

Chapter 290 – Lincoln Becomes America’s Sixteenth President



Dates:
November 6, 1860

- Sections:**
- Lincoln’s Sweep In The North Gives Him The Presidency
 - Republicans Also Pick Up Congressional Seats

Date: November 6, 1860

Lincoln’s Sweep In The North Gives Him The Presidency



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 majority – although Lincoln with his 39.8% share enjoys a sizable margin over the runner-up, Douglas.

Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865)

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 | | | | | |

Date: 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 |