

Chapter 251 - A New Constitutional Union Party Holds Its Convention

Time: May 9, 1860

Many Senior Officials Fear The Loss Of The Union



John Bell (1796 – 1869)

One week after the Democrats recess in Charleston, the new Constitutional Union Party holds its first and only convention in Baltimore. The prime mover behind the event is Kentucky Senator, John J. Crittenden, and the venue is the Eastside District Courthouse. Roughly 250 delegates from 23 states show up for a tightly choreographed session completed in a single day.

What draws the attendees together is a shared fear that the Union of States is about to collapse over the controversies surrounding slavery in the territories. All present agree this must not happen.

Their antidotes lie in rallying emotional support among the public for the “grand old flag” and persuading their fellow politicians to abandon harsh rhetoric and embrace “forbearance, concession and conciliation.”

The leadership of the Constitutional Union Party includes many nationally recognized figures whose service includes the military, the nation’s leading universities, the clergy, as well as the legislative and judicial branches of government. Their home states run from Massachusetts to Texas, albeit concentrated in the upper south, from Virginia and North Carolina through Kentucky and Tennessee. Several are slave owners, but without insisting that the institution be expanded to the territories.

Many are former Whigs, whose political roots trace back to Henry Clay and Presidents Zachary Taylor and Millard Fillmore. After the demise of their party in 1852, some shift to the now defunct Know Nothing/American Party. None seem comfortable with the new Republican alternative, whose policies on slavery seem likely to provoke disunion. A few former Democrats are also in the mix, troubled by the growing divisiveness of its overtly Southern stances.

Another characteristic of this group is their advanced age. Many have been born before the turn of the century and several have fought in the War of 1812. Together they have a shared memory of the early days of the Union, when its very survival remained in doubt.

One man in particular has become the spokesman for the birth of the nation. He is Edward Everett, America’s leading lecturer at the time, who tours the country with a stirring, fully

memorized, speech about George Washington and the Revolutionary War era – delivered in the name of raising funds to acquire and preserve the Mt. Vernon estate.

In 1851, Everett publishes his compendium on Daniel Webster, including a famous line that captures the spirit of the movement he now joins:

I was born an American; I will live an American; I shall die an American!

Profiles Of Several Constitutional Union Party Leaders

	State	Age	Party History	History
John Bell	TN	64	Jacksonian then a Whig, American & Constitutional Union	House '27-41, Speaker '34, Sec of War '41, Senate '47-59, opposes KN Act, Comm on Territories, owns slaves but opposes expansion and secession, but finally goes with CSA.
John Minor Botts	Va	57	Whig, American, Constit. Union	Planter and slave owner, House '39-43 & '47-49, opposes extension of slavery & Kansas admission as slave state and Virginia secession, ferocious Unionist.
John Crittenden	Ky	72	Whig, American, Constit. Union	War of 1812, Senate '17-19, '35-48, US Atty General '41, opposes Texas annexation, Mexican War, Taylor campaign mgr & AG '50-53, opposes KN Act and Lecompton, Senate '55-61, fails to support Lincoln for Senate, defects runs for President, House '61-63, last will shows he was a slaveholder.
Edward Everett	Mass	64	Cotton Whig & Constit. Union	Harvard president and Unitarian minister, House '25-35, Mass Gov '36-40, Amb to UK '41-45, Sec of State '52-53, Senator '53-54, Committee on Territories, famous national lecturer.
William Graham	NC	55	Whig & Constit. Union	Planter family, owns slaves & supports practice, but fears for Union, Senate '40-43, NC Governor '45-49, Sec of Navy '50-52, Whig VP nominee in '52 to reassure South, opposes secession, but eventually a CSA Senator in war
Sam Houston	TN/TX	67	Democrat, Union, Constit. Union	War of 1812 (w), House '23-27, Tenn Governor '27-29, commands Texian army, win at San Jacinto,

				Republic of Texas President '36-38, '41-44, Senate '46-59, slave owner, but opposes KN Act & against expansion, Governor of Texas '59-61
John McLean	Ohio	75	Democrat, Anti-Mason, Whig, Free Soil & Republican	House '13-16, Postmaster General '23-29, Supreme Court Associate Justice '29-61, declines Tyler offer as Sec of War, anti-slavery, dissenter in <i>Prigg v Pa</i> (fugitive slave case) & <i>Dred Scott</i> .
William Rives	Va.	67	Democrat, Whig	Planter family, T Jefferson protégé, House '23-29, Minister to France '29-33, Senate '32-34, candidate for Dem VP but falls short, Senate '36-39, '41-45, switch to Whigs in '44, Minister to France '49-53, opposes secession but then goes with Va into CSA.

The Delegates Pass A Platform Designed To Alienate No One

Members of the Constitutional Union Party are well aware that they have no chance of winning enough popular votes in the 1860 presidential election to defeat the Democrat and Republican nominees.

Instead their strategy lies in denying both the Electoral College majority required to win outright, and thus throw the election back into the House. Once there, they foresee a prolonged stalemate ending with a compromise candidate in the form of their own nominee.

To preserve this middle ground position for their candidate, the delegates approve a two paragraph platform that avoids any fixed position on the issue of slavery in the territories – and instead promises loyalty to time honored principles of the Constitution and all measures to insure domestic tranquility and preserve the Union. Here it stands in its entirety:

Whereas, Experience has demonstrated that Platforms adopted by the partisan Conventions of the country have had the effect to mislead and deceive the people, and at the same time to widen the political divisions of the country, by the creation and encouragement of geographical and sectional parties; therefore

Resolved, that it is both the part of patriotism and of duty to recognize no political principle other than THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COUNTRY, THE UNION OF THE STATES, AND THE ENFORCEMENT OF THE LAWS, and that, as representatives of the Constitutional Union men of the country, in National Convention assembled, we hereby

pledge ourselves to maintain, protect, and defend, separately and unitedly, these great principles of public liberty and national safety, against all enemies, at home and abroad; believing that thereby peace may once more be restored to the country; the rights of the People and of the States re-established, and the Government again placed in that condition of justice, fraternity and equality, which, under the example and Constitution of our fathers, has solemnly bound every citizen of the United States to maintain a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.

Bell And Everett Chosen To Head The Ticket

The final task for the delegates lies in selecting their nominees for the top of their ticket.

Enthusiasm runs highest for John Crittenden, but, as in the past, he continues to opt out of a run for the presidency.

The next most popular choice is Edward Everett, but his Massachusetts' roots fail to correspond to the party's upper southern demographics.

Almost by default this leaves John Bell in the spotlight. His colleagues consider his manner to be aloof and formal, hardly the stuff of an inspirational leader. But he has steered a middle course in government, mustered enough personal support to have been chosen as Speaker of the House, held a cabinet post, and is a Southern slave owner who has avoided alienating those in the North.

On the first ballot, Bell and Sam Houston take the lead. By the second, however, almost all of the "favorite son" candidates have dropped out and their votes have gone to Bell, who wins the nomination.

Constitutional Union Party Ballot Results

Candidates	State	1st	2nd
John Bell	Tenn	68.5	138
Sam Houston	Tex	57	69
John Crittenden	Ky	28	1
Edward Everett	Mass	25	9.5
William Graham	NC	22	18
John McLean	Ohio	21	1
William Rives	Va	13	0
John Botts	Va	9.5	7
William Sharkey	Miss	7	8.5
William Goggin	Va	3	0
Total		254	252
Needed to Win		128	127

After the Vice-Presidential slot goes easily to the popular northerner, Edward Everett, the convention adjourns.

Chapter 252 - The Republicans Nominate Abraham Lincoln

Time: May 16, 1860

The Republican Convention Opens In Chicago

Republicans are riding a wave of political optimism as they gather in Chicago on May 16, 1860 for their second national convention.

The city itself is booming, its population up to 109,000 (9th in the nation), and its unique combination of Great Lakes shipping and railroad lines is cementing its role as the hub for East-West commercial traffic.

To accommodate the large crowds, a mammoth wooden convention center, christened the *Wigwam*, is built along the south branch of the Chicago River, on the site of the old Sauganash Hotel, the first such facility in the city. On the opening day some 12,000 people pack the new structure, with another 20,000 milling about outside the hall, enjoying the various bands, parades, entertainers, food tents and free liquor available.

A total of 466 official delegates are seated in the hall. They represent 24 of the current total of 33 states, the other nine ominously comprising Southern hold-outs (NC, SC, Ga, Fla, Ala, Miss, La, TN and TN). Each attending state's voting power is a rough reflection of their prominence in the US Congress.

Delegate Count At Chicago

States	#
NY	70
Pa	54
Ohio	46
Massachusetts	26
Indiana	26
Kentucky	23
Virginia	23
Illinois	22
Missouri	18
Md	16
Maine	16
Iowa	16
NJ	14
Conn	12
Mich	12
Texas	10
WI	10
NH	10

Vt	10
RI	8
California	8
Minnesota	6
Del	6
Oregon	4
Total	466

Notable delegates include John Andrew (MA), Gideon Welles (CT), Preston King, William Evarts and George Curtis (NY), David Wilmot and Thaddeus Stevens (Pa), Francis P. Blair Sr. (Md), Thomas Spooner (Oh), Caleb Smith (Ind), David Davis and Nathan Judd (IL), Carl Schurz (WI), Francis P. Blair Jr and Gratz Brown (MO), Horace Greeley (NY) and Eli Thayer (OR),

The temporary chairman of the convention is Judge David Wilmot of Pennsylvania, famous for his 1846 Proviso in the U.S. House demanding that slavery be excluded from any lands won in the Mexican War, not on moral grounds, but so that white men and free labor would prevail. Wilmot's keynote address emphasizes the mission of the Party – to stop the Democrat's attempt to nationalize slavery.

A great sectional and aristocratic party, or interest, has for years dominated with a high hand over the political affairs of this country. That interest has wrested, and is now wresting, all the great powers of this government to the one object of the extension and nationalization of slavery. It is our purpose, gentlemen, it is the mission of the Republican Party and the basis of its organization, to resist this policy of a sectional interest.... It is our purpose and our policy to resist these new constitutional dogmas that slavery exists by virtue of the constitution wherever the banner of the Union floats.

George Ashmun, an ex-congressman from Massachusetts is elected President of the convention and a committee is named to draft a platform.

Time: May 17, 1860

A Platform Is Written To Win The Entire North

The paramount goal for the Republicans is to win the Presidency in 1860, and to do so they must be sure to sweep the Northern states, including the five won by Buchanan in 1856.

Northern States Won By Buchanan in 1856

States	Electoral Votes	Buchanan % of Votes	Runner Up
Pennsylvania	27	50%	Fremont 32%
Indiana	13	50	Fremont 40
Illinois	11	44	Fremont 40
New Jersey	7	47	Fremont 29
California	4	48	Fillmore 33

Their primary appeal to the North lies in the promise to oppose the “nationalization of slavery” sought by the South in response to the *Dred Scott* ruling. This is the glue that holds the Republican coalition together, despite the internal division between the minority, who oppose slavery on moral grounds, and the majority, who would simply prefer an all-white America.

The latter group, along with potentially “switchable” Northern Democrats, want a platform that offers more than just a ban on the expansion of slavery – something that the savvy newspaperman and at-large delegate, Horace Greeley, notes:

I want to succeed this time, yet I know the country is not Anti-Slavery. It will only swallow a little Anti-Slavery in a great deal of sweetening. An Anti-Slavery man per se cannot be elected; but a Tariff, River and Harbor, Pacific Railroad, Free Homestead man may succeed although he is Anti-Slavery.

The Platform Committee shares Greeley’s assessment and writes a succinct document in seventeen articles that explain the core principles for the 1860 campaign. It accuses the Democrats of abandoning the intent of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, being co-opted by Southern demands, and, in so doing, risking disunion. It promises to end this subservience and carry out the original intent of the founders to end the spread of slavery, so that it eventually withers away.

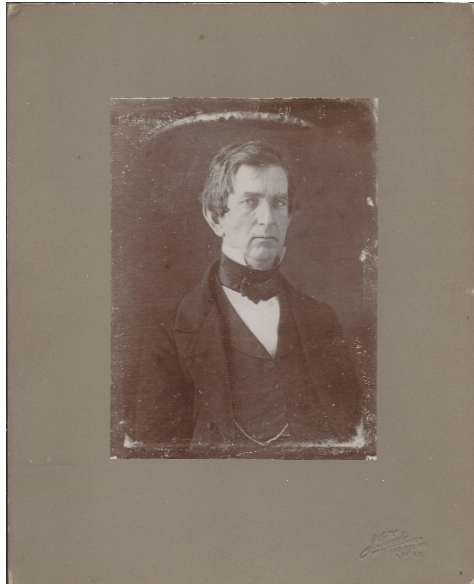
Then come some flourishes intended to deliver the “sweetening” sought by Greeley. Article 4 tries to reassure the South about state’s rights against any threats of abolition. Article 12 offers up a protective tariff much desired in New Jersey. Article 13 supports a Homestead Act offer of 160 free acres of land to western settlers. Article 14 gently defuses Know Nothing threats to immigrants. Article 15 is aimed mainly at the Great Lakes states wishing for upgrades in ports and navigational problems. Article 16 reaffirms the intent to move ahead with the long-delayed Pacific railroad, a boon to all commercial entities.

1. *“The history of the nation during the last four years has...established the necessity...of the Republican Party.*
2. *That the maintenance of the principles promulgated in the Declaration of Independence including “all men are created equal,” along with “the Federal Constitution, the Rights of the States and the Union...must be preserved.*
3. *“No Republican member of Congress has uttered...the threats of disunion so often made by Democratic members.*
4. *“The right of each state to order and control its own domestic institutions according to its own judgment exclusively...is inviolate.*
5. *“The Democratic Administration has far exceeded our worst apprehension in its measureless subserviency to the exactions of a sectional interest, as especially evinced in its desperate exertions to force the infamous Lecompton Constitution upon the protesting people of Kansas...”*

6. *"The recent...developments of frauds and corruptions at the Federal metropolis show that an entire change of administration is imperatively demanded.*
7. *"That the new dogma that the Constitution, of its own force, carries slavery into any or all of the territories of the United States, is a dangerous political heresy, at variance with the explicit provisions of that instrument itself, with contemporaneous exposition, and with legislative and judicial precedent; is revolutionary in its tendency, and subversive of the peace and harmony of the country."*
8. *"That the normal condition of all the territory of the United States is that of freedom: That...it becomes our duty, ...to maintain this provision of the Constitution against all attempts to violate it; and we deny the authority of Congress, of a territorial legislature, or of any individuals, to give legal existence to slavery in any territory of the United States."*
9. *"That we brand the recent reopening of the African slave trade, under the cover of our national flag, aided by perversions of judicial power, as a crime against humanity and a burning shame to our country..."*
10. *"That in the recent vetoes, by their Federal Governors, of the acts of the legislatures of Kansas and Nebraska, prohibiting slavery in those territories, we find a practical illustration of the boasted Democratic principle of Non-Intervention and Popular Sovereignty, embodied in the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, and a demonstration of the deception and fraud involved therein."*
11. *"That Kansas should, of right, be immediately admitted as a state under the Constitution recently formed and adopted by her people, and accepted by the House of Representatives."*
12. *Support for "duties upon imports...which secures to the workingmen liberal wages...and to mechanics and manufacturers an adequate reward for their skill, labor and enterprise...."*
13. *That we protest against any sale or alienation to others of the public lands held by actual settlers...and we demand the passage by Congress of the complete and satisfactory homestead measure which has already passed the House.*
14. *That the Republican party is opposed to any change in our naturalization laws...and in favor of giving a full and efficient protection to the rights of all classes of citizens, whether native or naturalized, both at home and abroad.*
15. *That appropriations by Congress for river and harbor improvements of a national character, required for the accommodation and security of an existing commerce, are authorized...and justified...*
16. *That a railroad to the Pacific Ocean is imperatively demanded by the interests of the whole country; that the federal government ought to render immediate and efficient aid in its construction...*
17. *Finally...we invite the co-operation of all citizens...who substantially agree with us in their affirmance and support.*

Time: May 17, 1860

Five Candidates Vie For The Presidential Nomination



William Henry Seward (1801-1872)

The platform is approved and on May 17 attention turns to nominating a Presidential candidate. Five men enter the convention with enough support to have a shot. They are:

Leading Candidates For President At The 1860 Republican Convention

Name	State	Age	Currently
Henry Seward	NY	59	U.S. Senator from New York
Abraham Lincoln	IL	51	Law practice in Illinois
Simon Cameron	Pa	61	U.S. Senator from Pennsylvania
Salmon Chase	Oh	52	Recently retired Governor of Ohio
Edward Bates	MO	66	Law practice in Missouri

The clear front-runner is the New Yorker, Henry Seward, coming to the end of his second term in the Senate after previously serving as Governor. At the 1856 convention, he was also the leading candidate, but withdrew after his long-time advisor, Thurlow Weed, convinced him that no Republican could beat Buchanan that year.

An emerging challenger to Seward is Abraham Lincoln, a contender for the Vice-Presidential candidacy in 1856, whose 1858 debates with Stephen Douglas for a Senate seat in Illinois have thrust him into the national spotlight. Lincoln enters the convention as a logical “second choice” across many different delegations.

Three other men enjoy support at a more confined, regional level.

In the crucial swing state of Pennsylvania the nod goes to sitting Senator Simon Cameron. Prior to entering politics, he becomes a wealthy businessman, first as a printer, then a railroad builder and finally a banker.

Salmon Chase is known initially for his distinguished career as a lawyer in Cincinnati, and then for playing a crucial role in founding the Liberty Party in 1843, the Free Soil Party in 1848, and the Republican Party in 1854. He has been twice elected as Governor of Ohio, retiring from that office in January 1860.

Lastly there is the conservative ex-Whig, Edward Bates, another accomplished lawyer, whose involvement in Missouri politics dates back to 1822, and who is touted at the convention by two king-makers, Francis Preston Blair Sr. and Horace Greeley.

Eight other men will gain minor support on the first ballot, but most qualify merely as “favorite sons.”

Date: May 17, 1860

Reservations Exist For Each Contender

Henry Seward and his campaign manager, Thurlow Weed, arrive in Chicago confident of victory. For well over a decade he has been in the national spotlight, opposing the leading Democrats in Congress and championing the ban on extending slavery to the new territories.

Despite this, many delegates are concerned about his ability to carry the lower North states, from Pennsylvania through Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Iowa, where their mid-to-southern districts still retain some conservative and even pro-slavery sentiments. Two convention attendees who damage Seward’s chances are Andrew Curtin, about to run for Governor of Pennsylvania, and Henry Lane, doing the same in Indiana. Both spread their fear of losing should Seward head the ticket in their states.

For these men, and others, Seward is considered “too radical” for their constituents. Conservative Whigs remain shocked by his March 1850 speech opposing slavery based on a “higher law” than the Constitution. Likewise his October 1858 “irrepressible conflict” address seems to dismiss all hope that the break-up of the Union might yet be avoided.

For Horace Greeley -- who appears to favor his fellow New Yorker while secretly behind Bates -- Seward is the symbol of unbridled Anti-Slavery fervor that is out of touch with the majority of white voters. If he wins the nomination, the door will be left open for Democratic attacks on the “Black Republicans” as wild-eyed abolitionists, supporting negro suffrage and outrages like racial inter-marriage -- the kind of opprobrium Douglas hurled at Lincoln in their 1858 debates.

Aside from Seward, the other candidates also have their vulnerabilities.

Simon Cameron is accused of shady financial practices throughout his business career, and for relying on machine politics and the spoils system while in office. His support is also thin outside of his home state of Pennsylvania.

Salmon Chase is considered more radical than Seward on the issue of slavery, and is not even certain of carrying Ohio in the general election. He possesses a brilliant legal mind and is an astute political strategist, but his manner is decidedly grave and lacking in personal wit and charm.

Edward Bates is another dour individual who suffers from extensive “baggage” despite endorsements from Blair Sr. and Greeley. He grows up on a slave plantation in Virginia; lives in the slave state of Missouri; and may or may not be willing to argue strongly on behalf of banning slavery in the territories. He never officially joins the Republican Party and his momentary membership with the Know Nothings alienates its German immigrant wing.

Finally there is Abraham Lincoln, a fresh face for a still fresh Party. But he is also an outsider to Washington politics, with only a one lackluster term in the House some twelve years ago, and back to back losses in 1854 and 1858 for a Senate seat from Illinois.

As he enters the field, Lincoln is not a dark horse, but every bit a long shot.

Time: Summer-Fall 1860

Lincoln's Campaign Begins Well In Advance



David Davis (1815-1886)

Lincoln's genius as a politician is on display as he carefully positions himself to defeat Seward and win the 1860 nomination.

He has always had an easy-to-like personality, marked by a witty and self-deprecating sense of humor and an open manner that appeals to both the humble and the high and mighty. This earns him the sobriquet as “Honest Abe,” a valuable distinction within the less than trustworthy political class.

He has also proven again and again that his intellectual capacity far exceeds expectations, given his lack of formal education, his gangly appearance and dress, and his high pitched Kentucky twang. Anticipating relatively little, his audiences -- be they trial juries or potential voters -- are startled by his razor sharp mind and his capacity to simplify the complex and state his arguments with pristine logic and

touching emotional pleas. As a speaker, Lincoln is able to pack more powerful thoughts into fewer words than any of his contemporaries.

He arrives at the convention on the wings of three magnificent speeches – at Peoria in 1854 attacking the Kansas-Nebraska Act, Springfield in 1858 warning of a “house divided,” and ten weeks earlier at Cooper Union in New York, demanding an end to the spread of slavery. These

speeches, along with his ability to hold his own against Stephen Douglas in the 1858 debates, have made him into a credible contender in Chicago.

But still he is still less well known than Seward and less plugged into the national party hierarchy than all four of his main competitors. He writes on March 24, 1860:

My name is new in the field; and I suppose I am not the first choice of a very great many. Our policy, then, is to give no offence to others—leave them in a mood to come to us, if they shall be compelled to give up their first love.

Instead of waiting for the delegates to come to him, he assembles his campaign team and goes on the offensive.

His supporters are drawn from different phases in his past. Many of them (Speed, Herndon, Logan, Browning, Oglesby, Koerner) share his ties to Kentucky. All have emigrated to Illinois, typically in the 1830's, often to practice law and to participate in the state legislature. Their home bases vary, with some (Davis, Swett, Fell and Hatch) in Bloomington, others (Speed, Herndon, Logan, Dubois) in Springfield, Norman Judd in Chicago, Oglesby in Quincy, Gillespie in Galena, Koerner in Belleville, and Lamon in Danville. Most are contemporaries of Lincoln, within five years of his age, at fifty-one. A few are younger: his legal protégé, "Billy" Herndon (41), Leonard Swett and Richard Oglesby (both 35), and "Hill" Lamon (32). His most intimate, long-term friend is Joshua Speed, with whom he shared an apartment in 1837 upon his arrival in the state capital. Some are firmly in his camp from their first encounter; others, like Judd, Dubois and Browning, have occasion to waver in their support or affection.

The first campaign moves occur well before the convention. To broaden his name recognition and establish his core ideas, with the delegates and public alike, Lincoln publishes a popular 258 page book that recaps his debates with Douglas. He then adds an autobiography focusing on his personal history.

His chances improve markedly when Norman Judd convinces other members of the Republican National Committee to hold the nominating convention in Chicago rather than back east again in Philadelphia. This insures that large crowds of Lincoln supporters will attend the event, and that the local press will impress delegates with a barrage of editorials for their favorite son.

One week before the *Wigwam* event opens, he adds another victory at the Republican Party's state convention in Decatur. David Davis, Jesse Fell, Norman Judd and his other key strategists have set their sights on securing unanimous support for Lincoln among the Illinois delegation, especially since other contenders, like Cameron and Chase, are plagued by internal schisms. To help with this outcome, the youthful Decatur-based politician, Richard Oglesby, decides that Lincoln would benefit from a more dynamic and forceful image than simply "Honest Abe." The result is a new moniker, Lincoln as the "Rail Splitter," shirt-sleeves rolled up, wielding an ax, getting the necessary tasks accomplished swiftly and decisively. The candidate is said to burnish this vision of physical labor by quipping that, given ten hours to fell a tree, he would spend the first nine sharpening his ax. The Decatur delegates love Oglesby's sell, and Lincoln walks away with the unanimity he sought.

At the same time his confidence is bolstered by reassurances, especially from Jesse Fell, that beating Seward and Chase is within reach if he plays his cards right. The first step, according to his floor captain, Judge David Davis, will be to register 100 votes on the first ballot, and then try to scoop up support from those who defect as the voting wears on.

Sidebar: Early Friends And Supporters Of Lincoln



Richard Oglesby (1824-1899)

Here are the men who help carry Lincoln to the Republican nomination in 1860.

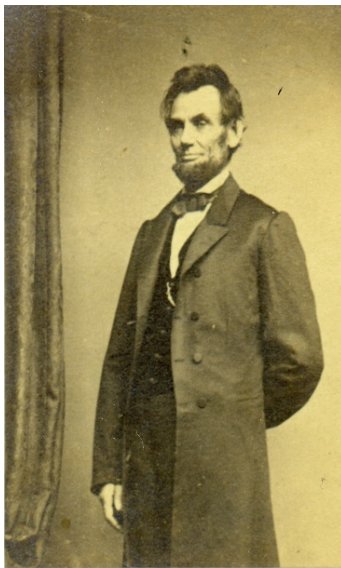
Name	Age	Profile
David Davis	45	Ohio, Kenyon College, Yale Law, to Bloomington '35 as lawyer, IL House '45, '48-62 Judge of 8 th circuit in IL, a registered Independent, delegate and lead floor manager for AL in Chicago, often competitive with Judd, later US Supreme Ct '62.
Norman Judd	45	New York, bar and move to Chicago in '36, law practice, city attorney '36-39, state Senate '44-60, initially anti-Nebraska Democrat, supports Trumbull over Lincoln for Senate '54, breaks with Douglas over KN Act, then advisor to AL, helps with Douglas debates, Chair of Republican Party in IL, gets national committee to select Chicago site, nominates AL.
Orville Browning	54	Kentucky, Augusta College, passes bar and to Quincy IL in '31, Blackhawk War, conservative Whig politics, serves terms in state legislature, another intimate friend despite some jealousy, also one of few who get on well with Mary L over time, US Senate '61-63.
Joshua Speed	45	Kentucky plantation with slaves, to Springfield in '35, runs general store, rents room to AL in '37, considered his best friend, disagree on slavery but acts as constant

		sounding board, his brother James becomes Attorney General in '64.
Leonard Swett	35	Maine, attends Colby College, into Mexican War, Bloomington IL as lawyer, rides circuit with AL, fails in bids for US House and Governor, but enter IL legislature in '58, helps bring Seward into the eventual cabinet.
Richard Oglesby	35	Kentucky, orphaned, to Decatur IL in '32, combat in Mexican War, Louisville Law School, gold rush, back to IL in '51, helps found Republican Party there, IL legislature in '60, creates "Rail Splitter" imagery to promote AL at the convention.
Stephen Logan	60	Kentucky, bar, to Springfield '32 and meets AL, Circuit court judge, mentors AL, Logan & Lincoln law firm '41-43, dissolved when his son joins firm, prickly personality, four terms in state legislature but lost for higher slots, floor manager for AL try to defeat Shields for Senate '55.
Jesse Fell	52	Pennsylvania Quaker, studies for bar in Ohio, to Bloomington IL in '31, diverse career in law, newspapers, education, land development, AL friend since '34, urges him to debate Douglas, especially close to Davis, tells AL he can defeat Seward and Chase, advisor on cabinet picks.
Jesse Dubois	49	IL native, wealthy family, Indiana College, four terms in state legislature '34 on, moves to Springfield in house near AL, family friends in the '50's, helps form Republican Party in IL at '56 Bloomington Convention, State Auditor '57-64, teams with Davis at Chicago to help win nomination, but bitter at the end when AL refuses his pleas for patronage jobs.
William Herndon	41	Kentucky, in Sangamon County '21, works at father's tavern in Springfield, one year at Illinois College, clerk at Joshua Speed's store, apprentice lawyer at Logan & Lincoln firm '40, bar in '44 then Lincoln & Herndon '44-65, "Billy" as surrogate son, Whig and Republican ties, not a confidante like Speed, but ever loyal.
Ward Hill Lamon	32	Virginia to Danville, IL, bar '53, state prosecutor, pro-South & anti-abolition, "fixer" role at convention and "extra tickets" to pack the hall, then bodyguard and US Marshal for DC per AL appointment. Called "Hill" Lamon. At Ford's Theater in '65.
Joseph Gillespie	50	NYC, to Galena IL in '27, Blackhawk War, Transylvania Law School, state House as Whig in '40 where befriends AL, state Senate '46-58, law practice including IC railroad, momentarily a Know-Nothing but then helps found Republican Party in IL in 1856 at Bloomington Convention.
Ozias Hatch	46	New Hampshire, to Pike County IL in '36, runs general store, on circuit court then state House '51-53, at

			Bloomington to help found Republican Party, IL Secretary of State '56-64 serving in Springfield, his office the “center of IL politics” at the time.
	Gustav Koerner	50	Born in Frankfurt, Germany, JD from Heidelberg U, accused of treason as a revolutionary and flees to US in '33, in Kentucky at Transylvania College, meets Mary Todd, to Belleville, IL in James Shield's law firm, co-counsel with AL on some cases, into state legislature '42, IL Supreme Court '45-48, Lt Governor '53-57, switches from Democrat to Republican over anti-slavery. Important link into foreign immigrant groups.

Time: May 17, 1860

Lincoln Wins The Nomination On The Third Ballot



Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865)

The day before the convention opens, local editor, Joseph Medill, pitches in with an oversized headline -- “The Winning Man: Abraham Lincoln” – in his *Chicago Press and Tribune*.

“Hill” Lamon and Davis also link up to rig the make-up of the 10,000 plus attendees on May 17, when the polling actually begins. Seating in the hall is “first come, first served” and requires a valid entry ticket. Lamon locates a printer who counterfeits “extra tickets” and then completes an early run by Illinois groups to pack the hall and dominate the cheering on behalf of Lincoln.

In addition to Davis and Judd, two other hand-picked delegates-at-large, Orville Browning and Gustav Koerner, also play their roles on the floor. Browning is there to reassure conservative Whigs that Lincoln is more moderate and balanced than the “radical” Seward on the slavery issues. The German-born Koerner signals that Abe is not tied to the anti-immigrant Know Nothing faction within the party.

After the nominating speeches are completed – with Norman Judd offering Lincoln’s name – the first round of balloting begins. At this point, Seward’s manager, Thurlow Weed, remains confident of victory, and plans to recruit Lincoln for the Vice-Presidential slot, to help carry Illinois. He informs the delegation of this intent, and also volunteers a \$100,000 payment to the Illinois Republican Party in exchange for their support of Seward.

But when the first ballot ends, Seward comes up well short of the 233 vote majority needed to win – while Lincoln squeaks past the 100 vote target set by Davis and Judd.

This opens up the potential for second ballot defections, and these prove fatal to Cameron, who drops from 50 votes down to two. The clear benefactor here is Lincoln, which sparks talk that the

Lincoln men have bought off the Pennsylvanian with a promised Cabinet post. Honest Abe's instructions to Davis in this regard have been loud and clear: "make no contracts that will bind me." Despite this, the fact that Cameron ends up as Secretary of War, suggests that Davis may have done what he thought necessary at the moment.

On the second ballot, Seward actually adds eleven votes, but his lead over Lincoln shrinks to 184.5 -- 181, and the momentum is clearly in favor of the challenger.

All of the stops come out as the roll is about to be called a third time. Leonard Swett works the Maine and New England delegates and Browning does the same with the Bates supporters in Missouri. When a sizable group of Ohioans swing to Lincoln, he is within 1.5 votes of victory on the third ballot, before a few "revisions" are called in that put him over the top. Seward's men then gracefully call for unanimous consent to the sound of cheers throughout the hall.

Chapter 253 - The Reconvening Democrats Nominate Two Separate Tickets

Time: June 11, 1860

Dissenters From The First Democratic Convention Meet To Plot Strategy

Seven weeks pass between the collapse of the Democratic Convention at Charleston and the party's follow-up effort scheduled to open June 18, 1860 in Baltimore.

The interim is spent searching for any form of compromise between the largely Northern faction backing Stephen Douglas and popular sovereignty, and delegates from the seven Southern states who bolted after their platform demand for a Congressional bill protecting slavery was defeated.

On June 11, before the second convention, an informal meeting is held in Richmond to settle on a unified strategy among the bolter states: Alabama, Louisiana, Georgia, South Carolina, Arkansas, Mississippi, Florida, Texas and Delaware.

The debate is between those who would immediately form a separate party to protect the interests of the slave states and those who wish to retain their long-standing identity as Democrats.

The separatists involved are well known by this time, especially William Yancey of Alabama and John Slidell of Louisiana. Their message to the potential delegates is well summed up in an editorial written by R.B. Rhett, Jr. in the *Charleston Mercury*:

The Democratic Party, as a party based on principles, is dead. It exists now only as a powerful faction. It has not one single principle common to its members North and South.

But others at the meeting hear the voice of men like Georgia's Alexander Stephens, who urges a more cautionary wait and see stance, and this is what prevails. Rather than staying away, the delegates will head to Baltimore and measure the reception they get – one litmus test being whether or not the delegate credentials they carried in Charleston are honored again in Baltimore.

Time: June 18, 1860

The Second Democratic Convention Opens With A Fight Over Seating Credentials

The official Democratic convention opens on June 18 at the Front Street Theater in Baltimore, a two story brick structure sporting a stage and balcony, built in 1829 to house cultural performances.

While Caleb Cushing, the “doughface” politician from Massachusetts, continues to serve as President, supporters of Stephen Douglas are firmly in charge of the event. His headquarters are set up at the nearby home of Reverdy Johnson, the prominent Maryland Democrat, and his floor manager is again William Richardson of Illinois, a long-time partner in driving legislation through Congress. The Little Giant is confident of a victory:

All we have to do is to stand by the delegates appointed by the people in the seceding states in place of the disunionists.

The atmosphere, however, is tense by the time the first session is called to order at 10am. Even the benediction, spoken by the Reverend John Macron, is a plea for restraint amidst the “rising tempest of sectional discord.”

As the waters of the political deep are agitated by the rising tempest of sectional discord, give the spirit of a large and liberal forbearance to everyone that “peace may be within our walls and prosperity within our palaces.

The immediate source of stress is a battle over seating credentials that soon focuses on delegates from Alabama, Louisiana and Georgia in particular. This pairs attendees who had walked out in Charleston against “new slates” recently chosen in state conventions that favor Douglas.

For three solid days the Credentials Committee searches for an accommodation that satisfies both sides.

As this drags on, Douglas sends a rather astonishing letter to Richardson, offering to withdraw his name if those present think it will restore party unity:

I learn there is eminent danger that the Democratic Party will be demoralized if not destroyed by the breaking up of the convention...If therefore you and any other friends...shall be of the opinion that...the Democratic Party (could be) maintained, and the country saved from the perils of Northern abolitionism and Southern disunion by withdrawing my name...I beseech you to pursue that course.

Richardson pockets the letter, although inquiries go to the New York delegation to see if they have an option to Douglas who might restore order. The Georgia Unionist, Alexander Stephens, is mentioned, but even he is considered too soft on guaranteeing slaveholder rights for Yancey, Slidell and other fire-eaters.

On June 21, the fourth day of the convention, the Credentials Committee issues its majority report calling for:

- *Re-admitting original delegates from Texas and Mississippi plus some from Arkansas and Delaware;*
- *Declining those from Alabama and Louisiana in favor of newly elected (Douglas) alternates; and*

- *Accepting and equal mix of old and new delegates from Georgia, with each given 0.5 votes.*

This motion passes by a 150.5-100 margin on June 22, but with a proviso from New York, allowing for members to consider a possible response from those who have been excluded.

Time: June 23, 1860

Douglas Wins The Nomination After Fifteen States Exit The Convention



Herschel V. Johnson (1812-1880)

Rejection of the original Charleston delegates sparks a Southern states walk-out that signals the death knell for the Democratic Party coalition that will persist for the next twenty-five years.

Within hours, the initial nine “bolters” are joined by attendees from Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Maryland, along with those from California and Oregon. They will be joined by Kentucky the following day.

Of the original 303 delegates to be seated, a total of roughly 108 leave the hall.

What follows is a mad dash to complete the nominating process and close the event.

Despite the obvious fact that Douglas will win, six other names are offered up almost out of spite. What follows is another humiliation after he tallies 173.5 votes on the first ballot only to encounter the “convention rule” requiring the winner to get 2/3rds of the original delegate count (i.e. 202) – now a mathematical impossibility.

A motion to re-set the standard at 2/3rds of the votes cast leads to a victory for Douglas on the second roll call.

Presidential Nomination Results

Candidates	State	1 st	2 nd
Stephen Douglas	IL	173.5	181.5
James Guthrie	Ky	9	5.5
John Breckinridge	Ky	5	7.5
Horatio Seymour	NY	1	0
Thomas Bocock	Va	1	0
Daniel Dickinson	NY	0.5	0
Henry Wise	Va	0.5	0
Total		190.5	194.5
Needed To Win		202	130

Dysfunction continues with the selection of a running mate. Douglas signals his interest in Alexander Stephens, but his managers insist that any remaining hope for unity rests with allowing the remaining Southern delegates to select their favorite. Their fury toward William Yancey of Alabama leads them to choose Benjamin Fitzpatrick, the 57 year old ex-Governor of the state, and now one of its sitting U.S. Senators.

But Fitzpatrick neither supports Douglas' commitment to popular sovereignty nor wants to risk his own public support in Alabama, and he quickly turns down the nomination. He is replaced by Herschel V. Johnson, a planter and slave-holder, who has formerly served as Governor and Senator from Georgia. While Johnson will eventually serve in the CSA Senate, in 1860 he is still hoping to avoid secession.

The closing business at Baltimore involves platform support for Douglas' fall-back position trying to square his popular sovereignty with the *Dred Scott* – namely that the final say on slavery in the new Territories will rest with the U.S. Supreme Court.

A twenty-five man National Committee is also named to oversee the upcoming campaign. It is headed by August Belmont, born in Germany and educated in Jewish schools, before coming to New York in 1837 to support the Rothschild Company during the financial panic that year. Belmont proves his worth throughout the race and continues to serve as Chairman of the Party for the next twelve years. He will also be remembered for his horse racing passion, as founder of The Belmont Stakes.

On the evening of June 23, a somber Stephen Douglas meets with supporters at a railway station in Washington, telling them that:

Secession from the Democratic Party means secession from the federal Union.

Events will prove him right on that assessment.

Time: June 23, 1860

The Break-away Southern Democrats Nominate John Breckinridge



John C. Breckinridge (1821-1875)

Unlike the “wait and see” tactic they followed back in Charleston, the “Bolter” states decide that a permanent split with the Northern Democrats is now unavoidable.

On the same day that Douglas is nominated, they re-group at the Maryland Institute Hall to pick their own ticket and settle on their demands regarding slavery. They number over 100 delegates, coming from the 15 slave states plus Oregon, California and a few members from New York and Massachusetts. The latter includes Caleb Cushing who shifts from presiding over the original convention to do the same for the Southerners.

By in large the majority remain opposed at this point to leaving the federal Union. But they know that their future economic well-being rests on extending slavery to the west, and their platform remains unchanged from the minority report which was voted down at Charleston.

It calls upon Congress to pass a law protecting the rights of slave-owners and their “property” in the territories.

Two candidates are nominated for President: America’s current Vice-President, John Breckinridge, from Kentucky, and Daniel Dickinson, the ex-Senator from New York. Both men are letter-of-the-law Constitutional conservatives.

Breckinridge prevails on the first ballot.

Nomination Results: Southern Democrats

Candidates	State	1 st
John Breckinridge	Ky	81
Daniel Dickinson	NY	24
Total		105
Needed To Win		70

Joseph Lane, the pro-slavery Senator from Oregon, is chosen as Vice-President.

The convention is about to end when the Alabama fire-eater, William Yancey, grabs the floor and delivers what is generally seen as an “unhelpful tirade” on behalf of secession.

Still the drama continues after the session ends.

When Breckinridge learns of his nomination, he says that he intends to reject it, on the grounds that it will only guarantee the election to Abraham Lincoln. This holds until he meets with Jefferson Davis, who posits the only way out for the South. That would be an agreement between Lincoln's three opponents – Breckinridge, Douglas and John Bell – to all withdraw their names, and unify behind a single anti-Republican candidate, to be chosen later.

Davis argues that this single opponent should be able to either defeat Lincoln outright or, at least, deny him the needed majority in the Electoral College, and throw the election back into the House. Once there, the South would indeed have a chance, given that each state would be given one vote to cast and a simple majority would be needed to win.

Even though the existing split in the House is 15 Slave States versus 18 Free States, several states (e.g. California, Oregon, Pennsylvania, even New York) just might reject Lincoln, giving his opponent a chance at victory.

But Stephen Douglas refuses to go along, believing that many of his voters would simply switch to Lincoln over either a Southern slave owner (e.g. Stephens) or another Northern doughface like Buchanan (e.g. Dickinson or even Cushing).

With the “all drop-out” notion gone, Breckinridge finally agrees to stay in and represent his region.

Sidebar: The Politician Warrior John Breckinridge



General John C. Breckinridge (1821-1875)

John Breckinridge is a loyal defender of slavery, but by no means a member of the Fire-eater class of Southerners who lobby for years on behalf of secession.

He models himself after two moderate political giants from Kentucky, the Whig, Henry Clay, and the Democrat, John J. Crittenden. His friendships extend in many directions, including Abraham Lincoln and his distant cousin, Mary Todd Lincoln.

He becomes Vice-President of the United States at 35 years old, after passing the bar in 1841, entering politics to campaign for James Polk in 1844, and serving as Major of the 3rd Kentucky Regiment, which arrives in Mexico City after the combat has ended. It is said that his eulogy on behalf of Henry Clay, Jr., killed at Buena Vista in February 1847, brings tears to the father's eyes.

Breckinridge is forever cautious about “waiting his turn” when it comes to politics, but he finally runs, and is elected to the US House in 1851 and again in 1853 as a Democrat. When Clay himself dies in 1852, he delivers another moving memorial in Congress. During that year, he stumps for Franklin Pierce, who twice offers him government positions he turns down, first as Governor of the Washington Territory and later as Minister to Spain.

Given his subsequent break with Stephen Douglas, it is ironic that he supports his 1854 Kansas-Nebraska Act and the principle of popular sovereignty, and almost fights a duel over it with one Francis Cutting, a fellow Democrat in the House.

The sharp rise of the Know-Nothing Party in Kentucky convinces Breckinridge to forego the race for a third term, and he returns to his Lexington law practice, along with promoting horse racing and breeding in the state. Soon enough, however, the 1856 events in “bloody Kansas” bring him back into the political arena and force him to take a more assertive stance on slavery.

While he owns a handful of slaves between 1849 and 1857, the Presbyterian church he attends condemns the practice, he defends “free blacks” in court, and supports “colonization.” But he is also a Southerner and a lawyer who is convinced that the 1787 Constitution guarantees slave holders the absolute right to take “their property” into the new Territories at least until statehood.

Again ironically, Breckinridge backs first Pierce and then Douglas, still a friend, for the 1856 nomination. Buchanan will never forgive him for this, but does agree to have him join

the ticket as Vice-President, to help carry the South – including Kentucky, which the Democrats win for the first time since 1828.

His final split with Douglas occurs when the Illinois Senator refuses to support the admission of Kansas under the Lecompton Constitution. Breckinridge, like Clay and Crittenden, is committed to the sacred Union, and fears that Douglas's action will fatally divide the Democratic Party and the nation.

With the sectional chaos mounting, his Vice-Presidential duty of presiding over the Senate is completed "respectfully and impartially." Fellow Kentuckians look to him next to fill a Senate seat of his own, after Crittenden retires, and he is nominated for that slot in late 1859. His acceptance speech on December 12, 1859 praises the *Dred Scott* ruling and attacks John Brown's raid, but still opposes all talk of secession.

He deflects moves to nominate him for president at the Charleston Convention in May, but then agrees to run after the Democratic schism at Baltimore in June. In the fall he will win 18% of the popular vote and 72 Electoral votes, second only to Lincoln. Despite the loss, he greets Lincoln and Mary to DC and helps create the "Committee of Thirteen," which fails to stop secession. On April 2, 1861 he pleads for peaceful reconciliation before the Kentucky General Assembly; ten days later the guns at Ft. Sumter issue in the Civil War.

Breckinridge now must choose between the Union and the Confederacy and he goes with the South, being appointed Brigadier General of the 1st Kentucky Regiment on November 2. Two of his sons enlist with him and two others fight for the USA. On December 4, 1860 he is expelled from the Senate seat he just won, declaring:

I exchange with proud satisfaction a term of six years in the Senate...for the musket of a soldier.

Thus begins a remarkable record as a Confederate army field commander. He leads his "Orphan Brigade" at Shiloh in April 1861, where he receives his first wound and is promoted to Major General. In early January 1863 he fights heroically at Stones River. He falls out with Braxton Bragg after summer 1863 battles at Vicksburg and Chickamauga, and goes east to join Lee's troops, winning further fame at New Market in May 1864, being wounded again at Cold Harbor in June and being declared the "second Stonewall" for his dying days victories in the Shenandoah Valley. On January 19, 1865, Jefferson Davis names him Secretary of War, and his first act is to name Lee as General-in-Chief. By then, however, the cause is lost, and he urges Davis to end it.

This has been a magnificent epic. In God's name let it not terminate in farce.

Ten days after Lee surrenders on April 9, Lincoln is assassinated and Breckinridge mourns the loss: "Gentlemen, the South has lost its best friend." In turn he flees to Cuba on June 11, then to Britain and back to Toronto in September 1865. On Christmas day 1868 President Johnson pardons all Confederates, and Breckinridge is back home in Lexington in March

1869, where he resumes his law practice. On March 17, 1875, he dies after surgery on his liver, damaged during the war – having packed an amazing life into only 54 years!

Time: Summer 1860

The Nominating Conventions Are Now At An End

Once the Southern “Bolters” settle on Breckinridge and Lane, four distinct tickets have been identified, and the search for a solution to the issue of slavery in the west is in the hands of the voting public.

Recap Of The Nominating Conventions In 1860

Party	Date	City	Ticket
Democrats	April 23-May 2	Charleston, SC	None
Constitutional Union	May 9	Baltimore, MD	John Bell & Edward Everett
Republican	May 16-18	Chicago, IL	Abraham Lincoln & Hannibal Hamlin
Southern “Bolters”	June 11	Richmond, Va	None
Democrats	June 18-23	Baltimore	Stephen Douglas & Hershel Johnson
Southern “Bolters”	June 23	Baltimore	John Breckinridge & Joseph Lane

Chapter 254 - The 1860 Campaign For President

Time: Fall of 1860

The 1860 Race Is Unique In American History

The 1860 campaign for President is unique in America's history, and it sets the stage for the break-up of the Union which follows.

Never before has the country been confronted with more than three sizable political parties in a presidential race.

Historical # Of Parties Competing For President

Year	Parties
1832	Democrats + National Republicans + Nullifiers
1836	Democrats + Whigs
1840	Democrats + Whigs
1844	Democrats + Whigs + Liberty
1848	Democrats + Whigs + Free Soil
1852	Democrats + Whigs + Free Soil
1856	Democrats + Republicans + Know Nothings

In 1860, there are suddenly four separate political parties, each offering distinct platforms and reasonably credible candidates.

The Four Party Presidential Race Of 1860

Candidates	Party	Main Platform Promise
Abraham Lincoln	Republican	Ban slavery in the western Territories
Stephen Douglas	North Democrats	Rely on popular sovereignty to decide
John Breckinridge	South Democrats	Pass a Congressional Bill to protect slavery nationwide
John Bell	Constitutional Union	Seek a new compromise that preserves the Union

On top of that, this becomes the first election since James Monroe in 1820 where the outcome is almost a certainty before the first ballot is cast.

The man destined to be chosen is Abraham Lincoln, assuming he can simply carry nearly all of the 183 electoral votes available in the North, based on his, and the Republican's, opposition to the presence of slaves (or even "free blacks") in the new territories.

Allocation Of Electoral Vote In 1860

Section	#
North/Free States	183
South/Slave States	120
Total	303
Needed To Win	152

Of course this kind of regional clean sweep has never happened in the era of two or more competing parties.

Prior campaigns have always been waged on a national basis, at least by the major parties, and past Presidents have always been able to carry at least five Free States and five Slave States.

Free And Slave States Won In Prior Presidential Elections

Year	Winner	Total States	# States Won	# Free States	# Slave States
1828	Jackson	24	15	5	10
1832	Jackson	24	16	8	8
1836	Van Buren	26	15	8	7
1840	Harrison	26	19	14	5
1844	Polk	26	15	7	8
1848	Taylor	30	15	8	7
1852	Pierce	31	27	16	11
1856	Buchanan	31	19	5	14

But this pattern changes in 1860, and with devastating results.

Time: Fall of 1860

The Focus Is On The Northern States

Instead of a national election in 1860, the race comes down to two separate sectional contests:

- In the North, a “stop Lincoln” effort to throw the election into the House of Representatives; and
- In the South, a largely irrelevant run-off between Breckinridge and Bell.

The Republican strategy is to concentrate exclusively in the North, knowing that their platform banning slavery in the west will be rejected out of hand in the South -- and that trying to campaign there would be a waste of time and money.

While smart in the short-run, this strategy will negatively affect Lincoln when he enters office. At that point he will remain a total mystery to people across the South. They will never see that he is a Kentuckian by birth; a loyal protégé of the Great Compromiser, Henry Clay; not a radical abolitionist; an outspoken opponent of John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry; a strict believer in the Constitution and the inviolable right of the old South to maintain slavery; a friend of the powerful Georgian Democrat Alexander Stephens (later the Confederate Vice-President), and one who wishes intensely to maintain the sacred Union. All of this "missing information" will weaken Lincoln's capacity to hold the nation together after he is elected.

Lincoln's opponents meanwhile concentrate on stopping his steamroller across the North.

Early in the campaign, even his long-term adversary, Stephen Douglas, is convinced that he cannot derail Lincoln by himself. The result is a joint agreement between the Little Giant and the two Southern candidates to construct what are known as "fusion ballots." These are intended to allow Northern voters who oppose Lincoln to choose a "generic alternative" representing "electors" for Douglas or Breckinridge or Bell.

If the total ballots cast for the "fusion candidate" were to exceed those for Lincoln in a given state, the effect would be to deny him some or all of its electoral votes needed for a majority.

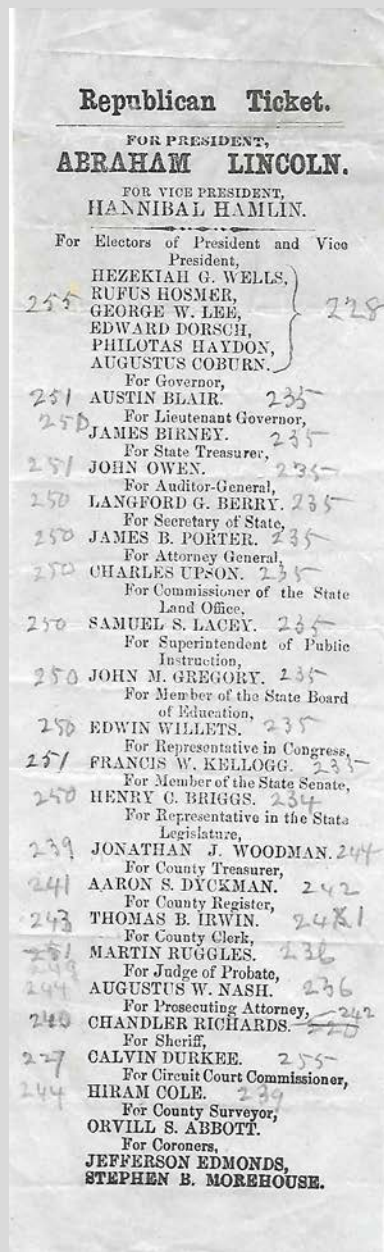
Representatives of Douglas, Breckinridge and Bell agree to construct these "fusion ballots" in three Northern states where they think Lincoln might be vulnerable: Pennsylvania (with 27 electoral votes), New Jersey (7 votes) and New York (35 votes).

In the end, this strategy succeeds only in the least important state, New Jersey, where the "fusion ballots" is chosen by 51.9% of the votes. Despite this outcome, four of the top seven vote counts for the "electors" listed belong to Lincoln, while the other three are for Douglas – thus giving Lincoln a 4-3 win in the Electoral College.

Popular Votes For President In 1860 In "Fusion" States

States	Lincoln	"Fusion"	Other
New York	53.7%	46.3%	0.0%
Pennsylvania	56.3	37.5	6.2
New Jersey	48.1	51.9	0.0

Sidebar: Ballots And Voting In The 1860 Election



It is not until the election of 1888 that Americans vote by going to a secure polling place, being handed a pre-printed ballot listing all candidates side by side for given federal or state offices, marking their choices in secret, and placing them in a locked ballot box.

Before that, the process is much more chaotic and prone to manipulations and even fraud.

Thus in 1860, each party is responsible for naming their slate of candidates, then printing up paper ballots, and distributing them to the public in newspapers (to be clipped out) or via “peddlers” who hand them out at the polling places. A voter would secure the ballot for their favored candidate, then enter the polling place and put this slip of paper in a box. “Poll judges,” often appointed by the party in power, are present to hopefully recognize local voters and to insure that only one ballot was cast per person.

Most of the ballots are constructed like the one shown here—with one set of candidates listed for President and Vice-President, and their “designated electors” shown below.

But the law also allows for so-called “fusion ballots,” often with a “generic” title such as “Opposition Parties.” These list a pre-set number of “electors” for each of the two or three candidates who have agreed to appear together on the same ballot. This was the case, for example, in the state of New Jersey, where all three of Lincoln’s opponents joined the “fusion” – in this case with Douglas naming three electors and Breckinridge and Bell listing two each.

The intent of this “fusion ballot” was to try to deny Lincoln the majority needed in a given state to win all of its electoral votes.

An 1860 Republican Ballot From Ohio

In 1860, this strategy failed in New York and Pennsylvania, while succeeding in New Jersey, where Lincoln won 48% versus 52% for the “Fusion” of Douglas, Breckinridge and Bell.

Time: Fall of 1860

The Campaign Is Lively From Start to Finish



The importance of the 1860 election is obvious to all, and 4 out of 5 citizens will eventually turn out to vote.

Three of the four candidates remain aloof from personal campaigning, thus conforming to the old dictate that “the office seeks out the man and not vice versa.” The exception is Douglas, who stumps on his own behalf throughout much of the run-up period.

Surrogate speakers are the norm for Lincoln, Breckinridge and Bell, along with fiery editorials from the roughly 327 newspapers extant at the time, many propaganda machines for state and local party bosses.

Endorsements are also sought and gotten, perhaps most notably from Presidents Buchanan and Pierce, two doughfaces who back Breckinridge to little avail.

One Of Lincoln’s “Wide Awake” Supporters

Armies of followers line up to promote their favorites and to have a rollicking good time in the process.

Lincoln’s forces are the “Wide-Awakes,” carrying oil lamps to light the way, wearing treated capes to prevent the inevitable dripping from staining their clothes. As they march they sing “Lincoln & Liberty Too” to the beat of “the old grey mare:”

*Old Abe Lincoln/Came out of the wilderness/Out of the wilderness/out of the wilderness,
Old Abe Lincoln/Came out of the wilderness/Down in Illinois.*

They personify the man himself as “Honest Old Abe – The people’s choice” and “the Rail-Splitter of the West.” Their parades are marked by six-foot spheres of cloth and tape which they roll down the streets shouting “The Republican ball is in motion.” In more serious moments they offer slogans: “Vote Yourself A Farm” and “Protection for American Industry” and “Free Soil, Free Speech, Free Home.”

Predictably the Douglas backers cast themselves as “The Little Giants” and are eager to chant that “No Rail Splitter can split this Union” and “Popular Sovereignty/Let The People Rule.”

In frivolous moments, the dour Bell supporters become “Bell Ringers” before they morph back into “Minute Men” and “Union Sentinels” touting Daniel Webster’s line, “Liberty and Union, Now and Forever,”

The ever-serious Breckinridge has his “National Democratic Volunteers” who proclaim “Our Rights, The Constitution and The Union” – while Douglas counters “Breckinridge may not be for dis-union, but all the dis-unionists are for Breckinridge!”

Time: Fall of 1860

Stephen Douglas Offers To Withdraw To Forestall Disunion

The one man at the center of the actual campaigning turns out to be Stephen Douglas, who will work initially on his own behalf before dedicating his remaining energy to trying to save the Union.

Douglas is only 47 years old at the time, but will be dead within a year, the victim of lifelong health issues, excessive drinking and a typically brutal public appearance schedule in 1860 that saps his remaining strength.

He is stunned in June 1860 by the break-up of his beloved Democratic Party at Charleston, but undeterred in his drive to once again compete against his arch-rival Lincoln, this time for the presidency. By July he announces his strategy in a letter to one of his supporters:

No time must be lost and no effort spared... We must make the war boldly against the Northern abolitionists and the Southern Disunionists, and give no quarter to either. We should treat the Bell & Everett men friendly and cultivate good relations with them, for they are Union men...(but) we can have not partnership with the Bolters.

At the same time, he is every bit as deluded as Lincoln about the sense of alienation spreading across the South. In his own mind, Douglas believes that he has been a good friend of the South, going all the way back to his earlier days in Congress, rooming at the “F-Street mess” with pro-slavery men like the Missouri “ruffian,” David Atchison, James Mason and Robert M. T. Hunter of Virginia and Andrew Butler of South Carolina. His record of support includes the 1850 Compromise, the Kansas-Nebraska Act and his doctrine of popular sovereignty, the last ditch effort to combat the Republican effort to ban slavery in the western territories. Surely, he tells himself, these credits to the South should be enough to offset his refusal to go along with the bogus Lecompton Constitution in Kansas.

Within this frame of mind, he predicts in July that he will carry many Northern states along with seven in the South -- when in fact, he will end up with only Missouri and a few electors in New Jersey.

Douglas' Election Forecast For The South As Of July 1860

Candidate	# Wins	States
Breckinridge	2	SC and perhaps Mississippi
Bell	6	Ky, Tenn, NC, Va, Md, Del
Douglas	7	MO, Ark, La, Tex, Ala, Ga, Fla.

He departs on July 14 from disappointing fund raising efforts in New York, to stump across New England, with appearances in Boston, Albany and his birthplace, Vermont. The responses are lukewarm, and by August the *New York Times* predicts that Lincoln is certain to win, and his reluctant running mate, the Georgian Herschel Johnson, tells him: "I have not much hope for the future."

But with his usual tenacity, Douglas heads South, into Virginia. When asked in Norfolk whether the South would be justified in seceding immediately, were Lincoln elected, he offers an unequivocal "no." In Petersburg he tells his audience:

I am not here on an electioneering tour. I am here to make a plea, an appeal for the invincibility of the Constitution and the perpetuation of the Union.

On August 30 in Raleigh, North Carolina, he adds:

I know of but one mode of preserving the Union. That is to fight against all disunionists...The only mistake we Democrats made was in tolerating disunionist sentiments in our bosoms so long.

The more bleak his presidential prospects become, the more he turns to what he sees as his duty as a patriot to stave off secession. In the same vein as his opposition to accepting the Lecompton Constitution, Douglas now places the well-being of the nation above his own political ambition.

In early September he is up North in Pennsylvania where a key battle is under way between the Democrats and Republicans for Governor. On September 11 he meets with Herschel Johnson in New York, who tells him that he is unlikely to win *any* Southern states, and that various "stop Lincoln" men, including Jefferson Davis, are asking all three current candidates to step aside in favor of one alternative who might unite the opposition. Douglas is shocked and dismayed by Johnson's alarms, but again refuses to drop out – although he does authorize an effort to create "fusion ballots" in several states.

He barrels forward to the west, through Cleveland and Cincinnati to Indianapolis on September 28, and then to Louisville. Observers comment on his voice (a "spastic bark"), the lemons he squeezes into his mouth to continue to speak, and the overall wear and tear on his frame.

The only wonder is that his health does not give way under the trials and fatigue he is compelled to endure in order to meet demands.

After passing through Chicago, he is off to Iowa, Wisconsin and Michigan. On October 9 he hears the devastating news from two early gubernatorial (October 9 polling) races. In the crucial

state of Pennsylvania, Republican Andrew Curtin defeats Democrat Henry Foster by 53-47%, while in Indiana, the abolitionist Henry Lane bests the Democrat Thomas Hendricks by a 52-48% margin. This ends all remaining hope for Douglas. Lincoln will be the next President and all that's left is to try to throw himself against the looming threat of secession. He writes:

Mr. Lincoln is the next President. We must try to save the Union. I will go South.

On October 19, 1860, just eighteen days before the election, Douglas begins another southern swing which will take him through Memphis to Huntsville, Nashville, and Chattanooga and, on October 29, Atlanta, where Alexander Stephens introduces him to an assembled crowd. November 2 brings him to Montgomery, soon to be the capital of the Confederacy, followed by Mobile on November 5, where he makes his final address. For the most part, Douglas is treated respectfully by the Bell supporters while being roundly denounced by the Breckinridge men. His message is the same to both:

I believe there is a conspiracy on foot to break up this Union. It is the duty of every good citizen to frustrate the scheme.

On November 6 he will monitor the election results from Mobile, with a friend who records that he seems “more hopeless than I had ever before seen him.”

But in many ways, the Little Giant's courageous march into the South during the campaign is his finest hour, both as a politician and patriot.

Time: September 5, 1860

John Breckinridge Makes His One Speech During The Run-Up

Like the other three men in the race, Vice-President John Cabell Breckinridge declares that he is intensely committed to preserving the Union.

He makes this point in the one public speech he delivers during the campaign, at a rally on September 5, 1860 in Ashland, Kentucky. The talk rambles on for over three hours, with Breckinridge pausing at several intervals to ask the audience if they wish to hear more, the response being calls to continue.

He begins by asserting, properly, that he never sought to run for President, and is doing so only because “a particular individual” (Douglas) tried to foist a “pernicious doctrine” (popular sovereignty) on the delegates in Charleston and Baltimore.

I did not desire to be presented to the American people...(but) the most flagrant acts of injustice were perpetrated, for the purpose of forcing upon the Democratic organization a particular individual as the representative of a pernicious doctrine, which I shall be able to show is repugnant alike to reason and the Constitution.

He also runs to clear his name of false accusations that have been made – that he backed a pardon for John Brown, that he was a Know Nothing, that he opposed slavery like his famous preacher uncle Robert, that he favor emancipation. All wrong, he says, and goes on to define the core issue fueling the conflict.

It is contended, on one hand...that the citizens of the slaveholding States may remove to them with their slaves, and that the local legislature cannot rightfully exclude slavery while in the Territorial condition; but it is conceded that the people may establish or prohibit it when they come to exercise the power of a sovereign State. On the other hand, it is said that slavery, being in derogation of common right, can exist only by force of positive law; and it is denied that the Constitution furnishes this law for the Territories; and it is further claimed that the local legislature may establish or exclude it any time after the government is organized.

I did not hold the doctrine that a Territorial Legislature could exclude slave property from the Territory during the Territorial condition....I held precisely the opposite,

The *Dred Scott* ruling should have ended the slavery debate, by defining slaves as “property” pure and simple, with no distinction versus other forms of property.

Between slave property and other property, no distinction exists; property in slaves is recognized by the Constitution of the United States,...I am content to stand upon these principles, thus announced by the Supreme Court of the Union. After this decision, we had arrived at a point where we might reasonably expect tranquillity and peace. The equality of rights of persons and property of all the States, in the common Territory, having been stamped by the seal of judicial authority, all good citizens might well acquiesce

Because the South will not give up their rights, they are being unfairly accused of being disunionists.

Because we will not bow down to a doctrine that deprives us of our rights, we are bolters, demagogues, secessionists, dis-unionists ! (Continued applause.)

Breckinridge asserts the two principles that capture his position on slavery in the territories:

I will read these two resolutions, and you can judge whether they accord with the Constitution, the decision of the Supreme Court, and the practice of the Government as I have shown it today :

- 1. Resolved, That the government of a Territory organized by an Act of Congress, is provisional and temporary, and during its existence all citizens of the United States have an equal right to settle with their property in the Territory, without their rights of either person or property being destroyed or impaired by Congressional or Territorial legislation.*

2. *That it is the duty of the Federal Government in all its departments to protect, when necessary, the rights of persons and property in the territories, and wherever else its constitutional authority extends." These are two principles we avow*

He cites support for his views from the icon of Kentucky politics, the 73 year old Senator, John Crittenden, and assures the listeners that acting on them will produce fairness and harmony between the States.

I derive some satisfaction from the fact that the Hon. John J. Crittenden, has declared, by his speeches and votes in the Senate, that the principles upon which we stand are constitutional and true. (Cheers.) Fellow-citizens, these principles will give us peace and prosperity; they will preserve the equality and restore the harmony of the States. They will make every man feel that in his personal rights and rights of property he stands on a footing of equality in the domain common to all the States? (Cheers.) They have their root in the Constitution, and no party can be sectional which maintains constitutional principles.

But Republicans refuse to accept the Constitution – they reject the words declaring “slaves are property” and deny owners the right to transport them into the territories free of risk. If their views prevail, it will “destroy the Union.”

The Republican organization holds precisely opposite principles. They say we have no rights in the territories with our property. They say Congress has a right to exclude it, and it is its duty to do so... (Lincoln's) principles are clearly unconstitutional, and if the Republican Party should undertake to carry them out, they will destroy the Union.

After calling out a long list of opponents, he offers, interestingly, that he is “not ashamed” of his principles when it comes to slavery.

I am not ashamed of the principles upon which I stand. I am not ashamed of the reasons by which they are sustained. I am not ashamed of the friends that support me. I am not ashamed of the tone, bearing and character of our whole organization. (Applause. A voice — "The truth will prevail.")

On this note – that truth will prevail – he ends.

Yes, the truth will prevail. You may smother it for a time beneath the passion and prejudices of men, but those passions and prejudices will subside, and the truth will reappear as the rock re-appears above the receding tide. I believe this country will yet walk by the light of these principles.... People of Kentucky, you never abandoned a principle you believed to be right. You may be misled, but the stigma never rested on Kentucky that she abandoned principles she believed to be true. (Cries of, "We never will.")

For myself, conscious that my foot is planted on the rock of the Constitution — surrounded and sustained by friends I love and cherish — holding principles that have been in every form indorsed by my native commonwealth — with a spirit erect and unbroken I defy all calumny, and calmly await the triumph of the truth. (Prolonged applause.)

Chapter 255 - Lincoln Becomes America's Sixteenth President

Time: November 6, 1860

Lincoln's Sweep In The North Gives Him The Presidency



Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865)

Public interest in the 1860 election is high, as reflected in the 81% turn-out level.

Percent Of Eligibles Voting For President

	1840	1844	1848	1852	1856	1860
Turn-out	80%	79	73	70	79	81

As both expected and feared, November 6 offers up two elections in one: a Northern race pitting Lincoln against Douglas, and a Southern contest between Breckinridge and Bell. The result is that no candidate comes close to winning a popular vote majority – although Lincoln with his 39.8% share enjoys a sizable margin over the runner-up, Douglas.

Percent Of The Popular Vote For Each Candidate

Lincoln	Douglas	Breckinridge	Bell	Total
39.8%	29.5%	18.1%	12.6%	100.0%

What gives Lincoln the presidency then is the sheer dominance of the Northern states in the Electoral College and the winner-take-all rules on a state by state basis. He takes every state up north with the exception of New Jersey to rack up 180 electoral votes against the 152 needed to win. In the South, he is shut out entirely, without even appearing on many state ballots.

Full Results Of The 1860 Presidential Election

1856	Party	Pop Vote	Electoral	South	Border	North	West
Lincoln	Republican	1,865,908	180	0	0	173	7
Douglas	No. Democrat	1,380,202	12	0	9	3	0
Breckinridge	So. Democrat	848,019	72	61	11	0	0
Bell	Con. Union	590,901	39	15	24	0	0
Other		531					
Total		4,685,561	303	76	44	176	7
Need To Win			152				

The Republican campaign has concentrated on five Northern states that Buchanan carried in 1856, and is able to “flip” 59 of the 63 electoral votes there to Lincoln in 1860.

Key State “Flips” Between 1856 And 1860 Explaining Lincoln’s Victory

	Penn.	Indiana	Illinois	California	New Jersey	Total
Electoral Votes At Stake	27	13	11	4	7*	63
Popular Vote % To Win						
Buchanan in 1856	50%	50%	44%	48%	48%	
Lincoln in 1860	56%	51%	51%	32.3%	48%	
Nearest Rival	39(D)	42(D)	47(D)	31.7(D)	52(F)	

* In NJ Lincoln loses the popular vote (48/52%) to a “fusion ticket” of Douglas/Bell/Breckinridge, but still takes 4 of 7 electors.

Lincoln carries most Northern states with 54% or more of the popular votes. Douglas’ only outright win is in Missouri. Bell carries his home state of Tennessee, along with Kentucky and Virginia. Breckinridge is dominant across the Lower South.

State By State Results In The Presidential Election Of 1860

Lincoln By Majority	Electoral	Lincoln	Douglas	Breckinridge	Bell	“Fusion”
Vermont	5	75.8%	19.4%	4.2%	0.5%	
Minnesota	4	63.4	34.3	2.2	0.1	
Massachusetts	13	62.9	20.3	3.6	13.2	
Maine	8	62.2	29.4	6.3	2.0	
Rhode Island	4	61.4	38.6	0	0	
Connecticut	6	58.1	20.6	19.2	2.0	
Michigan	6	57.2	42.0	0.5	0.3	
New Hampshire	5	56.9	39.3	3.2	0.6	
Wisconsin	5	56.6	42.7	0.6	0.1	
Pennsylvania	27	56.3	3.5	0	2.7	37.5%
Iowa	4	54.6	43.2	0.8	1.4	
New York	35	53.7		0	0	46.3
Ohio	23	51.2	42.3	2.6	2.8	
Indiana	13	51.1	42.4	4.5	2.0	
Illinois	11	50.7	47.2	0.7	1.4	
Lincoln By Plurality						
Oregon	3	36.1	28.0	34.4	1.5	
California	4	32.3	31.7	28.4	7.6	
NJ Fusion	4	48.1				51.9
Total - Lincoln	180					

Breckinridge-Majority						
South Carolina	8			Leg pick		
Texas	4			75.5	24.5	
Florida	3		1.7	62.2	36.1	
Mississippi	7		4.7	59.0	36.3	
Alabama	9	0	15.1	54.0	30.9	
Arkansas	4		9.9	53.1	37.0	
North Carolina	10		2.8	50.5	46.7	
Breckinridge-Plurality						
Georgia	10		10.9	48.9	40.2	
Maryland	8	2.5	6.4	45.9	45.1	
Delaware	3	23.7	6.6	45.5	24.2	
Louisiana	6		15.1	44.9	40.0	
Total - Breckinridge	72					
Bell By Plurality						
Tennessee	12		7.7	44.6	47.7	
Virginia	15	1.1	9.8	44.5	44.6	
Kentucky	12	0.9	17.5	36.3	45.2	
Total - Bell	39					
Douglas By Plurality						
Missouri	9	10.3	35.5	18.9	35.3	
NJ Fusion	3	48.1				51.9
Total - Douglas	12					
Grand Total	303					
Needed To Win	152					

Time: November 6, 1860

Republicans Also Pick Up Congressional Seats

In the Senate, Democrats hold a one seat edge when the 37th Congress opens on March 4, 1861. But this margin will rapidly disappear, as a total of eleven Southern states secede, leaving their seats vacant and handing the majority over to the Republicans of the North.

Election Trends In The Senate

Party	1856	1858	1860
Democrats	37	38	30
Republicans	20	25	29
Whigs	3	2	0
Know Nothings	4	0	1
Vacant	1	0	8
Total	65	65	68

In the House, the Republicans extend their lead over the Democrats after massive vacancies occur across the South.

Election Trends In The House

Party	1856	1858	1860
Democrats	133	98	45
Republicans	90	116	108
Opp/Unionists	0	19	30
Know Nothings	14	5	0
Vacant	0	0	56
Total	237	238	239

Chapter 256 - The North Misreads The Southern Threat Of Secession

Time: Fall Of 1860

Lincoln's Election Represents A Fatal Blow To The Southern Economy



A Typical Southern Plantation

The notion that the North is out to harm the South's agrarian economy is nothing new by 1860.

It surfaces first around 1830 with the protective tariff on finished goods imported from the UK which suppresses the demand and prices for their raw cotton exports. The "nullification" efforts led by South Carolina at the time signal the potential for secession.

A relative truce between the regions prevails until the Texas Annexation of 1845 and the Mexican War of 1846-7 opens up the prospect for new cotton plantations from the Mississippi River to California.

This would clearly be a boom for the Southern economy, but it is suddenly put on hold by Northern opponents of slavery. David Wilmot's 1846 Proviso seeks to cleanse the west of blacks for the benefit of free white settlers and the "dignity of their labor," while the abolitionist reformers call for the end of slavery in its entirety.

By this point the South has nothing to fall back on to insure its economic future.

Unlike the North, the shift to a modern industrial economy never takes hold in the South. In 1860, for example, it accounts for only 14% of the nation's manufacturing workers, 20% of the railroad tracks and 13% of the banks.

Location Of Manufacturing Workers

	1820	1840	1860
Northeast	62%	63%	69%
Northwest	7	14	17
Border	12	8	5
Southeast	16	11	5
Southwest	3	4	4
	100%	100%	100%

In turn the North produces 17 times as many textiles as the South, 30 times the leather goods, 20 times the pig iron and 32 times the firearms.

The reason for these differences is simple. Why should the South change course when between 1830 and 1860 it continues to enjoy truly remarkable gains in wealth from its traditional sources of revenue: the sales of raw cotton and the demand for “excess slaves” in the west.

The Westward Shift In The Slave Population

	1840	1860	# Ch	%Ch
East Coast	1,395.1	1,837.3	442.2	31%
Inland	814.0	1,372.9	558.9	69%
Trans Miss R	246.5	440.2	193.7	79%

By 1860, there is no doubt as the South Carolinian John Henry Hammond says on the floor of the Senate, “Cotton is King!” The worldwide demand for the “white gold” has skyrocketed, with four-fold growth over the past three decades -- as have profits to the planters and others across the supply chain.

Trends In Cotton Sales, Prices And Value (millions)

Year	Lbs. Sold	Price/Lb	Total Value	Index
1830	306.8	\$9.68	\$ 297	100
1860	1,712.0	7.30	1,218	410

Ransom p.78

Along with this growth in sales of raw cotton comes increased demand for the South’s “other crop” – the slaves who work the fields. While the U.S. slave population is doubling between 1830 and 1860, the “selling price” is growing even more rapidly, especially for “prime” field hands.

Trends In The Slave Population And Their “Value”

Year	# Slaves	\$/ Slave	Total Value	Index
1830	2.0 mil.	\$273	\$ 548.5 mil	100
1860	4.0	778	3,076.2	561

Astonishingly, in 1860 the economic value of these slaves exceeds the invested value of all of the nation's railroads, factories, and banks combined!

But for this Southern boom to continue, the new western territories must be open to more slavery and cotton plantations – and the Republican victory dashes all hope for this outcome.

Time: Fall Of 1860

Republican Leaders Think The South Is Bluffing

After Lincoln's win, conventional wisdom among Northern leaders is that the Slave Power will bluster about secession to try for concessions, but then back off in the end. The *New York Tribune* hypothesizes this outcome from the start:

The South could no more unite upon a scheme of secession than a company of lunatics could conspire to break out of bedlam.

Henry Seward agrees:

Who's afraid? Nobody's afraid. Nobody can be bought.

This perception is long held by Lincoln himself. In 1856 he says:

All this talk about dissolution of the Union is humbug, nothing but Folly.

Four years later, after his nomination, his mind is unchanged:

The people of the South have too much of good sense, and good temper, to attempt the ruin of the government...At least so I hope and believe."

And he will continue this hope even after the election is won, in the famous closing passage of his Inaugural address:

We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.

In the end, this profound misunderstanding in the North about the devastating effects their ban on slavery will have on the economic future of the South will lead to the death knell for the Union and for the 750,000 Americans who will eventually lose their lives during the course of the Civil War to follow.

Chapter 257 - Momentum Behind Disunion Builds In The South

Time: November 6, 1860

Reactions To The Election Materialize Quickly

Abraham Lincoln spends most of the election day at the Governor's Room of the statehouse in Springfield.

Around 3pm he hears that the crowds have thinned out and goes out to cast his ballot after carefully removing his name from the top so as not to vote for himself.

He then heads over to the Illinois & Mississippi telegraph office to watch the returns come in along with messages from his supporters around the country. He stays until 1am when it is clear he has won not only nationally, but also in his own city of Springfield, long a Democratic stronghold. From there he is off home for a long night's sleep.

The local supporters are far less restrained than the new President-elect. The city streets remain filled with revelers until 4am when a cannon sounds and the Wide Awakes break out once more in song:

*We're the Lincoln boys!
We're the Lincoln boys!
Ain't you glad you joined the Republicans,
Joined the Republicans,
Ain't you glad you joined the Republicans*

As news of the Republican's victory circulates, responses reflect the deep divisions within the country.

Salmon Chase sees it as the culmination of his personal efforts to defeat the Democrats and the Slave Power.

The great object of my wishes & labors for nineteen years is accomplished in the overthrow of the Slave Power.

The poet and editor of the *New York Evening Post*, William Cullen Bryant forecasts the start of a new era.

At our feet, conquered, lies that great oligarchy which has so long held the South through submission and fear... A new era is now inaugurated, the old order of things has passed away, never, we hope, to return..

John Greenleaf Whittier reflects on the awesome burden that lies ahead.

Well God has laid the responsibility upon us! We must take it up and bear it.

From the South comes acrimony, none as strident as that from South Carolina. The *Charleston Mercury*, edited by the son of the fire-eater, R.B. Rhett, says the “revolution” has arrived.

The Southern States are now in the crisis of their fate, and...nothing is needed for our deliverance but that the ball of revolution be set in motion....The tea has been thrown overboard – the revolution of 1860 has been initiated.

This is seconded by Edmund Ruffin who has campaigned non-stop since John Brown’s raid on behalf of southern secession.

This...momentous...election will serve to show whether these southern states are to remain free, or to be politically enslaved – whether the institution of negro slavery on which the social and political existence of the south rests, is to be secured by our resistance, or...abolished in a short time, as the certain result of our present submission to northern domination.

South Carolina Senator James Chestnut joins in with a bellicose line that surprises many given his family’s staunch pro-Unionist history.

A line of enemies is closing us which must be broken...For myself, I would unfurl the Palmetto (flag)...determined to live or die as became our ancestors.

Time: November 9, 1860

South Carolina Begins Its March Toward Secession



James L. Petigru (1789-1863)

The first overt act of resistance to Lincoln’s election comes predictably in South Carolina, where three federal officials in Charleston -- Judge AG Magrath, District Attorney James Conner and Port Collector W.F. Colcock -- immediately resign from their posts, with the latter announcing:

I will not serve under the enemy of my country.

Governor William Gist follows with an order for 10,000 rifles from the U.S. Arsenal, routing it through a New York bank recommended by Secretary of War, John Floyd.

On November 9, the South Carolina legislature passes a bill calling for a state convention to consider secession – a move met with “hurrahs” from the public and parade ground displays by local militias.

Over the next two days, James Chestnut and James Henry Hammond resign their seats in the U.S. Senate.

About the only voice of moderation by this point belongs to 71 year old James L. Petigru, the ex-Attorney General of the state, who had opposed “nullification” and the possibility of secession back in the 1830’s. He says:

My own countrymen here in South Carolina are distempered to a degree that makes them to a calm and impartial observers real objects of pity. They believe anything that flatters their delusion or their vanity; and at the same time they are credulous to every whisper of suspicion about insurgence or incendiaries.

Time: November 9, 1860

Buchanan Turns To His Cabinet For Advice

South Carolina’s call for a convention alarms Buchanan and he holds an emergency meeting with his cabinet on November 9, 1860, to seek their advice.

James Buchanan’s Cabinet On November 9, 1860

Position	Name	Home State	In War
Secretary of State	Lewis Cass	Michigan	USA
Secretary of Treasury	Howell Cobb	Georgia	CSA
Secretary of War	John Floyd	Virginia	CSA
Attorney General	Jeremiah Black	Pennsylvania	USA
Secretary of Navy	Isaac Toucey	Connecticut	USA
Postmaster General	Joseph Holt	Kentucky	USA
Secretary of the Interior	Jacob Thompson	Mississippi	CSA

The most outspoken response comes from Attorney General Jeremiah Black, formerly a justice on the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. While soon telling the President that the Constitution does not authorize the use of force against a seceding State, Black urges the deployment of troops to secure the federal forts in Charleston, and in doing so, send a signal to South Carolina to reject secession.

Black’s view is supported by another Northerner, Secretary of State Lewis Cass, and by Postmaster Joseph Holt of Kentucky.

The other Southerners disagree. Their leader is Secretary of the Treasury, Howell Cobb of Georgia, who is personally close to Buchanan and one who has long worked to avoid disunion.

His message is that any attempt to alter the status quo with the Charleston forts will be taken by South Carolina as a federal provocation, and boost the odds of secession, not diminish them.

Cobb's views are seconded by John Floyd of Virginia and Jacob Thompson of Mississippi, and by the Connecticut man, Isaac Toucey, another Buchanan loyalist.

On the same day the President encounters this split in his cabinet, he also learns from Colonel J. L. Gardner, the 76 year old Mexican War hero in command of the Charleston forts, that an effort to transfer arms from the undermanned and vulnerable Ft. Moultrie to the security of Ft. Sumter has been turned back at the Charleston wharf.

With this news in his head, Buchanan turns his attention to crafting his fourth and final address to Congress on the State of the Union, scheduled for December 3, 1860. He already senses that events are spinning out of control, and intends to use the message to defend his time in office and to try to delay the growing crisis.

Chapter 258 - Major Robert Anderson Assumes Command Over Charleston Harbor

Time: November 20, 1860

Winfield Scott Tells Him To Concentrate At Ft. Sumter



Robert Anderson (1805-1871)

As the threat of hostilities amplifies in South Carolina, the burden falls on Secretary of War John Floyd to avoid bloodshed, at least until Buchanan's term expires.

But Floyd is hardly up to this task.

At 54 years old, his career has been in politics, reaching a pinnacle from 1849-52 as the Governor of Virginia, before being invited by Buchanan into the cabinet. He is an affable man, but lacks any military experience and is famous for his administrative sloppiness within the department.

On November 20, 1860, Floyd makes his first move, naming Major Robert Anderson to replace Colonel J. L. Gardner as commander in Charleston harbor over Castle Pinckney and forts Johnson, Moultrie and Sumter. Anderson is a Southerner who hails from Louisville, Kentucky, graduates from West Point in 1825, and begins his active career in the Blackhawk War of 1832, where one of his recruits is Abraham Lincoln.

He serves on General Winfield Scott's staff in the Second Seminole War of 1833 and gradually earns his Captain's bars by 1841. His next promotion, to Brevet Major, comes after he is severely wounded during the battle of Molino del Rey, during Scott's assault on Mexico City in 1847.

Robert Anderson is 54 years old and serving as Major of Artillery in 1860. While also a slave owner and close friend of Jefferson Davis, he devotes his life to military service and stays out of politics. When Floyd summons him to Washington, he stops off on his way for advice from General Scott, now in his twentieth year as Commanding General of the U.S. Army and residing in New York City.

When Anderson visits, Scott tells him that Floyd is running the military while he is currently on the sidelines. Nevertheless, he is very familiar with the Charleston harbor sites, and predicts that the only sustainable fort will be Sumter. He encourages Anderson to concentrate there should the threats continue.

Time: November 20, 1860

He Is Ordered To Defend The Forts Without Provoking A Conflict

Anderson moves on to meet with Floyd, who warns him of the “delicate situation” he will be facing, and orders him to “avoid confrontation” with South Carolina officials and the state militia.

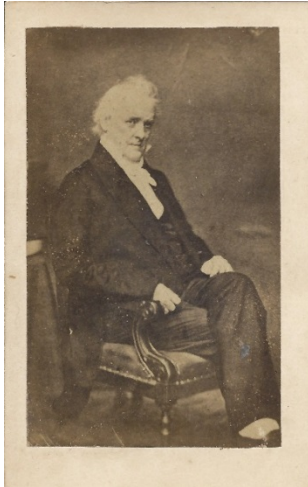
He arrives at Ft. Moultrie on November 21, 1860, and relies on his artillery acumen to assess the situation. He sees that all four forts are designed to defend against incoming attacks from the sea, and that three of them – Moultrie, Johnson and Castle Pinckney – are likely to fall easily if attacked behind, from inland.

As Scott indicated, only Ft. Sumter appears sustainable to Anderson, although he also recognizes that he is woefully undermanned, with less than 100 U.S. troops available to him, including musicians. Clearly if fighting breaks out, he knows that concentrating in Sumter and receiving reinforcements and supplies will be required to survive.

Chapter 259 - Buchanan Blames “The People Of The North” For Putting The Union At Risk In His Final Address To Congress

Time: December 3, 1860

He Chastises The North For Its “Intemperate Interference” In Southern Slavery



On December 3, 1869, James Buchanan’s sends his fourth and final state of the union address to Congress. It arrives one month after Lincoln is elected and only seventeen days before South Carolina becomes the first state to secede from the Union.

The message is exceedingly long and self-congratulatory in nature. The implication being that he would be hailed as a great president were it not for the ongoing agitation over slavery issues he inherited.

He begins the address with a tone of contrived optimism, of “plenty smiles throughout the land.”

James Buchanan (1791-1868)

Throughout the year since our last meeting the country has been eminently prosperous in all its material interests. The general health has been excellent, our harvests have been abundant, and plenty smiles throughout the land. Our commerce and manufactures have been prosecuted with energy and industry, and have yielded fair and ample returns. In short, no nation in the tide of time has ever presented a spectacle of greater material prosperity than we have done until within a very recent period.

But why then, he asks, does discontent threaten the nation and the Union itself?

Why is it, then, that discontent now so extensively prevails, and the Union of the States, which is the source of all these blessings, is threatened with destruction?

Buchanan places the blame squarely on “the intemperate interference of the Northern people with the question of slavery.”

The long-continued and intemperate interference of the Northern people with the question of slavery in the Southern States has at length produced its natural effects. The different sections of the Union are now arrayed against each other, and the time has arrived, so much dreaded by the Father of his Country, when hostile geographical parties have been formed.

This interference has riled the slaves, upset the peaceful “family altar” on the plantations, and forced the South to band together on behalf of their own security.

It can not be denied that for five and twenty years the agitation at the North against slavery has been incessant....The immediate peril arises not so much from these causes as from the fact that the incessant and violent agitation of the slavery question throughout the North for the last quarter of a century has at length produced its malign influence on the slaves and inspired them with vague notions of freedom. Hence a sense of security no longer exists around the family altar.

How easy it would be to end the conflict if only the North would back off and allow the South to exercise its rights around slavery.

How easy would it be for the American people to settle the slavery question forever and to restore peace and harmony to this distracted country! All that is necessary to accomplish the object, and all for which the slave States have ever contended, is to be let alone and permitted to manage their domestic institutions in their own way.

His Solution Is A Constitutional Amendment Validating Slavery

His shifts his attention to the remedies open to the South to protect their rights, one being secession. He argues that the election of Lincoln -- by a “mere plurality” and in the context of “temporary causes” -- should not by itself be sufficient cause for the South to secede.

This brings me to observe that the election of any one of our fellow-citizens to the office of President does not of itself afford just cause for dissolving the Union. This is more especially true if his election has been effected by a mere plurality, and not a majority of the people, and has resulted from transient and temporary causes, which may probably never again occur.

Instead the South would be “justified in revolutionary resistance” only if Lincoln commits some “overt and dangerous act.”

Reason, justice, a regard for the Constitution, all require that we shall wait for some overt and dangerous act on the part of the President elect before resorting to such a remedy (secession)..But are we to presume in advance that he will thus violate his duty? This would be at war with every principle of justice and of Christian charity. Let us wait for the overt act...In that event the injured States, after having first used all peaceful and constitutional means to obtain redress, would be justified in revolutionary resistance to the Government of the Union.

But even then Buchanan finds no provision in the Constitution allowing a state to break free -- unless the other members in the contract agree to let that happen. As he says, the Union was “intended to be perpetual...and not to be annulled (by) any one of the contracting parties.”

In order to justify secession as a constitutional remedy, it must be on the principle that the Federal Government is a mere voluntary association of States, to be dissolved at pleasure by any one of the contracting parties. If this be so, the Confederacy is a rope of sand, to be penetrated and dissolved by the first adverse wave of public opinion in any of the States.... Such a principle is wholly inconsistent with the history as well as the character of the Federal Constitution.

The right of the people of a single State to absolve themselves at will and without the consent of the other States from their most solemn obligations, and hazard the liberties and happiness of the millions composing this Union, can not be acknowledged

It was intended to be perpetual, and not to be annulled at the pleasure of any one of the contracting parties.

Furthermore, any attempt by South Carolina to seize federal property such as the Charleston forts, will be met by federal resistance.

Then, in regard to the property of the United States in South Carolina...It is not believed that any attempt will be made to expel the United States from this property by force; but if in this I should prove to be mistaken, the officer in command of the forts has received orders to act strictly on the defensive. In such a contingency the responsibility for consequences would rightfully rest upon the heads of the assailants.

Conversely he asks if the Constitution gives Congress authority over “coercing a State into submission” by force, if it attempts to withdraw peacefully without permission? The answer, he finds, is “no.”

The question fairly stated is, Has the Constitution delegated to Congress the power to coerce a State into submission which is attempting to withdraw or has actually withdrawn from the Confederacy?

The fact is that our Union rests upon public opinion, and can never be cemented by the blood of its citizens shed in civil war. If it can not live in the affections of the people, it must one day perish. Congress possesses many means of preserving it by conciliation, but the sword was not placed in their hand to preserve it by force.. This ought to be the last desperate remedy of a despairing people, after every other constitutional means of conciliation had been exhausted.

This brings him to his proposed “solution” which is precisely aligned with the demands of the South. It would require an “explanatory amendment” to the Constitution on slavery, validating “slaves as property,” guaranteeing the right of owners to transport them into all territories prior to statehood, and insuring Northern cooperation in returning run-aways.

This is the very course which I earnestly recommend in order to obtain an "explanatory amendment" of the Constitution on the subject of slavery.

- 1. An express recognition of the right of property in slaves in the States where it now exists or may hereafter exist.*
- 2. The duty of protecting this right in all the common Territories throughout their Territorial existence, and until they shall be admitted as States into the Union, with or without slavery, as their constitutions may prescribe.*
- 3. A like recognition of the right of the master to have his slave who has escaped from one State to another restored and "delivered up" to him, and of the validity of the fugitive-slave law enacted for this purpose.*

This section of the address ends with the totally delusional assertion that his proposal “would be received with favor by all of the States!”

It ought not to be doubted that such an appeal to the arbitrament established by the Constitution itself would be received with favor by all the States of the Confederacy. In any event, it ought to be tried in a spirit of conciliation before any of these States shall separate themselves from the Union.

He Congratulates Himself On His Achievements In Office

After having his say on slavery, Buchanan launches into a review of his many accomplishments in office – believing to the bitter end that these somehow outweigh the fact that the Union is crumbling on his watch.

He begins with his first love, foreign policy, and lists, in agonizing detail, the “most friendly” conditions he has delivered around the globe.

*Our relations with Great Britain are of the most friendly character...
With France, our ancient and powerful ally, our relations continue to be of the most friendly character...*

Between the great Empire of Russia and the United States the mutual friendship and regard which has so long existed still continues to prevail, and if possible to increase. Indeed, our relations with that Empire are all that we could desire...

.With the Emperor of Austria and the remaining continental powers of Europe, including that of the Sultan, our relations continue to be of the most friendly character...

The friendly and peaceful policy pursued by the Government of the United States toward the Empire of China has produced the most satisfactory results...Our minister to China, in obedience to his instructions, has remained perfectly neutral in the war between Great Britain and France and the Chinese Empire.. (The reference here is to the Second Opium War, with the two western powers trying to legalize and dominate the trade in opium and coolie labor.)

The ratifications of the treaty with Japan (was) concluded at Yeddo on the 29th July... With the wise, conservative, and liberal Government of the Empire of Brazil our relations continue to be of the most amicable character...

The exchange of the ratifications of the convention with the Republic of New Granada (i.e. largely the combination of Panama and Columbia) signed at Washington on the 10th of September, 1857, has been long delayed from accidental causes for which neither party is censurable.

Ever the expansionist, Buchanan again pushes for the acquisition of Cuba and its sugar plantations, long a target of Southern slave owners.

Our relations with Spain are now of a more complicated, though less dangerous, character than they have been for many years...I reiterate the recommendation contained in my annual message of December, 1858, and repeated in that of December, 1859, in favor of the acquisition of Cuba from Spain by fair purchase

The one foreign policy disappointment he sees is in Mexico, where he points to the failure of Congress to send a military force into the interior to end “outrages” committed against American citizens and merchants.

Our relations with Mexico remain in a most unsatisfactory condition... our citizens residing in Mexico and our merchants trading thereto had suffered a series of wrongs and outrages such as we have never patiently borne from any other nation...

I deemed it my duty to recommend to Congress in my last annual message the employment of a sufficient military force to penetrate into the interior...Having discovered that my recommendations would not be sustained by Congress, the next alternative was to accomplish in some degree, if possible, the same objects by treaty stipulations with the constitutional Government.

His litany now shifts to the domestic front. He credits himself with quelling the unrest among the Mormons in Utah -- despite the consensus belief that he bowed in the end to the will of Brigham Young.

Peace has also been restored within the Territory of Utah, which at the commencement of my Administration was in a state of open rebellion.

He appropriately mentions his “wise and judicious” management of the economy and his efforts to reduce federal government expenditures.

In my first annual message I promised to employ my best exertions in cooperation with Congress to reduce the expenditures of the Government within the limits of a wise and judicious economy.

I am happy, however, to be able to inform you that during the last fiscal year, ending June 30, 1860, the total expenditures of the Government in all its branches--legislative, executive, and judicial--exclusive of the public debt, were reduced...

He reports the cuts down to the penny:

*1858....\$71,901,129.77 (fiscal years ending June 30)
1859....\$66,346,226.13.
1860....\$58,579,780.08*

He notes that “not a single slave has been imported” in the last year, and that he has put an end to “filibustering” actions both domestically and abroad. Then come a few final recommendations for the next Congress: fund the transcontinental railroad; increase select tariffs; and establish a fixed date for the election of Congressmen across all states in the Union.

He Makes One Final And Futile Attempt To Explain Kansas

Buchanan knows that his presidency has been severely damaged by his handling of “bloody Kansas” and of the Lecompton Constitution, so he attempts to once again justify his actions.

He begins by saying that he did not create the conflict in Kansas. Instead, on his first day in office, he was handed a “revolutionary government,” attempting to impose the Free-State Topeka Constitution on the entire territory.

At the period of my inauguration I was confronted in Kansas by a revolutionary government existing under what is called the "Topeka constitution." Its avowed object was to subdue the Territorial government by force and to inaugurate what was called the "Topeka government" in its stead.

Naturally he turned to “the ballot box” as the best way to solve the dispute.

The ballot box is the surest arbiter of disputes among freemen...

But the “insurgent party” refused to participate in votes until January 1858, when it became clear that the anti-slavery party “were in the majority” – thus ending the “danger of civil war.”

The insurgent party refused to vote at either, lest this might be considered a recognition on their part of the Territorial government established by Congress. A better spirit, however, seemed soon after to prevail, and the two parties met face to face at the third election, held on the first Monday of January, 1858, for members of the legislature and State officers under the Lecompton constitution. The result was the triumph of the antislavery party at the polls. This decision of the ballot box proved clearly that this party were in the majority, and removed the danger of civil war. From that time we have heard

little or nothing of the Topeka government, and all serious danger of revolutionary troubles in Kansas was then at an end.

Instead of leaving it at that, Buchanan wanders back to the genuine source of the criticism levelled at him all along – his persistent demand that Kansas should be admitted to the Union under the pro-slavery Lecompton Constitution. He protests that it was his “duty” to submit the document to Congress for approval.

The Lecompton constitution, which had been thus recognized at this State election by the votes of both political parties in Kansas, was transmitted to me with the request that I should present it to Congress. This I could not have refused to do without violating my clearest and strongest convictions of duty.

From there, however, he proceeds to dig a hole for himself. First, by questioning “if fraud existed” – despite the overwhelming evidence that the Border Ruffians rigged the early elections. Second, by washing his hands of accountability for challenging the veracity of the Lecompton document.

If fraud existed in all or any of these proceedings, it was not for the President but for Congress to investigate and determine the question of fraud and what ought to be its consequences.

He tops that off by walking away from the key platform plank that he ran on in 1856 as a Democrat: the promise that “popular sovereignty” would be the litmus test on whether a new state’s constitution would be for or against slavery. While claiming that he “desired” such a vote, its omission he says was not without precedent.

It is true that the whole constitution had not been submitted to the people, as I always desired; but the precedents are numerous of the admission of States into the Union without such submission.

In embracing the pro-slavery Lecompton Constitution, he did his “duty” and avoided “disastrous consequences” for Kansas and for the Union.

Had I treated the Lecompton constitution as a nullity and refused to transmit it to Congress, it is not difficult to imagine, whilst recalling the position of the country at that moment, what would have been the disastrous consequences, both in and out of the Territory, from such a dereliction of duty on the part of the Executive.

Thus the story he has told himself all along. Not that his loyalty to the South has led him to overlook election fraud and try to force Congress to approve a constitution that violates the will of the people. Rather that he was simply fulfilling his duty to the nation.

This self-delusional narrative has failed during his entire term and it fails again in this his farewell speech.

Chapter 260 - Howell Cobb Resigns From The Cabinet And Urges Georgia To Secede

Time: December 3, 1860

All Sides Attack The President's Speech

The South is angered by two things in the address: first the President's assertion that the Constitution prohibits any State from leaving the Union without permission from the other signatories; second that any attempt to seize federal property, such as the Charleston forts, will be met by resistance.

The North regards the address as vintage Buchanan, announcing the dilemma facing the country, acting as if he had no part in its origin, and handing the mess off to Congress to find a solution. Massachusetts congressman Charles Francis Adams, son of the sixth president, finds the message...

...In all respects like the author, timid and vacillating...It satisfied no one and did no service in smoothing the waters.



Lyman Trumbull (1813-1896)

On the evening of December 3, the Republicans caucus to discuss their response to the president's call for Congress to take action. Illinois Senator Lyman Trumbull warns against committees that would surrender the ban on extending slavery in order to placate the South.

For Republicans to take steps toward getting up committees or proposing new compromises is an admission that to conduct the government on the principles on which we carried the election would be wrong.

Time: December 4, 1860

Republican Thurlow Weed Derided For Seeking To Appease The South



Thurlow Weed (1797-1872)

Republicans are shocked a day later by an editorial published by one of their chief strategists, Thurlow Weed, in his *Albany Evening Journal*, calling for the two sides to find a solution before it is too late. This draws immediate fire from his colleagues.

Senator Preston King of New York reprimands Weed:

It cannot be done. You must abandon your position... You and Seward should be among the foremost to brandish the lance and shout for war.

Weed responds by arguing that further dialogue may convince the states in the upper South and the border to stay with the Union. But others simply disagree. Vermont Congressman Justin Morrill's dissent references Seward's famous observation about an "irrepressible conflict:"

There can be no compromise short of an entire surrender... the truth (being) there is an irrepressible conflict between our systems of civilization.

Charles Francis Adams seconds the warning that the South still intends to rule and the Republicans must not surrender what they have just won at the polls.

Nothing short of a surrender of everything gained by the election will avail. They want to continue to rule.

Back in Springfield, the intensity of the Southern threat is beginning to dawn one of Lincoln's campaign advisors, Leonard Swett, who writes:

This flurry at the South can be got along with, but I don't think it ought to be trifled with.

Lincoln meanwhile feels like his positions have long been spelled out in detail and joining in a new fray would prove futile.

If I were to labor a month, I could not express my conservative views and intentions more clearly and strongly than they are in our platform and in many speeches already in print... anything new would merely be seized on by the ultras and misrepresented.

Let there be no compromise on the question of extending slavery. If there be, all our labor is lost, and, ere long, must be done again. . . . The tug has to come & better now, than any time hereafter.

Time: December 8, 1860

Cobb's Departure Signals The Coming Secession



Milledge Bonham (1830-1890)

On December 6, 1860, South Carolina congressman Milledge Bonham meets with a cross section of Southern politicians to decide how they want to respond to Buchanan's warning about secession and the prospect of an adversarial Republican president in the White House.

Bonham then visits Secretary of the Treasury, Howell Cobb, and learns that the strategy among the Southern members of the Cabinet, along with Jefferson Davis, lies in delaying any further confrontations until Buchanan's term expires in March.

Bonham, whose older brother was killed at the Alamo and who served as a Lt. Colonel in the Mexican War, tells Cobb that stalling is out of the question, especially as it relates to South Carolina.

The State will be eternally...disgraced now if she hesitates.

He also assures Cobb that once South Carolina secedes, other states are certain to follow.

The irony here is that, unknown to Bonham, Cobb has already drafted his own *Letter to the People of Georgia on the Condition in the Country*, laying out the case for leaving the Union.



Howell Cobb (1815-1868)

The *Letter* recaps in great detail the growing hostility of the North to the institution of slavery, leading up to the emergence of the Black Republican Party, dedicated to the belief...

That slavery is such an evil and curse, that it is the duty of everyone, to the extent of his power, to contribute to its ultimate extinction in the United States.

In his *Letter*, Cobb goes on the attack against Lincoln for "sentiments more odious than Seward;" John Andrews, the newly elected Massachusetts Governor, for his "declared sanction and approval of the John Brown raid; and finally that other band of abolitionists, "Beecher, Garrison, Cheever, Phillips and Webb." Together their messages are:

Hatred of slavery, disregard of judicial decisions, negro equality...(and) no such thing as property in our equals.

In the face of this antipathy, Cobb finds some arguing that the South should:

Rely for our safety and protection upon...the two Houses of Congress, and told...(to) delay...(as) the South responds by holding up before them a Constitution basely broken - a compact wantonly violated.

He asks if there is any credible option to “immediate secession” and, in a genuine show of loyalty, cites the “pure of heart” Buchanan as the only one still searching for patriotic solutions.

Is there no other remedy for this state of things but immediate secession? None worthy of your consideration has been suggested, except the recommendation of Mr. Buchanan, of new constitutional guarantees - or rather, the clear and explicit recognition of those that already exist. This recommendation is the counsel of a patriot and a statesman. It exhibits an appreciation of the evils that are upon us, and at the same time a devotion to the Constitution and its sacred guarantees. It conforms to the record of Mr. Buchanan’s life on this distracting question - the record of a pure heart and a wise head.

But the outlook seems futile to Cobb at this point:

The Union formed by our fathers was one of equality, justice and fraternity. On the fourth of March it will be supplanted by a Union of sectionalism and hatred. The one was worthy of the support and devotion of freemen - the other can only continue at the cost of your honor, your safety, and your independence.

In turn he calls upon Georgia to leave the Union.

Fellow-citizens of Georgia, I have endeavored to place before you the facts of the case, in plain and unimpassioned language... You have to deal with a shrewd, heartless and unscrupulous enemy, who in their extremity may promise anything, but in the end will do nothing...

On the 4th day of March, 1861, the Federal Government will pass into the hands of the Abolitionists. It will then cease to have the slightest claim upon either your confidence or your loyalty; and, in my honest judgment, each hour that Georgia remains thereafter a member of the Union will be an hour of degradation, to be followed by certain and speedy ruin. I entertain no doubt either of your right or duty to secede from the Union. Arouse, then, all your manhood for the great work before you, and be prepared on that day to announce and maintain your independence out of the Union, for you will never again have equality and justice in it. Identified with you in heart, feeling and interest, I return to share in whatever destiny the future has in store for our State and ourselves.

On December 8, 1860, Howell Cobb submits his resignation from Buchanan's cabinet, not without regret, but with conviction that he has no other choice.

His departure is just the first in a steady stream of set-backs coming at the President.

Chapter 261 - South Carolina Delivers An Ultimatum

Time: December 9, 1860

South Carolina Has Scheduled A Convention To Debate Secession

The next blow comes from South Carolina Governor William Gist, whose term is about to expire in five days.

Gist is a fierce supporter of secession, and has already scheduled a state convention for December 17 to debate the move.

But he fears that the federal government may attempt to delay or even stop the event before it can take place.

To prevent that possibility, he formulates an ultimatum directed at Buchanan and sends a delegation of South Carolina congressmen to meet with the President in Washington.

Time: December 10, 1860

Gist Tells Buchanan To Keep His Hands Off The Charleston Forts

Gist's main concern is that the firepower residing in four federal forts in Charleston harbor may be used to upset his plans.

To prevent that, his messengers tell Buchanan that "amicable arrangements" are still possible, but only if the administration makes no moves to reinforce the forts.

(South Carolina will) negotiate for an amicable arrangement of all matters between the State and the Federal Government, provided that no reinforcements shall be sent into those forts, and their relative military status shall remain as at present.

After that carrot comes the stick: if the status of the forts changes, Gist will send his State Militia troops in to seize them by force.

The South Carolinians walk away believing they have reached a "gentlemen's agreement" with Buchanan on their demand.

But soon enough the exact meaning of the phrase "relative military status" will come back into play.

Time: Mid-December 1860

Lincoln And Scott Also Begin To Focus On The Charleston Forts

While Buchanan dithers along, both Abraham Lincoln and General Winfield Scott ponder the proper response to the South Carolina demands.

Scott, at 74 years of age, remains the most famous soldier in America at the time.

He is a Virginian who joins the army as a Captain in 1808 and fights heroically in all the nation's conflicts from the War of 1812 through the Mexican War of 1846-47. After losing his presidential bid in 1852, he resumes his role as Commanding General of the U.S. Army.

In 1855, by a special act of Congress, he becomes the second 3-star Lieutenant General in history, after George Washington.

Scott does not yet know the President-elect, but says after assurances from his friend, Illinois congressman Elihu Washburn, that:

I wish to God that Mr. Lincoln was in office.

That's because he questions the "backbone" of Buchanan and the military competence and loyalty of Secretary of War, John Floyd.

For his part, Lincoln is crystal clear about the forts. He writes to Francis Blair, Sr.:

If the forts shall be given up before the inauguration, the General must retake them afterwards.

But both Scott and Lincoln recognize that the clock is ticking on the fate of Major Anderson, as he awaits concrete orders from Washington on how to defend his position and his troops.

Soon enough the decision will rest on Lincoln's shoulders.

Chapter 262 - A Panicked Congress Forms Select Committees To Avoid Disunion

Time: December 11, 1860

A Select “Committee Of 33” Is Formed In The House

At long last the possibility of an imminent end to the sacred Union sinks in to all members of Congress.

The response, predictably, is to form special committees in search of acceptable compromises.

The House leads the way here on December 11 by forming its “Committee of 33” comprising one member from each of the thirty-three states – with 18 Free and 15 Slave.



Thomas Corwin (1794-1865)

The Committee Chair is 66 year old Tom Corwin, former Governor and Senator of Ohio and Secretary of the Treasury under Fillmore before returning to his previously held House seat in 1859.

Corwin is known as the “peacemaker” in the chamber, although he comes to this task with a sense of dread.

I have never in my life seen my country in such a dangerous position.

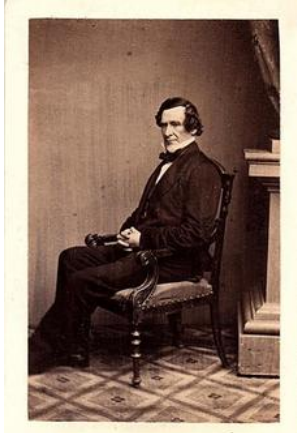
But the prospects for this group are apparent early on, when South Carolina and Florida refuse to attend, and four of the Republican members say they voted against having a committee in the first place.

Skepticism about the likely outcome abounds, with Know Nothing/American Party congressman Henry Winter Davis of Maryland labeling it...

A humbug...but as it will amuse men's minds it may do no harm.

Time: December 11-15, 1860

The Situation Continues To Unravel Around Buchanan



Jeremiah Black (1810-1883)

On the 11th, Buchanan also loses another cabinet member, as the decrepit Lewis Cass hands in his resignation. This results in a shift of Attorney General Jeremiah Black to Secretary of State and the addition of Edwin Stanton as the new AG.

He is a friend of Black and has helped research parts of the President's December 3 message to Congress. But more importantly, Stanton, a Democrat at the time, is also linked directly to Senator Henry Seward, who will serve in Lincoln's cabinet. This gives the Republican's a direct line into the workings of Buchanan's inner circle all the way up to the inauguration.



Edwin Stanton (1814-1869)

On December 12, the President names a reluctant former Governor of Maryland, Philip Thomas, to replace Howell Cobb as Treasury Secretary – a move that lasts less than five weeks before he too exits.

That same day, a caucus of seven Southern Senators and twenty-one Congressmen delivers more bad news, reporting that...

All hope of relief in the Union...is extinguished...the Republicans are resolute in the purpose to grant nothing that will or ought to satisfy the South.



Francis Pickens (1807-1869)

Then on December 14, a new Governor of South Carolina is sworn in to replace William Gist. He is Francis Pickens, cousin of the iconic John C. Calhoun, an ardent backer of the 1832 "nullification" movement, and eager to lead his state out of the Union.

Buchanan dispatches the "doughface" Caleb Cushing to Columbia to begin negotiations with Pickens, only to learn that he has already sent a letter demanding the surrender of the Charleston forts.

Hearing this, Republican Senator James Grimes of Iowa offers his view of conditions in the White House:

The whole cabinet is tumbling to pieces, and...Buchanan...about equally divides his time between praying and crying. Such a perfect imbecile never held office before.

Time: December 17-18, 1860

The Senate Sets Up A “Committee Of 13”



On December 17, 1860, a fiery speech by Ohio’s Benjamin Wade convinces the Senate that it cannot stand idly by as the Union dissolves and the threat of violent confrontation grows.

Wade warns Southerners that their outcries and demands will not force the Republicans to back down. As he says:

What have we to compromise? We went to the people...and we beat you upon the plainest and most palpable issue that ever was presented to the American people.

Benjamin Wade (1800-1878)

On December 18, 1860, the chamber responds by creating a “Committee of 13” to “inquire into grievances between the slaveholding and non-slaveholding states.”

The roster is star-studded and diverse in terms of regionality and party affiliation.

It is not by accident that two Kentucky men – Constitutional Unionist, John J. Crittenden, and Democrat, Lazarus Powell – are included. They represent the Border States, sitting between the lower South and the North, along with the tradition of Senator Henry Clay, the Great Compromiser of a prior generation.

Senators Named To The Committee Of Thirteen

Name	Age	State	Party
William Bigler	46	Pennsylvania	Democrat
Jacob Collamer	69	Vermont	Republican
John J. Crittenden	73	Kentucky	Constitutional Union
Jefferson Davis	52	Mississippi	Democrat
James Doolittle	45	Wisconsin	Republican
Stephen Douglas	47	Illinois	Democrat
James Grimes	44	Iowa	Republican
Robert MT Hunter	51	Virginia	Democrat
Lazarus Powell	48	Kentucky	Democrat
Henry Rice	44	Minnesota	Democrat
Henry Seward	59	New York	Republican
Robert Toombs	50	Georgia	Democrat
Benjamin Wade	60	Ohio	Republican

The priorities for the Committee of 13 are threefold:

- 1. To prevent secession in South Carolina, if that is still possible.*
- 2. To avoid any further departures, especially in the upper South.*
- 3. If disunion occurs, to avoid armed conflict and civil war.*

If these men cannot prevent disaster, it would seem no one can.

But here, as in the House, the start-up is hardly propitious, as Mississippi Senator Jefferson Davis labels the effort “a quack nostrum” and asks to be excused from serving. Pleas follow for him to change his mind, and he finally agrees to participate.

Chapter 263 - South Carolina Secedes From The Union

Time: December 17, 1860

The South Carolina Convention Opens

While Congress debates, the nation's eyes turn toward South Carolina where the state convention opens in Columbia at the local Baptist Church on December 17, 1860.

Roughly 170 delegates appear, including members chosen from many of the leading families in the state, men such as James Chestnut, R.B. Rhett, James Orr, Lawrence Keitt, William Gist and others.



David Jamison

Presiding is Judge David F. Jamison, a former member of the South Carolina legislature and state militia and also co-founder of two academies, The Citadel and The Arsenal.

A series of grievances are debated and agreed to. They include:

- The 1820 Missouri Compromise banning slavery south of 36°30'
- Disproportionate taxation levied on the region to run the federal government
- Denial of slaveholder access to western land they fought for in the Mexican War
- Persistent lack of Northern enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law
- Admission of the entire territory of California as a Free State
- Repeated attacks on Southern settlers in Kansas by abolitionists

But before the delegates agree by 159-0 to draft an Ordinance of Secession, the convention is interrupted by rumors of a potential outbreak of smallpox in Columbia – possibly the result of a plot originating in New York.

To avoid the risk, the delegates board a train on the morning of the 18th for a 120 mile ride southeast to Charleston, where they reconvene at the Institute Hall to resume business. The next day they move to a smaller and more secret venue at St. Andrew's Hall, with representatives from Mississippi and Alabama joining in.

Time: December 20, 1860

South Carolina Secedes!

The climax of their work comes at 1:07pm on December 20 when an Ordinance of Secession is read:

We the People of the State of South Carolina, in Convention assembled, do declare and ordain...that the union now subsisting under the name of 'The United States of America,' is hereby dissolved.

Voting on the motion is perfunctory at this point, and it carries 169-0.

After the delegates sign the declaration back at the Institute Hall, President Jamison intones:

I proclaim the State of South Carolina an Independent Commonwealth.

Upon hearing the news, the entire city of Charleston breaks out in celebrations. Bands play, militia units parade, bonfires are set, adults and children sing out.

No one knows what will happen next, but the heroic slogans and feelings of the 1776 revolution fill the air.

Chapter 264 - After The Fact, Congressional Committees Hear Compromise Proposals

Time: December 20, 1860

The Senate's "Committee Of 13" Focuses On The "Crittenden Compromise"

On the same day that South Carolina votes to secede, the second meeting of the Senate's "Committee of 13" designed to prevent that outcome hears a series of compromise proposals.

Included here are ideas from Southerners Jefferson Davis and Robert Toombs and Northerner Stephen Douglas.

But the leading contender is a very ambitious proposal set forth by the Border State member, John J. Crittenden of Kentucky, the most senior statesman present and the one man most determined to find a way to save the Union.



John J. Crittenden (1787-1863)

Crittenden calls upon Congress to once and for all end the sectional conflict over slavery by passing six amendments to the U.S. Constitution.

The centerpiece is a familiar plea to extend the 36°30' Missouri Compromise line across all the remaining western territories, with slavery prohibited to the north and allowed to the south until the settlers apply for statehood and declare their preference. Furthermore this type of "dividing line" would be applied to any new land "hereafter acquired" by the United States.

Southerners on the Committee of 13 applaud this idea, since it formally "recognizes" African slavery within the wording of the Constitution, and also appears to sanction the idea of new land (e.g. in Mexico, Cuba, etc.) where the institution might take hold.

Crittenden's other five amendments are also tilted toward the South. Congress would be forbidden to ban slavery in DC or on military posts or to interfere with selling slaves across state lines. It would vigorously enforce the return of run-aways and compensate owners for any lost slaves. And "no future amendments" would be allowed to change these commitments.

The Northern members of the Committee of 13 – especially the Republicans – see nothing to like about Crittenden's amendments and say so at the meeting.

Given the initial impasse, the Committee of 13 adjourns after agreeing to resume talks on December 26.

Sidebar: The Crittenden Compromise Amendments

Here is the exact wording proposed by JJ Crittenden:

1. Slavery would be prohibited in any [territory of the United States](#) "now held, or hereafter acquired," north of latitude [36 degrees, 30 minutes](#) line. In territories south of this line, slavery of the [African race](#) was "hereby recognized" and could not be interfered with by Congress. Furthermore, property in African slaves was to be "protected by all the departments of the territorial government during its continuance." States would be admitted to the Union from any territory with or without slavery as their constitutions provided.
2. Congress was forbidden to abolish slavery in places under its jurisdiction within a slave state such as a military post.
3. Congress could not abolish slavery in the District of Columbia so long as it existed in the adjoining states of Virginia and Maryland and without the consent of the District's inhabitants. Compensation would be given to owners who refused consent to abolition.
4. Congress could not prohibit or interfere with the interstate slave trade.
5. Congress would provide full compensation to owners of rescued fugitive slaves. Congress was empowered to sue the county in which obstruction to the fugitive slave laws took place to recover payment; the county, in turn, could sue "the wrong doers or rescuers" who prevented the return of the fugitive.
6. No future amendment of the Constitution could change these amendments or authorize or empower Congress to interfere with slavery within any slave state.

Time: December 20, 1860

The House “Committee Of 33” Considers The “Henry Winter Davis Compromise”

In the House, the Committee of 33 under Tom Corwin of Ohio is also struggling to find answers.

On December 17, 1860, Albert Rust of Arkansas and Thomas Nelson of Tennessee offer a Southern proposal which, like the Crittenden plan, would guarantee the presence of slavery in all territory south of the 36’30’ line. This so-called “Rust-Nelson Plan “is being discussed on December 20, when representative Henry Winter Davis of Maryland, announces a different option.



Davis argues for immediately creating one new state out of all the remaining western territory south of the 36°30' line, admitting it forthwith into the Union, and then allowing the settlers there to vote on a Free or Slave status. This approach mirrors the traditional Democratic Party call for “popular sovereignty” to decide the issue – and the fact that it comes from a slave state congressman, appears to shake the solidarity of the Southerners on the committee.

One Northerner who sees some hope in the Davis proposal is the Republican from Massachusetts, Charles Francis Adams. Along with some others, he believes the weather and soil across this New Mexico land would not support a plantation economy, so a popular vote is likely to go against slavery in the end.

Henry Winter Davis (1817-1865)

If other Republicans would join him in backing the Henry Winter Davis proposal, along with an amendment to the Constitution protecting slavery in all states where it currently exists, perhaps that compromise would save the Union and avoid a civil war.

Adams' next step lies in trying to convince his colleagues to get behind the Davis option.

Chapter 265 - The South Begins To Gear Up For War

Time: December 21, 1860

South Carolina Demands The Surrender Of Federal Property Including The Charleston Forts

Governor Francis Pickens wastes no time in taking charge over his “independent commonwealth.”

He sets up four committees, assigned to deal with engaging other slave states, finalizing a constitution, overseeing commercial matters and preparing to deal with foreign governments.

On December 21 he also names three envoys to negotiate with Washington over transferring all federally owned property in South Carolina to state control – including the customs house, post office, armory and forts in Charleston.

Prior to their departure, Pickens has already forwarded a letter on the matter to Buchanan that comes as another *ultimatum*, demanding that South Carolina troops be allowed into Ft. Sumter, and giving the President 24 hours to reply.

This letter not only shocks Buchanan, but also Senators Jefferson Davis and John Slidell and strategist Congressman Milledge Bonham. Their shared fear is that warfare will break out before the South has had time to properly prepare.

Together they apply pressure on Pickens to withdraw the letter, and he grudgingly agrees to do so.

However, by the time a conciliatory telegram from the Governor reaches Buchanan, he has already drafted a reply, consistent with his State of the Union principles, but delivered now with surprising temerity:

If South Carolina should attack any of these forts, she will then become the assailant in a war against the United States.

The President is greatly relieved by withdrawal of the ultimatum, responds by pocketing his response, and indicates his willingness to hold meeting with the South Carolina party, but only as “private citizens,” not as official envoys of a foreign government.

He also convenes a meeting of his revised cabinet to discuss the military situation in Charleston. This results in a vague and waffling message to Major Anderson, drafted by new Secretary of State, Jeremiah Black and signed by Secretary of War, John Floyd:

Exercise sound military discretion...It is neither expected nor desired that you should expose your own life or that of your men in a hopeless defense of these forts.

Time: December 22, 1860

Secretary Of War John Floyd Accused Of Conspiring With The South

More bad news visits Buchanan on December 22, this time regarding his Secretary of War, John Floyd.

Floyd is a genial man, well-liked by all, but with a reputation for sloppy financial management going all the way back to his days as Governor of Virginia. Whether he is corrupt or merely inept has been an open question, but now some \$870,000 worth of government bonds held in trust for Indian tribes are missing after a War Department audit.



John Floyd (1806-1863)

What's even worse, however, is evidence that Floyd has been shipping a steady stream of armaments to the South. In the Spring of 1860 he sends them 105,000 muskets and flintlocks along with 10,000 new rifles. This is followed in the Fall by a request for 10,000 additional weapons from secessionist South Carolina Governor William Gist. Here Floyd agrees to the sale as long as it is carried out in secrecy.

Taken together, critics conclude that he is engaged in treason and they demand that Buchanan fire him.

The President asks for Floyd's resignation, but he requests time to clear his name. This lasts for six more days, during which time he issues military orders which move more arms and troops into Southern states.

The end comes on December 28, when he tenders his resignation under the face-saving guise that his advice on managing the situation in Charleston is no longer being followed.

Charges of fraud and conspiracy are brought against Floyd in March 1861, but a DC court exonerates him. Instead the blame bleeds over onto Buchanan, who is accused even more vocally of being a puppet for the South.

After the war breaks out, Floyd will be named a Brigadier General in the Confederate Army, and given command of Ft. Donelson, a critical garrison on the Tennessee River. There he demonstrates his ineptitude as a military man when the fort falls in February 1862, and he is permanently relieved of field duty.

Chapter 266 - Major Robert Anderson's Heroic Move To Sumter Shocks All Sides

Time: December 26, 1860

Major Anderson Takes It Upon Himself To Concentrate At Ft. Sumter



Charleston Harbor In 1860-61

With all of Charleston calling upon the state militia to seize the harbor forts, Major Robert Anderson awaits orders from Washington that will allow him to leave his assigned post at Ft. Moultrie and move to Ft. Sumter.

His patience finally runs out, and he decides that the December 21 telegram saying he should "exercise sound military discretion" is sufficient cause to act.

He develops a plan to concentrate all of his men and movable arms at Sumter, and hopes to execute it on Christmas Day, under cover of the holiday celebrations. But the city is hit with a downpour, and he delays until December 26.

His first deception involves loading women and children at Ft. Johnson onto three schooners – along with a hidden cargo of provisions and weapons – and sending them in the direction of his home base at Ft. Moultrie, before diverting them at the last second to land at Sumter. This passes without incident.

As evening approaches, Anderson informs his staff of his intent to shift all 60 men in the garrison to Sumter that night. He assigns Captain John Foster and surgeon Samuel Crawford and

several others to form a rear guard, with orders to fire the fort's five heavy Columbiad cannons at the rebels, should they try to impede his boats. If not, they were to spike the guns and follow the crossing.

Captain Abner Doubleday forms his troops and has them row the one mile from Moultrie to Sumter. He is followed by Captain Truman Smith's company, then by the rear guard, and other boats carrying more supplies.

By nightfall, the full contingent in the fort includes 10 officers and 75 enlisted men, another 55 laborers who have been working there and are deemed to be "loyal" to the Union, and roughly 40 women and children. He also has provisions that he hopes can last for 40 days.

This is far from an ideal outcome, but at least Anderson feels secure for the time being.

That's because Ft. Sumter is an engineering masterpiece, with construction beginning in 1829 and enhancements ongoing in 1860. Its foundation is a natural sandbar in mid-channel, which had been covered by some 70,000 tons of New Hampshire granite. This supports a five-sided fort, 190 feet in circumference, with concrete walls 5 feet thick and almost 50 feet tall.

When Anderson arrives it boasts 60 cannon, albeit almost all pointed out to sea rather than back toward the surrounding land. With diligent work over the next three months he will reposition 51 of them to target the hostile batteries that surround him.

Anderson sends a telegram to Washington, reporting his move.

I have the honor to report that I have just completed, by the blessing of God, the removal to this fort of all of my garrison...as necessary to prevent the effusion of blood.

Time: December 27, 1860

Anderson's Move Stuns The White House

Buchanan first learns of Anderson's move when Southern Senators Jefferson Davis and Robert Hunter show up at the White House on December 27 to demand an explanation.

After Secretary of War confirms the news, the President tells his visitors:

I call God to witness – you gentlemen better than anybody else know that this is not only without but against my orders. It is against my policy.

They respond by accusing him of breaking the "December 10 agreement" to maintain the status quo in the harbor, and demand that he sack Major Anderson and return the Sumter garrison to Ft. Moultrie.

An evening cabinet meeting to formulate a response leads to a clash between War Secretary John Floyd, on his last day in office, and Secretary of State Black. When Floyd's calls for abandoning all the forts in Charleston, Black fires back accuses Floyd of cowardice.

An ever reluctant President finally sides with Black in supporting Anderson's move.

Time: December 27, 1860

South Carolina Responds To Anderson's Movement By Seizing The Other Forts



South Carolina Governor Francis Pickens is also outraged by Anderson's and immediately sends Colonel Johnston Pettigrew to meet with Anderson at Sumter. In response to the demand to return to Ft. Moultrie, Anderson replies:

I cannot and will not go back

To punctuate his refusal, Anderson orders the band to play the Star Spangled Banner as Pettigrew exits the fort.

Johnston Pettigrew (1828-1863)

Hearing the news, Pickens orders out the state militia to seize the other federal forts, beginning with Castle Pinckney.

At 4pm on December 27, 1860, Pettigrew and his troops arrive there to find Lt. Dick Meade manning the facility by himself. When Pettigrew begins to read aloud a proclamation from the Governor to assume control of the fort, Meade interrupts, saying that he does not recognize Pickens authority in the matter. Once he has occupied the site, Pettigrew offers Meade a "parole," but Meade declines and, in the military courtesies of the era, he is allowed to rejoin Anderson at Sumter.

With Pinckney secure, Lt. Colonel W. G. DeSaussure and a 200 man militia force occupy Ft. Moultrie without opposition, while other raiders take Ft. Johnson and the Charleston arsenal.

Once the Stars & Stripes have been lowered and the Palmetto flag of South Carolina hoisted, a first red-line is crossed in the national conscience. The rhetoric of secession becomes the reality of an overt, albeit still relatively passive, act of war. The United States is no longer one nation, and that fact will soon hugely amplify the level of anger and hostility felt throughout the North.

From December 27, 1860 forward, the possibility for a compromise becomes almost impossible.

Chapter 267 - The Select Congressional Committees Fail To Find A Compromise

Time: December 28, 1860

Buchanan Stalls For Time And The “Crittenden Compromise” Stalls Out Completely

News of South Carolina’s seizure of the secondary forts arrives in DC on the morning of December 28, along with the three envoys Pickens has chosen arrive to confer with Buchanan as “private gentlemen,” not officials of a foreign nation. He ducks the meeting, telling them:

You are pressuring me too importunately. You don’t give me time to consider, you don’t give me time to say my prayers. I always say my prayers when required to act upon any great State affair.

That same day the prestigious Senate “Committee of 13” meets for a fourth and final working session.

Several variations on Crittenden’s Compromise framework and wording are debated, but is soon becomes clear that an impasse has been reached.

Georgia Senator Robert Toombs makes a final motion:

Resolved, that this Committee has not been able to agree upon any plan of general adjustment and (will) report that fact to the Senate, together with the journal of the Committee, and ask to be discharged.

No one is more dismayed by this outcome than Kentucky Senator John J. Crittenden.

He is convinced that the Republicans still fail to understand that the South is not bluffing and that disunion and civil war will follow unless a compromise is found in time. He also believes that a national referendum would demonstrate support for his six amendment plan. If only party politics weren’t in the way.

(Republicans) are disposed to believe that the threatening appearances in the South will pass away...I firmly believe that a great majority of the people would accept my plan of settlement, but its fate must be decided here and by a party vote...God help us! I mean still to struggle for peace & union.”

Time: December 29, 1860

The “Henry Winter Davis Compromise” Fails To Gain Southern Support In The House

Given the events in South Carolina and the collapse of negotiations in the Senate, the only congressional proposal left standing on December 29 is the “Henry Winter Davis Compromise” in the House.

In addition to a Constitutional amendment to permanently protect slavery in states where it currently exists, it would provide a framework for dealing with all of the “territorial land” in the west still controlled by the federal government.

The answer being to extend a 36’30” line through all of the western land, create one mega-state to the South labeled New Mexico, and then have settlers there vote on a Slave State or Free State designation.

The proposal appears to be bi-partisan in nature, with Davis a Democrat from the Slave State of Maryland joined by Charles Francis Adams a Republican from the Free State of Maryland. Although both men are known as outspoken opponents of slavery.

On December 29, 1860, members of the Committee of 33 approve the Davis Bill by a narrow 12-10 margin, and Chairman Thomas Corwin commits to taking it to the full House in January, 1861.

The vote, however, is misleading since only one Southern member casts a ballot while the other fourteen simply drop out. This assures an eventual loss in the full Congress.

Time: December 31, 1860

The Year Ends With A Growing Sense of Doom

As 1860 comes to a close, President Buchanan is not alone in feeling like events are spinning out of control around him.

On December 29, he decides to shift his Postmaster General, the fiercely pro-Union Kentuckian, Joseph Holt, into the War Secretary slot vacated by John Floyd, and replace him with his assistant, Horatio King.

King expresses his fears for the capital city itself.

I feel as though we are on the verge of civil war, and I should not be surprised if this city is under the military control of the disunionists in less than one month!

Several Republicans go even farther. Maine Senator, William Fessenden, says that Buchanan...

Is frightened out of his wits and in the hands of traitors. It is rumored that Mr. Lincoln's inauguration is to be prevented by force, though I can hardly believe the secessionists are so mad as to attempt it."

Henry Seward tells Lincoln:

The cabinet is again in danger of explosion...The plot is forming to seize the capital and usurp the Government, and it has abettors near the President. I am writing you not from rumors, but knowledge.

With General Winfield Scott breathing down his neck to immediately send 250 troops to Sumter and strengthen the defenses in Washington, Buchanan turns to Jeremiah Black now serving at State to formulate a response to the South Carolina envoys.

Black calls Major Anderson a "gallant and meritorious officer...(who) has saved the country...when its day was darkest and its peril most extreme." This finally stiffens the President's spine, as reflected in the reply to South Carolina he drafts on their demand to withdraw from the forts:

This I cannot do; this I will not do. Such an idea was never thought of by me in any possible contingency.

So ends 1860 with South Carolina having seceded and occupying the secondary forts in Charleston; an undermanned federal force under Major Anderson hunkered down at Sumter; a Congress unable to find a viable compromise; and a sober nation pondering whether it wants to fight a bloody civil war over expanding slavery in the west.

Chapter 268 - The Supply Ship *Star Of The West* Is Fired Upon At Charleston Harbor

Time: January 2, 1861

Buchanan Rejects Commissioners from South Carolina Demanding Surrender of Sumter



Joseph Holt (1897-1894)

Hearing Buchanan's refusal on Sumter, the three South Carolina commissioners – James Orr (ex-Speaker of the U.S. House), ex-Senator Robert Barnwell, and ex-Governor, James H. Adams – author a highly accusatory letter that is delivered on New Year's Day.

Major Anderson waged war....No other words will describe his action...You have resolved to hold by force what you have obtained through our misplaced confidence, and by refusing to disavow the action of Anderson, have converted his violation of orders into a legitimate act of your executive authority...By your course you have probably rendered civil war inevitable.

On January 2, the President resorts to a traditional diplomatic snub by sending a note to the three envoys saying that he refuses to accept their reply.

By that time, however, they are already on their way back to South Carolina.

Buchanan then convenes another cabinet meeting to settle on next steps.

Time: January 5, 1861

Holt And Scott Convince Buchanan To Reinforce Sumter And Washington City



Charles P. Stone (1824-1887)

The cabinet session leads to a dramatic turn of events that will impact the course of the conflict over the next four months.

With Buchanan's approval, the new Secretary of War, Joseph Holt, reaches out to General Winfield Scott to determine how best to deliver needed aid to Ft. Sumter and also protect the capital.

Scott is ahead of Holt on both tasks.

Holt learns that the old General has just assigned Charles P. Stone, a Captain under Scott during the 1847 assault on Mexico City, to the position of Inspector General for DC, accountable for assessing current defenses in the city and strengthening them. Stone quickly expresses concern about the forces in Maryland, and Scott responds by adding more loyal troops and artillery to Ft. Washington, south of the city.

At the same time, the Virginian Scott writes directly to Lincoln assuring him of his loyalty to the Union.

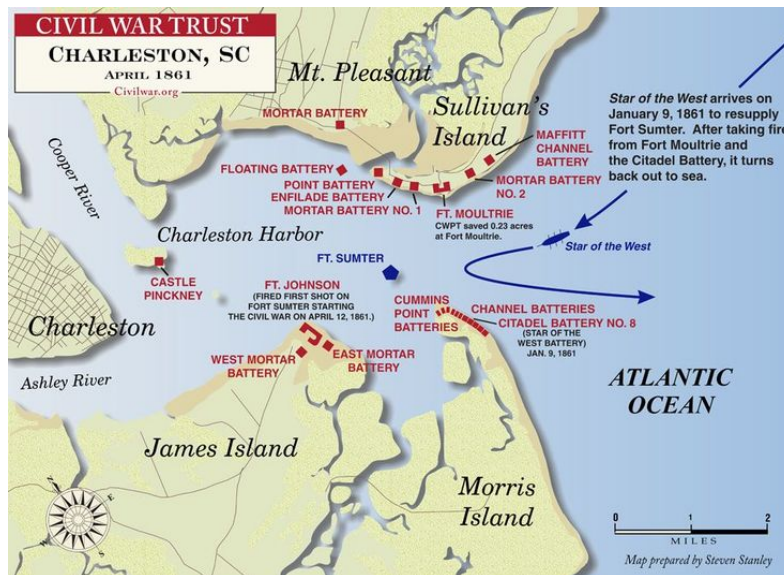
Scott has also readied the sloop *Brooklyn* with 200 troops and ninety days of provisions to sail from Fort Monroe at the southern tip of the Virginia peninsula once approval is given.

But upon further discussions with Holt, Scott settles on an alternative, a lighter and faster merchant side-wheeler, the *Star of the West*.

On the night of January 5, 1861, the *Star* slips out of New York harbor under a tight cloak of secrecy.

Time: January 9, 1861

South Carolina Fires On The *Star Of The West* Supply Ship



Map Showing The Path Of The *Star Of The West* Trying To Re-supply Ft. Sumter

While attempts are made to recall *Star*, the order goes out too late. The result is that the vessel arrives at 1:30am on January 9, 1861, outside the mouth of Charleston harbor. The lone light visible to Captain John McGowan, comes from Ft. Sumter, and *Star* drops anchor to its west and waits for sunrise to proceed.

Around 6:20am McGowan ups anchor and heads toward Sumter, flying the Stars & Stripes.

This move is met by cannon fire from a South Carolina battery at Cummings Point on the tip of Morris Island. One shot bounces off the *Star*'s rudder and another strikes her toward the bow and just above the waterline.

Following instructions, the captain runs up a separate flag intended to signal Major Anderson of the attack. The *Star* then tacks back eastward barely out of range of six guns, which fire at them from Ft. Moultrie.

The dual barrage has come without any warning and without any defensive response from Ft. Sumter.

But the officers at Sumter are unaware that a supply ship is coming and are at first confused by the fact that it is a merchant vessel, not a military sloop armed to defend itself.

Once the gunfire registers, Major Anderson beats the long roll and the garrison springs to its assigned duties. There is, however, little to be done against Morris Island, since none of Sumter's four guns pointed that way could reach the shore.

This is not the case with Ft. Moultrie, which is well within range of two 42-pounder pointed its way.

While Anderson ponders whether he has the latitude to fire until Sumter itself is attacked, the *Star of the West* moves out of the channel to safety.

Coverage in the *Charleston Mercury* applauds to outcome:

The first gun of the new struggle for independence has been fired, and federal power has received its first repulse.

Chapter 269 - Three More Southern States Secede Amid Calls For Calm

Time: January 9-11, 1860

Other States Follow South Carolina's Lead

Once word of the confrontation in Charleston Harbor spreads, the gates open for other states to follow South Carolina's lead, and three do so in quick order:

Secession Timing: First Four

Dates	States
December 20, 1860	South Carolina
January 9, 1861	Mississippi
January 10, 1861	Florida
January 11, 1861	Alabama

The Mississippi convention delegates vote 83-15 in favor of disunion, with an ordinance declaring:

We embrace the alternative of separation; and for the reasons here stated, we resolve to maintain our rights with the full consciousness of the justice of our course, and the undoubting belief of our ability to maintain it.

A celebration accompanies the decision: "Oxford is brilliantly illuminated...and bells are ringing, and guns are being fired. Three cheers for our gallant State!!"

At Tallahassee, Florida passes its ordinance by a 62-7 margin. A special state flag created to mark the departure reads: "The Rights of the South at All Hazards."

Alabama meets at its Montgomery on January 11, with pro-Unionist supporters in the northern districts making for a closer 61-39 vote to secede.

At this point a total of three Slave States have opted out with twelve more yet to be heard from.

Time: January 11, 1860

Jefferson Davis Seeks A Pause To Prepare For Possible War

Once Mississippi secedes, its Senator Jefferson Davis anticipates that Florida, Alabama and others will follow, and that an independent Southern confederation will be established, along the lines of that proposed thirty years ago by John C. Calhoun.

Davis is, however, uncertain about the likely response from the existing federal government. Will it allow a peaceful exit or attempt to stop it by force? If the latter, the seceding states will need time to organize a command structure and prepare to defend itself.

His fear is that the volatile events ongoing in Charleston Harbor may explode into widespread civil war before the southern coalition is prepared to fight.

The man in the middle of this at the moment is South Carolina Governor Pickens who continues to send threatening messages to Major Anderson at Ft. Sumter.

Davis and his military advisors decide to try to convince him to “pause” for the time being.

Time: January 11, 1860

Pickens And Anderson Arrive At A Plan

Still without orders from Washington, Anderson sends Lt. Norman Hall ashore with a message denouncing the attack on the *Star*, and stating his intent to turn his guns on any further interference from the rebel batteries.

Pickens replies that the “first act of positive hostility” was Anderson’s move from Moultrie to Sumter, and thus the repulse of the supply ship was fully justified.

But Picken’s military advisors also warn him that a bloody siege will be needed to reduce Sumter, and that the return fire from Anderson’s troops will do severe damage to the other city defenses.

Still Pickens decides to make one more attempt to capture the fort with rhetoric. On January 11, 1861, his envoys arrive with a letter demanding his surrender. Anderson reads it and replies on the spot:

I cannot do what belongs to the Government to do. The demand must be made upon them and I appeal to you as a Christian, as a man, and as a fellow country-man, to do all you can to prevent an appeal to arms.

He then makes a suggestion that will profoundly affect the national struggle, proposing to...

Send an officer, with a messenger from the Governor, to Washington (and) will do anything that is possible and honorable to prevent an appeal to arms.

Governor Pickens is delighted by this outcome, and Lt. Norman Hall and Isaac W. Hayne, the South Carolina Attorney General, depart for DC that same day.

The effect of Anderson's action will be the desired "pause" which gives both sides the opportunity to contemplate their next moves.

Time: January 2, 1860

Henry Seward Attempts To Deescalate The Tension

On January 12, another voice at the center of the turmoil is heard in the upper chamber.

It belongs to Senator Henry Seward of New York, assumed by all to be headed into Lincoln's cabinet, and by many to emerge as the real power behind the presidency.

Seward warns the packed assembly of the perils that would follow Disunion. It would mean...

Perpetual civil war...(and) not only arrest, but also extinguish, the greatness of this country.

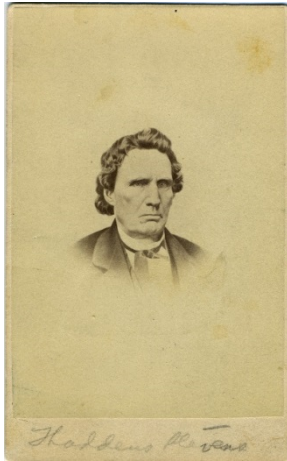
That said, his audience awaits word from Seward on how the crisis will be averted.

But he has little to offer. He states his willingness to support iron clad protections maintaining slavery in states where it already exists, and offers up the notion of routing transatlantic railroads along both southern and northern routes to help bind the nation together around commerce.

Beyond that, his plea is simply for "calm" – a call not dissimilar from that issued by Jefferson Davis before him.

Those most distressed by Seward's remarks are the Northern abolitionists, or "ultras." In addition to second term Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts, who despises Seward as a "compromiser," the acerbic Pennsylvanian, Thaddeus Stevens, has this to say:

I listened to every word, and by the living God, I have heard nothing.



Thaddeus Stevens (1792-1868)

An exasperated Seward tells his wife at the time:

I am the only hopeful, calm, conciliatory person here.

For those, particularly in the military, who see a much greater and more immediate threat from the South the question is whether either Seward or Lincoln really grasp the danger. This uncertainty will continue as the transition of power draws nearer.

Chapter 270 - Florida Threatens To Seize Ft. Pickens

Time: 1834 Forward

History Of The Fort

Suddenly another Southern challenge appears, this time relative to Ft. Pickens.

The fort is a pentagonal structure located on Santa Rosa Island below the city of Pensacola in the far western Florida panhandle.

Its history goes back to 1834 when the United States was continuing to strengthen its seaside defenses after the War of 1812. It was named after Andrew Pickens, a hero of the Revolutionary War before serving as a member of the U.S. House from South Carolina.

Once constructed it is largely neglected.

Troops are no longer even garrisoned there since after the Mexican War, and a fire in 1858 destroys much of the interior.

Still it remains symbolic of federal control over Florida after the state's January 10 secession.

Time: January 15, 1860

A Momentary Reprieve Follows An Ultimatum To Surrender The Fort

In command of all federal forces around Pensacola at the time is 32 year old Lt. Adam Slemmer.

He hears rumors of impending hostilities as early as January 7, but has no orders from Washington on how to proceed. So, like Robert Anderson at Ft. Sumter, Slemmer decides to act on his own.

He abandons Ft. Barrancas, located on land overlooking Pensacola Harbor -- spiking the guns there, and consolidating his small accumulation of 51 soldiers and 30 sailors at Ft. Pickens.

On January 15, an emissary sent by Florida Governor Madison Perry arrives with a demand that Slemmer surrender and evacuate the fort.



Adam Slemmer (1828-1868)

Slemmer refuses and prepares for a fight.

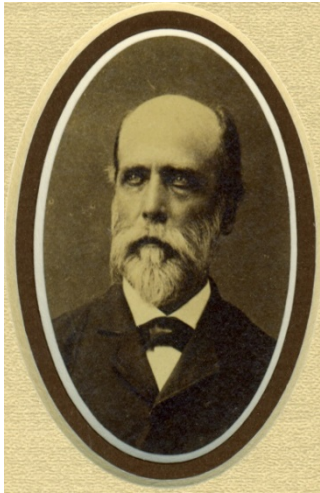
Unbeknownst to him, what prevents an immediate battle is a message from Davis and his military strategists waving Governor Perry off from any immediate action.

We think no assault should be made. The possession of the fort is not worth one drop of blood to us. Measures pending unite us in this opinion. Bloodshed now may be fatal to our cause.

Chapter 271 - Senate Resignations Provoke More Last Ditch Efforts To Preserve Peace

Time: January 21, 1861

The First Ten Southern Senators Resign



Alfred Iverson (1798-1873)

As Southern states secede from the Union, so too do their representatives in Congress.

These departures have relatively little effect in the House, already dominated by Northerners. But in the Senate they will quickly begin to swing the balance of voting power to the Northern Republicans.

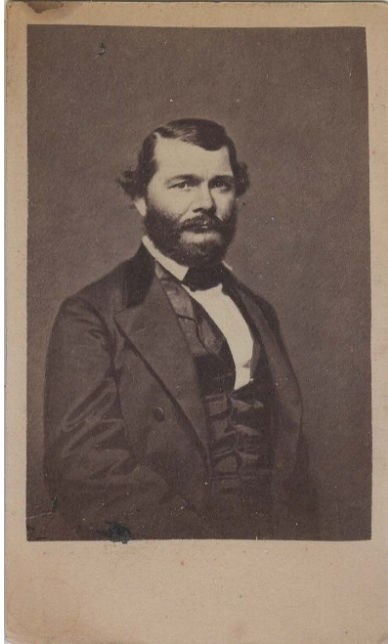
On January 21, the roster of exiting Southern Senators reaches nine – as Mississippi's Jefferson Davis and Florida's David Yulee and Stephen Mallory withdraw.

When Georgia's Alfred Iverson departs a week later, he offers a stern warning to the North:

In whatever shape you attack us, we will fight you. You may whip us but we will not stay whipped.

Time: January 21-24, 1861

The Politicians Continue Their Quest To Save The Union



Beriah Magoffin (1815-1875)

Despite the dwindling odds, several long-time Washington politicians continue their efforts to save the Union.

To most it appears certain that the seven states across the Lower South – from South Carolina through Texas -- will secede.

But that still leaves eight other Slave States yet to decide, including Virginia, seemingly a bellwether for the Upper South. If a plan can be worked out to retain this group, perhaps it will prompt the others to consider a peaceful return.

Various political insiders take up this cause.

One is Kentucky Governor Beriah Magoffin, a southern sympathizer, who eventually supports the “neutrality status” favored by the state assembly when the war breaks out. Magoffin tries to rally support for a constitutional amendment to repeal any state laws opposing enforcement of the fugitive slave act.

When this fails, Magoffin lines up behind his fellow Kentuckian, John J. Crittenden, who continues to believe that a national referendum will show that the public prefers his plan to Disunion and the prospect of civil war.

On January 21, 1861, Crittenden’s surrogate in the House, Indiana’s William English, puts the legislation up for a vote. The resounding 92-60 rejection is another blow for all bills – including the prior “Henry Davis Winter Compromise” -- that hinge on extending the old 36°30’ demarcation line to the west coast. Even the tenacious Tom Corwin of Ohio begins to despair:

If the States are no more harmonious in their feelings and opinions than these...representative men, then appalling as the idea is, we must dissolve & a long & bloody civil war must follow. I cannot comprehend the madness of the times....God alone I fear can help us.

But then another septuagenarian, ex-President John Tyler of Virginia, volunteers to try his hand at a solution.

The controversial Tyler has been out of politics for fifteen years, after becoming the nation’s first “accidental President” upon the death in 1841 of William Henry Harrison. While elected as a Whig, Tyler’s policy actions in office favor the Democrats, and by 1842 he is regarded as a

turncoat. Neither party will run him for re-election in 1844, and he heads home to plantation life along the James River.

On January 24, however, he is back in Washington, calling upon Buchanan and urging him to support a Peace Conference he is arranging for February 4 to consider a “Virginia Plan” to save the Union.

The President ultimately agrees to go along with Tyler’s proposal.

Chapter 272 - A Northern Controlled Congress Admits Kansas As A Free State

Time: January 1861

Southern Departures Hand Senate Control Over To The Republicans

The roster of Southern senators who have resigned or been expelled includes many influential leaders.

Senator	State	Exit Date	How
James Chestnut	SC	Nov 10, '60	Withdrew
James Hammond	SC	Nov 11, '60	Withdrew
John Breckinridge	Ky	Dec 4, '60	Expelled
Waldo Johnson	MO	Jan 10, '61	Expelled
Trustan Polk	MO	Jan 10, '61	Expelled
Albert Brown	Miss	Jan 12, '61	Withdrew
Jefferson Davis	Miss	Jan 21, '61	Withdrew
David Yulee	Fla	Jan 21, '61	Withdrew
Stephen Mallory	Fla	Jan 21, '61	Withdrew
Alfred Iverson	Ga	Jan 28, '61	Withdrew

Their departures further widen the North's voting control in the Senate and open the door to a re-introduction of a bill to admit the Kansas Territory to the Union as a Free State – under the terms of the Wyandotte Constitution.

Time: January 29, 1861

Kansas Is Finally Admitted As A State

A total of four State Constitutions have been written for Kansas since the Territory is first opened.

Kansas Constitutions

Title	Written By	Date
Topeka	Free State Party	December 15, 1855
Lecompton	Pro-Slavery Party	November 7, 1857
Leavenworth	Free State Party	April 3, 1858
Wyandotte	Free State Party	March 29, 1859

The most famous by far is the Lecompton Constitution, codified in November 1857 by the “Bogus Legislature” comprising mostly Pro-Slavery forces residing in Missouri.

For two years, Buchanan tries repeatedly to force Lecompton through the Congress before it finally goes down to defeat in August 1858 – along with the President’s hopes for re-election and the chances of avoiding a fatal North-South schism in the Democrat Party.

The Wyandotte Constitution backtracks sharply from its Leavenworth predecessor which promised to welcome blacks into the state, integrate them into public schools and even vote on the possibility of handing them the right to vote.

While all of those prospects disappear in Wyandotte, at least the prohibition against blacks becoming state residents (present in the initial Topeka version) is voted down by a margin of 10,421 to 5,530.

Ironically after four years of stubborn resistance, Buchanan signs a bill on January 29, 1861 admitting Kansas as the 34th entry into the (collapsing) Union under the Free State Wyandotte Constitution.

Chapter 273 - Pressures On Buchanan Continue To Mount

Time: January 29, 1861

A New "Threat To The Flag" Materializes In New Orleans



John Dix (1798-1879)

On January 29, Buchanan's newly appointed Secretary of the Treasury, John Dix, receives a telegraph message saying that secessionist forces are threatening a U.S. revenue ship around the port of New Orleans – and that the captain seems to be putting up little resistance.

Dix responds with the brand of fighting zeal that will mark his coming role as a Major General in the Union Army.

He sends an unequivocal order to a still-thought-to-be loyal lieutenant aboard the cutter:

If anyone attempts to haul down the American flag, shoot him on the spot.

This quote is quickly picked up by the nation's 3,000 newspapers, making Dix an overnight hero across the North and fanning the flames of patriotism.

Like "Old Bob" Anderson at Sumter, Dix is ready to stand tall in support of the flag.

Time: January 31, 1861

The "Pause" At Ft. Sumter Ends Abruptly

Two days after Kansas is admitted, Buchanan's most pressing crisis intensifies as the two messengers from Charleston – Hayne and Hall -- arrive with a message from Governor Pickens.

In it, Pickens first demands that Major Anderson abandon Ft. Sumter, after which he offers to buy it from the United States government!

Buchanan is taken aback by the proposal and intends to tell Hayne that Presidents have no authority to sell property. Before he can do that he finds that both men have already departed for Charleston.

But this latest exchange signals the end of the momentary "pause" created by Major Anderson.

Time: February 1, 1860

Three More Southern States Secede

On February 1, Texas joins Georgia and Louisiana in the latest parade of states leaving the Union.

Secession Timing: First Seven

1860	States
December 20	South Carolina
1861	
January 9	Mississippi
January 10	Florida
January 11	Alabama
January 19	Georgia
January 26	Louisiana
February 1	Texas

The Georgia Convention is held in Milledgeville with ex-Whig Governor George Crawford presiding. Three key state politicians – Howell Cobb, Robert Toombs and Alexander Stephens – have for years held out against efforts by South Carolina and John C. Calhoun to rebel against Northern transgressions.

But now they support the ordinance and it passes by a 208-89 count, with all three men soon destined to play key roles in the new Southern government.

Louisiana delegates gathered at Baton Rouge follow with a 113-17 vote in favor of the exit.

In the convention in Austin, pleas against joining a Southern confederacy by Sam Houston, the aging co-founder of the Republic of Texas in 1836, go unheeded, and the ordinance carries by 166-8. At this point Houston simply favors returning to “independent nation” status rather than getting entangled with other states in a possible losing war.

Time: February 3, 1861

Virginia Settles On A “Wait And See” Plan At Its State Convention



John Letcher (1813-1884)

All eyes now turn to Virginia which opens its convention to discuss secession in Richmond, two day after Texas exits.

The state’s history cries out for it to remain loyal, given its role in founding the Union, fighting for it under George Washington, and then begetting four of its first five presidents.

“Staying in” is the majority feeling among the delegates on February 3, 1861. It is also the preference of Governor John Letcher, who replaces the fiery secessionist, Henry Wise, on January 1, 1860, and also of John Janney, president of the convention and a founder of the Constitutional Union Party.

Still Wise has his pro-secession supporters, perhaps a third of those present, who are convinced that the Black Republicans intend to abolish slavery altogether once Lincoln takes power.

What further complicates matters is that those who are viscerally pro-Union, are divided as to the level of their commitment.

Some, like Congressman John Carlile, are unequivocal in condemning secession.

It is the result sir, of mature deliberation, concocted in treason, for the express purpose of breaking up constitutional liberty in this country... The plot was one that was conceived in perjury at Washington, and carried out by falsehood throughout the country, attended by coercion, intimidation, insult and a reign of terror, which was equally concerted throughout Virginia, as well as in the other Southern States.

(Carlile will ultimately lead a break-away movement in June 1861 that becomes the pro-Union state of West Virginia.)

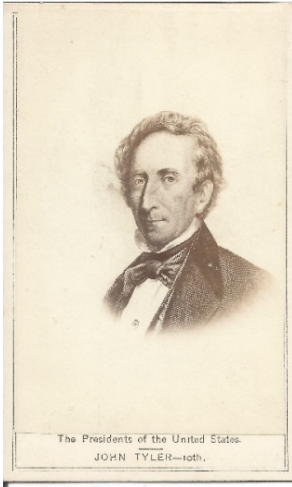
Other Virginians, the “Conditional Unionists,” adopt more of a “wait and see” attitude -- their key litmus test being whether or not Lincoln withholds the use of force in South Carolina.

Given these divisions, the convention is suspended with a target date of April 17 set to resume.

Chapter 274 - Ex-President John Tyler's National Peace Conference Meets In Washington

Time: February 4, 1861

The “Old Gentlemen’s Convention” Opens



John Tyler (1790-1862)

On February 4, 1861 John Tyler's Peace Conference convenes in the capital, after being endorsed by Buchanan two weeks earlier.

All told, the event draws 131 men to the prestigious Willard Hotel, some four blocks east of the White House. The assembly is nothing if not prestigious, with a list of “former” elites including: 50 congressmen, 14 senators, 19 governors, 12 Supreme Court justices, 6 cabinet members and, of course, one former U.S. President, John Tyler.

Republicans initially plan to boycott the conference, but then decide they must appear in order to counter any possible stampede toward secession that might materialize. Thus the Northern attendees include party members such as Salmon Chase, William Fessenden, David Wilmot, Stephen Logan and others.

Fourteen Free States are represented along with seven Slave States.

Critics of the affair immediately christen it the “Old Gentlemen’s Convention,” with 74 attendees being fifty years or older, and 19 into their seventies.

Time: February 6, 1861

A Committee Is Formed To Save The Union By Saving The Upper South

The hope going into the convention is that Tyler will announce his plan for keeping his home state of Virginia in the Union.

In turn that outcome might suffice to keep the other seven states in the Upper South from exiting, and even convince the eight that have already left to return.

Secession Status As Of February 6, 1861

Already Out	Still In
South Carolina	Virginia
Mississippi	Delaware
Florida	Maryland
Alabama	North Carolina
Georgia	Kentucky
Louisiana	Tennessee
Texas	Missouri
	Arkansas
(7)	(8)

But no such proposal comes from Tyler in his opening remarks to the attendees.

Instead he offers a perfunctory statement that his intent is not to bury the Union but to save it:

The country is in danger (and) one must take the place assigned him in the great work of reconciliation and adjustment....You have before you, gentlemen, a task...to snatch from ruin a great and glorious Confederation, to preserve the Government, and to renew and invigorate the Constitution.

With that said, administrative matters follow leading predictably to the formation of yet another committee to search for a fresh solution.

The chairman is James Guthrie of Kentucky, ex-Treasury Secretary under Pierce and Buchanan and a dedicated Union man.

He is joined by one representative from each of the twenty other attending states. Together they will spend the next two weeks going back and forth, getting nowhere.

Chapter 275 - The Confederate States Of America Are Founded

Time: February 4, 1861

The Seven Seceding States Meet In Montgomery

On the same day that Tyler's Peace Conference is meeting in Washington, the states that have already left the Union meet in Montgomery, Alabama, to confront the prospects of war.

It is the 60 year old fire-eater from South Carolina, Robert B. Rhett, who anticipates the need for this Southern Convention, and he goes about organizing it.

It begins on February 4 in the Senate Chamber of the Alabama legislature, with 37 delegates present.

They see their task much like that of the founding fathers: first to assert their independence; second to write a Constitution and form up a new government; third to agree on a plan to proceed in lockstep in response to whatever reactions occur in Washington.

Those gathered consider themselves conservative by nature, disinclined to embrace the hot-heated stances prevalent in South Carolina.

They choose Howell Cobb, who resigned as Buchanan's Treasury Secretary back on December 8, as president of the convention. They then look to another Georgian, the 5' tall, 95 lb. dynamo and friend of Lincoln, Alexander Stephens, to orchestrate the proceedings.

Strident men like Rhett and Lawrence Keitt are present, but they are held in check by others, including Jefferson Davis who tracks events from his home in Mississippi.

Time: February 7-9, 1861

A Constitution Is Completed And A Name Chosen

All meetings are held in secret, and action follows swiftly.

By the fourth day, February 7, the delegates pass a Constitution, largely the work of the German born Christopher Gustavus Memminger, who will go on to serve as Treasury Secretary in the new government he helps codify.

The work itself mirrors the 1787 US document, on the grounds that it served the nation well until the Black Republicans decided to violate it.

Still there are a few alterations, chief among them an explicit guarantee of slavery in Article I, Section IX:

No...law denying or impairing the right of property in negro slaves shall be passed.

Other articles try to overtly harness federal power vis a vis the sovereign states.

Thus the President will be limited to one six year term.

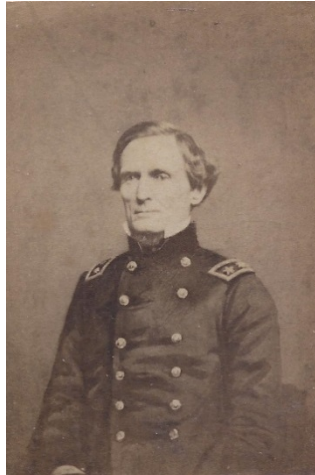
Unlike the U.S. Constitution, the vague call for him to do what he deems necessary to “protect and defend the general welfare” disappears from his enumerated powers.

Time will tell that these limits on central authority go on to plague efforts to get members to act in unison especially on military strategy and funding the war.

On February 9, the new government is christened the Confederate States of America.

Time: February 11, 1861

Jefferson Davis Is Chosen As The CSA President



Jefferson Davis (1808-1889)

The next order of business lies in selecting the CSA’s top officers, each for one six year term.

Initial interest here focuses on two influential Georgian moderates – 49 year old Senator Robert Toombs and 44 year old Howell Cobb, recently resigned from Buchanan’s cabinet. But Toombs is sometimes prone to drunkenness and Cobb’s often abrasive temperament rules him out.

The answer instead is Jefferson Davis of Mississippi, who insists that he would prefer a position as head of the CSA army.

Davis too arrives with his own full share of critics. Sam Houston calls him “as ambitious as Lucifer and as cold as a lizard.” Howell Cobb’s brother, Thomas, says: “he is not great in any sense of the term...the power of will has made him all he is.”

But Davis is blessed with the military background and “command presence” that the delegates feel may well be needed if Lincoln challenges the new government with force.

In the end, he becomes the only nominee put forward, and wins by acclimation. His response is characteristically dour, a tone that will be repeated throughout his tenure:

Upon my weary heart was showered smiles, plaudits, and flowers, but beyond them I saw troubles and thorns innumerable.

The Vice-Presidential slot goes to a third prominent Georgian, Alexander Stephens. He will find Davis overbearing and will quarrel with him almost continuously over the next four years.

Stephens is sworn in on February 11, with Davis' formal inauguration delayed until February 18, when he finally reaches Montgomery from Mississippi.

In his acceptance speech, Davis:

- Calls upon other Southern states to join the cause;
- Insists that the break is permanent;
- Hopes that war with the North can be avoided while mentioning it five times; and
- Seeks recognition from the UK and France to ensure future revenue from cotton sales.

With this, America's struggle no longer becomes a matter of South Carolina and Sumter, but of how to react to a formal new power, the CSA, residing on domestic soil.

Sidebar: Initial CSA Cabinet

Within a month of his election, Davis will organize his initial cabinet, choosing one member from each of the six states beyond Mississippi that have seceded. Harmony seldom reigns for long within this circle, given Davis' stern and autocratic manner. Both his State and War Secretaries will be gone in less than seven months, and his Vice-President, Stephens, will become a constant critic over the life of the confederacy.

Jefferson Davis' Opening Cabinet

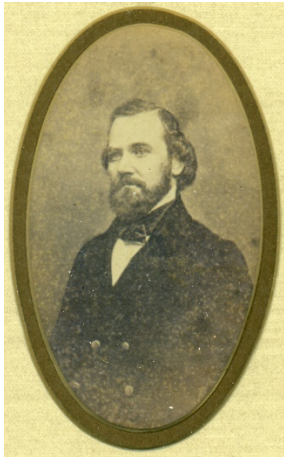
Position	(Total *)	Name	Home State	Age
Vice-President	(1)	Alexander Stephens	Georgia	49
Secretary of State	(4)	Robert Toombs	Georgia	49
Secretary of Treasury	(3)	Christopher Memminger	South Carolina	58
Secretary of War	(5)	Leroy Pope Walker	Alabama	44
Attorney General	(4)	Judah P. Benjamin	Louisiana	49
Secretary of Navy	(1)	Stephen Mallory	Florida	49
Postmaster General	(1)	John Reagan	Texas	42

* Total # who will serve in the position over the course of the CSA government.

Chapter 276 - CSA President Jefferson Davis Stalls For Time On Ft. Sumter

Time: February 11, 1861

The Situation At Charleston Points To An Assault On Sumter



Lawrence Keitt (1824-1864)

Once Governor Pickens learns from his DC messenger, Isaac Hayne, that Buchanan refuses to either abandon or sell Ft. Sumter, the pressure builds to launch an immediate attack.

It is spurred on daily by the South Carolina fire-eaters, the likes of Edmund Ruffin, Lawrence Keitt, R.B. Rhett and William Porcher Miles.

But Pickens' military men also warn him that any attempt to storm Ft. Sumter would involve heavy casualties for his South Carolina units. Thus the better option: ring the fort and starve out its occupants in siege mode.

If firepower becomes necessary, the battery on Cummings Point, only 1350 yards south of the fort, will be called upon to lead the way.

Meanwhile, inside Sumter, Major Anderson continues to reconfigure his artillery in order to fire at an enemy to his back and sides rather than out to sea.

He will eventually manage to re-rig a total of 51 cannons in this fashion. Included among them are three massive 10" Columbiads, each weighting 15,000 lbs., each capable of hurling a 128 lb. shell over 4,800 yards. After assessing how best to deploy these ship killers, Anderson converts them into faux mortars aimed at his nearby adversaries.

Distances From Ft. Sumter To Batteries At:

	Cummings Point	Ft. Moultrie	Ft. Johnson	Castle Pinckney
Yards	1,350	1,800	2,300	4,500

On February 1, 1861, Anderson pauses to take care of one more duty. He requests, and is granted, access to a boat that carries the 42 women and children at his fort back to safety in Charleston.

Time: February 12, 1861

Governor Pickens Hands The Sumter Decision Over To The New Confederation

Before Pickens can act, pleas for restraint pour into his office, most notably from Jefferson Davis and the new Confederate government. The fear here being twofold: an attack on Sumter would

reduce the odds of a peaceful departure from the Union; and preparations for any open and extended warfare are lacking.

Pickens now feels like he is caught in the middle and looks for a way to squirm out.

On Tuesday, February 12, he tries to force the issue by notifying Howell Cobb that:

I hope to be ready by Friday night, and I think I am prepared to take the fort or to silence it.

This tactic has the effect he now wants, as Cobb replies that the decision on what to do about Ft. Sumter now rests with President Davis and his new Confederate States of America cabinet.

In the end, the once bellicose Pickens seems relieved by yet another delay in the action.

On February 19 he informs ex-President Tyler that he has called off any attack on Sumter.

So once again a “pause” sets in at Charleston harbor.

Chapter 277 - Lincoln Delivers Confusing Messages On Route To Washington

Time: February 11, 1861

The New President Heads To Washington For The Inauguration



Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865)

As Jefferson Davis assumes office, Abraham Lincoln prepares to do the same.

Before leaving Illinois for Washington, he has two farewells to deliver. One is for his 72 year old step-mother, Sarah (Sally) Lincoln, living in Charleston, Illinois. He visits her on January 30 and tries to soothe her fear after she warns they will never meet because his enemies will kill him first.

Back home on February 6, he holds a reception for his Springfield neighbors, and on February 11 he says good-by to them before boarding a train with Mary heading east.

To this place and the kindness of the people, I owe everything. Here I have lived for a quarter of a century, and have passed from a young man to an old man. Here my children have been born, and one is buried. I now leave, not knowing when, or whether ever, I may return, with a task before me greater than that which rested upon Washington. Trusting in Him, who can go with me...I bid you an affectionate farewell.

With that he begins a grueling twelve-day journey to Washington, DC, which will include a total of 84 different stop-overs.

Lincoln's Twelve Day Whistle Stop Journey To Washington

Feb.	Starts In	Ends In	# Stops
11	Springfield. IL	Indianapolis, IN	9
12	Indianapolis	Cincinnati, OH	5
13	Cincinnati	Columbus, OH	8
14	Columbus	Pittsburg, Pa.	12
15	Pittsburg	Cleveland, OH	6
16	Cleveland	Buffalo, NY	13
17	Day of rest	Buffalo, NY	--
18	Buffalo	Albany, NY	10
19	Albany	New York City, NY	8
20	Stays put	New York City, NY	--

21	New York City	Philadelphia, Pa	9
22	Philadelphia	Philadelphia, Pa	3
23	Philadelphia	Washington, DC	1

Before he heads out he learns some hopeful and some ominous news.

On February 9, the state of Tennessee votes against holding a secession convention – and they will be joined nine days later by Maryland and Arkansas. Perhaps the Upper South will stay in after all.

But then comes word via Henry Seward's son, Fred, that a plot to assassinate the President has been discovered in Baltimore, which is to be his last scheduled stop before arriving in DC. Detective Alan Pinkerton confirms the same news, and, along with Ward Lamon, Lincoln's bodyguard, a plan for a safe passage through Maryland begins to take shape.

Time: February 11-23, 1861

Lincoln's Messages Along The Way Are Variable

Once under way, both the nation and the press are eager to hear what the new President will do once he takes office. The focus of their questions shift away from what they know he intends to do – stop the spread of slavery – to what remains uncertain, how he will deal with the seceding states.

Is he really willing to plunge the nation into a civil war to prevent more black slaves from residing in the west? This is what men like John Crittenden and Thomas Corwin are confronting in Congress. So what will he do once in the White House?

At his first stop in Indianapolis, he is met by Republican Governor Oliver Morton and a 34 gun salute. His promise to hold Sumter and take back the other Charleston forts draws cheers from a crowd estimated at 20,000.

In Cincinnati, he speaks to the German Industrial Association and urges them to support the Union.

A massive turn-out of perhaps 60,000 line his route through Columbus, Ohio on February 13. But many are puzzled by his words.

When we look out, there is nothing that really hurts anybody...As I traveled in the rain through your crowded streets, I (thought)... the Union can be in no danger...and will be preserved.

As with Seward's recent comments, the apparent naiveté is striking.

It is as if Lincoln fails to understand the devastating impact his refusal to expand slavery will have on the one-dimensional economy of the South. Without slavery in the west, there will be no new plantations to grow cotton and no new owners eager to buy excess field hands bred in the east.

Two days later, in Cleveland, he repeats these same misinformed sentiments:

The crisis, as it is called, is altogether artificial...It has no foundation in facts....Let it alone and it will go down of itself.

Arriving in Buffalo on February 16, he is greeted by ex-President Millard Fillmore and enjoys his first real rest stop. On Sunday the 17th he accompanies Fillmore to a nearby Unitarian Church. He is joined by newspaperman Horace Greeley on his departure to New York.

On February 19 at Dunkirk, New York, Lincoln grasps a flagstaff and asks the crowd for support him in whatever struggles lie ahead.

Standing as I do, with my hand upon this staff, and under the folds of the American flag, I ask you to stand by me as long as I stand by it.

In New York City some 250,000 people line his procession route to the Astor House, where he stays over-night before meeting with another influential editor, William Cullen Bryant.

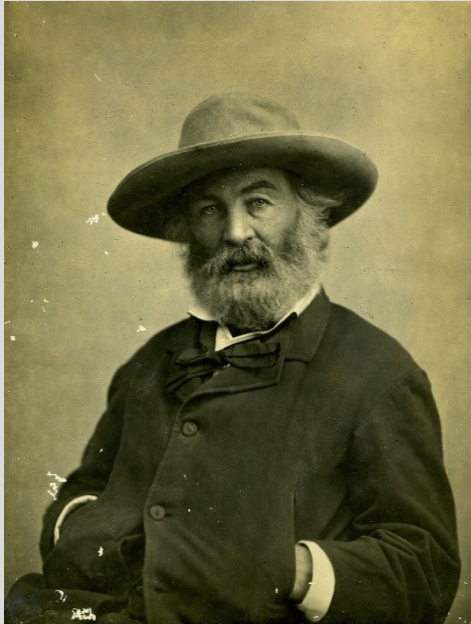
February 20 finds him addressing a large crowd in the city, again not talking about slavery, but about saving the Union.

There is nothing that can ever bring me willingly to consent to the destruction of the Union.

The next night he is in Philadelphia, and listening to detective Pinkerton and Ward Lamon describe their scheme to slip through the presumed assassins in Baltimore.

Time: February 19, 1861

Sidebar: The Poet Walt Whitman Recalls Seeing Lincoln For The First Time



Walt Whitman (1819-1892)

The sighting occurs as the President-elect arrives in New York City on February 19, 1861.

I shall not easily forget the first time I ever saw Abraham Lincoln... From the top of an omnibus (driven up on side, close by, and blocked by the curbstone and the crowds) I had, I say, a capital view of it all and especially of Mr. Lincoln: his looks and gait; his perfect composure and coolness; his unusual and uncouth height; his dress of complete black, stovepipe hat pushed back on his head; dark-brown complexion; seamed and wrinkled yet canny-looking face; black, bush head of hair; disproportionately long neck; and his hands held behind, as he stood observing the people."

-- Walt Whitman

Time: February 23, 1861

Lincoln Slips Into Washington Unscathed But Mocked



Allan Pinkerton (1819-1884) Seated On left

Lincoln's final move in his journey to DC proves effective although personally embarrassing.

On February 22, he travels to the Pennsylvania state capital of Harrisburg, meets with Republican Governor Andrew Curtin, and addresses the state legislature before retiring to his hotel.

Once there, he exchanges his familiar stovetop hat and overcoat for a brown felt cap and a different cloak, and slips back to the train station for a secret return trip to Philadelphia. Before leaving, Pinkerton cuts the telegraph lines in Harrisburg to conceal his departure.

In Philadelphia he boards an overnight sleeper on the Wilmington & Baltimore line headed to Washington. Pinkerton offers Lincoln a revolver and a Bowie knife for the trip, but the President-elect declines.

At 3:30am, the train pulls into Baltimore, where Lincoln's car is switched by horses to the B&O line depot for a 4:15am departure to DC. All of this proceeds without incident, and Lincoln is met in the capital at 6:15am on February 23 by his Illinois friend, Elihu Washburne, who accompanies him to the Willard Hotel.

The ruse becomes apparent as the train from Philadelphia arrives that same day in Baltimore around 11:30am, with the Mayor waiting to greet the Lincolns. When the assembled crowd learns that only Mary Lincoln and her three sons are on board, many react with "oaths, obscenities...and disgusting gesticulations" according to observers.

Once the scheme becomes clear to the press, they respond with cartoons showing a fearful new President sneaking into Washington in a disguise "like a thief in the night."

This is hardly the first impression the new President was hoping to make.

Chapter 278 - Tyler's Peace Conference Is Another Predictable Failure

Time: February 25, 1861

The Peace Conference Comes To An End

Two days after Lincoln's arrival in the capital, John Tyler's Peace Conference comes to an end.

As with their many predecessors, the "old gentlemen" have failed to arrive at any breakthroughs despite three weeks of steady debate.

In the end, on February 25, the outcome becomes nothing more than a rehash of the key components in the "Crittenden Compromise," centered around extending the 36'30" Missouri Compromise line and its sanctions across the remaining western territories.

This is the same approach that has been continuously rejected by the Republicans in Congress.

James Guthrie, head of the Committee of 21, along with many other Southerners are left in despair over the outcome.

To top it off, one day after the final gavel drops, John Tyler sends a message to Virginia urging it to leave the Union.



Washington City, Site Of Tyler's Peace Conference

Time: February 26, 1861

The Delegates Turn To Lincoln For Answers

Lincoln's arrival at the Willard Hotel causes a stir among the delegates to the Peace Conference, and a steady stream of them call upon Lincoln once he arrives.

Included here are Kentuckians Guthrie, John Crittenden and ex-Governor, Charles Morehead; John Bell of Tennessee, who ran against Lincoln in the election; the staunch Unionist, Alexander Doniphan of Missouri; and a host of Virginians.

All plead with Lincoln to understand the impact of the Republican's refusal to expand slavery on the South and to assure him that the secessionists are not bluffing. There is nothing "artificial" about the crisis and it will not "go down of its own" if left alone.

Whether these words alter his thinking about the crisis is unknown, but one incident suggests they may have.

It involves his meeting with the venerable Virginia statesman, William Cabell Rives, a fellow Whig, whose long career includes time in the House and Senate and as Minister to France under Taylor. When Rives tells Lincoln that Virginia will secede if force is used against South Carolina, the President-elect reportedly offers an urgent response.

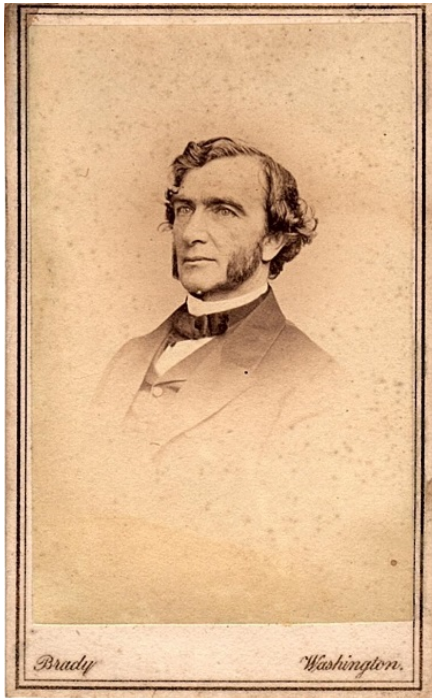
Mr. Rives, Mr. Rives, if Virginia will stay in, I will withdraw the troops from Fort Sumter.

With only a week left until he is sworn in, avoiding the prospect of bloodshed is very much on Lincoln's mind as he crafts his Inaugural Address.

Chapter 279 - Two Last Second Bills Gain Congressional Approval

Time: February 26, 1861

The Morrill Tariff Further Angers The South



Justin Morrill (1810-1898)

As usual, legislators scramble to complete left-over bills before the 36th Congress ends its second and final session on Monday, March 4.

With many Southerners already having withdrawn, the path is open for the Northern Republicans to pass several pieces of legislation.

On February 26, they vote to create the Territory of Colorado without reference one way or the other to slavery. On March 2 they add the Dakota and Nevada Territories the same way.

On the same day, they pass the Morrill Tariff, a sop to manufacturing interests in the state of Pennsylvania which has previously been blocked by Southerners in the Senate. The bill calls for a dramatic 70% jump in duties on foreign imports, from the 21% level in effect since 1857 to a new 36% rate. It passes this time by 25-14 in the depleted Senate, with 24 Republican votes and one from Democratic Senator William Bigler of the Keystone state.

While Southerners hope the Morrill Tariff will provoke Britain and France into formally recognizing the CSA government, its embrace of slavery will ultimately block such a move.

Time: March 4, 1861

The Corwin Amendment Seeks To Assure The South

The final piece of business plays out in the Senate where John Crittenden and Stephen Douglas unite behind trying to pass the "Corwin Amendment," named after the Ohio congressman, and aimed at assuring worried Southerners that slavery will never be abolished in states where it currently exists.

After a flurry of bickering the body agrees to an unusual Sunday session, which begins with one more emotional plea from Crittenden, witnessed by Lincoln who secretly enters the gallery:

We see the danger, we acknowledge our duty; and yet, with all this before us, we are acknowledging before the world that we can do nothing.

Incredibly the debate continues until 4:00am on Monday, inauguration day, when the senators, many in a drunken state, finally decide to vote. After three substitutes are turned back, Corwin's bill finally passes with the 2/3rds majority required, and eight Republican supporters.

Final Voting On The "Corwin Amendment" In The Senate: March 4, 1861

By Senator:	Proposal	Yea & Nays
George Pugh (OH)	Substitute Crittenden bill for Corwin bill	14-25
Kinsley Bingham (MI)	The Constitution needs no more amendments	13-25
Robert Johnson (Ark)	Substitute Peace Conference bill for Corwin	3-34
John Crittenden (Ky)	The Corwin bill	24-12

To become law, the "Corwin Amendment" would be required to go to the states for ratification, a step that never occurs. But as a symbolic gesture it seems to be the single concrete accomplishment by the Congress to reduce the odds of warfare.

It is also consistent with what Lincoln has said all along: he has neither the right, nor the intention, to abolish slavery in the old South.

Sidebar: Roll Call Of Departing Southern Senators



Robert Toombs (1810-1885)

In all, twenty-five U.S. Senators will exit their seats, all Southerners except for Jesse Bright of Indiana, a so-called Copperhead Democrat opposed to possible warfare. Bright has been three times President Pro Tempore of the chamber, and is expelled on February 5, 1861, for officially acknowledging Jefferson Davis as President of the Confederacy and for accusations that he helped direct arms to the Southern cause. No other senator has been expelled since Bright, as on 2108.

Senator	State	Exit Date	How
James Chestnut	SC	Nov 10, '60	Withdrew ***
James Hammond	SC	Nov 11, '60	Withdrew *
John Breckinridge	Ky	Dec 4, '60	Expelled
Waldo Johnson	MO	Jan 10	Expelled
Trustan Polk	MO	Jan 10	Expelled

Albert Brown	Miss	Jan 12, '61	Withdrew **
Jefferson Davis	Miss	Jan 21, '61	Withdrew **
David Yulee	Fla	Jan 21, '61	Withdrew **
Stephen Mallory	Fla	Jan 21, '61	Withdrew **
Alfred Iverson	Ga	Jan 28, '61	Withdrew *
Robert Toombs	Ga	Feb 4, '61	Withdrew **
Judah Benjamin	La	Feb 4, '61	Withdrew **
John Slidell	La	Feb 4, '61	Withdrew *
Jesse Bright	Ind	Feb 5, '61	Expelled
Ben Fitzpatrick (D)	Ala	Mar 3, 1861	Term expires *
Alfred Nicholson	Tenn	Mar 3, '61	Withdrew ***
John Hemphill	Tex	Mar 4	Did not appear ***
Thomas Bragg	NC	Mar 8	Withdrew ***
Thomas Clingman	NC	Mar 11	Withdrew ***
Clement Clay (D)	Ala	Mar 14, 1861	Did not appear**
Louis Wigfall	Tex	Mar 23	Withdrew ***
James Mason	Va	Mar 28	Withdrew*
Robert Hunter	Va	Mar 28	Withdrew*
William Sebastian	Ark	July 11, '61	Expelled
Charles Mitchel	Ark	July 11, '61	Expelled

* Term expires on Mar 3, 1861

** Seat declared vacant on Mar 14, '61

*** Expelled July 11, 1861

Chapter 280 - Lincoln Is Sworn In And Delivers His Inaugural Address

Time: March 4, 1861

James Buchanan's Final Day In Office

Few men are as relieved by abandoning the White House as James Buchanan.

His political survival strategy has been transparent for months: namely to postpone open warfare in Charleston harbor until those he deems responsible for the sectional conflict – Lincoln and the Black Republicans – are left in charge.

In this sense he has succeeded, albeit not by his own making.

Instead the outcome rests in large part with Major Robert Anderson, operating with the flimsiest of direction from Washington, but preparing a formidable defense at Sumter and refusing to be drawn into an exchange back on January 9, 1861, when shots are fired at the *Star of the West*.

As luck would have it, Buchanan is also helped by the sudden formation of the Confederate States of America during that same week. This removes the burden for action from the volatile Governor Pickens in Charleston and hands it to Jefferson Davis in Montgomery. His experienced military mind recognizes the need for the South to avoid all fighting until it has its militias and armaments and command and control structures in place.

Thus Buchanan can claim that a civil war has been avoided on his watch.

But he is quite certain that the reprieve will be short-lived. On inauguration day, March 4, he is in the capitol building signing documents when Secretary of War arrives with a message from Major Anderson saying that his supplies are running out and requesting 20,000 troops to subdue the local militias.

With that news in hand, James Buchanan enters his carriage to pick up Lincoln and head to the swearing in ceremonies. His purported words to his successor ring true:

If you are as happy entering the White House as I shall feel returning to Wheatland (his home), you are a happy man indeed.

Time: March 4, 1861

Abraham Lincoln Delivers His Inaugural Address



Lincoln Delivering His First Inaugural Address

According to custom at the time, Lincoln offers his inaugural address to a crowd of some 30,000 prior to being sworn in. He is introduced by his close friend, Edward Baker, who lends his name to the president's deceased son, "Eddie," and who will himself die in combat early in the war.

Before speaking Lincoln dons his steel-rimmed spectacles and gratefully hands his stovepipe hat off to a gracious Stephen Douglas as he moves to the podium.

In characteristic fashion, he goes right to the central issue most on the minds of his audience. The South, he says, has no cause to feel endangered by a Republican administration.

Apprehension seems to exist among the people of the Southern States that by the accession of a Republican Administration their property and their peace and personal security are to be endangered. There has never been any reasonable cause for such apprehension. Indeed, the most ample evidence to the contrary has all the while existed and been open to their inspection.

To demonstrate this he offer a series of assurances:

I have no purpose, directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the States where it exists. I believe I have no lawful right to do so, and I have no inclination to do so....

The right of each State to order and control its own domestic institutions according to its own judgment exclusively, is essential to that balance of power on which...our political fabric depend(s)...

We denounce the lawless invasion by armed force of the soil of any State or Territory, no matter what pretext, as among the gravest of crimes.

Persons held to service or labor in one State, under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall...be delivered up on claim of the party to whom such service or labor may be due.

After vowing to fairly uphold the laws of the Constitution, he declares the Union of the states is perpetual and functions like a contract which cannot be broken by any one party absent the consent of the rest.

I hold that in contemplation of universal law and of the Constitution, the Union of these States is perpetual. Perpetuity is implied, if not expressed, in the fundamental law of all national governments.

If the United States be...an association of States in the nature of contract merely, can it, as a contract, be peaceably unmade by less than all the parties who made it? One party to a contract may violate it--break it, so to speak--but does it not require all to lawfully rescind it?

In turn, he will consider any act of violence by a State against the authority of the Union qualifies as illegal insurrection and will oppose it.

It follows from these views...that acts of violence within any State or States against the authority of the United States are insurrectionary or revolutionary, according to circumstances.

I therefore...shall take care, as the Constitution itself expressly enjoins upon me, that the laws of the Union be faithfully executed in all the States,

The opposition need not involve bloodshed or invasion, as long as federal property remains in its hands and all duties on imports are properly collected.

In doing this there needs to be no bloodshed or violence, and there shall be none unless it be forced upon the national authority. The power confided to me will be used to hold, occupy, and possess the property and places belonging to the Government and to collect the duties and imposts; but beyond what may be necessary for these objects, there will be no invasion, no using of force against or among the people anywhere Lincoln asks why the current crisis exists.

That there are persons in one section or another who seek to destroy the Union at all events and are glad of any pretext to do it I will neither affirm nor deny; but if there be such, I need address no word to them. To those, however, who really love the Union may I not speak?

Before entering upon so grave a matter as the destruction of our national fabric, with all its benefits, its memories, and its hopes, would it not be wise to ascertain precisely why we do it?

He asserts that it is not because any laws in the Constitution are being broken.

Is it true, then, that any right plainly written in the Constitution has been denied? I think not. However, the words of the Constitution cannot be definitive on all issues, and, when that is the case, the government must rely on "majority rules" in order to function.

No foresight can anticipate nor any document of reasonable length contain express provisions for all possible questions. ...May Congress prohibit slavery in the Territories? The Constitution does not expressly say. Must Congress protect slavery in the Territories? The Constitution does not expressly say.

From questions of this class spring all our constitutional controversies, and we divide upon them into majorities and minorities. If the minority will not acquiesce, the majority must, or the Government must cease.

If the principle of majority rule breaks down it leads to secession and anarchy, which only feeds on itself as other minorities find reasons to rebel.

Plainly the central idea of secession is the essence of anarchy...For instance, why may not any portion of a new confederacy a year or two hence arbitrarily secede again, precisely as portions of the present Union now claim to secede from it?

The present conflict is over an instance of majority rules, in this case with one side arguing against the morality and extension of slavery, the other holding the opposite position.

One section of our country believes slavery is right and ought to be extended, while the other believes it is wrong and ought not to be extended. This is the only substantial dispute.

Lincoln continues to reject *Dred Scott* as the answer, and sees no perfect solution to the dispute. But he is certain it will only get worse if a futile attempt is made to divide one nation in two. He says that separation is possible in marriage, but not within nations where the two sides must continue “face to face” and find ways to settle future issues affecting both.

This, I think, cannot be perfectly cured, and it would be worse in both cases after the separation of the sections than before. Physically speaking, we cannot separate. We cannot remove our respective sections from each other nor build an impassable wall between them. A husband and wife may be divorced and go out of the presence and beyond the reach of each other, but the different parts of our country cannot do this. They cannot but remain face to face, and intercourse, either amicable or hostile, must continue between them.

Despite his personal objection to slavery, he offers a concession to the South, promising to support the “Corwin Amendment” should it ever get ratified (indeed a very long shot).

I understand a proposed amendment to the Constitution--which amendment, however, I have not seen--has passed Congress, to the effect that the Federal Government shall never interfere with the domestic institutions of the States, including that of persons held to service...I have no objection to its being made express and irrevocable.

The peroration comes as a series of pleas to his fellow citizens in the South. He asks first for time to think calmly about the whole subject.

My countrymen, one and all, think calmly and well upon this whole subject. Nothing valuable can be lost by taking time.

He asks that patriotism and Christian values inform their decisions.

Intelligence, patriotism, Christianity, and a firm reliance on Him who has never yet forsaken this favored land are still competent to adjust in the best way all our present difficulty.

He directly mentions the “issue of civil war” and assures Southerners that “the Government will not assail you.”

In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow-countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. The Government will not assail you. You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors. You have no oath registered in heaven to destroy the Government, while I shall have the most solemn one to "preserve, protect, and defend it.

While “loath to close,” his ending is a poetic appeal to the shared good will of his fellow Americans that he hopes will yet insure peace.

I am loath to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.

The speech is brief, lasting roughly a half hour, and it is marked by subdued reactions from the audience. After it is over, 83 year old Chief Justice Roger Taney, whose *Dred Scott* ruling he has again questioned, administers the oath of office to the new President.

I do solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my Ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States.

Time: May 4

Sidebar: Washington DC At Lincoln’s Inauguration

Washington City on March 4, 1861, is a metaphor for a nation whose destiny suddenly feels uncompleted and once again fearful of collapse, this time from within its own borders.

As first world capitals go, it remains a physically primitive city. Most streets are left unpaved and turn into mud-holes whenever rain strikes. Sanitation systems are lacking and raw sewage is dumped daily into the Potomac River, polluting the drinking water. Buildings are constructed largely from wood, not bricks, and efforts at architectural grandeur are frustrating. The Capitol building lacks its dome topped by Lady Liberty; scaffolding mars the Treasury; the red brick Smithsonian is an isolated eyesore along the swampy mall; and the glorious obelisk to honor George Washington is still chopped off at the waist, owing to a lack of construction funds.

The city population stands at just over 61,000 people in 1860, the 14th largest city in the nation, but still tiny relative to the prior capitals in New York (813,000) and Philadelphia (565,000). Its residents are a nomadic lot, packing it during the winter-centric congressional sessions and emptying out during the unbearably hot summers.

In its cultural beliefs and practices it is a decidedly Southern city, right down to the buying and selling slaves within sight of the principal government offices.

On March 4, 1860 it is also an occupied city.

Old General Winfield Scott sees to that outcome by importing armed troops to monitor the parade routes and the Capitol. He is already preparing for a civil war to come, but fully intends to keep the palpable fear and anger in the city under control for an orderly transfer of power.

Chapter 281 - The South Regards The Speech As A Declaration Of War

Time: March 1861

Southern Hostility Continues To Grow

Despite Lincoln's closing plea – “we must not be enemies” – Southern reactions to his inaugural speech are uniformly negative.

The *Alexandria Sentinel* says “the inaugural address is a declaration of war;” the *Athens Herald* claims “Mr. Lincoln's inaugural, analyzed, fully means nothing but force, war, and bloodshed;” the *Atlanta Confederacy* adds “the future is ominous...we are dealing first with men who hate us bitterly.”

While a Northern observer, Senator Stephen Douglas, finds ambiguity in the address – “I hardly know what he means...every point...is susceptible of a double construction” – the *Charleston News* hears “smooth and oily words... deeply impregnated with the intolerance of a partisan.”

There is little disagreement that the new President has properly identified the crux of the sectional conflict in a single sentence:

One section of our country believes slavery is right and ought to be extended, while the other believes it is wrong and ought not to be extended. This is the only substantial dispute.



Two Flags Instead Of One

But the rest of the speech, according to the critics, simply boils down to legalistic mumbo-jumbo contrived to prove that “majority rule” means the North can impose its will on the South, no matter how ruinous the effects are on its economic future.

This is the same argument that has played out in America since the 1787 Constitutional Convention – the North’s failure to recognize the extent to which the South’s wealth depends upon the extension of slavery. In Philadelphia, this message is delivered by South Carolinians like Charles C. Pinckney, Edward Rutledge and Rawlins Lowndes:

Without negroes this state is one of the most contemptible in the Union. Negroes are our wealth, our only natural resource. Yet behold how our kind friends in the North are determined soon to tie up our hands and drain us of what we have.

It is repeated in 1832 by John C. Calhoun, George McDuffie and Robert B. Rhett when the South tries in vain to “nullify” the Tariff of Abominations, “imposed” on them by the principle of “majority rules,” in order to protect Northern manufactures.

It comes around again in 1846 with the Wilmot Proviso and Salmon Chase’s Free Soil Party, intent on banning slavery in the western land won in the Mexican War in part by the sacrifices of Southern soldiers.

Then a decade later in “Bloody Kansas,” the opening battle in what, by March 1861, looks like the end of the Union and the start of a civil war.

From the beginning the sectional fight has centered on the long-term survival of the South’s one dimensional economy, hinging as it does on sales of its raw cotton and bred slaves

As James Henry Hammond declares in his landmark 1858 speech to the senate, “Cotton is King” across the South. The facts bear this out. Between 1850 and 1860, cotton production almost doubles – the result of new plantations opening on lands along the Mississippi Valley.

U.S. Cotton Production

	1850	1855	1860
Lbs. (millions)	933.5	1,173.7	1,712.0
Growth Index	100	126	183

But of even greater import to the future of Southern wealth is the increased demand for and value of field hands being created by these western plantations.

Value Of Southern Slaves

Year	# Slaves (000)	Ave. Price/ Slave	Total Value (000)
1850	3,204	\$377	\$1,207,908
1855	3,559	600	2,135,400
1860	3,954	778	3,076,212

In 1860 the market value of those enslaved in the South reaches \$3 Billion, more than the combined worth of all the manufacturing and railroad assets in the nation.

If Lincoln and the Republicans have their way with “majority rules” and ban the expansion of slavery in the west, it will sound the death knell for growth of the entire Southern economy.

The planter and political leaders in the South recognize this fact, but does the new President? If so, why does he, along with Henry Seward, insist on calling the crisis “artificial” and “nothing that really hurts anybody” – views he has just expressed on his whistle stop journey to Washington?

Time: March 1861

Lincoln And Seward Still Underestimate The Threat

The fact is that neither Lincoln nor Seward fully comprehend in March 1861 the economic impact their slavery ban will have on the South.

They both tend to regard the early secession movement as a temporary anomaly, sparked by yet another small band of “ultras” in South Carolina who fomented the “nullification” movement.

As such, they are both convinced early-on that this too shall pass, that if they exhibit restraint and patience toward the secessionists, the anger will subside, calmer heads will prevail, and the Union will be restored.

They perceive the dispute in moral terms – the right vs. wrong of human bondage.

For the South, however, the paramount issue is what it has always been -- the impact of the ban on its prospects for future wealth.

Stop the continued expansion of plantations requiring slaves and you stop the growth engine for the entire South. This threat is not just emotional in nature and it is not passing.

The Republicans as a whole believe the South is “bluffing” once again to have its way in the political arena.

But they are wrong.

This time the threat is truly existential, and, as in Kansas, the South means to fight it out.

While Lincoln will recognize this reality ahead of Seward, he enters the White House still clinging to the hope that the “better angels” will somehow prevail in time.

Chapter 282 - Lincoln Names His Cabinet And It Debates Sumter Strategy

Time: March 5, 1861

Lincoln Announces His Cabinet



Edward Bates (1793-1869)

It is not until the day after his swearing-in that Lincoln finalizes his cabinet.

The task has been difficult, given his wish to engage men known for holding very different opinions on matters of state, and expressing them with vigor. The result of these characteristics is a history of personal animosity between several of his choices. Henry Seward and Salmon Chase are sworn enemies – Chase finding Seward too soft on ending slavery and Seward regarding Chase as a radical abolitionist who will provoke the South into a civil war. Both men tell Lincoln that he must make a choice, one or the other.

None of the candidates seem to respect Simon Cameron, who is convinced he is owed a top job because of the president's victory in Pennsylvania.

Seward, Chase, Cameron and a fourth choice, Edward Bates, have also competed against Lincoln at the 1860 Republican nominating convention. But instead of animosity, he holds them all in high stead, as evident in comments to Thurlow Weed:

Their long experience in public affairs and their eminent fitness (give them) higher claims than his own for the place he was to occupy.

Like Cameron, Edward Bates is formerly a member of the controversial Know-Nothing (American) Party. He hails from the critical border state of Missouri, was once a slave-holder, and becomes the first man west of the Mississippi to hold a cabinet post.

Montgomery Blair is another border state representative and the son of Francis P. Blair, Sr., member of Jackson's "kitchen cabinet," and solid Democrat before his role in founding the Republican Party. Of all the cabinet members, the younger Blair will be the only one with military credentials, having graduated from West Point and serving in the Second Seminole War.

Gideon Welles of Connecticut is a former Free Soiler, and chosen to capture the opinions in the New England region. Caleb Smith is from the swing state of Indiana, and, like Seward and Lincoln, is an old-time Whigs.

From the beginning, Lincoln wants Seward for the State Department, but he initially refuses to serve with Chase. When Lincoln hints that he may default to the esteemed New Jersey native,

William Dayton, Seward comes on board. Cameron demands the Treasury job; Lincoln gives it to Chase; Cameron settles for the War Department. Chase is perpetually certain that he deserves more than offered, and is the last hold-out before his acceptance.

In the end, Lincoln has assembled the diverse and outspoken cabinet he desires.

Along the way, he has also exhibited the political savvy and firm backbone that will prove so essential to his presidency.

Abraham Lincoln's Opening Cabinet

Position	(Total *)	Name	Home State	Prior Party	Age
Vice-President	(1)	Hannibal Hamlin	Maine	Democrat	51
Secretary of State	(1)	Henry Seward	New York	Whig	59
Secretary of Treasury	(2)	Salmon P. Chase	Ohio	Free Soil	53
Secretary of War	(2)	Simon Cameron	Pennsylvania	Know Nothing	61
Attorney General	(2)	Edward Bates	Missouri	Know Nothing	67
Secretary of Navy	(1)	Gideon Welles	Maine	Free Soil	58
Postmaster General	(2)	Montgomery Blair	Maryland	Democrat	47
Secretary of Interior	(2)	Caleb Smith	Indiana	Whig	52

* Total # who will serve in the position over the course of Lincoln's first term.

Time: March 7-9, 1861

Lincoln's Military Men Rule Out Reinforcing Ft. Sumter

After fending off a steady stream of "patronage seekers," the new president plows into discovering the latest news and thinking about Ft. Sumter.

On March 7 he discusses the situation with Lt. General Scott, in command of the Army, Secretary of the Navy, Gideon Welles, and Rear Admiral Silas Stringham, who begins his service at age eleven in 1809.

All three tell him that the enemy firepower already concentrated in Charleston harbor makes it impossible to reinforce Major Anderson.

Two days later Lincoln returns to the matter, asking for Scott's beliefs on three questions:

1. How long can Anderson hold out? Scott says a month for sure and maybe more.

2. If a decision was made to try to reinforce the fort, are the resources available? The answer is “no.”

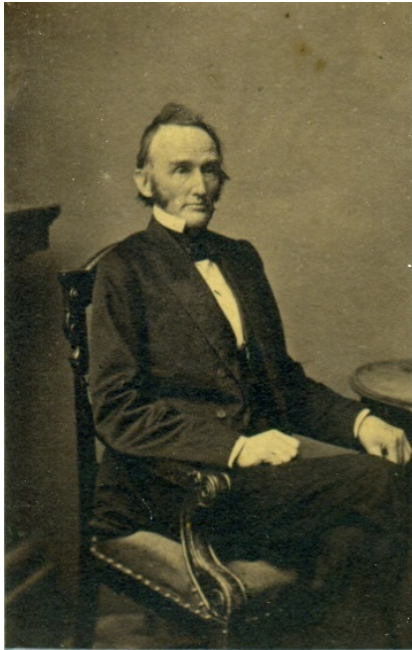
3. If not, what would be required and how long would that take?

This third question has been discussed during Buchanan’s time, and Anderson himself has been asked then for his opinion. While no one knows for sure, what Lincoln hears seems to be the latest consensus, and it is sobering.

Scott explains the formidable forces arrayed against Sumter and says that a fleet of warships will be needed, along with 5,000 regular army troops and another 20,000 volunteers – and that it will take about six months to prepare for such an assault!

Time: March 14, 1861

Lincoln Queries His Cabinet



Montgomery Blair (1813-1883)

Lincoln is not happy with Scott’s assessment and decides to put a question on the table to discuss with his full cabinet on March 14, 1861.

Assuming it to be possible to now provision Ft. Sumter under all the circumstances, is it wise to attempt it?

Secretary of State Henry Seward leaps to asserting his opposition to any such action.

The people of the other slave states, divided and balancing between sympathy with the seceding states and loyalty to the Union, have been intensely excited, but at the present moment indicate a disposition to adhere to the Union if nothing extraordinary shall occur...to produce popular exasperation....I would not initiate a war to regain a useless and unnecessary position...I would not provoke war in any way now.

This is what Seward has been saying all along to Lincoln and to anyone else he encounters. It is the rosy-colored glasses version of the situation. The South will soon return to its senses and come back to the Union if only the administration shows patience, avoids all forms of forceful coercion, and gives them time to reconsider the costs of their actions.

Other members of the cabinet *want* to believe Seward’s outlook, and end up agreeing with what he says in this meeting.

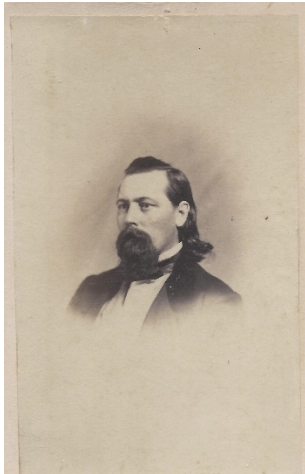
The only exception being the West Point graduate, Montgomery Blair, who mirrors the opinion Lincoln has heard three days earlier from his father, who storms into his office, recounts Andrew Jackson's threats against the "nullifiers," and says that abandoning Sumter would be an act of treason.

Blair argues that the duty of the government lies in defending federal property, and that any show of weakness on Ft. Sumter will only embolden the South to try to occupy more outposts, especially Ft. Pickens in Florida.

Chapter 283 - Lincoln Sends Messengers To Charleston To Assess The Situation

Time: March 21, 1861

Two Emissaries Head To Charleston



Ward Lamon (1828-1893)

Lincoln is still not sure what to do next, and on March 21, 1861, he decides to gather more first-hand information about conditions in and around Ft. Sumter.

He calls for help on a long-term lawyer friend from Illinois, Stephen Hurlbut, a native of Charleston, to go there, look around, talk to the citizens and report back on his findings.

Hurlbut will be joined on the visit by the trusted bodyguard, Ward Lamon, who is tasked with reaching Governor Pickens, telling him that he is an emissary from Washington, and securing a meeting with Major Anderson to learn about conditions at the fort.

The two men depart on what will be a three day journey south.

Time: March 23, 1861

Seward Continues To Leak The Word That Sumter Will Be Evacuated



Edward Stoeckl (1804-1892)

While Lincoln seeks more information on Ft. Sumter, his Secretary of State is busily telling all comers that the fort will soon be evacuated.

He says this on March 15 to Associate Supreme Court Justice Joseph Campbell of Alabama.

He repeats it eight days later to the Russian Minister Baron de Stoeckl at a state dinner.

Word of the apparent “decision” filters south and shifts the thinking there from “if to when” regarding the turn-over of Sumter.

Time: March 24-28, 1861

Lincoln's Failure To Act Draws Scathing Criticism



Charles F. Adams (1807-1886)

As more days slip by without a public announcement, the pressure on Lincoln mounts from all sides, especially from Northerners siding with Seward.

Congressman Charles Francis Adams offer this criticism of the president on March 28:

The impression which I have received is that the course of the President is drifting the country into war, by want of decision. For my part I see nothing but incompetency in the head. The man is not equal to the hour.

Alarms are also heard among the party faithful:

If Ft. Sumter is evacuated, the new administration is done forever (and) the Republican Party is done.

These views are by no means unexpected or new to Lincoln.

From his one term in the House from 1847-49, up through his two losses to Stephen Douglass for a Senate seat, most Washington politicians and pundits have discounted his capacity to ever succeed in the Oval office, much less now during a national crisis.

The hope among his many critics is that the “better man,” Henry Seward, will seize the reins and act as de facto executive over the next four years.

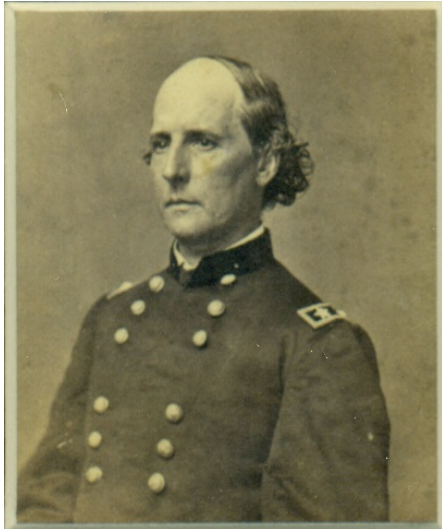
Lincoln is well aware of the skepticism that surrounds him.

He knows that he must act soon, and he does so on the same day as Adams attacks him.

Chapter 284 - Lincoln Decides To Reinforce Both Ft. Sumter And Ft. Pickens

Time: March 28, 1861

The Reports From Charleston Tip The Balance For Lincoln On Sumter



Stephen Hurlbut (1815-1882)

Stephen Hurlbut and Ward Lamon have spent two days visiting Charleston before writing up their report and getting it to Lincoln on March 28.

In walking around the city, Hurlbut is struck by the total absence of the Stars & Stripes flying on ships in port. Instead they all bear the Palmetto insignia of South Carolina or the new seven star flag of the CSA.

Hurlbut visits three times with seventy-one year old James Petigru, a former Attorney General for South Carolina, who has known him as a young boy. Petigru says that he is the last remaining Unionist in the city and that nothing will change that fact. The only question left is whether the South will be allowed to go in peace or whether a civil war will follow.

Hurlbut hears this same story from his other political and business contacts and sums it up in writing.

Separate Nationality is a fixed fact...no attachment (remains) to the Union.

Furthermore, any attempt to reinforce Sumter – even with provisions alone -- will lead to war, with attacks on Ft. Pickens and other federal facilities to follow.

Meanwhile, Lamon reaches Governor Pickens under the guise that he is an agent of the government looking for the means to evacuate the fort. Pickens allows him to visit Ft. Sumter, and he holds a ninety minute meeting with Major Anderson, who ends up believing that a peaceful exit is coming shortly.

After absorbing the news from Charleston, Lincoln again summons Scott for his reactions. Sounding altogether too much like his confidante Seward, the General recommends that both Sumter and Pickens be surrendered on the hope that the gestures will restore both states to the Union.

Upon hearing Scott's proposal, the President later recalls being in "cold shock," and he is sharp in his criticism of his army chief, even wondering if he should continue to trust him going forward.

In an evening meeting Lincoln shares Scott's proposal with the cabinet. Montgomery Blair again speaks out against any show of weakness, directing his remarks at Seward, whom he sees as the real voice behind Scott. While others begin to show signs of wavering around continued inaction, the meeting breaks up without decisions, save for one man in the room.

That is Lincoln, who finds thirty-nine year old Lt. Gustavus Fox, Gideon Welles right hand man at the Navy Department, and orders him to pull together a detailed plan to reinforce both Ft. Sumter and Ft. Pickens.

Time: March 29, 1861

The Cabinet Joins Lincoln In The Decision To Reinforce The Forts

The President reconvenes the cabinet meeting, minus Simon Cameron, at noon on Good Friday, March 29 – with a shift in mood immediately apparent, away from Seward and toward Blair...and Lincoln.

Like Blair, the Navy, says Gideon Welles, is in favor of reinforcing both forts, and he goes even further:

Armed resistance to a peaceful attempt to send provisions to one of our own forts will justify the government in using all the power at its command to reinforce the garrison....

Chase favors defending Ft. Pickens, delivering provisions to Sumter initially, and following up with reinforcements if the supply ship is met by force.

Bates is firm about supporting Ft. Pickens, but remains uncertain about what to do at Sumter, although agreeing that a decision “to either evacuate or relieve it” must be made.

Smith mirrors Bates on both counts, while saying he does not know if Sumter can be reinforced.

Seward continues to argue that any expedition to Sumter will trigger a war and should be avoided. But he also feels the groundswell in the room, and agrees that preparations should be made to fight in Florida.

What Lincoln hears in all of this is reinforcement for what he has now come at long last to believe.

The rebellion is not “artificial” as he thought. The South is not bluffing this time. Restraint and patience and the “mystic chords of memory” will not restore their place in the Union.

What lies ahead appears to be a civil war, and it is time for the North to begin to prepare for it.

He responds by ordering Navy Secretary Welles and War Secretary Cameron to send an expedition to Ft. Sumter, to arrive as early as April 6.

Chapter 285 - Organizational Confusion Mars Planning For The Expeditions

Time: March 31, 1861

Plans To Reinforce The Forts Begin To Take Shape



Montgomery Meigs (1816-1892)

After the cabinet adjourns on March 29, Seward takes Lincoln to meet with the army's engineering genius, Captain Montgomery Meigs, already well known in DC for his construction work on the capitol building and the Rock Creek Aquaduct.

By sheer luck, Meigs has recently toured the Florida forts, after being banished south for criticizing Buchanan's War Secretary, John Floyd about mismanaged contracts.

Lincoln is encouraged by the talk with Meigs, who is assigned to work with Erasmus Keyes, Scott's military secretary, to develop detailed plans for securing Ft. Pickens.

They are still working on the morning of March 31, when Seward tells them to finish up, show their work to Scott, and update Lincoln by 3pm.

Time runs out before they can reach Scott, so they head to the White House and tell the President that reinforcing Ft. Pickens would be possible, given proper planning and the choice of a bold naval commander.

Lincoln is supportive, but sends them back to Scott for his approval. Once there, they earn the General's wrath for violating the chain of command.

But this incident is only the beginning of the comedy of errors that will mark the efforts to organize the naval expeditions to both Ft. Sumter and Ft. Pickens.

Lincoln signals the pressure to act quickly, while not sure whether to prioritize Sumter or Pickens.

Seward wants to give up on Sumter and make a stand at Pickens.

Both insert themselves into the chain of command, with often contradictory orders that confuse and frustrate the military planners.

Time: April 1, 1861

Equipping The Expeditions Becomes Contentious



A Warship At Anchor

Monday, April 1, 1861 finds two sets of planners working under intense time pressure to outfit their expeditions to save the federal forts.

The Sumter task force is led by naval Lt. Gustavus Fox, under the direction of General Winfield Scott.



Gustavus Fox (1821-1883)

The Ft. Pickens effort belongs to army Captain Montgomery Meigs and Major Erastus Keyes, but is befuddled from the start by its command structure. Thus Seward convinces Lincoln that the Navy Department is riddled with Southern sympathizers and that success in Florida requires total secrecy, even so far as keeping Secretary Gideon Welles in the dark. This approach yields one blow up after another as the effort progresses.

The first order for both planners is to identify the ships that will carry the men and supplies and landing crafts to their targeted destinations.

Meigs jumps to one crucial ship in particular for *Florida*, the sidewheel steam frigate *USS Powhatan* currently being refitted at the Brooklyn Naval Yard, under its acting head, Captain Andrew Foote.

Ship	Propulsion	Tons	Cannons	Stationed At
<i>Powhatan</i>	Steamer	2,415	10-9", 1-11", 5-12#	New York

He gets the go-ahead from Scott, Seward and Lincoln on *Powhatan* and, along with Keyes, lines up two commanders for their move on Ft. Pickens: naval Captain David Dixon Porter, and army Colonel Harvey Brown. They also enlist another navy man, Rear Admiral Silas Stringham, to oversee the strategy.

Since the Ft. Pickens venture remains a secret, Lt. Fox remains unaware as he scurries ahead on his Sumter efforts.

Chapter 286 - Seward Adds Confusion And Lincoln Puts Him In His Place

Time: April 1, 1861

The South Receives Mixed Messages In Washington

Uncertainty about Lincoln's actual plans for the forts, especially Sumter, continues to concern all Southerners, from Charleston to Montgomery, and even to the delegates at the Virginia convention in Richmond.

Three "southern commissioners" led by Martin Crawford, an ex-US Congressman from Georgia, remain in DC to keep up to date on the latest. Their "back channel" source for most information is Associate Supreme Court Justice John Campbell of Alabama who is in constant contact with Henry Seward – whom they believe "speaks for Lincoln."

On March 15, Seward assures Campbell that Sumter will be evacuated, but nothing has happened for over two weeks.

So the Judge now contacts the Secretary for an update. The message this time is less comforting.

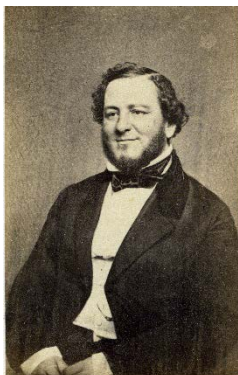


Martin Crawford (1820-1883)

Seward tells Campbell that Lincoln's "ears are open to everyone" at the moment – but that it seems unlikely he will try to reinforce Sumter, and certainly not without signaling Governor Pickens in advance.

Hearing this news, CSA President Jefferson Davis asks his cabinet for their thoughts.

Opinion continue to differ – with Attorney General Judah Benjamin declaring that war is inevitable, and Secretary of State Robert Toombs arguing that Lincoln will evacuate Sumter in the end.



Judah Benjamin (1811-1884)

Davis still wants to believe Seward and Toombs and opts for no change in policy yet. He orders Crawford and the others to remain in Washington with their eyes and ears open

Time: April 1, 1861

Seward Oversteps His Bounds And Lincoln Asserts His Authority



William Henry Seward (1801-1872)

April Fool's Day concludes with one other telling incident that will define the relationship between Henry Seward and Abraham Lincoln over the remaining four years of their time together.

Seward believes that he is clearly superior to the President in seeing "the big picture" affecting the destiny of the nation.

For him that involves finding any way possible to bring the seceding states back into the Union. But he is no longer certain that evacuating the forts would produce that outcome, even if he could finally convince Lincoln to go along.

What is needed, he thinks, is a different strategy, something so compelling that the South will be persuaded to heal the breach and come home.

He arrives at a delusional proposal: finding a "common enemy" such as Spain, and provoking a conflict with them over something the South might fight for in unison with the North, such as acquiring Cuba or other potential plantation territories.

With this in mind, he sends a memorandum to Lincoln in which he politely offers to take the lead in the current crisis if it is producing too much strain on the President.

Lincoln is taken aback by the proposal, but decides to use it to put Seward in his place and establish the working relationship he wants and needs going forward. He summons Seward and tells him straight out that Ft. Sumter must be defended and that the final decision belongs with him:

If this must be done; I must do it.

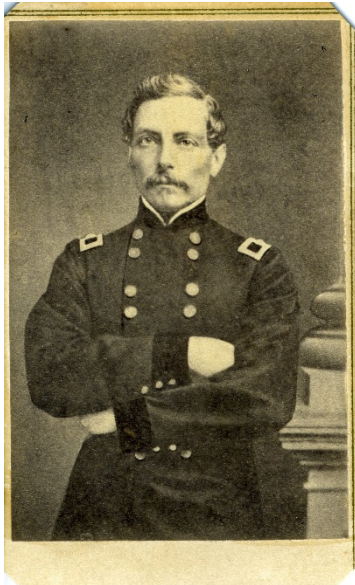
His tone with Seward is gentle, not harsh, and he insures him that he his support as Secretary of State will be crucial to this and all future decisions during his presidency.

It is generally agreed that from that time forward. Seward will always remain willing to openly and aggressively offer advice to Lincoln, without ever again overstepping his bounds.

Chapter 287 - Lincoln Sends Messengers To Charleston While Monitoring The Virginia Convention

Time: April 2, 1861

The South Puts The Squeeze On The Ft. Sumter Garrison



Pierre Gustave Toutant-Beauregard
(1818-1893)

The sideways drift in negotiations over Ft. Sumter causes War Secretary Leroy Walker to increase the pressure on Major Anderson.

The form comes by way of rations.

Anderson already writes a note to Washington on April 1 saying that his food is running out and estimating that, at best, he could hold on for ten days or so.

Walker ups the ante on April 2, ordering that no more provisions be allowed into the fort.

The order goes to forty-two year old Pierre Gustave Toutant-Beauregard.

Beauregard is born on a sugar plantation outside New Orleans to French Creole parents. He graduates from West Point as an engineer and is twice wounded en route to capturing Mexico City with General Scott.

After touting Jefferson Davis to head the Confederacy, he is rewarded by being named the first Brigadier General in the Confederate Army.

His supreme self-confidence and flamboyant personality make General Beauregard eager to lead an assault on Ft. Sumter.

Time: April 4, 1861

Lincoln Keeps His Eye On The Virginia Convention

Within Lincoln's cabinet there is agreement that if Virginia stays in the Union, it might swing the entire Upper South and the Border states to follow suit, and perhaps even cause a return by the seven early seceders. This will prove to be more wishful thinking, but on April 4 the

President wants to hear the latest news from the Virginia convention, already under way for two months.

To do so, he invites John Baldwin, a pro-Union delegate, to the White House for an update.

Seward still hopes that Lincoln will use the time to tell Baldwin that he will evacuate Sumter if Virginia ends its session without seceding.

But the President simply probes his guest as to why the convention hasn't ended already, to demonstrate the state's loyalty to the Union.

Baldwin levels with Lincoln, saying that the delegates are in a wait and see mode regarding the outcome at Ft. Sumter, and that, if shots are fired by either side, secession will follow. When Lincoln pushes back on that assessment, Baldwin responds:

Mr. President, I did not come here to argue with you. I am here as a witness. I know the sentiments of the people of Virginia and you do not.

Time: April 4, 1861

Two Messengers Are Dispatched To Charleston

After Baldwin leaves, Lincoln decides it is time to communicate directly with Governor Pickens in Charleston, and, if possible, visit Ft. Sumter and Major Anderson.

He enlists a State Department clerk, Robert Chew, to hand Pickens a message, while denying him the authority any on-the-spot reply. The message reads:

I am directed by the President of the United States to notify you to expect an attempt...to supply Ft. Sumter with provisions only; and that, if such an attempt be not resisted, no effort to throw in men, arms or ammunition, will be made without further notice, or in case of an attack on the fort.

This wording reflects the President's passive-aggressive approach to dealing with Ft. Sumter.

On one hand he promises not to initiate the use of force – while, on the other, making it clear that he fully intends to keep Sumter in Union hands.

That way, if violence breaks out, it will be the other side that fires the first shot.

In addition to Chew, Lincoln also dispatches Lt. Theodore Talbot to Charleston, on the outside chance that he will be allowed to enter the fort and report on conditions there.

Chapter 288 - Confusion Reigns As The Federal Expeditions To The Forts Head Out

Time: April 4, 1861

An Angry Gideon Welles Confronts Lincoln About The Sumter Expedition



Gideon Welles (1802-1878)

On April 4 Lincoln learns that Anderson is almost out of food.

He responds by drafting a note to the Major in Cameron's name, saying that reinforcements are coming, and that he should hold out as long as possible, surrendering only if starvation risks the life of his men.

He then sends for Lt. Fox who is leading the Sumter expedition. He says that the voyage is a go, that it will include both provisions and soldiers, and that Fox needs to launch it in the next two days.

In a panic, Fox heads to Naval Secretary Gideon Welles for support. His main request is to for the frigate *Powhatan* and Welles signs off on the order – totally unaware that it has already been promised to Meigs for his secret mission to Ft. Pickens in Florida.

All seems well until that evening when Lincoln's personal secretary, John Nicolay, suddenly appears to inform him that the President and Seward have already assigned *Powhatan* to another naval initiative. Welles is outraged by this intrusion on his authority, and arrives at the White House near midnight with Seward in tow to demand an explanation.

Lincoln apologizes to Welles and dissembles, saying the mistake was an accidental oversight on his part. But by now his concerns about Anderson's fate have risen, and he changes course, telling Welles that Fox can have *Powhatan* for Sumter.

This solves the immediate flare up, while leaving Seward angry about his pet Ft. Pickens project, and Welles still totally unaware of it.

Time: April 6, 1861

Map Showing Ft. Pickens In The Gulf Of Mexico

A speedy tugboat chases him down some fifteen miles away off Staten Island, and hands him a note signed by Seward to abandon his voyage.

This is an unpleasant position to be in, but...I received my orders from the President and shall proceed and execute them.

Consistent with all of this planning confusion is the ultimate outcome regarding *Powhatan*.

For the Ft. Pickens effort, *Powhatan* proves trivial, no more than an excess ornament on what will be an easy and successful operation.

Time: April 8, 1861

The Sumter Expedition Heads Out Amidst Press Coverage

A shaken Lt. Fox, already two days behind the timetable handed him by Lincoln, has been scrambling to assemble his Sumter fleet and provisions.

He lines up the revenue cutter *Harriet Lane* and the *Baltic*, both in New York, along with *Pocahontas* at Norfolk, and *Pawnee* at Washington. He also locates 300 troops and supplies for up to a year.

The Sumter Fleet

Ships	Propulsion	Tons	Cannons	Debarks From
<i>Harriet Lane</i>	Steamer	730	1-4", 2-8", 1-9", 2-24#	New York
<i>Baltic</i>	Steamer	2723	Passenger	New York
<i>Pocahontas</i>	Steamer	558	1-10#, 1-20# 4-32#	Norfolk, Va
<i>Pawnee</i>	Steamer	1533	2-12#, 8-9"	Washington

Fox is on board *Baltic* when it leaves along with *Harriet Lane* on April 8; the other two ships do not get under way until two days later.

These departures are quickly picked up by the press, with James Pike of Greeley's *New York Tribune* breaking the story:

The President is unwilling to strike the national flag and determined not to permit the garrison at Ft. Sumter to be starved out or abandoned...to a humiliating surrender.

Chapter 289 - Davis Decides To Take Sumter By Force

Time: April 8, 1861

The Hope For A Peaceful Evacuation At Sumter Vanishes

Lincoln's two messengers meet with Governor Pickens on April 8 to notify him of the movement to resupply Sumter. After Robert Chew hands him Lincoln's note, Pickens wishes to reply. But the well-rehearsed Chew buys time by saying that he is not cleared to transmit any responses.

Lt. Theodore Talbot then asks permission to visit the fort, but Beauregard will have none of that – and the two messengers are soon back on the train to Washington.

Meanwhile in DC, Seward informs the Southern “commissioners” that their request to be recognized as officials of the new Confederate States government is denied.

These two meetings draw a quick response. Martin Crawford wires Beauregard in Charleston:

The war policy prevails in the Cabinet at the hour.

He has also picked up rumors about the Ft. Pickens expedition, and notifies Davis:

Fort Pickens and Texas are the first points of military demonstration.

Davis in turn sends a definitive order to Beauregard to block any attempt to relieve Sumter.

Under no circumstances are you to allow provisions to be sent to Fort Sumter

Time: April 9, 1861

The CSA Cabinet Agree On The Sumter Attack



Roger Pryor (1828-1919)

On April 9, CSA President Jefferson Davis tells his cabinet that he is ready to attack Ft. Sumter, the only question left in his mind is the timing.

He finds only one dissenter, and that is his Secretary of State, Robert Toombs who issues a dire warning:

Mr. President, at this time it is suicide, murder and will lose us every friend at the North. You will wantonly strike a hornet's nest which extends from mountains to oceans, and legions, now quiet, will swarm out and sting us to death. It is unnecessary; it puts us in the wrong; it is fatal!

But the others are unmoved by Toombs and the word goes to Charleston to finalize their preparations.

The gruff Texan, Louis T. Wigfall, reassures Davis:

No one now doubts that Lincoln intends war. The delay on his part is only to complete his preparations.

The long wait is about to end, and the city is overjoyed by the prospect.

Doubly so when Governor Pickens decides to open what was previously declared "private mail" to Sumter, and finds Lincoln's April 4 note telling Anderson that reinforcement will be on the way soon – a clear conflict with the apparent assurances from Seward and others of a peaceful evacuation.

The sixty-seven year old fire-eater, Edmund Ruffin, is so excited that he picks up a rifle and joins the Palmetto Guard as a private.

The Virginia rebel, Roger Pryor, is in town to partake in the action and fire up the locals, saying:

You have at last annihilated this accursed Union, reeking with corruption, and insolent with excess of tyranny.

Chapter 290 - Threats To Both Washington And Sumter Become Imminent

Time: April 8-9, 1861

The Virginian John Minor Botts Warns Lincoln Of A DC Plot



John Minor Botts (1802-1869)

As Davis is readying his attack of Ft. Sumter, Lincoln is clinging to the hope that the Virginia Convention will vote to stay in the Union and that war can be avoided.

On April 8 ex-Whig Congressman and Virginia Unionist, John Minor Botts, visits the White House after learning that a fleet has set out to relieve Ft. Sumter. He comes to plead with Lincoln to change his mind, saying that the move will lead to war.

Lincoln responds with the same emotional message he used with John Baldwin on April 4.

I am no war man. I want peace more than any man in this country, and will make greater sacrifices to preserve it than any other man...

Botts is convinced of Lincoln's sincerity, and returns the following day to warn the President that southern forces are planning to attack and subdue Washington.

Lincoln immediately sends Botts to see General Scott who stiffens the city's defenses with additional troops from New York and Pennsylvania.

Time: April 10-11, 1861

Anderson Sees Signs Of An Imminent Attack



Robert Anderson (1805-1871)

On April 10, General Beauregard receives the order from Jefferson Davis to bombard Ft. Sumter when his preparations are complete.

From the parapet of the fort, Major Anderson spots a flurry of increased activity at the batteries which envelop him and orders his men to man their guns.

Time seems to stand still on both sides until 4pm on April 11 when a dingy arrives at Sumter under a white flag bringing three representatives from Beauregard: his military aide-de-camp, Lt. Colonel Alexander Chisolm, Captain Stephen D. Lee, and the spokesman for the party, ex-Senator James Chestnut.

Anderson greets Chestnut, who presents a demand that the fort be evacuated post haste. He also outlines the terms for departure: all men will be granted paroles and returned by ship to Northern ports; they will be allowed to carry their arms and personal possessions with them; and may salute the flag as they depart.

The Major asks for a moment to confer with his officers, who are unanimous in rejecting the offer.

Anderson returns and delivers the news to Chestnut, saying:

I will await the first shot, and if you do not batter us to pieces, we shall be starved out in a few days.

The last part of this reply captures Chestnut's attention, as a possible way to avoid being labeled the aggressor in a civil war. Once back in Charleston, he wires Anderson's comment to Montgomery for their reaction. At 9:20pm word comes back from War Secretary Leroy Walker:

Do not desire needlessly to bombard Fort Sumter.

This comes with an instruction to return to the fort and ask Anderson if he would state a precise date and time for a peaceful departure. At 11pm that night Chestnut is back at Sumter seeking an answer.

When Anderson says that he will hold out four more days, until April 15, when his food runs out, an exasperated Chestnut heads back to report the disappointing news to Davis.

Chapter 291 - The Battle For Ft. Sumter Is Under Way

Time: April 12, 1861

The Confederates Bombard The Fort



Edmund Ruffin (1794-1865)

General Beauregard's orders are now crystal clear:

Reduce the fort as your judgment decides to be most practicable.

He moves almost immediately, with much of Charleston still gathered near the harbor at night, after waiting all day to cheer the start of the action.

At 3:20am he follows military protocol with Chestnut back at Sumter handing Anderson a note that firing will begin one hour hence.

While still looking out to sea for the arrival of the anticipated reinforcements, the garrison braces for the bombardment.

It comes at 4:30am on April 12 from Ft. Johnson to the southwest, fired by Captain George James, as a signal shot to unleash the other batteries. Seconds later, Edmund Ruffin is given the honor of firing from Cummings Point, landing a 64 lb. shell that hits the outer wall.

Inside of Sumter, Major Anderson has only 700 shells at his disposal, and he waits until 7:30am to return fire, with Captain Abner Doubleday pulling the first lanyard. To protect his men, Anderson also abandons his heavy guns along the exposed parapet and utilizes only the lower batteries which peak out from behind five feet of solid concrete.

The Confederate pounding continues unabated, with the only hope for the garrison appearing on the horizon in the late morning.

Sidebar: The Remarkable Defenders Of Ft. Sumter

In addition to Major Robert Anderson, a host of other members of the Ft. Sumter garrison will go on to earn high military honors in the upcoming Civil War. Included here are subsequent Major Generals Abner Doubleday, Samuel Crawford, Truman Seymour, John Foster and Jefferson C. Davis. Another defender, artillery Captain Norman J. Hall, will earn fame at several battles, including Gettysburg, where his brigade turns back Pickett's Charge along Cemetery Ridge.



Time: April 12, 1861

Lt. Fox's Rescue Expedition Approaches Sumter But Then Turns Away



USS Constitution

Aside from the sheer courage of Anderson and his men within the fort, all they have to hope for is a last second rescue by the naval fleet supposedly on its way.

The fact is that it has arrived, at least in part, as of 3am on April 12, some ninety minutes before the Confederates open fire.

But the mission continues to be plagued by the lack of coordination evident from the beginning.

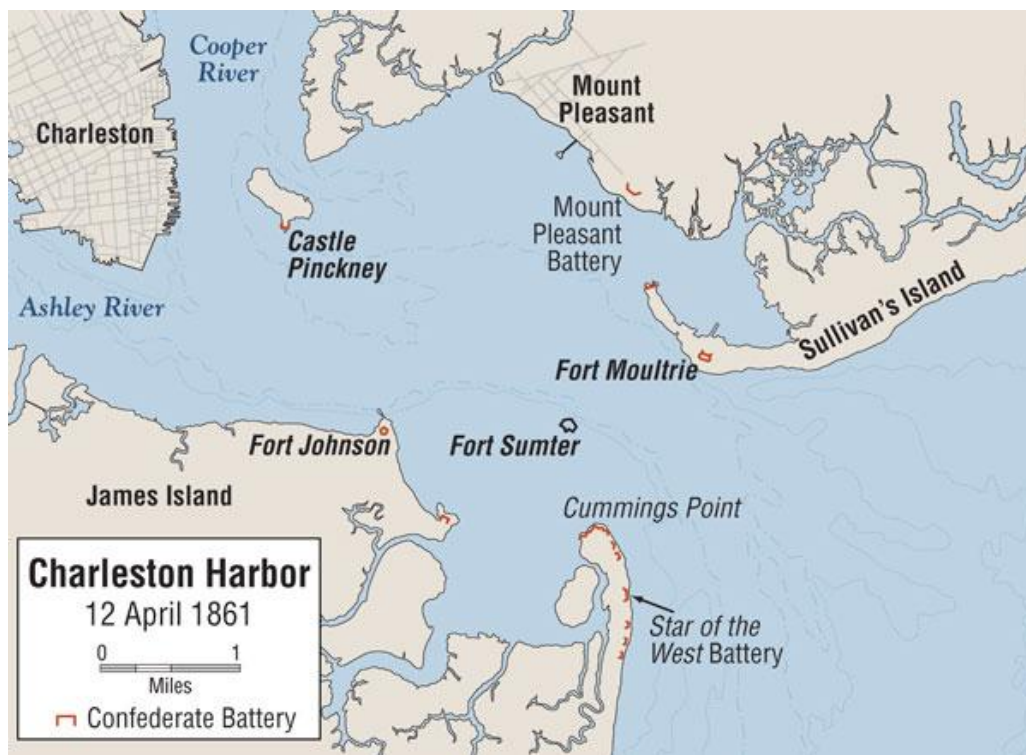
When the overall commander, Lt. Gustavus Fox, traveling aboard the passenger ship, *Baltic*, reaches the designated rendezvous point ten miles east of the Charleston harbor lighthouse, he finds two of his four support craft present and two missing.

The *Harriet Lane*, departing from New York, appears, as does *Pawnee*, coming down from Washington. Absent, however, are *Pocahontas*, traveling from Norfolk with its 300 soldiers and heavy weapons, and *Powhattan* which, still unbeknownst to Fox, is on its way to Ft. Pickens – along with landing craft crucial to any amphibious landing at Sumter.

Fox is very concerned about proceeding with only a three ship fleet, but finally runs out of patience with waiting, and sets sail for Sumter. By the time he approaches the harbor, he hears cannon fire and sees smoke already rising from the fort. Instead of a peaceful landing, any attempt will need to be made under fire.

Fox is no coward, but neither is he a reckless fool, and so he tacks back east hoping to find that his two missing vessels have arrived. To his consternation, neither are there, and he again reverses course hoping to at least do something for Anderson and his men.

But again he is frustrated, this time by a storm which sets in on his approach and forces him to again turn back.

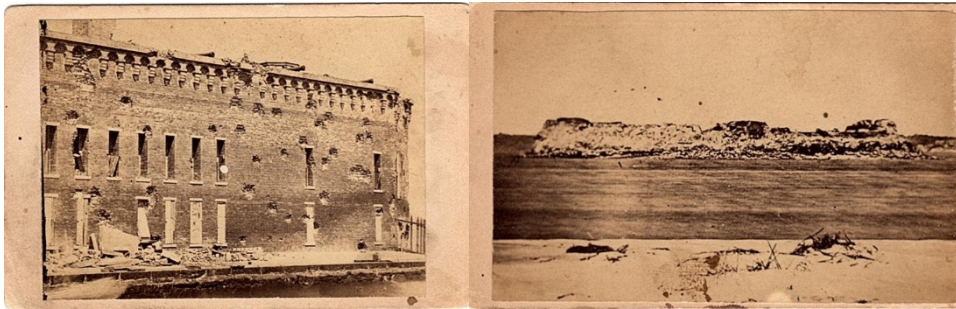


Map Of Charleston Harbor

Chapter 292 - Ft. Sumter Ends And “Then The War Came”

Time: April 12-13, 1861

The Confederates Continue To Pound Sumter



The Devastating Effects Of The Confederate Barrage On Ft. Sumter

The beleaguered defenders at Sumter actually see Fox's undermanned fleet trying to make their approach in the high seas late on April 12.

Its failure seals their fate.

Around midnight they examine the damage suffered so far by the fort.

While the entire structure is pock marked by rounds, the outer walls remain largely intact.

Inside it is a different story. Food has run out as has most of the wood needed for building fires.

Likewise, Anderson's supply of ammunition is almost gone, and he cuts back to firing only six cannon before ceasing to respond entirely by the morning of the 13th.

Meanwhile the *Pocahontas* finally arrives overnight and the prior day's storm blows over.

But by now there is nothing Lt. Fox can do to change the outcome.

Time: April 13, 1860

Major Anderson Surrenders



Louis T. Wigfall (1816-1874)

On July 13, General Beauregard decides that it is time to call off the slaughter.

He orders a boat be sent with Chestnut to again offer Anderson terms for surrender.

Before it can launch, the boisterous ex-Senator from Texas, Louis T. Wigfall, sets out on his own under a white flag and makes it to the door of the fort, where he is allowed to enter.

Wigfall says that he represents Beauregard and that if Anderson will agree to evacuate post haste, the same generous terms advanced earlier by Chestnut will hold.

Anderson agrees and runs up a white flag, just as the “official party” arrives.

After momentary confusion, agreement is reached that the fort will be formally surrendered on April 14 at noon.

Time: April 14, 1861

A Fatal Accident Mars The Surrender Ceremony



A Staunch Defender Of The Flag

The Sumter garrison has been defeated, but its spirit is not broken, and Robert Anderson insists that the defense they have put up over the last four and one-half months be properly honored.

This includes a final roll call assembly for his troops followed by a planned 100 gun salute before the flag is hauled down.

All is going smoothly until the 46th round is fired and a spark lands amidst the remaining gunpowder setting off a violent explosion. A private named David Hough who is standing at attention nearby has his right arm blown off and dies almost instantly. Another private, Edward Galloway, suffers wounds that will prove fatal three days later.

Amazingly these are the only two deaths that occur on both sides during the battle.

Anderson is shaken by the tragedy, fires four more rounds to reach fifty, then salutes and lowers the flag, folds it carefully, puts it under his arm and leads the men out of the fort.

The battle for Sumter is over; the battle for the Union has just begun.

Chapter 293 -Aftermath 1861

Time: April 15, 1861

Lincoln Calls For 75,000 Army Volunteers

The Confederates first move is to inform Washington that they intend to leave the Union peacefully and operate henceforth as an independent nation.

But Lincoln will have none of that.

His main concern is that a sovereign South will move immediately to expand slavery into the west and thereby set off a series of battles akin to Bloody Kansas.

He also fears that recognizing the Confederacy as a separate nation will increase the chances of Britain or France providing support for them in a coming civil war.

Finally, in his heart, he is dedicated to ultimately resolving the “house divided” schism and welcoming the southerners back into the “sacred Union” of his youth.

On April 15 Lincoln announces that the rebels are not operating as an independent nation, but rather as “insurrectionists” from within. He says they are illegally violating the 1787 Constitutional “contract” and that his intent going forward will be to compel them to return to the United States proper.

Despite these bold assertions, Lincoln knows that the North is woefully unprepared to prosecute a war.



Regular Army

His Regular Army, at the moment, comprises only 16,000 officers and soldiers stationed in small forts across the country and with defections mounting daily from southern supporters. That is hardly enough to conduct a major war, and he acts immediately by calling for 75,000 volunteers to defend the flag.

In doing so, he is initially restrained by the Militia Act of 1795 which puts a ceiling on the number of recruits and limits their service to only three months in total.

Congress, however, quickly overturns the outdated Act and on May 3, Lincoln expands the Regular Army to 22,714 and calls for another 42,000 recruits to serve for three years. In July 1861 the lid comes all the way off with a call for a 500,000 man army.

Estimated Active Troop Sizes During The War

Time	Union	Confederate
Summer 1861	200,000	200,000
Summer 1863	600,000	300,000

Time: April 17-23, 1861

Virginia Joins The Confederacy Along With R.E. Lee

Lincoln's call for 75,000 troops is seen as provocative throughout the South -- and doubly so since it includes target quotas for all states still in the Union. This includes Virginia and only serves to further enflame the secessionists at the ongoing convention in Richmond. Still the Unionist delegates there warn against a rash move. As Alexander Stuart frames it:

Secession is not only war, but it is emancipation; it is bankruptcy; it is repudiation; it is widespread ruin of our people.

The debate drags on for five days after the fall of Ft. Sumter, with the Unionists trying desperately to prevail. But when their "delay motion" fails by a narrow margin of 64-77, the tide has turned against them. The leader of the war faction continues to be ex-Governor Henry Wise.



Holding a revolver aloft, Wise tells the convention:

We are here indulging in foolish debates, the only result of which must be delay, and, perhaps, ruin. Blood (should) be flowing at Harper's Ferry before night.

On April 17, the Virginia Ordinance Of Secession passes by a 88-55 votes, and, as Lincoln feared, it will trigger three more states in the Upper South (Arkansas, North Carolina and Tennessee) to also depart.

Governor Henry Wise
(1806-1876)

The Virginia decision fosters one other outcome that will profoundly impact the course of the war. It involves Colonel Robert E. Lee, a 32 year veteran of service in the U.S. Army now forced to make a decision between his loyalty to the United States or to his roots in Virginia.



Lee has consistently opposed secession calling it an unlawful “betrayal” and “nothing but revolution.” As recently as March 28, 1861 he swears an oath of loyalty as part of his promotion to Colonel in the Regular Army. But the convention vote changes his mind.

Upon hearing of his wavering, Lincoln’s advisor Francis Preston Blair Sr. approaches Lee and offers him a position as Major General in charge of defending the capital. Lee’s response is telling:

Mr. Blair, I look upon secession as anarchy. If I owned the four millions of slaves in the South I would sacrifice them all to the Union; but how can I draw my sword upon Virginia, my native state?

Robert E. Lee (1807-1870)

Most of Lee’s family oppose secession and Lee himself agonizes over his decision before submitting his resignation on April 20 to a despairing Winfield Scott. On April 23, he is given command of all troops in Virginia and on August 31 he is named one of the five initial Lieutenant Generals, ranking third behind Samuel Cooper and Albert Sidney Johnston. Throughout the war, Lee will wear the insignia of a Colonel, refusing to don that of a full general unless and until the war is won.

Sidebar: Reprise Of Slave State Secession Decisions

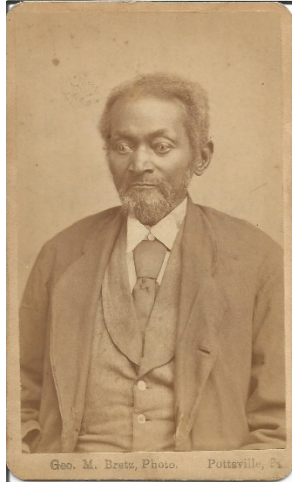
Out of a total of fifteen slave states in America, eleven will secede, three will remain in the Union, and one (Kentucky) will declare neutrality.

States	Convention On	Decisions
South Carolina	December 20, 1860	Secedes
Mississippi	January 9, 1861	Secedes
Florida	January 10	Secedes
Alabama	January 11	Secedes
Georgia	January 19	Secedes
Louisiana	January 26	Secedes
Texas	February 1	Secedes
Delaware	January 3	Rejects Secession
Missouri	March 19	Rejects Secession
Virginia	April 17	Secedes
Maryland	April 30	Rejects Secession
Arkansas	May 6	Secedes
North Carolina	May 20	Secedes
Kentucky	May 20	Neutral
Tennessee	June 8	Secedes

Time: April 19, 1861

Union Troops Attacked In Baltimore

Two days after Virginia secedes, a secessionist mob in Baltimore attacks Union Militia troops as they arrive by rail on their way to defend Washington.



Nick Biddle (1796-1876)

The first soldiers to arrive are a mix of Volunteer companies and Regular from Pennsylvania, who are pelted by bricks and curses as they march through the streets on way to their encampment on April 18 in DC near the Washington monument.

One man injured in the melee is 65-year old Nick Biddle, a beloved black servant in the troop who is given the honor of wearing a uniform of the Washington Artillery. When he is spotted, cries of “Nigger in uniform” go up and he is hit in the head by a stone.

Biddle continues to march, head wrapped in a bloody bandage, and wins subsequent notoriety as the “first casualty of the war.”

The Pennsylvanians are followed by 240 soldiers of the 6th Massachusetts Militia who are met at the Baltimore train station by a mob of some 700 members of the pro-secessionist “National Volunteers.”

A riot breaks out after shots are fired into the crowd and before the fighting ends, four U.S. troops are killed and twenty-four others are wounded. Twelve “Volunteers” also die in the battle.

Time: April 27, 1861

Lincoln Suspends Habeas Corpus To Deal With Rebels

The riot in Baltimore triggers fear that the Slave State of Maryland may secede at its upcoming April 30 convention, and then move to cut off access of Union troops to the capital.

To address this threat, Lincoln decides to authorize the arrest and imprisonment of known insurrectionists and the suspension of their right to habeas corpus (appearing in court to confront one’s accusers).

Included in the initial round up are the Mayor of Baltimore, the Police Chief and entire Board of Police, the City Council members and even sitting U.S. Congressman Henry May.

Critics of this action, notably Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Roger Taney, regard this as an unconstitutional violation of Article I, Section 9 of the Constitution:

The privilege of the writ of habeas corpus shall not be suspended, unless when in cases of rebellion or invasion the public safety may require it.

On May 25, another arrest is made, this time involving one John Merryman, a member of the Baltimore resistance, who is accused of treason for destroying public property, including strategic bridges around the city. After he is jailed at Ft. McHenry, his lawyers assert the right to habeas corpus, and the case comes before Roger Taney, Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, acting in his circuit court capacity.

In *Ex parte Merryman*, Taney issues an order saying that the defendant must be brought to court -- but it is ignored by General George Cadwallader at the fort who cites Lincoln's prior directive.

Lincoln himself also rejects the order before addressing the controversy in a July speech to Congress where he argues that his action is justified by the exception clause for "cases of rebellion." But then, on July 13, Merryman is released from jail after posting bail of \$25,000 and his treason trial is called off.

Still the President continues to demand the arrest of insurrectionists, and in March 1863 Congress passes a bill in support of his policy "whenever the public safety may require it."



Another famous case follows on May 5, 1863, when ex-Ohio Congressman Clement Vallandigham is taken into custody by General Ambrose Burnside. Four days earlier he delivers an inflammatory speech to a large crowd repeating his claims that the war is being fought by "King Lincoln" to free the slaves not save the Union, that the liberties of white men were at risk and that the slaughter should stop immediately.

A military tribunal sentences Vallandigham to prison for the duration of the war, and he in turn demands his right to habeas corpus in a federal court.

Clement Vallandigham (1820-71)

On May 19 Lincoln dodges the legal issue by ordering that the prisoner be escorted through Union lines to reside in the Confederacy. Ironically Jefferson Davis guards him as an "enemy alien" before he leaves the country on a blockade runner, ending up in Canada. From there he successfully campaigns for the Democrat nomination for Governor of Ohio before eventually going down to a 60-40% defeat in the 1863 general election.

Time: April 1861

Scott Launches The Anaconda Plan To Blockade Southern Ports



Winfield Scott (1786-1866)

The President turns to his General-in-Chief, Winfield Scott, to plan the Union's military strategy for the upcoming war.

Unlike those who anticipate a short conflict with the Union racing overland for a mere 200 miles to capture Richmond, Scott foresees a prolonged struggle decided in the end by sieges and attrition.

This leads to his "Anaconda Plan" to produce a stranglehold on the South by utilizing U.S. Navy superiority to encircle and then contract its borders.

Scott's first blow will lie in blockading all Southern ports, thereby limiting its outgoing commercial ties to Europe along with its hopes for incoming military supplies.

This will be followed by a campaign to drive down the Mississippi River to New Orleans, effectively sealing off the CSA western armies from those in the East.

Once that much is accomplished, the Union's superior manpower and resources will simply squeeze the life out of the Confederacy.

In the end, despite many stops and starts, Scott's Anaconda Plan will play out essentially as he predicts.

Time: May 13, 1861

Queen Victoria Declares That Britain Will Remain Neutral

While Scott plans to isolate the South, the CSA government is trying to gain formal recognition of its independent nation status especially from Great Britain, and the potential for military support to follow.

But Lincoln recognizes this threat and acts to shut it down by announcing that any foreign support to the South will be regarded as an act of war against the United States. His blockade of the southern ports signals his willingness to use force against aggressors.

At this point, Britain is on the spot to decide its strategic response. Are the benefits of preserving the supply of raw cotton from the South sufficient to assume the risks of warfare with the Union on the high seas and perhaps even in Canada?

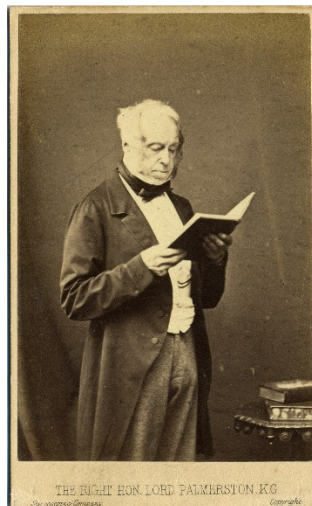
While the common working men in England clearly oppose the Confederates for their reliance on slave labor, many among the upper crust identify with the more aristocratic traditions of the South. Key among them is William Gladstone, Chancellor of the Exchequer, whose family wealth traces to slave labor in the West Indies. Gladstone's views are offset by Lord John Russell, currently serving as Foreign Minister.

The third man in the mix is "Harry" Temple, Lord Palmerston, who is Prime Minister throughout the American conflict and who finally comes down on the side of caution.

The policy is announced on May 13, 1861 in a "Proclamation of Neutrality" from Queen Victoria, still fairly early on in her sixty-three year run (1837-1901) on the British throne.

Whereas hostilities have unhappily commenced between the United States and certain States styling themselves as the Confederate States of America...And whereas we being at peace with the Government of the United States, we declare our Royal determination to maintain a strict and impartial neutrality in the contest between said competing parties.

Although France and other foreign powers adopt this same position, many violations will materialize over the course of the four-year war. Britain will end up arming the majority of Southern infantrymen, mainly with Enfield Rifles. "Privateers" from both Britain and France will sail across the Atlantic carrying foodstuffs and weapons, as well as acting as "raiders" destroying over 700 U.S. merchant ships. France also uses the war as a diversion in December 1861 to invade Mexico and install Emperor Maximillian I for a five-year reign.



(Names missing here...) BOB

Time: May 24, 1861

A Cold-Blooded Murder Claims The Life Of Col. Elmer Ellsworth

Another violent incident occurs on May 24 in Alexandria, Virginia at the Marshall House Inn.

The proprietor there, a man named James Jackson, raises a large Confederate Flag on the roof of the inn which is spotted by Union troops in the vicinity. They take it upon themselves to haul it down, with Elmer Ellsworth, Colonel of the 11th N.Y. Volunteers ("Fire Zouaves"), and Private Francis Brownell first on the scene.

Ellsworth reaches the roof, tears down the flag and is descending with Brownell to the lobby when Jackson appears on a landing and fires one round from his double-barreled shotgun into the Colonel's chest, killing him instantly. But before he can shoot again, Brownell kills him with a shot to the face.

Word of the murder spreads rapidly, given Ellsworth's friendship with Lincoln and the fact that he is the first officer to fall for the Union. His uniformed body is displayed in the East Room of the White House before being moved to City Hall in New York City for a viewing attended by thousands and followed by a state funeral. For his action, Brownell is awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor and becomes a celebrity in the North.

The innkeeper James Jackson is also celebrated across the South as a martyr to its cause.



Elmer Ellsworth (1837-61)



The Marshall House



Francis Brownell (1840-94)

Time: July 21, 1861

The Battle Of 1st Bull Run Foretells The Slaughter To Come

Once it's clear that a peaceful exit by the Confederates is not to be, both sides begin to organize for the warfare to come.

Soldiers in the Regular Army head North or South and join up with new volunteers. Each is given a rank (from Private to General), assigned to a branch (Infantry, Artillery, and Cavalry) and placed in a unit:

Military Structure With Optimal Troop Levels

Company	Regiment	Brigade	Division	Corps	Army
100 men	4 companies	4 regiments	3-5 brigades	3 divisions	1-8 corps
100 men	400 men	1,600 men	6,000 men	18,000 men	70,000 men
Captain	Colonel	Brigadier General	Major General	Lt. General	

These units are then allocated to the Eastern or Western Theaters of war, and to Departments with defined territorial boundaries. The Union Army tends to name their forces after rivers (e.g. the Army of the Potomac or the Tennessee) while the Confederates prefer state titles (e.g. the Army of Northern Virginia.)

Training is rudimentary on both sides, with Regular Army veterans overseeing basic drills for the raw volunteers.

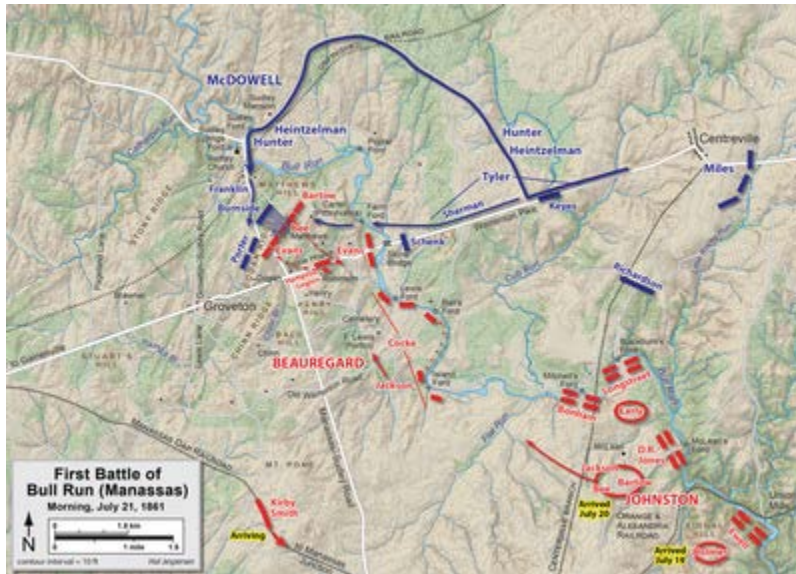
Actual conflict early on is limited to “skirmishes,” the first of significance on June 3 around Philippi, Virginia, where Major General George McClellan routs a small band of Confederates, earning more credit for command than he deserves and prompting “Drive to Richmond” rhetoric among the northern public.

The pressure to advance falls on Irwin McDowell a former staff officer promoted three ranks to Brigadier General and placed in charge of the 35,000 man Union Army of Northwestern Virginia. On July 16, his troops depart from Washington intent on staging a diversionary attack at Manassas Junction while moving the bulk of his command south to take Richmond.

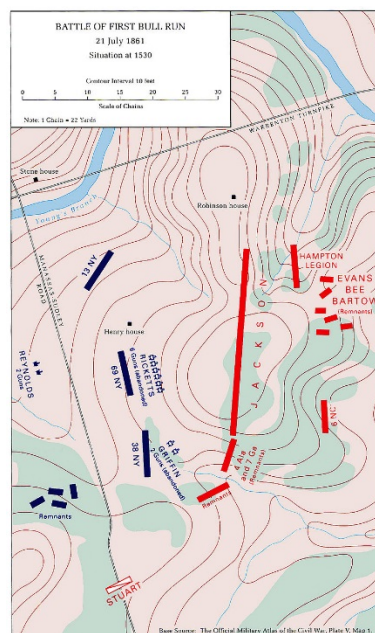
Meanwhile the Confederate Army of the Potomac under the dashing Brigadier General Pierre Gustav Toutant Beauregard hears of the Union advance from spies in D.C. and moves his force into defensive positions just west of a point where the Warrenton Pike crosses the Manassas-Sudley Road.

After a debilitating 30-mile hike in the blistering heat, McDowell shows up east of the Sudley Road on July 18 and begins to deploy his troops for battle. This effort drags on for two days, during which time Beauregard receives additional reinforcements.

Early on the morning of July 21 both armies swing into action, each with roughly 18,000 men who will be actively engaged during the combat. Ironically both commanders have the same plan in mind, that being to strike at their opponent’s left flank and then envelope their rear guards. Thus the battle takes on the form of a counterclockwise wheeling motion, with McDowell heading north and west and Beauregard going south and east.



Positions As The Battle Opens



The Turning Point On Henry Hill

The fighting rages on throughout the day, with the Union enjoying the upper hand.

Then comes the turning point around 3:30pm when the Union's 1st Artillery unit under Captain James Rickett's attempts to drive the Confederates off of Henry Hill, just south of the Warrenton pike.

But they are stopped cold by a general who earns a lasting sobriquet from fellow defender Bernard Bee who is heard to say: "there stands Jackson like a stone wall."

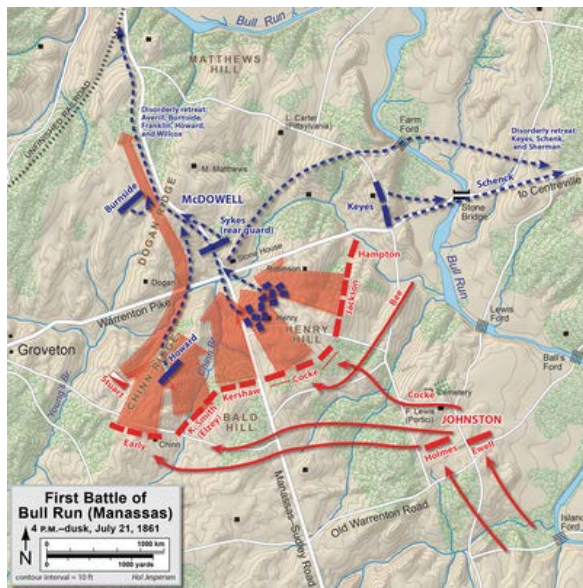
While Bee is mortally wounded, Stonewall Jackson and his fellow Confederates race down from Henry Hill to capture Ricketts' battery and Ricketts himself, shot four times during the exchange.

At this point the tide has turned against the Union.

Jackson's troops are soon joined by the main body of the southern army moving in unison against McDowell's suddenly disheartened brigades just north of the crossroads.

From there the rout is on.

By 5:00pm McDowell's troops are running away for safety. Most retreat due north along the Manassas-Sudley road then turn east along an unfinished railroad line before looping back to the Warrenton Pike on their way to Washington.



The Route Of The Union Army

The capital is in a state of shock as stragglers wander in over the next several days. Rumors abound that the rebel army will launch an attack at any minute, but this never materializes. Like the Union troops, the Confederates are totally played out and in no shape for an offensive.

A respite follows, but 1st Bull Run ends the popular myths on both sides about a short war with heroic victories and few casualties. When the muster rolls are called after July 21, nearly 5,000 men have been killed, wounded or captured.

Casualties At First Bull Run

	Union	Confederate
Killed in Action	460	387
Wounded	1,124	1,582
Captured/missing	1,312	13
Total	2,896	1,982

Included among those captured during the flight are many northern “spectators” who have shown up with chairs, binoculars and picnic baskets to watch the “entertainment” from afar. One of them is U.S. Congressman Alfred Ely of New York who will spend the next six months in Libby Prison before being released by an exchange of captives.

Of course it is unknown at the time that the butcher bill from July 1 will be exceeded by 30 other encounters over the next four years -- with the 51,000 casualties at the three day long Battle at Gettysburg leading the count.

In regard to the total number of victims of the Civil War, new estimates continue to appear as scholars try to reconstruct piecemeal records. The numbers below are now thought to represent the lower end of the range, with some 650,000 killed, missing or dead of disease and another 469,000 wounded.

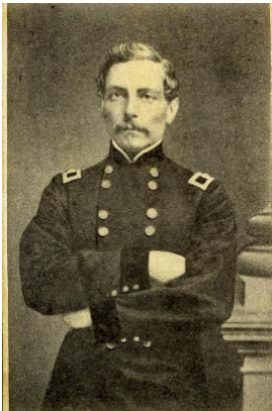
Casualties During The Entire War

	Union	Confederate	Total
Killed in Action	110,000	94,000	204,000
Wounded	275,000	194,000	469,000
Captured/missing	30,000	31,000	61,000
Died of Diseases	225,000	164,000	389,000
Total	640,000	483,000	1,123,000

Even these conservative estimates are shocking, as the 1.1 million figure represents a full 3% of the nation's population in the 1860 Census. The casualties during the conflict exceed the cumulative number of losses for all of America's wars from the 1776 Revolution through the two World Wars, Korea, Viet Nam and the Middle East.

The financial costs are also staggering, with total estimates around \$6Billion for the North and \$3Billion for the South. Despite the imposition of the first tax on personal income (prohibited in the 1787 Constitution) both sides are bankrupt as the war ends.

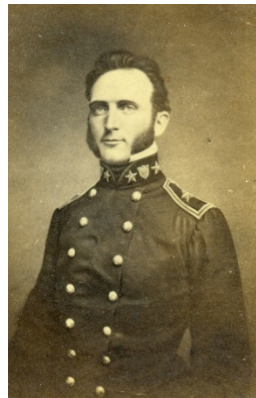
Finally, with the South employing a largely defensive posture to survive, it suffers a devastating loss of property and infrastructure and cities, not to mention the trauma endured by its civilian population.



Irwin McDowell
(1818-85))



PGT Beauregard
(1818-93)



James Ricketts
(1817-87)



Stonewall Jackson
(1824-63)

Summary Of Key Events In 1861 After The Fall Of Ft. Sumter

Date	Events
April 15	Lincoln declares a state of “insurrection” (not war) and calls for 75,000 volunteers to serve for three months.
April 17	Virginia becomes the 8 th state to secede
April 19	A secessionist mob in Baltimore attacks Union troops, killing four. Lincoln orders a blockade of Southern ports according to Anaconda.
April 19	The Anaconda Plan to block Southern ports goes into effect
April 20	Robert E. Lee resigns his US Army commission and accepts a position with the CSA
May 3	Lincoln expands the Regular Army to 22,714 and calls for an additional 42,000 volunteers to serve for up the 3 years.
May 6	Arkansas secedes
May 13	England proclaims neutrality, soon followed by France and Spain.
May 13	Martial law declared in Baltimore by General Ben Butler
May 20	North Carolina secedes
May 21	Richmond named CSA capital
May 24	Col. Elmer Ellsworth killed by a rebel at the Marshall House in Virginia
June 3	Battle of Phillipi, Va. McClellan
June 8	Tenn secedes, 11 th and last
June 11-19	Loyalists form a Unionist gov in W. Va
July	The Congress authorizes a volunteer army of 500,000 men
July 2	Lincoln authorizes suspension of habeas corpus
July 21	First Bull Run
July 22	U.S. Congress resolution that the war is being fought to “preserve the Union” and not to abolish slavery
August 5	The Congress passes the first personal income tax to help fund the war
August 10	CSA wins Wilson’s Creek battle in Missouri
August 30	General Fremont authorizes martial law in Missouri and “frees” the slaves of secessionists in the state – before Lincoln voids the order.
Sept 13	First naval engagement as US ship raids CSA site in Pensacola and burns a privateer
Oct 4	Authorization of first US armored warship, <i>Monitor</i> .
October 21	CSA wins battle of Ball’s Bluff with 1900 US soldiers killed
Nov 1	Lincoln names George McClellan to replace Scott as General In Chief
Nov 7	Union Navy captures two rebel forts on Port Royal Sound, SC
November 8	Two CSA diplomats on <i>RMS Trent</i> seized by the US Navy sparking a crisis
December 8	Spain invades Mexico leading to the 5.5 year reign of Maximillian I

Dec 20	“Radical Republicans” in Congress set up a Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War to oversee Lincoln who they feel is too conciliatory toward the CSA.
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