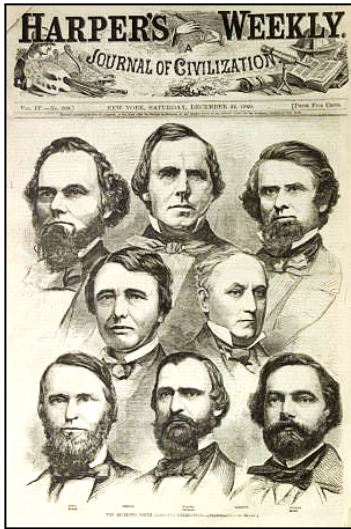


Declaration of the Immediate Causes Which Induce and Justify the Secession of South Carolina From the Federal Union (December 24, 1860) {Excerpts}



The People of the State of South Carolina, in Convention assembled, on the 26th day of April, A.D., 1852, declared that the frequent violations of the Constitution of the United States, by the Federal Government, and its encroachments upon the reserved rights of the States, fully justified this State in then withdrawing from the Federal Union; but in deference to the opinions and wishes of the other slaveholding States, she forbore at that time to exercise this right. Since that time, these encroachments have continued to increase, and further forbearance ceases to be a virtue...

In the year 1765... the British Empire... undertook to make laws for... the thirteen American Colonies. A struggle for the right of self-government ensued, which resulted, on the 4th July, 1776, in a Declaration by the Colonies, "that they are, and of right ought to be,

FREE AND INDEPENDENT STATES....

They further solemnly declared that whenever any "form of government becomes destructive of the ends for which it was established, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it, and to institute a new government" ...

In pursuance of this Declaration of Independence, each of the thirteen States proceeded to exercise its separate sovereignty; adopted for itself a Constitution... For purposes of defence, they united their arms and their counsels; and, in 1778, they entered into a league known as the Articles of Confederation, whereby they agreed to entrust the administration of their external relations to... the Congress of the United States, expressly declaring, in the first article, "that each State retains its sovereignty, freedom and independence...."

Thus were established the two great principles asserted by the Colonies, namely: the right of a State to govern itself; and the right of a people to abolish a Government when it becomes destructive of the ends for which it is instituted....

In 1787, Deputies were appointed by the States to revise the Articles of Confederation, and... these Deputies recommended, for the adoption of the States... the Constitution of the United States...

By this Constitution, certain duties were imposed upon the several States, and the exercise of certain of their powers were restrained... But, to remove all doubt, an amendment was added, which declared that the powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States, respectively, or to the people....

We maintain that in every compact between two or more parties, the obligation is mutual; that the failure of one of the contracting parties to perform a material part of the agreement, entirely releases the obligation of the other.... We assert, that fourteen of the States have deliberately refused for years past to fulfill their constitutional obligations....

The Constitution of the United States, in its 4th Article, provides as follows:

“No person held to service or labor in one State, under the laws thereof, escaping into another shall, in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged from such service or labor, but shall be delivered up, on claim of the party to whom such service or labor may be due.”

But an increasing hostility on the part of the non-slaveholding States to the Institution of slavery has led to a disregard of their obligations... [The northern] States... have enacted laws which either nullify the Acts of Congress, or render useless any attempt to execute them... Thus the constitutional compact has been deliberately broken....

The right of property in slaves was recognized by giving to free persons distinct political rights, by giving them the right to represent, and burthening them with direct taxes for three-fifths of their slaves; by authorizing the importation of slaves for twenty years; and by stipulating for the rendition of fugitives from labor.

Those [non-slaveholding] States have assumed the right of deciding upon the propriety of our domestic institutions; and have denied the rights of property established in fifteen of the States and recognized by the Constitution; they have denounced as sinful the institution of Slavery; they have permitted the open establishment among them of societies, whose avowed object is to disturb the peace and to [take away] the property of the citizens of other States. They have encouraged and assisted thousands of our slaves to leave their homes; and those who remain have been incited by emissaries, books and pictures to servile insurrection.

For twenty-five years this agitation has been steadily increasing, until it has now secured to its aid the power of the [federal] Government... A geographical line has been drawn across the Union, and all the States north of that line have united in the election of a man to the high office of President of the United States whose opinions and purposes are hostile to slavery. He is to be entrusted with the administration of the [federal] Government, because he has declared that the “Government cannot endure permanently half slave, half free,” and that the public mind must rest in the belief that Slavery is in the course of ultimate extinction.

This sectional combination for the subversion of the Constitution, has been aided in some of the States by elevating to citizenship persons, who, by the Supreme Law of the land, are incapable of becoming citizens; and their votes have been used to inaugurate a new policy, hostile to the South, and destructive to its peace and safety.

On the 4th of March next, this party will take possession of the Government. It has announced, that the South shall be excluded from the common Territory; that the Judicial Tribunals shall be made sectional, and that a war must be waged against slavery until it shall cease throughout the United States.

The Guarantees of the Constitution will then no longer exist; the equal rights of the States will be lost. The slaveholding States will no longer have the power of self-government, or self-protection, and the Federal Government will have become their enemy...

Declaration of the Causes of Secession, Georgia (January 29, 1861) {Excerpts}

The people of Georgia having dissolved their political connection with the Government of the United States of America, present to their confederates and the world the causes which have led to the separation. For the last ten years we have had numerous and serious causes of complaint against our non-slave-holding confederate States with reference to the subject of African slavery. They have endeavored to weaken our security, to disturb our domestic peace and tranquility, and persistently refused to comply with their express constitutional obligations to us in reference to that property, and by the use of their power in the Federal Government have striven to deprive us of an equal enjoyment of the common Territories of the Republic....

A brief history of the rise, progress, and policy of anti-slavery and the political organization into whose hands the administration of the Federal Government has been committed will fully justify the pronounced verdict of the people of Georgia. The party of Lincoln, called the Republican party, under its present name and organization, is of recent origin. It is admitted to be an anti-slavery party... anti-slavery is its mission and its purpose...

We had acquired a large territory by successful war with Mexico; Congress had to govern it; how, in relation to slavery, was the question then demanding solution. This state of facts gave form and shape to the anti-slavery sentiment throughout the North and the conflict began. Northern anti-slavery men of all parties asserted the right to exclude slavery from the territory by Congressional legislation and demanded the prompt and efficient exercise of this power to that end. This insulting and unconstitutional demand was met with great moderation and firmness by the South. We had shed our blood and paid our money for its acquisition; we demanded a division of it on the line of the Missouri restriction or an equal participation in the whole of it. These propositions were refused, the agitation became general, and the public danger was great. The case of the South was impregnable. The price of the acquisition was the blood and treasure of both sections-- of all, and, therefore, it belonged to all upon the principles of equity and justice.

...The prohibition of slavery in the Territories, hostility to it everywhere, the equality of the black and white races, disregard of all constitutional guarantees in its favor, were boldly proclaimed by its leaders and applauded by its followers. With these principles on their banners and these utterances on their lips the majority of the people of the North demand that we shall receive them as our rulers.

[It has become clear that the North's] avowed purpose is to subvert our society and subject us not only to the loss of our property but the destruction of ourselves, our wives, and our children, and the desolation of our homes, our altars, and our firesides. To avoid these evils we resume the powers which our fathers delegated to the Government of the United States, and henceforth will seek new safeguards for our liberty, equality, security, and tranquility.

A Declaration of the Immediate Causes which Induce and Justify the Secession of the State of Mississippi from the Federal Union (January 1861) {Excerpts}

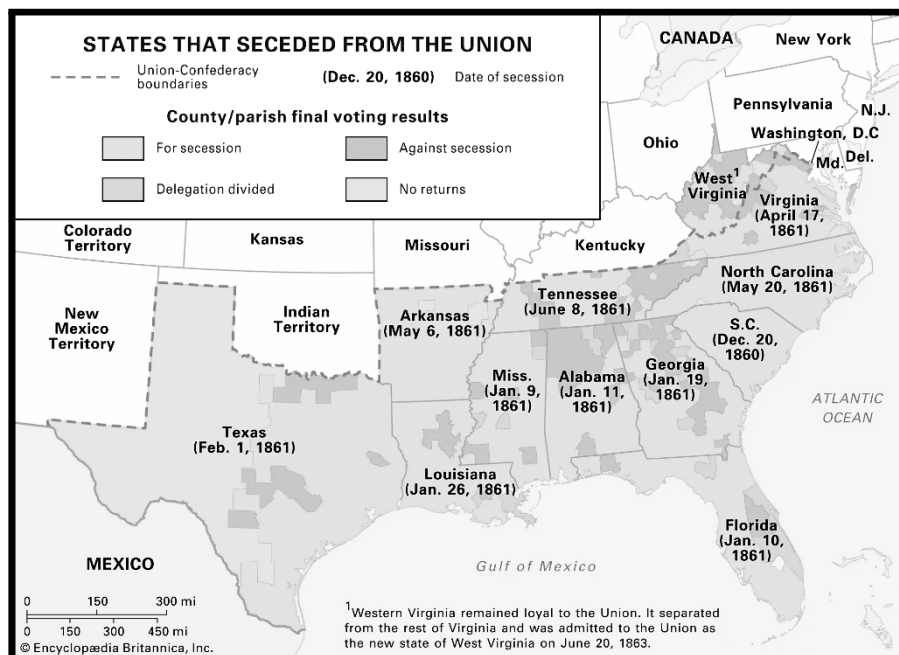
In the momentous step which our State has taken of dissolving its connection with the government of which we so long formed a part, it is but just that we should declare the prominent reasons which have induced our course.

Our position is thoroughly identified with the institution of slavery - the greatest material interest of the world. Its labor supplies the product which constitutes by far the largest and most important portions of commerce of the earth. These products are peculiar to the climate verging on the tropical regions, and by an imperious law of nature, none but the black race can bear exposure to the tropical sun. These products have become necessities of the world, and a blow at slavery is a blow at commerce and civilization. That blow has been long aimed at the institution, and was at the point of reaching its consummation. There was no choice left us but submission to the mandates of abolition, or a dissolution of the Union, whose principles had been subverted to work out our ruin.

That we do not overstate the dangers to our institution, a reference to a few facts will sufficiently prove...

Utter subjugation awaits us in the Union, if we should consent longer to remain in it. It is not a matter of choice, but of necessity. We must either submit to degradation, and to the loss of property worth four billions of money, or we must secede from the Union framed by our fathers, to secure this as well as every other species of property. For far less cause than this, our fathers separated from the Crown of England.

Our decision is made. We follow in their footsteps. 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.



Name: _____ Hour: _____

Respond on your own paper. Staple this page to the top and make sure your full name and correct hour are filled in above.

South Carolina's Declaration of Secession (December 1860)

1. Why hadn't South Carolina attempted to secede in 1852, at least according to this document?
2. This wasn't the first time South Carolina had expressed its willingness to use armed force to resist a federal government it feared was trampling on its rights. Briefly explain what happened back in 1832-1833 which might have started a civil war much earlier if they'd been able to get the support of more southern states. *{This isn't in the document – you'll have to look it up if you don't remember.}*
3. Briefly explain South Carolina's historical/constitutional argument as to why it had the right to secede.
4. In what way had northern states been violating the Constitution (thus 'breaking the contract' between the states), according to this document?
5. This document references three specific compromises related to slavery in the U.S. Constitution. Briefly explain those three compromises.
6. What other complaint does South Carolina have about northern states? (It's not technically a constitutional violation, but it essentially supports the argument that "they started it!")
7. Why is South Carolina convinced the election of Abraham Lincoln is a threat, based on this document?
8. "This sectional combination for the subversion of the Constitution, has been aided in some of the States by elevating to citizenship persons, who, by the Supreme Law of the land, are incapable of becoming citizens; and their votes have been used to inaugurate a new policy, hostile to the South, and destructive to its peace and safety." What exactly had some states done which South Carolina finds so horrifying?
9. To what is this document referring when it claims that "the Supreme Law of the land" had declared Black Americans "incapable of becoming citizens"? *{Hint: think Supreme Court}*
10. Assuming this excerpt is representative of the entire document (it is), what seemed to be South Carolina's NUMBER ONE reason for trying to leave the Union?

Georgia's Declaration of Secession (January 1861)

11. The first paragraph of this document is loosely modeled after which famous American document? *{Hint: Pay Attention to the Title}*
12. What seems to be Georgia's number one complaint against the federal government?
13. What's Georgia's primary complaint against Lincoln and the Republican Party?
14. According to Georgia's declaration, how did the Mexican-American War contribute to tensions between the North and the South?

16. What does the final paragraph of the Georgia excerpt claim the North is trying to do to the South (or at least to Georgia). In what way was the North supposedly trying to do these terrible things?

17. The first paragraph of this document is loosely modeled after which famous American document?
{Hint: Pay Attention to the Title}

19. Briefly explain TWO justifications Mississippi offers for why slavery was so essential to the state.

20. How does Mississippi describe what will happen to them if they don't secede? What does that mean in plain, simple English?



" Little Bo-peep, she lost her sheep,
And didn't know where to find 'em;
Let 'em alone, and they'll all come home,
With their tails hanging down behind 'em."