

Slavery and states' rights

[Sociology](#), [Slavery](#)



The debate over slavery and states' rights had become so intense by 1860 that the South was ready to break away altogether, and they did not want to cooperate with the North. They felt they were being exploited and taken advantage of by the North. The economy, culture, and various ways of life had developed differently throughout the U. S. , creating a feeling of disunity. Resolving disputes through compromise no longer seemed possible. They had no reason to compromise and work out their disputes because the South wanted to form a confederacy of their own.

This all began to deteriorate because of the dramatic economic, social, and political issues, such as the Compromise of 1850, Fugitive Slave Act, political leaders, succession attempts, and the Kansas-Nebraska Act gradually became unfeasible nearing 1860. Southern dependence on a staple crop (mostly cotton), and northern industrialist society caused a contrast between the views of the north and south. While the Compromise of 1850 and the Kansas-Nebraska Act allowed pro- and anti-slavery factions to coexist for a time, growing economic differences between the northern and southern states made it much harder for compromises to exist.

In 1850 a very thin majority was willing to accept a North where slavery was barred and a South that had the institution. That was the status quo. Unfortunately, rumors of succession floated the air and concerned many northerners. In a speech to the Senate, Senator Daniel Webster stated, " I hold the idea of a separation of these states-those that are free to form one government and those that are slaveholding to form another- as a moral impossibility. (Doc D)

This is mentioned to show that the states could not separate by any line because they wouldn't be able to satisfy everyone. The Union must stay together in order to prosper. In 1854, trying to keep the South from succeeding, Sen. Stephen A. Douglas very foolishly got a law passed that changed the status of slavery. Instead of being barred in the North, the Kansas-Nebraska Act opened the territory up to possibly having slavery. The Act was the biggest mistake of Sen. Douglas' career.

Many Northerners, Republicans such as Abraham Lincoln were willing to let slavery remain where it was, but were strongly against its spread, yet a large number of persons from the slave state of Missouri stormed Kansas and briefly established slavery there. Fighting broke out between Free and Slave forces in Kansas, causing the North and South to give up compromising over it. It has been said by some that the Civil War started in Kansas; meaning the South would eventually succeed from the union. Because the North didn't believe the South could succeed in doing so, there was no reason to compromise their disputes.

In a speech to the Senate, Senator Henry Clay stated, " I believe it is utterly impracticable, whatever course of legislation she may choose to adopt, for her to succeed..." (Doc A) Senator Clay means that the succession of the South is not important and doesn't carry any weight. There's no reason to compromise because the South can't make it on its own. Because of this attitude, the North and South could not compromise on the issues of the economy. Slavery was one of the main disputes that were not compromised.

Northerners thought that slavery was wrong while southerners thought that slavery was needed.

Northerners wanted to end slavery as quick as possible. The South was rapidly falling more and more than the North in population, representation in Congress, industry, income, railroads, and trade. As a result, paranoia developed in Dixie; the radical Fireaters felt the South had to act to protect slavery before it obviously became too weak to be able keep slavery. The Fugitive Slave Act legally mandated the return of any runaway slaves, regardless of the location (state) within the Union where they were at the time of their discovery or capture.

Many northerners disapproved of this act and would not follow it. In the Declaration of the National Anti-Slavery Convention, the American Anti-Slavery Society states, " All those laws which are now n force, admitting the right of slavery, are..., before God, utterly null and void. " (Doc B) This shows that no matter what happened, the north was not going to budge on their beliefs of slavery. After fighting for months on the issue, both sides became very agitated and would not want to deal with it. It got so bad that at one point it was not allowed to be compromised whatsoever.

In the Resolution of the Pinckney Committee, the House of Representatives states, " All petitions, memorials, resolutions, propositions, or papers relating in any way or to any extent whatsoever, to the subject of slavery or the abolition of slavery, shall without being either printed or referred, be laid on the table and that no further action whatever shall be had thereon. " (Doc C) The Pinckney resolution was essentially a gag rule for Congress. It received

many petitions advocating the abolition of slavery. This resolution said that Congress wouldn't print these petitions and would not refer to them.

It can't be compromised if one side is being ignored. The Issue on slavery is one of the reasons why the United States had a civil war. The dispute on slavery called for an impossible compromise. Political leaders made it less likely to settle disputes. Leaders such as President Lincoln were anti-slavery and fought to abolish it. He was the first Republican to be elected president. Southerners feeling as they did, did not recognize his moderation. Lincoln, as said, did oppose the spread of slavery, but was definitely not going to attack in the South.

In a speech at Alton, Illinois, Abraham Lincoln states, " You may say... that all of this difficulty in regard to the institution of slavery is the mere agitation of office seekers and ambitious Northern politicians..." (Doc G) In this passage, Lincoln is quoting his opponents who have said that only politicians have generated the issue of slavery. Lincoln makes the point here that the issue of slavery has torn the citizens apart and is not the work of politicians. Lincoln's point is that it was impossible to compromise because so many people were ferociously involved and had split the country.

Southerners incorrectly saw him as a radical. It was true that previous Democratic presidents, such Lincoln's predecessor John Buchanan had tried to appease the South. There was not going to be appeasement with Lincoln's election, which tipped the scales for war. Lincoln won the election of 1860 because the Democratic Party split. In the Presidential Election, 1860, " Lincoln received 180 Electoral votes with 1, 866, 452 Popular votes. " (Doc

H) Since Lincoln was deeply hated by the South (not even on the ballot of the election of 1860 in the South) there was no chance of compromise between the North and South.

Politics made the chances of compromise even worse. Theodore Roosevelt once said " A typical vice of American politics is the avoidance of saying anything real on real issues. " This statement is proven correct by the lack of compromise between the North and South. The two states couldn't agree on whether a tomato was a vegetable or fruit. The big topic was slavery and whether or not it should be legal. They never agreed on issues, leading the South's succession, and later the Civil War.