

Summary: Civil War Begins

Abraham Lincoln

Conflict grew between the North and South. Southerners thought abolitionists would start slave rebellions. Some southerners wanted to leave the Union. Northerners were afraid slavery would spread. Americans who opposed slavery formed the Republican Party. Republicans opposed slavery in the territories.

Abraham Lincoln was a Republican. He was born in Kentucky, a slave state. He was raised on a farm in Illinois, a free state. His family was poor. He did not go to school, but he read a lot. Lincoln became a lawyer and a political leader.

Lincoln's Campaigns

In 1858, Lincoln ran for Senate in Illinois against Stephen Douglas. They debated so people could hear their ideas. Douglas wanted popular sovereignty for territories. He did not think slavery was wrong. Lincoln said slavery was evil, but he did not support abolition. Lincoln lost, but the debates made him famous. Many southerners thought he wanted to abolish slavery.

Lincoln ran for President in 1860. He was the only candidate against slavery. He won, but the election showed that the country was divided. No southern states voted for Lincoln. Some southerners said the federal government was too strong. They said tariffs and laws to limit slavery threatened states' rights. Some chose secession to protect their right to enslave people.

Secession Begins

In 1860, South Carolina left the union. In all, eleven southern states formed the Confederacy. Jefferson Davis was president. Lincoln wanted unity and peace but it was too late. Confederates attacked Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861. Lincoln called for men to fight the rebellion. The Civil War began.



Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

secession *noun*, when part of a country leaves or breaks off from the rest

Confederacy *noun*, states that separated from the Union and formed a confederation

civil war *noun*, a war between two groups or regions within a nation



After You Read

REVIEW Why did some southerners want their states to leave the Union?

Draw a box around three sentences that tell what southerners said about the federal government, what they thought threatened states' rights, and what right they wanted to protect.

REVIEW Why did southerners see Lincoln as an enemy? Circle what Lincoln said about slavery. Also circle what southerners thought he would do about slavery.

REVIEW What event began the Civil War? What happened on April 12, 1861? Draw a box around the answer.