

CHAPTER 11

Out of Turmoil, West Virginia Moves Closer to Statehood

CHAPTER PREVIEW

TERMS

slave state, free state, states' rights, Missouri Compromise, Underground Railroad, Compromise of 1850, popular sovereignty, sabotage, insurrection, treason, martyr, platform, moderate, secede, mandate, Confederate States of America, abstain

PEOPLE

John Brown, John Letcher, John S. Carlile, Robert E. Lee

PLACES

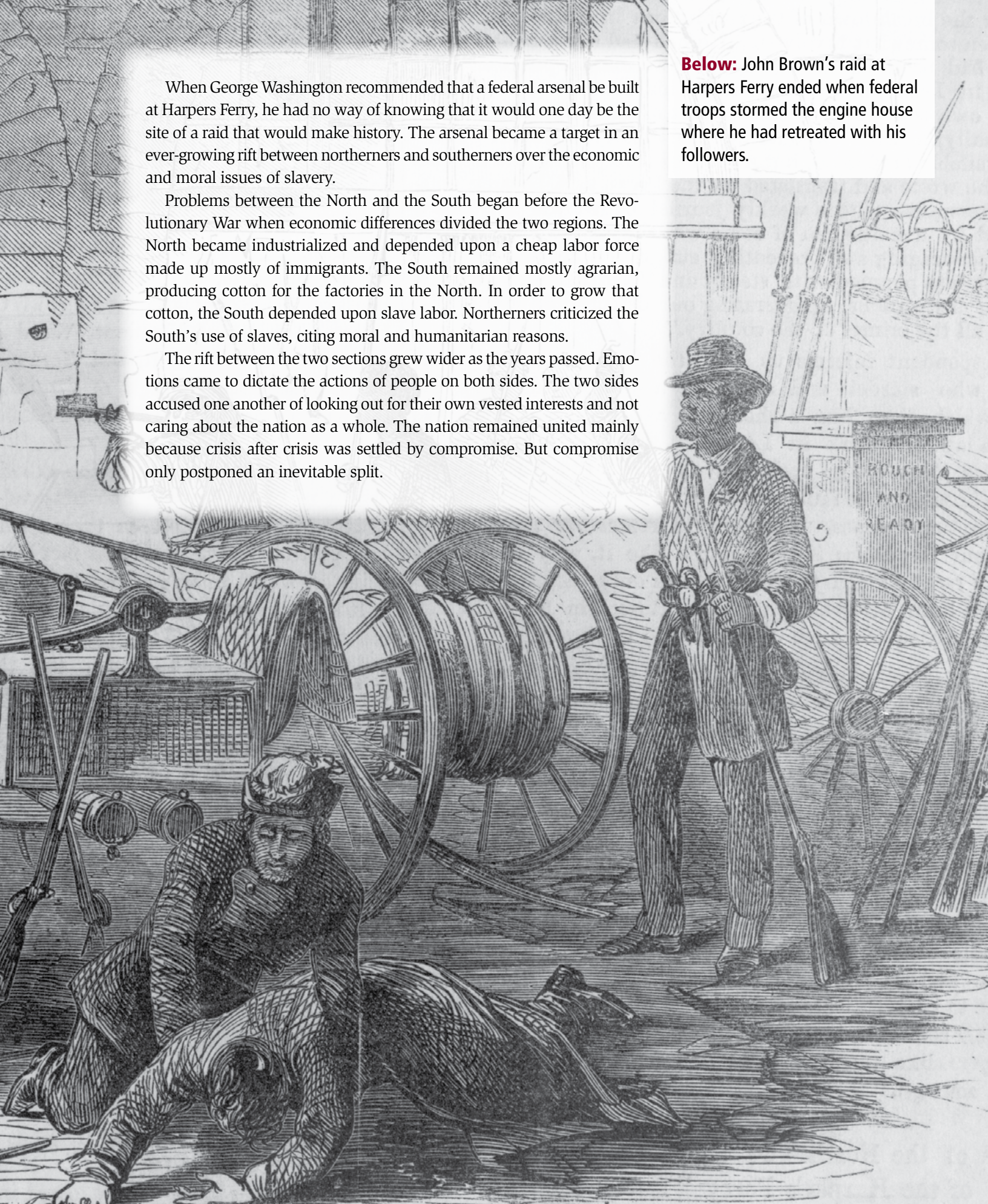
Pottawatomie Creek, Osawatomie, Fort Sumter

When George Washington recommended that a federal arsenal be built at Harpers Ferry, he had no way of knowing that it would one day be the site of a raid that would make history. The arsenal became a target in an ever-growing rift between northerners and southerners over the economic and moral issues of slavery.

Problems between the North and the South began before the Revolutionary War when economic differences divided the two regions. The North became industrialized and depended upon a cheap labor force made up mostly of immigrants. The South remained mostly agrarian, producing cotton for the factories in the North. In order to grow that cotton, the South depended upon slave labor. Northerners criticized the South's use of slaves, citing moral and humanitarian reasons.

The rift between the two sections grew wider as the years passed. Emotions came to dictate the actions of people on both sides. The two sides accused one another of looking out for their own vested interests and not caring about the nation as a whole. The nation remained united mainly because crisis after crisis was settled by compromise. But compromise only postponed an inevitable split.

Below: John Brown's raid at Harpers Ferry ended when federal troops stormed the engine house where he had retreated with his followers.



SIGNS of the TIMES



HISTORY

Joseph Johnson, from Bridgeport, became the only western Virginian to become governor of Virginia. He served from January 16, 1852, to January 1, 1856.

GEOGRAPHY

In 1860, only 5% of the population of the United States lived in Virginia. New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Illinois each had a greater population.

ECONOMICS

A farmhand in the North earned \$13 a month; a southern farmhand earned \$9. In 1845, a good field hand cost \$600; by 1860, the price had risen to \$1,800. The cost of slaves was determined by the price of cotton. A planter had to sell 16,500 pounds of processed cotton to buy a good slave.

GOVERNMENT

The Whig Party began to break up nationally after the election of 1852. The northern wing of the party had become more antislavery and was less willing to compromise with the southern wing to maintain unity. The result was the creation in 1854 of a new political party—the Republican Party—that existed only in free states.

EVERYDAY LIFE

Population: The population of Virginia in 1860 was 1,596,318, of which 490,865 were slaves. The percentage of slaves in some western Virginia counties was Berkeley, 13.2%; Fayette, 4.5%; Greenbrier, 12.5%; Kanawha, 13.5%; Monroe, 10.4%; Putnam, 9.2%; Randolph, 3.7%; and Wood, 1.6%. McDowell County had no slaves according to the 1860 census.

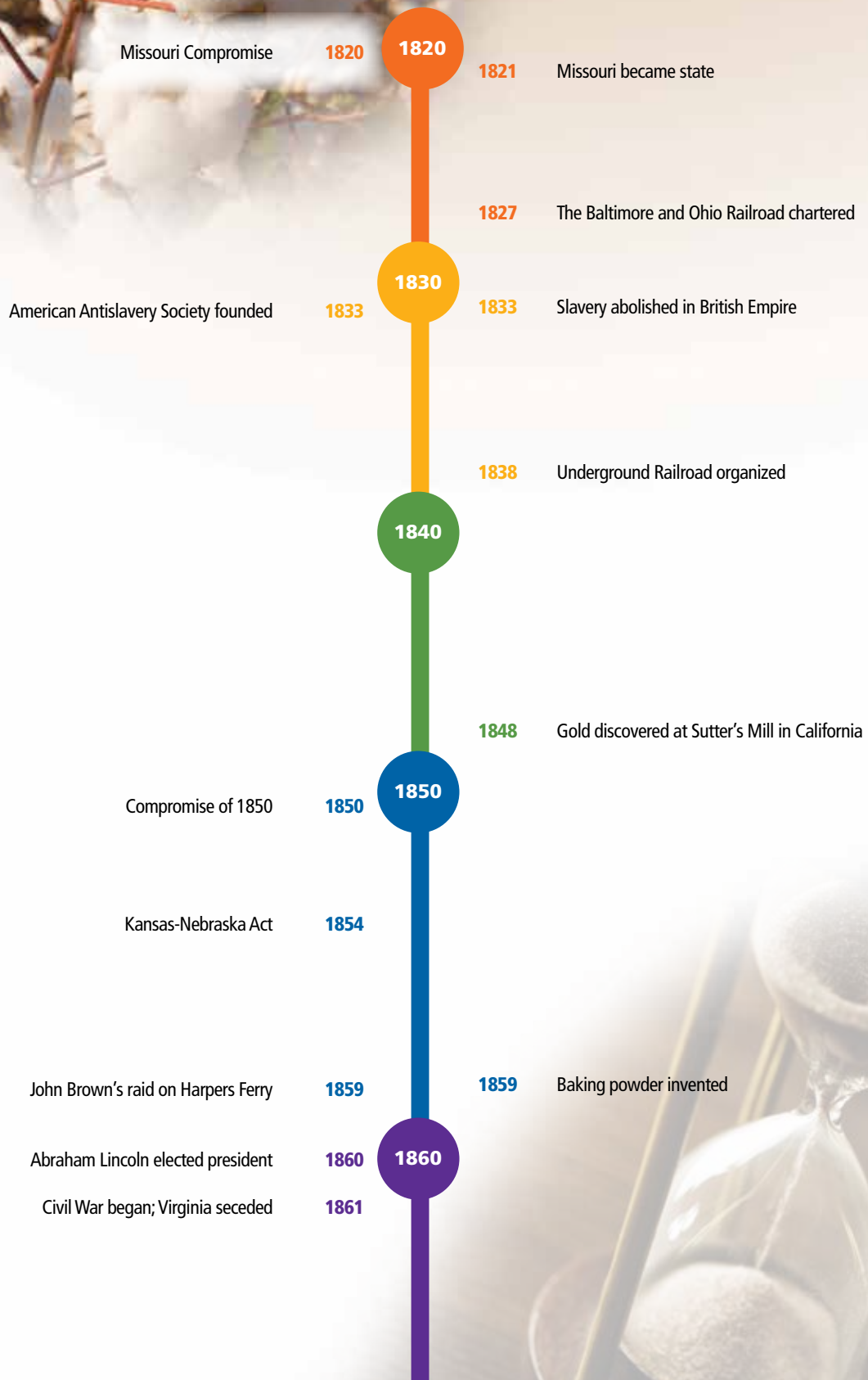
Science/Technology: Inventions of the period included soap powder, the safety pin, the washing machine, a pencil with an eraser on the end, and postage stamps with adhesive on the back. Petroleum was used commercially for the first time—as medicine.

Transportation: Charles Goodyear produced vulcanized rubber in 1839. The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad linked Chicago to the East. Stagecoach service and mail delivery connected St. Louis and San Francisco, a distance of 2,812 miles. In 1860, the Pony Express began service from St. Joseph, Missouri, to Sacramento, California.

Recreation: The first officially recognized baseball game in U.S. history took place on June 19, 1846. The New York Nine defeated the New York Knickerbockers 23-1 in four innings.

Religion: St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City was designed by James Renwick. Beginning in 1858, religious revivals swept across the nation with daily prayer meetings in all major cities.

Figure 11.1 Timeline: 1820 – 1861



Paraphrasing

DEFINING THE SKILL

When you listen to what other people say or read what others have written, you draw your own conclusions about what you have heard or read. Then, when you tell others what you have read or heard, you *paraphrase*; that is, you retell the story in your own words. To paraphrase, you should

- focus on the main idea;
- include most details, examples, and descriptions;
- use concise language, which includes your own words.

PRACTICING THE SKILL

Copy the graphic organizer below on a separate sheet of paper. Read the following excerpt on the differences of opinion about the amount of power that should be given to the federal government. List the details that describe the position of northerners and southerners on the graphic organizer. Then paraphrase (or rewrite) the information in your own words.

The northern states supported a strong federal government—with authority over the states. They believed that only such a strong national government could provide the services they wanted. The southern states, on the other hand, had little need for federal regulation since they had few immigrants and few factories. Instead of a strong national government, they supported states’ rights (the principle that the rights and responsibilities of states should take precedence over the rights and responsibilities of the federal government). Although there was an uneasy balance of power in the first half of the nineteenth century, southerners could see the day coming when the rapidly growing North would gain control of Congress and tip the balance in favor of a strong national government. A government controlled by northern interests could outlaw slavery—or push through any other legislation—over the South’s objections.

| Topic | Facts from the Reading | Paraphrase the Information |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|
| The Power of the Federal Government | | |

SECTION 1

Slavery Promotes Conflict

As you read, look for

- the importance of maintaining a balance between free and slave states;
- the provisions of the Missouri Compromise;
- the provisions of the Compromise of 1850;
- the events that occurred in “Bleeding Kansas”;
- the raid on Harpers Ferry;
- terms: **slave state, free state, states’ rights, Missouri Compromise, Underground Railroad, Compromise of 1850, popular sovereignty, sabotage, insurrection, treason, martyr.**

Slavery had once existed throughout the United States. But it died out in the North because the North’s economy was different from that of the South. Small farms in the North had little need for slaves, and thousands of immigrants provided plenty of cheap labor for the area’s growing industrial base. Slavery was just not profitable there.

If cotton had not become such an important cash crop, slavery might also have died out in the South. But by 1860, cotton accounted for over 50 percent of the value of all U.S. exports. Growing cotton required a great deal of manual labor, and slave labor kept down costs so the South could compete in the global marketplace. Slavery became such an economic issue that, regardless of how southerners felt about it personally, they began to resist any interference with it as a threat to their livelihood.



Above: Slave labor was used to pick cotton manually. As more cotton was produced, more slaves were needed. Soon, slaves became an important factor in the South’s economy.

The Culture of Slavery

Americans of African descent in the United States today include ancestors from the Caribbean and other parts of the Americas and Africa. Most African Americans, however, are descendants of Africans who were forcibly brought to America through the slave trade. An estimated 645,000 Africans were imported into the United States between 1650 and 1808 as slave labor. The unique aspects of the culture (food, language, religion, music, and folklore) that they brought with them played an important role in helping them survive the harshness and misery of their lives in captivity.

Although aspects of the slave culture, e.g., language and food, were preserved and even incorporated into non-African cultures, it is their oral traditions—music, folklore, and storytelling—that played the most important role in preserving their unique history. Because slaves were not permitted to learn to read or write, these oral traditions were their only way of preserving their culture for future generations.



When slaves were brought to America, they were often made to convert to Christianity. In order to maintain some of their African religion, cultural elements, including shouting, dancing, and African rhythms, were incorporated into their worship. Call-and-response patterns became part of their sermons. Music had secular (worldly) as well as religious meaning. The roots of gospel and blues were introduced in work songs and “field hollers” based on the musical forms and rhythms of Africa.

Slaves discovered that many stories in the Bible paralleled their own experiences. They compared their own captivity to the exile and captivity of the Jews. These similarities led them to develop songs (spirituals) that expressed their faith, as well as their sorrows and hope for the future. Some of the spirituals supposedly carried hidden messages of

secret meetings, protests, or even an intent to escape. "Follow the Drinking Gourd" supposedly instructed slaves how to use the North Star to find their way to the Jordan River (Ohio River) where they would be free.

Besides music, another important oral tradition of slaves included folktales and storytelling. These stories took the form of parables, which conveyed ideals, morals, and cultural values. Storytelling, which was one of the few activities that was not controlled by slave owners, included tales about the creation of the world, heroic deeds, and magic. Like their music, some stories contained hidden messages; however, a more common theme of folktales involved the outsmarting of a slaveholder.

Most oral traditions have a trickster figure. In African culture, that figure often took the form of an animal or a creature who, while weak and disadvantaged in contests, succeeded in getting the better of a larger, more powerful adversary. The weaker animal or person had to outwit or outthink the stronger character, usually through trickery. The rabbit was a common trickster in African folktales. In the story of Brer Rabbit, the rabbit succeeds in getting Brer Fox to rescue him from a well by telling him the moon's reflection on the water in the well is a block of cheese. Brer Fox jumps in a water bucket, which takes him into the well. The lowering of the bucket with the fox causes the bucket with the rabbit to rise, allowing Brer Rabbit to get his freedom. It is believed that slaves also told stories of how they outwitted their masters, possibly in real life, by lying, stealing, loafing, putting rocks in the bottom of their cotton baskets, pretending to be sick, or destroying property.



Below: Church groups began to preach against slavery.

something extra!

The “Northwest” of the early 1800s included what today are the states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, and part of Minnesota.



Political Implications of Slavery

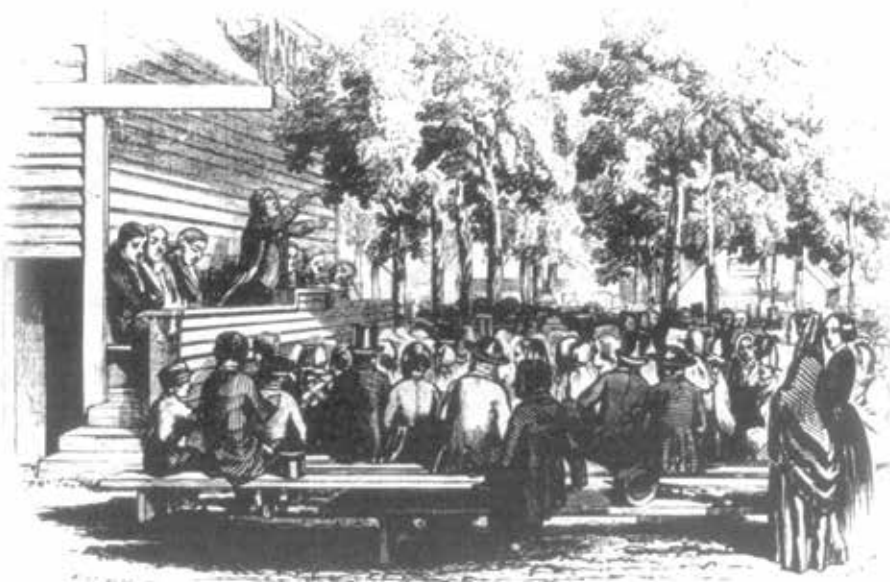
In 1819, the United States had twenty-two states. Of these, eleven were **slave states** (states that permitted slavery), and eleven were **free states** (states that did not permit slavery). All of the slave states were in the South; all of the free states were in the North or what was then the Northwest. In the U.S. Senate, there was an equal number of senators from slave states and from free states. In the House of Representatives, however, the slave states had fewer representatives than the free states. But the slave states had formed something of an alliance with the northwestern states. Slavery threatened that alliance and the delicate balance that existed in Congress.

The northern states supported a strong federal government—with authority over the states. They believed that only a strong national government could provide the services they wanted. The southern states, on the other hand, had little need for federal regulation since they had few immigrants and few factories. Instead of a strong national government, they supported **states’ rights** (the principle that the rights and responsibilities of states should take precedence over the rights and responsibilities of the federal government). Although there was an uneasy balance of power in the first half of the nineteenth century, southerners could see the day coming when the rapidly growing North would gain control of Congress and tip the balance in favor of a strong national government. A government controlled by northern interests could outlaw slavery—or push through any other legislation—over the South’s objection.

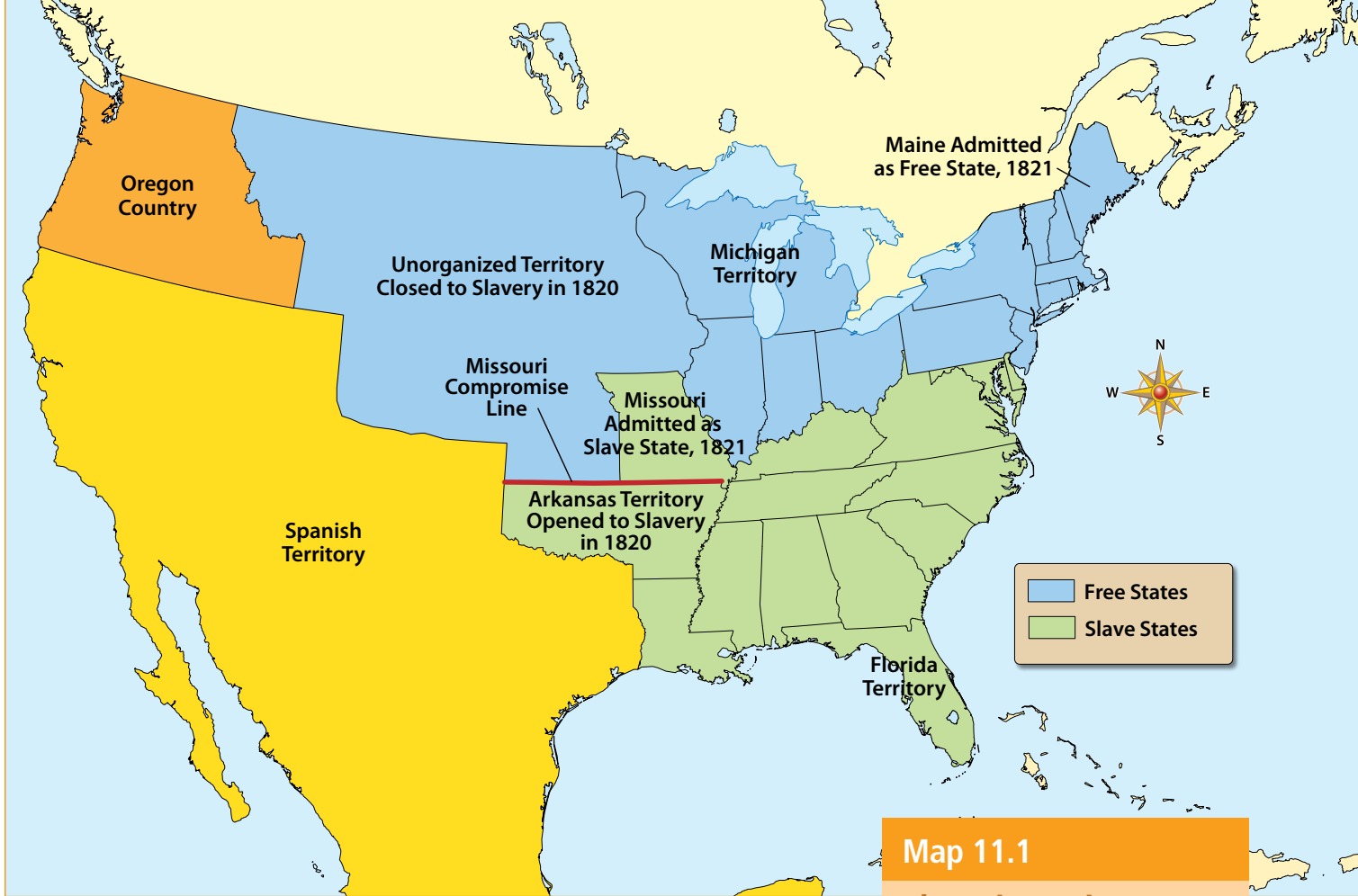
Missouri Compromise

In 1819, the balance of power between North and South became an issue when the Territory of Missouri applied for statehood as a slave state. Congress added an amendment to the statehood bill requiring Missouri

to abolish slavery. In the House of Representatives, the bill passed with all of the free states voting for it and all of the slave states voting against it. The Senate rejected the bill. A compromise was worked out in 1820 that maintained the balance between the number of slave states and free states. Missouri and Maine would enter the Union at the same time—Missouri as a slave state and Maine as a free state. A line would be drawn from Missouri’s southern border westward. Slavery would only be permitted south of that line. This was known as the **Missouri Compromise**.



EXHIBITION AND PREACHING AT THE CAMP MEETING OF BAPTISTS



Map 11.1

The Missouri Compromise

Map Skill: Where were all the free states located?

About this time, religious groups in the Northeast began to preach against slavery. Slavery became more of an emotional issue. In 1833, the American Antislavery Society was formed and called for an immediate end to slavery without any thought about how that would affect the South. The Society flooded Congress with petitions, but its most lasting effect was to convince people that slavery was evil and that slave owners were sinners. Believing themselves to be morally superior, abolitionists launched bitter attacks on slavery and slave owners. The abolitionists formed what came to be known as the **Underground Railroad**, a network of houses and other places used to help slaves from the South escape to the North or Canada.



something extra!

It is estimated that, at the height of its use (from 1810 to 1850), between 30,000 and 100,000 slaves escaped through the Underground Railroad.

Left: Abolitionists formed the Underground Railroad to help slaves escape slavery.

The Ramsdell House

The town of Ceredo, in Wayne County, was founded by Eli Thayer, an abolitionist who believed economic prosperity could be achieved without slave labor. Around 1858, Thayer extended a personal invitation to Z. D. Ramsdell, a Boston abolitionist, to relocate to Ceredo and join him in the abolitionist movement.

Ramsdell accepted the invitation and built a brick home, the first of its kind, in Ceredo. Some mystery surrounds the building of the house. First, it was built atop a mound, which some contend was an Adena mound. Second, the house had a “hidden” basement, which was rumored to have served as a station on the Underground Railroad. Slaves who might have been brought there stayed

in the basement until nightfall, when they could safely be transported across the Ohio River to Lawrence County, Ohio.

When the Civil War broke out, Ramsdell left Ceredo to join the Union army. After the war, he returned to his home, where he remained until his death in 1887. The Ramsdell House remained in the family until 1977.

Over the years, the house fell into a state of disrepair. In 1982, however, a Historical Landmark Commission, with support from the American Legion, undertook the restoration of the building. Today the house, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, serves as a museum.



The Compromise of 1850

The slavery issue arose again and again as new territories and states were formed. The annexation of the lands taken from Mexico after the war of 1846 led to another debate over which states would be slave states and which would be free. Congress settled that debate by passing the **Compromise of 1850**. According to its terms, California was admitted as a free state and part of Texas was given to New Mexico. The slave trade was banned in the District of Columbia, but a stronger fugitive slave law was passed requiring people in the free states to help catch runaway slaves. Slavery in New Mexico and Utah would be decided by **popular sovereignty** (the right of those living within a territory to decide upon an issue, such as whether to allow slavery).

Four years later, Congress passed the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Somehow a provision was put in the bill allowing those territories, which were both north of the Missouri Compromise line, to decide whether to permit slavery. Both proslavery and antislavery factions were outraged. Fighting broke out in the territory, and a new antislavery party—the Republican Party—was formed.

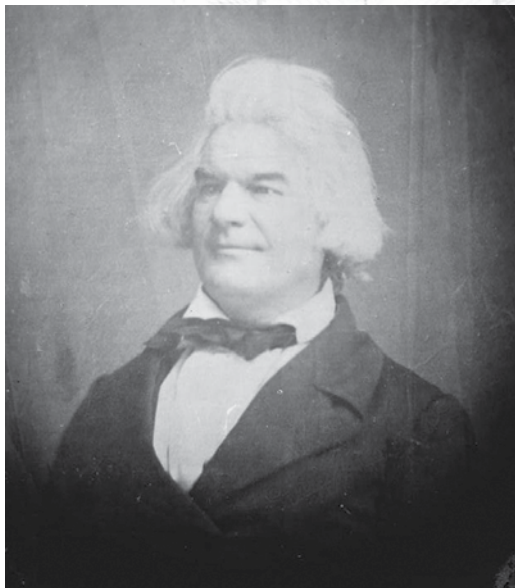


“Bleeding Kansas”

After the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, both supporters and opponents of slavery flooded into Kansas, hoping to influence the decision on slavery. In 1855, John Brown, a leading abolitionist, received a letter from one of his sons, John Jr. In the letter, John Jr. praised the virtues of the Kansas territory, but he also detailed the problems created by the supporters of slavery. He pleaded with his father to send arms to help the free-state, or free-soil, supporters form militia companies to protect themselves from the proslavery forces. After reading his son’s letter, John decided to do more than send arms; he decided to take the arms to Kansas and fight alongside his sons.

In May 1855, Kansas held territorial elections and elected a proslavery government. However, more than twice as many men voted as were registered. Many of the “extra” voters were so-called border ruffians (proslavery armed men from Missouri who crossed the state line to vote and scare antislavery voters away from the polls). Shortly after Brown’s arrival, a free-state convention was held in Topeka setting up a free-state government. There were now two governments in Kansas. Determined that theirs would be the only government of Kansas, the proslavery supporters targeted Lawrence, a center of the antislavery movement, for destruction.

Above: Henry Clay speaking at the debate over the Compromise of 1850.



Charles Sumner **(top)**, a senator from Massachusetts, was beaten with a cane on the floor of the U.S. Senate because of his verbal attack on a southern senator, Andrew P. Butler **(above)**.

After the free-state convention, the townspeople of Lawrence began to prepare for possible attacks. They built fortifications around the town and began training local militias. In May 1856, Brown and his sons prepared to join the defense of the town. But before they arrived, they learned that the border ruffians had taken Lawrence without a fight and were leveling it. Brown, astonished and angered that the people of Lawrence would allow the town to fall without a fight, became determined to strike a blow against the border ruffians.

Meanwhile, the violence in Kansas spread to the U.S. Congress, where Charles Sumner, a Massachusetts senator, publicly criticized the Missourians for their interference in Kansas. Among others, Sumner criticized Senator Andrew P. Butler of South Carolina, declaring that his support of slavery was inappropriate. Butler's cousin, Congressman Preston Brooks, was enraged by the attack on his relative. With his cane, Brooks attacked Sumner on the floor of the Senate until the Massachusetts senator lay bleeding at his feet.

News of the attack on Sumner spread quickly over the telegraph lines. Three days later, John Brown and seven followers crept down upon the isolated cabins of proslavery settlers on Pottawatomie Creek, Kansas. They violently massacred five proslavery settlers, including two teenagers. Four of the bodies were viciously mutilated.

The brutal massacre brought immediate retaliation from border Missourians. During the ensuing fighting, two of Brown's sons were captured. Jason Brown would have been hanged except for the intervention of a Kentucky judge who literally saved him from the hangman's noose. John Jr. was captured near Osawatomie. Both men were turned over to the U.S. Army and were transported to LeCompton, Kansas, as prisoners. After Pottawatomie Creek, a price was put on John Brown's head. He became an outlaw, fleeing from both federal officials and border ruffians. He joined a band of antislavery guerrillas in the Kansas countryside.

Throughout the summer, there were violent confrontations between the proslavery and antislavery forces that left over two hundred people dead. While his sons were prisoners, John Brown saw the gradual destruction of the free-state forces in Kansas. On July 4, the free-state legislature was disbanded. At the same time, the proslavery forces built forts in eastern Kansas with the support of the federal government. Disillusioned, four of Brown's sons decided to leave Kansas. The others, including Jason who had just been released from prison, decided to stay—at least until John Jr. was able to rejoin the family.




By the end of the summer, the free-staters had regained some ground, and the border ruffians decided to make one last effort to save their cause. The final battle began near the Osage River. The free-state supporters numbered about thirty-five, while the proslavery forces were reported to be in the hundreds. The free-staters held their ground for a time against the border ruffians before being forced to retreat. The Missourians decided not to pursue them, opting instead to go to Osawatomie, where they burned homes and plundered the land.

Osawatomie marked a turning point in the struggle for Kansas. It was a morale booster to the free-staters who proved a small group could stand up to a larger proslavery faction. It was after the incident at Osawatomie and the release of his son John Jr. that John Brown decided to leave the Kansas Territory and return east with the remainder of his family.

The Attack on Harpers Ferry

Six months before the convention to choose presidential candidates for the election of 1860, John Brown reappeared on the national scene by leading an attack on the federal arsenal in Harpers Ferry, Virginia. Brown hoped to capture the arsenal, arm his followers, and set up a black state. He thought a black state would attract rebellious slaves who would then form an army to face the proslavery supporters in the South.

John Brown arrived at Harpers Ferry on July 4, 1859. After receiving reports from a secret agent who had been sent to the area a year earlier, Brown determined that the residents of the small town posed no threat. Therefore, he went forward with his plans to take control of the government buildings in town, including the large three-story building that was rumored to contain 40,000 to 50,000 rifles. He also planned to occupy Hall's Rifle Works, located about a half a mile away.



**something
extra!**

Tortured by visions of his father's assault on the Pottawatomie Creek settlers, John Brown Jr. suffered a mental breakdown.

Above: John Brown played an important role in "Bleeding Kansas."

Below: John Brown kept his hostages in the engine house, located on the left in the photograph. The machine shop on the right was where muskets were assembled.

At first, Brown took up residence in Maryland, five miles from the arsenal. He was joined by a black man named Osborne Anderson. In order to give the appearance of a normal family, Brown sent for his daughter and a daughter-in-law. Over a period of time, the small “family” increased. For three months, Brown lived a double life. On the outside, he was just a harmless old man named Isaac Smith; on the inside, he was planning his strategy and gathering support for his plan.

The Raid

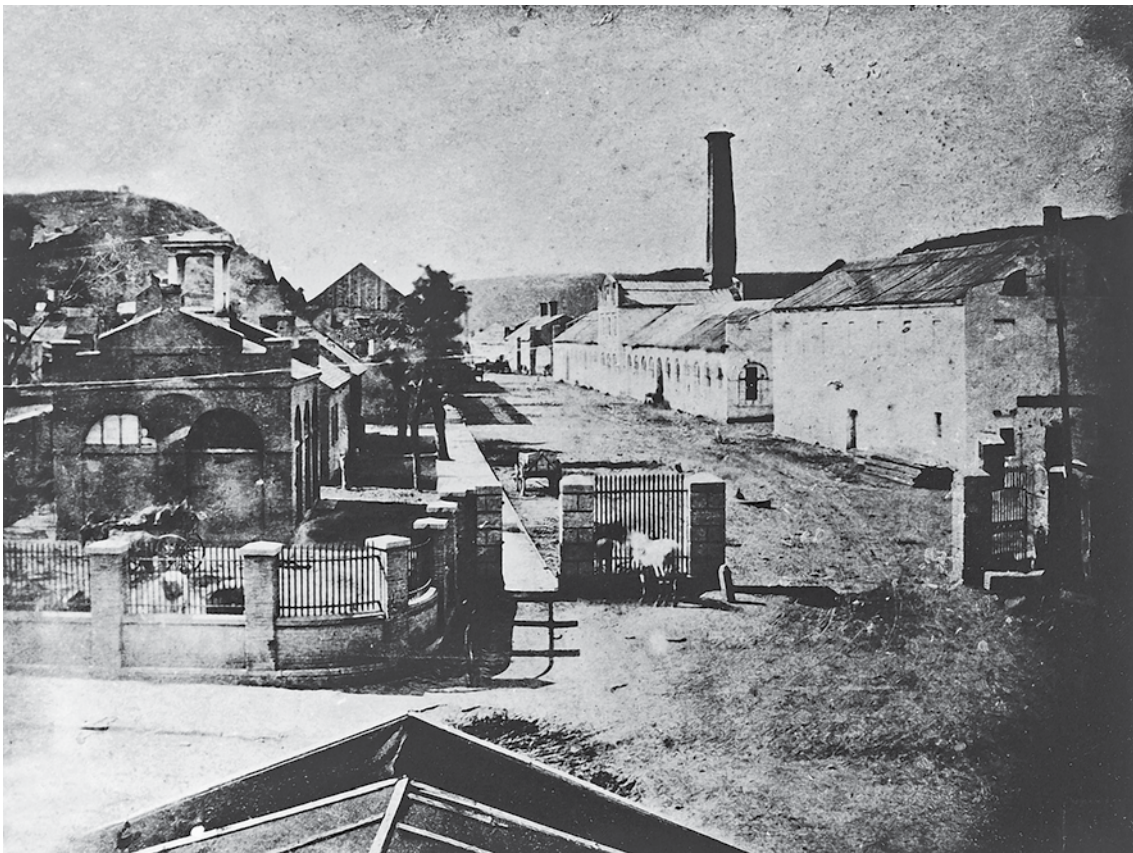
On the night of October 16, a band of nineteen men set out down the road to Harpers Ferry to put the plan in operation. John Brown drove a wagon loaded with guns and ammunition, while his followers walked two-by-two the five miles to the Virginia border. A dark covered bridge connected the states of Virginia and Maryland. It was on the bridge that the small band met their first opposition. The night watchman came to check on the noise he heard. Brown’s men took him prisoner and then cut the telegraph lines.

Once across the bridge, John Brown set his sights on the sleepy town of Harpers Ferry. Straight ahead was the three-story building where the guns were stored. To the right was the government armory that Brown had targeted for attack. At the armory gate, Brown’s men captured the lone watchman. They then forced open the gate to the armory and took up their prearranged stations. By midnight, the village was quietly being patrolled by Brown’s men. Several leading citizens, including George Washington’s great-grand nephew Lewis, were taken prisoner.

something extra!



One of the men with Brown was Dangerfield Newby, a black man. Newby hoped to rescue his wife, who was still a slave.



Below: The engine house served as the focal point of John Brown's raid at Harpers Ferry.

At midnight, an unplanned incident took place. At the bridge, Brown's men seized another watchman as he came on duty for his twelve-hour shift. The watchman escaped, and one of Brown's men fired a shot, grazing the escapee's scalp. This lone shot set off a bizarre chain of events that ultimately marked the end of Brown's dream. The shot awoke a man named Dr. John Starry, who, within hours, organized an opposing force of townspeople.

At 1:30 a.m., a mail train stopped in Harpers Ferry on its way from Wheeling, Virginia, to Baltimore, Maryland. It picked up one passenger and was about to leave when the wounded watchman came running up, screaming that the bridge was in the control of a band of crazy people who might have **sabotaged** (willfully damaged or destroyed machinery, materials, or property) the railroad tracks. The conductor ordered the train to stop, which led to panic among the passengers. John Brown, because he did not want to frighten the passengers, ordered the train to move on. Surprisingly, however, the conductor refused, saying he would wait until it was daylight so he could be assured that it was safe.



Below: Since John Brown refused to surrender, federal troops stormed the engine house and took a wounded Brown prisoner.

Meanwhile, Dr. Starry found the goings-on in the town strange. He went to the home of the three men in charge of the government's property to let them know what was happening. Then, to his dismay, all three went to the gate of the armory and were captured.

As morning light appeared, Brown convinced the conductor that there was no danger and told the mail train to move out. Brown asked the conductor to tell no one of the happenings at Harpers Ferry. However, as soon as the train stopped in Baltimore, the conductor sent a telegraph to government leaders, detailing what had happened.

The Government's Response

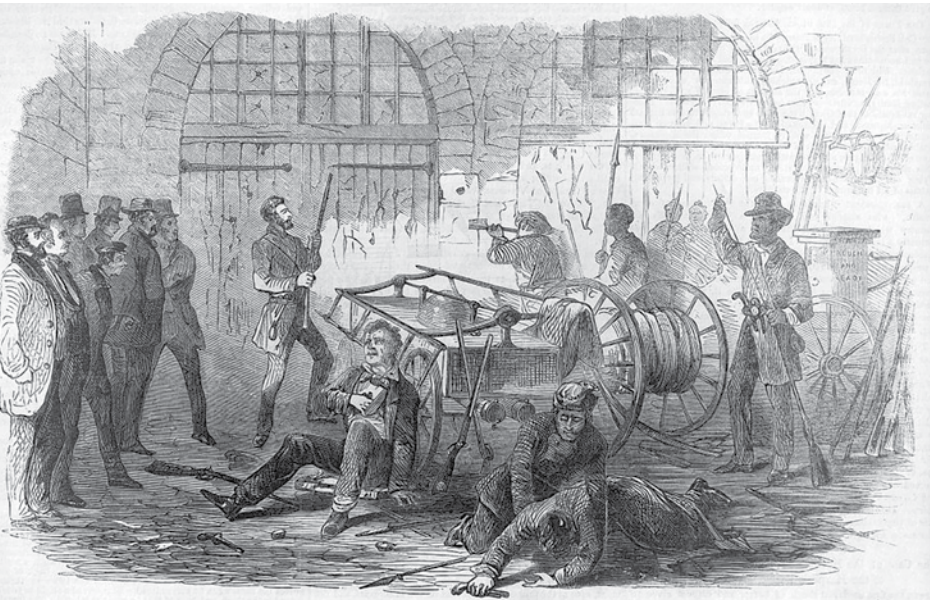
President James Buchanan thus learned of the slave and abolitionist **insurrection** (rebellion). Fearing that similar uprisings might break out elsewhere, he pleaded for the news to be kept quiet. When that became impossible, Buchanan had civilian militias guard the arsenals in Washington, DC. He then called in Colonel Robert E. Lee and ordered him to take command of the forces at Harpers Ferry and put down the insurrection against the United States at any cost.

Soon, troops were marching across the bridge from Maryland into Virginia. Brown and his men succeeded in holding off the first attack. But more and more federal troops arrived on the scene. As the battle heated up, the troops attacked the watchhouse and found a room with thirty to forty prisoners, all of whom they set free.

John Brown and those of his men who were left retreated to the engine house. There they were surrounded by soldiers.

John Brown refused to surrender. As night came again, U.S. Marines took their positions for the final assault. Lee sent Lieutenant J. E. B. Stuart in a last-ditch effort to persuade Brown to surrender, but Brown chose to fight. Federal troops stormed the engine house, and a young lieutenant dealt Brown a deep blow with his sword. When the fighting came to an end, the old man was found, his body curled up, his hair covered with blood, his face wet and grimy from smoke and gunpowder. While the events of Harpers Ferry seemed to last an eternity to those involved, the fight actually lasted less than two days.

A mob outside the engine house wanted to lynch Brown for his crime. One of his hostages, however, said Brown had fought fairly and showed genuine concern for his captives. He maintained that he did not deserve to be killed by a mob but should have his day in court with a jury deciding his guilt or innocence.



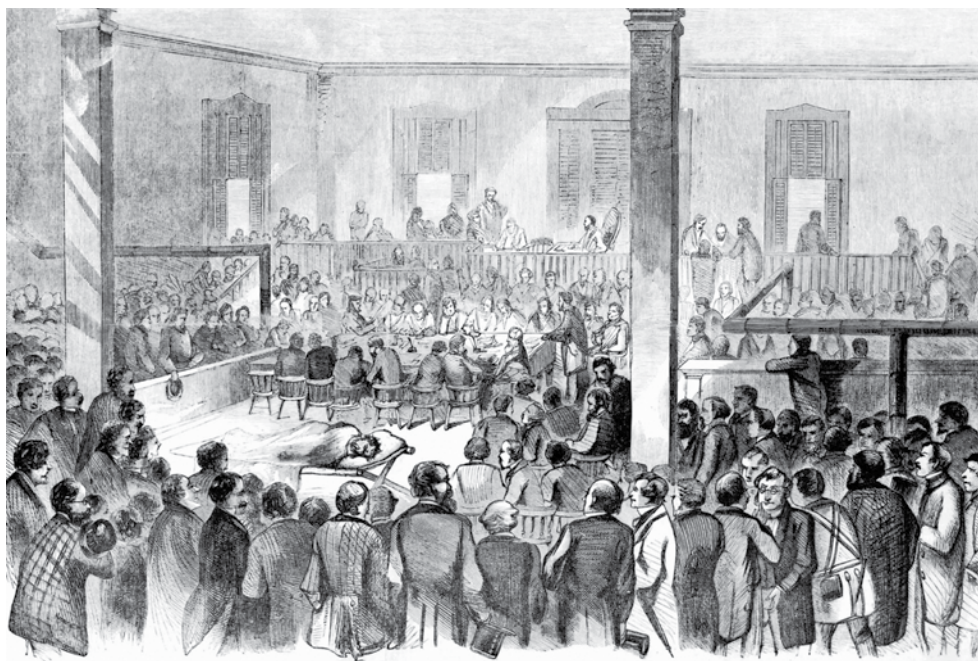
something
extra!

Two of Brown's sons were killed at Harpers Ferry.

John Brown's Last Days

One week later at Charles Town, Brown was tried for murder, insurrection, and **treason** (the crime of trying to overthrow one's own government). He was convicted and, with six others, sentenced to be hanged. Some of his followers asked Governor Henry Wise of Virginia to place him in an insane asylum instead of hanging him. They argued that his bizarre actions were certainly the work of a crazed person. Despite their pleas, Brown's execution was carried out on December 2, 1859.

The South condemned Brown's raid. The raid made many southerners fearful of slave revolts, and they became convinced that northerners would stop at nothing to free the slaves. While many northerners also condemned Brown's raid, others considered him a **martyr** (a person who suffers death in support of a belief, cause, or principle) to freedom. Abolitionists pledged to work harder than ever to bring an end to slavery. Northern troops would soon march off to war singing "John Brown's body lies a-moldering in the grave, but his soul is marching on."



Reviewing the Section

Reviewing the Content

1. What were the terms of the compromises of 1820 and 1850?
2. Why did border ruffians from Missouri go to Kansas?
3. Why did John Brown decide to attack the arsenal at Harpers Ferry?

Using the Content

Pretend that you are a writer for a local newspaper. Write a news article about one of the major events described in this section, such as the Missouri Compromise, the Compromise of 1850, "Bleeding Kansas," or John Brown's raid.

Extending the Literacy Skill

Read the information on the Compromise of 1850 on page 421. Use a graphic organizer similar to that on page 414 to record important facts. Then, rewrite the excerpt in your own words.

Above: The trial of John Brown. He lies wounded on a cot listening to the testimonies.

John Brown

John Brown, born in Connecticut in 1800, has a place in history books for his efforts to free slaves in Missouri and for his attack on a federal arsenal in Virginia. Some have said that Brown was insane. But Virginia Governor Henry A. Wise, who talked with Brown after the raid, described him as

... a bundle of the best nerves I ever saw; cut and thrust and bleeding and in bonds. He is a man of clear head, of courage, fortitude, and simple ingenuousness. He is cool, collected, indomitable; and it is but just to him to say that he was humane to his prisoners and he inspired me with great trust in his integrity as a man of truth.

In order to understand Brown's actions, it is necessary to understand the factors that motivated him. His beliefs were modeled after those of his father, Owen. Owen's father—John's grandfather—died fighting for freedom during the American Revolution. Young John heard many stories of the bitter hardships the family suffered after his grandfather's death. By the end of the Revolutionary War, Owen Brown was caught up in the religious revival of the time. Because times were hard and many people died young from fevers, infections, or accidents, revival preachers instilled in their listeners the importance of being concerned about their souls. Owen Brown and his son John believed they must prepare to one day meet God, and they dedicated themselves to helping those in need. Since slaves were among those most oppressed, John and his father decided to dedicate their lives to freeing them.

As a young man living in western Pennsylvania, John Brown helped fugitive slaves along the Underground Railroad. By the time he was twenty-five years old, Brown not only provided shelter for fugitive slaves but also began arming them to fight their oppressors.



It was not until he was thirty-seven years old that Brown became associated with the abolitionist movement. In 1837, he attended a meeting at a Congregational church in the Ohio Valley where he lived. Laurens Hickok, a professor of theology at Western Reserve College in Ohio, was the speaker. Hickok told the gathering about a Presbyterian minister and newspaper publisher, Elijah Lovejoy. Lovejoy had been killed by a proslavery mob in Alton, Illinois, because he had used his church newspaper to denounce the sins of slavery. Hickok suggested that the struggle in Illinois was more than a mere struggle in support of black people. He claimed that it was an example of how all U.S. citizens were slaves to southern mob law.

Listening to Hickok's words, John Brown was reminded of the words of William Lloyd Garrison. In a speech eight years earlier, Brown had heard Garrison charge that slavery was really a threat to the freedom of all citizens. Garrison had demanded that slaves be given the freedom and rights promised by the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights. Garrison said, "Born upon our soil, they are entitled to all the privileges of American citizens. This is their country by birth, not adoption. Their children possess the same inherent and inalienable rights as ours; and it is a crime of the blackest dye to load them with fetters [chains]." Brown realized that Hickok and Garrison were saying the same thing: The slavery issue was merely a smoke screen for the much greater issue of the protection of the rights of all citizens.

As the meeting at the Congregational church was coming to an end, Brown rose from his seat and took an oath: "Here before God, in the presence of these witnesses, I consecrate my life to the destruction of slavery." And, from that time on, Brown's obsession with the destruction of slavery became the guiding factor in his life. It led to his raid on Harpers Ferry and, ultimately, to his death.

SECTION 2

Moving toward Secession

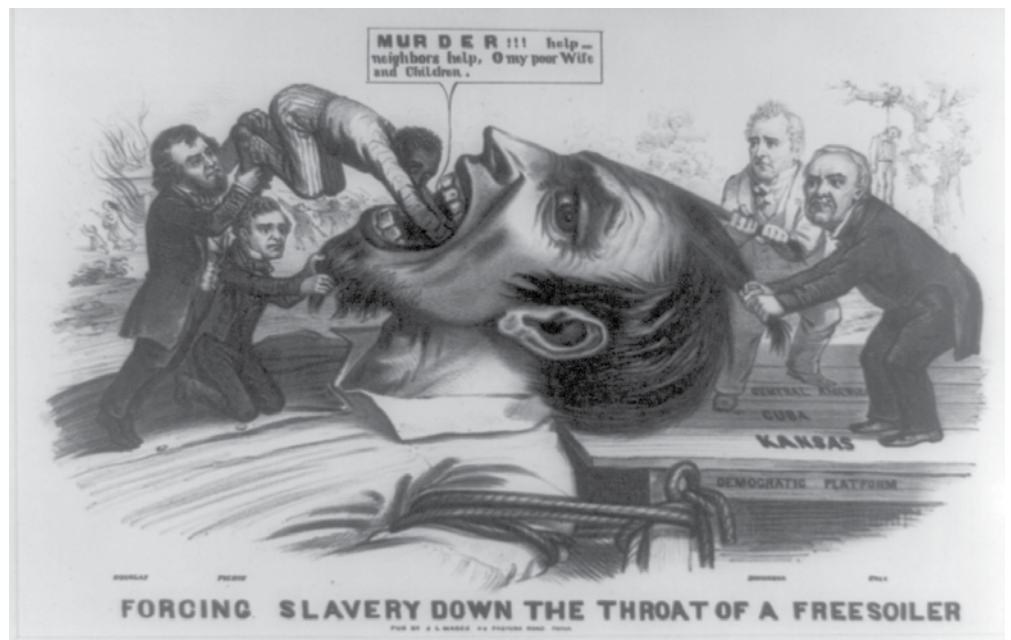
As you read, look for

- the candidates and results of the election of 1860;
- the consequences of the attack on Fort Sumter;
- the dilemma of Virginia's secession;
- terms: **platform, moderate, secede, mandate, Confederate States of America, abstain.**

The United States might have split apart earlier than it did had it not been for the work of compromisers. The compromisers worked hard to ensure a balanced Senate so that one section of the country could not outvote and impose its will on another section. For this trend to continue, the country had to have the same number of slave states and free states.

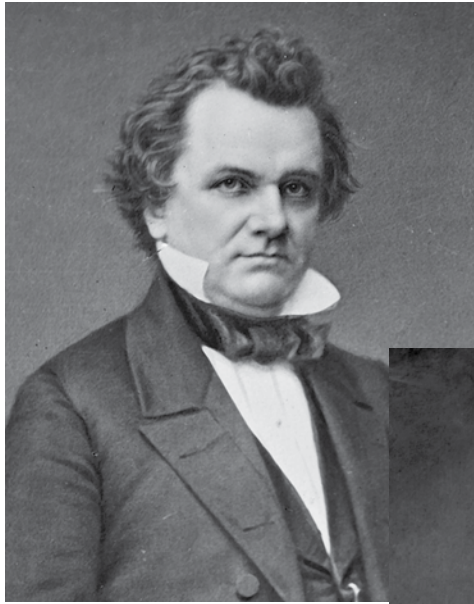
In the 1850s, the decision about whether a new state would be slave or free came to be determined by popular sovereignty. As territories opened for settlement, southerners and northerners alike rushed into the area before election day to ensure that their viewpoint would prevail in the election. Settlers with opposing views often fought, as John Brown and his sons did in Kansas.

An increasingly strident (loud and harsh) antislavery movement, however, made compromise almost impossible. And the rise of the Republican Party—a political party established to oppose slavery—made southerners even more doubtful about their place in the Union.



Above: This political cartoon depicts prominent Democrats forcing slavery down the throat of a Kansas free-soiler.

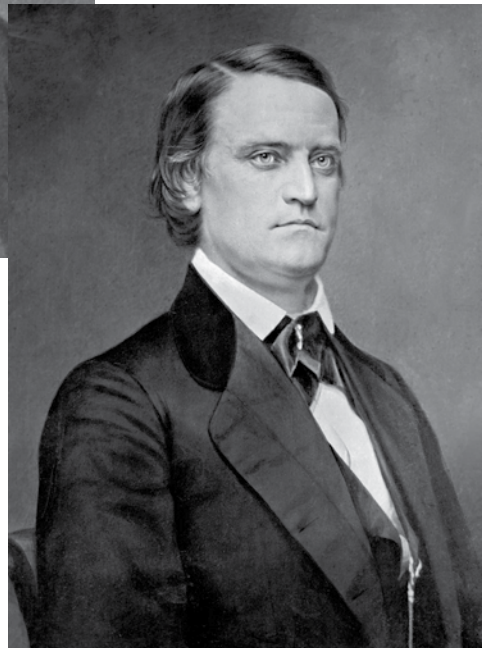
Top: Stephen A. Douglas was the Democratic presidential candidate in the election of 1860. **Below:** John C. Breckinridge was the Southern Democratic candidate.



Lincoln's Election Hastens Secession

In April 1860, the Democrats met in Charleston, South Carolina, to nominate a candidate for president of the United States. The southern Democrats wanted the party to adopt a **platform** (a statement of the principles and policies a political party supports) calling for the national government to protect slavery in the new territories. Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois, the leading presidential candidate, refused to support that position. He stressed the concept of popular sovereignty. And it was this platform that the party finally adopted.

Delegates from eight southern states walked out of the convention, and Douglas did not have the necessary support to receive the presidential nomination. A new convention met in Baltimore, Maryland, on June 18. For a second time, southern delegates walked out. This time, they were replaced by southerners who supported Douglas, thus ensuring him the nomination of his party. The southerners who walked out called their own convention and nominated John C. Breckinridge of Kentucky to represent their section of the



party. Breckinridge, President Buchanan's vice president, was considered a **moderate** (one who is not an extremist) on the slavery issue. The southern Democrats adopted a platform calling for the protection and expansion of slavery.

The Republican convention began on May 16 with William H. Seward of New York as the leading contender for the nomination. Seward was an abolitionist, which made him unacceptable to some party members. Abraham Lincoln was the only prospective candidate without important political enemies. As a result, Lincoln

was nominated on the third ballot, and the Republicans adopted a platform that proposed making slavery illegal in the territories. To broaden the party's support, the platform also called for the immediate admission of Kansas as a free state, a tariff to protect eastern factory workers and owners, a homestead law that would make land available to western farmers, and the construction of a transcontinental railroad.

Another political party, the Constitutional Union Party, was formed to uphold the Constitution and the federal Union. It took no stand on the issue of slavery; this appealed mostly to voters in the border states. The party nominated John Bell of Tennessee for president.

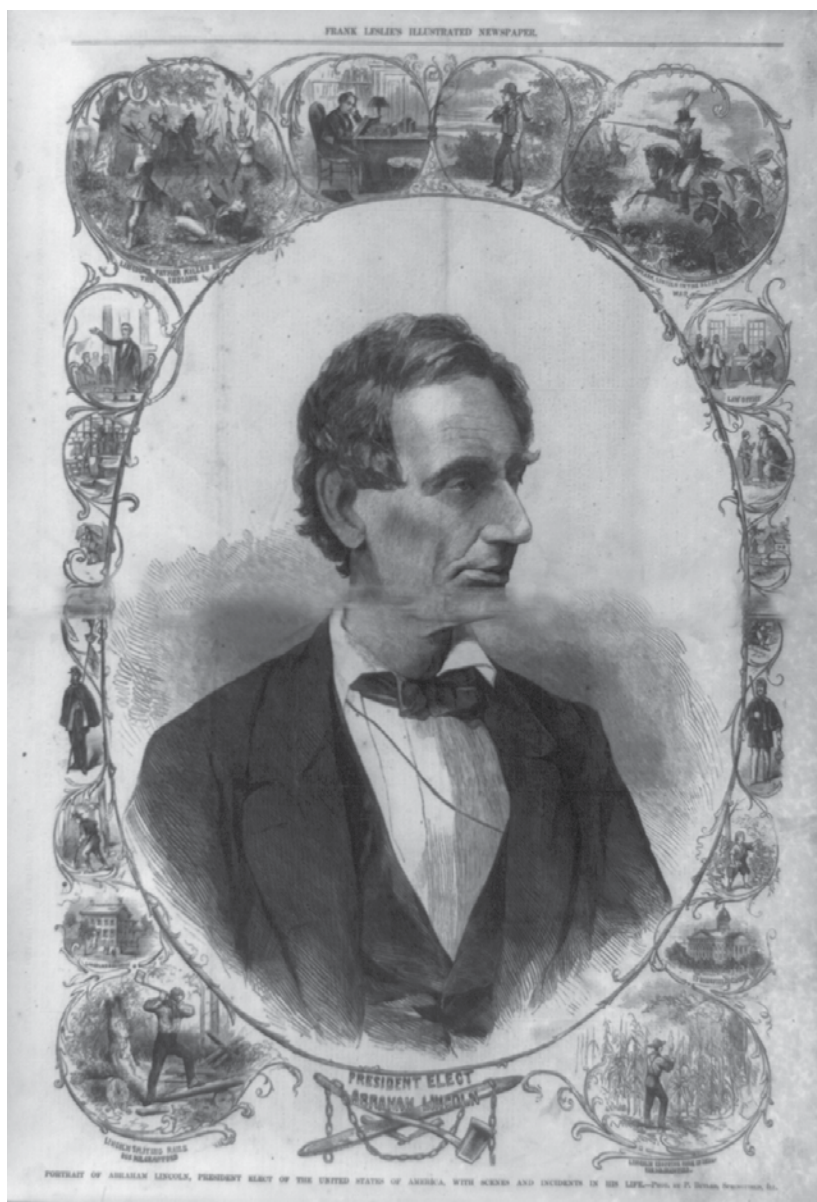
something
extra!



At the Charleston convention, the Democrats went through 49 ballots without being able to nominate anyone.

Lincoln made no speeches in the campaign, although others spoke for the party. On the other hand, Douglas spoke widely, carrying his message throughout the North and South. He was convinced that Lincoln's election would tear the country apart, as the southern states would follow through on their threat to **secede** (withdraw from the Union) if Lincoln won.

The election was largely determined by regional voting. Although he won only 40 percent of the popular vote, Lincoln had a clear majority of electoral votes—180 to 123 for his three opponents combined. He carried all of the northern states except New Jersey. Breckinridge carried eleven of the fifteen southern states, Bell took three, and Douglas carried only one—Missouri.



Above: Abraham Lincoln, a Republican, was elected the 16th president of the United States in 1860.

Figure 11.2 The Election of 1860

| Candidate | Popular Vote | | Electoral Vote |
|--------------|--------------|----------|----------------|
| | National | Virginia | |
| Bell | 592,906 | 74,322 | 39 |
| Breckinridge | 848,356 | 73,598 | 72 |
| Douglas | 1,382,713 | 16,155 | 12 |
| Lincoln | 1,865,593 | 1,887 | 180 |
| Totals | 4,689,568 | 165,962 | 303 |

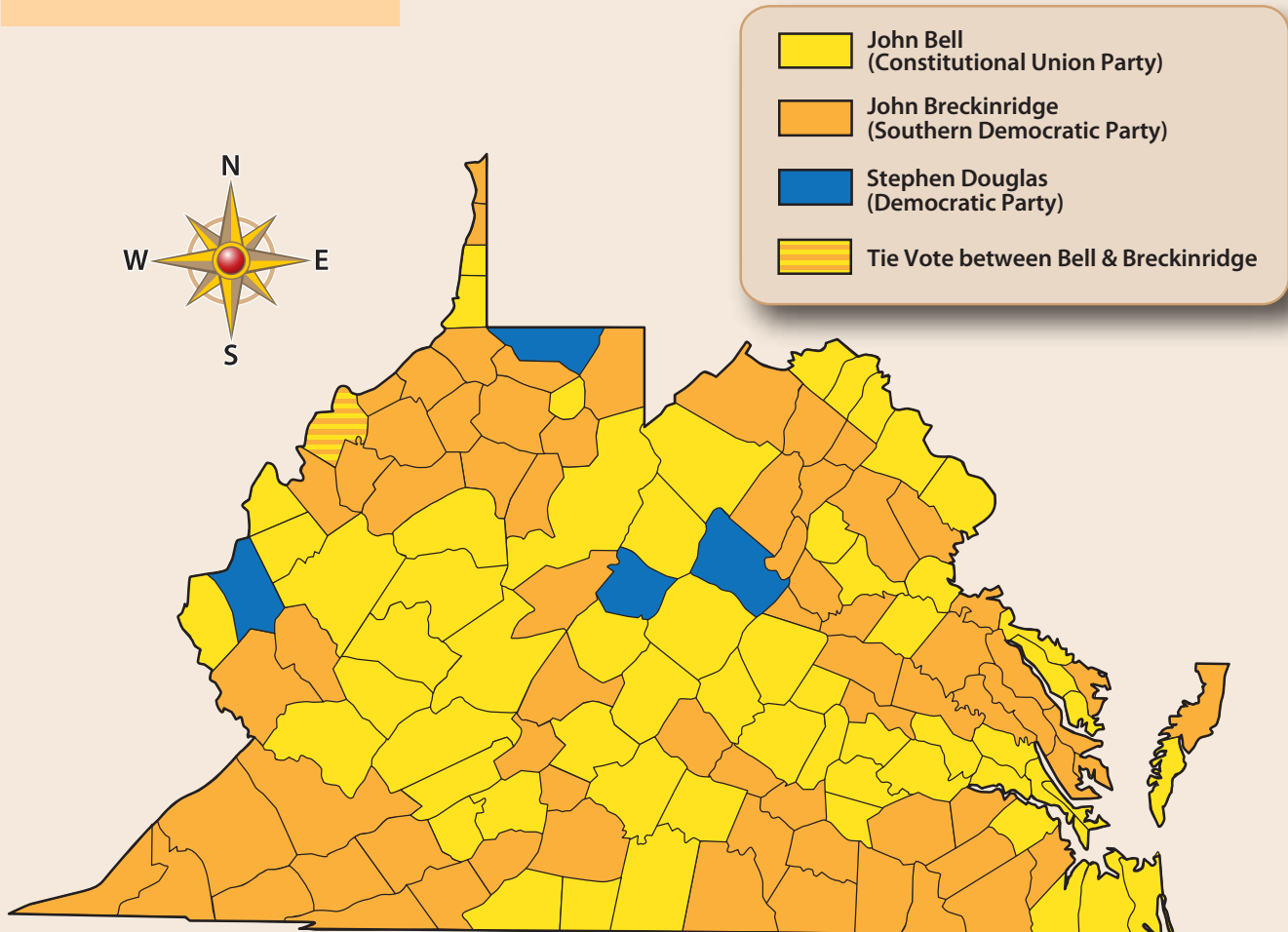
Virginia was one of the three states carried by Bell, who defeated Breckinridge by less than 800 votes. Douglas finished third in Virginia. Lincoln, who lost every state in the South, came in last. Lincoln received 1,887 votes in all of Virginia, and 1,764 of that number came from western Virginia.

The main importance of the election of 1860 was that it was clearly a **mandate** (authority given to someone to perform a certain task or apply certain policies). Lincoln and Douglas together received 69 percent of the total popular vote nationwide. This figure illustrated the overwhelming

Map 11.2

Election of 1860 in Virginia

Map Skill: How did your county vote in the election?



support of the people for excluding slavery in the territories. With Lincoln's election, the direction of the country became clear. The supporters of slavery realized that they would now have to find a way to turn their threat of secession into reality.

South Carolina voted to secede on December 20, 1860. Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana followed in January 1861. In February, Texas joined the other six. On February 4, 1861, delegates from the seceding states met in Montgomery, Alabama, to form a new government called the **Confederate States of America**. Virginia was among those states that had to decide whether or not to carry out the threat to leave the Union.

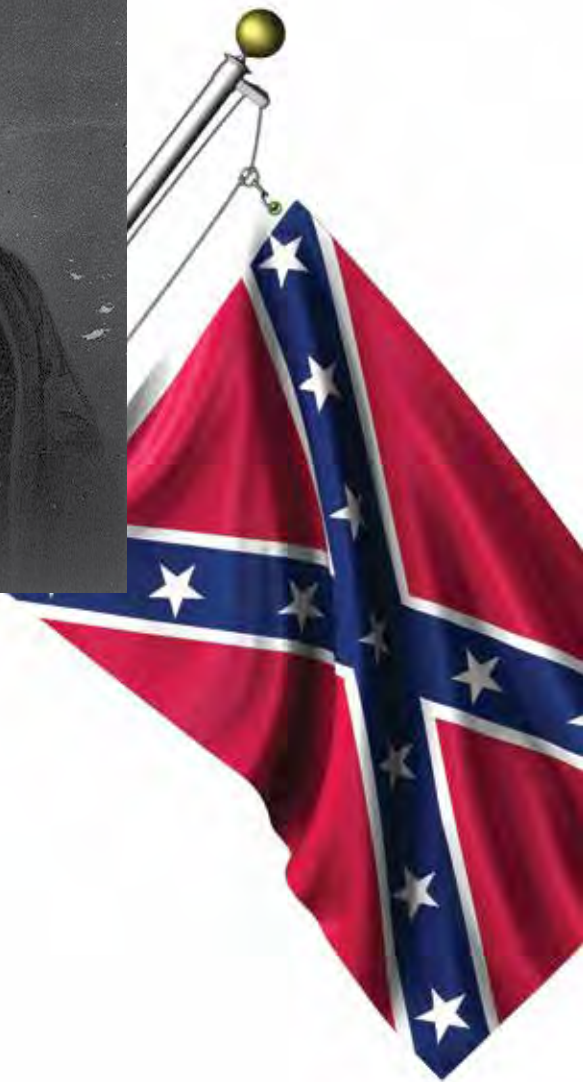
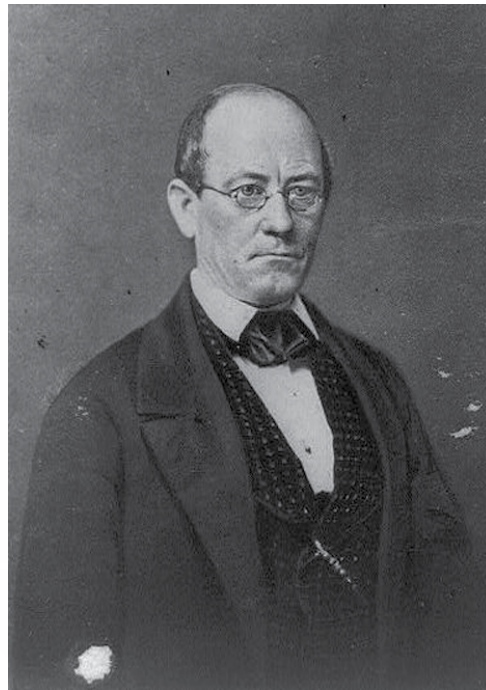
Virginia Moves toward Secession

Both the North and the South wanted the support of Virginia, the "mother of presidents." Virginia had played an important role in the early days of the United States. It could play an important role now. Although the United States was governed by a federal system in which the national and state governments shared power, many of Virginia's citizens believed in states' rights. As the number of seceded states grew, the rest of the country wanted to know which Virginia would put first—the country or the state.

Governor John Letcher called the General Assembly into special session on January 7, 1861. He wanted the lawmakers to consider "calmly and wisely what ought to be done." The General Assembly decided to call for an election on February 4, 1861. Those elected would serve as delegates to a convention that would meet in Richmond on February 13 to chart the state's course.

All the delegates were under pressure to make a wise choice. A majority of the 152 men who met at Richmond in February favored remaining in the Union. People from the seceded states tried to convince the delegates that Virginia's destiny was with the South. How much influence these voices had is not really known because, before the delegates made a decision, other events pushed Virginia out of the Union.

Below: John Letcher was Virginia's governor when the state seceded from the Union.





Fort Sumter

Abraham Lincoln became president of a divided nation on March 4, 1861. When he took office, one of his concerns was Fort Sumter, which was located in the harbor of Charleston, South Carolina. The Confederate government of South Carolina refused to allow the fort to remain in Union hands. On the other hand, Lincoln could not withdraw the federal troops, for that would recognize the sovereignty of a seceded state. Lincoln decided his only choice was to send reinforcements to the fort. Before aid could arrive, however, South Carolina fired on the fort, forcing it to surrender. On that day, April 12, 1861, the Civil War began.

In eastern Virginia, the news of Fort Sumter's surrender was met with celebration. Cries for secession echoed throughout the meeting place of the Virginia convention. The delegates, however, were still not prepared to make a decision on Virginia's fate. Then, on April 15, President Lincoln asked the loyal states to supply 75,000 troops to put down the southern rebellion. Governor Letcher refused to supply Virginia's quota of troops because to do so would have been a denial of the states' rights principle. The mere call for troops was enough to convince many delegates of what action to take.

something
extra!



Fort Sumter was bombarded for 34 hours before Major Robert Anderson surrendered.

Above: Fort Sumter was bombarded by Confederate artillery in the harbor of Charleston, South Carolina, and the Civil War began.

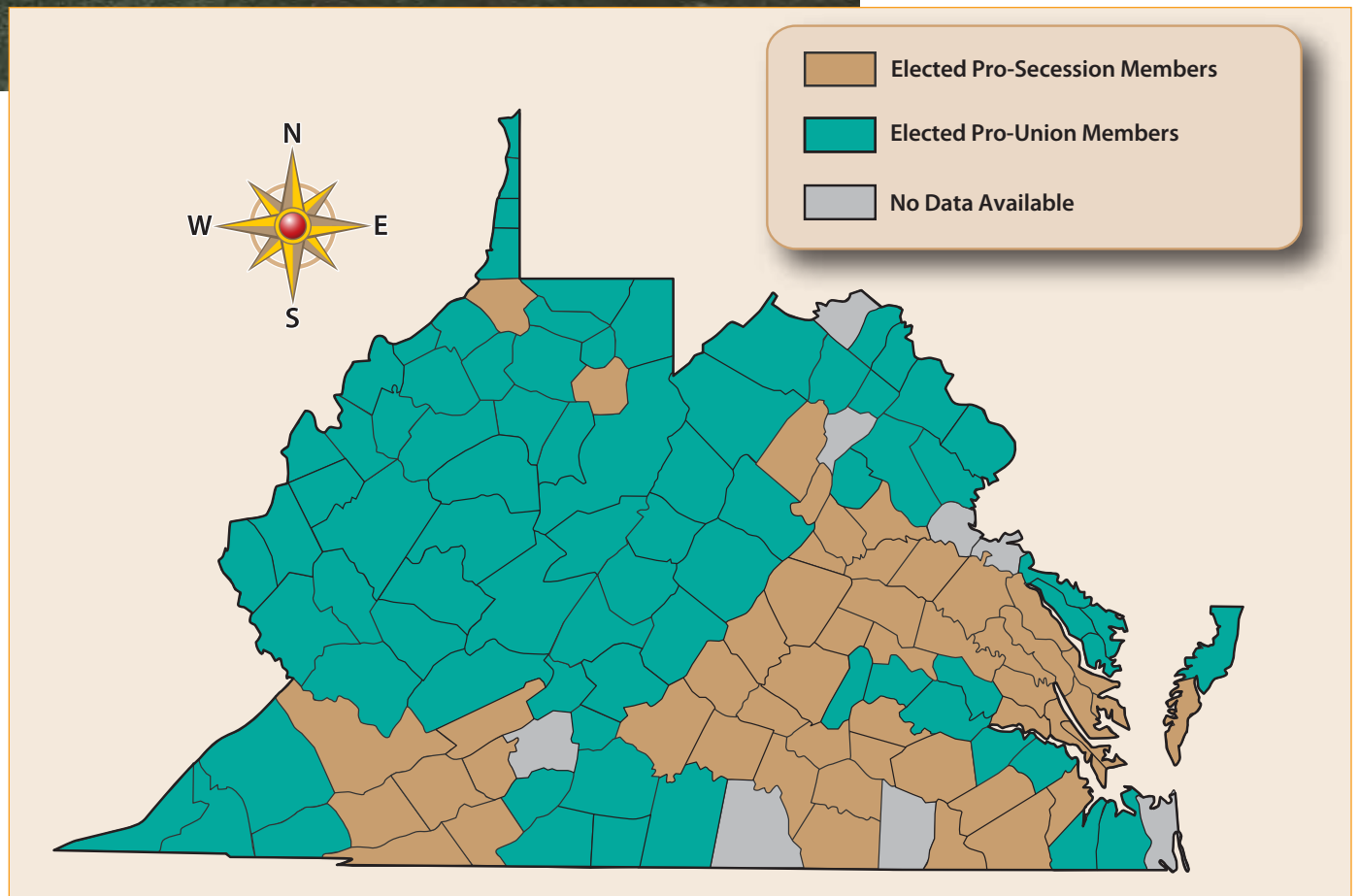
Inset: A view of Union soldiers inside Fort Sumter.



Map 11.3

Virginia's 1861 Secession Convention

Map Skill: How many counties in present-day West Virginia elected pro-secession delegates?



Opposite Page: Following the secession vote, John S. Carlile from western Virginia led a protest meeting in Clarksburg on April 22, 1861. **Below:** Reenactors provide a look at life during the Civil War era.

On April 17, 1861, the convention passed an Ordinance of Secession, stating that the delegates did “repeal the ratification of the Constitution of the United States by the State of Virginia.” The vote was 88 for secession and 55 against. The majority of western Virginians voted against the ordinance. Of the total number of delegates at the convention, 47 came from what is now West Virginia. Of those 47 delegates, 32 representatives voted against the secession, 11 voted for it, and 4 **abstained** (did not vote). When asked to sign the Ordinance of Secession, the 4 delegates who abstained changed their minds and voted for secession.

The ordinance was to be submitted to the people of Virginia for ratification on May 23, 1861. Neither side, however, waited for the vote of the people. John S. Carlile of Harrison County quickly crossed the mountains to mobilize opposition to secession. He led a protest meeting in Clarksburg on April 22, which in turn called for a convention to meet in Wheeling on May 13, ten days before the vote on ratification.

East of the mountains, Governor Letcher began to ally Virginia with the Confederacy. A well-respected Virginian, Colonel Robert E. Lee, was named to lead the state militia. Most easterners thought that the west would eventually follow the lead of the east. Even though the regions disagreed, easterners were sure that allegiance to Virginia was stronger than allegiance to the Union.

Opposition to Secession

Many people in western Virginia were not ready to follow John Carlile’s lead. Some favored secession simply because they did not want to be separated from Virginia. These people were fighting a losing battle, however, because “West” Virginia already existed as a way of life economically, geographically, and religiously. The only thread still holding the two areas together was a common government. And that thread was about to be cut.



Because western Virginians had not been authorized to call a convention by the commonwealth government of Virginia, the Wheeling meeting (the First Wheeling Convention) was regarded as a revolutionary act. Only twenty-seven of the fifty counties in western Virginia sent representatives. Although Carlile pushed for the formation of a new state, other delegates were convinced that this action was illegal because the U.S. Constitution forbade the formation of a new state from another state without the permission of the older state. The delegates knew Virginia would never willingly give permission for such a separation. The delegates did vote on May 15 to end the convention with the agreement that, if the state as a whole voted for secession, delegates would be elected to attend a second convention to begin in Wheeling on June 11, 1861.

When the people spoke at the ballot box on May 23, 1861, the results showed they favored secession. When news of the vote reached Washington, DC, federal troops, under the command of General George B. McClellan, were sent to protect the B&O Railroad. These troops also assured the safety of the promised Second Wheeling Convention. One of the first acts of the Second Wheeling Convention was the presentation of a document titled *A Declaration of Rights of the People of Virginia*. The document identified several grievances of the people against the Virginia General Assembly and Governor Letcher, including their attempt to force Virginia to become part of an illegal confederacy. Of the one hundred delegates who attended the convention, eighty-six showed their support of the document by signing it. This declaration played a crucial role in West Virginia's statehood movement by providing reasons why the state government of Virginia should be reorganized to remain loyal to the Union. It was this reorganized government of Virginia that gave its approval to West Virginia's petition for statehood.



Reviewing the Section

Reviewing the Content

1. Who was the governor of Virginia during the discussions about secession?
2. What event started the Civil War?
3. What man was instrumental in calling for the First Wheeling Convention?

Using the Content

Write a persuasive essay calling for Virginia to secede from or remain in the Union.

Extending the Literacy Skill

Read the excerpt "Lincoln's Election Hastens Secession" on pages 430-433. Then, use a graphic organizer similar to that on page 414 to record important facts. Finally, rewrite the excerpt in your own words.



Focus on Technology

LEARNING SKILL: CRITICAL THINKING

Identify information needed and use search engines to gather material, place it in a database, and use the data to complete a class assignment.

TECHNOLOGY TOOL: SEARCH ENGINES, SOFTWARE, E.G., EXCEL

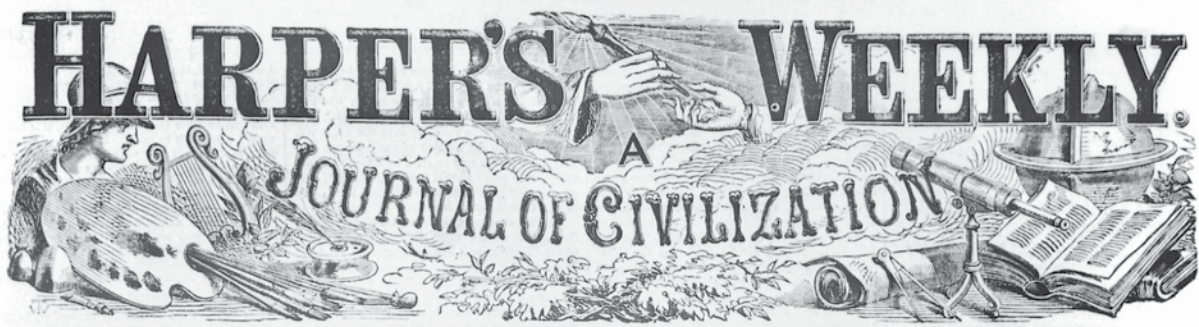
Enter data relevant to the class assignment into a database and perform simple queries.

Go to the website https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virginia_Secession_Convention_of_1861 and click on "List of Delegates." Create a database that includes the name of each delegate, the county each represented, and the second vote of each. Use a simple inquiry to create a graph showing the percentage of votes for and against secession. Do a second inquiry to create a list of those delegates who voted for and against secession. Finally, do a third inquiry to create a list of those counties that voted for and against secession.



HARPER'S WEEKLY

A JOURNAL OF CIVILIZATION



Vol. V.—No. 236.]

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, JULY 6, 1861.

[SINGLE COPIES SIX CENTS
\$2 50 PER YEAR IN ADVANCE

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the Year 1861, by Harper & Brothers, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Southern District of New York.



Above: The Second Wheeling Convention of June 11, 1861, was the subject of this *Harper's Weekly* magazine cover.

Chapter Summary

Section 1: Slavery Promotes Conflict

- Slavery was a factor in the division of the North and South.
- The North, with small farms and factories, had little need for slaves. The South, which depended on cotton as a major contributor to its economy, depended on slave labor.
- The North supported a strong federal government with authority over the states. The South favored states' rights over a strong federal government.
- To preserve the interests of the North and South, it was important to maintain a balance of free and slave states. The Missouri Compromise called for adding the states of Maine and Missouri to the Union in order to keep the balance between free and slave states.
- The balance of free and slave states was upset by the Compromise of 1850, when only California was added to the Union as a free state.
- The Kansas-Nebraska Act allowed people in the territories north of the Missouri line to decide the issue of slavery for themselves (popular sovereignty). The Kansas-Nebraska Act resulted in "Bleeding Kansas."
- Border ruffians favored making Kansas a slave state. John Brown played a role on the side of free-state forces.
- John Brown planned a raid on Harpers Ferry to capture a federal arsenal, arm his followers, and establish a black state to attract rebellious slaves. Brown's raid was unsuccessful, and he was later tried and hanged for treason.

Section 2: Moving toward Secession

- The four candidates in the presidential election of 1860 were Stephen A. Douglas (Democrat), John C. Breckinridge (Southern Democrat), John Bell (Constitutional Union), and Abraham Lincoln (Republican).
- John Bell carried Virginia in the general election. Abraham Lincoln was elected president with just 40 percent of the popular vote, but a majority of the electoral vote.
- The election of 1860 was a mandate for the exclusion of slavery from new territories.
- South Carolina was the first state to secede from the Union, followed by Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas. These seven states formed the Confederate States of America.
- The military encounter at Fort Sumter contributed to Virginia's decision to secede.
- At the convention called to discuss Virginia's secession, a majority of the delegates from western Virginia voted against leaving the Union.
- John Carlile was instrumental in organizing the First Wheeling Convention. Delegates to the First Wheeling Convention agreed to call a second convention if Virginia voted for secession.
- When Virginians voted for secession, the Second Wheeling Convention was convened. Of the 100 delegates who attended, 86 signed a document titled *A Declaration of Rights for the People of Virginia*.

Out of Turmoil, West Virginia Moves Closer to Statehood

Recalling the Facts



1. What were the causes of division between the North and the South?
2. What was the purpose of the Underground Railroad?
3. What was “Bleeding Kansas”?
4. What was the turning point in the battle for Kansas?
5. What did John Brown hope to accomplish at Harpers Ferry?
6. What was the outcome of Brown’s attack on Harpers Ferry?
7. Who were the four candidates for president in the election of 1860? Who won the election? Which candidate received the greatest number of votes in Virginia?
8. What states seceded from the Union to form the Confederate States of America?
9. What action toward western Virginia did the federal government take when news of Virginia’s vote on secession reached Washington, DC?

Learning Skill



1. Why was it important to maintain the same number of slave states and free states?
2. How do you think history might have been changed if the Missouri Compromise or the Compromise of 1850 had not been passed?
3. Would a compromise have avoided the Civil War? Give reasons for your answer.
4. Why might President Buchanan have wanted to keep what was happening at Harpers Ferry quiet?
5. How might history have been different if Breckinridge had been elected president?

6. How might history have been different if Virginia had not voted to secede?
7. What might happen if states seceded from the Union today?

Community Connection



Survey three adults to get their response to the question: “Do you think states have the right to leave the Union?” Share your results with the class to make a class graph of the findings.

Literacy Skill



1. Visualize the raid at Harpers Ferry. (What did it look like, feel like, smell like, taste like, sound like?) Then write a seven-sentence paragraph using sensory words to describe the raid.
2. Write a diary entry that President Lincoln might have written expressing his feelings upon hearing that South Carolina had left the Union.

Technology Tool



1. Use a search engine to find more information on the life of John Brown. Write his obituary from the information you find.
2. Use a search engine to find a copy of Abraham Lincoln’s first inaugural address. Read the address and then summarize the two major themes it addresses. What other issues might Lincoln have addressed in the speech?