

# Civil War

## Was the Civil War caused by states' rights or slavery?

Slavery was the most divisive issue the United States has ever faced and it led to a bitter Civil War. The early political conflicts were not about slavery in the south but its extension as new states joined the Union. The Missouri Compromise of 1820 established an east-west line along the southern border of Missouri that its supporters hoped would forever divide free and slave settlement. States to the south could allow slavery; states to the north (with the exception of slave state Missouri) could not.

### Iowa: A Free but Complicit State to Slavery

Settlers knew that Iowa would be a free state. Most Iowans of the time were willing to let slavery exist in the south. Like most white Americans of the time period, they believed in the superiority of the white race and opposed granting equal rights or opportunities to African Americans. They passed laws attempting to discourage blacks from coming to the state. On the national level, they wanted most of all to find compromises that would keep the Union together. Iowa did have a small population of abolitionists who wanted to abolish slavery everywhere as a moral evil.

In 1854, Congress passed the Kansas-Nebraska Act that allowed the settlers in any new territory to decide the slavery issue there for themselves. This opened the possibility that Nebraska on Iowa's western border could become a slave state. Most Iowans opposed that prospect. The Republican party emerged strongly opposed to any further extension of slavery into western territories.

### The Election of Abraham Lincoln and the Dawn of the Civil War

In 1860, Republican candidate Abraham Lincoln was elected president. Several southern states seceded (withdrew) from the Union, formed the Confederate States of America, and took over federal forts and other buildings. In April, southern cannons opened fire on Ft. Sumter in the harbor of Charleston, South Carolina, and the Civil War began.

Lincoln called for 75,000 volunteers to enlist for three months to put down the rebellion. Iowa quickly exceeded its quota. The war did not end quickly, as most expected and hoped, but instead dragged on for four very bloody years. Iowa soldiers fought mainly in the western battles, including Shiloh and Vicksburg. Disease took a fearful toll on the troops. By the end of the war, 3,000 Iowa soldiers had been killed and around 8,000 had died from diseases.

### Women Take Charge of the Home Front

On the home front, women had to shoulder the workloads of husbands, brothers and sons who had left to fight. Their burdens were especially heavy on the farms. Women also organized to provide the troops with clothing, food and medical supplies. Annie Wittenmyer of Keokuk became a national leader in improving conditions for the sick and wounded in Union hospitals. General Grenville Dodge proved his skill as a railroad builder and created an efficient spy network.

The war had a huge impact on the political landscape. After Southern surrender in 1865, the state became strongly Republican. Democrats were tarred as the party of the south. A constitutional amendment in 1868 granted the right to vote to African-American men, though women could not vote until 1920. Memories of the war would be strong for the next half century. The Union was preserved.

## Supporting Questions

### North vs South: Who thought they were right?

- [“Cornerstone Speech” by Alexander Stephens in Savannah, Georgia, March 21, 1861](#)

### How was slavery and the extension of it reflected as a cause of conflict?

- [Petitions from Iowa Recorded in the U.S. Senate Journal, between 1850 and 1864](#)
- [“The Great Exhibition of 1860” Political Cartoon, 1860](#)
- [Alexander Hamilton Stephens’ Papers, January 10 to February 14, 1861](#)

### How did Southerners justify secession?

- [“The North the Aggressor - - The South on the Defensive” Newspaper Article, October 4, 1860](#)
- [“We Are Out of the Union” Newspaper Article, January 3, 1861](#)
- [Constitution of the Confederate States of America, 1861](#)
- [“The Dis-United States. Or the Southern Confederacy” Cartoon, 1861](#)

### What factors contributed to conflict between North and South?

- [“The Hurly-Burly Pot” Cartoon, 1850](#)
- [“The Hercules of the Union, Slaying the Great Dragon of Secession” Cartoon, 1861](#)
- [President Abraham Lincoln’s First Inaugural Address, March 4, 1861](#)

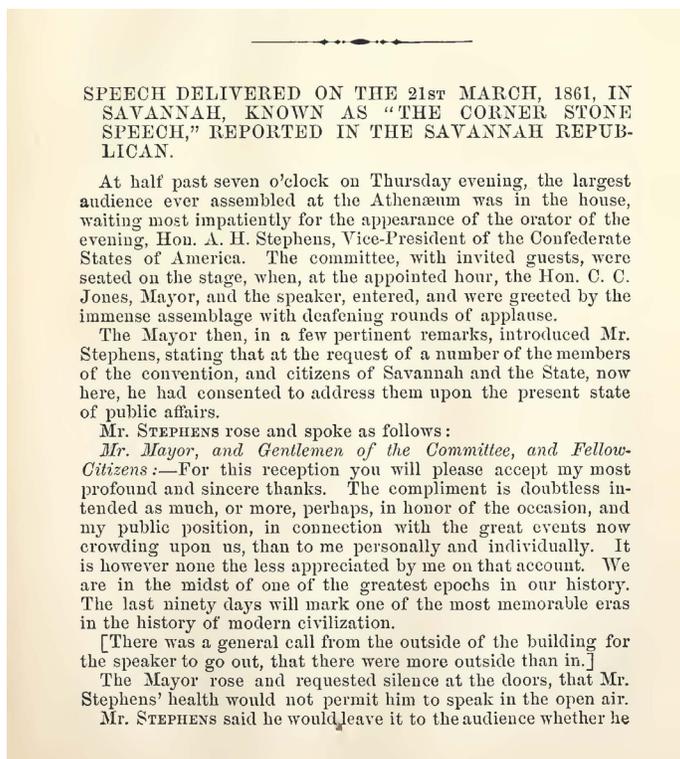
## \*Printable Image and Document Guide

## Additional Resources

**[An Anxious Christmas Eve](#):** A diary entry by Benjamin Tucker Tanner , who was a powerful church leader and later, a bishop in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Tanner’s entry rejoiced the approach of Christmas in 1860, but also expressed worry over the state of the country as the nation was on the brink of civil war. He described the decisive issue as slavery.

**[The Life of James W. Grimes](#):** The book contains primary source records of Grimes, who served as both a governor of Iowa and a U.S. senator. Notably, the book contains his address to the General Assembly when he became governor in 1854.

## “Cornerstone Speech” by Alexander Stephens in Savannah, Georgia, March 21, 1861



Courtesy of the Indiana State Library, Stephens, Alexander Hamilton, pp. 717-729, 21 March 1861

### Description

Alexander Hamilton Stephens, vice president of the Confederate States of America, gave this speech on March 21, 1861 to justify secession. Stephens' speech declared that disagreements over the enslavement of Africans was the "immediate cause" of secession.

### [Full Transcript of Alexander Hamilton Stephens' Speech](#)

### [Transcribed Excerpts from Alexander Hamilton Stephens' Speech](#)

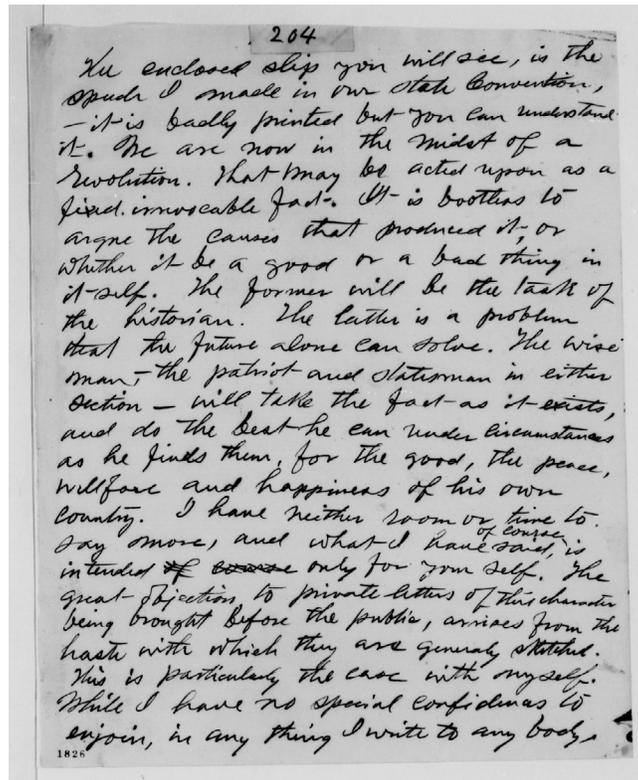
### Text-Dependent Questions

- Why does Alexander Hamilton Stephens think the Confederate constitution is better than the U.S. Constitution? Give specific examples.
- What role does slavery play in the new Confederate constitution? Cite specific examples from the text.

### Citation Information

Stephens, Alexander Hamilton, "Alexander H. Stephens, in public and private : with letters and speeches, before, during, and since the war by Henry Cleveland," pp. 717-729, 21 March 1861. [Courtesy of the Indiana State Library](#)

## Inaugural Address of Alexander Hamilton Stephens' Papers, January 10 to February 14, 1861



Courtesy of Library of Congress, Stephens, Alexander Hamilton, "Alexander Hamilton Stephens Papers: General Correspondence," pp. 183-184, 10 January to 14 February 1861

### Description

This letter was written by Alexander Hamilton Stephens, who was the vice president of the Confederate States of America. Stephens wrote the letter to Samuel R. Glenn on leaving it to the historians to explain the causes of the war. He wrote the letter on February 8, 1861.

### [Transcript of Alexander Hamilton Stephens' Papers](#)

### Text-Dependent Questions

- Alexander Stephens was the Vice-President of the Confederacy. In this letter, what does he say about the cause of the war?
- Why does Stephens leave the decision about the war's cause to historians? What evidence from the text supports your answer?

### Citation Information

Stephens, Alexander Hamilton, "Alexander Hamilton Stephens Papers: General Correspondence," pp. 183-184, 10 January to 14 February 1861. [Courtesy of Library of Congress](#)

## Petitions from Iowa Recorded in the U.S. Senate Journal, between 1850 and 1864

amendment of the Constitution of the United States, incorporating therein a provision prohibiting slavery in all the States and Territories; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. Grimes presented a petition of citizens of Clayton county, Iowa, praying the adoption of measures for the immediate abolition of slavery in the so-called border States; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. Harding asked, and by unanimous consent obtained, leave to bring in a bill (S. 23) granting lands to the State of Oregon to aid in the construction of a military road from Eugene City to the southern or eastern boundary of said State; which was read the first and second times, by unanimous consent, and referred to the Committee on Public Lands.

Mr. Harding asked, and by unanimous consent obtained, leave to bring in a bill (S. 24) granting lands to the State of Oregon to aid in the construction of a military road from the Dalles of Columbia river to a point at or near the mouth of Owyee river; which was read the first and second times, by unanimous consent, and referred to the Committee on Public Lands.

Mr. Harding asked, and by unanimous consent obtained, leave to bring in a bill (S. 25) to authorize the President to negotiate a treaty with the Klamath, Modoc, and other Indian tribes in southeastern Oregon; which was read the first and second times, by unanimous consent, and referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

Mr. Wilson, from the Committee on Military Affairs and the Militia, to whom was recommitted the bill (S. 7) to increase the bounty for volunteers and the pay of the army, reported it with amendments.

Mr. Wilson, from the Committee on Military Affairs and the Militia, to whom was referred the bill (S. 18) to amend an act entitled "An act for enrolling and calling out the national forces, and for other purposes," approved March 3, 1863, reported it with amendments.

Mr. McDougall was, on his motion, excused from further service as a member of the Committee on Private Land Claims.

On motion by Mr. Doollittle,

*Ordered*, That when the Senate adjourn, it be to Monday next.

The Senate proceeded to consider the resolution submitted by Mr. Sumner, the 17th instant, proposing an additional rule of the Senate requiring sena-

Courtesy of Library of Congress, Journal from the U.S. Senate, between 1850 and 1864

### Description

The Journal of the U.S. Senate of the United States is a record of all proceedings in the chamber. Throughout the decade leading up to the Civil War, members of Iowa's congressional delegation presented petitions from the state regarding slavery.

### [Full Transcript of Entries in the U.S. Senate Journal](#)

- [Transcribed Excerpt from U.S. Senate Journal from May 21, 1850](#)
- [Transcribed Excerpt from U.S. Senate Journal from June 8, 1850](#)
- [Transcribed Excerpt from U.S. Senate Journal from March 7, 1854](#)
- [Transcribed Excerpt from U.S. Senate Journal from January 17, 1862](#)
- [Transcribed Excerpt from U.S. Senate Journal from February 20, 1862](#)
- [Transcribed Excerpt from U.S. Senate Journal from December 18, 1863](#)
- [Transcribed Excerpt from U.S. Senate Journal from February 23, 1864](#)

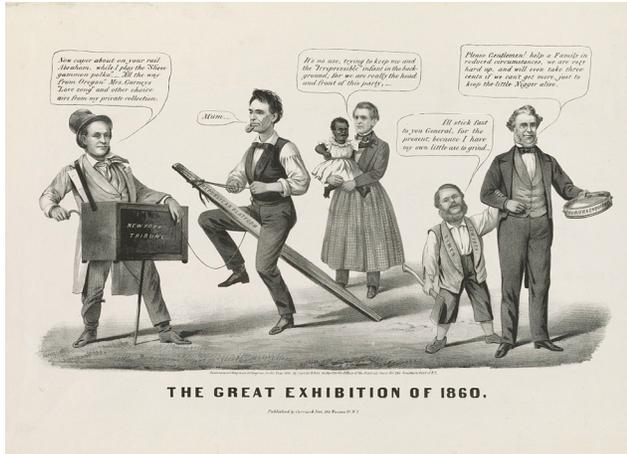
### Text-Dependent Question

- Using evidence from the text, describe how Iowa's interest regarding the issue of slavery changed and/or stayed the same from 1850-1864. How do the dates correspond to national events?

### Citation Information

Journal from the U.S. Senate, between 1850 and 1864. [Courtesy of Library of Congress](#)

## “The Great Exhibition of 1860” Political Cartoon, 1860



Courtesy of Library of Congress, Maurer, Louis, Currier & Ives, 1860

### Description

The artist satirizes the antislavery orientation of the Republican platform. Abolitionist editor Horace Greeley (left) grinds his New York “Tribune” organ as candidate Abraham Lincoln (center, riding on a wooden rail) prances to the music. Lincoln is tethered with a cord to Greeley’s index finger, and his lips are padlocked shut. Although the abolitionist bias of the party was well-known, Lincoln and the Republicans tried to de-emphasize the slavery issue during the 1860 campaign. Greeley says, “Now caper about on your rail Abraham, while I play the Slieve gammon polka. All the way from Oregon’ Mrs. Gurney’s Love song’ and other choice airs from my private collection.” Lincoln replies, “Mum.” In the background stands William H. Seward, holding a wailing black infant. He complains, “It’s no use trying to keep me and the ‘Irrepressible’ infant in the background; for we are really the head and front of this party.” (For the contextual significance of the term irrepressible see “The Irrepressible Conflict,” no. 1860-28.) At right stand two other New York editors friendly to the Republican cause, Henry J. Raymond of the “New York Times” (a short, bearded man holding an ax) and James Watson Webb of the New York “Courier and Enquirer.” Raymond clings to Webb’s arm, saying, “I’ll stick fast to you General, for the present; because I have my own little axe to grind.” (Raymond was Webb’s chief associate on the “Courier” staff until 1851, when he left to found a rival paper.) Webb holds out a tambourine and complains about the financial difficulties experienced by his newspaper: “Please Gentlemen! help a Family in reduced circumstances, we are very hard up, and will even take three cents if we can’t get more, just to keep the little Nigger alive.” The artist is poking fun at the measures Webb took in August 1860 to revive his newspaper’s flagging circulation, which included a reduction of the paper’s price to three cents and the hiring of newsboys to sell the “Courier” on the streets.

### [Transcript of Political Cartoon from the Election of 1860](#)

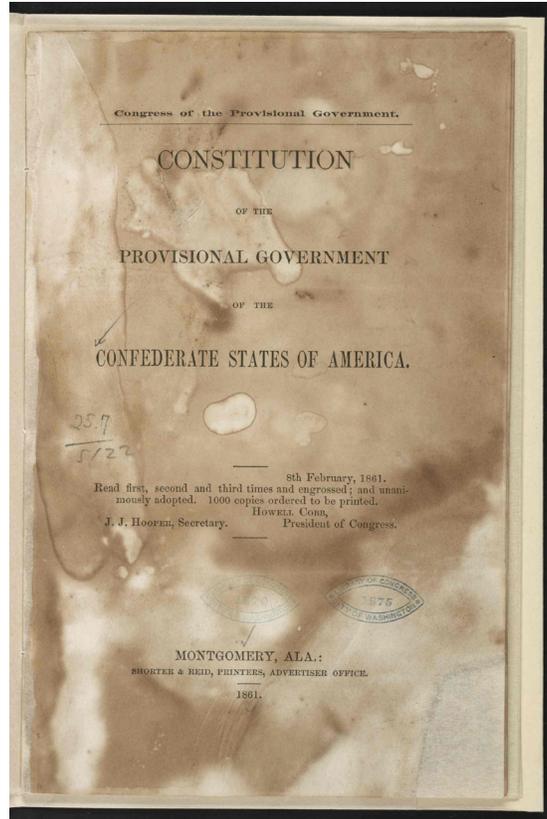
### Text-Dependent Questions

- In this cartoon, the man in the background says that “for we are really the head and front of this party.” What do you think “we” means in this case?
- In the cartoon, Abraham Lincoln, Republican candidate for president, and the Republican party platform are being led by newspaper editor Horace Greeley. What does this imply about who the artist believed was in charge of the Republican party?

### Citation Information

Maurer, Louis, “The Great Exhibition of 1860,” Currier & Ives, 1860. [Courtesy of Library of Congress](#)

## Constitution of the Confederate States of America, 1861



Courtesy of Library of Congress, Shorter & Reid, Montgomery, Alabama, 1861

### Description

The Constitution of the Confederate States of America was written when southern states seceded from the Union. It is, in large part, exactly the same as the U.S. Constitution, with notable exceptions, some of which are excerpted here. The predominantly center around the concept that there will be no law enacted to end slavery.

[Full Transcript of the Constitution of the Confederate States of America](#)

[Transcribed Excerpts from the Constitution of the Confederate States of America](#)

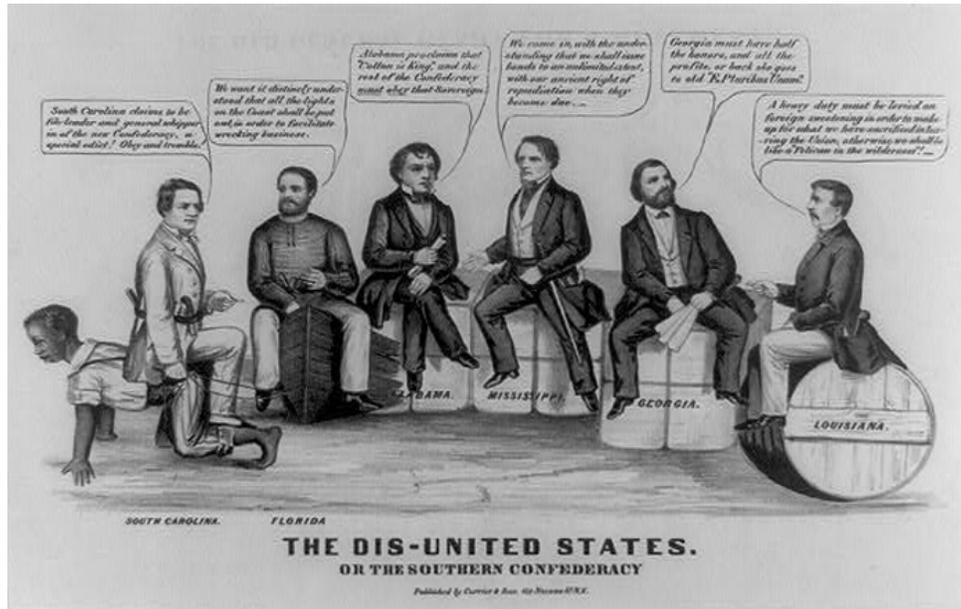
### Text-Dependent Questions

- According to the preamble of the Confederate States of America's (CSA) Constitution, what power will states in the Confederacy have? How does this differ from the preamble of the U.S. Constitution?
- What rights does the CSA Constitution give slave owners? Cite specific evidence from the text in your answers.

### Citation Information

"Constitution of the Confederate States of America," Shorter & Reid, Montgomery, Alabama, 1861. [Courtesy of Library of Congress](#)

## “The Dis-United States. Or the Southern Confederacy” Cartoon, 1861



Courtesy of Library of Congress, “The Dis-United States Or the Southern Confederacy,” Currier & Ives, New York, 1861

### Description

In this cartoon, the Confederate leaders are portrayed as a band of competing opportunists led by South Carolina governor and secessionist Francis Pickens (far left). The artist criticizes the January 1861 secession of five states from the lower south, following the lead of South Carolina, which had formally declared its independence a month before. Armed with a whip and a pistol, Pickens sits on the back of a young slave, pronouncing, “South Carolina claims to be file leader and general whipper in of the new Confederacy, a special edict! Obey and tremble!” The other leaders are also armed. Pickens’s tyranny is met by expressions of self-interest from the other confederates. The nature of these individual interests are conveyed pictorially and in the text. Although Texas, which seceded on February 1, 1861, is not represented here, the print probably appeared at the time of the Montgomery convention in early February when the Confederate States of America was formed, but before Jefferson Davis assumed its presidency. Texas did not attend that convention.

### [Transcript of “The Dis-United States. Or the Southern Confederacy” Cartoon](#)

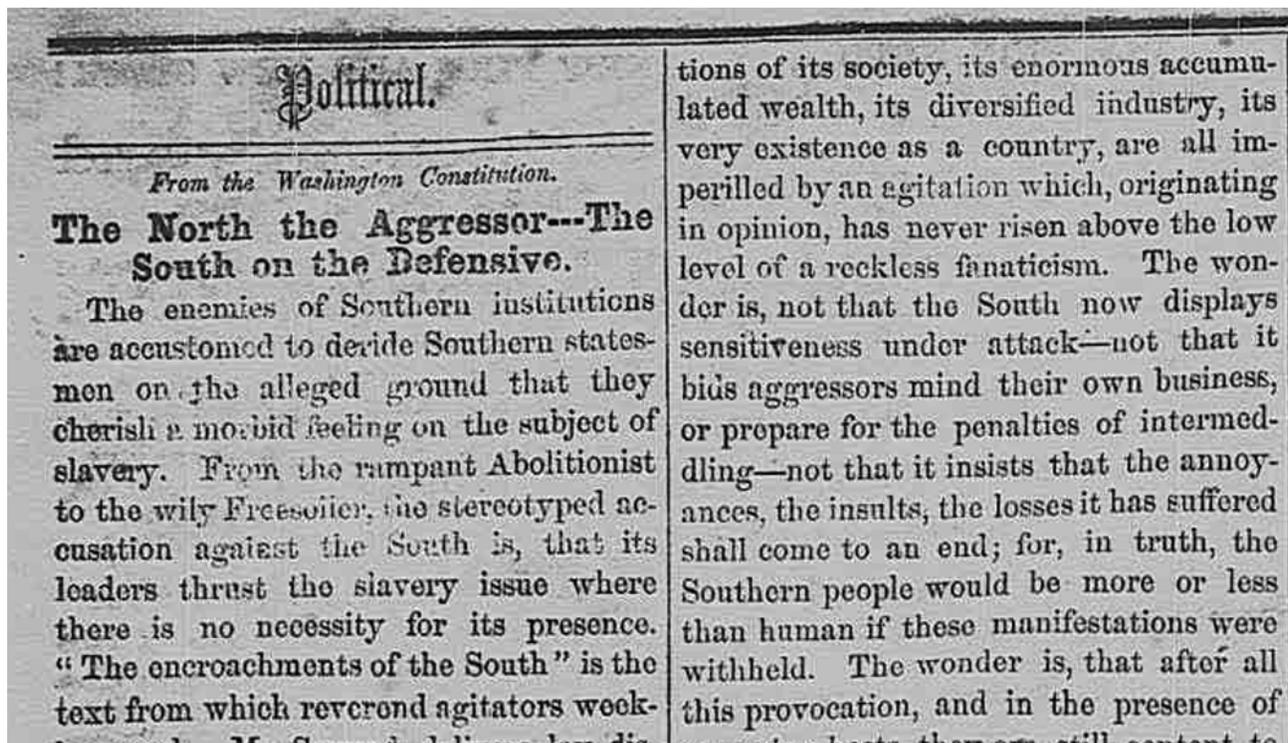
### Text-Dependent Questions

- According to the cartoon, what motivated the southern states to secede and become part of the Confederacy?
- Using evidence from the cartoon, how strongly do you think these states were committed to the Confederacy?

### Citation Information

“The Dis-United States Or the Southern Confederacy,” Currier & Ives, New York, 1861. [Courtesy of Library of Congress](#)

## “The North the Aggressor - - - The South on the Defensive” Newspaper Article, October 4, 1860



Courtesy of Library of Congress, “The North the Aggressor --- The South on the Defensive,” The Anderson Intelligencer, 4 October 1860

### Description

The newspaper article from the Anderson Intelligencer was published in South Carolina in October 1860. This was roughly a month before the presidential election and ultimately said that “the South will not submit to a diminution of its rights.”

[Full Transcript of the Newspaper Article, “The North the Aggressor --- The South on the Defensive”](#)

[Transcribed Excerpts from Newspaper Article, “The North the Aggressor --- The South on the Defensive”](#)

[Printable Image of “The North the Aggressor...” Article](#)

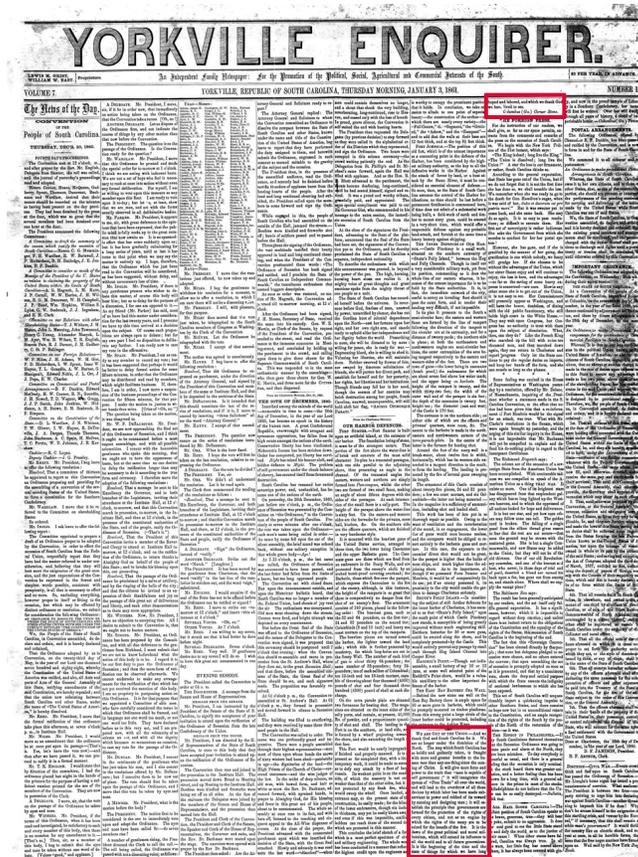
### Text-Dependent Questions

- Relating to the title of the article, does the author make a convincing argument that the north is the “aggressors” in the conflict? Justify your answer with evidence from the text.
- What does the author say the south wants? Use quotes from the text to support your answer.

### Citation Information

“The North the Aggressor --- The South on the Defensive,” The Anderson Intelligencer, 4 October 1860. [Courtesy of Library of Congress](#)

# “We Are Out of the Union” Newspaper Article, January 3, 1861



Courtesy of Library of Congress, “We Are Out of Union,” Yorkville Enquirer, 3 January 1861

## Description

This newspaper article appeared in Yorkville, South Carolina, in January, 1861 shortly after South Carolina seceded. The tone of the article is celebrating South Carolina’s secession as it was “no longer under the dominion of the North.” The author of the article describes the action by the state as gallant and bold.

## [Transcript of “We Are Out of the Union” Newspaper Article](#)

## [Printable Image of “We Are Out of the Union” Article](#)

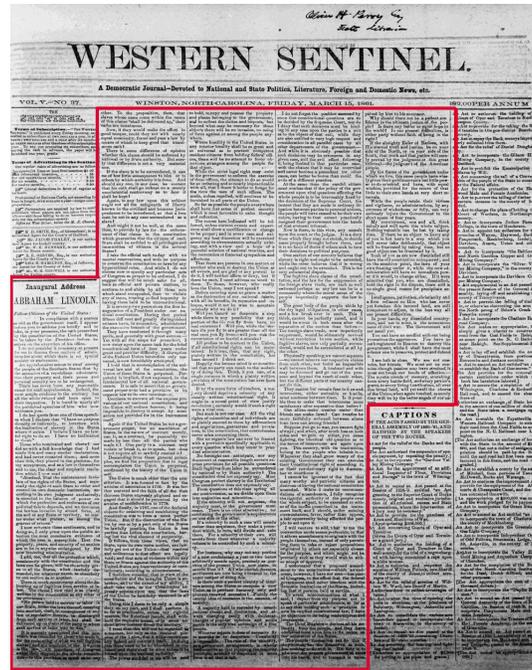
## Text-Dependent Questions

- How would you describe the emotional tone of this article? What words or phrases does the author use to show his feelings about secession?
- According to the author, will secession have positive or negative consequences? What evidence from the text supports your answer?

## Citation Information

“We Are Out of Union,” *Yorkville Enquirer*, 3 January 1861. [Courtesy of Library of Congress](#)

## President Abraham Lincoln's First Inaugural Address, March 4, 1861



Courtesy of Library of Congress, Western Sentinel, 15 March 1861

### Description

Abraham Lincoln, in his first inaugural address, focused on shoring up his support in the north without further alienating the south, where he was almost universally hated or feared. Delivered after Hannibal Hamlin was sworn in as vice president, the address avoided any mention of the Republican Party platform, which condemned all efforts to reopen the African slave trade and denied the authority of Congress or a territorial legislature to legalize slavery in the territories. The address also denied any plan on the part of the Lincoln administration to interfere with the institution of slavery in states where it existed. To Lincoln, the Union, which he saw as older even than the U.S. Constitution, was perpetual and unbroken, and made secession legally impossible.

[Full Transcript of President Abraham Lincoln's First Inaugural Address](#)

[Transcribed Excerpts from President Abraham Lincoln's First Inaugural Address](#)

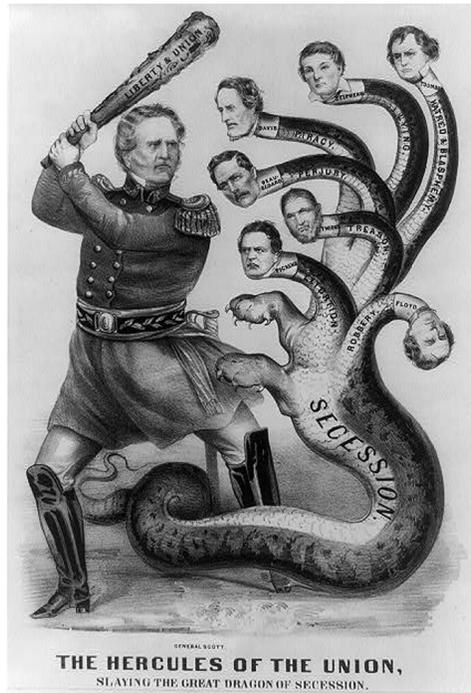
### Text-Dependent Questions

- According to President Abraham Lincoln, what is the cause of the conflict between the north and the south?
- What words or phrases does Lincoln use to indicate that he does not want the conflict to escalate?
- Read the last portion of the speech again starting at "We are not enemies, but friends." What feeling do you think Lincoln was trying to provoke in those who heard and read the speech?

### Citation Information

"Inaugural Address of Abraham Lincoln," Western Sentinel, 15 March 1861. [Courtesy of Library of Congress](#)

## “The Hercules of the Union, Slaying the Great Dragon of Secession” Cartoon, 1861



Courtesy of Library of Congress, “The Hercules of the Union, Slaying the Great Dragon of Secession,” Currier & Ives, New York, 1861

### Description

This cartoon from 1861 shows General Winfield Scott slaying a dragon called secession. The cartoon serves as a tribute to the commander of Union forces, Gen. Winfield Scott, shown as the mythical Hercules slaying the many-headed dragon or hydra, here symbolizing the secession of the Confederate states. At left stands Scott, wielding a great club “Liberty and Union,” about to strike the beast. The hydra has seven heads, each representing a prominent Southern leader. The neck of each southerner depicted is labeled with a vice or crime associated with him.

### [Transcript of “The Hercules of the Union, Slaying the Great Dragon of Secession” Cartoon](#)

### Text-Dependent Questions

- Each head of the hydra represents a southern leader and a crime associated with them. What do you think it means that no leader is accused of the crime of slavery?
- Justify this claim using evidence - the hydra is a creature with many heads. The artist used the hydra to show that secession had multiple causes, not just slavery.

### Citation Information

“The Hercules of the Union, Slaying the Great Dragon of Secession,” Currier & Ives, New York, 1861. [Courtesy of Library of Congress](#)

## “The Hurly-Burly Pot” Cartoon, 1850



Courtesy of Library of Congress, Baillie, James S., “The Hurly-Burly Pot,” 1850

### Description

This cartoon was created to attack abolitionist, Free Soil, and other sectional interests of 1850 as dangers to the Union. The artist, James Baillie, singles out for indictment radical abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison, Pennsylvania Free Soil advocate David Wilmot, New York journalist Horace Greeley and Southern states’ rights spokesman Senator John C. Calhoun.

### [Transcript of “The Hurly-Burly Pot” Cartoon](#)

### Text-Dependent Questions

- Analyze the cartoon and determine who the artist blames for the conflict in the country? Justify your answer.
- What does the artist imply about the motives of the movement each man represents? Use evidence from the cartoon.
- This cartoon was created in 1850. Using other documents and your own knowledge of events after 1850, do you believe the artist was accurate in where he lay the blame for the Civil War?

### Citation Information

Baillie, James S., “The Hurly-Burly Pot,” 1850. [Courtesy of Library of Congress](#)