Fitzgerald

The Secession of the Southern States

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From the 1840s to 1860, Southerners frequently threatened to withdraw from the Union as antislavery [sentiment](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/sentiment) in the North grew stronger. Compromises like the Missouri compromise and the Compromise of 1850 had attempted to keep the Southern states in the Union.

However, when the [Republican Party](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Republican-Party) formed with the goal of preventing slavery from spreading to the territories, it seemed like the ability to compromise was nearing an end. Southerners vowed that the election of a Republican president would make secession a certainty. The Democratic Party split in the Election of 1860 over the over the slavery-extension question, nominating a North candidate who supported popular sovereignty, and a Southern candidate, who insisted on the property rights of slave owners making slavery legal throughout the Union. With the Democrats split, Lincoln was able to win the presidency for the republicans.

On Dec. 20, 1860, a special convention called in South Carolina unanimously voted for secession. Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, and Louisiana followed in January. Texas did not secede until February 1, as Sam Houston, who had been the leader of Texas since its revolution and was the governor of Texas, was against it. Houston said,

Let me tell you what is coming. After the sacrifice of countless millions of treasure and hundreds of thousands of lives, you may win Southern independence if God be not against you, but I doubt it. I tell you that, while I believe with you in the doctrine of states' rights, the North is determined to preserve this Union. They are not a fiery, impulsive people as you are, for they live in colder climates. But when they begin to move in a given direction, they move with the steady momentum and perseverance of a mighty avalanche; and what I fear is, they will overwhelm the South.

the governor, who had ben the leader of Texasstill more than a month before Lincoln Houston was removed from office, and Texas seceded.

Lincoln did deny the right of secession but refused to remove troops from forts in the South. He waited a month after his inauguration before announcing that he would send provisions to soldiers at Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor. He had obviously chosen this fort to make a stand, as South Carolina had always led the South in talks of secession.

This was a brilliant move by Lincoln, as it forced the South to make the decision to start the war, as letting a fort full of Union soldiers inside their newly declared Confederacy be resupplied would be ridiculous. On April 12, 1861, Confederate guns opened fire on the fort, and the Civil War began.

This allowed Lincoln request that the states send troops to help "suppress the rebellion." Forced now to make a choice between the Union and the [Confederacy](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Confederate-States-of-America), the states of the upper South—Virginia, [North Carolina](https://www.britannica.com/place/North-Carolina-state), Arkansas, and Tennessee—voted to secede. Though these states had not wanted to secede from the Union, probably because their economy did not depend on growing cotton, they believed the states that had seceded had the right to do so.

On Blank Map - Color

* Red - States that secede after Lincoln was elected
* Light Red - State that secede after war began