

Georgia Studies



**Unit 5: Civil War and
Reconstruction**

**Lesson 1: Antebellum
Georgia**

Study Presentation



Lesson 1: Antebellum Georgia

- Essential Question
 - How do political policies influence growth and development?
 - How did national political issues lead to the decision for Southern states to secede from the Union?

Differences: North and South

- Class Structure: North generally based on wealth; South based on wealth and being “born into the right family”
- **Slavery**: Practice of forcing a person, that was considered property, to work for you with no pay and with no rights. North wanted it abolished (done away with); South supported it
- Southern plantation system consisted of large and small categories; the wealthiest had the most land and the most slaves
- Economy: Northern based on mining, industry, banks, stores, and railroads; Southern based on agriculture, including cotton, rice, and indigo
- Southerners resented tariffs, which raised import prices; the South imported more than the North

States' Rights and Nullification

- **States' rights:** Belief that the state's interests take precedence over interests of national government
- Northern states believed that all states should abide by laws made by the national government
- Southern states believed that states had right to govern themselves and decide what would be best for their own situation
- Many Southern states believed that if the US Government created laws that took away their right to own slaves then those states had the right to nullify those laws.
- **Nullification** – Legal theory that states have a right to nullify, or invalidate, a law which that state viewed as unconstitutional.

The Missouri Compromise

- Compromise (agreement or settlement) between the northern and southern states; approved in 1820
- Maine entered the Union as a free state, and Missouri entered as a slave state
- 11 states allowed slavery and 11 states did not
- Prohibited slavery north of 36°20' latitude (the southern border of Missouri), and included Louisiana Territory lands west of Missouri
- Temporarily solved slavery controversy between the states

The Compromise of 1850 and the Georgia Platform

- Compromise between northern and southern states in 1850
- California would enter Union as a free state
- New Mexico territory would not become part of Texas or a guaranteed slave state
- The District of Columbia would no longer trade slaves, but slave owners there could keep their slaves
- Runaway slaves could be returned to their owners in slave states
- Utah and New Mexico territories could decide if they wanted to allow slaves or not
- **The Georgia Platform** – Statement from the Georgia Convention in response to the Compromise of 1850. Supported by Union states, the Georgia Platform stated that the Southern states would agree to follow the Compromise of 1850 (and not leave the Union) as long as northern states would no longer attempt to take away rights from southern states.

The **Kansas-Nebraska Act**

- Created the territories of Kansas and Nebraska in 1854; nullified the Missouri Compromise and broke the peace created by the Compromise of 1850.
- Led to the creation of the Republican Party and further divided the northern and southern states.
- Those territories had right of popular sovereignty
- Popular sovereignty: When a territory asked for statehood, the people could vote on slavery
- Freesoilers in those territories fought against Abolitionists and proslavery supporters

The **Dred Scott** Supreme Court Case and Decision

- Supreme Court ruling in 1857
- A slave filed suit after he lived in free states with his owner but was returned to slave state
- Court ruled that slaves were not citizens and could not file lawsuits
- Court also ruled that Congress could not stop slavery in the territories
- Decision further separated the North and South

The Abolitionists

- Led the movement to do away with slavery. Many northern whites, some southern whites and free blacks were involved
- Made speeches, wrote books and articles, and offered their homes as safe houses for runaway slaves
- Uncle Tom's Cabin (1852), by Harriet Beecher Stowe, portrayed slavery's evils; the book sold more than 1 million copies
- Many abolitionists assisted slaves in their escape from southern states to the north. Many of these slaves escaped on the Underground Railroad.
- The Underground Railroad was not a railroad or underground but instead was a series of roads, houses, river crossings, boats, wagons, woods, and streams where white and black citizens (known as conductors) would assist slaves in their escape attempts.
- One famous conductor was Harriet Tubman. Tubman was an ex-slave that personally helped more than 300 slaves escape to freedom

Slave Rebellions

- 1831 – Nat Turner led bloody rebellion in Virginia; between 57 and 85 people died; Turner was hanged
- Nat Turner's Rebellion and other unsuccessful rebellions prompted strict laws across the South, known as Slave Codes, designed to curtail slave movements, meetings, and efforts to learn to read and write
- These laws applied to both slaves and freed blacks and gave slave owners near-absolute power over their human property.

Freed Blacks and Slaves

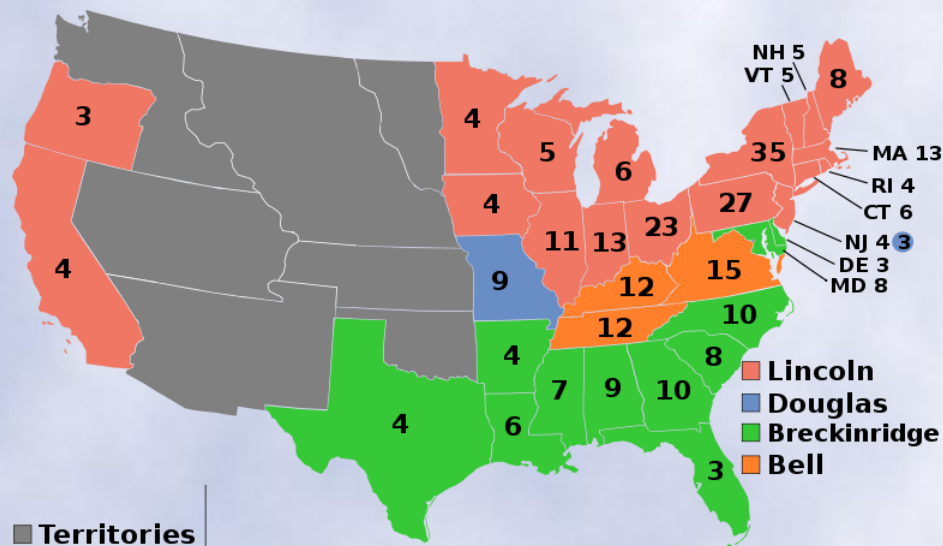
- 500,000 freed blacks; only 6 percent lived in South (mostly Virginia and Maryland)
- By 1860, 11.5 percent of nation's 4 million slaves lived in Georgia
- 3,500 freed blacks lived in Georgia by 1860
- Slaves in the lower South cultivated "King Cotton" which accounted for 50% of America's exports

Georgia's Pre-War Economy

- 68,000 farms by 1860; cotton was chief crop
- 500 plantations (500 acres or more); most farms were less than 100 acres
- 60 percent of Georgians owned no slaves; only 236 had 100 or more slaves
- Half of Georgia's total wealth was in slaves (\$400 million)
- 1,890 factories in Georgia by 1860; about \$11 million in value

Election of 1860

- In 1860, Abraham Lincoln, a Republican from Illinois, won election as President of the US.
- Northern states favored a Republican candidate that would help to abolish slavery. Southern states favored candidates that supported States' Rights.
- Northern States, California and Oregon supported Lincoln.
- Most Southern states supported John C. Breckinridge
- Most Border states supported either Stephen Douglas or John Bell



Debate Over Secession in GA

- Georgians were, for the most part, for the Union; however, they were strongly for states' rights
- Despite lawmakers' strong debates for and against secession (leaving the union/country), a Secession convention began in January 1861 in Milledgeville, the capital
- A **secession** ordinance (bill) passed by a vote of 208-89
- The Southern states who seceded met in Montgomery, Alabama in February, 1861; they formed the Confederate States of America

Georgians in Leadership

- **Alexander H. Stephens** served as a Representative in Congress from Georgia from 1843-1859. During this time he spoke against southern secession. However, after the southern states seceded from the Union Stephens was elected as Vice President of the Confederate States of America (CSA) in 1861.
- Robert Toombs was named Secretary of State of the Confederate States of American
- Governor Joseph E. Brown favored secession and used his terms as governor to prepare Georgia for war