

Secession and War

Essential Question

What role did the theory of states' rights play in the outbreak of the Civil War?

Reading Guide

Content Vocabulary

secession (p. 463) states' rights (p. 464)

Academic Vocabulary

reject (p. 464) justify (p. 464)

Key People and Events

John Crittenden (p. 463)

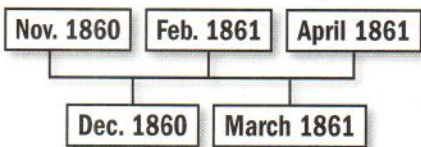
Confederate States of America (p. 464)

Jefferson Davis (p. 464)

Fort Sumter (p. 466)

Reading Strategy

Taking Notes As you read, list the major events on a time line like the one below.



American Diary

The events at Harpers Ferry inflamed slaveholders. In 1859 the Charleston Mercury declared "The day of compromise is passed. . . . There is no peace for the South in the Union." Republicans argued that the South leaving the Union was a tactic to frighten voters from casting their ballots for Abraham Lincoln. To many Southerners, however, Lincoln's election would signal that their position in the Union was hopeless.

—from the Charleston Mercury



The Wigwam in Chicago was the site of the 1860 Republican Convention.

Secession

Main Idea Fearing that President Lincoln would not protect Southern rights, first South Carolina and then other states voted to leave the Union.

History and You Have you ever been so angry that you needed to leave a room? Read to learn about the South's decision to secede.

Would the Union break up? That was the burning question as the presidential election of November 1860 approached.

The Election of 1860

The issue of slavery split the Democratic Party. The northern Democrats nominated Stephen Douglas. They supported popular sovereignty. Southern Democrats vowed to uphold slavery. Their candidate was John C. Breckinridge. Moderates from the North and the South who formed the Constitutional Union Party chose John Bell. This party took no position on slavery.

The Republicans nominated Abraham Lincoln. Their platform was that slavery should be left undisturbed where it existed, but that it should be excluded from the territories.

Many Southerners feared, however, that a Republican victory would encourage slave revolts.

With the Democrats divided, Lincoln won a clear majority of the electoral votes. The vote was along purely sectional lines. Lincoln's name did not even appear on the ballot in most Southern states, but he won every Northern state. In effect, the more populous North outvoted the South.

Attempt at Compromise

The Republicans promised not to disturb slavery where it already existed. Many Southerners, though, did not trust the Republican Party to protect their rights. On December 20, 1860, South Carolina voted to secede from the Union.

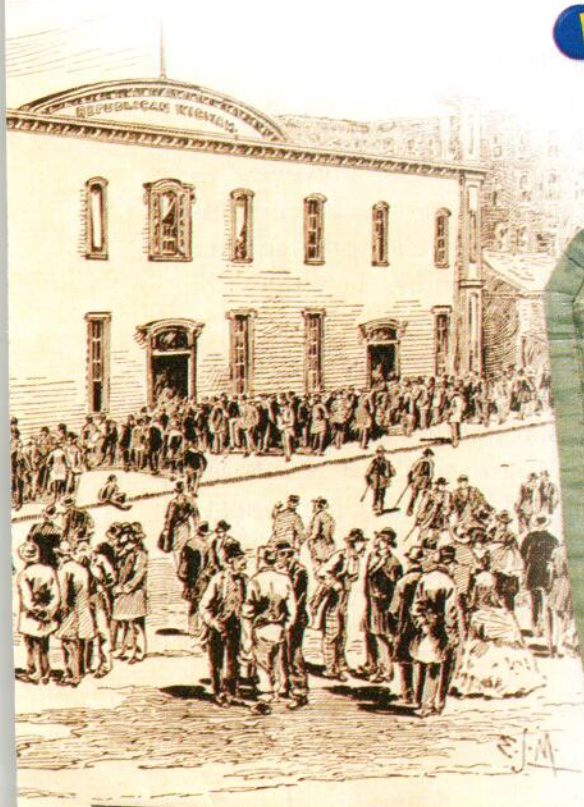
As other Southern states debated the question of **secession**, or withdrawal from the Union, leaders in Congress worked frantically to fashion a compromise. Senator **John Crittenden** of Kentucky proposed a series of amendments to the Constitution. Central to his plan was a provision to protect slavery south of 36°30'N latitude—the line set by the Missouri Compromise—in all territories “now held or hereafter acquired.”

Primary Source **Secession Ribbon**

Supporting Separation *Secession* means “separation from the Union.” Some Southerners wore ribbons like this one to show their support for separating from the United States. The words on the ribbon are mottoes, or well-known expressions, from the American Revolution.

Critical Thinking

Analyzing What did the mottoes mean during the American Revolution? Why do you think secessionists used these mottoes?



INTERPRETING POLITICAL CARTOONS

This cartoon was created in 1861, just before the outbreak of the Civil War. Secession was breaking up the United States.

- 1. Interpreting** What do the men in the cartoon represent?
- 2. Analyzing** Look at each person's expression. How would you describe their expressions?
- 3. Identifying Points of View** What does the cartoonist think will result from the men's action?



Republicans **rejected**, or refused to accept, this provision. They had just won an election on the principle that slavery would not be extended in any territories. "Now we are told..." Lincoln wrote, "the government shall be broken up unless we surrender to those we have beaten." Leaders in the South also rejected the plan. "We spit upon every plan to compromise," exclaimed one Southern leader. "No human power can save the Union," wrote another.

The Confederacy

By February 1861, Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, and Georgia joined South Carolina and also seceded. On February 4, delegates from these states and South Carolina met to form a new nation. Calling themselves the **Confederate States of America**, they chose **Jefferson Davis** as their president.

Southerners **justified**, or found reasons to support, secession with the theory of **states' rights**. The states, they argued, had voluntarily chosen to enter the Union. They defined

the Constitution as a contract among the independent states. They believed the national government violated that contract by refusing to enforce the Fugitive Slave Act and by denying the Southern states equal rights in the territories. As a result, they argued, the states had a right to leave the Union.

Reactions to Secession

Many Southerners welcomed secession, ringing church bells and celebrating in the streets. Other Southerners, however, were alarmed. Virginian Robert E. Lee expressed concern about the future. "I only see that a fearful calamity is upon us," he wrote.

In the North, some abolitionists preferred to allow the Southern states to leave. If the Union could be kept together only by compromising on slavery, they declared, then let the Union be destroyed. Most Northerners, however, believed that the Union must be preserved. For Lincoln the issue was "whether in a free government the minority have the right to break up the government whenever they choose."

Lincoln Takes Office

Lincoln had won the election, but he was not yet president. James Buchanan's term ran until March 4, 1861. In December 1860, Buchanan sent a message to Congress saying that the Southern states had no right to secede from the Union. Then he added that he had no power to stop them from doing so.

As Lincoln prepared for his inauguration on March 4, 1861, people throughout the United States wondered what he would say and do. They wondered, too, what would happen in Virginia, North Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee, Missouri, and Arkansas. These slave states chose to remain in the Union, but the decision was not final. If the United States used force against the Confederate States of America, the remaining slave states also might secede.

In his Inaugural Address, Lincoln spoke to the seceding states directly, mixing tough-

ness with words of peace. He said that secession would not be permitted, that "the Union of these States is perpetual [forever]." He vowed to hold federal property in the South, including a number of forts and military installations, and to enforce the laws of the United States. At the same time, Lincoln pleaded with the South:

PRIMARY SOURCE

"In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow countrymen, and not in mine, are the momentous issues of *civil war*. The Government will not assail you. You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors. . . . We are not *enemies*, but *friends*. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection."

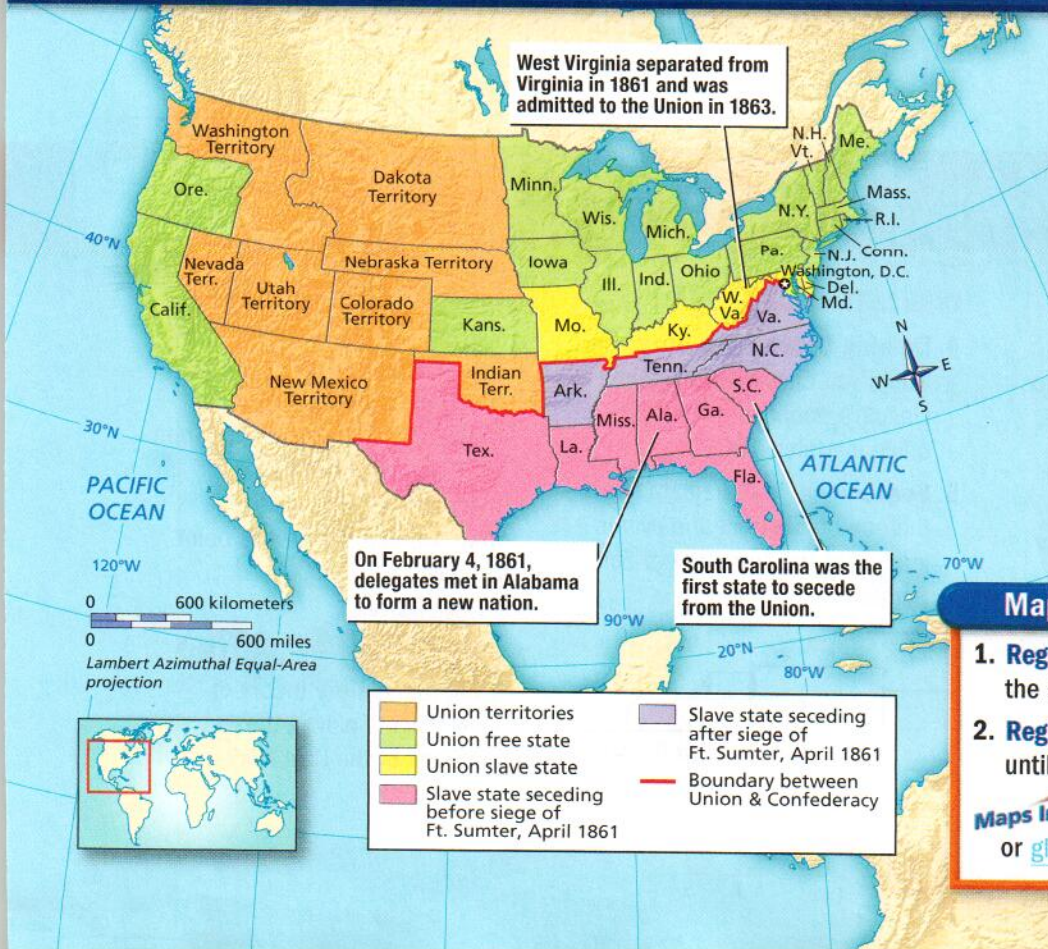
—Abraham Lincoln, on reconciliation

Reading Check

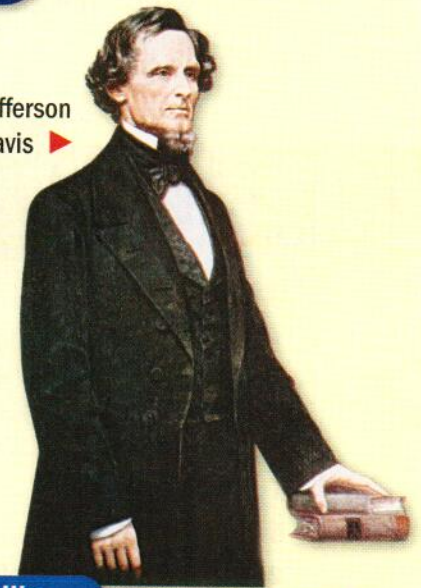
Explaining What was John Crittenden's proposal to save the Union?

Seceding States, 1860-1861

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC



Jefferson Davis



Map Skills

- Regions** Which states seceded before the attack on Fort Sumter?
- Regions** Which states did not secede until after the attack on Fort Sumter?

Maps In Motion See StudentWorks™ Plus or glencoe.com.

Fort Sumter

Main Idea The Civil War began when Confederate forces attacked Fort Sumter in South Carolina.

History and You Have you ever argued with a family member over an item that you each felt you owned? Read to learn about events at Fort Sumter.

Confederate forces had already seized some U.S. forts within their states. Although Lincoln did not want to start a war by trying to take the forts back, allowing the Confederates to keep them would amount to admitting their right to secede.

The day after taking office, Lincoln received a message from the commander of **Fort Sumter**, a U.S. fort on an island guarding Charleston Harbor. The message warned that the fort was low on supplies and the Confederates demanded its surrender.

Lincoln responded by sending a message to Governor Francis Pickens of South Carolina. He informed Pickens that he was sending an unarmed expedition with supplies to Fort Sumter. Lincoln promised that Union forces would not “throw in men, arms, or

ammunition” unless they were fired upon. The president thus left the decision to start shooting up to the Confederates.

Jefferson Davis made a fateful choice. He ordered his forces to attack Fort Sumter before the Union supplies could arrive. Confederate guns opened fire early on April 12, 1861. Union captain Abner Doubleday witnessed the attack from inside the fort:

PRIMARY SOURCE

“Showers of balls . . . and shells . . . poured into the fort in one incessant stream, causing great flakes of masonry to fall in all directions.”

—quoted in *Fort Sumter*

High seas kept Union relief ships from reaching the fort. Fort Sumter surrendered on April 14. Thousands of shots were fired during the siege, but there was no loss of life.

President Lincoln issued a call for troops, and volunteers quickly signed up. Meanwhile, Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Arkansas voted to join the Confederacy. The Civil War had begun.

Reading Check

Explaining Why did Lincoln decide not to send armed troops to Fort Sumter?

Section 4 Review

History ONLINE
Study Central™ To review this section, go to glencoe.com.

Vocabulary

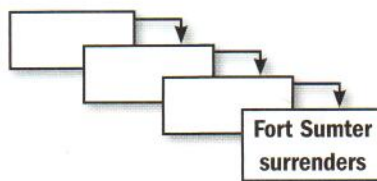
1. Use each of the following vocabulary terms in a sentence that will help explain its meaning: *secession*, *reject*, *justify*, *states' rights*.

Main Ideas

2. **Specifying** What action did South Carolina take after Lincoln won the election of 1860? Why?
3. **Explaining** What was the significance of the attack on Fort Sumter?

Critical Thinking

4. **Drawing Conclusions** How would you describe President Lincoln's priorities as he took office in March 1861?
5. **Sequencing** In a diagram like the one below, trace the events leading to the surrender of Fort Sumter.



6. **Descriptive Writing** Imagine that you are a Confederate journalist. Write a brief announcement about the attack on Fort Sumter for your newspaper. Then write another brief announcement of the event—this time from a Union journalist's point of view.

7. **Answer the Essential Question**
What role did the theory of states' rights play in the outbreak of the Civil War?