

## Events Leading to the Civil War 1861-1865

### **March 1794**

Eli Whitney receives patent for the Cotton Gin. The machine greatly increased the production of cleaned cotton thus making cotton a profitable crop for the first time and increasing the need and production value for slaves.

### **June 1796**

Tennessee becomes the sixteenth state and enters the Union a slave state.

### **1800**

The results of the 1800 census show a total population of 5,084,912 including 887,612 slaves or 17% of the population. Slaves are virtually non-existent in northern states and as high as 42% in South Carolina and 39% in Virginia.

August - Slave Gabriel Prosser leads a group of armed slaves in rebellion. His plan involved seizing Capitol Square in Richmond, Virginia and taking Governor James Monroe as a hostage, in order to bargain with city authorities for freedom. Ultimately Gabriel, along with many followers, were captured and executed.

### **March 1803**

Ohio becomes the seventeenth state and enters the Union as a free state based on the terms of the Northwest Ordinance.

### **1804**

New Jersey's state legislature announces a gradual emancipation act.

### **March 1807**

Congress passes law banning the importation of any new slaves into the United States effective January 1, 1808.

### **1810**

The results of the 1810 census show a total population of 6,807,786 including 1,130,781 slaves or 17% of the population. Slaves are virtually non-existent in northern states and as high as 47% in South Carolina and 42% in Georgia.

### **December 1812**

Louisiana becomes the eighteenth state and enters the Union as a slave state.

### **December 1816**

Indiana becomes the nineteenth state and enters the Union as a free state.

### **December 1817**

Mississippi becomes the twentieth state and enters the Union as a slave state.

### **December 1818**

Illinois becomes the twenty first state and enters the Union as a free state.

### **December 1819**

Alabama becomes the twenty second state and enters the Union as a slave state.

**1820**

The results of the 1820 census show a total population of 10,037,323 including 1,529,012 slaves or 15% of the population. Slaves are virtually non-existent in northern states and as high as 51% in South Carolina and 45% in Louisiana.

March - The Missouri Compromise is negotiated allowing Maine to be admitted to the Union as a free state and Missouri as a slave state in 1821. This act will maintain a balance between free and slave states. The compromise establishes the 36 degree, 30' parallel of latitude as a dividing line between free and slave areas of the territories.

May - Maine becomes the twenty third state and enters the Union as a as a free state.

**August 1821**

Missouri becomes the twenty fourth state and enters the Union as a slave state.

**1827**

The state of New York abolishes slavery.

**1828**

Congress again raises tariffs with the Tariff of Abominations. The tariffs are designed to support American industry and in that way are successful greatly benefiting the northern industrial economy, however the tariffs are damaging to the southern agricultural economy.

**1830**

The results of the 1830 census show a total population of 12,754,289 including 1,987,396 slaves or 16% of the population. Slaves are virtually non-existent in northern states and as high as 54% in South Carolina and 51% in Louisiana.

**1831**

January - William Lloyd Garrison publishes the first issue of the abolitionist journal, the Liberator.

August - The Nat Turner Rebellion in Southampton County, Virginia. Over 60 whites were killed in the uprising. Turner was on the run for or nearly two months, but was eventually caught and hanged.

**1832**

The Tariff Act of 1832 reduces duties. The South, still dissatisfied threatens secession. South Carolina's legislature organizes an army and declare the tariffs null and void.

**1833**

A Compromise Tariff Act is passed as a means of gradually reducing the tariffs of concern in the southern states. Confrontation is averted with this compromise.

**1834**

Slavery abolished throughout the British Empire.

**1836**

May - The House passes a resolution that automatically tables or postponed action on all petitions relating to slavery without hearing them. Stricter versions of this gag rule are passed in succeeding Congresses.

June - Arkansas becomes the twenty fifth state and enters the Union as a as a slave state.

### **1837**

January - Michigan becomes the twenty sixth state and enters the Union as a as a free state.

November - Abolitionist publisher Elijah P. Lovejoy is murdered in Alton, Illinois and his printing press is thrown in the river. He had been calling for an end to slavery.

### **1838**

Lead by black abolitionist Robert Purvis, the Underground Railroad is formally organized.

### **1840**

The results of the 1840 census show a total population of 16,987,946 including 2,482,546 slaves or 15% of the population. Slaves are virtually non-existent in northern states and as high as 55% in South Carolina and 52% in Mississippi.

### **1845**

Former slave, Frederick Douglass, publishes his autobiography - Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass.

March - Florida becomes the twenty seventh state and enters the Union as a slave state in 1845.

December - Texas becomes the twenty eighth state and enters the Union as a slave state in 1845.

### **December 1846**

Iowa becomes the twenty ninth state and enters the Union as a free state in 1846.

### **May 1848**

Wisconsin becomes the thirtieth state and enters the Union as a free state in 1848.

### **1849**

Harriet Tubman escapes from slavery in Maryland. She reportedly returned to the South 19 times and brought out more than 300 slaves.

### **1850**

The results of the 1850 census show a total population of 23,054,152 including 3,200,600 slaves or 14% of the population. Slaves are virtually non-existent in northern states and as high as 58% in South Carolina and 51% in Mississippi.

September - Congress implements several measures forming the Compromise of 1850. The measures included California joining the Union as a free state, the territories of New Mexico and Utah are organized with no restrictions on slavery, slave trading is abolished in the District of Columbia effective January 1851 and the Fugitive Slave Act of 1793 is modified and strengthened to allow slaveholders to retrieve slaves in northern states and free territories.

California becomes the thirty first state and enters the Union as a free state in 1850.

### **1852**

Harriet Beecher Stowe publishes Uncle Tom's Cabin as a response to the pro-slavery movement.

### **1854**

The Kansas-Nebraska Act passes Congress and thus overturns the Missouri Compromise opening the Northern territory to slavery. Both sides begin to send settlers into the areas in an effort to influence the future status of these areas.

#### **1855**

As Kansas prepares for elections thousands of Border Ruffians from Missouri enter the territory in an effort to influence the election. This begins the Bloody Kansas period with duplicate constitutional conventions, separate elections and constant and violent attacks.

#### **May 1856**

Massachusetts Senator Charles Sumner delivers a speech attacking slavery supporters in the Senate. He singles out Senator Andrew Butler of South Carolina in his speech. Two days later, South Carolina Representative Preston Brooks, Butler's nephew, attacks Sumner on the Senate floor and beats him with a cane. The House did not expel or censure Brooks for the attack, Sumner took three years to recover.

#### **1857**

Congress passes the Tariff of 1857 lowering rates to the lowest level since 1812 to 20%, this is very unpopular in the North and praised in the South.

March - Dred Scott Decision - The Supreme Court rules in Scott v. Sandford that blacks are not U.S. citizens, and slaveholders have the right to take existing slaves into free areas of the country.

#### **1858**

Minnesota becomes the thirty second state and enters the Union as a free state in 1858.

#### **1859**

Oregon becomes the thirty third state and enters the Union as a free state in 1859.

October - John Brown attacks Harpers Ferry, Virginia. Robert E. Lee, then a Federal Army regular leads the troops and captures Brown. John Brown and two of the black members of his band were hanged.

#### **1860**

The results of the 1860 census show a total population of 31,183,582 including 3,950,528 slaves or 13% of the population. Slaves equal 2% of the population in what would be Northern Aligned States and 39% in Southern Aligned States. The total population for Northern Aligned States was 22,080,250 and for Southern Aligned States was 9,103,332. In the Northern Aligned States 8% of the families owned slaves and 31% in the Southern Aligned States. 57% of the population in South Carolina were slaves and 49% of the families in Mississippi owned slaves. Click for full 1860 Census detail.

November - Abraham Lincoln is elected president. Lincoln received 40% of the popular vote and won 59% of the Electoral votes. He was not even on the ballot in the deep south.

December - On December 20th South Carolina convention passes ordinance of secession thus seceding from the Union. The Declaration of Secession for South Carolina states, "We affirm that these ends for which this Government was instituted have been defeated, and the Government itself has been made destructive of them by the action of the non-slaveholding States. Those States have assume the right of deciding upon the propriety of our domestic institutions; and have denied the rights of property established in fifteen of the States and recognized by the Constitution; they have denounced as sinful the institution of slavery; they have permitted open establishment among them of societies, whose avowed object is to disturb the peace and to eloign the property of the citizens of other States. They have encouraged and assisted thousands of our slaves to leave their homes; and those who remain, have been incited by emissaries, books and pictures to servile insurrection."

On December 26th U.S. Major-General Robert Anderson moves his troops from Ft. Moultrie, in Charleston, South Carolina, to Ft. Sumter.

### **January 1861**

On January 9th an unarmed merchant ship, Star of the West, arrives in Charleston Harbor with troops and supplies to reinforce Ft. Sumter. The ship is fired upon and retreats. Also on this day Mississippi secedes from the Union. The Declaration of Secession for Mississippi states, "Our position is thoroughly identified with the institution of slavery - the greatest material interest of the world. Its labor supplies the product which constitutes by far the largest and most important portions of commerce of the earth."

January 10th - Florida secedes from the Union.

January 11th - Alabama secedes from the Union.

January 16th - The Senate refuses to consider the The Crittenden Compromise, one of several failed attempts to ease tension between the North and South. The compromise contained six proposals for constitutional amendments, and four proposals for Congressional resolution including the re-application of the north/south boundary from the Missouri Compromise, stated that the federal government could not interfere with slavery where it already existed and could not interfere with the recovery of slaves from any part of the Union.

January 19th - Georgia secedes from the Union. On January 29th Georgia's Declaration of Secession is approved stating, "For the last ten years we have had numerous and serious causes of complaint against our non-slave-holding confederate States with reference to the subject of African slavery. They have endeavored to weaken our security, to disturb our domestic peace and tranquility, and persistently refused to comply with their express constitutional obligations to us in reference to that property, and by the use of their power in the Federal Government have striven to deprive us of an equal enjoyment of the common Territories of the Republic."

January 26th - Louisiana secedes from the Union.

January 29th - Kansas becomes the thirty fourth state and enters the Union as a free state in 1861.

### **February 1861**

February 1st - The Texas Legislature votes to secede from the Union. In a general election, held on February 23, 1861, voters ratified secession by a better than three to one margin. In the Texas Declaration of Secession it states, "In all the non-slaveholding States, in violation of that good faith and comity which should exist between entirely distinct nations, the people have formed themselves into a great sectional party, now strong enough in numbers to control the affairs of each of those States, based upon an unnatural feeling of hostility to these Southern States and their beneficent and patriarchal system of African slavery, proclaiming the debasing doctrine of equality of all men, irrespective of race or color - a doctrine at war with nature, in opposition to the experience of mankind, and in violation of the plainest revelations of Divine Law. They demand the abolition of negro slavery throughout the confederacy, the recognition of political equality between the white and negro races, and avow their determination to press on their crusade against us, so long as a negro slave remains in these States."

February 8th - Provisional Constitution of the Confederacy adopted in Montgomery, Alabama.

February 9th - Jefferson Davis unanimously elected President of the Confederacy by delegates to the Montgomery convention.

February 11th - President elect Abraham Lincoln leaves Springfield, Illinois, on his trip to Washington, D.C., arriving on Saturday, February 23. Lincoln addresses a crowd, many of them friends - view Lincoln's Farewell Address.

February 18th - Jefferson Davis inaugurated as President of the Confederacy.

### **March 1861**

March 4th - Abraham Lincoln inaugurated as sixteenth president of the United States - view Lincoln's First Inaugural Address.

March 6th - The Confederate Congress authorizes an army of volunteers.

April 1861

April 12th, 4:30 am - South Carolina's Fort Sumter is fired upon by the Confederates - The War Begins.

April 13th - U.S. Major-General Anderson surrenders Ft. Sumter.

April 15th - In Washington, President Lincoln issues a proclamation announcing an "insurrection," and calls for 75,000 troops to be raised from the militia of the several States of the Union.

April 17th - Virginia secedes from the Union.

### **May 1861**

May 6th - Arkansas secedes from the Union.

May 20th - North Carolina secedes from the Union.

June 1861

June 8th - Tennessee secedes from the Union.

#### *Sources:*

*National Park Service - Underground Railroad Chronology*

*The Africans in America Website*

*Pathways to Freedom - Underground Railroad Library*

*Virginia Museum of Fine Arts - African American Migration*

*United States Historical Census Data Browser*

<http://www.civil-war.net/pages/timeline.asp>