

South Carolina Declaration of Causes of Secession

- December 24, 1860

... And now the State of South Carolina having resumed her separate and equal place among nations, deems it due to herself, to the remaining United States of America and to the nations of the world, that she should declare the immediate cause which have led to this act. ...

In 1787, Deputies were appointed by the States to revise the articles of Confederation; and on 17th September, 1787, these Deputies recommended, for the adoption of the States, the Articles of Union, known as the Constitution of the United States.

Thus was established, by compact between the States, a Government with defined objects and powers, limited to the express words of the grant. ... 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. ...

In the present case, that fact is established with certainty. We assert that fourteen of the States have deliberately refused for years past to fulfill their constitutional obligations, and we refer to their own statutes for the proof. ...

The States of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin and Iowa, 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 and disregarded by the non-slaveholding States; and the consequence follows that South Carolina is released from her obligation. ...

... Those States 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 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. ...

... 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 intrusted with the administration of the common Government, because he has declared that "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. ...

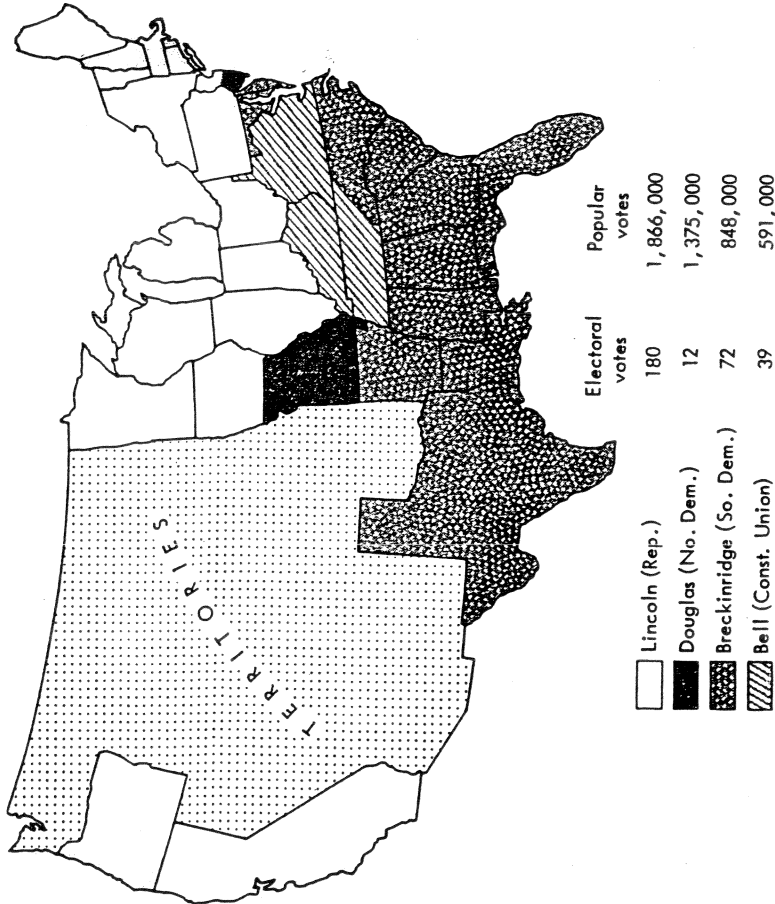
The guarantees of the Constitution will then no longer exist: the equal rights of the States will be lost. The Slaveholding States will no longer have the power of self government, or self-protection, and the Federal Government will have become their enemy. ...

We, therefore, the people of South Carolina, by our delegates in Convention assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, have solemnly declared that the Union heretofore existing between this State and the other states of North America is dissolved, and that the State of South Carolina has resumed her position among the nations of the world. ...

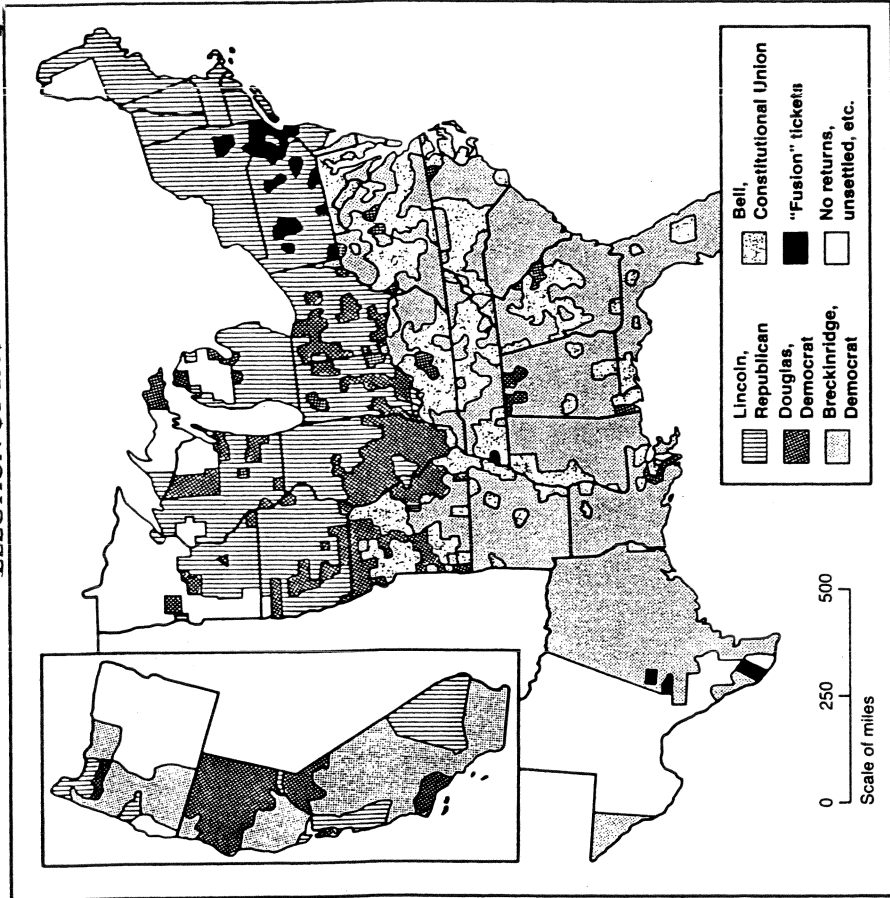
Questions:

1. How did South Carolina view the United States Constitution? Under what conditions could a state leave the Union?
2. What accusations did South Carolina make against 14 northern states? What laws was South Carolina referring to?
3. Name three reasons why South Carolina seceded from the Union.

Election of 1860



Election of 1860



VOTING IN THE 1860 ELECTION

| | ALL STATES | | FREE STATES (18) | | SLAVE STATES (15) | |
|-----------------------|---------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| | Popular Votes | Electoral Votes | Popular Votes | Electoral Votes | Popular Votes | Electoral Votes |
| Lincoln | 1,864,735 | 180 | 1,838,347 | 180 | 26,388 | 0 |
| Opposition to Lincoln | 2,821,157 | 123 | 1,572,637 | 3 | 1,248,520 | 120 |
| Fusion | 595,846 | — | 580,426 | — | 15,420 | — |
| Douglas | 979,425 | 12 | 815,857 | 3 | 163,568 | 9 |
| Breckinridge | 669,472 | 72 | 99,381 | 0 | 570,091 | 72 |
| Bell | 576,414 | 39 | 76,973 | 0 | 499,441 | 39 |

SOURCE: James M. McPherson, *Ordeal By Fire: The Civil War and Reconstruction* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1982), 124-25. Copyright © 1982 by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

Southern Editorials on the Possibility of Lincoln's Election to the Presidency

The Charleston Mercury

Sept. 18, 1860

The leaders and oracles of the most powerful party in the United States [Republican] have denounced us as tyrants and unprincipled heathens, through the civilized world. They have preached it from their pulpits. They have declared it in the halls of Congress and in their newspapers. In their schoolhouses they have taught their children (who are to rule this government in the next generation) to look upon the slaveholder as the special disciple of the devil himself. They have published books and pamphlets in which the institution of slavery is held up to the world as a blot and a stain upon the escutcheon of America's honor as a nation.

They have brought forth an open and avowed enemy to the most cherished and important institution of the South, as candidate for election to the Chief Magistracy of this government—the very basis of whose political principles is an uncompromising hostility to the institution of slavery under all circumstances.

They have virtually repealed the Fugitive Slave Law, and declare their determination not to abide by the decision of the Supreme Court guaranteeing to us the right to claim our property wherever found in the United States.

And, in every conceivable way, the whole Northern people, as a mass, have shown a most implacable hostility to us and our most sacred rights; and this, too, without the slightest provocation on the part of the South. . . .

The political policy of the South demands that we should not hesitate, but rise up with a single voice and proclaim to the world that we will be subservient to the North no longer, but that we *will* be a free and an independent people. . . .

All admit that an ultimate dissolution of the Union is inevitable, and we believe the crisis is not far off. Then let it come now; the better for the South that it should be today, *she* cannot afford to wait.

Document 3: Southern Editorial on Secession

The Terror of Submission

“1. The first effect of the submission of the South, to the installation of Abolitionists in the offices of President and Vice President of the United States, must be a powerful consolidation of strength of the Abolition party at the North...

2. To plunder the South for the benefit of the North, by a new Protective Tariff, will be one of their first measures of Northern sectional dominion...

3. Immediate danger will be brought to slavery, in all the Frontier States... The tenure of slave property will be felt to be weakened; and the slaves will be sent down to the Cotton States for sale, and the Frontier States *enter a policy of making themselves Free States*.

4... The abolitionists will renew their operations upon the South with increased courage...

7... The submission of the South to the administration of Messrs. LINCOLN and HAMLIN, must reduce the value of slaves in the South, one hundred dollars each...

9. Before Messrs. LINCOLN and HAMLIN can be installed in Washington, as President and Vice President of the United States, the Southern States can dissolve peaceably (we know what we say) their Union with the North...

10. If the South once submits to the rule of the Abolitionists by the General Government, there is, probably an end of peaceful separation of the Union....

11. The ruin of the South, by the emancipation of her slaves, is not like the ruin of any other people.... It is the loss of liberty, property, home, country – everything that makes life worth having. And this loss will probably take place under circumstances of suffering and horror, unsurpassed in the history of nations. We must preserve our liberties and institutions, under penalties greater than those which impend over any other people in the world.”

From: The Charleston Mercury, October 11, 1860