

Southern Perspective

The issue of slavery became more and more contentious between northern states and southern states in the middle part of the 19th century, especially as the United States expanded westward and began to take in new territories and states. Slavery was important to the southern economy because of the large labor force required to pick and process cotton – the southern cash crop. The southern states scored a victory with the passing of the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854. Introduced by Stephen A. Douglas, the bill called for the residents of the particular territory to choose for itself whether to allow slavery (otherwise known as *popular sovereignty*). Northern politicians such as Abraham Lincoln and abolitionists (those opposed to slavery) fought vigorously against the bill. With the election of President Lincoln in 1860, southern officials began to fear that Lincoln would repeal the bill and that the northern majority would threaten their way of life – and their economic interests. Southern states began to fear that Lincoln would emancipate slaves. The 1859 raid on the federal arsenal by John Brown, a radical abolitionist, perpetuated fears and led many to believe in a northern conspiracy. Shortly after Lincoln’s election, South Carolina officially seceded from the Union. Ten states would follow soon after and form the Confederate States of America.

Northern Perspective

Although the North was divided on their views of slavery, political officials in power such as Abraham Lincoln fought against the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Although many viewed slavery as immoral, which was one reason for its proposed abolishment, officials in the north were also worried that the extension of slavery into western states would give the southern states disproportional influence in such areas. When Abraham Lincoln was elected president, eleven states promptly seceded (broke away) from the Union. Lincoln deemed this unacceptable and declared war for the purposes of preserving the Union.

1. What caused the issue of slavery to become a big problem?

- A. Cotton
- B. The secession of the eleven Confederate states
- C. Westward expansion and the adoption of new states
- D. Stephen A. Douglas and Abraham Lincoln

2. What was popular sovereignty?

- A. The right for the southern states to allow slavery
- B. The right of the president to abolish slavery
- C. The right of a state to decide on the issue of slavery
- D. The right of the southern states to secede from America

- 3. Why did southerners begin to believe that slavery was threatened?**
- A. Because popular sovereignty was allowed following the Kansas-Nebraska Act
 - B. Because Abraham Lincoln was elected president in 1860
 - C. Because abolitionists fought against passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act
 - D. Because slavery was important to the southern economy
- 4. Northern politicians feared...**
- A. that Abraham Lincoln would declare war on the southern states.
 - B. that Abraham Lincoln would eventually allow slavery in America.
 - C. that slavery was immoral.
 - D. the extension of slavery into new territories would give the southern states too much influence.
- 5. Which of the following best describes northern attitudes toward slavery?**
- A. The north was united in their desire to end slavery
 - B. The north was divided on the issue of slavery
 - C. The north did not believe in slavery, but believed it should be allowed in the south
 - D. Politicians in the north believed in the Kansas-Nebraska Act
- 6. What was the effect of the Election of 1860?**
- A. The John Brown rebellion
 - B. It changed people's views on slavery in the north
 - C. The passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act
 - D. The secession of eleven states
- 7. Why was the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act a victory for the southern states?**
- A. Because it made of the possibility that new states and territories would allow slavery
 - B. Because it guaranteed that slavery would be allowed in new states and territories
 - C. Because it pulled the nation closer to the Civil War
 - D. Because it led to southerners believing in a northern conspiracy