

Steps Towards Civil War

- 1612 J. Rolfe establishes tobacco as major crop in Virginia; puts South on road to one-crop economy
- 1619 First Africans arrive in Virginia (some new evidence they may have been there even earlier)
- 1661 Barbados slave code adapted; establishes harsh treatment of slave “property” as normal
- 1670 Carolina colony formed (rice production requires large work force)
- 1676 Bacon’s Rebellion (reduces call for indentured servants; increases call for slaves)
- 1712 Slave revolt in New York City
- 1776 Declaration of Independence leaves out original sections against slavery
- 1788 Constitution: slavery not outlawed; slave trade to end in 1808; enhances national gov’t power
- 1793 Whitney’s Cotton Gin invented; increases cotton production and need for slaves
- 1798-99 Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions claim states’ rights to nullify federal laws
- 1800 Gabriel leads slave rebellion in Virginia
- 1800 Second Great Awakening begins; followed by reform movements (abolition) and increased religious sectionalism
- 1802 Louisiana Purchase opens new territory; leads to Manifest Destiny & conflict over slave v. free
- 1808 Slave trade ends as promised in Constitution (applies to international trade)
- 1812 War of 1812 encourages increased sectionalism (South for/North against)
- 1814-1815 Hartford Convention: some New Englanders flirt with ideas of secession
- 1817 American Colonization Society formed to return African slaves to Africa
- 1819 Tallmadge Amendment proposes no slaves in Missouri, etc. (fails)
- 1820 Missouri Compromise (Missouri and Maine admitted; new slavery boundary set at 36° 30’)
- 1822 Denmark Vesey leads slave rebellion in Charleston, SC
- 1828 Tariff of 1828 (Tariff of Abominations) infuriates South, especially SC
- 1828 *South Carolina Exposition* published (written anonymously by John Calhoun)
- 1831 Nat Turner leads slave rebellion in Virginia
- 1831 Garrison begins publishing *The Liberator* (abolitionist journal)
- 1832 Tariff of 1832: reduces tariff slightly, but does not mollify Southerners
- 1832-33 South Carolina Nullification Crisis
- 1833 American Anti-Slavery Society founded (expansion of Abolitionist movement)
- 1833 Tariff of 1833: a compromise tariff succeeds in calming nullification crisis
- 1833 Force Bill threatens federal forces against SC’s nullification threats; SC nullifies it in response
- 1836 Texas wins independence from Mexico expanding possible slave territories
- 1846 Wilmot Proviso proposes that all new U.S. territories from Mexico-American War be free (fails)
- 1848 Free Soil Party organized
- 1850 Compromise of 1850 (Henry Clay): fugitive slave law; Calif. admitted as free state, etc.
- 1852 Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* strengthens Abolitionist movement, angers South
- 1854 Kansas-Nebraska Act: S. Douglas offers Popular Sovereignty; negates Missouri Compromise
- 1854 New Republican Party formed with Abolition as a major theme (Whigs, Free Soilers, etc.)
- 1854 Ostend Manifesto: suggestion that Spain should sell Cuba to US (or else!) for more slave land
- 1856-1870 Bleeding Kansas: sectionalism reaches new levels of violence over vote in Kansas
- 1856 Sen. Brooks Attacks Sen. Sumner: debate over Kansas turns violent in Senate
- 1856 Pottawatomie Massacre: John Brown & crew murder supposed pro-slaveryites at Kansas creek
- 1857 Dred Scott Case: Scott loses case to gain freedom when taken to free Ill.; negates Missouri Comp.
- 1857 Le Compton Constitution in Kansas; two versions guarantee slavery
- 1857 Tariff and Panic: South suffered less in economic downturn and gained unrealistic confidence
- 1858 Lincoln-Douglas Debates: Douglas’s Freeport Doctrine; Lincoln gained fame, lost Ill. election
- 1859 John Brown’s Raid (Harper’s Ferry): Northern sympathy for Brown offends South
- 1860 Lincoln’s Election despite Southern threats to secede; Republicans won against divided Demos
- 1860 Crittendon Compromise: intended to halt secession, requires compromises on all sides & fails
- 1860 Secession of South Carolina in December 20, 1860 (followed by six other states in early 1861)
- 1861 Government of the Confederacy is formed; Jefferson Davis is president; capital in Virginia
- 1861 Fort Sumter attacked by South Carolina: Civil War begins