

## Causes of the Civil War DBQ – Documents

Aim: Evaluate and analyze the causes of the Civil War.

Background: After the Constitution was adopted by all of the States in 1789, uniting the States into one nation, differences between the States had been worked out through compromises. For more than 30 years arguments between the North and South had been growing. By 1861 these differences between the Northern States (which included the Mid-Western and Western States) and the Southern States had become so great that compromise would no longer work. Thus, a conflict started within our nation that was called the Civil War (1861-1865). There has been arguments since nearly as soon as the war was over to answer the question:

**What caused the Civil War?**

### Document 1:

#### **Excerpt from a speech by Albert Gallatin Brown, a Mississippi politician September 26, 1860**

(The Northerners) hate us now, and they teach their children in their schools and churches to hate our children...the John Brown raid...the abolitionists among us, tell the tale...The North is accumulating power, and it means to use that power to emancipate (free) your slaves...Disunion is a fearful thing, but emancipation is worse. Better leave the union in the open face of day, than be lighted from it at midnight by the arsonist's torch."

### Document 2:

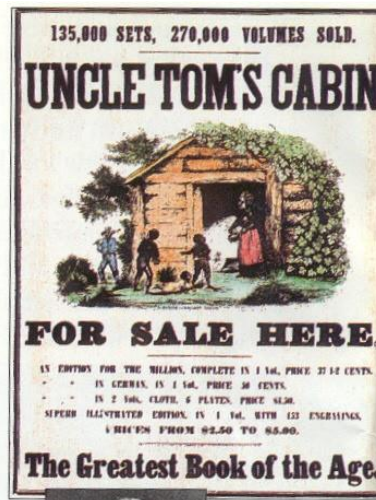
#### **Excerpt from *Dred Scott v. Sanford*, Supreme Court decision, 1857**

...upon full and careful consideration of the subject, the court is of the opinion, that, upon the facts stated...Dred Scott was not a citizen of Missouri within the meaning of the constitution of the United States and not entitled as such to sue in its courts.

Document 3:

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:**

Harriet Beecher Stowe published the best-selling antislavery novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, in 1852. She wrote this book to show that slavery was evil and that the Fugitive Slave Law was unjust. Many Northerners viewed slavery as wrong. Abolitionists wanted to end slavery and some helped slaves escape to the North and Canada. The Southerner's believed that they were stealing their property.



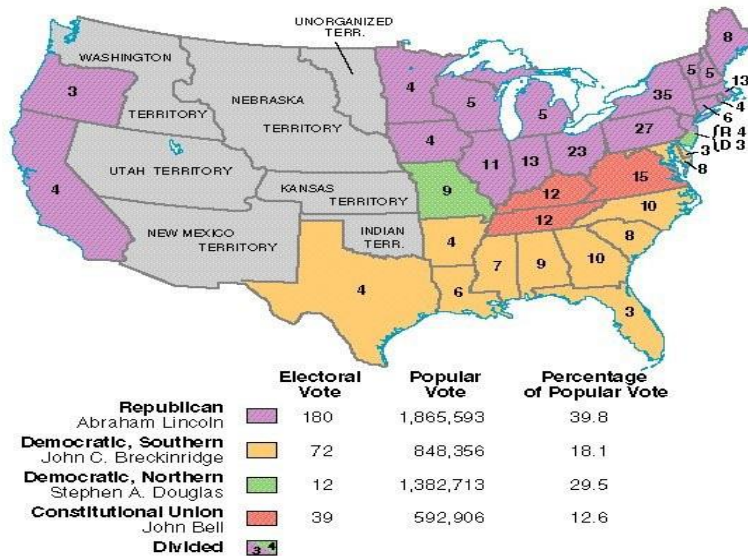
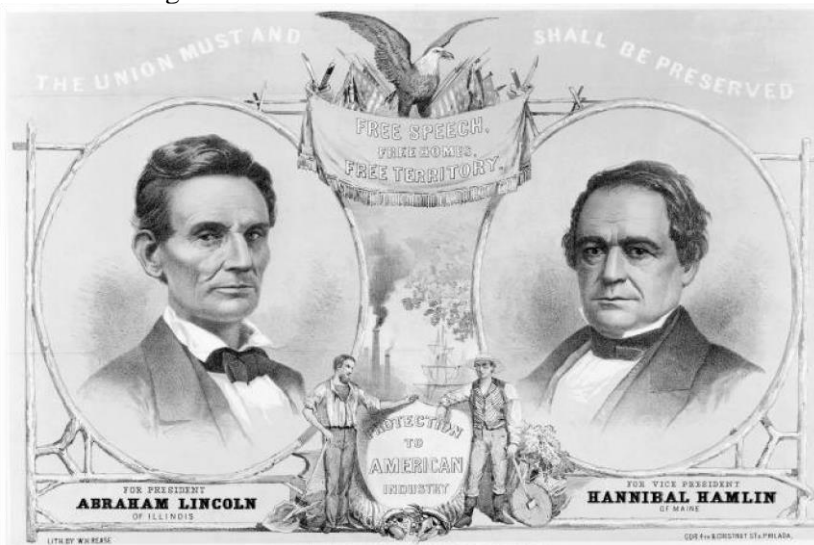
Simon Legree beating Tom from *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe, 1852 In March 1862, Harriet Beecher Stowe visited the White House and upon meeting President Abraham Lincoln, said, "So this is the little lady who made this big war?"

Document 4:

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:**

**November 6, 1860** - Abraham Lincoln, who had declared "Government cannot endure permanently half slave, half free..." is elected president.

**Dec 20, 1860** - South Carolina secedes from the Union. They were followed within two months by Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana and Texas. Seven states of the Deep South, those in which the slavery system is most entrenched, leave the Union. Many Southerners favored secession as part of the idea that the states have rights and powers which the federal government cannot legally deny. The supporters of states' rights held that the national government was a league of independent states, any of which had the right to secede.



Document 5:

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:**

"The sectional division between North and South began in colonial times and resulted from geographical differences. In the South, the earliest settlers found the warm climate and fertile soil ideal for growing tobacco. They started many tobacco plantations and brought in black slaves from Africa to provide most of the labor. In time, other plantation crops, especially cotton, sugar cane, and sugar beets, were found to thrive in the South. The South thus quickly established a rural way of life supported by an agricultural economy based on slave labor.

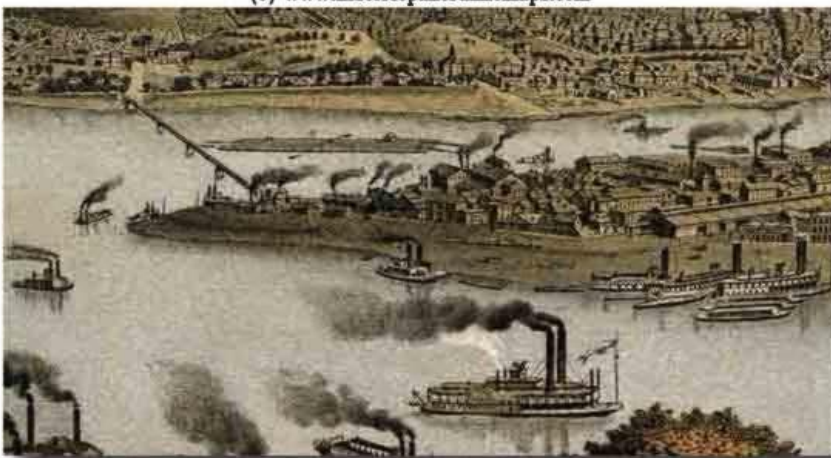
The cooler climate and rocky soil in the North were not suitable for establishing plantations or large farms. As a result of those and other factors, the North's economy came to depend more on trade than on agriculture. Industry and commerce were centered in the North. Many factories using mass-production methods had sprung up there, and cities grew rapidly." The North developed an intricate railway system and shipping industry to transport the manufactured goods.

Source: A-Z History <http://school.discovery.com/homeworkhelp/worldbook/atozhistory/c/HEAD1>



Southern Cotton Plantation 1850s

(c) [www.historicpanoramicmaps.com](http://www.historicpanoramicmaps.com)



Pittsburgh Factories  
1850s

Document 6:  
**Declarations of Causes of Seceding States South Carolina**  
Declaration of the Immediate Causes Which Induce and Justify the  
Secession of South Carolina from the Federal Union  
Excerpts written by C. G. Memminger

In pursuance of this Declaration of Independence, each of the thirteen States proceeded to exercise its separate sovereignty; adopted for itself a Constitution, and appointed officers for the administration of government in all its departments-- Legislative, Executive and Judicial. For purposes of defense, they united their arms and their counsels; and, in 1778, they entered into a League known as the Articles of Confederation, whereby they agreed to entrust the administration of their external relations to a common agent, known as the Congress of the United States, expressly declaring, in the first Article "that each State retains its sovereignty, freedom and independence, and every power, jurisdiction and right which is not, by this Confederation, expressly delegated to the United States in Congress assembled."

We, therefore, the People of South Carolina, by our delegates in Convention assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, have solemnly declared that the Union heretofore existing between this State and the other States of North America, is dissolved, and that the State of South Carolina has resumed her position among the nations of the world, as a separate and independent State; with full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and to do all other acts and things which independent States may of right do.  
Adopted December 24, 1860

*Sources: Library of Congress  
J.A. May & J.R. Faunt, South Carolina Secedes (U. of S. Car. Pr, 1960), pp. 76-81*

## Document 7

### **Jefferson Davis, Message to the Confederate Congress (April 29, 1861)**

“It was by the delegates chosen by the *several States*... that the Constitution of the United States was framed in 1787 and submitted to the *several States* for ratification... [These] States endeavored in every possible form to exclude the idea that the separate and independent sovereignty of each State was merged into one common government and nation, and... to impress on the Constitution its true character – that of a compact between independent States.

... Amendments were added to the Constitution placing beyond any pretense of doubt the reservation by the States of all their sovereign rights and powers not expressly delegated to the United States by the Constitution.

Strange, indeed, ... [the Constitution has] proved unavailing to prevent the rise and growth in the Northern States of a political school which has persistently claimed that the government thus formed was not a compact *between* States, but was in effect national government, set up *above* and *over* the States.”

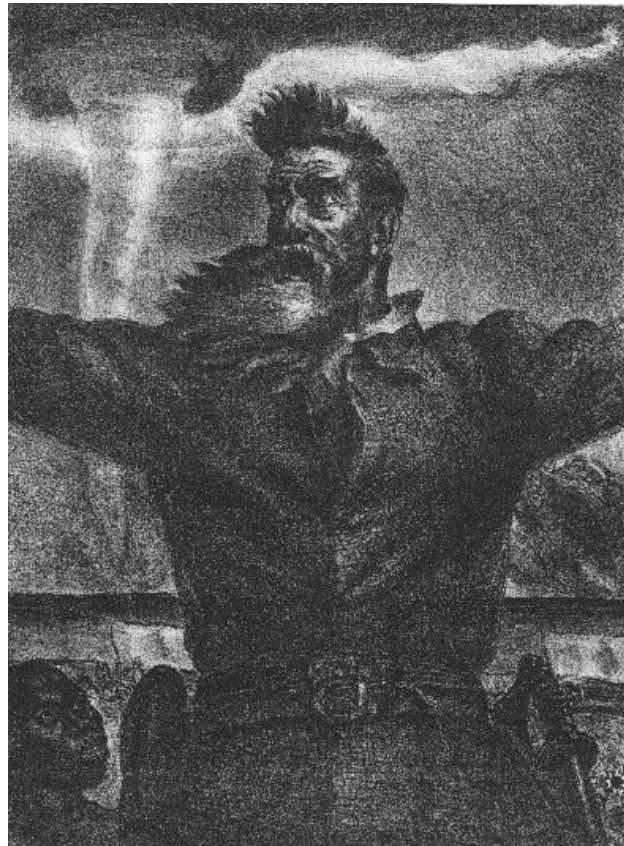
Document 8:

**JOHN BROWN'S LAST SPEECH**

November 2, 1859

(American State Trials, ed. by J. D. Lawson, Vol. VI, p. 800 ff.)

*John Brown, most fanatical of abolitionists, planned to incite a general insurrection of slaves in Virginia and form a free state somewhere in the mountains of western Maryland and Virginia. With the aid of funds gathered in New England and New York he collected supplies and arms at a farmhouse near Harper's Ferry, Virginia, and on the night of October 16 moved on the town of Harper's Ferry and captured the government armory. United States marines under the command of Col. R. E. Lee carried the armory by assault, and captured Brown and some of his followers. He was indicted for treason and for conspiring with slaves to commit murder, convicted, and sentenced to be hanged. On Brown, see O. G. Villard, *John Brown*; F. B. Sanborn, *Life and Letters of John Brown*; R. P. Warren, *John Brown*. The trial is given in full in *American State Trials*, Vol. VI.*



I have, may it please the Court, a few words to say.

In the first place, I deny everything but what I have all along admitted,—the design on my part to free the slaves. I intended certainly to have made a clean thing of that matter, as I did last winter, when I went into Missouri and there took slaves without the snapping of a gun on either side, moved them through the country, and finally left them in Canada. I designed to have done the same thing again, on a larger scale. That was all I intended. I never did intend murder, or treason, or the destruction of property, or to excite or incite slaves to rebellion, or to make insurrection.



Document 9:

**“Cotton is King,” a speech given by James Henry Hammond on March 4, 1858.**

...It appears, by going to the report of the Secretary of Treasury, which are authentic, that last year the United States exported in round numbers \$279,000,000 worth of domestic produce, excluding gold and foreign merchandise re-exported. Of this amount \$158,000,000 worth is the clear produce of the South; articles that are not and cannot be made at the North. There are then \$80,000,000 worth of exports of products of the forest, provisions and breadstuffs. If we assume that the South made but one third of these, and I think that is a low calculation, our exports were \$185,000,000, leaving to the North less than \$95,000,000.

In addition to this, we sent to the North \$30,000,000 worth of cotton, which is not counted in the exports. We sent to her \$7 of \$8,000,000 worth of tobacco, which is not counted in the exports. We sent naval stores, lumber, rice, and many other minor articles. There is no doubt that we sent to the North \$40,000,000 in addition; but suppose the amount to be \$35,000,000, it will give us a surplus production of \$220,000,000. But the recorded exports of the South now are greater than the whole exports of the United States in any year before 1856. They are greater than the whole average exports of the United States for the last twelve years, including the two extraordinary years of 1856 and 1857....

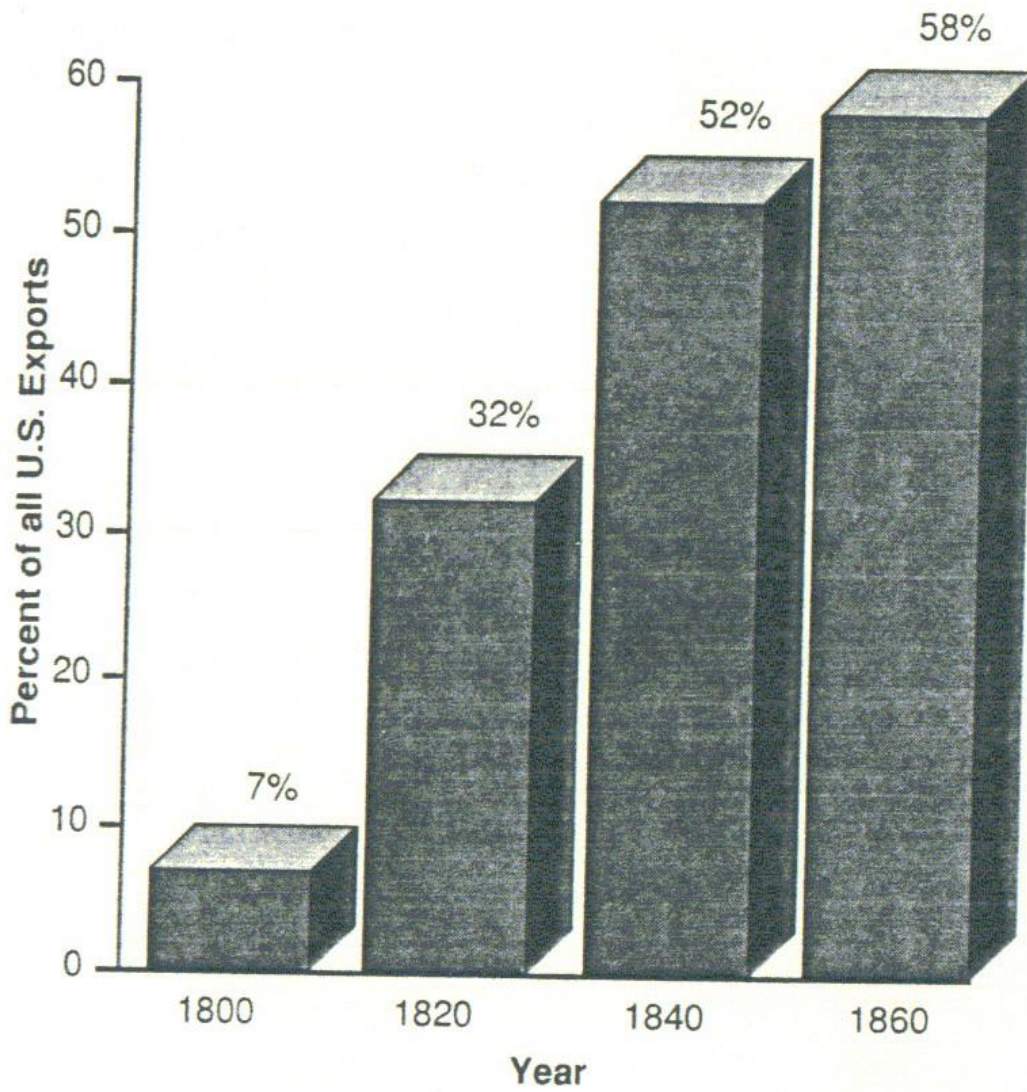
With an export of \$220,000,000 under the present tariff, the South organized separately would have \$40,000,000 of revenue. With one-fourth the present tariff, she would have a revenue with the present tariff adequate to all her wants, for the South would never go to war; she would never need an army or a navy, beyond a few garrisons on the frontiers and a few revenue cutters....

No, you dare not make war on cotton. No power on earth dares to make war upon it. Cotton is king....



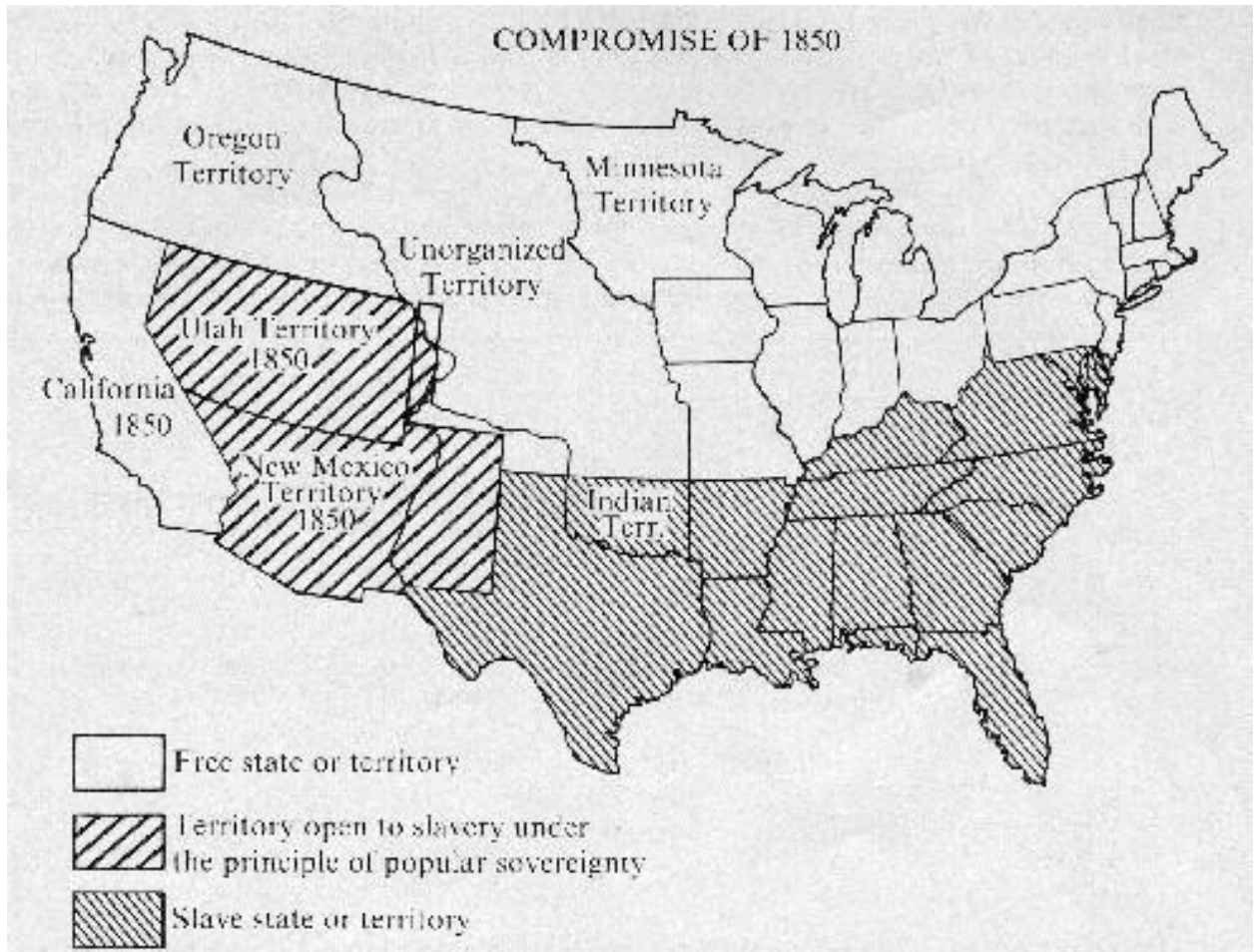
Document 10:

**Cotton Exports as Percentage of All U.S. Exports, 1800-1860.**



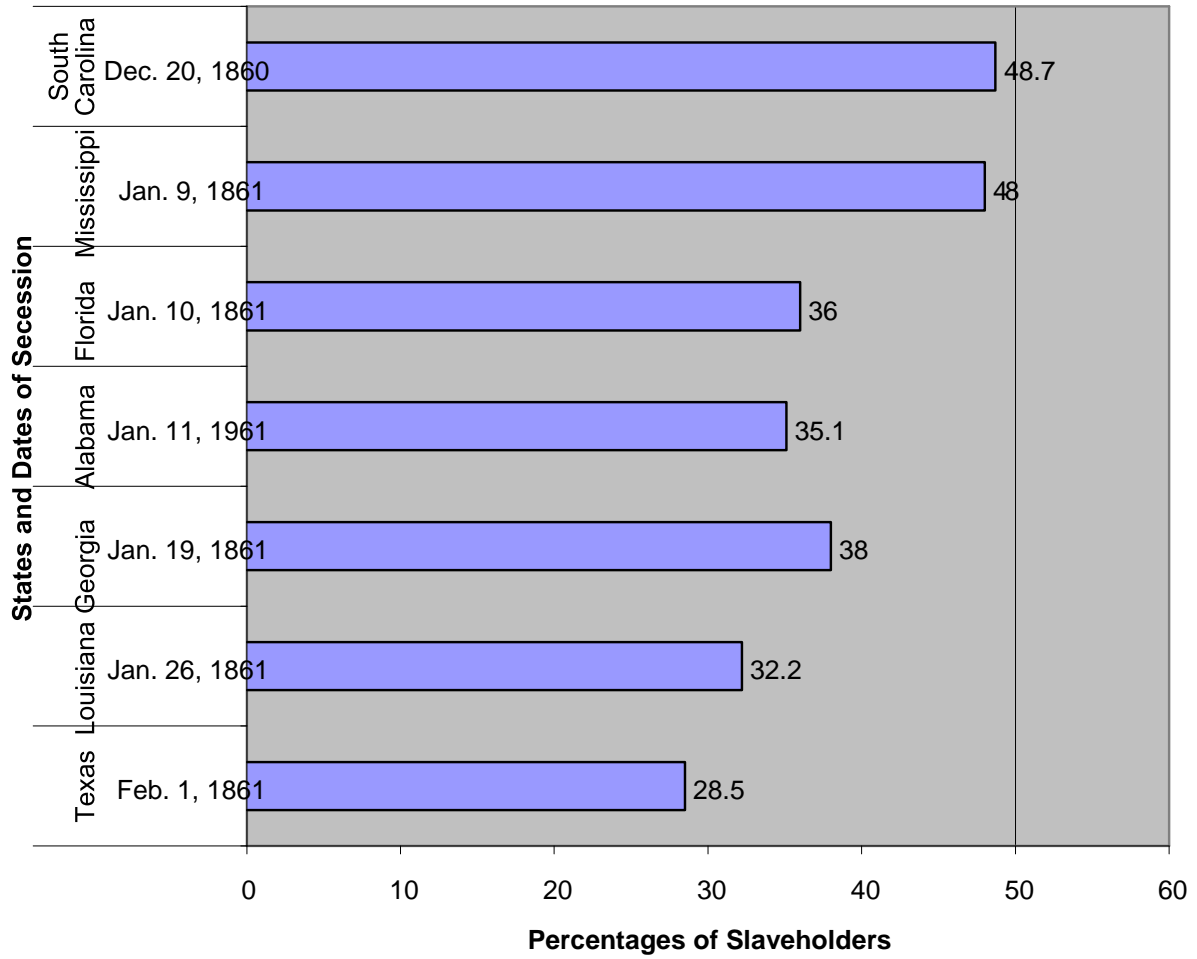
Document 11:

**Compromise of 1850**



Document 12:

**Dates of Secession and Percentages of Slaveholders**



Document 13:



On May 22, 1856, Representative Preston Brooks of South Carolina entered the Senate Chamber and repeatedly struck Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts over the head with a cane. The assault was in reaction to a speech in which Sumner criticized slavery and the Senators who supported it, including Andrew Butler, a relative of Brooks.

The day after the attack, the House passed a resolution to establish a select committee to investigate the incident, and Speaker Nathaniel Banks of Massachusetts appointed five Members to look into the matter. The sworn testimony of Senator Albert Brown of Mississippi, whom Brooks spoke with shortly after the incident, describes Brooks's justification for the attack: "Regarding the speech (of Mr. Sumner) as an atrocious [sic] libel on South Carolina, and a gross insult to my absent relative (Judge Butler), I determined, when it was delivered, to punish him for it." The select committee recommended expelling Brooks from Congress, but the resolution did not secure the necessary two-thirds vote when it reached the House Floor. On July 15, 1856, Brooks resigned in protest, but was quickly returned to the seat he vacated by a special election held just one month later.

Source: Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

# **CAUTION!!**

## **COLORED PEOPLE OF BOSTON, ONE & ALL,**

You are hereby respectfully CAUTIONED and  
advised, to avoid conversing with the  
**Watchmen and Police Officers  
of Boston,**

For since the recent **ORDER OF THE MAYOR &  
ALDERMEN**, they are empowered to act as

## **KIDNAPPERS AND Slave Catchers,**

And they have already been actually employed in  
**KIDNAPPING, CATCHING, AND KEEPING  
SLAVES.** Therefore, if you value your **LIBERTY,**  
and the *Welfare of the Fugitives* among you, *Shun*  
them in every possible manner, as so many **HOUNDS**  
on the track of the most unfortunate of your race.

### **Keep a Sharp Look Out for KIDNAPPERS, and have TOP EYE open.**

**APRIL 24, 1851.**