

# A Dividing Nation

## Overview and Objectives

### Overview

In a Visual Discovery activity, students analyze and bring to life images depicting the growing conflict between the North and the South to understand why the nation could not prevent civil war.

### Objectives

In the course of reading this chapter and participating in the classroom activity, students will

#### *Social Studies*

- identify the regulations on slavery in the Northwest Ordinance.
- trace the effects of territorial expansion on the debate over slavery.
- analyze the impact of key events on the antislavery movement and on the Union.

#### *Language Arts*

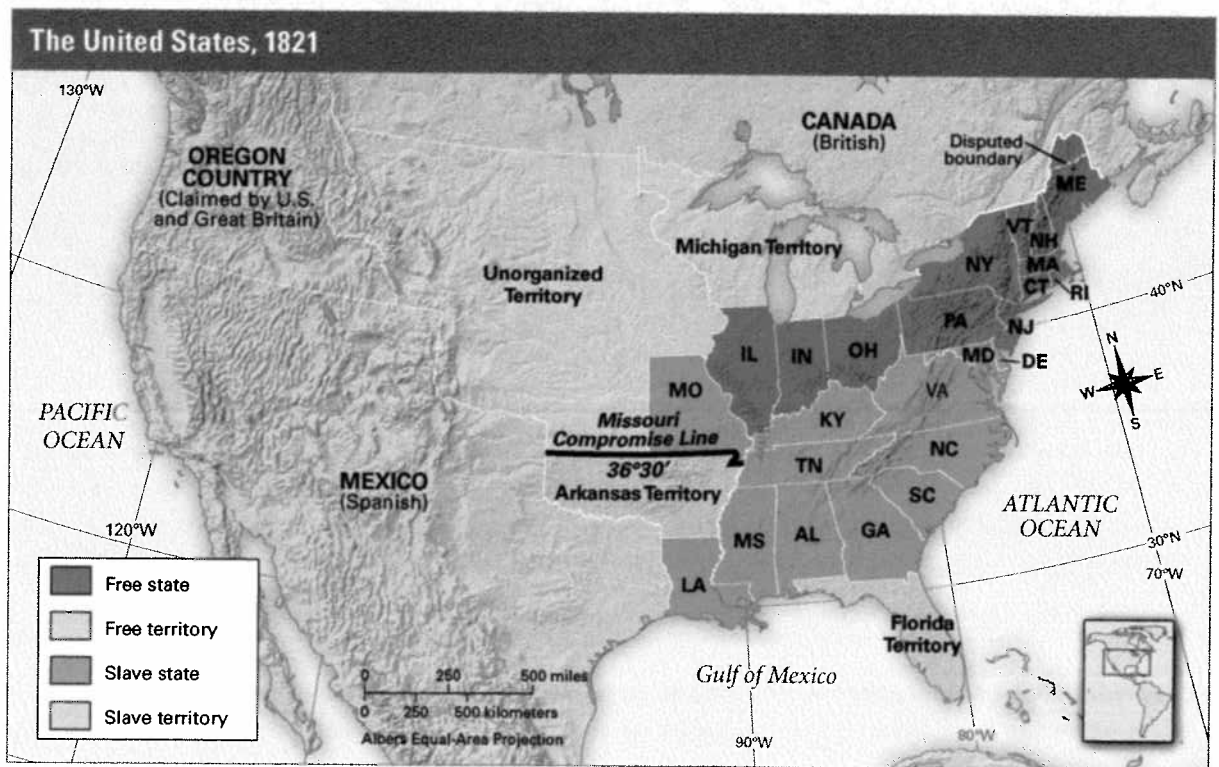
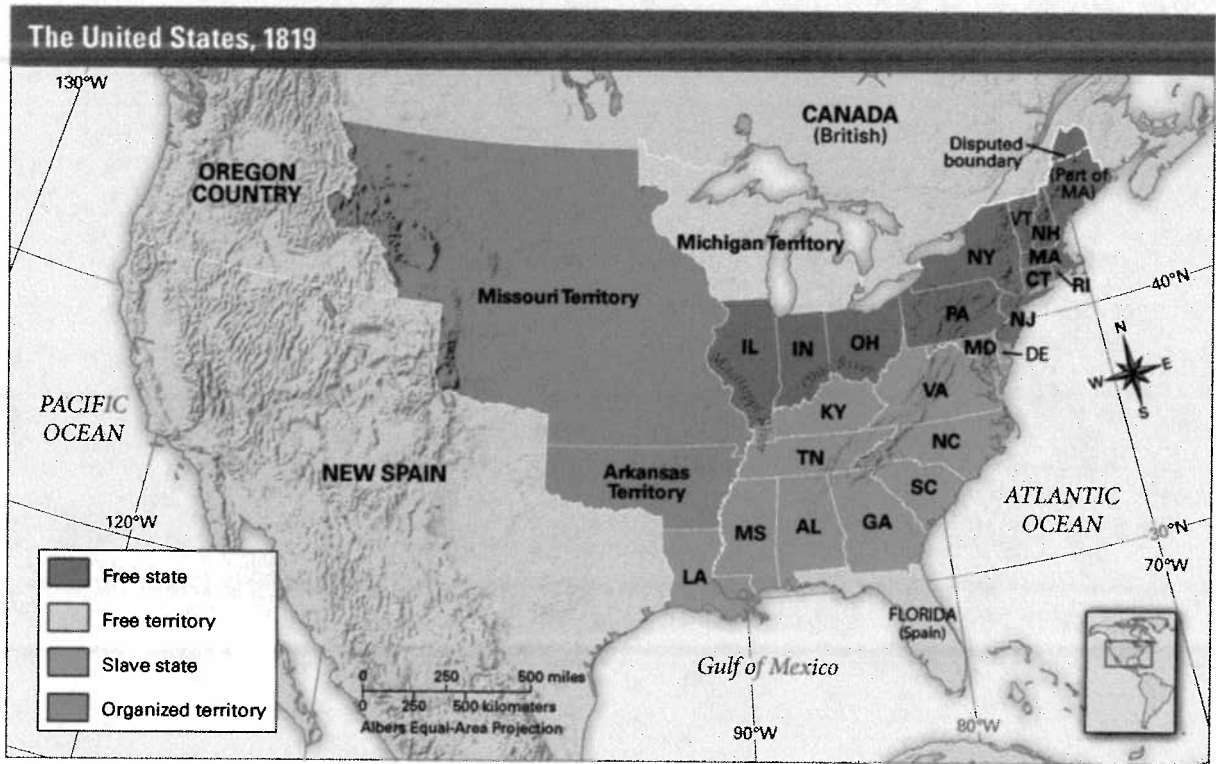
- participate in simulated historical debate.

### Social Studies Vocabulary

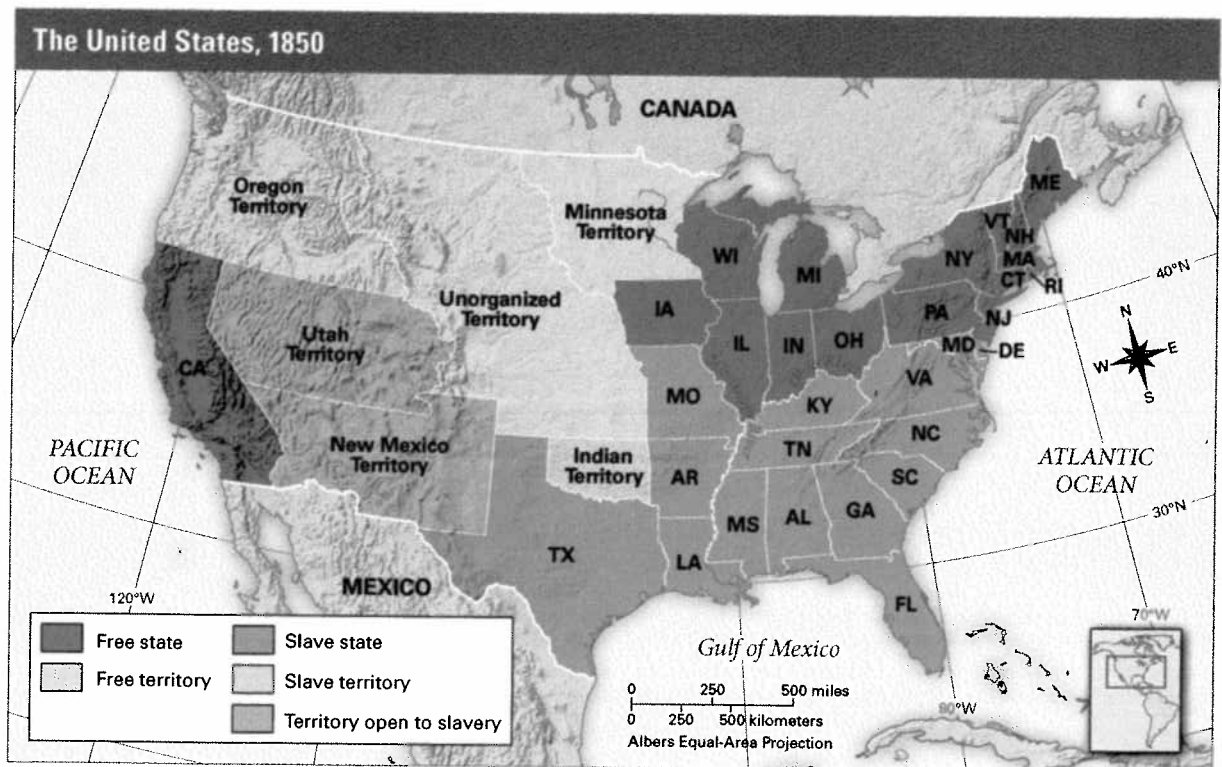
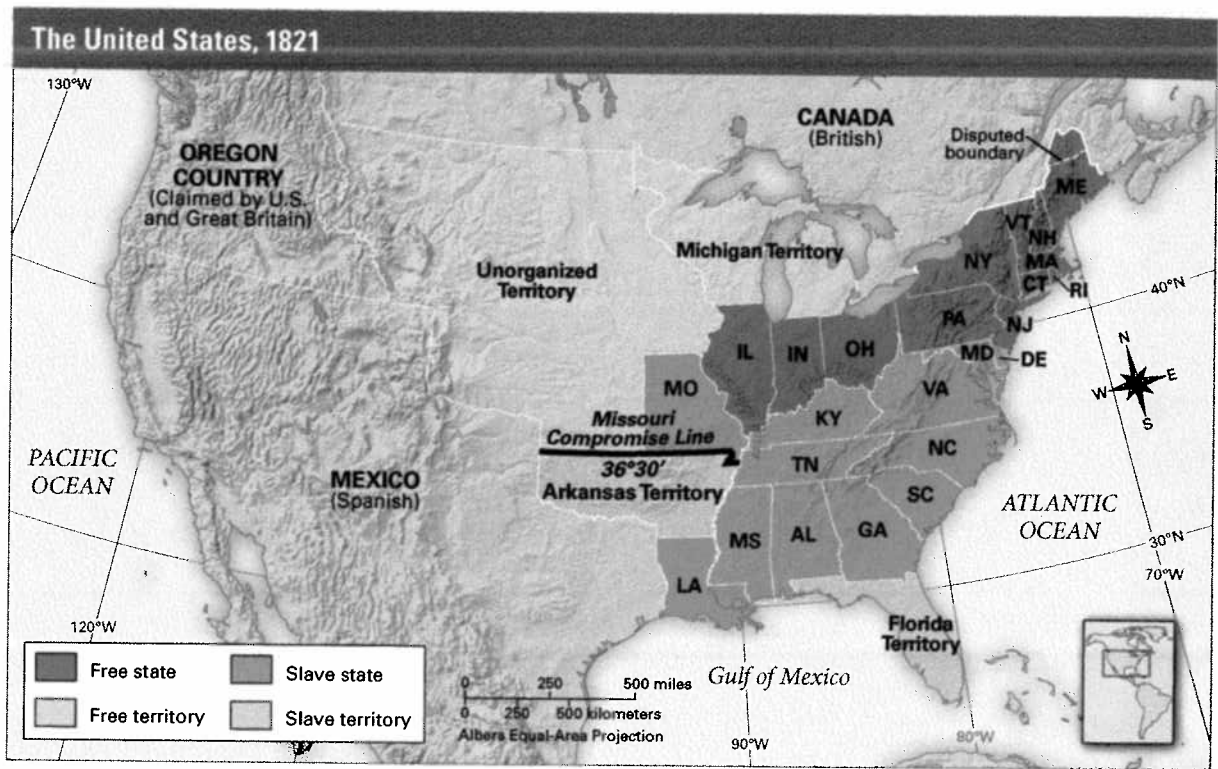
**Key Content Terms** Union, Missouri Compromise, fugitive, Wilmot Proviso, Compromise of 1850, Kansas-Nebraska Act, Dred Scott decision, Lincoln-Douglas debates

**Academic Vocabulary** confront, ensure, faction

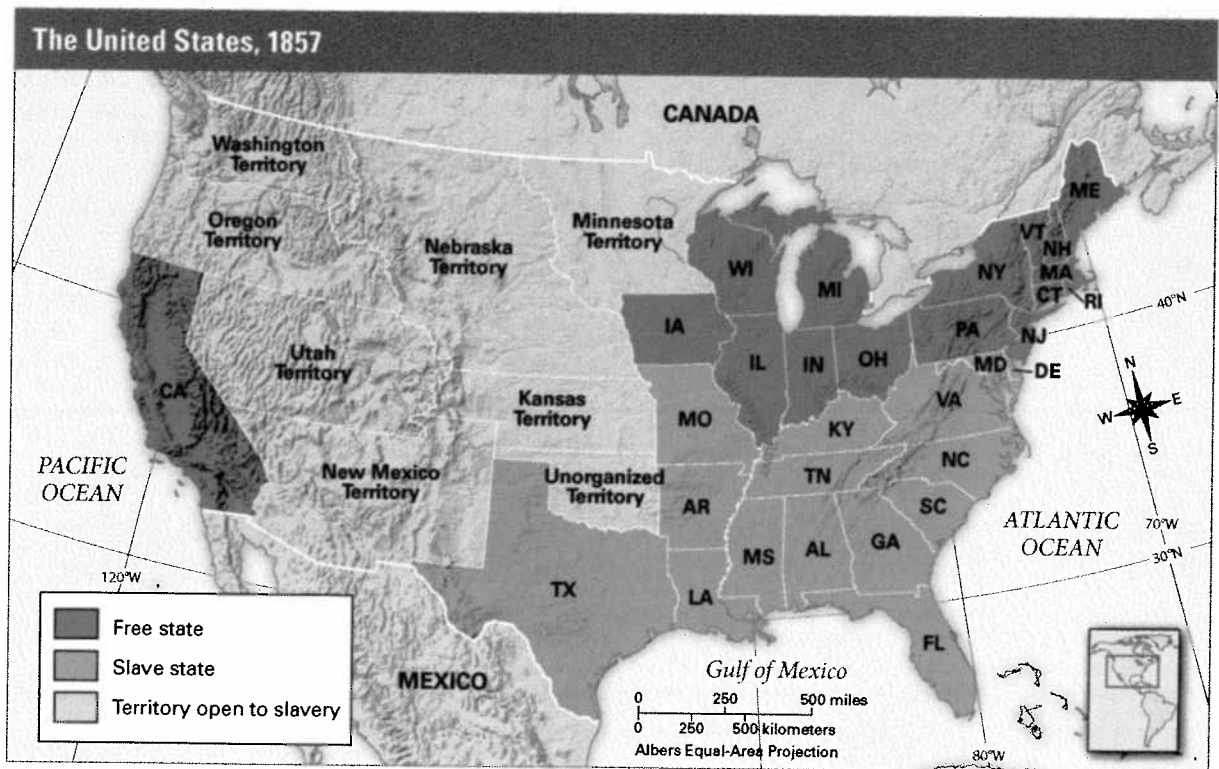
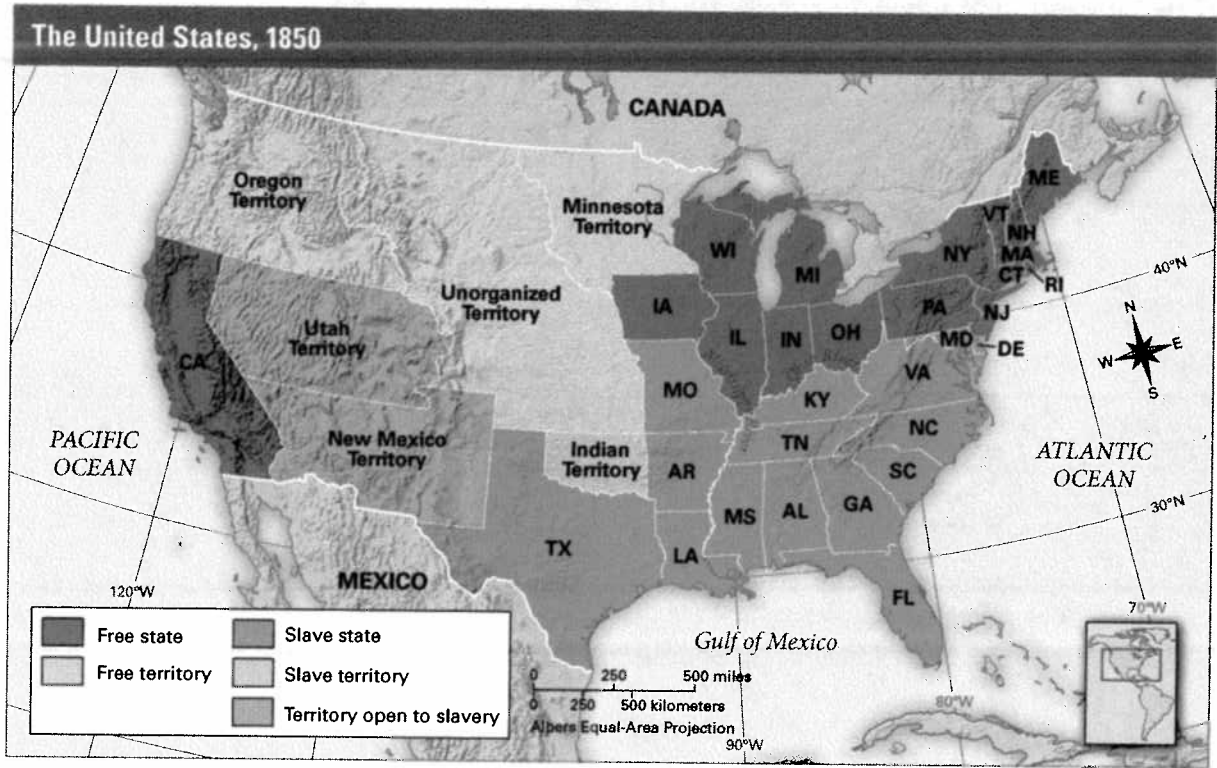
# The United States in 1819 and 1821



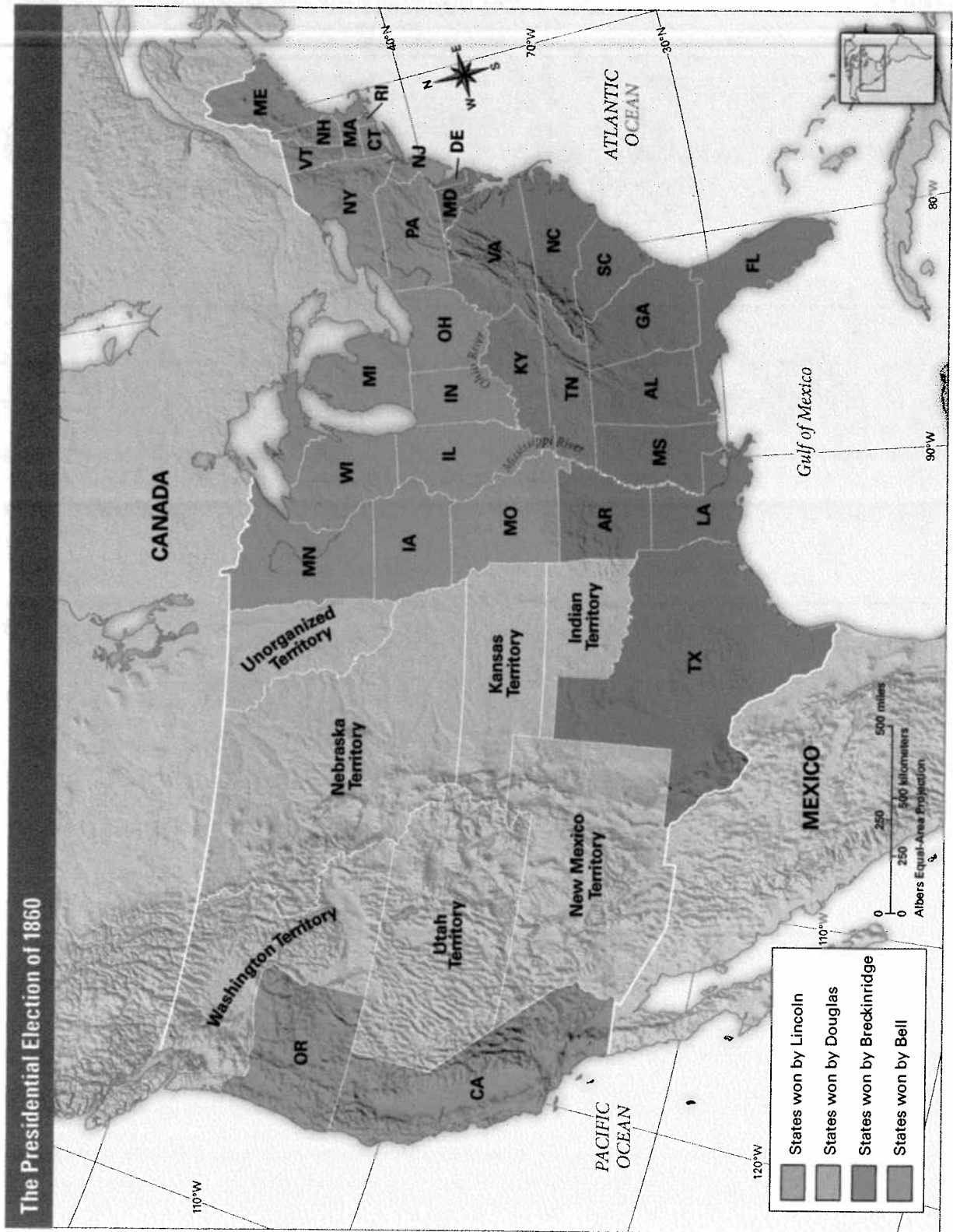
# The United States in 1821 and 1850



# The United States in 1850 and 1857

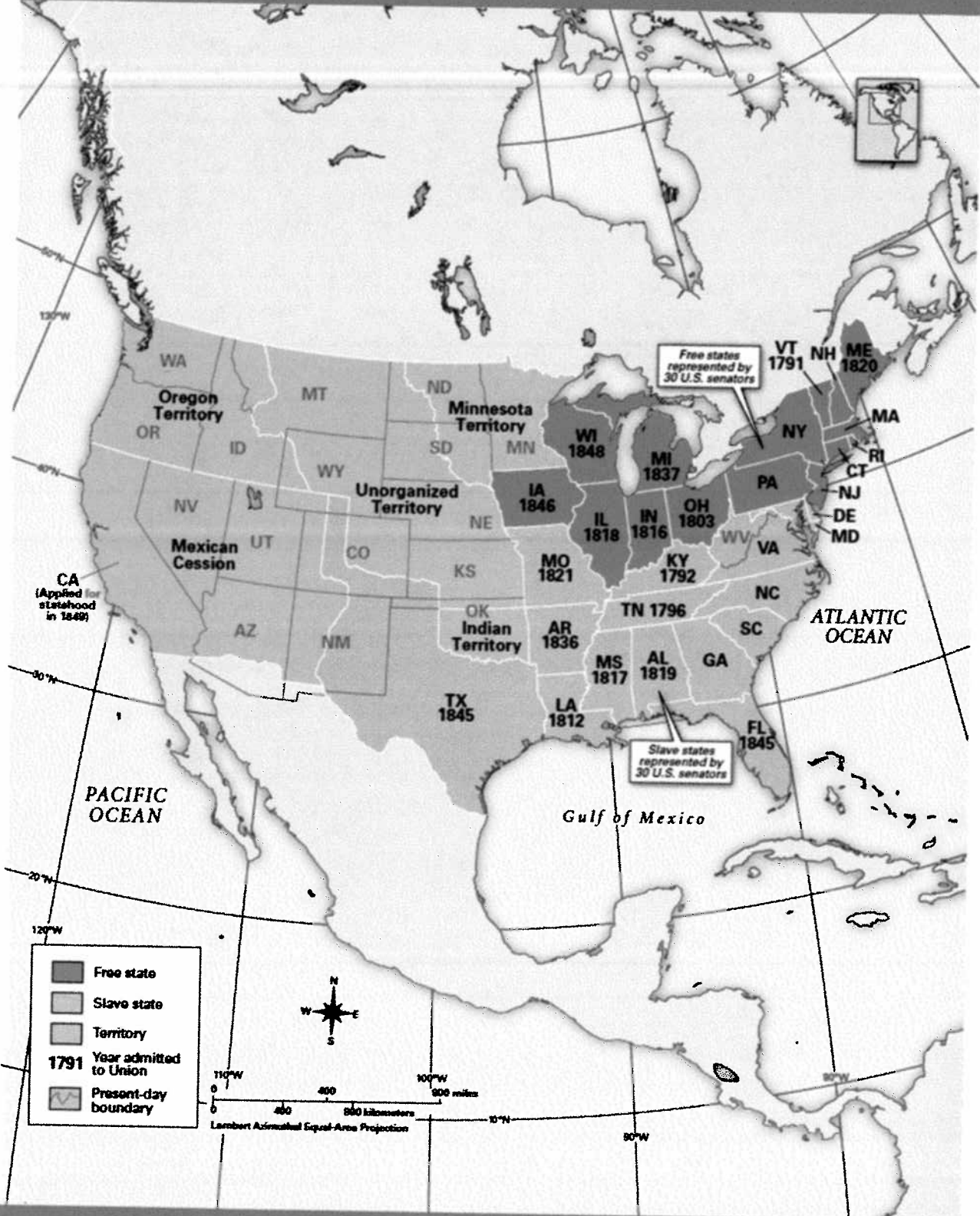


# The United States in 1860

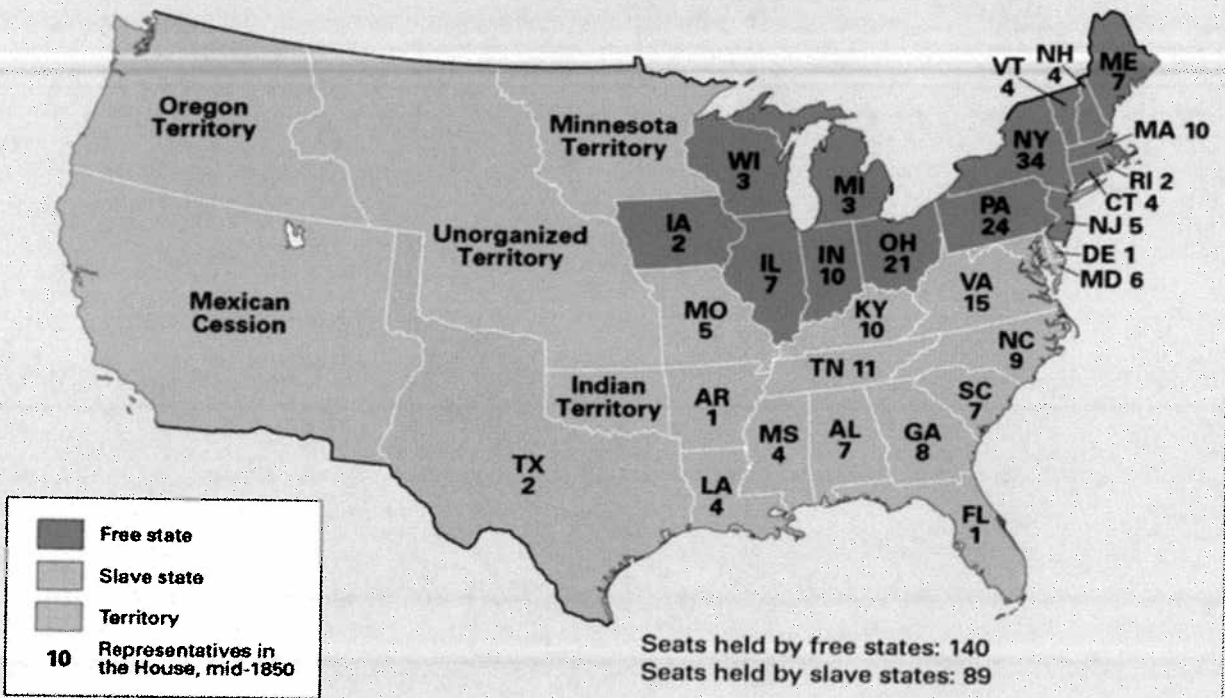




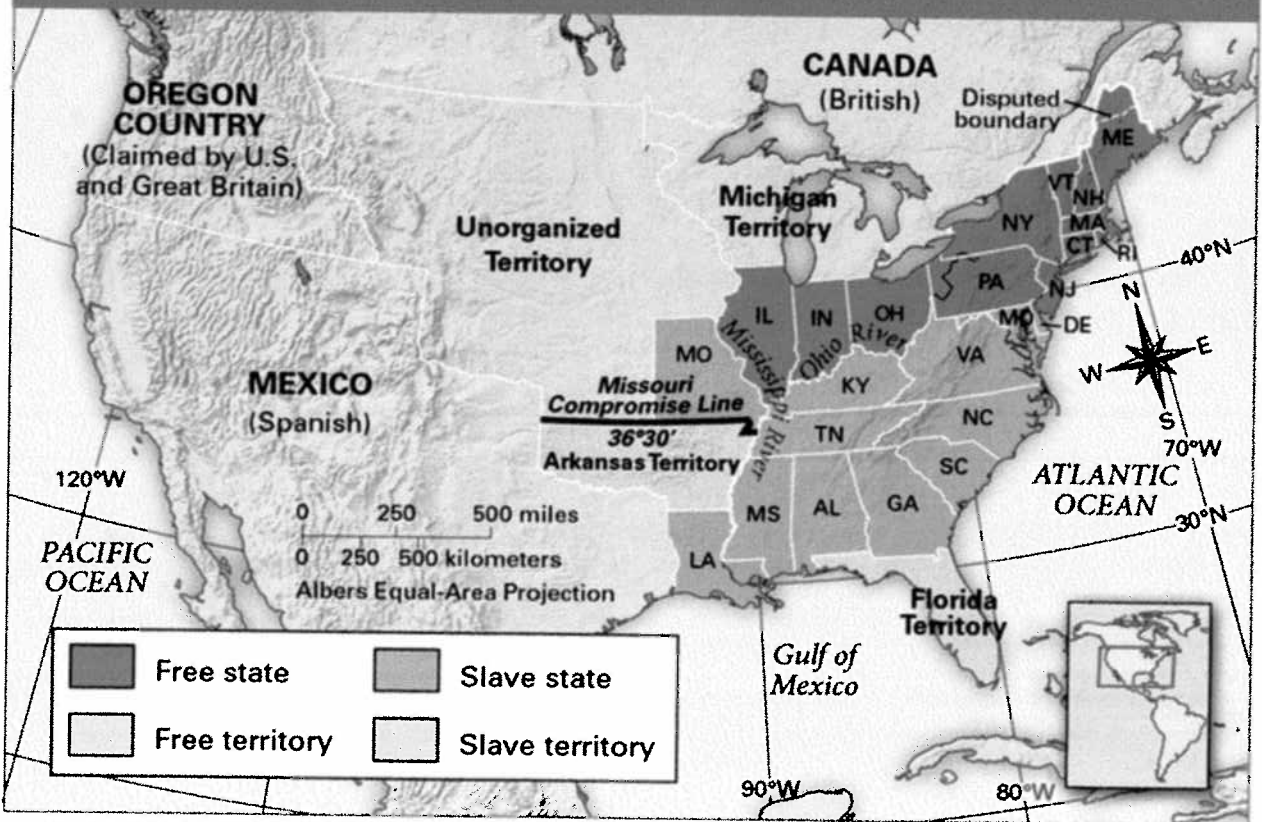
The United States, Mid-1850



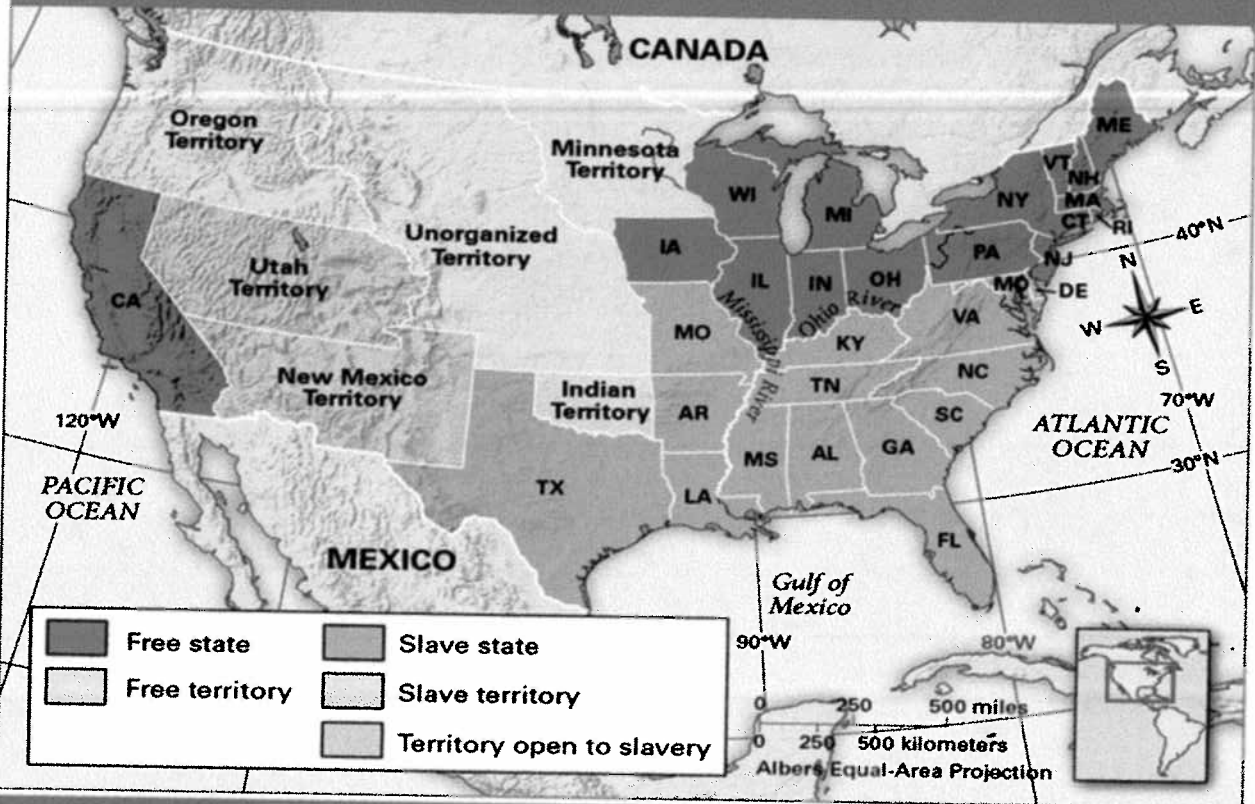
## The House of Representatives, Mid-1850



## The Missouri Compromise, 1820



## The Compromise of 1850



## Impact of the Dred Scott Decision, 1857





## A Dividing Nation

Which events of the mid-1800s kept the nation together and which events pulled it apart?

### Setting the Stage - The Union Challenged

The maps on these two pages show the United States in mid-1850, the year tensions over slavery reached a breaking point. In this unit, you will learn why this crisis developed and how Congress handled it. You will also learn about events after 1850 that further divided the North and South and turned the dispute over slavery into war.

As the map on the opposite page shows, some states allowed slavery. Notice, however, that the same number of states banned it. This balance gave the slave states and the free states an equal number of votes in the U.S. Senate. However, as the map on this page shows, that equality did not exist in the House of Representatives, where each state's votes are based on its population.

The Constitution requires that the House and Senate agree on new laws. Southerners believed that as long as the Senate remained balanced, Congress could not pass laws to affect slavery. Then, in 1849, California asked to become a state. California's new constitution, however, banned slavery. Admitting California as a free state, many Southerners warned, would upset the equal balance between slave states and free states—making the slave states a minority.

The 1850s were one of the most troubled decades in U.S. history. Yet, they were mild compared to the 1860s, a time of war, bitterness, and the repair of a broken nation. As you explore the topics in this unit, picture what it must have been like to live during such difficult times. The era's events drew the American people into a deadly struggle over slavery, freedom, and the very survival of the nation.

### Section 1 - Introduction

In 1860, after one of the strangest elections in the nation's history, a tall, plainspoken Illinois lawyer named Abraham Lincoln was elected president. On learning of his victory, Lincoln said to the reporters covering the campaign, "Well, boys, your troubles are over; mine have just begun."

Within a few weeks, it became clear just how heavy those troubles would be. By the time Lincoln took office, the nation had split apart over the issue of states' rights regarding slavery and was preparing for civil war. The survival of the United States of America, and the fate of 4 million slaves, rested in Lincoln's hands.

The troubles Lincoln faced were not new. The issues dividing the nation could be traced back to 1619, when the first slave ship arrived in Virginia. Since that time, slavery had ended in half of the United States. The question was, could the nation continue half-slave and half-free?

For decades, Americans tried to avoid that question. Many hoped slavery would simply die out on its own. Instead, slavery began to expand into new territories, and the question could no longer be ignored.

Between 1820 and 1860, Americans tried to fashion several compromises on the issue of slavery. Each compromise, however, created new problems and new divisions.

Lincoln understood why. Slavery was not simply a political issue to be worked out through compromise. It was a deeply moral issue. As Lincoln wrote in a letter to a friend, "If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong."

In this chapter, you will learn how Americans tried to keep the United States united despite their deep divisions over slavery. Some events during this period kept the nation together, while others pulled it apart. You will also find out how Americans finally answered the question of whether a nation founded on the idea of freedom could endure half-slave and half-free.

## Section 2 - Confronting the Issue of Slavery

A traveler heading west across the Appalachians after the War of 1812 wrote, "Old America seems to be breaking up and moving westward." It was true. By 1819, settlers had formed seven new states west of the Appalachians.

In the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, Congress had established a process for forming new states. Besides outlining the steps leading to statehood, this law also banned slavery north of the Ohio River. As a result, the three western states that were formed north of the river—Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois—were free states. The four states that were formed south of the Ohio River—Kentucky, Tennessee, Louisiana, and Mississippi—permitted slavery.

In 1819, Alabama and Missouri applied to Congress for statehood as slave states. No one in Congress questioned admitting Alabama as a slave state. Alabama was located far south of the Ohio River and was surrounded by other slave states.

Congress had another reason for admitting Alabama with no debate. For years, there had been an unspoken agreement in Congress to keep the number of slave states and free states equal. The admission of Illinois as a free state in 1818 had upset this balance. By accepting Alabama with slavery, Congress was able to restore the balance between slave and free states. Missouri, however, was another matter.

**Questions About Missouri** Some Northerners in Congress questioned whether Missouri should be admitted as a slave state. Most of Missouri, they observed, lay north of the point where the Ohio River flows into the Mississippi. On the eastern side of the Mississippi, slavery was banned north of that point. Should this ban not also be applied west of the Mississippi?

This question led to another one. If Missouri were allowed to enter the Union as a slave state, some asked, what would keep slavery from spreading across all of the Louisiana Territory? The vision of a block of new slave states stretching from the Mississippi to the Rocky Mountains was enough to give some Northerners nightmares.

The Tallmadge Amendment When the bill to make Missouri a state came before Congress, Representative James Tallmadge of New York proposed an amendment to the bill. The amendment said that Missouri could join the Union, but only as a free state.

Southerners in Congress protested Tallmadge's amendment. What right, they asked, did Congress have to decide whether a new state should be slave or free? According to the theory of states' rights favored by many Southerners, Congress had no power to impose its will on a state, old or new. Instead, the people of each state should decide whether to permit slavery. The fight over slavery thus involved a basic question about the powers of the federal and state governments under the Constitution.

A Deadlocked Congress Southerners' protests were based on their view that if Congress were allowed to end slavery in Missouri, it might try to end slavery elsewhere. The North already had more votes in the House of Representatives than the South. Only in the Senate did the two sections have equal voting power. As long as the number of free states and slave states remained equal, Southern senators could defeat any attempt to interfere with slavery. But if Missouri entered the Union as a free state, the South would lose its power to block antislavery bills in the Senate. If that happened, Southerners warned, it would mean disaster for the South.

In the North, the Tallmadge Amendment awakened strong feelings against slavery. Many towns sent petitions to Congress, condemning slavery as immoral and unconstitutional. Arguing in favor of the amendment, New Hampshire representative Arthur Livermore spoke for many Northerners when he said,

An opportunity is now presented . . . to prevent the growth of a sin which sits heavy on the soul of every one of us. By embracing this opportunity, we may retrieve the national character, and, in some degree, our own.

The House voted to approve the Tallmadge Amendment. In the Senate, however, Southerners were able to defeat it. The two houses were now deadlocked over the issue of slavery in Missouri. They would remain so as the 1819 session of Congress drew to a close.

### Section 3 - The Missouri Compromise

When Congress returned to Washington in 1820, it took up the question of Missouri statehood once again. By then, the situation had changed, for Maine was now asking to enter the Union as a free state.

For weeks, Congress struggled to find a way out of its deadlock over Missouri. As the debate dragged on and tempers wore thin, Southerners began using such dreaded words as secession and civil war.

"If you persist," Thomas Cobb of Georgia warned supporters of the Tallmadge Amendment, "the Union will be dissolved. You have kindled a fire which a sea of blood can only extinguish."

“If disunion must take place, let it be so!” thundered Tallmadge in reply. “If civil war must come, I can only say, let it come!”

A Compromise Is Reached Rather than risk the breakup of the Union, Congress finally agreed to a compromise crafted by Representative Henry Clay of Kentucky. The Missouri Compromise of 1820 admitted Missouri to the Union as a slave state and Maine as a free state. In this way, it maintained the balance of power between slave and free states.

At the same time, Congress drew an imaginary line across the Louisiana Purchase at latitude 36°30'. North of this line, slavery was to be banned forever, except in Missouri. South of the line, slaveholding was permitted.

Reactions to the Compromise The Missouri Compromise kept the Union together, but it pleased few people. In the North, congressmen who voted to accept Missouri as a slave state were called traitors. In the South, slaveholders deeply resented the ban on slavery in territories that might later become states.

Meanwhile, as Secretary of State John Quincy Adams recognized, the compromise had not settled the future of slavery in the United States as a whole. “I have favored this Missouri compromise, believing it to be all that could be effected [accomplished] under the present Constitution, and from extreme unwillingness to put the Union at hazard [risk],” wrote Adams in his diary. “If the Union must be dissolved, slavery is precisely the question on which it ought to break. For the present, however, the contest is laid asleep.”

#### Section 4 - The Missouri Compromise Unravels

Many Northern periodicals and newspapers detailed the horrors of slavery.

As John Quincy Adams predicted, for a time the “contest” over slavery was settled. But a powerful force was building that soon pushed the issue into the open again: the Second Great Awakening. Leaders of the religious revival of the 1820s and 1830s promised that God would bless those who did the Lord’s work. For some Americans, the Lord’s work was the abolition of slavery.

The “Gag Rule” During the 1830s, abolitionists flooded Congress with antislavery petitions. Congress, they were told, had no power to interfere with slavery in the states. Then what about the District of Columbia? asked the abolitionists. Surely Congress had the power to ban slavery in the nation’s capital.

Rather than confront that question, Congress voted in 1836 to table—or set aside indefinitely—all antislavery petitions. Outraged abolitionists called this action the “gag rule,” because it gagged, or silenced, all congressional debate over slavery.

In 1839, the gag rule prevented consideration of an antislavery proposal by John Quincy Adams, who was now a member of Congress. Knowing that the country would not agree on abolishing slavery altogether, Adams proposed a constitutional amendment saying that no one could be born into slavery after 1845. Congress, however, refused to consider his proposal.



Southern Fears Abolitionists were far from silenced by the refusal of Congress to debate slavery. They continued to attack slavery in books, in newspapers, and at public meetings.

White Southerners deeply resented the abolitionists' attacks as an assault on their way of life. After Nat Turner's slave rebellion in 1831, resentment turned to fear. Southern states adopted strict new laws to control the movement of slaves. Many states tried to keep abolitionist writings from reaching slaves. Mississippi even offered a reward of \$5,000 for the arrest and conviction of any person "who shall utter, publish, or circulate" abolitionist ideas.

Fugitive Slaves Nat Turner's rebellion was the last large-scale slave revolt. But individual slaves continued to rebel by running away to freedom in the North. These fugitives from slavery were often helped in their escape by sympathetic people in the North.

To slaveholders, these Northerners were no better than bank robbers. They saw a slave as a valuable piece of property. Every time a slave escaped, it was like seeing their land vanish into thin air. Slaveholders demanded that Congress pass a fugitive slave law to help them recapture their property.

Slavery in the Territories The gag rule kept the slavery issue out of Congress for ten years. Then, in 1846, President James Polk sent a bill to Congress asking for funds for the war with Mexico. Pennsylvania representative David Wilmot added an amendment to the bill known as the Wilmot Proviso. (A proviso is a condition added to an agreement.) The Wilmot Proviso stated that "neither slavery nor involuntary servitude shall ever exist" in any part of the territory that might be acquired from Mexico as a result of the Mexican-American War.

Southerners in Congress strongly opposed Wilmot's amendment. They maintained that Congress had no right to decide where slaveholders could take their property. The Wilmot Proviso passed the House, but it was rejected by the Senate.

Statehood for California For the next three years, Congress debated what to do about slavery in the territory gained from Mexico. Southerners wanted all of the Mexican Cession open to slavery. Northerners wanted all of it closed.

As a compromise, Southerners proposed a bill that would extend the Missouri Compromise line all the way to the Pacific. Slavery would be banned north of that line and allowed south of it. Northerners in Congress rejected this proposal.

Then, late in 1849, California applied for admission to the Union as a free state. Northerners in Congress welcomed California with open arms. Southerners, however, rejected California's request. Making California a free state, they warned, would upset the balance between slave and free states. The result would be unequal representation of slave states and free states in Congress.

The year ended with Congress deadlocked over California's request for statehood. Once again, Southerners spoke openly of withdrawing from the Union. And once again, angry Northerners denounced slavery as a crime against humanity.

## Section 5 - The Compromise of 1850

On January 21, 1850, Henry Clay, now a senator from Kentucky, trudged through a Washington snowstorm to pay an unexpected call on Senator Daniel Webster of Massachusetts. Clay, the creator of the Missouri Compromise, had come up with a plan to end the deadlock over California. But to get his plan through Congress, he needed Webster's support.

Something for Everyone Clay's new compromise had something to please just about everyone. It began by admitting California to the Union as a free state. That would please the North. Meanwhile, it allowed the New Mexico and Utah territories to decide whether to allow slavery, which would please the South.

In addition, Clay's plan ended the slave trade in Washington, D.C. Although slaveholders in Washington would be able to keep their slaves, human beings would no longer be bought and sold in the nation's capital. Clay and Webster agreed that this compromise would win support from abolitionists without threatening the rights of slaveholders.

Finally, Clay's plan called for passage of a strong fugitive slave law. Slaveholders had long wanted such a law, which would make it easier to find and reclaim runaway slaves.

The Compromise Is Accepted Hoping that Clay's compromise would end the crisis, Webster agreed to help it get passed in Congress. But despite Webster's support, Congress debated the Compromise of 1850 for nine frustrating months. As tempers frayed, Southerners talked of simply leaving the Union peacefully.

Webster dismissed such talk as foolish. "Peaceable secession!" he exclaimed. "Your eyes and mine are never destined to see that miracle . . . I see it as plainly as I see the sun in heaven—I see that [secession] must produce such a war as I will not describe."

A war over slavery was something few Americans wanted to face. In September 1850, Congress finally adopted Clay's plan. Most Americans were happy to see the crisis end. Some Southerners, however, remained wary of the compromise.

## Section 6 - The Compromise of 1850 Fails

Henry Clay and Daniel Webster hoped the Compromise of 1850 would quiet the slavery controversy for years to come. In fact, it satisfied almost no one—and the debate grew louder each year.

The Fugitive Slave Act People in the North and the South were unhappy with the Fugitive Slave Act, though for different reasons. Northerners did not want to enforce the act. Southerners felt the act did not do enough to ensure the return of their escaped property.

Under the Fugitive Slave Act, a person arrested as a runaway slave had almost no legal rights. Many runaways fled all the way to Canada rather than risk being caught and sent back to their owners. Others decided to stand and fight. Reverend Jarmain Loguen, a former slave living in New York, said boldly, "I

don't respect this law—I don't fear it—I won't obey it . . . I will not live as a slave, and if force is employed to re-enslave me, I shall make preparations to meet the crisis as becomes a man."

The Fugitive Slave Act also said that any person who helped a slave escape, or even refused to aid slave catchers, could be jailed. This provision, complained New England poet Ralph Waldo Emerson, made "slave catchers of us all."

Opposition to the act was widespread in the North. When slave catchers came to Boston, they were hounded by crowds of angry citizens shouting, "Slave hunters—there go the slave hunters." After a few days of this treatment, most slave catchers decided to leave.

Northerners' refusal to support the act infuriated slaveholders. It also made enforcement of the act almost impossible. Of the tens of thousands of fugitives living in the North during the 1850s, only 299 were captured and returned to their owners during this time.

Uncle Tom's Cabin Nothing brought the horrors of slavery home to Northerners more than Uncle Tom's Cabin, a novel by Harriet Beecher Stowe. The novel grew out of a vision Stowe had while sitting in church on a wintry Sunday morning in 1851. The vision began with a saintly slave, known as Uncle Tom, and his cruel master. In a furious rage, the master, Simon Legree, had the old slave whipped to death. Just before Uncle Tom's soul slipped out of his body, he opened his eyes and whispered to Legree, "Ye poor miserable critter! There ain't no more ye can do. I forgive ye, with all my soul!"

Racing home, Stowe scribbled down what she had imagined. Her vision of Uncle Tom's death became part of a much longer story that was first published in installments in an abolitionist newspaper. In one issue, readers held their breath as the slave Eliza chose to risk death rather than be sold away from her young son. Chased by slave hunters and their dogs, Eliza dashed to freedom across the ice-choked Ohio River, clutching her child in her arms. In a later issue, Stowe's readers wept as they read her account of how the character of Uncle Tom died at the hands of Simon Legree.

In 1852, Uncle Tom's Cabin was published as a novel. Plays based on the book toured the country, thrilling audiences with Eliza's dramatic escape to freedom. No other work had ever aroused such powerful emotions about slavery. In the South, the novel and its author were scorned and cursed. In the North, Uncle Tom's Cabin made millions of people even more angry about the cruelties of slavery.

The Ostend Manifesto and the Kansas- Nebraska Act Northerners who were already horrified by slavery were roused to fury by two events in 1854: the publication of the so-called Ostend Manifesto and the Kansas-Nebraska Act.

The document known as the Ostend Manifesto was a message sent to the secretary of state by three American diplomats who were meeting in Ostend, Belgium. President Franklin Pierce, who had taken office in 1853, had been trying to purchase the island of Cuba from Spain, but Spain had refused the offer. The message from the diplomats urged the U.S. government to seize Cuba by force if Spain continued to refuse to sell the island. When the message was leaked to the public, angry Northerners

charged that Pierce's administration wanted to buy Cuba in order to add another slave state to the Union.

Early that same year, Senator Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois introduced a bill in Congress that aroused an uproar. Douglas wanted to get a railroad built to California. He thought the project was more likely to happen if Congress organized the Great Plains into the Nebraska Territory and opened the region to settlers. This territory lay north of the Missouri Compromise, and Douglas's bill said nothing about slavery. But Southerners in Congress agreed to support the bill only if Douglas made a few changes—and those changes had far-reaching consequences.

Douglas's final version of the bill, known as the Kansas-Nebraska Act, created two new territories, Kansas and Nebraska. It also abolished the Missouri Compromise by leaving it up to the settlers themselves to vote on whether to permit slavery in the two territories. Douglas called this policy popular sovereignty, or rule by the people. The Kansas-Nebraska Act was passed in 1854.

The Kansas-Nebraska Act hit the North like a thunderbolt. Once again, Northerners were haunted by visions of slavery marching across the plains. Douglas tried to calm their fears by saying that the climates of Kansas and Nebraska were not suited to slave labor. But when Northerners studied maps, they were not so sure. Newspaper editor Horace Greeley charged in the *New York Tribune*,

The pretense of Douglas & Co. that not even Kansas is to be made a slave state by his bill is a gag [joke]. Ask any Missourian what he thinks about it. The Kansas Territory . . . is bounded in its entire length by Missouri, with a whole tier of slave counties leaning against it. Won't be a slave state! . . . Gentlemen! Don't lie any more!

**Bloodshed in Kansas** After the Kansas-Nebraska Act was passed in 1854, settlers poured into Kansas. Most were peaceful farmers looking for good farmland. Some settlers, however, moved to Kansas either to support or to oppose slavery. In the South, towns took up collections to send their young men to Kansas. In the North, abolitionists raised money to send weapons to antislavery settlers. Before long, Kansas had two competing governments in the territory, one for slavery and one against it.

The struggle over slavery soon turned violent. On May 21, 1856, proslavery settlers and so-called "border ruffians" from Missouri invaded Lawrence, Kansas, the home of the antislavery government. Armed invaders burned a hotel, looted several homes, and tossed the printing presses of two abolitionist newspapers into the Kaw River. As the invaders left Lawrence, one of them boasted, "Gentlemen, this is the happiest day of my life."



The raid on Lawrence provoked a wave of outrage in the North. People raised money to replace the destroyed presses. And more “Free- Soilers,” as antislavery settlers were called, prepared to move to Kansas.

Meanwhile, a fiery abolitionist named John Brown plotted his own revenge. Two days after the Lawrence raid, Brown and seven followers, including four of Brown’s sons and his son-in-law, invaded the proslavery town of Pottawatomie, Kansas. There, they dragged five men they suspected of supporting slavery from their homes and hacked them to death with swords.

Violence in Congress The violence in Kansas greatly disturbed Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts. To Sumner, it was proof of what he had long suspected—that Senator Stephen Douglas had plotted with Southerners to make Kansas a slave state.

In 1856, Sumner voiced his suspicions in a passionate speech called “The Crime Against Kansas.” In harsh, shocking language, Sumner described the “crime against Kansas” as a violent assault on an innocent territory, “compelling it to the hateful embrace of slavery.” He dismissed Douglas as “a noisome [offensive], squat, and nameless animal.” Sumner also heaped abuse on many Southerners, including Senator Andrew P. Butler of South Carolina.

Just what Sumner hoped to accomplish was not clear. However, copies of his speech were quickly printed up for distribution in the North. After reading it, New England poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow congratulated Sumner on the “brave and noble speech you made, never to die out in the memories of men.”

Certainly, it was not about to die out in the memories of enraged Southerners. Two days after the speech, Senator Butler’s nephew, South Carolina representative Preston Brooks, attacked Sumner in the Senate, beating him with his metal-tipped cane until it broke in half. By the time other senators could pull Brooks away, Sumner had collapsed, bloody and unconscious.

Reactions to the attack on Sumner showed how divided the country had become. Many Southerners applauded Brooks for defending the honor of his family and the South. From across the South, supporters sent Brooks new canes to replace the one he had broken on Sumner’s head.

Most Northerners viewed the beating as another example of Southern brutality. In their eyes, Brooks was no better than the proslavery bullies who had attacked the people of Lawrence. One Connecticut student was so upset that she wrote to Sumner about going to war. “I don’t think it is of very much use to stay any longer in the high school,” she wrote. “The boys would be better learning to hold muskets, and the girls to make bullets.”

### Section 7 - The Dred Scott Decision

In 1857, the slavery controversy shifted from Congress to the Supreme Court. The Court was about to decide a case concerning a Missouri slave named Dred Scott. Years earlier, Scott had traveled with his owner to Wisconsin, where slavery was banned by the Missouri Compromise. When he returned to

Missouri, Scott went to court to win his freedom. He argued that his stay in Wisconsin had made him a free man.

**Questions of the Case** There were nine justices on the Supreme Court in 1857. Five, including Chief Justice Roger Taney, were from the South. Four were from the North. The justices had two key questions to decide. First, as a slave, was Dred Scott a citizen who had the right to bring a case before a federal court? Second, did his time in Wisconsin make him a free man?

Chief Justice Taney hoped to use the Scott case to settle the slavery controversy once and for all. So he asked the Court to consider two more questions: Did Congress have the power to make any laws at all concerning slavery in the territories? And, if so, was the Missouri Compromise a constitutional use of that power?

Nearly 80 years old, Taney had long been opposed to slavery. As a young Maryland lawyer, he had publicly declared that “slavery is a blot upon our national character and every lover of freedom confidently hopes that it will be . . . wiped away.” Taney had gone on to free his own slaves. Many observers wondered whether he and his fellow justices would now free Dred Scott as well.

As a result of the Dred Scott decision, slavery was allowed in all territories.

**Two Judicial Bombshells** On March 6, 1857, Chief Justice Taney delivered the Dred Scott decision. The chief justice began by reviewing the facts of Dred Scott’s case. Then he dropped the first of two judicial bombshells. By a vote of five to four, the Court had decided that Scott could not sue for his freedom in a federal court because he was not a citizen. Nor, said Taney, could Scott become a citizen. No African American, whether slave or free, was an American citizen—or could ever become one.

Second, Taney declared that the Court had rejected Scott’s argument that his stay in Wisconsin had made him a free man. The reason was simple. The Missouri Compromise was unconstitutional.

Taney’s argument went something like this. Slaves are property. The Fifth Amendment to the Constitution says that property cannot be taken from people without due process of law—that is, a proper court hearing. Taney reasoned that banning slavery in a territory is the same as taking property from slaveholders who would like to bring their slaves into that territory. And that is unconstitutional. Rather than banning slavery, he said, Congress has a constitutional responsibility to protect the property rights of slaveholders in a territory.

The Dred Scott decision delighted slaveholders. They hoped that, at long last, the issue of slavery in the territories had been settled—and in their favor.

Many Northerners, however, were stunned and enraged by the Court’s ruling. The New York Tribune called the decision a “wicked and false judgment.” The New York Independent expressed outrage in a bold headline:

**The Decision of the Supreme Court: Is the Moral Assassination of a Race and Cannot be Obeyed!**

## Section 8 - From Compromise to Crisis

During the controversy over the Kansas-Nebraska Act, antislavery activists formed a new political organization, the Republican Party. The Republicans were united by their beliefs that “no man can own another man . . . That slavery must be prohibited in the territories . . . That all new States must be Free States . . . That the rights of our colored citizen . . . must be protected.”

In 1858, Republicans in Illinois nominated Abraham Lincoln to run for the Senate. In his acceptance speech, Lincoln pointed out that all attempts to reach compromise on the slavery issue had failed. Quoting from the Bible, he warned, “A house divided against itself cannot stand.” Lincoln went on: “I believe this government cannot endure, permanently half-slave and half-free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved—I do not expect the house to fall—but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing, or all the other.”

The Lincoln-Douglas Debates Lincoln’s opponent in the Senate race was Senator Stephen Douglas. The Illinois senator saw no reason why the nation could not go on half-slave and half-free. When Lincoln challenged him to debate the slavery issue, Douglas agreed.

During the Lincoln-Douglas debates, Douglas argued that the Dred Scott decision had put the slavery issue to rest. Lincoln disagreed. In his eyes, slavery was a moral, not a legal, issue. He declared, “The real issue in this controversy . . . is the sentiment of one class [group] that looks upon the institution of slavery as a wrong, and of another class that does not look upon it as a wrong.”

Lincoln lost the election. But the debates were widely reported, and they helped make him a national figure. His argument with Douglas also brought the moral issue of slavery into sharp focus. Compromises over slavery were becoming impossible.

John Brown’s Raid While Lincoln fought to stop the spread of slavery through politics, abolitionist John Brown adopted a more extreme approach. Rather than wait for Congress to act, Brown planned to seize the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia. An arsenal is a place where weapons and ammunition are stored. Brown wanted to use the weapons to arm slaves for a rebellion that would end slavery.

Brown launched his raid in 1859. It was an insane scheme. All of Brown’s men were killed or captured during the raid. Brown himself was convicted of treason and sentenced to die. On the day of his hanging, he left a note that read, “I John Brown am now quite certain that the crimes of this guilty land will never be purged away but with Blood.”

Such words filled white Southerners with fear. If a slave rebellion did begin, it was Southern blood that would be spilled. The fact that many Northerners viewed Brown as a hero also left white Southerners uneasy.

## Section 9 - The Election of 1860 and Secession

The 1860 presidential race showed just how divided the nation had become. The Republicans were united behind Lincoln. The Democrats, however, had split between Northern and Southern factions.

Northern Democrats nominated Stephen Douglas for president. Southern Democrats supported John C. Breckinridge of Kentucky. The election became even more confusing when a group called the Constitutional Union Party nominated John Bell of Tennessee.

**Abraham Lincoln Is Elected President** With his opposition divided three ways, Lincoln sailed to victory. But it was an odd victory. Lincoln won the presidential election with just 40 percent of the votes, all of them cast in the North. In ten Southern states, he was not even on the ballot.

For white Southerners, the election of 1860 delivered an unmistakable message. The South was now in the minority. It no longer had the power to shape national events or policies. Sooner or later, Southerners feared, Congress would try to abolish slavery. And that, wrote a South Carolina newspaper, would mean “the loss of liberty, property, home, country—everything that makes life worth living.”

**The South Secedes from the Union** In the weeks following the election, talk of secession filled the air. Alarmed senators formed a committee to search for yet another compromise that might hold the nation together. They knew that finding one would not be easy. Still, they had to do something to stop the rush toward disunion and disaster.

The Senate committee held its first meeting on December 20, 1860. Just as the senators began their work, events in two distant cities dashed their hopes for a settlement.

In Springfield, Illinois, a reporter called on President-Elect Abraham Lincoln. When asked whether he could support a compromise on slavery, Lincoln’s answer was clear. He would not interfere with slavery in the South. And he would support enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Act. But Lincoln drew the line at letting slavery extend into the territories. On this question, he declared, “Let there be no compromise.”

Meanwhile, in Charleston, South Carolina, delegates attending a state convention voted that same day—December 20, 1860—to leave the Union. The city went wild. Church bells rang. Crowds filled the streets, roaring their approval. A South Carolina newspaper boldly proclaimed, “The Union Is Dissolved!” Six more states soon followed South Carolina’s lead. In February 1861, those states joined together as the Confederate States of America.

**The Civil War Begins** On March 4, 1861, Lincoln became president of the not-so-united United States. In his inaugural address, Lincoln stated his belief that secession was both wrong and unconstitutional. He then appealed to the rebellious states to return in peace. “In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow countrymen, and not in mine,” he said, “is the momentous issue of civil war.”

A month later, Confederates in Charleston, South Carolina, forced the issue. On April 12, 1861, they opened fire on Fort Sumter, a federal fort in Charleston Harbor. After 33 hours of heavy shelling, the defenders of the fort hauled down the Stars and Stripes and replaced it with the white flag of surrender.

The news that the Confederates had fired on the American flag unleashed a wave of patriotic fury in the North. All the doubts that people had about using force to save the Union vanished. A New York newspaper reported excitedly, “There is no more thought of bribing or coaxing the traitors who have



dared to aim their cannon balls at the flag of the Union . . . Fort Sumter is temporarily lost, but the country is saved.”

The time for compromise was over. The issues that had divided the nation for so many years would now be decided by a civil war.

### Summary

In this chapter, you learned how a series of compromises failed to keep the United States from splitting in two over the issue of slavery.

**Confronting the Issue of Slavery** The issue of granting Missouri statehood threatened to upset the balance of free and slave states. Northerners were concerned that if Missouri entered the Union as a slave state, other territories would also be admitted as slave states. Southerners worried that if Congress banned slavery in Missouri, it would try to end slavery elsewhere.

**The Missouri Compromise** In 1820, the Missouri Compromise resolved the issue by admitting Missouri as a slave state and Maine as a free state. It also drew a line across the Louisiana Territory. In the future, slavery would be permitted only south of that line.

**The Compromise of 1850** The furor over slavery in new territories erupted again after the Mexican-American War. The Compromise of 1850 admitted California as a free state and allowed the New Mexico and Utah territories to decide whether to allow slavery. It also ended the slave trade in Washington, D.C., and included a stronger fugitive slave law. Attitudes on both sides were hardened by Harriet Beecher Stowe’s novel *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* and the Kansas-Nebraska Act.

**The Dred Scott Decision** In 1857, the Supreme Court issued a decision in the Dred Scott case: African Americans were not citizens and the Missouri Compromise was unconstitutional.

**From Compromise to Crisis** Antislavery activists formed a new political party: the Republican Party. The party nominated Abraham Lincoln for the Illinois Senate. Slavery was the focus of debates between Lincoln and opponent Stephen Douglas. Lincoln lost the election, but the debates brought slavery into sharp focus. A raid launched by abolitionist John Brown raised fears of a slave rebellion.

**The Election of 1860 and Secession** Lincoln won the presidency in 1860. Soon afterward, South Carolina and six other Southern states seceded from the Union and formed the Confederate States of America. In early 1861, Confederate troops fired on Fort Sumter in Charleston, South Carolina, marking the beginning of the Civil War.

# The Civil War

## Overview and Objectives

### Overview

In an Experiential Exercise, students take on the role of soldiers at the Battle of Gettysburg and encounter key aspects of what it was like to be a soldier in the Civil War and then write about their experiences.

### Objectives

In the course of reading this chapter and participating in the classroom activity, students will

#### *Social Studies*

- compare the strengths and weaknesses of the Union and Confederacy at the outbreak of the Civil War to predict the outcome of the war.
- draw connections between significant writings and speeches of Abraham Lincoln and the Declaration of Independence.
- identify the views of leaders on both sides and compare and contrast the experiences of white and black Union soldiers.
- examine critical battles and events of the war and connect them to the Union's Anaconda Plan.
- explain how key events of the Civil War, like the Battle of Gettysburg, affected soldiers and civilians.

#### *Language Arts*

- write a journal entry describing life during the Civil War.

### Social Studies Vocabulary

**Key Content Terms** Confederacy, civil war, Emancipation Proclamation, habeas corpus, Gettysburg Address, Appomattox Court House

**Academic Vocabulary** technological, perpetual, crisis, assert, reinforcements

# The Civil War, 1861-1865

-  Union states
-  Border states
-  Confederate states
-  Territories
-  Union victory
-  Confederate victory
-  Indecisive or a draw



## The Civil War

What factors and events influenced the outcome of the Civil War?

### Section 1 - Introduction

The Confederate bombardment of Fort Sumter in Charleston, South Carolina, ended months of confusion. The nation was at war. The time had come to choose sides. For most whites in the South, the choice was clear. Early in 1861, representatives from six of the seven states that had seceded from the Union met to form a new nation called the Confederate States of America. Southerners believed that just as the states had once voluntarily joined the Union, they could voluntarily leave it now. The men who fought for the South were proud defenders of Southern independence.

For many Northerners, the choice was just as clear. "There can be no neutrals in this war," declared Senator Stephen Douglas after the attack of Fort Sumter, "only patriots—or traitors." Most Northerners viewed the secession of Southern states as a traitorous act of rebellion against the United States. They marched off to war eager to defend what they saw as their union, their constitution, and their flag.

Choosing sides was harder for the eight slave states located between the Confederacy and the free states. Four of these so-called border states—Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina—joined the Confederacy. The western counties of Virginia, however, remained loyal to the Union. Rather than fight for the South, they broke away to form a new state called West Virginia. The other four border states—Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri—remained in the Union, although many of their citizens fought for the South.

As Americans took sides, they began to see why a civil war—a conflict between two groups of citizens in one country—is the most painful kind of war. This conflict divided not only states, but also families and friends. In this chapter, you will learn how this "brothers' war" turned into the most destructive of all American wars. As you read, put yourself in the shoes of the soldiers and civilians who were part of this long and tragic struggle.

### Section 2 - North Versus South

President Abraham Lincoln's response to the attack on Fort Sumter was quick and clear. He called for 75,000 volunteers to come forward to preserve the Union. At the same time, Jefferson Davis, the newly elected president of the Confederacy, called for volunteers to defend the South. For the first time, Americans were fighting a civil war.

**Strengths and Weaknesses of the North** The North began the war with impressive strengths. Its population was about 22 million, compared to the South's 9 million. The North was both richer and more technologically advanced than the South. About 90 percent of the nation's manufacturing, and most of its banks, were in the North.

The North had geographic advantages, too. It had more farms than the South to provide food for troops. Its land contained most of the country's iron, coal, copper, and gold. The North controlled the seas, and



its 21,000 miles of railroad track allowed troops and supplies to be transported wherever they were needed.

The North's greatest weakness was its military leadership. At the start of the war, about one-third of the nation's military officers resigned and returned to their homes in the South. During much of the war, Lincoln searched for effective generals who could lead the Union to victory.

**Strengths and Weaknesses of the South** In contrast to the North, the South's great strength was its military leadership. Most of America's best military officers were Southerners who chose to fight for the Confederacy. This was not an easy decision for many of them. Colonel Robert E. Lee, for example, was not a supporter of either slavery or secession. But he decided that he could not fight against his native Virginia. Lee resigned from the U.S. Army to become commander in chief of the Confederate forces.

The South had geographic advantages as well. To win the war, the North would have to invade and conquer the South. The sheer size of the South made this a daunting task. The South, in contrast, could win simply by defending its territory until Northerners grew tired of fighting.

The South did have an important geographic disadvantage. If the Union could control the Mississippi River, it could split the Confederacy in two.

The South's main weaknesses were its economy and its transportation systems. The region's agriculturally based economy could not support a long war. It had few factories to produce guns and other military supplies. The Confederacy also faced serious transportation problems. The South lacked the railroads needed to haul troops or supplies over long distances.

**Abraham Lincoln versus Jefferson Davis** The North's greatest advantage was its newly elected president, Abraham Lincoln. Through even the darkest days of the war, Lincoln never wavered from his belief that the Union was perpetual—never to be broken. Throughout his presidency, Lincoln related the preservation of the Union to the ideals of the American Revolution. In his first inaugural address, he said that the Union was begun by the American Revolution, "matured and continued" by the Declaration of Independence, and affirmed by the Constitution.

At the time of the secession crisis, Jefferson Davis was a U.S. senator from Mississippi. A firm believer in states' rights, he resigned his seat in the Senate when Mississippi left the Union. Like Lincoln, Davis often spoke of the American Revolution. When Southerners formed their own government, Davis said in his inaugural address, they "merely asserted a right which the Declaration of Independence of 1776 had defined to be inalienable." He believed the South was fighting for the same freedom cherished by the nation's founders.

### Section 3 - Bull Run: A Great Awakening

In the spring of 1861, President Lincoln and General Winfield Scott planned the Union's war strategy. Step one was to surround the South by sea to cut off its trade. Step two was to divide the Confederacy into sections so that one region could not help another. Step three was to capture Richmond, Virginia,

the capital of the Confederacy, and destroy the Confederate government. Journalists called this strategy the Anaconda Plan because it resembled the crushing death grip of an anaconda snake.

**Rose Greenhow's Dilemma** Most Northerners believed that the war could be won with a single Union assault on Richmond. In 1861, thousands of volunteers poured into Washington, D.C., shouting, "On to Richmond!" A young widow and Washington social leader named Rose O'Neal Greenhow watched these eager troops carefully.

Greenhow was a strong supporter of the Southern cause. She used her friendship with government officials to learn just when and how the Union planned to attack Richmond. Her challenge was to find a way to deliver this information to Confederate leaders without being discovered.

**The Battle of Bull Run** On a hot July morning, long lines of Union soldiers marched out of Washington heading for Richmond. Their voices could be heard singing and cheering across the countryside. Parties of civilians followed the army, adding to the excitement. They had come along to see the end of the rebellion.

The troops would not have been so cheerful had they known what was waiting for them at Manassas, a small town on the way to Richmond. Greenhow had managed to warn Southern military leaders of Union plans. She had smuggled a coded note to them in a young girl's curls. Southern troops were waiting for the Union forces as they approached Manassas. The two armies met at a creek known as Bull Run.

At first, a Union victory looked certain. But Confederate general Thomas Jackson and his regiment of Virginians refused to give up. "Look," shouted South Carolina general Bernard Bee to his men, "there is Jackson with his Virginians, standing like a stone wall." Thus inspired by "Stonewall" Jackson's example, the Confederate lines held firm until reinforcements arrived. Late that afternoon, Jackson urged his men to "yell like furies" as they charged the Union forces. The charge overwhelmed the inexperienced Union troops, who fled in panic back to Washington.

The Battle of Bull Run was a smashing victory for the South. For the North, it was a shocking blow. Lincoln and his generals now realized that ending the war would not be easy.

**Women Support the War** Over the next year, both the North and the South worked to build and train large armies. As men went off to war, women took their places on the home front. Wives and mothers supported their families by running farms and businesses. Many women went to work for the first time in factories. Others found jobs as nurses, teachers, or government workers.

Women also served the military forces on both sides as messengers, guides, scouts, smugglers, soldiers, and spies. Greenhow was arrested for spying shortly after the Battle of Bull Run. Although she was kept under guard in her Washington home, she continued to smuggle military secrets to the Confederates. The following year, Greenhow was allowed to move to the South, where President Jefferson Davis welcomed her as a hero.

Women also volunteered to tend sick and wounded soldiers. Dorothea Dix was already well known for her efforts to improve the treatment of the mentally ill. She was appointed director of the Union army's nursing service. Dix insisted that all female nurses be over 30 years old, plain in appearance, physically strong, and willing to do unpleasant work. Her rules were so strict that she was known as "Dragon Dix."

While most nurses worked in military hospitals, Clara Barton followed Union armies into battle, tending troops where they fell. Later generations would remember Barton as the founder of the American Red Cross. To the soldiers she cared for during the war, she was "the angel of the battlefield."

#### Section 4 - Antietam: A Bloody Affair

For 12 hours, Confederate and Union forces fought at Antietam in what was the bloodiest day of the...

The Battle of Bull Run ended Northerners' hopes for a quick victory. In the months that followed that sobering defeat, the Union began to carry out the Anaconda Plan.

The Anaconda Plan in Action Step one of the Anaconda Plan was to blockade the South's ports and cut off its trade. In 1861, the Union navy launched the blockade. By the end of the year, most ports in the South were closed to foreign ships. The South had long exported its cotton to Great Britain and France. The Confederacy looked to Great Britain to send ships to break through the blockade. The British, however, refused this request. As a result, the South could not export cotton to Europe or import needed supplies.

Early in 1862, the Union began to put step two of the Anaconda Plan into action. The strategy was to divide the Confederacy by gaining control of the Mississippi River. In April, Union admiral David Farragut led 46 ships up the Mississippi River to New Orleans. This was the largest American fleet ever assembled. In the face of such overwhelming force, the city surrendered without firing a shot.

Meanwhile, Union forces headed by General Ulysses S. Grant began moving south toward the Mississippi from Illinois. In 1862, Grant won a series of victories that put Kentucky and much of Tennessee under Union control. A general of remarkable determination, Grant refused to accept any battle outcome other than unconditional, or total, surrender. For this reason, U. S. Grant was known to his men as "Unconditional Surrender" Grant.

Later in 1862, Union general George McClellan sent 100,000 men by ship to capture Richmond. Again, a Union victory seemed certain. But despite being outnumbered, Confederate forces stopped the Union attack in a series of well-fought battles. Once more, Richmond was saved.

The Battle of Antietam At this point, General Robert E. Lee, the commander of the Confederate forces, did the unexpected. He sent his troops across the Potomac River into Maryland, a slave state that remained in the Union. Lee hoped this show of strength might persuade Maryland to join the Confederacy. He also hoped that a Confederate victory on Union soil would convince European nations to support the South.

On a crisp September day in 1862, Confederate and Union armies met near the Maryland town of Sharpsburg along Antietam Creek. All day long, McClellan's troops pounded Lee's badly outnumbered forces. The following day, Lee retreated to Virginia.

McClellan claimed Antietam as a Union victory. But many who fought there saw the battle as a defeat for both armies. Of the 75,000 Union troops who fought at Antietam, about 2,100 were killed. About 10,300 were wounded or missing. Of the 52,000 Confederates who fought at Antietam, about 2,770 lost their lives, while 11,000 were wounded or missing. In that single day of fighting, more Americans were killed than in the War of 1812 and the Mexican War combined. The Battle of Antietam was the bloodiest day of the war.

**The New Realities of War** The horrifying death toll at Antietam reflected the new realities of warfare. In past wars, battles had been fought in hand-to-hand combat using bayonets. During the Civil War, improved weapons made killing from a distance much easier. Rifles, which replaced muskets, were accurate over long distances. Improved cannons and artillery also made it easier for armies to attack forces some distance away. As a result, armies could meet, fight, die, and part without either side winning a clear victory.

Medical care was not as advanced as weaponry. Civil War doctors had no understanding of the causes of infections. Surgeons operated in dirty hospital tents with basic instruments. Few bothered to wash their hands between patients. As a result, infections spread rapidly from patient to patient. The hospital death rate was so high that soldiers often refused medical care. An injured Ohio soldier wrote that he chose to return to battle rather than see a doctor, "thinking that I had better die by rebel bullets than Union quackery [unskilled medical care]."

As staggering as the battle death tolls were, far more soldiers died of diseases than wounds. Unsanitary conditions in army camps were so bad that about three men died of typhoid, pneumonia, and other diseases for everyone who died in battle. As one soldier observed, "these big battles [are] not as bad as the fever."

### Section 5 - Gettysburg: A Turning Point

While neither side won the battle of Antietam, it was enough of a victory for Lincoln to take his first steps toward ending slavery. When the Civil War began, Lincoln had resisted pleas from abolitionists to make emancipation, or the freeing of slaves, a reason for fighting the Confederacy. He himself opposed slavery. But the purpose of the war, he said, "is to save the Union, and is not either to save or destroy slavery."

**The Emancipation Proclamation** As the war dragged on, Lincoln changed his mind. He decided to make abolition a goal of the Union. Lincoln realized that European nations that opposed slavery would never support the side that did not want slavery to end. Freeing slaves could also deprive the Confederacy of a large part of its workforce.

On January 1, 1863, President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. The proclamation, or formal order, declared slaves in all Confederate states to be free. This announcement had little immediate effect on slavery. The Confederate states ignored the document. Slaves living in states loyal to the Union were not affected by the proclamation.

Still, for many in the North, the Emancipation Proclamation changed the war into a crusade for freedom. The Declaration of Independence had said that "all men are created equal." Now the fight was about living up to those words.

**The Battle of Gettysburg** In the summer of 1863, Lee felt confident enough to risk another invasion of the North. He hoped to capture a Northern city and help convince the weary North to seek peace.

Union and Confederate troops met on July 1, 1863, west of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. The Union troops, about 90,000 strong, were led by newly appointed General George C. Meade. After a brief skirmish, they occupied four miles of high ground along an area known as Cemetery Ridge. About a mile to the west, some 75,000 Confederate troops gathered behind Seminary Ridge.

The following day, the Confederates attempted to find weak spots in the Union position. The Union lines held firm. On the third day, Lee ordered an all-out attack on the center of the Union line. Cannons filled the air with smoke and thunder. George Pickett led 15,000 Confederate soldiers in a charge across the low ground separating the two forces.

Pickett's charge marked the northernmost point reached by Southern troops during the war. But as Confederate troops pressed forward, Union gunners opened great holes in their advancing lines. Those men who managed to make their way to Cemetery Ridge were struck down by Union soldiers in hand-to-hand combat.

Although Gettysburg was a victory for the Union, the losses on both sides were staggering. More than 17,500 Union soldiers and 23,000 Confederate troops were killed or wounded in three days of battle. Lee, who lost about a third of his army, withdrew to Virginia. From this point on, he would only wage a defensive war on Southern soil.

**Opposition on the Union Home Front** Despite the victory at Gettysburg, Lincoln faced a number of problems on the home front. One was opposition to the war itself. A group of Northern Democrats were more interested in restoring peace than in saving the Union or ending slavery. Republicans called these Democrats "Copperheads" after a poisonous snake with that name.

Other Northerners opposed the war because they were sympathetic to the Confederate cause. When a proslavery mob attacked Union soldiers marching through Maryland, Lincoln sent in troops to keep order. He also used his constitutional power to temporarily suspend the right of habeas corpus. During the national emergency, citizens no longer had the right to appear before a court to face charges. People who were suspected of disloyalty were jailed without being charged for a crime.

Lincoln's Gettysburg Address In 1863, President Lincoln traveled to Gettysburg. Thousands of the men who died there had been buried in a new cemetery. Lincoln was among those invited to speak at the dedication of this new burial ground. The nation would never forget Lincoln's Gettysburg Address.

The president deliberately spoke of the war in words that echoed the Declaration of Independence. The "great civil war," he said, was testing whether a nation "conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal . . . can long endure." He spoke of the brave men, "living and dead," who had fought to defend that ideal. "The world . . . can never forget what they did here." Finally, he called on Americans to remain

dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

#### Section 6 - Vicksburg: A Besieged City

The Civil War was a war of many technological firsts. It was the first American war to use railroads to move troops and to keep them supplied. It was the first war in which telegraphs were used to communicate with distant armies. It was the first conflict to be recorded in photographs. It was also the first to see combat between armor-plated steamships.

The Merrimac and the Monitor Early in the war, Union forces withdrew from the navy yard in Norfolk, Virginia. They left behind a warship named the Merrimac. The Confederacy began the war with no navy. They covered the wooden Merrimac with iron plates and added a powerful ram to its prow.

In response, the Union navy built its own ironclad ship called the Monitor. Completed in less than 100 days, the Monitor had a flat deck and two heavy guns in a revolving turret. It was said to resemble a "cheese box on a raft."

In March 1862, the Merrimac, which the Confederates had renamed the Virginia, steamed into Chesapeake Bay to attack Union ships. With cannonballs harmlessly bouncing off its sides, the iron monster destroyed three wooden ships and threatened the entire Union blockade fleet.

The next morning, the Virginia was met by the Monitor. The two ironclads exchanged shots for hours before withdrawing. Neither could claim victory, and neither was harmed.

The battle of the Merrimac and the Monitor showed that iron-clad ships were superior to wooden vessels. After that, both sides added ironclads to their navies. The South, however, was never able to build enough ships to end the Union blockade of Southern harbors.

Control of the Mississippi Ironclads were part of the Union's campaign to divide the South by taking control of the Mississippi River. After seizing New Orleans in 1862, Admiral David Farragut moved up the Mississippi to capture the cities of Baton Rouge and Natchez. At the same time, other Union ships gained control of Memphis, Tennessee.

The Union now controlled both ends of the Mississippi. The South could no longer move men or supplies up and down the river. But neither could the North, as long as the Confederates continued to control one key location—Vicksburg, Mississippi.

**The Siege of Vicksburg** The town of Vicksburg was located on a bluff above a hairpin turn in the Mississippi River. The city was easy to defend and difficult to capture. Whoever held Vicksburg could, with a few well-placed cannons, control movement along the Mississippi. But even Farragut had to admit with fellow officer David Porter that ships "cannot crawl up hills 300 feet high." An army would be needed to take Vicksburg.

In May 1863, General Ulysses S. Grant battled his way to Vicksburg with the needed army. For six weeks, Union gunboats shelled the city from the river while Grant's army bombarded it from land. Slowly but surely, the Union troops burrowed toward the city in trenches and tunnels.

As shells pounded the city, people in Vicksburg dug caves into the hillsides for protection. To survive, they ate horses, mules, and bread made of corn and dried peas. "It had the properties of Indian rubber," said one Confederate soldier, "and was worse than leather to digest."

Low on food and supplies, Vicksburg surrendered on July 4, 1863. The Mississippi was now a Union waterway, and the Confederacy was cut in two.

**Problems on the Confederate Home Front** As the war raged on, life in the South became grim. Because of the blockade, imported goods disappeared from stores. What few items were available were extremely expensive.

Unable to sell their tobacco and cotton to the North or to other countries, farmers planted food crops instead. Still, the South was often hungry. Invading Union armies destroyed crops. They also cut rail lines, making it difficult to move food and supplies to Southern cities and army camps.

As clothing wore out, Southerners made do with patches and homespun cloth. At the beginning of the war, Mary Boykin Chesnut had written in her journal of well-dressed Confederate troops. By 1863, she was writing of soldiers dressed in "rags and tags."

By 1864, Southerners were writing letters like this one to soldiers on the battlefield: "We haven't got nothing in the house to eat but a little bit o' meal. I don't want to you to stop fighten them Yankees . . ."



but try and get off and come home and fix us all up some." Many soldiers found it hard to resist such pleas, even if going home meant deserting their units.

### Section 7 - Fort Wagner: African Americans and the War

Early in the war, abolitionists had urged Congress to recruit African Americans for the army. But at first, most Northerners regarded the conflict as "a white man's war." Congress finally opened the door to black recruits in 1862. About 186,000 African Americans, many of them former slaves, enlisted in the Union army. Another 30,000 African Americans joined the Union navy.

The Massachusetts 54th Regiment Massachusetts was one of the first states to organize black regiments. The most famous was the 54th Massachusetts Infantry, commanded by Colonel Robert Gould Shaw. Two of the 54th Infantry's 1,000 soldiers were sons of Frederick Douglass.

The men of the Massachusetts 54th were paid less than white soldiers. When the black soldiers learned this, they protested the unequal treatment by refusing to accept any pay at all. In a letter to Lincoln, Corporal James Henry Gooding asked, "Are we Soldiers, or are we Laborers? . . . We have done a Soldier's duty. Why can't we have a Soldier's pay?" At Lincoln's urging, Congress finally granted black soldiers equal pay.

After three months of training, the Massachusetts 54th was sent to South Carolina to take part in an attack on Fort Wagner outside of Charleston. As they prepared for battle, the men of the 54th faced the usual worries of untested troops. But they also faced the added fear that if captured, they might be sold into slavery.

African Americans at War The assault on Fort Wagner was an impossible mission. To reach the fort, troops had to cross 200 yards of open, sandy beach. Rifle and cannon fire poured down on them. After losing nearly half of their men, the survivors of the 54th regiment retreated. But their bravery won them widespread respect.

During the war, 166 African American regiments fought in nearly 500 battles. Black soldiers often received little training, poor equipment, and less pay than white soldiers. They also risked death or enslavement if captured. Still, African Americans fought with great courage to save the Union.

### Section 8 - Appomattox: Total War Brings an End

During the first years of the war, Lincoln had searched for a commander who was willing to fight the Confederates. The president finally found the leader he needed in General Grant. He made Grant commander of the Union forces in March 1864. Grant's views on war were quite straightforward: "The art of war is simple enough. Find out where your enemy is. Get at him as soon as you can. Strike at him as hard as you can and as often as you can, and keep moving on."

Using this strategy, Grant mapped out a plan for ending the war. He would lead a large force against Lee to capture Richmond. At the same time, General William Tecumseh Sherman would lead a second army into Georgia to take Atlanta.

Grant Invades Virginia In May 1864, General Grant invaded Virginia with a force of more than 100,000 men. They met Lee's army of 60,000 in a dense forest known as the Wilderness. In two days of fierce fighting, Grant lost 18,000 men. Still, Grant would not retreat. "I propose to fight it out along this line," he said, "if it takes all summer." He followed Lee's army to Cold Harbor, Virginia, where he lost 7,000 men in 15 minutes of fighting.

By the time the two forces reached Petersburg, a railroad center 20 miles south of Richmond, Grant's losses almost equaled Lee's entire army. But he was able to reinforce his army with fresh troops. Lee, who had also suffered heavy losses, could not.

Total War Grant believed in total war—war on the enemy's will to fight and its ability to support an army. With his army tied down in northern Virginia, Grant ordered General Philip Sheridan to wage total war in Virginia's grain-rich Shenandoah Valley. "Let that valley be so left that crows flying over it will have to carry their rations along with them," ordered Grant.

In May 1864, General Sherman left Tennessee for Georgia with orders to inflict "all the damage you can against their war resources." In September, Sherman reached Atlanta, the South's most important rail and manufacturing center. His army set the city ablaze.

The Reelection of Lincoln Any hope of victory for the South lay in the defeat of President Lincoln in the election of 1864. Northern Democrats nominated General George McClellan to run against Lincoln. Knowing that the North was weary of war, McClellan urged an immediate end to the conflict.

Lincoln doubted he would win reelection. Grant seemed stuck in northern Virginia, and there was no end in sight to the appalling bloodletting. Luckily for the president, Sheridan's destruction of the Shenandoah Valley and Sherman's capture of Atlanta came just in time to rescue his campaign. These victories changed Northern views of Lincoln and his prospects for ending the war. In November, Lincoln was reelected.

Sherman's March Through Georgia After burning Atlanta, Sherman marched his army across the state toward Savannah, promising to "make Georgia howl." His purpose was to destroy the last untouched supply base for the Confederacy.

As they marched through Georgia, Sherman's troops destroyed everything that they found of value. They trampled or burned fields and stripped houses of their valuables. They burned supplies of hay and food. Dead horses, hogs, and cattle that his troops could not eat or carry away lined the roads. The troops destroyed everything useful in a 60-mile-wide path.

In December 1864, Sherman captured Savannah, Georgia. From there, he turned north and destroyed all opposition in the Carolinas. Marching 425 miles in 50 days, he reached Raleigh, North Carolina, by March 1865. There he waited for Grant's final attack on Richmond.

Most battles during the Civil War took place in or near border states or in Confederate states.

The War Ends For nine months, Grant's forces battered Lee's army at Petersburg, the gateway to Richmond. On April 1, 1865, the Union forces finally broke through Confederate lines to capture the city. Two days later, Union troops marched into Richmond.

Grant's soldiers moved quickly to surround Lee's army. Lee told his officers, "There is nothing left for me to do but go and see General Grant, and I would rather die a thousand deaths."

On April 9, 1865, General Lee, in full dress uniform, arrived at Wilmer McLean's house in the village of Appomattox Court House. He was there to surrender his army to General Grant. The Union general met him in a mud-splattered and crumpled uniform.

Grant's terms of surrender were generous. Confederate soldiers could go home if they promised to fight no longer. They could take with them their own horses and mules, which they would need for spring plowing. Officers could keep their swords and weapons. Grant also ordered that food be sent to Lee's men. Lee accepted the terms.

As Lee returned to his headquarters, Union troops began to shoot their guns and cheer wildly. Grant told them to stop celebrating. "The war is over," he said, "the rebels are our countrymen again."

"Touched by Fire" No one who fought in the Civil War would ever forget the intensity of the experience. "In our youth," wrote Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr., "our hearts were touched by fire."

The nation, too, had been touched by fire. Many compared the Civil War to a great furnace that burned away one country and forged a new one in its place. In this new country, neither slavery nor the right to secession had any place. Just as Lincoln had said, the Union was a single whole, not a collection of sovereign states. Before the war, Americans tended to say "the United States are." After the war, they said "the United States is."

These momentous changes came at a horrifying cost. Billions of dollars had been spent on the conflict. Almost every family had lost a member or a friend. More than 620,000 Union and Confederate soldiers were dead. Thousands more came home missing an arm or a leg. It would take generations for the South to recover from the environmental destruction wrought by the war. Croplands lay in ruins. Two-fifths of the South's livestock had been destroyed.

Many historians have called the Civil War the first truly modern war. It was the first war to reflect the technology of the Industrial Revolution: railroads, the telegraph, armored ships, more accurate and destructive weaponry. It also introduced total war—war between whole societies, not just uniformed armies.

As devastating as it was, the Civil War left many issues unsettled. The old society of the South had been destroyed, but the memory of it lingered. Thousands of white Southerners clung to a romantic picture of the prewar South. Decaying plantation houses became shrines. In the years to come, many in the South would try to re-create their vanished way of life. Secession and slavery were gone, but conflicts over states' rights and the status of African Americans would continue long into the future.

## Summary

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In this chapter, you read about the Civil War between the Union and the Confederacy.

**The North Versus the South** Both sides had strengths and weaknesses going into the war. The North had a larger population and more factories and railroads than the South, but it lacked strong military leadership. The South had serious economic and transportation problems, but it had better military leadership and the advantage of fighting a defensive war.

**Bull Run: An Awakening** The Battle of Bull Run in 1861 was a victory for the Confederacy and showed the Union that ending the war would not be easy. As the North and South built their armies, women supported their families and the military forces.

**Antietam: A Bloody Affair** Using a strategy called the Anaconda Plan, Union forces blockaded Southern ports and gained control of the Mississippi River. High death tolls at the Battle of Antietam reflected new methods of warfare that included improved weapons.

**Gettysburg: A Turning Point** The Battle of Gettysburg ended the South's last attempt to invade the North. From that point on, Confederate forces fought a defensive war in Southern territory.

**Vicksburg: A Besieged City** In 1863, Confederate forces continued to hold Vicksburg, a key location on the Mississippi River. Capturing Vicksburg would divide the Confederacy in two and allow the Union to control the Mississippi River. After weeks of bombardment, Vicksburg surrendered.

**Fort Wagner: African Americans and the War** African Americans were able to join Union military forces in 1862. They fought in nearly 500 battles. The most famous black regiment was the 54th Massachusetts Infantry, which fought in the Battle of Fort Wagner.

**Appomattox: Total War Brings an End** In April 1865, Union forces captured the Confederate capital of Richmond and surrounded General Lee's Confederate army. Lee surrendered at Appomattox Court House.

# The Reconstruction Era

## Overview and Objectives

### Overview

In a Visual Discovery activity, students analyze primary source images to evaluate how close African Americans came to full citizenship during Reconstruction.

### Objectives

In the course of reading this chapter and participating in the classroom activity, students will

#### *Social Studies*

- cite purposes and examples of black codes.
- identify the effects of the Freedmen's Bureau.
- examine the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments and their role in Reconstruction.
- trace the relationship between President Johnson and Congress.
- illustrate the effects of Reconstruction on African Americans' pursuit of full citizenship.
- identify the factors that caused African Americans to leave the South.

#### *Language Arts*

- create a metaphor.

### Social Studies Vocabulary

**Key Content Terms** Reconstruction, Thirteenth Amendment, Freedmen's Bureau, black codes, civil rights, Fourteenth Amendment, Fifteenth Amendment, Jim Crow laws

**Academic Vocabulary** resolve, so-called, tolerate

# Military Reconstruction Districts, 1870



## The Reconstruction Era

### To what extent did Reconstruction bring African Americans closer to full citizenship?

#### Section 1 - Introduction

Five days after the Civil War ended, President Lincoln was shot dead by an assassin.

By the end of the Civil War, Americans longed for peace. But what kind of peace? One that punished the South for its rebellion? A peace that helped rebuild the devastated region? A peace that helped the 4 million African Americans freed from slavery become full and equal citizens? In his second inaugural address, delivered in 1865, President Abraham Lincoln spoke of a healing peace:

With malice [hatred] toward none, with charity  
for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us  
to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work  
we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care  
for him who shall have borne the battle and for his  
widow and orphan, to do all which may achieve  
and cherish [hold dear] a just and lasting peace.

The nation would never know how Lincoln planned to achieve such a peace. On April 14, 1865, just five days after the war ended, the president was assassinated while attending a play at Ford's Theater in Washington, D.C. The assassin was an actor named John Wilkes Booth. Booth thought that killing Lincoln would somehow save the Confederacy.

After Lincoln's death, Vice President Andrew Johnson became president. The task of rebuilding the South and bringing the Southern states back into the Union would not be easy for Johnson's administration. For while the nation was united again, Americans remained deeply divided.

As you read this chapter, think about Lincoln's dream of "a just and lasting peace." Did the end of the war and the end of slavery lead to a peace based on liberty and justice for all? Did these events bring African Americans closer to the ideals of liberty and justice, including the rights of citizenship?

#### Section 2 - Presidential Reconstruction

As the Civil War ended, people in the United States had sharply different views about how to rebuild the Southern states and bring them back into the Union. This period of time came to be called Reconstruction. For President Andrew Johnson, a Southerner from Tennessee, Reconstruction had two major aims. First, Southern states had to create new governments that were loyal to the Union and that respected federal authority. Second, slavery had to be abolished once and for all.



These aims left many issues to be resolved. For example, who would control the new state governments in the South—former Confederates? Would freed slaves have the same rights as other citizens? And what would the relationship be between freed slaves and former slave owners?

Many Republicans in Congress believed that strong measures would be needed to settle these issues. To them, Reconstruction meant nothing less than a complete remaking of the South based on equal rights and a free-labor economy. The stage was set for a battle over the control—and even the meaning—of Reconstruction.

**President Johnson's Reconstruction Plan** In May 1865, President Johnson announced his Reconstruction plan. A former Confederate state could rejoin the Union once it had written a new state constitution, elected a new state government, repealed its act of secession, and canceled its war debts. There was a final requirement as well. Every Southern state had to ratify the Thirteenth Amendment, which abolished slavery throughout the United States.

By the fall of 1865, every Southern state had met the president's requirements. The Thirteenth Amendment became part of the Constitution. Presidential Reconstruction had begun.

The Freedmen's Bureau built more than 1,000 schools for African Americans between 1865 and 1872.

The Freedmen's Bureau For former slaves, called freedmen, the freedom guaranteed by the Thirteenth Amendment brought problems as well as opportunities. Frederick Douglass described the freedman as "free from the individual master but a slave of society." Douglass wrote,

He had neither money, property, nor friends.

He was free from the old plantation, but he had nothing but

the dusty road under his feet . . . He was turned loose,

naked, hungry, and destitute [penniless] to the open sky.

To assist former slaves, Congress established the Freedmen's Bureau in March 1865. Over the next four years, the bureau provided food and medical care to both blacks and whites in the South. It helped freedmen arrange for wages and good working conditions. It also distributed some land in 40-acre plots to "loyal refugees and freedmen."

Some whites, however, attacked the bureau as an example of Northern interference in the South. Ultimately, the hope of many freedmen for "forty acres and a mule" died when Congress refused to take land away from Southern whites.

The most lasting benefit of the Freedmen's Bureau was in education. Thousands of former slaves, both young and old, flocked to free schools built by the bureau. Long after the bureau was gone, such institutions as Howard University in Washington, D.C., continued to provide educational opportunities for African Americans.

**Black Codes** As new state governments took power in the South, many Republicans in Congress were alarmed to see that they were headed by the same people who had led the South before the war—wealthy white planters. Once in office, these leaders began passing laws known as black codes to control their former slaves.

The black codes served three purposes. The first was to limit the rights of freedmen. Generally, former slaves received the rights to marry, to own property, to work for wages, and to sue in court. But they did not have other rights of citizenship. Blacks, for example, could not vote or serve on juries in the South.

The second purpose of the black codes was to help planters find workers to replace their slaves. The codes required freedmen to work. Those without jobs could be arrested and hired out to planters. The codes also limited freedmen to farming or jobs requiring few skills. African Americans could not enter most trades or start businesses.

The third purpose of the black codes was to keep freedmen at the bottom of the social order in the South. Most codes called for the segregation of blacks and whites in public places.

### Section 3 - Congressional Reconstruction

As 1865 came to a close, President Johnson announced that Reconstruction was over. The Southern states were ready to rejoin the Union.

A group of Republicans in Congress did not agree with Johnson. Known as the Radical Republicans, these lawmakers had an additional goal for Reconstruction. They believed that the South would not be completely rebuilt until freedmen were granted the full rights of citizenship.

Radical Republicans wanted the federal government to take a more active role in Reconstruction—a role that would involve tougher requirements for restoring Southern governments. In the House of Representatives, Thaddeus Stevens of Pennsylvania led the Radical Republicans. In the Senate, they were led by Charles Sumner of Massachusetts.

Early in 1866, Radical Republicans joined with more moderate lawmakers to enact two bills designed to help freedmen. The first extended the life of the Freedmen's Bureau. The second was the Civil Rights Act of 1866. It struck at the black codes by declaring freedmen to be full citizens with the same civil rights as whites. Johnson declared both bills unconstitutional and vetoed them. An angry Congress overrode his vetoes.

The Fourteenth Amendment To further protect the rights of African Americans, Congress approved the Fourteenth Amendment. This amendment granted citizenship to "all people born or naturalized in the United States." It also guaranteed all citizens "the equal protection of the laws." This meant that state governments could not treat some citizens as less equal than others.

President Johnson opposed the Fourteenth Amendment and called on voters to throw Republican lawmakers out of office. Instead, Republican candidates won a two-thirds majority in both houses of Congress in the 1866 election. From then on, Congress controlled Reconstruction.

**Military Reconstruction Act** Early in 1867, Congress passed the Military Reconstruction Act. Once again, it did so over Johnson's veto. This plan divided the South into five military districts, each governed by a general supported by federal troops. The state governments set up under Johnson's Reconstruction plan were declared illegal. New governments were to be formed by Southerners loyal to the United States—both black and white. Southerners who had supported the Confederacy were denied the right to vote.

Congress also passed two acts designed to reduce Johnson's power to interfere with congressional Reconstruction. The Command of the Army Act limited his power over the army. The Tenure of Office Act barred him from firing certain federal officials without the Senate's consent. President Johnson blasted both laws as unconstitutional. Then, to prove his point, he fired one of the officials protected under the Tenure of Office Act.

**President Johnson Is Impeached** The House of Representatives responded to Johnson's challenge by voting to impeach the president. Besides violating the Tenure of Office Act, the House charged, Johnson had brought "the high office of the President of the United States into contempt, ridicule, and disgrace, to the scandal of all good citizens."

During his trial in the Senate, the president's lawyers argued that Johnson's only "crime" had been to oppose Congress. If he were removed from office for that reason, they warned, "no future President will be safe who happens to differ with a majority of the House and Senate."

Two-thirds of the Senate had to find the president guilty to remove him from office. Despite heavy pressure to convict him, 7 Republicans and 12 Democrats voted "not guilty." Johnson escaped removal from office by one vote, but he had lost his power.

**Sharecropping** While Congress and the president battled over Reconstruction, African Americans in the South worked to build new lives. Most former slaves desperately wanted land to farm but had no money to buy it. Meanwhile, former slave owners needed workers to farm their land but had no money to pay them. Out of the needs of both groups came a farming system called sharecropping.

Planters who turned to sharecropping divided their land into small plots. They rented these plots to individual tenant farmers—farmers who paid rent for the land they worked. A few tenants paid the rent for their plots in cash. But most paid their rent by giving the landowner a portion of what they raised. This payment of crops was called a share. Usually it was about a third or a half of the tenant's crop.

Sharecropping looked promising to freedmen at first. They liked being independent farmers who worked for themselves. In time, they hoped to earn enough money to buy a farm of their own.

However, most sharecroppers had to borrow money from planters to buy the food, seeds, tools, and supplies they needed to survive until harvest. Few ever earned enough from their crops to pay back what they owed. Rather than leading to independence, share-cropping usually led to a life-time of poverty and debt.

## Section 4 - Southern Reconstruction

Under the terms of the Military Reconstruction Act, the U.S. Army returned to the South in 1867. The first thing it did was begin to register voters. Because Congress had banned former Confederates from voting, the right to vote in the South was limited to three groups: freedmen, white Southerners who had opposed the war, and Northerners who had moved south after the war.

The South's New Voters African Americans made up the South's largest group of new voters. Most black voters joined the Republican Party—the party of Lincoln and emancipation.

White Southerners who had not supported secession were the next largest group. Many were poor farmers who had never voted before. In their eyes, the Democratic Party was the party of wealthy planters and secession. As a result, they also supported the Republican Party. Southern Democrats were appalled. They saw any white man who voted Republican as a traitor to the South. Democrats scorned such people as scalawags, or worthless scoundrels.

The last group of new voters were Northerners who had moved south after the war. Southerners called these newcomers “carpetbaggers” after a type of handbag used by many travelers. They saw carpetbaggers as fortune hunters who had come south to “fatten” themselves on Southerners' misfortunes.

The Election of 1868 New voters in the South cast their first ballots in the 1868 presidential election. The Republican candidate was former Union general Ulysses S. Grant. Grant supported Reconstruction and promised to protect the rights of African Americans in the South. His Democratic opponent, Horatio Seymour, promised to end Reconstruction and return the South to its traditional leaders— white Democrats.

Seymour won a majority of white votes. Grant, however, was elected with the help of half a million black votes. The election's lesson to Republicans was that if they wanted to keep control of the White House and Congress, they needed the support of African American voters.

The Fifteenth Amendment In 1869, at President Grant's urging, Congress passed the Fifteenth Amendment. This amendment said that a citizen's right to vote “shall not be denied . . . on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.” It guaranteed every male citizen the right to vote, regardless of race.

With the passage of this amendment, most abolitionists felt their work was done. The American Anti-Slavery Society declared the Fifteenth Amendment to be “the capstone and completion of our movement; the fulfillment of our pledge to the Negro race; since it secures to them equal political rights with the white race.”

New State Constitutions When the army finished registering voters, Southern Reconstruction got underway. Across the South, delegates were elected to constitutional conventions. About a fourth of those elected were African Americans.

The conventions met and wrote new constitutions for their states. These constitutions were the most progressive, or advanced, in the nation. They guaranteed the right to vote to every adult male, regardless of race. They ended imprisonment for debt. They also established the first public schools in the South. The Georgia constitution stated that these schools should be “forever free to all the children of the state.” However, under the new state constitutions, these schools were open only to whites.

New State Governments Elections were then held to fill state offices. To the dismay of Southern Democrats, a majority of those elected were Republicans. About a fifth were African Americans.

The South’s new state governments quickly ratified the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. By 1870, every Southern state had finished this final step of Reconstruction and rejoined the Union.

Next, Southern governments turned to the task of rebuilding. Work was begun on damaged roads, bridges, and railroads. Schools and hospitals were built. To pay for these projects, state legislatures raised taxes. Between 1860 and 1870, taxes in the South increased by up to 400 percent.

African Americans in Office About a fifth of the South’s new officeholders were African Americans. Blacks served in every Southern legislature and held high offices in three states. Twenty-two African Americans represented their states in Congress—20 in the House and 2 in the Senate. After watching these representatives, many of whom had been born slaves, Pennsylvania congressman James G. Blaine said,

The colored men who took their seats in both the Senate and House did not appear ignorant or helpless. They were as a rule studious, earnest, ambitious men, whose public conduct . . . would be honorable to any race.

#### Section 5 - The End of Reconstruction

Most whites in the South bitterly resented the Southern Reconstruction governments. They hated the fact that these governments had been “forced” on them by Yankees.

Many taxpayers also blamed their soaring tax bills on corruption—the misuse of public office for personal gain—by the South’s new leaders. While some Southern officeholders did line their pockets with public funds, most, whether black or white, were honest, capable leaders. Still, when taxes increased, opposition to the new state governments increased as well.

But what bothered many Southerners most about their Reconstruction governments was seeing former slaves voting and holding public office. Across the South, Democrats vowed to regain power and return their states to “white man’s rule.”

Violence Against African Americans At first, Democrats tried to win black voters away from the Republican Party. When that tactic failed, they attempted to use legal means to keep blacks from voting

or from taking office. In Georgia, for example, the legislature refused to seat elected black lawmakers until they were forced to by the state supreme court. When legal methods failed, whites turned to violence.

Throughout the South, whites formed secret societies to drive African Americans out of political life. The most infamous of these groups was the Ku Klux Klan. Dressed in long, hooded robes and armed with guns and swords, Klansmen did their work at night. They started by threatening black voters and officeholders. African Americans who did not heed their threats were beaten, tarred and feathered, and even murdered.

The Enforcement Acts In 1870 and 1871, Congress passed three laws to combat violence against African Americans. Known as the Enforcement Acts, these laws made it illegal to prevent another person from voting by bribery, force, or scare tactics.

President Grant sent troops into the South to enforce these acts. Hundreds of people were arrested for violence against blacks. Those who were brought to trial, however, were seldom convicted. Few witnesses and jurors wanted to risk the Klan's revenge by speaking out against one of its members.

The Amnesty Act of 1872 By this time, most Northerners were losing interest in Reconstruction and the plight of the freedmen. It was time, many people said, to "let the South alone."

One indication of this changing attitude was the passage of the Amnesty Act of 1872. Amnesty means forgiveness for past offenses. The Amnesty Act allowed most former Confederates to vote once again.

The effects of the Amnesty Act were seen almost immediately. By 1876, Democrats had regained control of all but three states in the South. Republicans clung to power in South Carolina, Louisiana, and Florida, but only with the help of federal troops.

The Disputed Election of 1876 In 1876, Americans went to the polls to choose a new president. The Democrats nominated New York governor Samuel J. Tilden as their candidate. Rutherford B. Hayes was the Republican nominee. When the votes were counted, Tilden won a majority of popular votes and 184 electoral votes, just one short of the 185 needed for election. Hayes received 165 electoral votes. Twenty electoral votes from four states were in dispute.

Congress, which was controlled by Republicans, appointed a commission to decide which candidate should get the disputed electoral votes. The commission awarded all 20 to Hayes, giving him exactly the 185 electoral votes he needed to win. The Democrats threatened to block the commission's decision. Inauguration day grew near with no new president in sight.

The Compromise of 1877 After weeks of negotiation, Democratic and Republican leaders in Congress agreed to a compromise. The Democrats accepted the electoral commission's decision, allowing Hayes to become president. In return, Hayes agreed to withdraw the remaining federal troops still occupying Southern states.

Once President Hayes withdrew all remaining federal troops from the South in 1877, Reconstruction was officially over. After that, Democrats quickly took control of the last Southern states. "This is a white man's country," boasted South Carolina senator Ben Tillman, "and white men must govern it."

Most white Southerners celebrated the end of Reconstruction. But for freedmen, the return of the South to "white man's rule" was a giant step backward. "The whole South—every state in the South," observed a Louisiana freedman, "has got into the hands of the very men that held us as slaves."

### Section 6 - Reconstruction Reversed

With Reconstruction over, Southern leaders talked of building a "New South" humming with mills, factories, and cities. Between 1880 and 1900, the number of textile mills in the South grew rapidly. Birmingham, Alabama, became a major iron-making center. Still, most Southerners, black and white, remained trapped in an "Old South" of poverty.

**Losing Ground in Education** During Reconstruction, freedmen had pinned their hopes for a better life on education provided by the South's first public schools. When Southern Democrats regained control of states, however, they cut spending on education. "Free schools are not a necessity," explained the governor of Virginia. Schools, he said, "are a luxury . . . to be paid for, like any other luxury, by the people who wish their benefits."

As public funding dried up, many schools closed. Those that stayed open often charged fees. By the 1880s, only about half of all black children in the South were attending school.

**Losing Voting Rights** Southern Democrats also reversed political gains made by freedmen after the war. Many Southern states passed laws requiring citizens who wanted to vote to pay a poll tax. The tax was set high enough that voting, like education, became a luxury that many black Southerners could not afford.

Some Southern states also required citizens to pass a literacy test to show they could read before allowing them to vote. These tests were designed so that any African American, regardless of his education, would fail.

In theory, these laws applied equally to blacks and whites and, for that reason, did not violate the Fifteenth Amendment. In practice, however, whites were excused from paying poll taxes or taking literacy tests by a so-called "grandfather clause" in the laws. This clause said the taxes and tests did not apply to any man whose father or grandfather could vote on January 1, 1867. Since no blacks could vote on that date, the grandfather clause applied only to whites.

African Americans protested that these laws denied them their constitutional right to vote. The Supreme Court, however, found that the new voting laws did not violate the Fifteenth Amendment because they did not deny anyone the right to vote on the basis of race.

**Drawing a "Color Line"** During Reconstruction, most Southern states had outlawed segregation in public places. When Democrats returned to power, they reversed these laws and drew a "color line" between



blacks and whites in public life. Whites called the new segregation acts Jim Crow laws. Jim Crow was a black character in an entertainer's act in the mid-1800s.

Not all white Southerners supported segregation. When a Jim Crow law was proposed in South Carolina, a Charleston News and Courier editorial tried to show how unjust it was by taking segregation to ridiculous extremes.

If there must be Jim Crow cars on railroads, there should be  
Jim Crow cars on the street railways. Also on all passenger boats  
. . . There should be Jim Crow waiting saloons [waiting rooms]  
at all stations, and Jim Crow eating houses . . . There should be  
Jim Crow sections of the jury box, and a separate Jim Crow . . .  
witness stand in every court—and a Jim Crow Bible for colored  
witnesses to kiss.

Instead of being a joke, as intended, most of these ridiculous suggestions soon became laws.

**Plessy v. Ferguson** African Americans argued that segregation laws violated the Fourteenth Amendment's guarantee of equal protection of the laws. Homer Plessy, who was arrested for refusing to obey a Jim Crow law, took his protest all the way to the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court decided his case, *Plessy v. Ferguson*, in 1896. The majority of the Supreme Court justices found that segregation laws did not violate the Fourteenth Amendment as long as the facilities available to both races were roughly equal. Justice John Marshall Harlan, a former slaveholder, disagreed. In his dissenting opinion, he wrote, "Our Constitution is color blind, and neither knows nor tolerates classes among citizens."

After the Supreme Court's decision in *Plessy*, states passed additional Jim Crow laws. Blacks and whites attended separate schools, played in separate parks, and sat in separate sections in theaters. Despite the Court's decision that these separate facilities must be equal, those set aside for African Americans were almost always inferior to facilities labeled "whites only."

### Section 7 - Responding to Segregation

**African** Americans responded to segregation in many ways. The boldest protested openly. Doing so, however, was dangerous. Blacks who spoke out risked being attacked by white mobs. Some were lynched, or murdered, often by hanging, for speaking out against "white rule." During the 1890s, an African American was lynched somewhere in the United States almost every day.

**African American Migration** Thousands of African Americans responded to segregation by leaving the South. A few chose to return to Africa. In 1878, some 200 Southern blacks chartered a ship and sailed to

Liberia, a nation in West Africa that had been founded in 1821 for the settlement of freed American slaves.

Many more African Americans migrated to other parts of the United States. Not only were they pushed from the South by racism and poverty, but they were pulled by the lure of better opportunities and more equal treatment. Some sought a new life as wage earners by migrating to cities in the North. There, they competed for jobs with recent immigrants from Europe and often faced racism, if not Southern-style segregation. Others headed to the West, where they found work as cowboys and Indian fighters. Two all-black U.S. Cavalry units known as the Buffalo Soldiers fought on the front lines of the Indian wars. Some blacks found new homes with American Indian nations.

Thousands of black families left the South for Kansas in the Exodus of 1879. The "exodusters," as the migrants were known, faced many hardships on their journey west. Bands of armed whites patrolled roads in Kansas in an effort to drive the migrants away. Still, the exodusters pushed on, saying, "We had rather suffer and be free."

Self-Help Most African Americans, however, remained in the South. They worked hard in their families, churches, and communities to improve their lives. While most blacks farmed for a living, a growing number started their own businesses. Between 1865 and 1903, the number of black-owned businesses in the South soared from about 2,000 to 25,000.

Families, churches, and communities also banded together to build schools and colleges for black children. Because of these efforts, literacy among African Americans rose rapidly. When slavery ended in 1865, only 5 percent of African Americans could read. By 1900, more than 50 percent could read and write.

### Summary

In this chapter, you learned about the period of Reconstruction in the South from 1865 to 1877.

**Presidential Reconstruction** Under President Johnson's Reconstruction plan, every Southern state rejoined the Union after it had written a new constitution, elected a new state government, cancelled its war debts, and ratified the Thirteenth Amendment, which abolished slavery.

**Congressional Reconstruction** Congressional Reconstruction began in 1866, when Republican leaders in Congress worked to give freedmen the full rights of citizenship. Congress passed, and the states ratified, the Fourteenth Amendment, which gave citizenship to all people born in the United States and equal protection of the law to all citizens.

**Southern Reconstruction** Under the Military Reconstruction Act, federal troops returned to the South in 1867 and began registering voters. New Southern voters helped former Union general Ulysses S. Grant become president. In 1869, Congress passed the Fifteenth Amendment, which protected the right of African American men to vote. Many blacks were elected to state government offices during this third phase of Reconstruction.

**The End of Reconstruction** Southern whites used legal means as well as violence to keep blacks from voting or taking office. Reconstruction officially ended in 1877, when President Rutherford B. Hayes withdrew all remaining federal troops from the South once he took office after the disputed election of 1876.

**Reconstruction Reversed** After Reconstruction, African Americans lost educational and political gains. Many Southern states closed schools that had been opened to freedmen. They also passed laws designed to keep blacks from voting. Jim Crow laws and the Supreme Court's decision in Plessy v. Ferguson legalized many forms of discrimination against blacks.

**Responding to Segregation** Many African Americans responded to segregation by leaving the South. Many migrated to other parts of the United States. Those who remained in the South worked hard to improve their lives.