

The Civil War

Lesson 1: Texas Joins the Confederacy

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How do governments change?

Terms to Know

economy the system by which goods and services are produced, sold, and bought in a country or region

states' rights the position that the federal government should not interfere with the states exercising their constitutional powers

fundamental of central importance

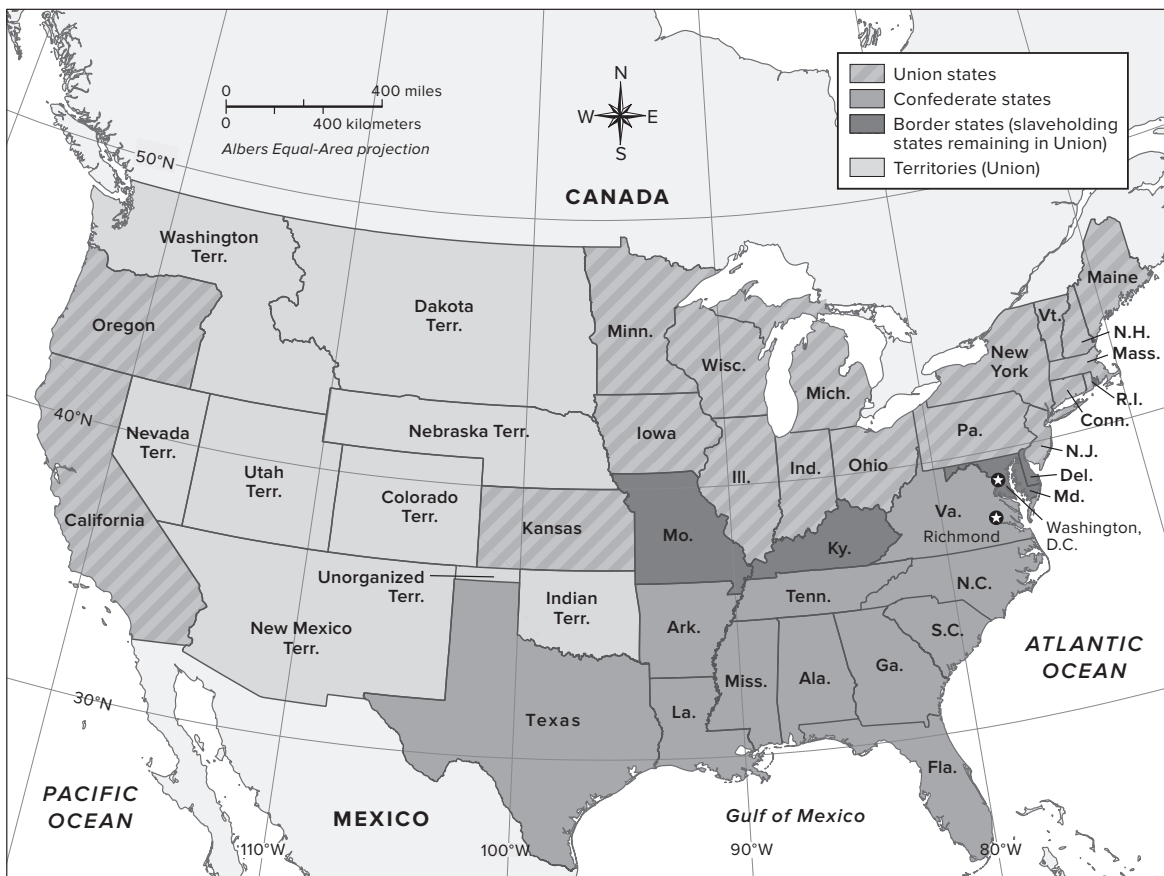
sectionalism focus on the interests of one's region

sovereign free from outside control; self-governing

secede to withdraw from a larger unit one belongs to

ordinance a local law or piece of legislation

Where in the world?



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The Civil War

Lesson 1: Texas Joins the Confederacy, *continued*

Explaining

- Why was slavery more important, in general, to Southerners than to Northerners?



Marking the Text

- Highlight the three main issues that worried Southerners after statehood.

Defining

- What is sectionalism?



Reading Progress Check

- Why did the possibility of higher tariffs upset Southerners?

A Divided Nation

Guiding Question *What issues divided the nation in the time leading up to the Civil War?*

Soon after Texas became a state, the issue of slavery divided the country. The South's **economy** was based on plantation agriculture. Enslaved workers were an important part of that economy. Many Southerners believed that an end to slavery would end their way of life. The North's economy was based on small farms and industry. Slavery had been abolished in most Northern states before 1860.

In the 1850s, a new political party arose mainly in the North. This party, the Republican Party, opposed the spread of slavery to new territories. A group within the party hoped to see slavery ended completely. Southerners believed that this anti-slavery group dominated the party. Many worried that if Republicans gained control of the government, they would end slavery.

Other political issues also concerned Southerners. The Republican Party supported raising tariffs on imported goods. Southerners had long opposed high tariffs. The South, unlike the North, had few manufacturers who would benefit from tariffs. In addition, the South imported many of its goods. High tariffs meant that imports would cost more. Southerners believed this would hurt them economically.

States' rights was another **fundamental** issue that concerned Southerners. For example, some Southern leaders argued that the states had the right not to follow laws passed by Congress if they disagreed with those laws. This included a tariff law.

Divisions on these issues promoted **sectionalism**. Sectionalism is a focus on the interests of one's own region. People in the North and South focused on what would benefit their region rather than the whole nation. Many political leaders pursued sectional, instead of national, interests.

Texas Secession

Guiding Question *How did Texans make the difficult decision to secede?*

In the 1800s, The United States was known as the Union. For years, Southern leaders argued that they had voluntarily entered the Union as **sovereign** states. Therefore, they had a right to **secede**, or leave, the Union if they felt that their rights were threatened.

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When Republican Abraham Lincoln won the presidential election in November 1860, many Southerners believed that their way of life was in danger. Rather than wait for Lincoln to end slavery, they acted. By the end of January 1861, South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, and Louisiana had all seceded.

Many Texans urged Governor Sam Houston to call for a convention on secession. People in the state disagreed about this issue. Those who depended on enslaved labor wanted to secede, but other, mostly in northern and western Texas, opposed secession. Houston was devoted to the Union, and so he was an opponent of secession. He also thought it was unwise to enter a war that he believed the South could not win. He refused to call for a convention.

Supporters of secession called for a convention to vote on the issue anyway. They organized elections to choose delegates. Texans who opposed secession felt that this meeting would be illegal and refused to take part in the election. As a result, most of the delegates favored secession.

Although Houston tried to stop the convention, it began in Austin on January 28, 1861. Members of this Texas Secession Convention adopted the Ordinance of Secession. This **ordinance** claimed that the U.S. government had abused its power. It stated that Texas had the sovereign right to free itself from the United States. About a month after the convention, the people of Texas approved secession from the Union by a vote of 46,153 to 14,747.

Birth of the Confederacy

Guiding Question *How was Texas affected by its decision to join the Confederate States of America?*

Delegates at the Texas Secession Convention had also sent delegates to a meeting of the seceded states in Montgomery, Alabama. The Montgomery Convention of February 1861 formed a new country, the Confederate States of America. The convention wrote a constitution. The Confederate Constitution gave more power to the individual states than to the central government. It also guaranteed the protection of slavery.

The Convention chose leaders, too. Jefferson Davis from Mississippi was elected president of the Confederate States of America. Texan John H. Reagan was named postmaster general. He had served as a judge, a member of the Texas legislature, and a member of the U.S. Congress.



Making Connections

5. Why did Governor Houston refuse to call a convention to discuss secession?



Reading Progress Check

6. How strong was the movement for secession in Texas?



Marking the Text

7. Circle the sentences that describe the accomplishments of the Montgomery Convention. Underline the name of the person elected president of the Confederate States of America.

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Identifying Cause and Effect

8. Why was Sam Houston removed from office?



Reading Progress Check

9. How did the Confederate Constitution differ from the U.S. Constitution?

The Convention then ordered all state officials to take an oath of allegiance to the Confederacy. Governor Sam Houston believed this oath violated the one he had already sworn to for upholding the U.S. Constitution. He refused to take the new oath, so the Convention removed him from office. President Lincoln offered to send Union troops to keep Houston in office. However, Houston knew that action would lead to violence and declined the offer.

Edward Clark, the lieutenant governor, took the oath of the Confederacy and became governor. Houston gave his last public speech in April 1861. In the speech, he warned that the North was determined to preserve the Union and that, in the conflict to come, the South would be crushed.

In early 1861, the Confederacy seized U.S. arsenals, forts, and navy yards within their borders. South Carolina demanded the surrender of Fort Sumter in Charleston Bay. U.S. troops refused to turn the fort over, however. On April 12, 1861, Confederate troops opened fire on the fort. The next day U.S. troops surrendered the fort. The Civil War had begun. Lincoln called for volunteers to defend the Union. Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina then joined the Confederacy.

Writing

Check for Understanding

1. **Expository** How did the Republican Party and the election of 1860 help spark the Civil War?

2. **Expository** Where and how did the Civil War begin?
