Chapter Two

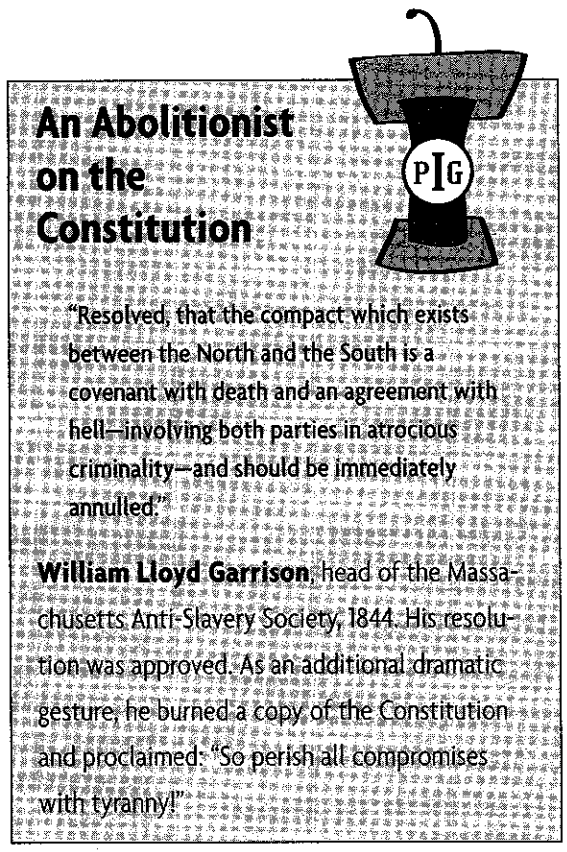
THE GUNPOWDER TRAIL

Powder kegs had been stacking up in the North and South for generations. Even in colonial days one could recognize that the Pilgrims and Puritans of New England, the free thinkers of Rhode Island, the Quakers of Pennsylvania, the landed gentlemen of Anglican Virginia, the Scotch-Irish immigrants of the back country, and the rest of the American motley were very different folk. Most of them spoke the same language, they were united first under the Crown, as members of the British Empire, and could unite in common cause, but no one would ever mistake a Northerner for a Southerner.

New England had frequently felt at odds with Southern ambitions—whether the issue was the Louisiana Purchase, the War of 1812, the annexation of Texas, or the Mexican War, all of which were considered in the Southern interest rather than the Northern. There had even been New England secessionist movements. After the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, some misfit New England Federalists, led by Senator Timothy Pickering of Massachusetts, supported the secession of New England and New York as "a new confederacy" that would be "exempt from the corrupt and corrupting influence and oppression of the aristocratic Democrats of the South."[1] In 1814, while the War of 1812 was still being fought, delegates from the New England states met at the Hartford Convention, called by

Guess What?

- Leading Northern abolitionists considered the Constitution "a covenant with death and an agreement with hell"
- Before Nat Turner's Rebellion, there were at least three times more anti-slavery societies in the South than in the North
- "Landslide Lincoln" won the election of 1860 with less than 40 percent of the popular vote



the Massachusetts state legislature, to discuss secession from the Southern and Western states. In the 1840s, many Northern abolitionists had similar ideas.

Likewise, South Carolina had long been a home to fire-eaters. In 1832, South Carolina had threatened secession over the "Tariff of Abominations," after asserting the state's right to nullify federal legislation noxious to its interest.

South Carolina couched its argument in the language of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, who had supported the right of states to nullify federal laws they deemed unconstitutional. Jefferson had done so in the Kentucky Resolutions and Madison had done so in the Virginia Resolutions of 1798. The nullifiers also spoke for the economic interests of the agricultural South, which in the 1830s—thanks to high tariffs—was financing more than 70 percent of the cost of the federal government. But in 1832, South Carolina stood alone among the Southern states in threatening to nullify federal law or secede from the Union. In 1861, South Carolina was not alone. The tensions in the country had grown more severe as the sectional stakes had been ratcheted up.

As was shown by the Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions (which sought to overturn the Alien and Sedition Acts), Timothy Pickering's plot for a New England confederacy (in opposition to the Louisiana Purchase), the Hartford Convention (opposed to the War of 1812 and the trade embargo with Britain), and the nullification crisis (in opposition

to high tariffs), the conflict between North and South was about more than slavery.

But, of course, it was about slavery too. Northern abolitionists were shrill in their condemnations of the South—and had been ever since 1818 when debate erupted over whether Missouri should be admitted to the Union as a slave state (of which there were currently eleven) or as a free state (of which there were also eleven). The Missouri Compromise of 1820 seemed to settle the issue. Missouri came in as a slave state, but was balanced off by the entry of Maine as a free state, and Missouri's southern border became the official dividing line—states created north of that border would be free states, beneath it would be slave states.

Thomas Jefferson did not welcome the Compromise because he thought it portended the death of the Union. The line drawn by the Missouri Compromise was all too obviously a battle line, for a "geographical line, coinciding with a marked principle, moral and political, once conceived and held up to the angry passions of men, will never be obliterated; and every new irritation will mark it deeper and deeper." He also believed that Congress had acted unconstitutionally, because it was not within Congress's power "to regulate the condition of the different descriptions of men composing a state. This certainly is the exclusive right of every state, which nothing in the Constitution has taken from them and given to the general government." For Jefferson, the Compromise was "like a firebell in the night, [which] awakened and filled me with terror. I considered it at once as the knell of the Union. It is hushed, indeed, for the moment. But this is a reprieve only, not a final sentence." Slavery was the cause, and while Jefferson believed that eventually "emancipation and *expatriation* could be effected; and gradually, and with due sacrifices . . . as it is, we have the wolf by the ears, and we can neither hold him, nor safely let him go. Justice is in one scale, and self-preservation in the other."[2]

Abolitionists help abolish the Union

Many Southerners agreed with Jefferson that slavery had left them holding a "wolf by the ears." Why? One reason was the Haitian Revolution, a slave uprising that lasted from 1791 to 1804, and that was full of gruesome stories of black slaves mutilating, raping, and murdering the French colonists, until every white man, woman, and child was extirpated from the island.

Before the Haitian Revolution, many Southerners accepted slavery as an unfortunate inheritance. After the Haitian Revolution they regarded it as an unfortunate necessity. The Francophile Thomas Jefferson, who was

In This Corner, the Grey Galahad

Name: Jefferson Davis

Title: President, Confederate States of America

Date of birth: 3 June 1808, Todd County, Kentucky

Education: Thomas Aquinas Catholic school (Kentucky), Jefferson College (Mississippi), Transylvania University (Kentucky), West Point (New York, 1824-28)

Experience: Army officer (1828-35), planter (1836-), congressman from Mississippi (1845-46), volunteer colonel of Mississippi Riflemen in the Mexican War (1846-1847), United States senator from Mississippi (1847-51), secretary of war (1853-1857), United States senator from Mississippi (1857-6)

Personal: Married Miss Knox Taylor (1835), daughter of Zachary Taylor, widowed (1835), married Varina Howell (1845), at the time of secession, four children (three surviving). (Two more children would be born during the war and one of his sons would die in an accident at the Confederate White House.)

president from 1801 to 1809, was as alarmed as any Southern slaveholder by the ferocity of the rebels. He supported Napoleon Bonaparte's attempts to crush them. Before the Haitian Revolution, he had privately toyed with the idea of a gradual emancipation; now he hardened himself against it.

While the Haitian Revolution had led to the deaths of more than 80,000 whites and an untold number of blacks, a far fewer number—fifty-seven white men, women, and children—were killed in Nat Turner's Uprising of 1831. But it was much closer to home, in the green and pleasant land of Virginia. Southern slaveholders often told themselves that their blacks were content and well taken care of—and in many cases they might have been. But on plantations across the South, in counties where blacks could easily outnumber whites, memories of Nat Turner and the Haitians flickered and the nightmare remained.

Being a kind master was no salvation. Turner acknowledged that his own master had been kind. Nor was freeing the blacks an obvious solution:

In This Corner, the Blue Bomber

Name: Abraham Lincoln

Date of birth: 12 February 1809, Nolin Creek, Kentucky

Title: President, United States of America

Education: Self-educated

Experience: Clerk, three months in the state militia, ran a town store that went bust, postmaster, surveyor, Illinois State legislator (1834-42), lawyer (1836-60), congressman from Illinois (1846-48).

Personal: Married Mary Todd (1842), four sons, two surviving. (One died in 1862 at the White House.)

Turner had seventy followers, some of whom were free blacks. Nor was education or Christianity apparently any help. Turner had been taught to read, became a Baptist preacher, fancied himself a prophet, and felt inspired by a vision to kill every white person he could find. In short, he was mad.

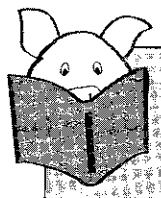
He bore, in fact, a striking resemblance to another mad man—this one white, and a darling of the abolitionists—who began a campaign of murder in the hope of sparking a massive slave insurrection in the South: John Brown.

Turner and Brown helped convince Southerners that they had no friends in the North. Before Turner's uprising, as memories of Haiti faded, there was widespread abolitionist sentiment in the South. In 1827, there were 130 anti-slavery societies in the United States—more than 100 of those were in the South, and drew their support from Southern evangelical Christians. They had political clout too. In 1830, Thomas Jefferson's grandson (Thomas Jefferson Randolph, later commissioned a colonel in the Confederate Army) opened a debate in the Virginia Assembly on manumitting the slaves. Immediately after Turner's rebellion, the Virginia legislature actually considered—and nearly approved—freeing and deporting the state's slaves, but opted instead for what seemed the more practical alternative: imposing stringent laws that, among other things, denied slaves the right to an education so that they could not preach an unholy gospel, as Turner had done. A man who would later gain fame in Confederate grey—Thomas Jonathan "Stonewall" Jackson—was one of the most prominent breakers of this law, running a Sunday school for blacks that taught them to read and write.

If Nat Turner's rebellion helped erase Southern anti-slavery sentiment, the effect of John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry was worse. Southerners had always been appalled at the violence of Northern abolitionist rhetoric. They regarded such Northerners as imperious know-nothings who would bear none of the consequences of abolition and simply, captiously,

demanded that it be done—as if overturning the economic, social, and political structure of the South was a trifle. They were, in Southern eyes, would-be arsonists, fanning flames that could ignite a holocaust. John Brown seemed to personify the abolitionist as arsonist, terrorist, and murderer. Even Lincoln, to his credit, thought Brown a fanatic, but to the dismay of Southerners, many Northern abolitionists considered Brown a martyr.

Brown first came to national attention in another North-South conflict. This one was caused by Stephen Douglas's Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, which repealed the Missouri Compromise. Douglas's scheme was to repeal the Compromise in order to win Southern votes for the transcontinental railway that would run through Nebraska and Kansas (and his home state of Illinois) rather than take the Southern route—the shortest route and the one favored by Secretary of War Jefferson Davis—running from San Diego to New Orleans. The United States had already made the Gadsen Purchase, buying additional Mexican territory through which the railway would run if it took the Southern route.



Books Yankees Don't Want You to Read

The History of the Confederacy, 1832-1865, by Clifford Dowdey (Barnes & Noble Books, 1989, originally published as *The Land They Fought For*). Dowdey is one of the best historians of the War.

Under the Kansas-Nebraska Act, the Nebraska Territory would divide into the states of Kansas and Nebraska, and these states could decide for themselves whether they would enter the union as free states or slave states. The Act was an attempt of bribery on Douglas's part. While Nebraska's fate was essentially already decided—it would be a free state—Douglas dangled the prospect of Kansas, which under the Missouri Compromise should also have been a free state, as a potential slave state. It was a terrible idea, which only turned Kansas into "bleeding Kansas," as "free-soil" partisans and pro-slavery partisans rushed not to settle the

territory but to unsettle it: Northern "Jayhawkers" on the one side, Southern "border ruffians" on the other.

Northerners held the numerical upper hand—indeed, did so overwhelmingly—because Southerners wealthy enough to own slaves were generally content to stay where they were, and certainly not eager to risk their wealth in a violent new territory. But the border ruffians from Missouri gave the pro-slavery faction a political head start. They ensured that pro-slavery gunmen staffed the polling places so that Southern rights were respected.

Northern immigration to Kansas became a crusade, attracting men like John Brown. Brown responded to the border ruffians with a declaration of holy war against them—or against innocents who happened to look like them. In 1856, at Pottawatomie Creek, Brown and his accomplices kidnapped five innocent pro-slavery settlers and—like the later Lizzie Borden—gave them the equivalent of forty whacks. This was Brown's warm-up for his raid on Harpers Ferry, Virginia, in 1859.

Not content with murder in Kansas, John Brown aimed to foment a slave insurrection in Virginia. His first target, however, was not a slave owner but the slaveless federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry. Brown and his twenty men crept into Harpers Ferry before dawn, killed two men (one of them a free black), and easily captured the rifle works and an extremely well-stocked armory. To strengthen his hand he seized sixty hostages among the townspeople (including Colonel Lewis Washington, a kinsman of George Washington). Then he waited for a wave of slaves to well up and form his Mameluke army with which he would sweep away the "peculiar institution" in a purgation of blood.

But his rebellious slaves never came. Instead, the Maryland militia came and trapped Brown and his men within the town's fire-engine house adjacent to the armory. The War Department in Washington summoned Colonel Robert E. Lee[3] to command a detachment of Marines. Lee ordered the Marines to attack the firehouse with sledgehammers (to break

into it) and bayonets; their muskets were unloaded in order to avoid civilian casualties.

Brown was captured and put on trial—giving him a forum to become a hero to abolitionists—and then hanged. One of Brown's gifts was a mesmerizing presence and a biblical eloquence; even those who knew him to be a fanatic were impressed by his words and his self-possessed dignity in the court room. He told the court that not only was he willing to give his life to free the slaves, he was willing to give the lives of *millions* to free the slaves. "Now, if it is deemed necessary that I should forfeit my life for the furtherance of the ends of justice and mingle my blood further with the blood of my children and with the blood of millions in this slave country whose rights are disregarded by wicked, cruel, and unjust enactments, I say, let it be done."[4]

Radicals in the North now had their martyr. The South, which, initially, had not been troubled by Brown's crime—Lee had dismissed it as a riot—was shocked at the outpouring of Northern abolitionist rhetoric proclaiming the virtues of a murderer and would-be terrorist who welcomed the death of millions if it would end slavery. The North's reaction to Brown's execution convinced the South that the United States was indeed a house divided, and that the South had better fortify its half of the estate.

Lincoln's dilemma

That was 1859. There was a presidential election in 1860, and on election day, there were four candidates for president: Abraham Lincoln of the Republican Party (founded 1854), the party of the moral majority whose political platform pledged its opposition to both slavery and polygamy (an issue because of Mormon Utah); Stephen Douglas of the Democrat Party, which stood for nothing but opportunism; John C. Breckinridge, James Buchanan's vice president, running as a "National Democrat" (which really meant "Southern Democrat"); and Tennessean John

Bell who ran under the banner of the Constitutional Union Party, which represented "the anti-extremist Old Gentleman's Party" of the Upper South.

The results were definitive. Lincoln swept Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, and Oregon, and squeaked out a victory in California, where the vote totals divided into near even thirds between Lincoln, Douglas, and Breckinridge. Stephen Douglas won only Missouri and three of New Jersey's seven electoral votes (the other four went to Lincoln). Breckinridge won in Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Maryland, and Delaware. The great John Bell took the gentlemanly bourbon-sipping electors of Tennessee, Kentucky, and Virginia. More telling than the tally of states was the tally of electoral votes. Lincoln had won more electors (180) than his combined opponents: Breckinridge (72), Bell (39), and Douglas (a measly 12).

The new president, however, did not enjoy a political honeymoon; he confronted what he had predicted, a house divided, and with his manly rail-splitter sinews, he tried to squeeze it back together.

In his First Inaugural speech, delivered 4 March 1861, one month after the creation of the Provisional Government of the Confederate States of

Landslide Lincoln

In the election of 1860, Abraham Lincoln won slightly less than 40 percent of the popular vote, Stephen Douglas took almost 30 percent of the vote, John C. Breckinridge had 18 percent (and won almost all the Southern states), and John Bell had more than 12 percent (winning three states of the upper South). If the Democrats had been united, they still would have lost, shifting only the electoral votes of California and Oregon, which shows just how outnumbered in electoral college votes the South had become: a Democrat candidate could have taken 60 percent of the popular vote and still lost the election.

America, he asserted his right to execute federal law in every state that participated in the 1860 federal election and to "possess the property and places belonging to the government, and to collect the duties and imposts." He proposed to do this, in other words, in states that had not only declared their independence from the Union, but had formed a new Southern Confederacy. If Lincoln ever felt sympathy for King George III, it would have been understandable. He was trying to enforce his authority over a people who denied it.

He added what amounted to a declaration of war that denied it was a declaration of war: "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 yourselves being 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."[5]

Lincoln said that if the South was dissatisfied with the result of the election, it had two choices: "Whenever they shall grow weary of the existing Government, they can exercise their *constitutional* right of amending it or their *revolutionary* right to dismember or overthrow it."[6] But it was disingenuous in the extreme to uphold revolution as a right, and not secession. When the colonists had declared their independence from the Crown in 1776 they had seceded from the British Empire; they did not seek to storm Buckingham Palace or the Parliament at Westminster. So too, Jefferson Davis and his fellow Southerners had no desire to overthrow the government of the United States or conquer those who wished to belong to it. The South merely wanted to go its own way, which is why the Civil War should really be called the War for Southern Independence or the War of Northern Aggression. President Jefferson Davis, in his first message to the Confederate Congress, put the South's case in eight simple words: "All we ask is to be let alone."[7]

Lincoln's position was especially disingenuous given that he had once held secession—referring specifically to Texas's secession from Mexico—as a fundamental, universal human right: "Any people anywhere, being inclined and having the power, have the right to rise up and shake off the existing government and form a new one that suits them better. This is a most valuable—a most sacred right—a right, which we hope and believe, is to liberate the world. Nor is this right confined to cases in which the whole people of an existing government, may choose to exercise it. Any portion of such people that can, may revolutionize, and make their own, of so much of their territory as they inhabit."[8]

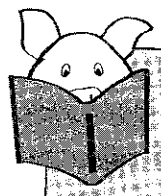
What then, was the problem? Well, circumstances had changed, and Lincoln now sided with Santa Anna rather than the Texans. There was still, however, the need for a *casus belli*. During the Mexican War, which Congressman Lincoln opposed—and in which men like Jefferson Davis, Robert E. Lee, and Thomas Jonathan Jackson fought—Lincoln demanded to know at precisely what spot, on which side of the border, American blood had been shed to justify the war. Now he earnestly wanted to wage war against his former fellow countrymen. But to do so he needed the fulfillment of his previous "Spot Resolutions." He needed the South to fire on Union troops.

"Fort Sumter's been fired upon, my regiment leaves at dawn"

There were some in the North who thought the Union should let its "erring sisters depart in peace." Fort Sumter changed all that. Though no one died at Fort Sumter, though Lincoln could not point to the fort and say that Union blood had been shed, the roar of cannons against the fort was echoed by a roar of Northern fury to preserve the Union. Lincoln had successfully goaded the South into firing the first shot, and reaping the unfortunate consequences.

Of course, things looked rather different from the landward side of Charleston Harbor. Fort Sumter could not exist in South Carolinian waters with its canons pointing at Charleston. It, like other federal properties on Southern land or in Southern waters, had to be surrendered. In exchange, the South offered not only to pay for the properties, but to pay the South's portion of the federal debt of the United States.

These Southern offers, however, were solutions Lincoln did not want to hear. Nor did he desire to meet with Southern representatives sent to defuse the crisis, despite the intervention of two associate justices of the Supreme Court on their behalf. The issue was first principles. The South could not secede. It was irretrievably bound to the United States. While Fort Sumter was, one would think, erected for the protection of the people of Charleston, it must now remain as a federal fort directed *against* the people of Charleston and their desire to be free of federal authority.



Books Yankees Don't Want You to Read

The Story of the Confederacy, by Robert Selph Henry (Da Capo Press, reprint, no date; foreword by Douglas Southall Freeman). Originally published in 1931, it remains a classic history.

Sumter's importance was in part symbolic. It and Fort Pickens at Pensacola, Florida, were the only two Federal forts in the new Confederate republic that had not surrendered to the Confederate States of America. Had Fort Sumter been peaceably surrendered, the initial crisis confronting North and South would have been defused. But as a Federal citadel in Charleston Harbor, the seat of secession, it was regarded as an intolerable provocation, irritant, and threat.

The issue was not just Charleston harbor, of course. Lincoln had vowed to collect "duties and imposts"—tariffs—in the South. Tariffs amounted to 95 percent of federal revenue, and the Morrill Tariff of 1861 (signed into law by President James Buchanan) had more than doubled tariff duties. The

South had opposed the tariff, the North had supported it, and now, though South Carolina had left the Union, Lincoln proposed to enforce it.

Ratcheting up the pressure, on 6 April 1861, Lincoln announced that he was sending men and supplies to Sumter—men who would not fire, he pledged, unless fired upon. It was apparent now to the Confederates that if they were to take possession of the fort, they could not wait. On 12 April 1861, after gentlemanly negotiations between Confederate General P. G. T. Beauregard and the fort's commander, Kentucky-born Major Robert Anderson, failed to win surrender of the fort, Beauregard ordered his artillerists to open fire on Fort Sumter. Two days later, the fort was his.

The South had won the stand-off over Fort Sumter, but it had also handed Lincoln the victory he sought—the South had fired first. Lincoln now had his righteous cause—to put down the rebel insurrection.

Lincoln had closed his inaugural speech by saying: "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."[9]

Beautiful sentiments, but one has to wonder whether seeking to wage war on one's fellow Americans, as Lincoln was committed to do, is actually a reflection of the better angels of our nature. Arkansas, Tennessee, North Carolina, and Virginia thought it wasn't, and rather than join in the suppression of the Southern states, they seceded as well—and the Confederate government swiftly moved from Montgomery, Alabama, to Richmond, Virginia.

For these Southern states, the "mystic chords of memory" were strong indeed. Robert E. Lee spoke for them when he declined command of the Union forces, "stating as candidly and courteously as I could, that though opposed to secession and deprecating war, I could

take no part in the invasion of the Southern states."[10] Earlier he had confessed, "a Union that can only be maintained by swords and bayonets . . . has no charm for me . . . .If the Union is dissolved and government disrupted, I shall return to my native state and share the miseries of my people and save in defense will draw my sword on none."[11] He made good on that promise and took the position that every humane man can echo: "With all my devotion to the Union and the feeling of loyalty and duty as an American citizen, I have not been able to make up my mind to raise my hand against my relatives, my children, my home."[12] So spoke a man who had served the flag of the United States his entire adult life, a West Pointer, a former superintendent at West Point, a veteran of the Mexican War.

But Abraham Lincoln—the man who thought the Mexican War wrong, even if it had brought the United States California, Utah, Nevada, and Arizona, and parts of Colorado, Wyoming, and New Mexico, as well as a greater Texas, with little resistance in those territories—thought it perfectly

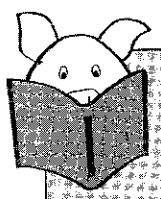
We're All Confederates Now

Put yourself in Robert E. Lee's shoes. If the South seceded today, how many of us would think the proper response would be for the federal government to send tanks over the bridges spanning the Potomac into Virginia, to blockade Southern ports and carpet bomb Southern cities? If we don't, it's because we see the United States as the Confederacy saw it, *as a voluntary union*. The idea that we have to keep California, Mississippi, Minnesota, and Maine together by force would probably strike us as ridiculous. And if it came to that, it would probably strike us as horrendous and wrong.

right to wage war, total war, against his fellow Americans. It would last four years and be the bloodiest war in our history.

Pride versus power

On paper, the war was decided before it was fought. The Federal forces had a four-to-one advantage in available fighting manpower (counting only white males) and an industrial base that outweighed the South by an even larger proportion. In terms of manufactured goods, Massachusetts alone produced 60 percent more than the entire Confederacy. Other Northern states—New York and Pennsylvania—produced double the Confederacy's total. Likewise, banking and ready capital belonged to the North, not the South, by a ratio of three to one. Nine-tenths of Southern savings were, in fact, in Northern banks.



Books Yankees Don't Want You to Read

Their Tattered Flags: The Epic of the Confederacy, by Frank E. Vandiver. (Texas A&M University Press, 1989). A spirited retelling. Vandiver was a military historian and president of Texas A&M.

The North had 22,000 miles of railroad track laid, to only 9,000 for the South—and much of the South's track ran on differing gauges, which made transportation difficult, as did the comparative lack of roads. The South had 3,000 miles of coastline, but shipbuilding was a Yankee art and shipping a Yankee business. In fact, just about everything was a Yankee business. The Deep South had virtually no factories. Only the secession of Virginia gave the South a foundry to cast artillery. The South had few pharmacies either, and the North declared medicines contraband, so whiskey became the Southern anesthetic of choice.

The South was wealthy in only three commodities—cotton (nine-tenths of the world's supply came from the South), tobacco (good for spitting in the eyes of Yankees), and pride (a conviction that any Johnny Reb could whup any three, or possibly ten, Billy Yanks).

The South initially thought that if it withheld its "white gold" for sale on world markets, it could compel powers like France and Britain to intervene on its behalf—what it really did was assist the United States Navy. On 19 April 1861, Lincoln ordered Southern ports blockaded, an act of war that the United States Navy was not yet large enough to enforce. Nevertheless, the South, with its typical courtesy, kindly did the Navy's work for it by not exporting its cotton. It eventually realized its error, but too late—relying on daring blockade-runners to try to bring goods into Southern ports. As the blockade tightened, the South was left with only one partially opened port in Wilmington, North Carolina. Southerners were never as clever as Yankees when it came to money.

It was its martial prowess—its men born to the saddle and to arms, the military tradition of its aristocrats, and the raw-boned rebel yell of its small farmers, workingmen, and frontiersmen in which the South trusted. It had never claimed to be an industrial power like the North. It had disdained Northern efficiency in favor of manners and charm. Yet when Lincoln's armies crossed the Potomac, the South was ready with serried ranks of armed, equipped, and uniformed men led by more than competent generals. The Federals would find that Southern fighting prowess was no trifling matter.