

Key Issues and Events that led to the Civil War

Slavery

- Slavery was not allowed in Georgia until after the Trustee Period
- Slavery grew drastically with the invention of the cotton gin
- The South's economy became dependent on cotton
- Abolitionists (Opponents) in the North called for the end of slavery
- The gap widened every time the U.S. gained more territory
- The South wanted slavery in new territories. The North wanted to contain slavery.

States' Rights

- States' rights are the amount of power a state government has in relation to the amount of power held by the federal government
- Ex: *Worcester v. Georgia* Georgia lost the case but refused to follow the ruling
- States' rights proved that a state could do as it pleased if there was not a unified attempt by the federal government or other states to stop them
- The states' rights argument is often based on a states' right to have slavery

Short Term Compromises

The Missouri Compromise (1820)

- An agreement between the states about allowing Missouri to enter the Union
- If Missouri entered the Union, there would be more slave states than free. This would change the balance of power in the Senate to the side of the slave states.
- Missouri was allowed to enter the Union as a slave state. In return, Maine was allowed to enter as a free state.
- Additionally, Congress banned slavery north of the 36° 30' parallel (southern border of Missouri)
- The debate calmed for almost 30 years with states being admitted into the Union in free and slave pairings

Compromise of 1850

- California had a population large enough to apply for statehood. However, there was not a slave state to balance the entry of a free one
- The South, which had a smaller population than the North, was fearful that losing the balance of power in the Senate would one day give the North the opportunity to end slavery.
- Talk of secession was common in the South and war almost started, but several Senators wrote a compromise the groups agreed to follow
- The two most important terms of the compromise were that California was admitted as a free state, but Northern legislators agreed to pass an act which guaranteed the return of any runaway slave to their owners if they were caught in the North (Fugitive Slave Act)

Kansas-Nebraska Act (1854)

- Precursor or a "mini" civil war in Kansas
- The act repealed the Missouri Compromise and made it possible for slavery to be allowed above the 36° 30' parallel (Senator Stephen Douglas believed in the ability of the states to decide if they would be slave or free, known as popular sovereignty).
- Since Kansas was being considered for statehood, it was flooded by pro and anti-slavery supporters who came to the state to vote for or against slavery. Violence erupted between the two sides ("Bleeding Kansas")
- In the end, Kansas was admitted as a free state
- The act greatly divided the nation and destroyed the other two attempts of compromise. It also allowed for the rise of the Republican Party (Whig Party split into a northern and southern faction)

Nullification (Early 1830s)

- Nullification was a states' rights issue involving a dispute on tariffs (tax)
- The North supported high tariffs to support their new manufacturing industry while the South opposed the tariff because it would take away profits from cotton farmers (Britain imposed a revenge tariff on cotton)
- The House of Representatives voted to renew the tariff, South Carolina threatened to nullify (void) the tariff and possibly secede (leave the Union or the United States)
- The President, Andrew Jackson, threatened to attack South Carolina if they seceded

The Dred Scott Case (1857)

- Supreme Court declared that slaves and freed blacks were not citizens of the United States and did not have the right to sue
- Dred Scott was a slave who was taken by his master to the free states of Illinois and Wisconsin. When he returned to Missouri, Scott sued the state based on the belief that his time in the free states made him a free man.

The Election of 1860

- Due to the division in the country (sectionalism), four presidential candidates ran for office in 1860.
- Due to the issue of slavery, Northern and Southern Democrats split into two parties. A third nominee was from the Constitutional Union Party (avoid secession) Abraham Lincoln was the nominee for the Republican party, a party that began in 1854 and whose primary goal was to prevent the expansion of slavery.
- Though Lincoln's name was not on the ballot in most southern states, he won the election
- After the election, the southern states voted one by one to secede from the Union

Georgia Platform, Alexander Stephens, and the Debate Over Secession

- While debate over the Compromise of 1850 was raging in Congress, important Georgia politicians were deciding if the state should accept the terms of the Compromise. The efforts and attitude of these Georgians became known as the **Georgia Platform**.
- One such politician was **Alexander Stephens**. He played a major role in assisting with the passage of the Compromise of 1850 and the Kansas-Nebraska Act. He was an advocate for slavery, but resisted secession.
- **Alexander Stephens** served as a Governor, U.S. Congressman, U.S. Senator, and the Vice-President of the Confederacy once Georgia voted for secession.
- In 1861, there was a spirited debate in the Georgia General Assembly about if Georgia should join other southern states in breaking away from the Union. There were strong supporters on both sides (Alexander Stephens), but Georgia eventually seceded from the Union.