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| Reading  | Notes - What We Know |
| 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](https://www.britannica.com/event/Compromise-of-1850) had attempted to keep Southern states in the Union.However when the [Republican Party](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Republican-Party) with the goal of preventing the expansion of slavery into the territories, it seemed like the ability to find compromise was nearing an end. Southerners vowed that the election of a Republican president in 1860 would make secession a certainty. When the Democratic Party split in two in the Election of 1860 over the slavery-extension question, [Lincoln](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Abraham-Lincoln) was able to win the majority of the popular vote in Northern states and be elected as the first Republican president.On Dec. 20, 1860, a special convention called in [South Carolina](https://www.britannica.com/place/South-Carolina) unanimously voted for secession. Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, and Louisiana followed in January, while Texas voted to secede on Feb. 1, 1861—still more than a month before Lincoln was actually inaugurated. The lame-duck president, [James Buchanan](https://www.britannica.com/biography/James-Buchanan-president-of-United-States) denied the right of secession but would not order the military to use force against the states that had seceded.Lincoln would not use force either. He waited a month after his inauguration before announcing that he would send provisions to Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor. On April 12, 1861, Confederate guns opened fire on the fort, and the Civil War began. This allowed Lincoln to request that the states send troops to help “suppress the rebellion.” Forced now to make a choice between the Union and the confederacy, the states of the upper South, Virginia, [North Carolina](https://www.britannica.com/place/North-Carolina-state), Arkansas, and Tennessee, voted to secede. Tough these states had not wanted to secede from the union, probably because their economies did not depend on growing cotton, they believed the states that had seceded had the right to do so. |  |