CALMUN'25

UNITED STATES SENATE

STUDY GUIDE

Agenda Item: Secession Crisis and American Civil War

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1. Letter from the Secretary-General

Esteemed Participants,

As the Secretary-General of Cağaloğlu Model United Nations, it is my distinct honor to welcome you all to the 7th edition of CALMUN, which will take place on May 16th, 17th, and 18th, 2025. It is with great pleasure that we present the study guide for the U.S. Senate, which aims to equip you with the essential knowledge and context for the upcoming three days.

After months of preparation and dedicated effort, I am proud to say that we are now just one step away from CALMUN 2025. We hope that, by reading this guide, you will feel as ready and enthusiastic as we are.

Without a doubt, this conference would not be possible without the contributions of our remarkable academic team. I extend my gratitude to our Head of Academy, Özge Öztürk; our Co-Heads of Crisis, Meryem Sultan Çok and Akay Engin; our devoted and hardworking team members; and our motivated trainees. Their commitment and passion have brought this vision to life and elevated CALMUN's academic quality to its peak.

Furthermore, I would also like to extend my best wishes to all delegates participating in CALMUN 2025. Whether this is your first conference or you are a seasoned MUNer, I thank each of you for taking a step forward and joining us. We truly hope that CALMUN will be a special experience that you will remember warmly in the future. From my perspective, MUN is about motivation, enjoyment, meaningful discussion, and connection. I wish each delegate an inspiring, engaging, and memorable experience.

Warm regards,

Ceylin Gürsoy

Secretary-General

2. Glossary

Abolitionism: A movement that sought the immediate end of slavery throughout the United States on moral, religious, and political grounds.

Border States: Slaveholding states that remained loyal to the Union during the Civil War, including Kentucky, Missouri, Maryland, and Delaware. These states were critical both strategically and politically.

Confederate States of America (Confederacy): A government formed in 1861 by Southern states that seceded from the Union. The Confederacy emphasized states' rights and the protection of slavery.

Emancipation Proclamation: An executive order issued by President Abraham Lincoln in 1863, declaring all enslaved people in Confederate-controlled territories to be free. It redefined the Civil War as a fight against slavery.

Habeas Corpus: A legal principle that protects individuals from arbitrary detention by requiring that a court determine the legality of imprisonment. Suspended by President Lincoln during the Civil War in certain areas.

Popular Sovereignty: The principle that settlers of a given territory have the right to decide whether slavery would be permitted within their borders.

Radical Republicans: A faction within the Republican Party that advocated for the complete abolition of slavery and harsher policies toward the Southern states during Reconstruction.

Reconstruction Amendments: The Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution, adopted between 1865 and 1870, aimed at abolishing slavery and guaranteeing civil rights and voting rights for formerly enslaved individuals.

Secession: The formal withdrawal of a state from the Union. Eleven Southern states seceded between 1860 and 1861, leading to the formation of the Confederacy.

Union: The Northern states during the Civil War that remained loyal to the federal government of the United States and opposed the Confederacy.

3. Introduction to the Committee

The United States Senate is the upper chamber of Congress, with the House of Representatives as the lower chamber. The Senate plays a key role in the creation, approval, and enforcement of federal legislation.

Each U.S. state is represented by two senators in the Senate, regardless of its population. Therefore, both smaller and larger states hold equal representation in the Senate. In 1860, the United States consisted of 33 states and had a total of 66 senators. Senators serve six-year terms, with approximately one-third of the senators elected every two years to ensure continuity and legislative stability.

The Senate works with the House of Representatives in drafting and voting on legislation. It holds the authority to confirm high-level appointments made by the President, such as cabinet members and federal judges. Also, the Senate conducts impeachment trials for the President or other officials, after an impeachment by the House. Additionally, a two-thirds majority vote in the Senate is required to approve any international treaties made by the President.

Each member of the Senate holds one vote in legislative proceedings. Most legislative decisions in the Senate are determined by a simple majority, defined as one vote more than half. In a tie (33–33), the Vice President of the United States, the President of the Senate, makes the final decision. However, certain critical matters -such as presidential impeachments, international treaties, and constitutional amendments- require supermajority approval, typically a two-thirds or three-fourths majority.

4. Rules of Procedure

The Committee will begin after the roll call, with Senators standing to present the Pledge of Allegiance. There will be no opening speeches. However, the Majority Leader and the Minority Leader of the U.S. Senate will each have one minute to speak. They should use this time to explain their party's general position on the topic and share key ideas or goals related to the agenda.

Unless the Chamber is currently in a voting procedure or in caucus, any Senator may propose a motion for a moderated or unmoderated caucus at any point during the session.

There are two special types of motions that may be used in the U.S. Senate:

Party Caucus: A party caucus follows the same format as an unmoderated caucus, but Senators may only interact with members of their own political party. To propose a party caucus, a Senator must state their party, suggest the caucus, and offer a duration. Party caucuses are helpful when members of the same party need to discuss important topics privately, organize their opinions, or agree on a common approach before speaking or voting.

Filibuster: A motion for a filibuster requires a simple majority to pass. If accepted, it gives the Senator who proposed it unlimited speaking time on the floor. This time may also be shared with other Senators.

The Senator may speak about the agenda or any unrelated topic, as long as they do not stop talking. The filibuster can serve two purposes:

- To speak in detail about controversial issues connected to the agenda. If the Chair believes the speaker is not staying on topic, they may end the filibuster.

- To delay the process, for example, to give one party more time to prepare or to prevent a vote from happening too soon.

There is no official time limit for a filibuster. However, it may be ended if a supermajority -three-fifths (3/5) of the Senate- votes to do so.

Senators may write bills to propose new laws or suggest changes to existing policies. Each bill should include a short title that provides a brief name for the legislation, a purpose section that clearly explains what the bill aims to accomplish, and a series of articles that form the main content. These articles should be organized into sections, each beginning with the heading “SECTION” and may contain smaller parts for clarity. Once a bill is introduced, it will be discussed and then voted on by the Senate.

5. Introduction to the Agenda Item

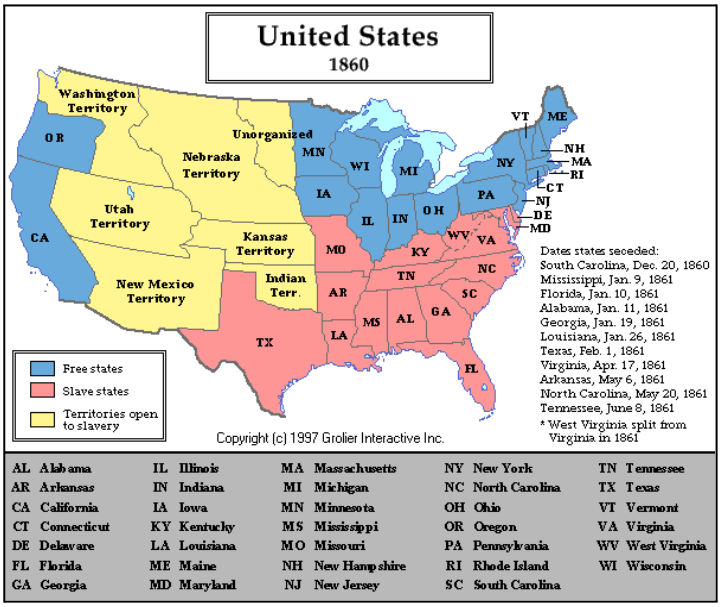
In the nineteenth century, the United States of America faced one of the greatest crises in its history. Known as the Secession Crisis, this period began when several Southern states collectively seceded from the Union, leading to the American Civil War between 1861 and 1865. The conflict emerged from deep divisions over critical issues such as slavery, the economy, states’ rights, and the limits of federal authority. Political and social divisions widened, creating uncertainty about the future of the country.

The primary cause of the crisis was the question of slavery. While the Northern states developed a modern economy and enacted laws opposing slavery, the Southern states sought to preserve the institution as the foundation of their economic system. Abraham Lincoln’s election in 1860 was perceived as a direct threat by the South, as he pledged to prevent the expansion of slavery into new territories. In response, Southern leaders declared independence to safeguard their way of life. The federal government, however, viewed secession as illegal and a violation of national unity.

The crisis escalated when South Carolina left the Union in 1860, quickly followed by Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas. These states formed the Confederate States of America, electing Jefferson Davis as president. Although the Confederacy asserted that it had permanently separated from the Union, the United States government refused to recognize the secession. Growing tensions made armed conflict inevitable.

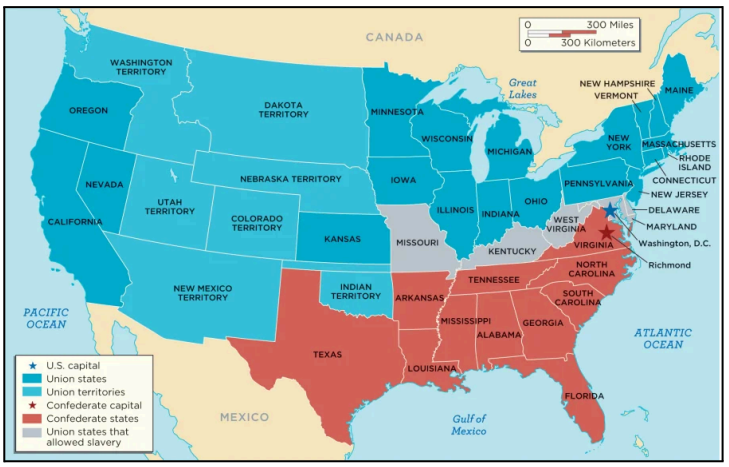
War officially began in April 1861 with the Confederate attack on Fort Sumter. The Northern states, committed to preserving the Union, entered the conflict by declaring secession unconstitutional. The Civil War soon became more than a military confrontation; it transformed into a struggle that reshaped the nation's future. Major battles, political shifts, and social uprises marked the war years. Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation in 1863 reframed the conflict as a fight against slavery, laying the groundwork for a major social revolution. After four years of devastating conflict, the surrender of General Robert E. Lee in 1865 brought the war to an end, reuniting the nation and leading to the formal abolition of slavery. Nonetheless, the war left lasting economic and social scars, particularly in the Southern states.

6. Regional Overview of the States in the North and the South



The accompanying map presents the political landscape of the United States in 1860, just before the outbreak of the Civil War. States marked in blue represent the North, while those marked in red represent the South. This division primarily reflects the opposing positions held regarding the institution of slavery. Throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the Northern states had gradually abolished slavery, moving toward an industrialized economy based on manufacturing, trade, and wage labor. In contrast, the Southern states continued to uphold and defend slavery as the cornerstone of their agricultural economy, which depended heavily on slave labor for the production of cotton, tobacco, and other cash crops. These profound economic and social differences became increasingly politicized, resulting in sectional tensions that would eventually erupt into armed conflict.

In addition to the recognized states, the map highlights areas in yellow that represent territories which had not yet achieved statehood due to small populations or undeveloped governments. These regions were governed by federal law but lacked their own legislatures and full representation in the U.S. Senate. The status of territories such as Kansas, Nebraska, and New Mexico became flashpoints in the national conflict over the expansion of slavery.



During the Civil War, all Northern states remained loyal to the Union. Their economic systems, cultural values, and political institutions had increasingly seperated from those of the South, reinforcing their commitment to preserving the federal Union. Conversely, many Southern states, driven by fears that the election of Abraham Lincoln signaled an imminent threat to the institution of slavery, chose to secede from the Union. They subsequently formed the Confederate States of America, establishing a new government with its own constitution that explicitly protected slavery. This decision to secede was seen by the federal government and the majority of Northern citizens as unconstitutional and an existential threat to the nation's unity, thereby setting the stage for the Civil War.

Importantly, the map also identifies four key slaveholding states (Kentucky, Missouri, Maryland, and Delaware) depicted in gray. These states, known collectively as the Border States, occupied a pivotal position within the unfolding conflict. Although slavery remained legal within their borders, these states did not join the Confederacy and instead maintained their allegiance to the Union. Their loyalty was critical to the Union's military and political strategy. Geographically, the Border States provided essential strategic advantages: they controlled vital rivers, such as the Ohio and Mississippi, which were crucial for transportation, communication, and supply lines. Their location also created a buffer zone that limited Confederate access to Northern territory.

The loyalty of the Border States, however, was far from absolute. Deep internal divisions existed within their populations, with significant numbers of residents sympathizing with the Confederate cause. This resulted in widespread civil unrest, guerrilla warfare, and political instability within these states throughout the duration of the war. President Lincoln and Union leaders took extraordinary measures to ensure the continued allegiance of the Border States, including the use of military force and the suspension of certain civil liberties, particularly in Maryland. The decision of these states to remain within the Union significantly strengthened the North's political legitimacy and weakened the Confederacy's claims to represent all slaveholding interests.

Finally, it is important to recognize the role of the Western territories shown on the map. Regions such as Kansas and Nebraska had become arenas of violent confrontation over the expansion of slavery, most notably during the period known as "Bleeding Kansas." The question of whether new territories would permit slavery had profound implications for the balance of power in Congress and fueled sectional tensions. The Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, which allowed settlers to determine the status of slavery through popular sovereignty, effectively nullified the Missouri Compromise and contributed directly to the rising sectional hostilities. The uncertain status of these territories in 1860 symbolized the broader national struggle between pro-slavery and anti-slavery forces, and their future remained a contentious issue as the nation moved toward war.

7. Indirect Causes of the War

a. Differences Between the North and the South

During the nineteenth century, the Northern and Southern regions of the United States developed along markedly different paths, resulting in disparities in climate, economy, demographics, infrastructure, culture, and political ideology. These differences, although gradual in their development, created a widening gap between the two regions, ultimately leading to tensions and the outbreak of the Civil War.

i. Climate and Geography

The climate and geography of the North shaped the development of its economy and society. The North experienced cooler and drier conditions, with four distinct seasons marked by warm summers and harsh winters. The land was defined by rocky soil, dense forests, and numerous rivers, making large-scale agriculture challenging. As a result, only about sixteen percent of Northern farms were classified as large-scale operations. Instead, Northern industries capitalized on abundant timber from extensive forests, using it to support shipbuilding and construction.

Additionally, the Atlantic coast of the North featured numerous sheltered bays and coves, facilitating maritime commerce. Although many rivers were too rapid and rough for direct navigation, Northern inhabitants used waterfalls as a reliable and inexpensive energy source to power factories. This early use of water power contributed to the rapid industrialization of cities such as Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Richmond, transforming them into major trade and manufacturing hubs before the Civil War.

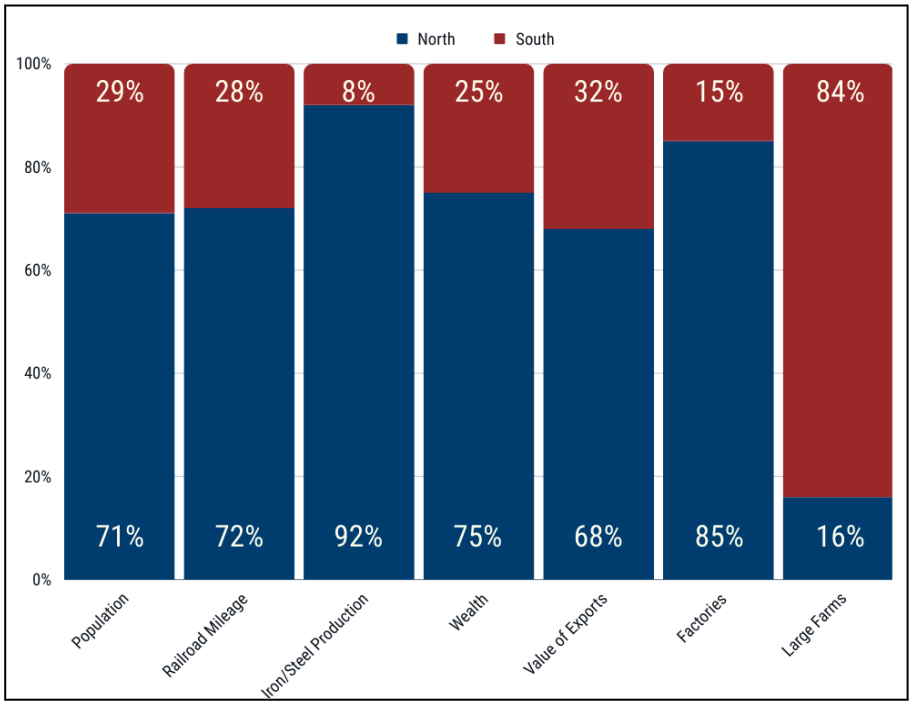
In contrast, the South benefited from a warmer and more humid climate, with long growing seasons and consistent rainfall. The geography included fertile plains and a vast network of navigable rivers, such as the Mississippi and its tributaries, which enabled efficient transportation of agricultural goods. Large-scale plantation agriculture flourished in this environment, creating the South's economic dependence on farming and, in turn, on slavery, which provided the labor essential to sustaining it.

ii. Economy

The economic structures of the North and South differed fundamentally by the mid-nineteenth century, contributing significantly to the deepening sectional divide. The North's economy was diverse and increasingly industrialized, centered on manufacturing, trade, mining, shipping, textiles, and lumber. This growth fostered urbanization, technological advancement, and the rise of financial institutions that supported infrastructure development. In contrast, the South remained largely agrarian, relying on cash crops like cotton, tobacco, rice, and sugar. Although Southern agriculture was profitable internationally, the region lacked the industrial base and financial networks that defined the North.

By 1860, the North's economic strength was clear. Its industrial output, especially in firearms, far exceeded that of the South—Northern factories produced thirty-two times more firearms. The North also expanded its railroads and banking systems, which boosted trade and allowed for the efficient movement of goods and troops. While about forty percent of Northerners worked in agriculture, nearly eighty-four percent of Southerners did. Even in farming, the North often surpassed the South, producing similar amounts of corn and much more wheat and oats—showing its technological and organizational edge.

The South's economic weakness was not due to a lack of wealth. The total value of the Southern slave economy exceeded that of the nation's railroads, banks, and factories combined. However, Southern leaders prioritized agriculture over industry, relying on cotton exports and hoping foreign demand would bring international support. This dependence on a single sector left the South especially vulnerable during wartime.



As the Civil War neared, both sides prepared to use their economic resources, but the North was better equipped for a long conflict. Its industrial power, financial systems, and advances in agricultural machinery made it more adaptable. New farming tools allowed fewer workers to produce enough food, even as many men joined the army. This helped maintain the Northern food supply and redirected resources to support the war, giving the North a major strategic advantage.

iii. Demographics

The demographic differences between the North and the South further deepened the divide between the two regions. In the North, the population was growing rapidly, fueled by industrialization, urbanization, and immigration. Approximately thirty percent of the Northern population resided in cities or large towns, many of which were transforming into major industrial and commercial centers. Urbanization provided a dense labor force for factories and created vibrant economic hubs that supported manufacturing, trade, and innovation.

In contrast, the South remained mostly rural. Only about ten percent of its population lived in urban areas, with the vast majority residing in small towns and agricultural regions. Many Southern states had populations where enslaved African Americans constituted a significant, and in some cases a majority, share. By 1860, the Southern states held approximately four million enslaved individuals, whose labor was essential to the agricultural economy but who were denied any political rights or social mobility.

Immigration patterns further reinforced the demographic imbalance. European immigrants overwhelmingly chose the North over the South, seeking employment opportunities in Northern factories and urban centers. Statistical estimates indicate that immigrants selected the North at a rate nearly seven times greater than the South. These newcomers provided a continuous influx of labor and contributed to the North’s economic growth and cultural dynamism. As a result, by the outbreak of the Civil War, the Union boasted a population of approximately twenty-three million, compared to the Confederacy’s nine million, of whom nearly one-third were enslaved individuals. This significant disparity in population would have profound implications for the Union's military capacity and economic resilience during the conflict.

iv. Transportation

Transportation infrastructure represented another area in which the North held a decisive advantage over the South. In the decades leading up to the Civil War, the North invested heavily in developing a comprehensive railway network. The ability to mass-produce railway components, combined with strong engineering and industrial output, allowed the North to build and maintain an extensive rail system connecting major cities, industrial centers, and farming regions. This superior network proved critical during the war. The Union could move troops, weapons, and supplies efficiently across vast distances, enhancing its mobility and strategic reach. The War Department established the United States Military Railroads to manage and expand rail transport for military purposes. This organization not only built new lines but also captured and operated Southern railroads to support the Union war effort.

Unlike the North, the South relied primarily on rivers for transportation. Although Southern states had many waterways to move agricultural goods, their rail system was small, disconnected, and poorly suited for sustained military use. Many towns and plantations were near rivers instead of railroads, and the limited rail lines often used incompatible track sizes, making supply and troop movement difficult. The South's weaker industry and fragmented transport network severely hampered its ability to equip and reinforce armies, placing it at a consistent disadvantage throughout the war.

v. Culture and Education

The cultural and educational development of the North and South reflected the broader economic and social differences between the two regions. In the North, cities expanded rapidly due to industrialization, and although urban centers were often overcrowded and unsanitary in the early nineteenth century, significant improvements followed after the 1830s. Municipal governments invested in upgrading streets, ports, and public services. Importantly, Northern states began to prioritize public education, establishing schools and funding programs to promote literacy and civic engagement. Education became widely accessible, and Northern cities emerged as centers of intellectual and cultural life. The availability of printed materials—books, newspapers, and pamphlets—further boosted literacy rates, which were notably higher than those in the South. Prestigious institutions such as Harvard and Yale expanded their influence, helping to shape a more educated middle and upper class focused on social reform and innovation.

In contrast, Southern society remained rooted in a hierarchical, plantation-based system dominated by a wealthy elite of planters. This small upper class exercised significant control over the agricultural economy and the region's political life. Educational opportunities were far more limited, particularly for the lower classes and the enslaved population. Literacy rates among the Southern population, especially among enslaved African Americans and poor white farmers, were substantially lower than in the North. Formal schooling was largely confined to the children of plantation owners, and few public institutions dedicated to education existed. Churches often served as venues for basic instruction in rural areas, but systematic education was rare. Southern cultural values emphasized tradition, hierarchy, and stability, contributing to widespread resistance to abolitionist movements and reforms. The attachment to traditional structures, reinforced by the dependence on slavery, made the South less receptive to the social and economic changes transforming the North.

b. Tariffs

Tariffs, or taxes placed on imported goods, became a major source of disagreement between the North and the South during the nineteenth century. These tariffs were intended to protect growing American industries by making imported European goods more expensive, which encouraged people to buy products made in the United States. In May 1828, Congress passed a particularly high tariff to support Northern factories and boost domestic manufacturing. While this policy helped the industrial North, it hurt the Southern economy, which depended on exporting agricultural goods and importing manufactured items.

Southern states, with little industry of their own, were hit especially hard. They relied on low-cost imports for everyday goods and were affected when Britain, one of their main cotton buyers, reduced its demand for American cotton in response to U.S. tariffs. As a result, Southern planters faced serious financial losses. The Tariff of 1828 became widely unpopular in the South, where it was called the "Tariff of Abominations." Although Congress later passed a lower tariff in 1832 to calm tensions, many in the South remained dissatisfied. In November 1832, South Carolina, one of the states most affected, issued the Ordinance of Nullification, declaring the Tariffs of 1828 and 1832 invalid within the state. This was a direct challenge to federal authority and raised the idea of secession as a possible course of action.

President Andrew Jackson responded firmly. In December 1832, he issued the Proclamation to the People of South Carolina, defending the power of federal law and warning that military force would be used if needed to enforce the tariffs. In March 1833, Congress passed the Force Bill, giving Jackson the authority to use the army to make states follow federal law. That same day, a political solution was also offered. Senator Henry Clay of Kentucky proposed the Compromise Tariff, which would gradually lower tariff rates over the next ten years. This compromise satisfied most Southern leaders, and South Carolina repealed its Ordinance of Nullification in March 1833. While the immediate crisis was avoided, the Nullification Crisis left behind lasting tensions over states' rights and federal power - issues that would return with even greater intensity in the years leading up to the Civil War.

8. Slavery and Its Role in Escalating the Tensions

When the United States declared independence in 1776, slavery was already firmly established, especially in the Southern states. The Constitution, written in 1787, did not abolish slavery or clearly define its legal status, which allowed the practice to continue and spread - particularly in areas where agriculture depended on enslaved labor. Over time, many Northern states began to move toward ending slavery by passing laws that gradually restricted or abolished it within their borders. In the North, support for abolition grew, influenced by moral beliefs, religious values, and political ideas.

In contrast, the Southern economy became more and more dependent on slavery to support large-scale farming. Crops like cotton, tobacco, and rice required large amounts of labor, and slavery provided a steady, low-cost workforce that helped make Southern agriculture highly profitable. Although Southern leaders often defended slavery using cultural or legal arguments, their resistance to abolition was mainly driven by economic interests.

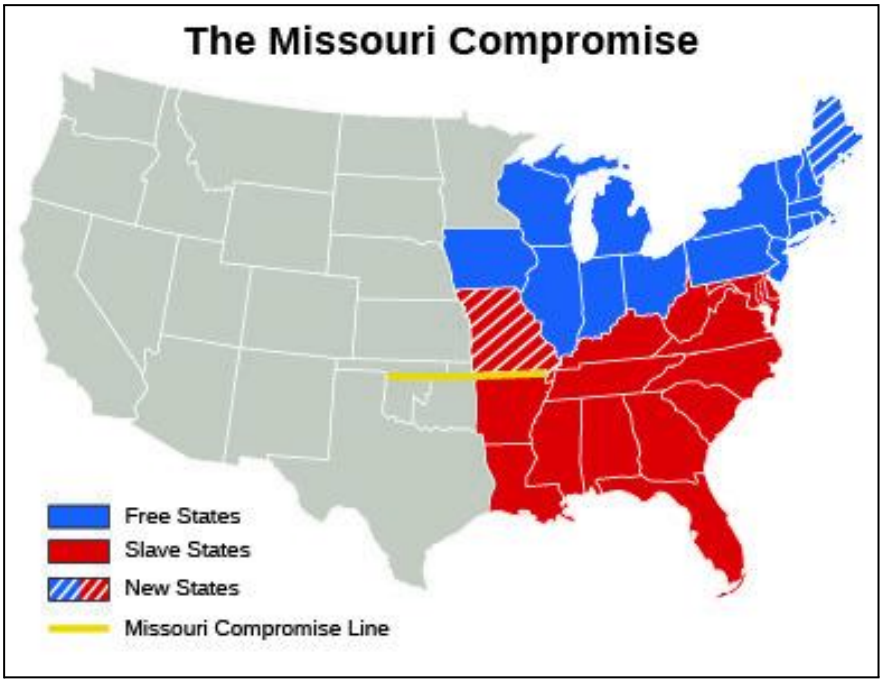
In 1808, Congress passed the Act Prohibiting Importation of Slaves, largely due to pressure from the North. This law made it illegal to bring enslaved people into the country from overseas, effectively ending the transatlantic slave trade. However, it did not end slavery within the United States. The enslaved population continued to grow through natural increase, and domestic slavery remained widespread across the South.

a. Missouri Compromise

As the United States expanded westward in the early nineteenth century, the issue of whether new states would allow slavery became increasingly divisive. Each time a new state applied to join the Union, Congress faced the challenge of maintaining a careful balance between slave and free states. This balance was important because it affected control of the Senate, where every state had equal representation regardless of population size. Any change could give one side -either supporters or opponents of slavery- greater influence over national laws.

In 1820, Missouri applied for admission as a slave state, sparking strong opposition from many in the North. They feared that allowing Missouri to join as a slave state would give the South a majority in the Senate. To settle the conflict, Congress passed the Missouri Compromise. According to this agreement, Missouri would be admitted as a slave state, while Maine -recently separated from Massachusetts- would enter as a free state. This solution preserved the balance between free and slave states in the Senate.

The compromise also set a boundary for the future expansion of slavery: it banned slavery in all U.S. territories north of the 36°30′ latitude line, except for Missouri. While this agreement helped ease tensions at the time and offered a temporary guideline for admitting new states, it did not resolve the deeper conflict. Disagreements over the expansion of slavery continued and grew stronger, especially as new territories were added, eventually leading to greater political unrest in the years before the Civil War.



b. The Compromise of 1850

As the United States acquired new territories following the Mexican-American War, the question of whether slavery would be permitted in these areas reignited serious tensions. In an effort to prevent the Union from breaking apart, Congress passed a series of five legislative measures collectively known as the Compromise of 1850. These laws were meant to address the immediate disputes between the North and the South, though they ultimately served only as a temporary solution.

The first major provision admitted California into the Union as a free state, following the state's own request. This admission pleased Northern states, as it shifted the balance of power in the Senate in favor of free states. The second provision banned the slave trade, though not slavery itself, within the District of Columbia. This was considered a symbolic victory for abolitionists, who had long protested the presence of slave markets in the nation’s capital.

The third provision addressed the territorial claims of Texas. Texas had claimed rights over portions of the New Mexico territory. To resolve the dispute, the federal government compensated Texas with ten million dollars in exchange for giving up its claims. This agreement helped to establish the present-day boundaries of Texas.

The fourth measure organized New Mexico as a formal territory, without an immediate decision regarding the legality of slavery. Finally, the fifth and most controversial provision introduced the principle of "popular sovereignty" in both the Utah and New Mexico territories. Under this principle, settlers in these territories would decide for themselves whether to permit slavery. This approach provided Southern states with an opportunity to expand slavery into new regions, depending on the outcomes of local votes.

c. Fugitive Slave Act

The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 became one of the most divisive pieces of legislation in American history. Intended to strengthen the earlier act of 1793, it required that all escaped slaves be returned to their enslavers - even if they were found in free states. Those who helped fugitives or refused to cooperate with authorities faced severe consequences, including heavy fines and jail time.

The law established a system of federal commissioners to handle fugitive slave cases. These officials were paid more if they ruled in favor of slaveholders, raising serious concerns about fairness. Accused individuals were denied key legal protections: they could not speak in their own defense and were not given the right to a trial by jury. As a result, even free African Americans were at risk of being wrongfully captured and enslaved, with few options to prove their freedom.

The act also forced local law enforcement across the country, including in Northern states that opposed slavery, to help enforce its terms. This requirement outraged many in the North and led to a surge in anti-slavery activism. Several Northern states passed "personal liberty laws" to resist the act and offer basic legal rights to those accused. At the same time, the Underground Railroad expanded, helping more enslaved people and free African Americans flee to Canada, where U.S. laws no longer applied.

The law deepened the growing divide between North and South. Many Northerners who had previously stayed out of the slavery debate became more involved after witnessing the injustice of the act. In the South, resistance to the law was seen as a threat to their rights and way of life. As thousands sought freedom through secret escape networks, tensions between the two regions grew sharper. The Fugitive Slave Act not only fueled national conflict but also made compromise increasingly unlikely in the years leading up to the Civil War.

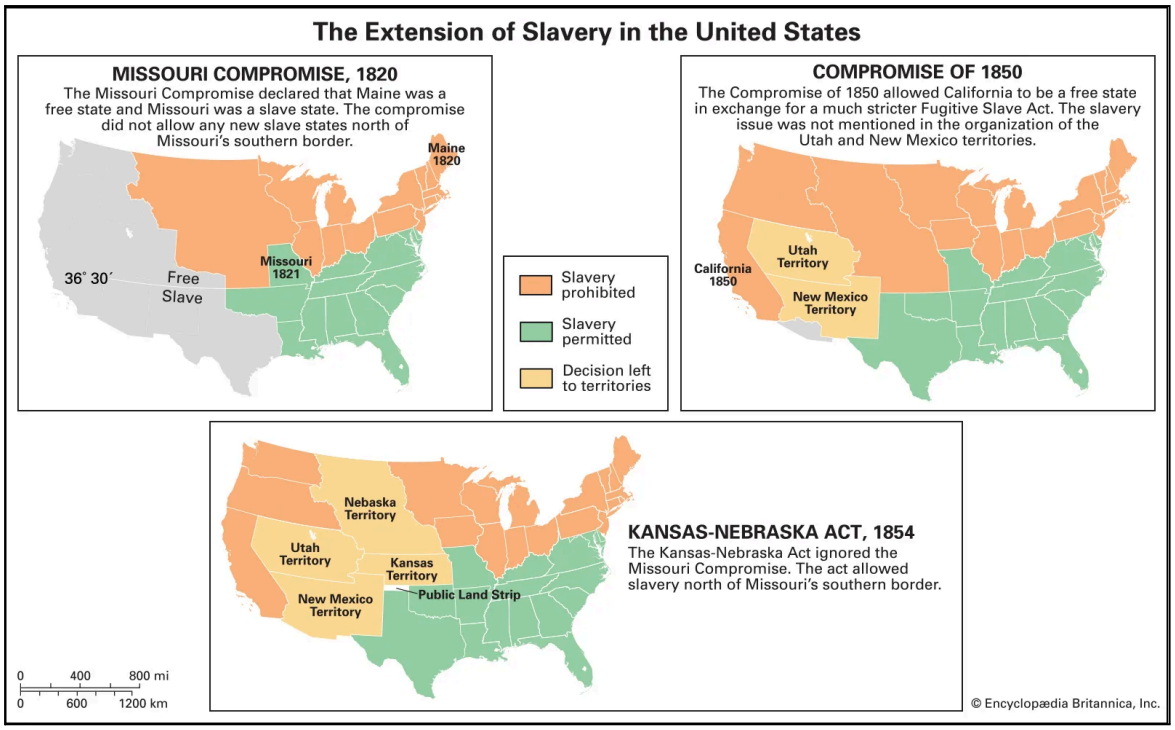
d. Kansas-Nebraska Act

In 1854, the need to build a transcontinental railroad from Chicago to the Pacific Northwest brought renewed attention to the national debate over the expansion of slavery. For the railroad to pass through certain western lands, particularly Kansas and Nebraska, these regions first needed to be formally organized as U.S. territories. This raised an immediate and divisive question in Congress: Would Kansas and Nebraska allow slavery?

Senator Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois introduced the Kansas-Nebraska Act as a proposed compromise. The Act allowed settlers in each territory to decide the issue of slavery for themselves through the principle of popular sovereignty, meaning residents would vote on whether to allow slavery. However, this proposal effectively overturned the Missouri Compromise of 1820, which had banned slavery in territories north of the 36°30′ latitude line - including the areas in question.

The passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act triggered a wave of violence and unrest. Both pro-slavery and anti-slavery supporters moved into Kansas in large numbers to sway the vote, leading to a series of violent confrontations known as "Bleeding Kansas." These conflicts included armed attacks, destruction of property, and several deaths, revealing how deeply divided the nation had become and foreshadowing the civil conflict ahead.

The Act also had major political consequences. The Whig Party collapsed under the strain of sectional disagreements, while the newly formed Republican Party quickly rose in its place. The Republican platform opposed the expansion of slavery into western territories and sought to preserve the Union. As Northern support coalesced around the Republican cause and the South increasingly backed the Democratic Party, political divisions between the regions grew more pronounced. The Kansas-Nebraska Act not only destabilized the territories but also sharpened the sectional tensions that would ultimately lead to the Civil War.



e. Dred Scott Decision

The Dred Scott decision, formally known as *Dred Scott v. Sandford* (1857), is widely regarded as one of the most damaging rulings in the history of the U.S. Supreme Court. Legal scholar Bernard Schwartz called it "first in any list of the worst Supreme Court decisions," while Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes described it as the Court's "greatest self-inflicted wound." The Court ruled that African Americans, whether enslaved or free, could not be considered U.S. citizens and therefore had no right to sue in federal court. The decision deepened sectional divisions and pushed the nation closer to civil war.

Dred Scott was an enslaved man taken by his enslaver, John Emerson, from Missouri - a slave state - to Illinois and the Wisconsin Territory, where slavery was banned under the Missouri Compromise. After Emerson's death, Scott sued for his freedom in 1846, arguing that his residence in free territories had made him legally free. Although a lower court initially ruled in his favor, the Missouri Supreme Court reversed the decision in 1852. The case later moved to federal court under diversity jurisdiction after Scott's legal ownership passed to John Sandford, Emerson's brother-in-law. The federal courts also ruled against Scott, prompting his legal team to appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court.

In 1857, the Supreme Court not only denied Scott's claim to freedom but also issued a sweeping judgment that declared the Missouri Compromise unconstitutional. The Court ruled that Congress did not have the authority to ban slavery in U.S. territories, opening the door for slavery to expand into all western lands. It further stated that enslaved people were property protected under the Constitution, stripping Congress of any power to regulate slavery in the territories. The ruling caused widespread outrage in the North. Abolitionists and moderates alike condemned it as both morally wrong and legally flawed.

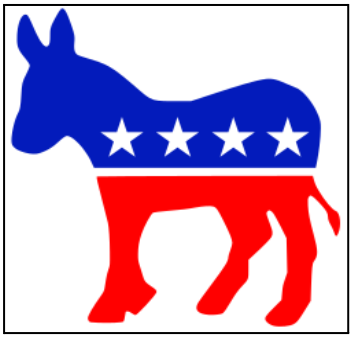
The political consequences were immediate. The Republican Party, which had been founded in opposition to the expansion of slavery, gained momentum. Abraham Lincoln, whose opposition to the decision helped raise his national profile, would soon become a leading voice against the spread of slavery. Many historians view the Dred Scott case as a major turning point and a direct cause of the secession crisis that followed. Although Dred Scott was eventually emancipated by the family who gained custody of him after the case ended, he lived only briefly as a free man, dying in 1858.

9. Parties

During the first half of the nineteenth century, the United States was home to a variety of political parties. However, by the time of the secession crisis and the outbreak of the Civil War, many of these parties had lost influence or vanished entirely. The Whig Party and the Know-Nothing Party, once major political forces, experienced a steep decline, largely because they failed to take clear positions on the increasingly divisive issue of slavery. Their reluctance to address this central concern led to a loss of public confidence, as voters began to support parties with more definitive views.

As a result, political competition in the 1850s became increasingly centered on two dominant parties: the Democratic Party and the newly formed Republican Party. Many former Whigs, especially those who opposed the expansion of slavery, joined the Republican Party, fueling its rapid rise. This shift contributed to growing sectional divisions, as the nation's politics became more sharply divided along regional lines.

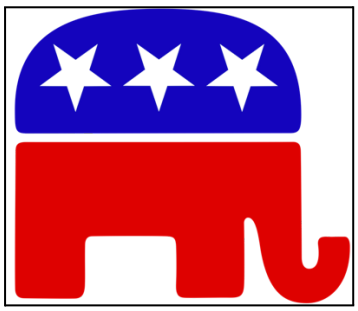
a. Democratic Party



The Democratic Party remained the dominant political force throughout most of the Southern states, where it enjoyed widespread support among agricultural communities and the slaveholding elite. The party also retained influence in certain slave states that ultimately remained in the Union, as well as among segments of the working class and settlers in the western frontier. Democrats generally championed states' rights and sought to limit the power of the federal government, arguing that individual states had the authority to resist federal laws they believed to be unconstitutional. Central to the Democratic platform was the defense and expansion of slavery into newly acquired territories, along with support for free trade and low tariffs, policies that aligned closely with Southern economic interests.

As national tensions escalated in the late 1850s, the Democratic Party split into two factions: Northern Democrats and Southern Democrats. Northern Democrats tended to be less extreme in their views on slavery. They supported the principle of popular sovereignty, which allowed settlers in each territory to decide the status of slavery, and prioritized preserving the Union over advancing sectional agendas. Figures like Senator Stephen A. Douglas, who opposed Abraham Lincoln in the 1860 presidential election, promoted compromise as a means of maintaining national unity. In contrast, Southern Democrats adopted a firm and uncompromising defense of slavery. They viewed the institution as essential to their economic and social systems and demanded its unrestricted expansion into all U.S. territories. Opposing any federal interference, they warned of secession if their demands were not met. Notable leaders of this faction included Jefferson Davis, who later became President of the Confederacy, and John C. Breckinridge, the Southern Democratic candidate in the 1860 election.

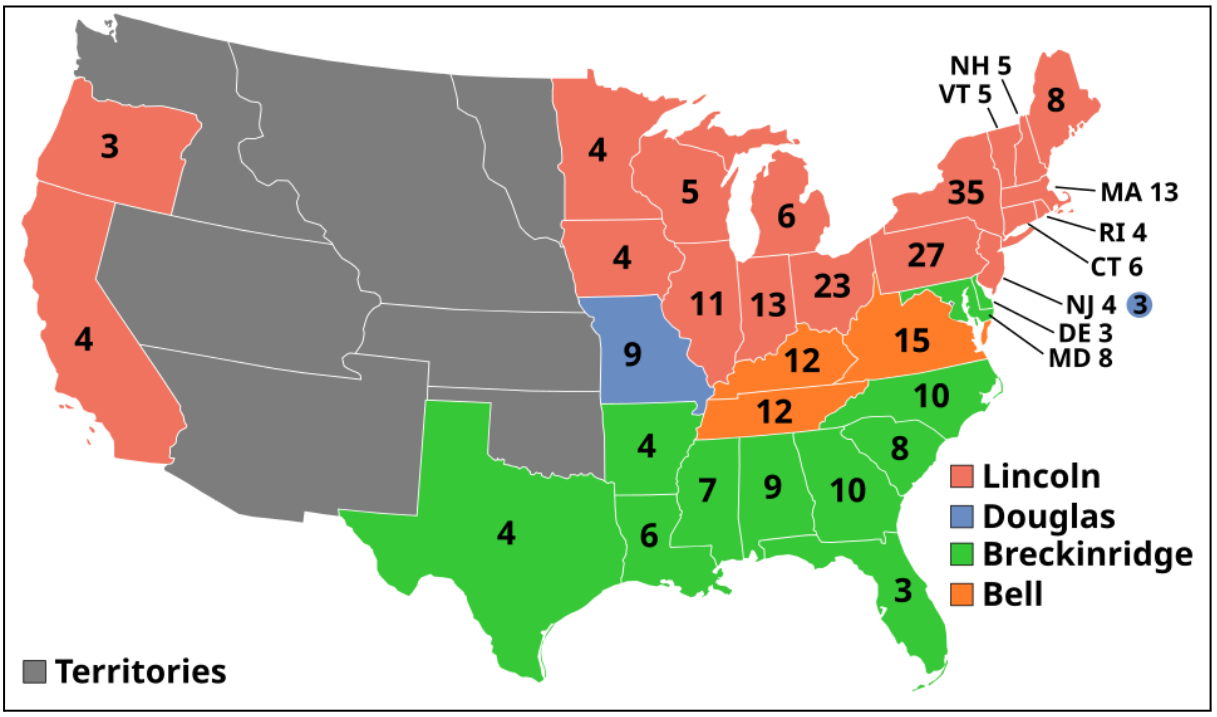
b. Republican Party



Tariffs, or taxes on imported goods, became a major point of contention between the North and South during the nineteenth century. Designed to protect emerging American industries, tariffs made European goods more expensive and encouraged consumers to buy domestically manufactured products. In May 1828, Congress passed a particularly high tariff to bolster Northern factories and promote manufacturing. While this legislation benefited the industrialized North, it harmed the Southern economy, which relied heavily on agricultural exports and imports. Southern states, lacking a strong industrial base, were disproportionately affected. They depended on affordable imports and faced retaliatory measures from Britain, one of their largest cotton buyers. When British demand for American cotton fell, Southern planters suffered economic losses. Consequently, Southern states denounced the legislation, labeling the Tariff of 1828 the "Tariff of Abominations." Although Congress passed a reduced Tariff of 1832 to ease Southern discontent, dissatisfaction persisted. In November 1832, South Carolina, one of the most affected states, issued the Ordinance of Nullification, declaring the Tariffs of 1828 and 1832 null and void. This marked a direct challenge to federal authority and introduced the possibility of secession as a political strategy.

c. Constitutional Union Party

The Constitutional Union Party was a short-lived political movement that emerged in the years leading up to the Civil War. Formed by former Whigs, moderate Democrats, and members of the Know-Nothing Party, it aimed to provide a centrist alternative amid the growing sectional divide. Rather than addressing the contentious issue of slavery directly, the party focused on preserving the Union and upholding the Constitution and existing laws. Its moderate platform appealed mainly to voters in the Upper South, especially in states like Kentucky and Tennessee. In the 1860 presidential election, the party nominated John Bell as its candidate. Bell campaigned on a message of national unity and strict adherence to constitutional principles. While he did not secure a large number of electoral votes, he won several key border states, reflecting the widespread desire among some voters to avoid disunion and civil war. However, the party's refusal to take a firm position on slavery - the central issue of the era - limited its long-term viability. With the outbreak of the Civil War, the Constitutional Union Party quickly dissolved, leaving the political field to more ideologically defined parties.



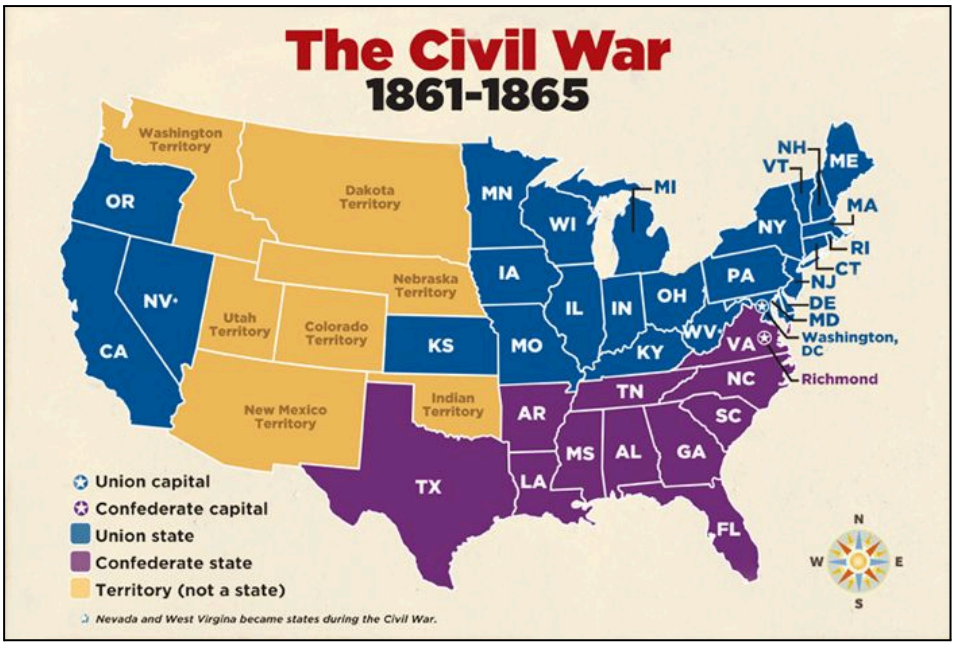
10. Secession and Main Events of the War

a. Election of Abraham Lincoln and the First Years

In the presidential election of 1860, Abraham Lincoln, representing the Republican Party, secured victory with approximately forty percent of the popular vote. His election served as a critical turning point and acted as a catalyst for the secession of Southern states. Although Lincoln pledged not to interfere with slavery where it already existed, he strongly opposed its expansion into new territories - an essential principle of the Republican platform. Southern leaders viewed his position as a direct threat to their way of life, interpreting it not merely as a policy of containment but as a step toward the eventual abolition of slavery throughout the United States.

Lincoln's electoral success was based almost entirely on Northern support. He received little to no backing in the South and was excluded from the ballot in several Southern states. Many Southerners saw his victory as confirmation that their region had lost meaningful political power within the Union. In the months following the election, seven Southern states - South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas - formally seceded from the Union. These states established the Confederate States of America, with Jefferson Davis elected as its president and a new constitution adopted that explicitly protected the institution of slavery. Historians frequently cite Lincoln's election as the immediate cause of the secession crisis, reinforcing Southern fears that federal power would ultimately be used to undermine their economic and social order.

Upon assuming office in March 1861, Lincoln emphasized the preservation of the Union, declaring secession legally invalid. He initially pursued a policy of restraint, seeking a peaceful resolution to the crisis. However, tensions escalated quickly. On April 12, 1861, Confederate forces opened fire on Fort Sumter, a federal garrison located in Charleston Harbor, South Carolina. Although South Carolina had already seceded, the fort remained under Union control, and its bombardment marked the beginning of armed conflict. In response, Lincoln issued a call for volunteer troops to suppress the rebellion. This action prompted four additional states - Virginia, Arkansas, North Carolina, and Tennessee - to join the Confederacy.



b. Structure of the Confederate Government

Following the secession of the Southern states, the Confederacy established a government closely modeled on the U.S. Constitution, but with key modifications reflecting its priorities. In February 1861, delegates from the seceded states met in Montgomery, Alabama, to draft the Constitution of the Confederate States of America. Jefferson Davis was elected president, with Alexander H. Stephens as vice president. While the Confederate government retained the familiar structure of executive, legislative, and judicial branches, its constitution placed greater emphasis on states' sovereignty.

A defining feature of the Confederate Constitution was its explicit protection of slavery. It guaranteed slavery's existence in all Confederate territories and barred Congress from restricting it - departing clearly from the U.S. Constitution's ambiguity on the issue. The document also limited the central government's authority to fund internal improvements, reflecting Southern distrust of federal power and a strong preference for decentralization.

Other notable provisions included a single six-year presidential term without re-election and a commitment to free trade over protective tariffs, aligning with the South's agricultural economy. Though structurally similar to the U.S. Constitution, the Confederate version clearly prioritized states' rights and the preservation of slavery as its guiding principles.

c. Civil Liberties During the War

The outbreak of the Civil War created serious tensions not only between the Union and the Confederacy but also within the Union itself, particularly concerning the balance between civil liberties and national security. In his efforts to preserve the Union, President Abraham Lincoln took several controversial actions, most notably the suspension of the writ of *habeas corpus* - a foundational legal safeguard that protects individuals from unlawful detention by requiring the government to justify imprisonment before a court.

In April 1861, Lincoln authorized the military to suspend *habeas corpus* along vital transportation routes in Maryland, a key border state whose loyalty was crucial for protecting Washington, D.C. This measure allowed Union forces to arrest and detain individuals suspected of disloyalty without providing an immediate trial. As the war progressed, the suspension was extended to other regions and applied to broader groups of people considered potential threats to national security. Lincoln defended his decision as a necessary response to rebellion and a means of preserving public order during an unprecedented national crisis.

These actions provoked intense debate. Critics accused Lincoln of exceeding his constitutional authority and violating basic civil rights, while supporters argued that extraordinary measures were essential to safeguard the Union. The controversy reached the Supreme Court in the case *Ex parte Merryman*, in which Chief Justice Roger B. Taney ruled that only Congress held the power to suspend *habeas corpus*. Despite the ruling, Lincoln continued to enforce the suspension throughout much of the war, illustrating the broader conflict between protecting individual liberties and ensuring national survival in times of emergency.

d. First Battle of Bull Run

In July 1861, approximately 30,000 Union troops under the command of General Irvin McDowell departed Washington, D.C., and launched an offensive against Confederate forces positioned near Bull Run Creek, close to Manassas, Virginia. The Confederate army, led by Generals P.G.T. Beauregard and Joseph E. Johnston, fielded a force of roughly equal strength. McDowell's objective was to defeat the Confederate forces and advance toward Richmond, the capital of the Confederacy. At first, Union troops succeeded in pushing Confederate forces back across Bull Run Creek. However, the arrival of reinforcements under General Johnston from the Shenandoah Valley shifted the momentum.

During the battle, Confederate General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson earned his enduring nickname by holding a firm defensive line, described as standing "like a stone wall." The Union forces, unable to maintain their advance, eventually fell into disarray and retreated in confusion back to Washington, D.C.

The Union's defeat at Bull Run shattered early Northern expectations of a quick and decisive victory. It revealed the scale and seriousness of the conflict to come. For the Confederacy, the victory provided a significant morale boost and encouraged further military mobilization. In the aftermath, public confidence in Union military leadership declined sharply, prompting President Lincoln to relieve General McDowell of his command.

e. The Battle of Antietam

In September 1862, Confederate General Robert E. Lee launched his first major offensive into Union territory by leading the Army of Northern Virginia into Maryland. His objectives were to achieve a decisive victory on Northern soil, encourage diplomatic recognition of the Confederacy by European powers, and potentially pressure the Union into peace negotiations. Lee's campaign faced an unexpected setback when Union troops discovered a misplaced copy of his detailed marching orders, known as Special Order 191. Despite this extraordinary intelligence advantage, Union General George B. McClellan hesitated to act swiftly, giving Lee time to regroup and reposition his forces.

The opposing armies met near Antietam Creek on September 17 in what became the bloodiest single-day battle in American history. Although Union forces outnumbered the Confederates nearly two to one, the fighting was intense and the casualties severe on both sides. While the battle was tactically inconclusive, it halted Lee's invasion of the North and was considered a strategic victory for the Union. President Abraham Lincoln seized this opportunity to issue the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, redefining the purpose of the war by explicitly tying the Union cause to the abolition of slavery.

Although the proclamation did not immediately free enslaved individuals, it shifted the moral foundation of the conflict and made slavery a central issue. It also effectively ended any chance of Confederate recognition by Britain or France, both of which had already abolished slavery. Despite the political gains achieved, Lincoln remained frustrated with McClellan's overly cautious approach and his failure to decisively defeat Lee's army. As a result, Lincoln relieved McClellan of his command shortly after the battle.

f. The Battle of Fredericksburg

In December 1862, General Ambrose Burnside, newly appointed as commander of the Union Army following the dismissal of General George B. McClellan, launched an offensive aimed at capturing Richmond, the Confederate capital. His plan involved crossing the Rappahannock River to engage Confederate forces entrenched in Fredericksburg, Virginia. However, significant delays in the arrival of pontoon bridges necessary for the river crossing, combined with poor coordination and ineffective leadership, severely undermined the operation. Once across the river, Union troops launched repeated frontal assaults against well-fortified Confederate positions on Marye's Heights. These attacks resulted in devastating Union casualties and failed to break the Confederate lines. Despite the scale of the Union losses, Confederate General Robert E. Lee chose not to pursue the retreating enemy, gaining no strategic advantage beyond the immediate victory on the battlefield. The Battle of Fredericksburg ended in a decisive Confederate triumph and dealt a serious blow to Northern morale. Public confidence in Union military leadership waned, and in the aftermath of the defeat, General Burnside was relieved of his command.

g. Following Years and General Lee's Surrender

The Union's defeat at Fredericksburg prompted President Lincoln to continue his search for effective military leadership. General Ambrose Burnside was replaced by General Joseph Hooker, who was later succeeded by General George Meade. While Union forces struggled with leadership in the early stages of the war, their significant advantages in manpower, industrial capacity, and transportation infrastructure gradually began to shift the balance in their favor. In contrast, the Confederacy—dependent on an agricultural economy and lacking substantial industry—faced growing shortages of weapons, supplies, and soldiers.

Lincoln's issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863 fundamentally transformed the nature of the conflict. The war was no longer fought solely to preserve the Union but also to end slavery. This moral repositioning of the Union cause discouraged foreign powers, particularly Britain and France, from recognizing or aiding the Confederacy, as both nations had strong anti-slavery sentiments.

Key Union victories further weakened the South. The capture of Vicksburg, which gave the Union full control of the Mississippi River, severed vital transportation and supply lines, dividing the Confederacy and crippling its logistical capabilities. As Confederate forces suffered increasing defeats across multiple fronts, morale among Southern troops and civilians steadily declined.

Recognizing the deteriorating condition of his army and the futility of continued resistance, General Robert E. Lee sought to bring the conflict to a close. In April 1865, after being surrounded and cut off from retreat, Lee met with Union General Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox Court House in Virginia. Grant offered generous surrender terms, allowing Confederate soldiers to return home with their personal belongings and horses, reflecting a broader commitment to national reconciliation. Lee's surrender marked the effective end of organized Confederate resistance and signaled the conclusion of the American Civil War.

11. Aftermath

a. Assassination of Abraham Lincoln

In April 1865, just days after General Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appomattox, President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated while attending a performance at Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C. The assassin, John Wilkes Booth - a well-known actor and fervent Confederate sympathizer - strongly opposed Lincoln's policies and the abolition of slavery. Booth was part of a broader conspiracy that also aimed to assassinate Vice President Andrew Johnson and Secretary of State William Seward, although only Booth succeeded in his mission. During the performance, Booth entered the presidential box, shot Lincoln in the back of the head, and escaped the theater. After a 12-day manhunt, he was located and killed in Virginia. Eight conspirators were subsequently arrested, tried, and executed for their roles in the plot.

Lincoln's assassination marked the first time a sitting American president was killed in office and had a profound effect on the nation. His death plunged the country into mourning and created deep political uncertainty at a critical moment in the nation's history. Vice President Andrew Johnson, a Southern Democrat who had remained loyal to the Union, assumed the presidency. While Johnson initially voiced support for Lincoln's approach to reconciliation, he soon implemented lenient policies toward the former Confederate states. His approach drew strong opposition from many Republicans in Congress, who believed stricter terms were necessary to reshape the South and protect the rights of newly freed African Americans. This growing divide gave rise to the Radical Republicans, a faction that pushed for more aggressive Reconstruction policies and stronger federal protections for civil rights.

b. Reconstruction Amendments

n the years following the Civil War, Congress undertook significant efforts to rebuild the nation and establish a legal framework for civil rights. Three constitutional amendments - collectively known as the Reconstruction Amendments - were adopted between 1865 and 1870 to redefine American citizenship and guarantee basic rights to formerly enslaved individuals.

i. Thirteenth Amendment (1865)

Ratified in 1865, the Thirteenth Amendment formally abolished slavery and involuntary servitude throughout the United States, except as punishment for a crime. While President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation had declared enslaved people in Confederate-held territories free, the amendment gave this principle permanent and universal constitutional force. Its adoption marked a turning point in American history by legally ending slavery nationwide. Although Lincoln did not live to witness its full impact, the amendment stands as one of his most enduring legacies. Despite opposition from many Southern states, its passage represented a decisive step toward redefining freedom and justice in the post-war era.

ii. Fourteenth Amendment (1868)

Ratified in 1868, the Fourteenth Amendment fundamentally redefined the concept of American citizenship and greatly expanded civil rights protections. It declared that all persons born or naturalized in the United States are citizens, regardless of race, color, or previous condition of servitude. This provision granted formerly enslaved individuals full citizenship and guaranteed that they were entitled to the same legal protections as other Americans. The amendment introduced two key clauses: equal protection under the law and due process, both of which would become essential tools in future civil rights efforts. Although the amendment established a powerful legal foundation for equality, its enforcement in the post-war South faced persistent resistance, and the full realization of its promises would take many decades.

iii. Fifteenth Amendment (1870)

Ratified in 1870, the Fifteenth Amendment aimed to strengthen the achievements of Reconstruction by protecting voting rights. It prohibited the federal and state governments from denying any citizen the right to vote based on "race, color, or previous condition of servitude." In principle, the amendment guaranteed Black men the right to participate in the political process, marking a significant step toward racial equality in American democracy.

However, many Southern states quickly developed ways to undermine the amendment's intent. Tactics such as literacy tests, poll taxes, property requirements, and grandfather clauses - along with widespread intimidation and violence - were used to suppress Black voter turnout. These efforts were further reinforced by discriminatory laws, including the Black Codes and later Jim Crow laws, which institutionalized racial segregation and inequality across many aspects of public life. As a result, while the Fifteenth Amendment represented a landmark in expanding civil rights, its promises remained largely unfulfilled for decades, with true enforcement only beginning during the civil rights movement of the mid-twentieth century.

12. Points to Cover

1. How can the Senate maintain an effective balance between the principles of states' rights and the authority of the federal government?
2. What legal and political approaches should be taken to address the issue of slavery in newly acquired territories?
3. What measures could be adopted to prevent the secession of Southern states while also responding to the concerns of the abolitionist movement?
4. How can federal policy address and mitigate the economic disparities between the industrial North and the agricultural South?
5. Is the institution of slavery constitutionally protected as a property right, or should it be regarded as a moral violation requiring federal intervention?
6. Should the federal government pursue the abolition of slavery, ensure its protection, or defer entirely to the decisions of individual states?
7. In what manner should the Senate respond to states that threaten or attempt secession in reaction to federal legislation or executive actions?
8. How should the Senate approach the question of civil liberties during times of national crisis, particularly regarding the suspension of habeas corpus?
9. What policies should be adopted to prevent foreign powers from intervening or recognizing the Confederacy during the conflict?
10. In the event of Southern surrender or defeat, what role should the federal government play in reconstructing Southern states and integrating formerly enslaved individuals into American society?

13. Resources and Links for Further Research

The-Life-of-Abraham-Lincoln.pdf

The-Legacy-of-Abraham-Lincoln-6-8-Lesson1.pdf

Recovering the Legal History of the Confederacy

Microsoft Word - Article 1 A brief overview.docx

AW1_RevisionACW.pdf

Chapter 3

oso-9780197760789-chapter-3.pdf

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