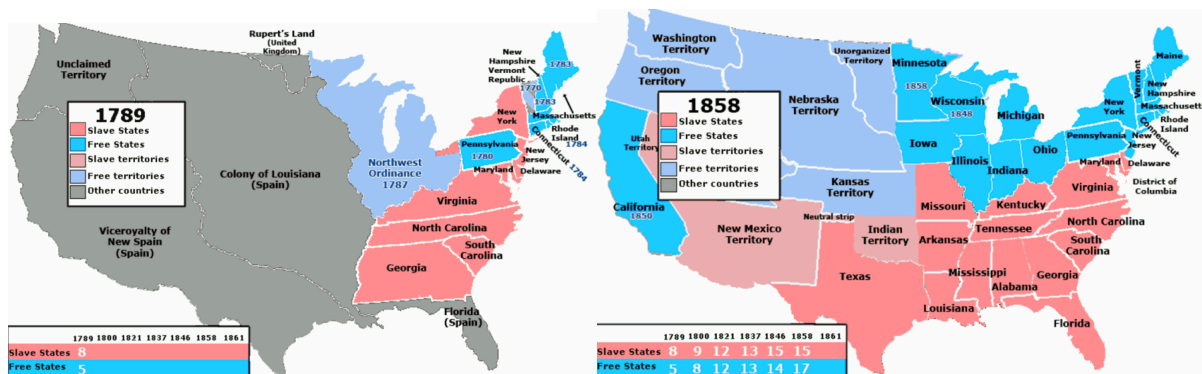


G. Abolitionism and the Rejection of Compromise

1. Once America became secure as an independent country, more and more Americans refused to allow slavery to be normal anymore. They became abolitionists.
2. *Abolitionism* was the name of the idea that slavery is wrong, and should be *abolished*.
3. One of the most famous abolitionists was William Lloyd Garrison of Massachusetts, who started a newspaper called the *Liberator*.
4. In a famous speech that he gave, Garrison explained that the *Declaration of Independence* was more important than the Constitution. "I am a believer in that portion of the Declaration of American Independence," he said, "in which it is set forth, as among self-evident truths, that all men are created equal...with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Hence, I am an abolitionist."
5. Among Garrison's allies, was the greatest examples of the noble potential of every black slave: Frederick Douglass, a slave who had taught himself to read, and who as an adult had escaped to the free Northern states.
6. Douglass gave a speech entitled "*What, to the Slave, is the 4th of July*" in which he explained that Americans should not celebrate their own freedom without giving it to the slaves as well.
7. The abolitionists struggled to convince people that something *normal* could also be *wrong*, but because of their efforts, believers in freedom *and* to slave holders who refused to abandon their way of life both became angrier. Looking back, we can see how the abolitionist movement contributed to the coming of the *Civil War*.

H. The Constitution as an Obstacle to the Abolition of Slavery

1. Unfortunately, a *Civil War* was probably necessary to end slavery, because the Constitution could not be changed.
2. The Founding Fathers wished to prevent the majority of the population from easily changing the laws, so they made the process of changing the Constitution very difficult.



The original mix of five free states to eight slave states became seventeen to fifteen by the time of the *Civil War*, but that was still not enough to change the Constitution.

3. The creation of “amendments” (i.e. additions, or changes) to the Constitution required 3/4 of the states to agree.
4. When the Constitution was created only 5/13 would want abolition. By the time of the *Civil War* the situation was better. 17/32 would support it, but that was still nowhere near enough to change the Constitution.

I. The Civil War (1861-5)

1. The *Civil War* started because of the election of Abraham Lincoln in 1860.
2. Lincoln was an abolitionist. He called slavery a “monstrous injustice,” and although he explained that he did not think there was anything the Federal government could do to stop slavery, Southerners were still alarmed by his election.
3. South Carolina led a group of states in a *secession* (to “secede” means to leave a country) and they formed the “Confederate States of America.” The constitution of this new group of states that wanted to become a country defended slavery.
4. In early 1861, Ft. Sumter (a fort in South Carolina belonging to the federal government) was bombarded by southern forces. This attack signaled the willingness of the South to fight for secession, and triggered the war itself.
5. During the war, president Lincoln announced that “all persons held as slaves within any State...the people whereof shall be in rebellion against the United States shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free.” This *Emancipation Proclamation* of 1863 began the process of freeing the slaves. (“Emancipation” means *giving freedom*.)
6. The war continued until 1865, with the famous General Sherman marching his army throughout the South.
7. Ultimately, the Confederate commander General Robert E. Lee realized there was no way to win, and he surrendered to Union general Ulysses S. Grant in 1865.
8. The war was over, but just five days later, Abraham Lincoln was shot and killed by a Southerner, John Wilkes Booth, while attending a play.
9. The country would have to be rebuilt without the president who had led the cause of Union through the war.

