

Chapter 21

Trigger Events of the Civil War- Overview

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

- What were the events that increased tensions between Northern and Southern states over slavery?
- What were ways enslaved people in the United States showed resistance to slavery?

Events:

1. The Missouri Compromise of 1820
2. Nat Turner's Rebellion in 1831
3. The Compromise of 1850
4. Wilmot Proviso and The Compromise of 1850
5. Fugitive Slave Act of 1850
6. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* - 1852
7. Kansas-Nebraska Act (1854)
8. Bleeding Kansas and The Beating of Senator Sumner(1854-1861)
9. *Dred Scott Case*- 1857
10. Lincoln and Douglas' Senatorial Debate- 1860
11. John Brown's Raid in 1859
12. Lincoln Wins the Presidential Election of 1860
13. The Battle of Fort Sumter- 1861

The Missouri Compromise of 1820

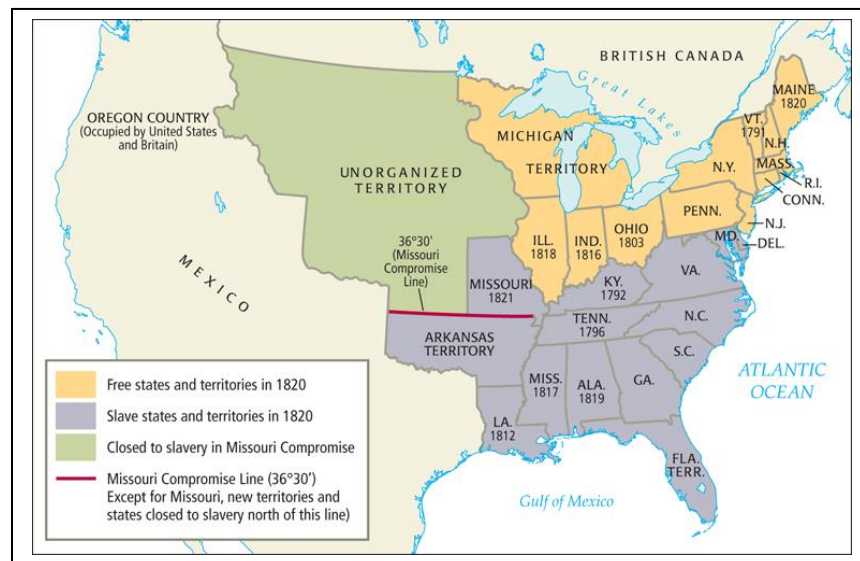
After the 1803 Louisiana Purchase, Congress wanted to establish a policy to guide the expansion of slavery into the new western territory. According to the Northwest Ordinance, new states banned slavery. So Ohio, Indiana and Illinois were Free states. When the states south of the Ohio River applied for statehood permitting slavery- Kentucky, Tennessee, Louisiana, Alabama and Mississippi, there were no issues. However, when Missouri applied for statehood as a slave state, it sparked a bitter national debate of the growth of slavery. Most of Missouri lay north of the Ohio River. If Missouri became a slave state, what would stop all future states in the Louisiana Territory to become slave states as well?

The Debate:

- Northerner's wanted to ban slavery in any new states.
- Southerner's wanted to add Missouri as a slave state ... which would give the pro-slavery groups a majority in Congress.
- Congress wanted to balance slave and free states- not giving any group more voting power.

In the end, Congress reached an agreement written by Henry Clay that became known as the Missouri Compromise of 1820:

- Missouri was admitted as a slave state
- Maine was admitted as a free state
 - This kept a balance in Congress (14 Free states to 14 Slave states)
- A line was drawn through the rest of the Louisiana Territory along the 36°30' parallel, dividing north as future free states banning slavery and the south as future slave states.



The Missouri Compromise kept the union together, for now.

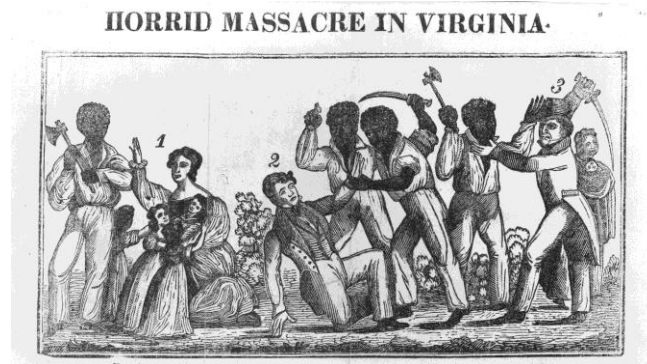
In the south, slaveholders deeply hated the ban on slavery and that future states in territories would later become Free states. In the North, congressmen who voted to have Missouri as a slave state were called traitors.

Nat Turner's Rebellion in 1831

In August of 1831, a slave named Nat Turner encouraged an **uprising** that spread through several plantations in southern Virginia. Turner and approximately 70 followers killed 57 white people. Armed militia crushed the slave rebellion after two days of terror.



55 slaves, including Turner, were tried in court and executed for their role in the rebellion. Nearly 200 more blacks were lynched (hung) by wild mobs, whether they were involved in the rebellions or not. Although smaller slave uprisings were fairly common in the South, Nat Turner's rebellion was the bloodiest.



Rebellion from Turner and others panicked white southerners.

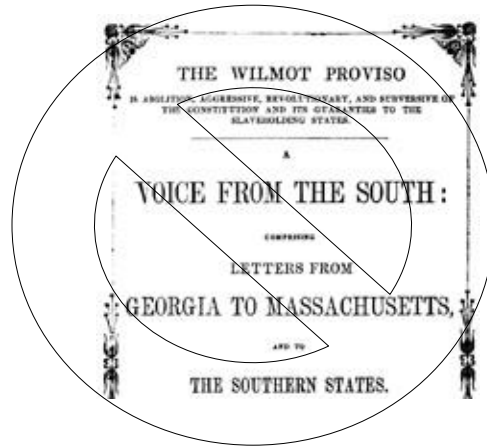
Virginia lawmakers reacted to the crisis by rolling back what few civil rights slaves and free black people had at the time. They passed strict **slave codes** that tightened owners' control of their slaves. Also, they allowed for harsher punishment of slaves by authorities. Education was prohibited and the right to assemble was extremely limited.

In the North, **abolitionists** continued to educate others on slavery by writing anti-slavery literature in books, articles in newspapers and held public meetings. Abolitionists were active anti-slavery people.

Many Southerners tried to keep anti-slavery press out of the South. In Mississippi, they offered rewards of \$5000 for the arrest of any person who circulated abolitionist ideas.

The Compromise of 1850

The Wilmot Proviso was a proposed bill that wanted to outlaw slavery in Mexican Cession territory that the United States acquired from the Mexican American War. This included most of the Southwest all the way to California. David Wilmot spent two years fighting for his plan to be accepted but it failed at each attempt.



Since Wilmot Proviso failed, Senators Henry Clay and Daniel Webster out together a more practical bill that both sides could agree on, for now... the Compromise of 1850.

The Compromise of 1850 stated:

- **California** would be admitted as a Free State. The Northerners liked that law.
- **New Mexico and Utah territories** were open to decide if they would allow slavery by public vote, which pleased the South.
- Plus it added that **Washington DC** would no longer allow slaves to be sold in the national capital but allowed its citizens to keep their slaves.
- Finally, it called for stronger **Fugitive Slave Laws**.

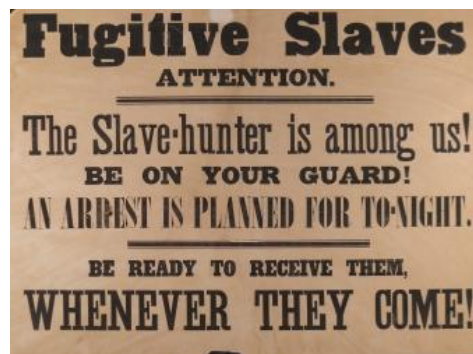


Fugitive Slave Act of 1850

The Compromise of 1850 tried to settle the dispute over slavery but it did not since it strengthened the Fugitive Slave Act. A **fugitive** is a criminal that escaped from the law but in this case it referred to run-away slaves from the south.

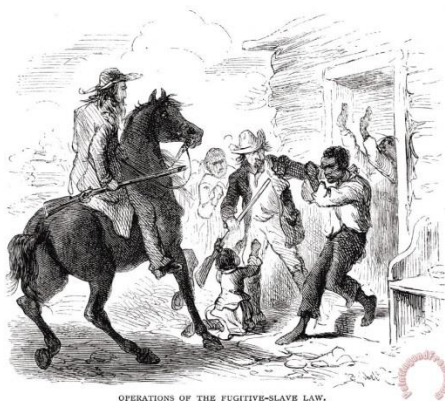
The new **Fugitive Slave Act**, forced non-slaveholders to participate in the slave system.

- The Fugitive Slave Act was a law that required Northerners to seize and return escaped slaves to the south.
- It also stated that any person who helped slaves escape, or even refused to aid slave catchers, could be jailed.



Northerners did not want to enforce the act because they felt they were being forced to participate in the institution of slavery. Many refused to obey the Act. When bounty hunters came to the North, they were called out and insulted in the streets of New England.

Southerners were dissatisfied with the Fugitive Slave Act as well because from the tens of thousands of runaway slaves living in the North, only 299 were captured and returned to the South. Additionally, many runaways fled all the way to Canada where the Fugitive Slave Act could not be enforced.

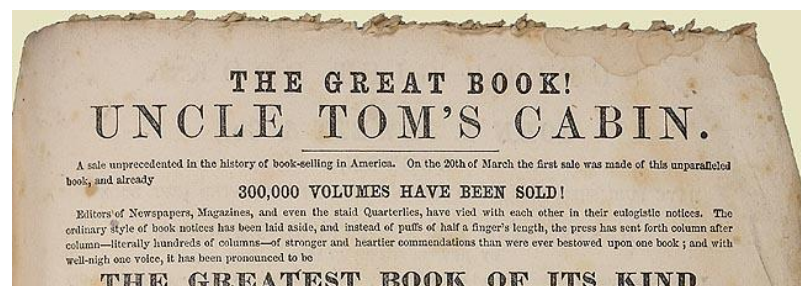
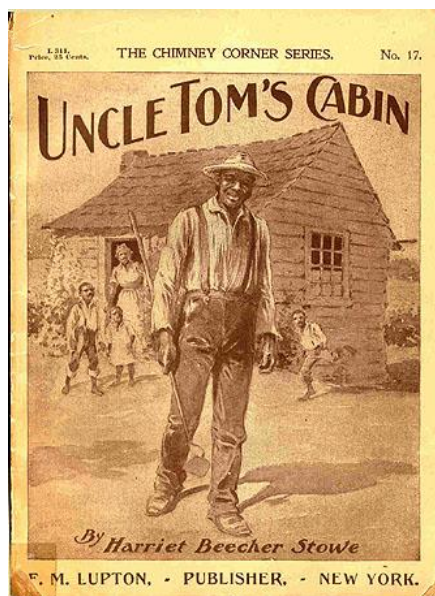


Uncle Tom's Cabin - 1852

Harriet Beecher Stowe's **fictional novel** of slave life was a cultural sensation. **Uncle Tom's Cabin** was the second-best-selling book in America in the 19th century. Its popularity brought the issue of slavery to life for those few who remained unaffected after decades of legislative conflict and widened the division between North and South.

In the story, a sweet mild mannered slave named Uncle Tom was beat by his school master. In a furious rage, the master had the old slave whipped to death. Another character, Eliza, was a slave who 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 icy Ohio River, clutching her child in her arms. The novel was turned into a play which toured the country, thrilling the audience with the dramatic escape to freedom. No other work had ever caused such powerful emotions about slavery.

Millions of Northerners felt as if their eyes had been opened to the horrors of slavery, while Southerners protested and cursed Stowe's work that it was insulting to the South.

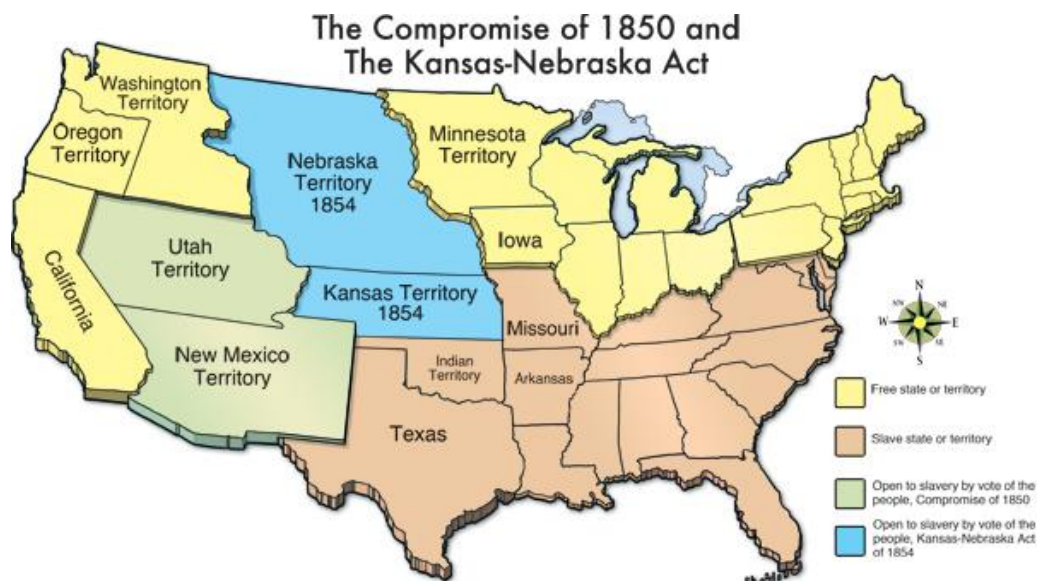


Kansas-Nebraska Act (1854)

The Missouri Compromise of 1820 stated that all new states formed in the Louisiana Territory north of the 36°30' parallel line had to ban slavery. The compromise failed due to many disagreements on an act that was passed 30 years prior. The failing Missouri Compromise had reopened the national debate over slavery in the western territories.

Senator Douglas introduced a bill that divided the land west of Missouri into two territories- Kansas and Nebraska. He argued that the people of these territories should decide on the slavery issue through popular vote. This will allow sovereignty for the settlers of the new territories to decide if slavery would be legal there. He named it the Kansas-Nebraska Act.

After months of debate, the Kansas-Nebraska Act passed and allowed its people to vote on the slavery issue. Anti-slavery supporters were outraged because it changed the original terms of the Missouri Compromise of 1820, which outlawed slavery in both territories. Southerners rejoiced in the possibilities of having both Kansas and Nebraska become slave states by the vote of the people.



Bleeding Kansas (1854-1861)



Most settlers in Kansas were peaceful farmers looking for good farm land. However, there were many pro-slavery and anti-slavery settlers that poured into Kansas to protect their self-interests by voting in their favor on the issue of slavery. Southerners collected money to send pro-slavery settlers to move to Kansas and start farms. In the north, abolitionists also raised money to send settlers and weapons to anti-slavery settlers. The struggle over slavery soon turned violent:

- Proslavery settlers from Missouri raided and attacked the city of Lawrence, Kansas- the headquarters of the antislavery movement.
- The homes of anti-slavery leaders were burned and looted by pro-slavery settlers. They also destroyed two printing presses of abolitionist newspapers.
- Afterwards, an abolitionist named John Brown plotted his own revenge. He and his followers invaded a proslavery town- Pottawatomie, Kansas. They dragged five men suspected of being pro-slavery from their homes and hacked them to death with swords.
- The two groups struggled for five years with random outbreaks of bloodshed that claimed a total of 56 lives.

The Beating of Senator Sumner



Violence even found itself in Congress. Senator Charles Sumner protested the violence in Kansas in a speech criticizing proslavery leaders. South Carolina Representative Preston Brooks attacked Charles Sumner on the Senate floor in retaliation for his speech. He beat Sumner into unconsciousness with a cane. It took Sumner over three years to recover. Southerners applauded the attack while Northerners were outraged.

The split between the North and South made the idea of a compromise seem virtually impossible. The Kansas-Nebraska Act and the violence that followed moved the United States even closer to the Civil War.

Dred Scott Case- 1857

In 1857, the slavery debate moved from Congress to the Supreme Court. The nine justices had to decide on a case that involved a slave from Missouri named Dred Scott. He traveled with his slave owner to Wisconsin, where slavery was banned according to the Missouri Compromise of 1820. When Scott returned to Missouri, he filed his case arguing that his stay in Wisconsin made him a free man. Five justices from the South and four justices from the North had to decide if Dred Scott would win his freedom. They had two issues to answer:

- As a slave, was Dred Scott a citizen who had the right to bring a case before federal court?
- Did his time in Wisconsin make him a free man?

Dred Scott's case failed, by a vote of 5 to 4. The court had decided that Scott could not sue for his freedom in federal court because he was not a citizen. The chief justice read the review... "No African, whether slave or free, was an American citizen - or could ever become one."

Second, Scott's argument that his stay in Wisconsin made him a free man was rejected because the Missouri Compromise was unconstitutional since it was replaced by the Kansas-Nebraska Act. In addition, slaves were property under the Fifth Amendment, and property cannot be taken from people without due process of law. Congress has a constitutional responsibility to protect the property rights of slaveholders in a territory."

- For the Southerners, the Dred Scott decision delighted slaveholders. They hoped that the issue of slavery and territories had been settled and in their favor.
- Many Northerners, however, were enraged by the courts ruling. The New York tribune called the decision a "wicked and false judgment."
- As a result of the Dred Scott decision, slavery was opened in all the territories.

with no rights which the white man is bound to respect." - Chief Justice Taney March 7, 1857

HIGH COURT RULES

SCOTT STILL A SLAVE!!

SUPREME COURT SAYS NO NEGRO A CITIZEN; ANGRY CROWDS PROTEST DECISION

WASHINGTON, March 6, 1857—Dred Scott is still a slave. In a decision that crushed Scott's hopes for freedom, the Supreme Court today threw out his case and ruled that no Negro, enslaved or free, is a citizen of the United States. Speaking for the Court's majority, Chief Justice Taney declared "the people of the Negro race are not included, and were not intended to be included, under the word 'citizens' in the Constitution, and can therefore claim none of the rights and privileges which that instrument provides and secures to citizens of the United States."



In its sweeping decision, the Court struck down as unconstitutional the Missouri Compromise, which included slavery in territories south of Missouri. Scott had maintained that under the terms of the Compromise he was automatically freed once his master brought him to the free state of the Louisiana Territory.

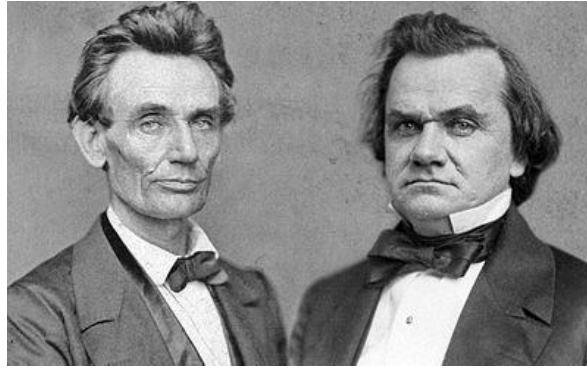
According to the Court, however, Congress had an right

Court Decision in Brief

1. All Negroes are denied citizenship.
2. Congress does not have power to prohibit slavery in Federal territory. (This ruling opens all northern territories to slavery.)
3. The Missouri Compromise of 1820 is unconstitutional.
4. The Ordinance of 1787

1857—Dred Scott attempted to buy his freedom before bringing suit. (See page 2 col. 3)

Lincoln and Douglas' Senatorial Debate- 1860



U.S. Senate Debates

The **Republican Party** was 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 citizens... Must be protected."

Republicans nominated Abraham Lincoln to run for Senator of Illinois. In his speech he warned, "**A house divided against itself cannot stand. 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.**"

Stephen Douglas ran against Lincoln and argued- **that the nation can stay half free and half slave**. Lincoln lost the U.S. Senate election for Illinois but his debates and speeches were reported nationally. The debates helped make Lincoln become a national figure for the Republican Party. Compromises over slavery were separating the people of the nation.

"A house divided against itself cannot stand. 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.**

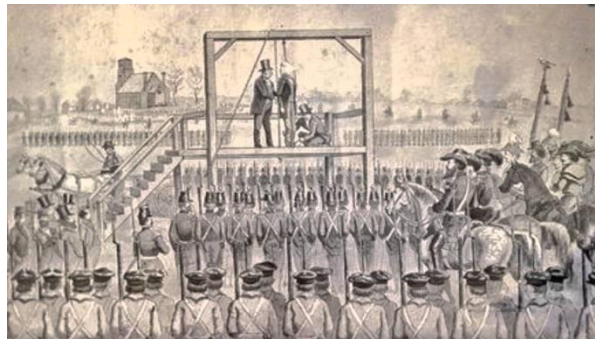
Abraham Lincoln, "A House Divided", 1858

John Brown's Raid in 1859

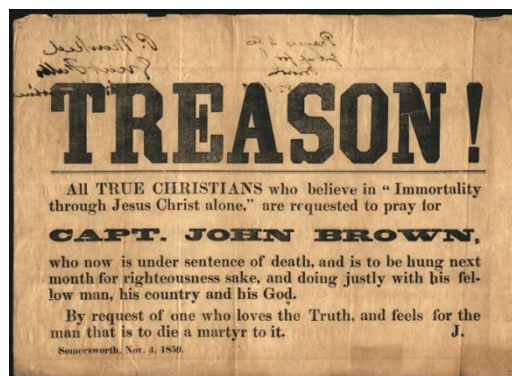


While Lincoln fought to stop the spread of slavery through politics, an abolitionist (a-bo-lish-a-nist) named John Brown was taking a more extreme approach. Brown planned to seize the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia. An **arsenal** is a place where weapons and ammunition are stored. Brown 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 attempt. All of Brown's men were killed or captured during the raid. 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." Brown was charged with treason, convicted and then executed by hanging.



Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry and his execution further divided the North and South, and made a resolution of the slavery issue much more difficult to achieve. His 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 left many white Southerners uneasy.



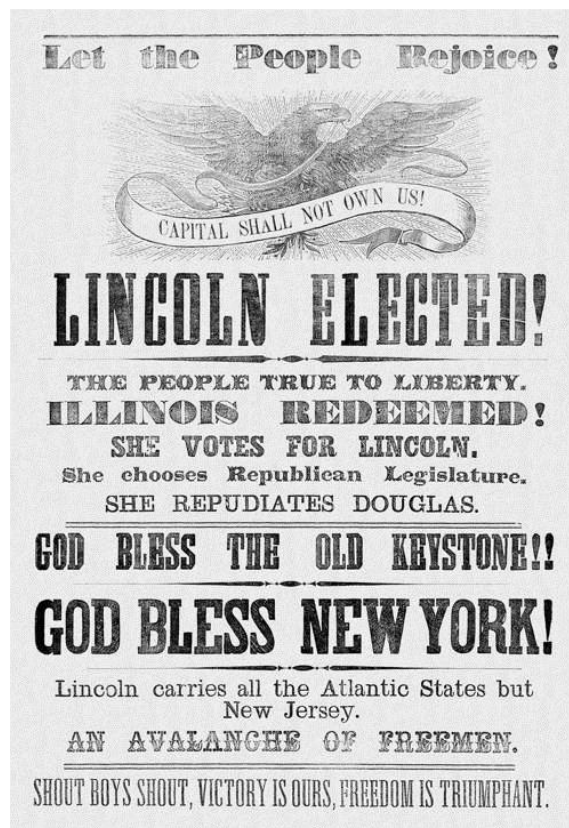
Lincoln Wins the Presidential Election of 1860

In the **Presidential Election of 1860**, Republicans were united behind Lincoln and Democrats were supporting Stephen Douglas or third-party candidate named John Breckenridge. With votes divided three ways, **Lincoln was victorious but by a slim margin of 40%**. In ten Southern states, Lincoln's name was not on ballot tickets.

For white Southerners, the election of 1860 showed that they were a minority and they feared that Congress will try to abolish slavery. A newspaper in South Carolina wrote, with slavery abolished, it would mean "the loss of liberty, property, home, country- everything that makes life worth living."

Senators tried to rush a new compromise to keep the Union together. A reporter asked Lincoln if he would support the compromise. **Lincoln was clear in his answer** and stated he would not interfere with slavery in the South and he would enforce the Fugitive Slave Act. However, he would not allow new slave states to be created in the territories. He declared, "Let there be no compromise."

On December 20, 1860- delegates from South Carolina met and decided on the same day to leave the Union. South Carolina was the first to **secede** (to separate). Six more states followed by February of 1861 to join together as a new nation named the **Confederate States of America**.



The Battle of Fort Sumter- 1861

Lincoln became president of the not-so-united United States. Lincoln stated his belief that this **secession** (separation) was both wrong and unconstitutional. He then pleaded to the rebellious states to return in peace. "In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war."

A month later on April 12, 1861, **Confederate troops fired on Fort Sumter**, a U.S. federal fort in Charleston, South Carolina. After 33 hours of heavy bombing, US soldiers took down the American flag and replaced it with a white flag of surrender.

Fort Sumter was a loss for the North and a win for the South. The news that Confederates had fired on American post, unleashed a wave of patriotic anger in the North. Many said that the time for compromise was over and the issues that have divided the nation for so many years will now be decided by war.

This marked the beginning of the Civil War.

