning. But these achievements came at the cost of 625,000 lives--nearly as many American soldiers as died in all the other wars in which this country has fought combined. The American Civil War was the largest and most destructive conflict in the Western world between the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815 and the onset of World War I in 1914.

(<https://www.battlefields.org/learn/articles/brief-overview-american-civil-war>)



The Civil War started because of uncompromising differences between the free and slave states over the power of the national government to prohibit slavery in the territories that had not yet become states. When Abraham Lincoln won election in 1860 as the first Republican president on a platform pledging to keep slavery out of the territories, seven slave states in the deep South seceded and formed a new nation, the Confederate States of America. The incoming Lincoln administration and most of the Northern people refused to recognize the legitimacy of secession. They feared that it would discredit democracy and create a fatal precedent that would eventually fragment the no-longer United States into several small, squabbling countries.

(<https://www.battlefields.org/learn/articles/brief-overview-american-civil-war>)

During the American Civil War, the Federal Government was generally referred to as the Union, although the terms “United States,” “Federals,” the “North,” and “Yankee,” were also used. (<https://www.legendsofamerica.com/ah-unioncivilwar/>)





# The Union

California

Illinois

Iowa

Maine

Minnesota

New Hampshire

New Jersey

Oregon

Rhode Island

Wisconsin

Connecticut

Indiana

Kansas

Michigan

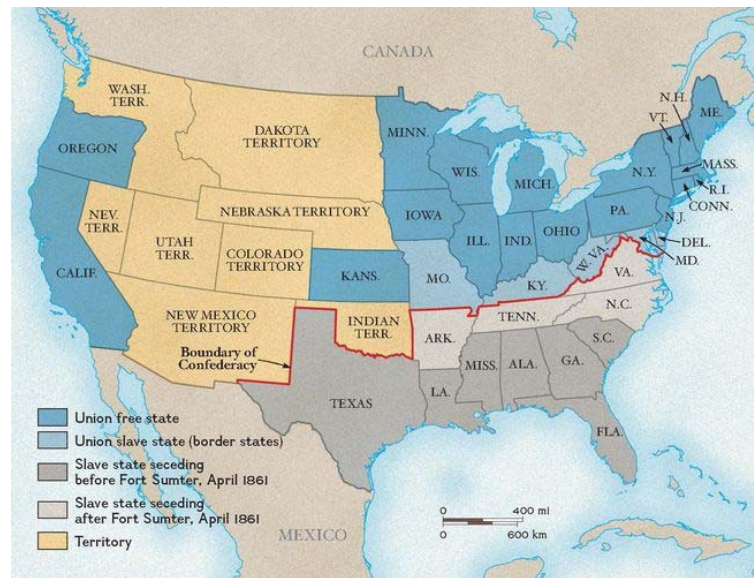
Nevada

New York

Ohio

Pennsylvania

Vermont

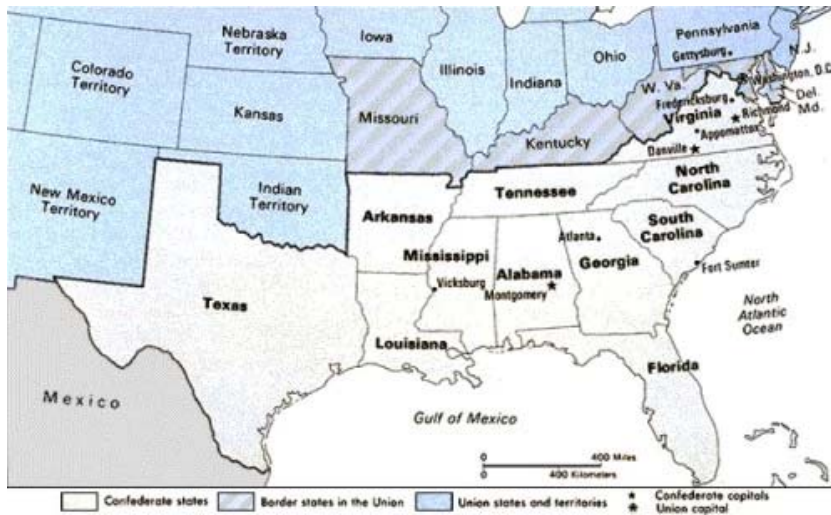


## The Border States

These states were actually slave states which did not declare their secession from the United States. (<https://www.legendsofamerica.com/ah-unioncivilwar/>)

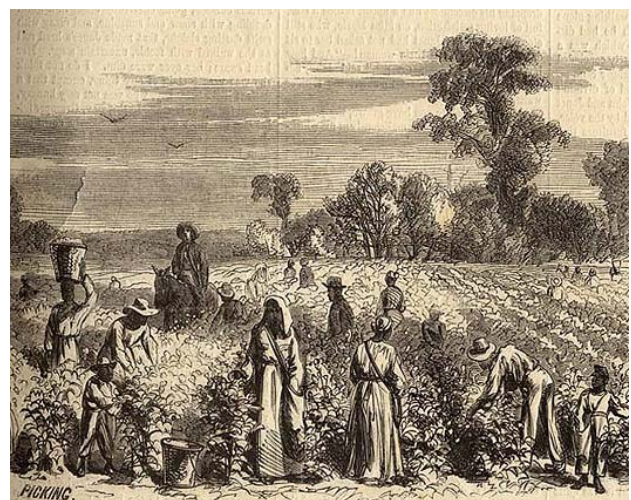


# Confederate States



South Carolina  
Mississippi  
Florida  
Alabama  
Georgia  
Louisiana  
Texas  
Virginia  
Arkansas  
Tennessee  
North Carolina

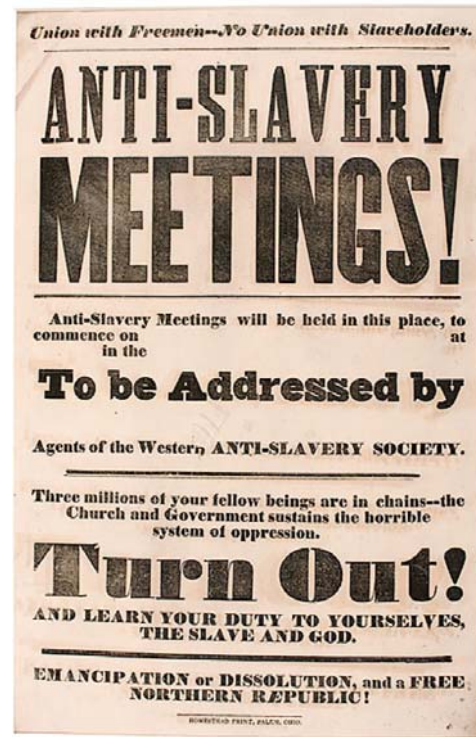
The South was committed to an agrarian way of life. It was a land where profitable and efficient plantations worked by slave labor produced cotton for the world market. It was also a land where a majority of its white population was made up of subsistence farmers who lived isolated lives on the edge of poverty and whose literacy rates were low compared with those in the more densely populated North.



<https://www.history.com/topics/american-civil-war/secession>

The South nevertheless was beginning to industrialize, a factor that added to the social tensions surfacing during the 1850s between the haves—plantation owners and professional groups in the few urban centers—and the have-nots—an increasingly restive yeoman or small-farmer group. But the issue of black servitude provided cohesion for the white bloc and contributed greatly to a patriarchal system wherein the masses of the whites still looked to a planter-professional elite for political and social guidance. Although the northern masses might also defer to the opinions of the powerful and living conditions among the urban poor were precarious, educational levels were far higher than in the South. The ethic of free capital and free labor was deeply ingrained in the cities and in farm communities as well. It was this ethic that formed the ideological basis for a broad antislavery movement.

<https://www.history.com/topics/american-civil-war/secession>



Southern leaders were concerned over internal stresses in their society and were increasingly aware of the moral and social repugnance the slave system engendered not only in the North but also in Western Europe. Southern leadership, though surely not unified in its response to a political victory of antislavery forces in 1860, began as early as 1858 to prepare its section for separation from the Union.

<https://www.history.com/topics/american-civil-war/secession>





The close connection between the right to revolution and separation from the governing power in the spirit of 1776 was an early theme in the provisional Confederacy. To be sure, the revolution was posited as a peaceful one. Separation from a Union perceived to be under the control of a tyrannical power that would destroy southern institutions was the objective.



<https://www.history.com/topics/american-civil-war/secession>

Confederate leaders at this early date thought that the North would not fight to preserve the Union. But the provisional government nevertheless began purchasing arms and munitions, and seceded states started to equip and train their militias.

<https://www.history.com/topics/american-civil-war/secession>



State and Confederate government authorities seized federal forts, arsenals, and other national property within their jurisdiction. When Abraham Lincoln was inaugurated on March 4, 1861, federal troops held only Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor, Fort Pickens off the Florida coast, and one or two other outposts in the South.

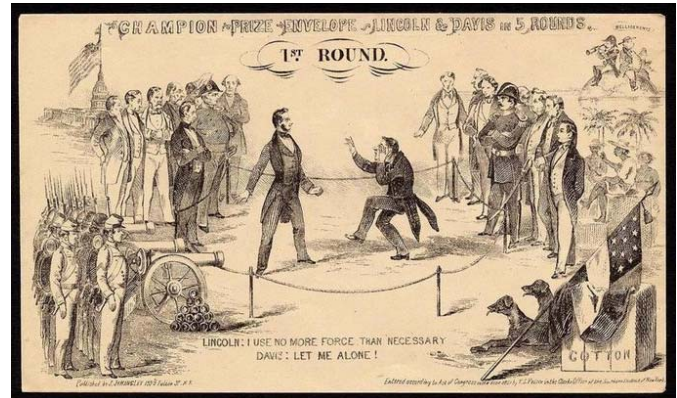


Concerned about the loyalty of the border states of Virginia, Maryland, Missouri, and Kentucky, the new administration went so far as to offer the slave states an amendment to the Constitution that would guarantee slavery where it legally existed. Lincoln himself in his inaugural address pledged only to hold federal property that was in the possession of the Union on March 4, 1861.

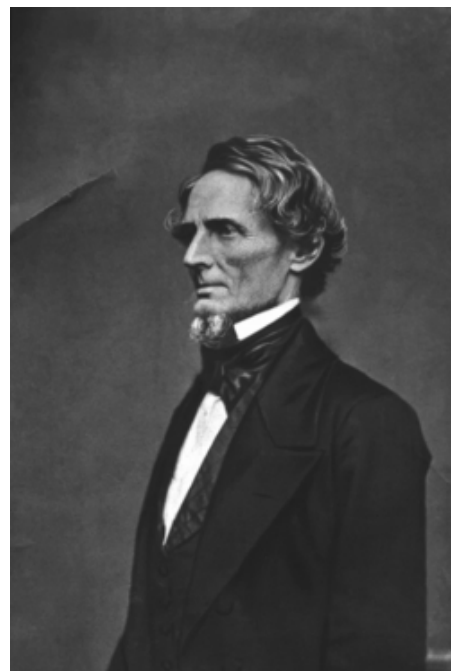




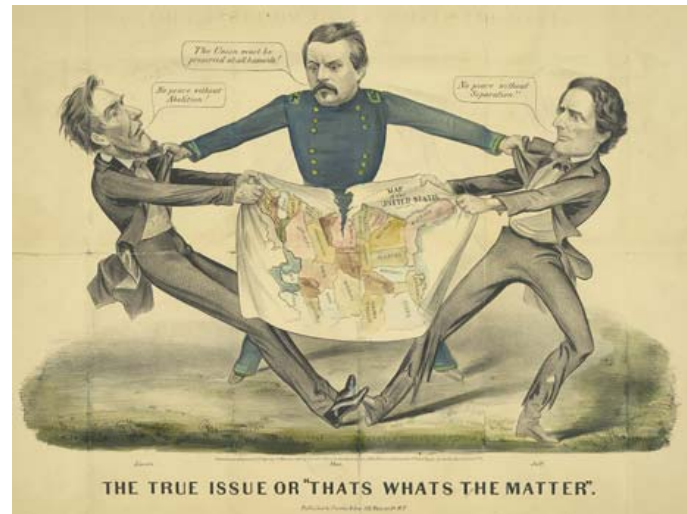
The provisional Confederacy likewise sought vigorously to stimulate secession sentiment in the border states. Had all the border slave states thrown in their lot with one or the other government, there might not have been a war, or conversely, separation might well have become an accomplished fact. As it was, however, the prompt action of the Lincoln administration after the bombardment and surrender of Fort Sumter secured Maryland and Delaware for the Union. Kentucky proclaimed its neutrality but eventually remained loyal to the Union. Missouri, too, though a major battleground for the contending forces, contributed most of its resources in men and matériel to the Union.



Once the war was joined, waves of patriotic sentiment swept over North and South. Vocal political opposition would exist on both sides, but it was never strong enough to overthrow either government. Secession as revolution, an early theme in southern rhetoric, was not emphasized after the formation of the Confederacy. Rather, Jefferson's compact theory was enshrined in its Constitution. A nation could not have been formed, nor a war fought, if the states were wholly independent of any central authority.



Behind it all, of course, was the unity of a minority geographical section defending a distinct set of institutions that were thought to be under attack. The original federal Union that shared the exercise of power with the states strengthened the concept of secession. It also supplied a pretext for southern leaders to seize the initiative and form a separate nation.



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