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The American Civil War

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Definition

The American Civil War was one of the bloodiest wars in the history of America. It took place from **1861 to 1865**. The war broke out between two sections: the North and the South. This war started when **Confederates** attacked **Fort Sumter in South Carolina**, shortly after Abraham Lincoln was elected as a president. Many historians claimed that slavery was an important factor. However there were other indirect causes that led to the outbreak of this civil war





**What led to the American
Civil War?**

Indirect Causes: The Role of Sectionalism and Economic Differences

In the 19th century, the North industrialized and urbanized with economies shifting to factories and cities like New York, supported by high birthrates and immigration, while the South remained agrarian, reliant on slave-based plantations—Northerners were mostly Republicans, and Southerners were mostly Democrats. This economic divide fueled sectional tensions, as Northerners increasingly opposed slavery and the South defended it as essential to their lifestyle. Westward expansion intensified conflicts, with each new state sparking battles over free vs. slave status that threatened Southern political power in Congress.

Indirect Causes: Slavery Debates between Northerners and Southerners

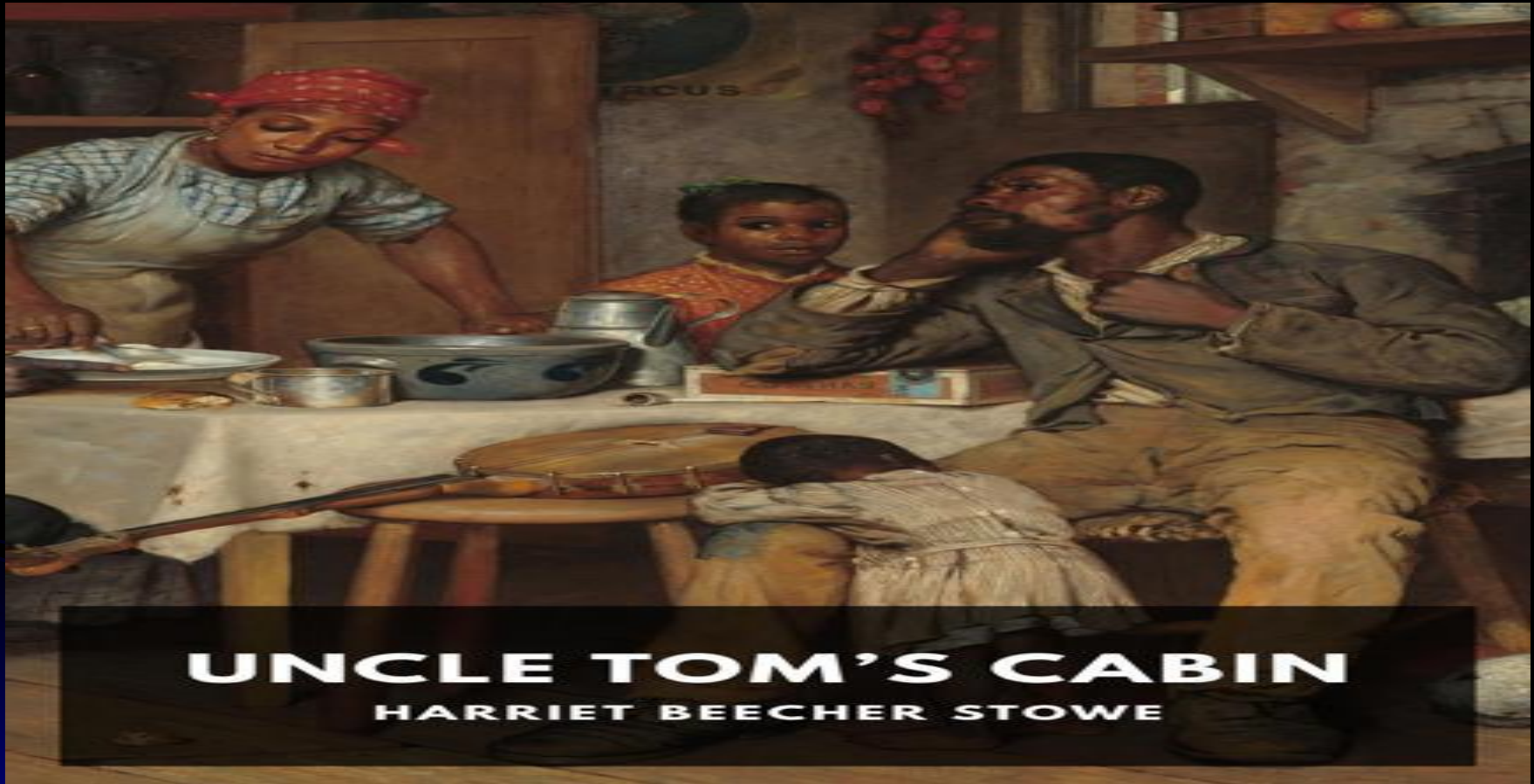
Southerners defended slavery as economically vital, warning that abolition would collapse cotton, tobacco, and rice industries, causing chaos and uprisings like the French Revolution. They claimed slaves were biologically inferior, historically natural (citing Greeks, Romans, Bible), divinely sanctioned (bringing Christianity), and better off than Northern workers or Europeans.

Northerners viewed slavery as immoral and outdated, pushing for abolition to uphold human rights and equality; they rejected racial inferiority claims and saw enslaved conditions as dehumanizing, favoring free labor systems that fueled industrial growth.

The role of the abolitionist movement

The abolitionist movement (1830s–1870) sought to end U.S. slavery through moral suasion, literature, and political agitation, inspired by British tactics and initially rooted in religion before becoming a divisive national force. Key writings like Harriet Beecher Stowe's 1852 novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*—which depicted brutal slave treatment—stirred Northern outrage against slaveholders, fueling sectional animosity, while Southerners dismissed it as biased propaganda; this emotional polarization, alongside debates and violence, significantly contributed to the Civil War, as Lincoln reportedly quipped to Stowe about her book's impact.

Uncle Tom's Cabin



UNCLE TOM'S CABIN
HARRIET BEECHER STOWE

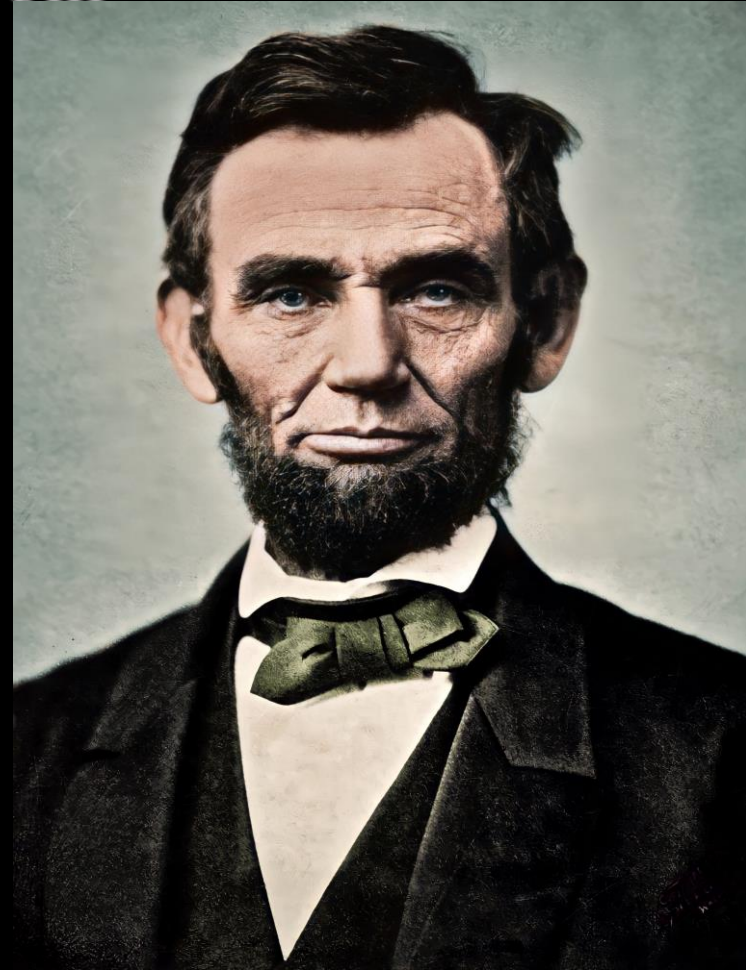
President Lincoln met Mrs. Stowe, he is reported to have said, "So you are the little woman who wrote the book that made the Great War"

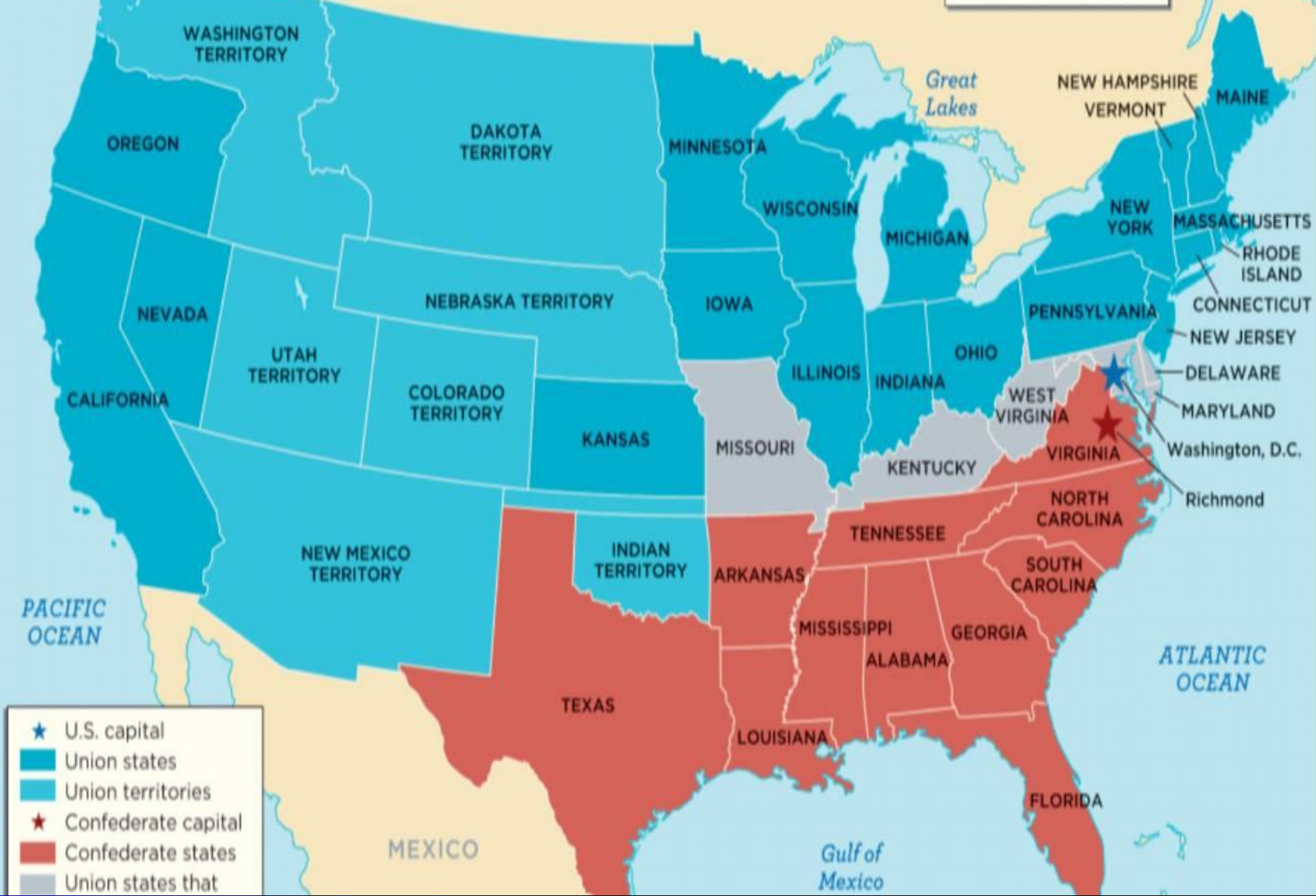
Indirect Causes: the Debates on Tariffs and States' Rights

Southern states saw that it was their right to decide about slavery within their own boundaries. The idea of states' rights was not new to the Civil War. Since the Constitution was first written, there had been arguments about how much power the states should have versus how much power the federal government should have. The southern states felt that the federal government was taking away their rights and powers. The conflict augmented when Southerners wanted to trade with Europeans. In order to accomplish that, Southerners needed to pay some taxation imposed by Congress. However, Southerners, who saw tariffs as a threat to their prosperity and tried to nullify them, did not welcome these taxes.

Indirect Causes: the Emergence of Abraham Lincoln

- Lincoln, after losing the 1858 Senate race to Douglas, ran as the moderate Republican candidate in the 1860 presidential election, opposing slavery's expansion into territories but not immediate abolition in Southern states—yet this position failed to convince the South. His victory prompted South Carolina to secede on December 20, 1860, followed by Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas by February 1861, forming the Confederacy in Montgomery and claiming states' rights to exit the voluntary Union.





- ★ U.S. capital
- Union states
- Union territories
- ★ Confederate capital
- Confederate states
- Union states that



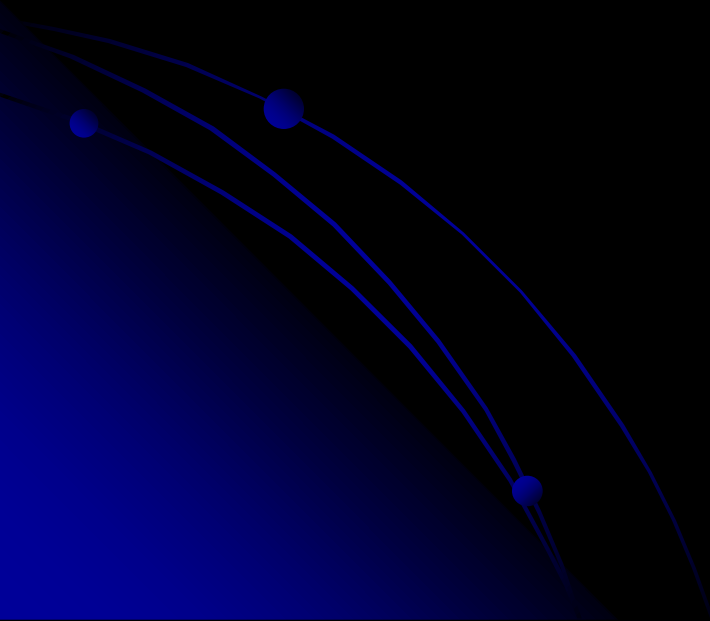
**What is the Legacy of the
American Civil War ?**

The Legacy of the American Civil War

The American Civil War abolished slavery via the **13th Amendment (1865)**, preserved the Union, and centralized federal power over states, but entrenched racial divides that birthed **Jim Crow** laws, **KKK** violence, and **Civil Rights** struggles through the 1960s (McPherson, 1988). Costing **620,000** lives (**2%** of the population), it economically devastated the South while accelerating Northern industrialization, yet inspired global human rights movements despite backlash.

Exercise 1

- Make a presentation about:
- The Role of the Abolitionist Movement in the American Civil War.



Exercise 2

- Listen to the following teaching video and answer the following questions (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ONCREEs9Qy0>).
- 1. What was the other name given to the American Civil War?
- 2. What was the U.S. Civil War?
- 3. What was the central cause of the war, according to the video?
- 4. What was the most profitable crop which depended on enslaved people in the south?
- 5. ?What was the second cause which led to the war?
- 6. What were the economic differences between the North and the South?
- 7. What were the compromises made previously to balance free and slave states?
- 8. When and where did violent confrontations between pro-slavery and anti-slavery settlers take place, leading to bloody skirmishes?
- 9. What was the U.S. supreme court decision which outraged colonists and inflamed the north in anger?
- 10. When and where did Southerners open fire, officially starting the civil war?

Exercise 3

Make Tick the correct answer

Q1:Who was the president of the Confederate States of America?

A: Abraham Lincoln

B:Jefferson Davis

C:Ulysses S. Grant

Q2:Which state was the first to secede from the Union?

A: Virginia

B:South Carolina

C:Mississippi

Q3:Which document, issued by Lincoln in 1863, declared freedom for slaves in Confederate states?

A: Homestead Act

B:Emancipation Proclamation

C: Thirteenth Amendment

Q4:What was the main trigger event that began the Civil War?

A: Lincoln's election

B: Attack on Fort Sumter

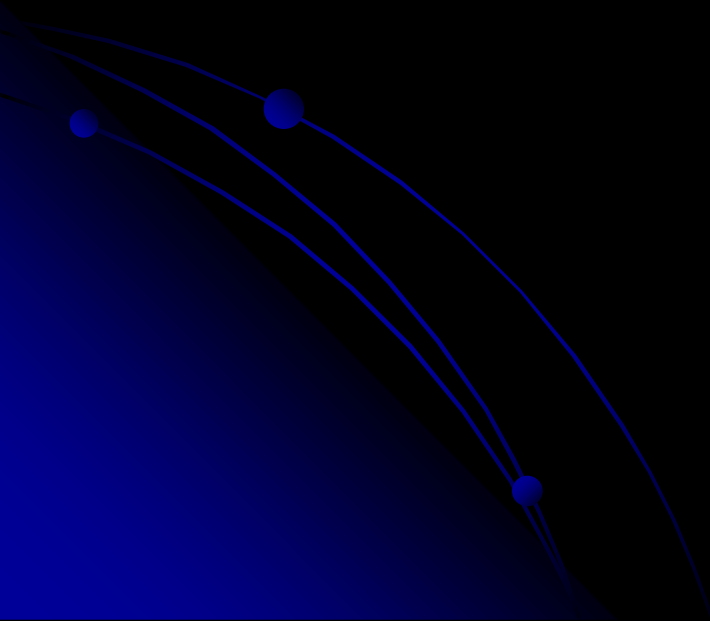
C: Dred Scott decision

Q5:How many states had seceded before Fort Sumter?

A: 13

B: 11

C: 7



Thank You

