

Frederick Douglass

# A Changing Nation



Reader





Steamboat

Lowell textile mills

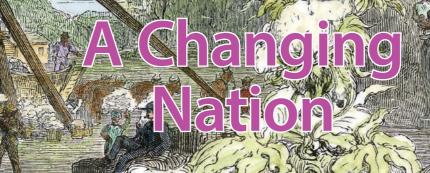


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# A Changing Nation

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# Chapter 1 New Industries and Improved Transportation

**Differences Between North and South** With the signing of the Declaration of Independence, people in the United States with a European background began to identify as something new: Americans. They shared a common

The Framing Question

How were the regions of the United States different before the Civil War?

language. Many shared a common faith. They honored their shared history, especially their revolutionary achievement. But beginning in the nineteenth century, people in the northern and southern parts of the United States began to disagree over the issue of slavery.

Enslaved adults and children worked in the fields on large plantations.

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Slavery is the practice of owning people and forcing them to work. In the 1600s, Europeans began transporting enslaved Africans to America to provide a source of labor. Most enslaved people lived in the South. But there were enslaved people in the

Northern states, too. Just as tensions over slavery were increasing, **distinct** regions were forming in the United States. These cultural and social changes added to a growing divide between the North and the South.

## The Growth of Industry in the North

People in the North increasingly lived in towns and cities, while most Southerners continued to farm for a living. In the North, **manufacturing** was growing more and more important. Major changes were also taking place in cloth manufacturing in Great Britain. Machines had been invented that spun cotton into thread two hundred times faster than a person could.

## Vocabulary

**distinct**, adj. recognized as being different from something else

## Vocabulary

manufacturing, n. the production of items in large numbers for sale or trade

mill, n. a building or group of buildings where goods are produced

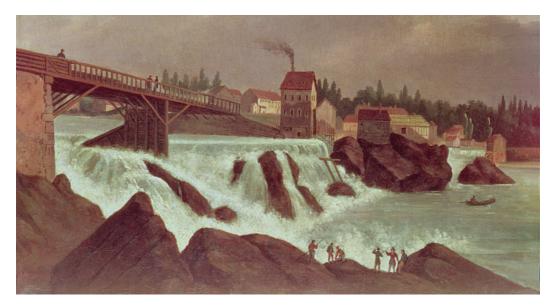
Before long, British manufacturers built special factories called **mills**. The mills housed these new spinning machines. Power to run the machines came from swiftly flowing streams, which turned the waterwheels that were connected to the spinning machines. With these machines, British manufacturers made cloth faster and cheaper than anyone else. The British government wanted to keep these machines a secret. Keeping such a large

secret, though, is nearly impossible. Several American manufacturers placed an advertisement in a British newspaper. The men offered a reward to anyone who could build a spinning machine for them. Samuel Slater, a young British mill employee, saw the ad. Slater memorized every part of the spinning machine in the factory where he worked. He disguised himself as a farmhand and boarded a ship headed for the United States in 1789.



The British invention of machines that spun cotton faster than people could changed the cotton industry in America.

Slater built every wooden part of the machine by hand. In the early 1790s, he finished the job. America's first cotton thread mill had opened in Pawtucket, Rhode Island. Some years after, a wealthy Boston merchant named Francis Lowell and several



Samuel Slater's mill was the first cotton mill in America.

wealthy friends built a factory for processing raw cotton in Waltham, Massachusetts. There, machines not only spun the cotton thread but also dyed it and wove it into cloth.

Soon, hundreds of other factories sprang up. Most of these early factories were in New England. The rushing water of New England's many rivers and streams was used to power the machines. Later, factories spread to other parts of the Northeast. The factories made more than just cloth. They also made shoes and household goods.

At the time of the American Revolution, there were only a handful of cities in the whole country. By 1850, nearly one hundred places in the United States could be called cities. People moved to the cities where they could find jobs in the factories. Nearly all of the factories were in the North and in the region we call the Midwest.

## The Growth of the Rural South

The South, meanwhile, grew in a different direction. There were not many mills there, and there were not many cities either. The great majority of Southerners made their living from the land. The North was gradually becoming more urban, or city-like, while the South remained rural. Many Southern farmers turned their attention to growing cotton.



Cotton is a natural resource that grew well and reliably throughout many Southern states.

In fact, many Southerners believed their future lay in cotton. Cotton was widely used to make clothing. Southern farmers knew that the high demand for cotton from factories in the North and in Great Britain would make them and the South wealthy. A few of these big cotton **producers** owned very large farms. The farms were called **plantations**. Often, a plantation owner would have fifty or more enslaved people who worked on their farm. These plantations were much larger than the family farms of the North and the West. Plantation owners were the leaders

Vocabulary

producer, n. a

person or company that makes or grows goods for sale

**plantation**, n. a large farm where cash crops are grown on behalf of the person who owns the land

free enterprise, n. a system in which businesses operate with minimal government involvement

of the South. They became wealthy through **free enterprise**. This is a system that allowed them to own property and make their own business decisions.

In fact, the production of cotton in the United States had exploded because of an invention by Eli Whitney in 1793. The cotton gin was

a machine that could remove the green seeds from cotton quickly and easily. The cotton gin helped the South supply enough cotton to meet the demand for it in the North and Great Britain.

Before the cotton gin, it had taken a lot of work to get cotton from the farm to the store. This caused



The cotton gin made cotton a profitable crop in the Southern states and territories.

the price to go up. This increase in price resulted in less people buying cotton. It was too expensive. All that changed with the cotton gin! Once Whitney's invention made producing cotton faster, the supply went up, and the price came down. Producers no longer needed to charge as much for cotton. Still, the demand from **consumers** was so high that cotton made many plantation owners incredibly rich.

Factories in the North were now ready to buy all the cotton the South could grow. Moreover, Great Britain began to **import** Southern cotton, becoming its main buyer. The South had so much cotton to make goods that it **exported** it all over the world. And as the cotton industry continued to grow, so did the need for more and more enslaved workers.

## Vocabulary

**consumer**, n. a person who purchases goods

**import**, v. to bring goods into a country to sell there

**export**, v. to send goods to sell in another country

As time went on, some Northerners became more opposed to slavery. And Southern plantation owners, because they profited from it, were more determined to keep it. Not all farmers lived on large plantations, though. Most Southern farmers owned small farms. Some struggled to grow enough food. Though they generally supported slavery, they did not live rich, comfortable lives.

By the 1840s, most Northerners opposed the spread of slavery into new United States territories. Most Southerners, however, demanded that slavery be allowed to expand, as the country itself expanded. The stage was set for trouble. As you will learn, the argument that began over the growth of slavery into new western territory almost broke up the United States.

## **Getting Around**

At about the same time that the cotton gin changed farming in the South, many Americans were moving west. As America's population grew and spread out, one thing was clear. The United States needed to improve its transportation system. Some improvements had taken place by 1800. Many roads that connected growing cities were widened. This allowed them to handle more wagon traffic and horses. This made it possible to travel between towns by stagecoach. A stagecoach was a wagon pulled by horses. During a trip by stagecoach, the driver would stop every fifteen or twenty miles to switch horses. This kind of travel was uncomfortable. It also took a long time.

Another transportation improvement was the development of roads called *turnpikes*. Just before 1800, some people began building good roads. Then, they charged other people for using them.

Every ten miles or so, the road's



People traveled long distances by stagecoach.

owners would collect a fee. They did this by placing a pike, or pole, across the road. This prevented the travelers from passing until they paid the toll. That is how the turnpike got its name. When the toll was paid, the pike would be turned, allowing the traveler to pass.

Most of the turnpikes ran between the cities in the East, where there were many travelers to pay the tolls. No turnpike ran very far west. This meant that pioneers, the people moving to the West, had to travel mainly on foot. Western dirt roads were not wide enough for wagons. So the pioneers would walk while leading a horse or mule that carried their supplies.

## **Steamboats**

Improved roads were a big help. But they were still slow. Roads were also an expensive way for Westerners to send their farm products to market. Rivers provided a better means to do that. Most of the streams west of the Appalachian Mountains emptied into the Ohio River. The Ohio then emptied into the great Mississippi River.

Many settlers chose to farm the land along these waterways. They could load their goods onto **flatboats** and float them downstream all the way to the port of New Orleans. From there, their goods could be sent by ship around the world. The

problem with flatboats was that they could not return upstream against the current without great human effort. Most farmers would break up their boats and sell them for lumber after selling their crops in New Orleans. They then returned north on horseback or on foot.

# Vocabulary

flatboat, n. a boat with a flat bottom and square corners that can be used to carry loads and can also be used as a house

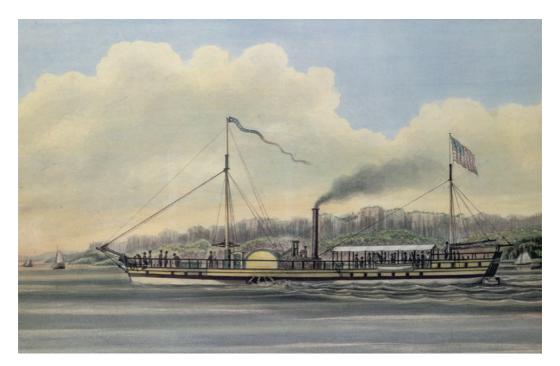


Flatboats could only move downstream.

People living in the region needed a way to easily travel upstream. American inventor Robert Fulton believed he knew how to make this happen. He built a boat. Then he placed two large paddle wheels on its sides and installed a steam engine. The power from the steam engine turned the paddle wheels. These worked like oars and pushed the boat through the water.

Fulton named his boat *Clermont*. Others who saw this odd-looking boat laughed and called it a different name: *Fulton's Folly*. But Robert Fulton had the last laugh. In August 1807, the *Clermont* steamed up the Hudson River against the current. Fulton's steamboat made the trip in far less time than a horse-drawn wagon could. It also carried a much larger cargo. Not much later, steamboats made their appearance on the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. They carried passengers and goods up and down these water highways.

Another improvement was the Erie Canal, a waterway built by people to connect Lake Erie with the Hudson River. Farmers near



Robert Fulton's steamboat, *Clermont*, made the trip from New York City to Albany much faster than a horse-drawn wagon could.

the Great Lakes used this canal to ship their corn and wheat to Albany by water. From Albany, the goods could be shipped down the Hudson River to New York City.

## Railroads

Soon, an even greater improvement in transportation was introduced—the railroad.

In 1830, a young mechanic named Peter Cooper designed and built a steam engine to pull a train. This **locomotive**, as Cooper called it, could reach a speed of eighteen

Vocabulary locomotive, n. a railroad engine

miles an hour. That was many times faster than a wagon. However, a person needed a taste for adventure to ride on one of the early railroads! Passengers were usually showered with sparks from the locomotive's smokestack. The railroad cars often jumped off the tracks. Steam engines also had a nasty habit of blowing up. If the locomotive broke down, the male passengers had to get out and push the train to the next town.

Despite all these problems, railroads became a popular mode of travel. In the 1830s and 1840s, hundreds of railroad companies sprang up. Nearly all of them were small companies. There was no national railroad network. That meant each company decided for itself how far apart to set its tracks.

One might set the tracks five feet apart. Another might set them two inches wider. That meant that each company's locomotives and cars could only roll on its own tracks. Think of what this meant for passengers traveling a long distance. A train reached the end of one company's line every forty or fifty miles. Then, the passengers had to get off and walk a few blocks to the next company's railroad line. Still, it was the fastest transportation around. And a railroad could be built almost anywhere. Demand for railroads grew as more people became interested in moving west. They wanted the land and resources that could be found

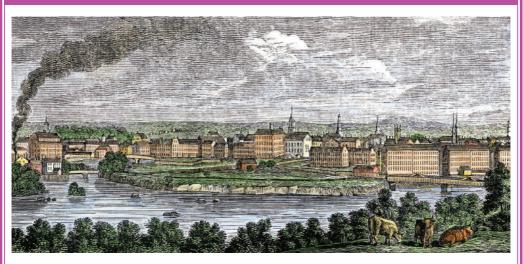
there. After they moved west, they needed a way to send their crops and goods back east. For these reasons, most early railroads ran between Northern and Western states. By the 1840s, railroads had become the most important



form of transportation Early railroad travel could be very dangerous. in the country.

As railroads stretched westward, cities grew. In the Midwest, Chicago became a center for transportation and shipping. Grain and livestock from farms in the region were shipped along railroads to the city. The growth of Chicago was rapid. Between 1830 and 1860, the population increased from about three hundred to more than one hundred thousand. Twenty years later, more than five hundred thousand people lived in Chicago.

## PRIMARY SOURCE: NINETEENTH-CENTURY IMAGES OF NORTH, SOUTH, MIDWEST, AND WEST



#### Lowell textile mills



**Olivier Plantation** 

## PRIMARY SOURCE: NINETEENTH-CENTURY IMAGES OF NORTH, SOUTH, MIDWEST, AND WEST



Randolph Street, Chicago



Sod house, Kansas

# Chapter 2 Slavery, Civil War, and Abolition

Unalienable Rights When the Declaration of Independence was written, the United States was a new country full of hope. It seemed that slavery might die out. This was in part due to the liberties promised in that document. It declared that all men are entitled to unalienable rights. These are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

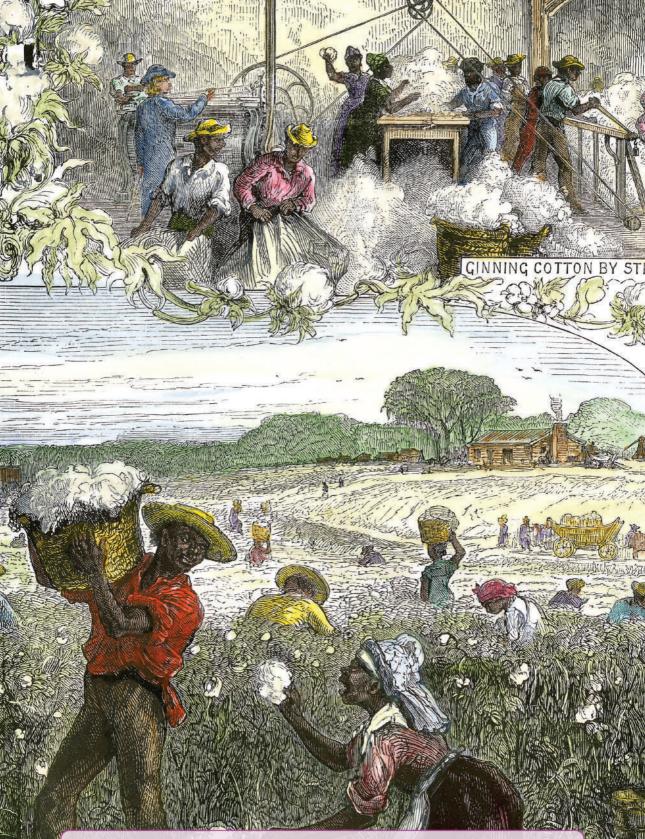
## The Framing Question

How was slavery abolished in the United States?

## Vocabulary

unalienable, adj. unable to be taken away or denied

So how could people accept the enslavement of people and still live up to the words of the Declaration of Independence? On the eve of the Civil War, a growing number of Americans, both Northerners and Southerners, believed that they could not do both.



Some enslaved people lived in the North, but slavery was largely unprofitable there. By the time of the American Revolution, it was slowly coming to an end.

As you have read, because of the demand for cotton, enslaved labor became even more important in the South. Slavery had been debated at the Constitutional Convention in 1787. During those discussions, delegates decided that Americans would have to stop importing slaves by the year 1808. But the issue remained a problem. Slavery was a system that spanned generations. The children and grandchildren of enslaved people were also enslaved, with little hope of freedom. Even after 1808, enslaved people continued to be sold within the United States. Some slaves were still brought against their will into the United States from Africa and the Caribbean even though it was illegal.

## **Abolition**

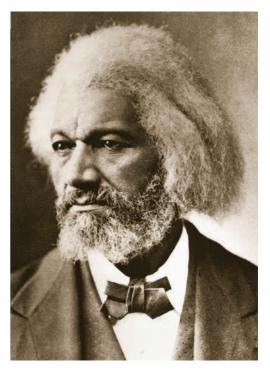
Over time, people began to publicly speak out against slavery. Some church ministers and writers drew attention to the evils of enslavement. Those who were strongly against slavery were called *abolitionists* because they wanted to immediately **abolish**, or end, it. In the North, abolitionists hung posters in public places arguing against slavery.

Some abolitionists began educating people on the evils of slavery. They formed antislavery groups. They handed out more than a million pamphlets and gave public lectures, or talks. William Lloyd Garrison was a leading abolitionist. Garrison published an abolitionist newspaper called *The Liberator*. He also started an organization of abolitionist reformers. Frederick Douglass was another important abolitionist. Douglass had himself escaped from slavery. He was an outstanding public speaker who connected emotionally with audiences. When he spoke about slavery, his listeners knew that he spoke from experience. Douglass later wrote a book about his life as an enslaved person and his escape. His book is called *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*. He, too, published an abolitionist newspaper.

Sojourner Truth was another important member of the abolitionist movement. Like Douglass, she had once been enslaved. She was born at the beginning of the nineteenth century and lived as a slave for a Dutch family in New York. She was sold several times and then escaped in 1826. A gifted speaker, she traveled across the country preaching about abolition. Truth met Douglass in Massachusetts around 1844 in a community

founded by abolitionists. The community became a stop on the Underground Railroad, which you will read about next. Like Douglass, Truth also wrote a book about her time as a slave in the North.

At first, the number of abolitionists was small. Only a few thousand people in the whole country bought *The Liberator*. Even in the North, where more people opposed slavery, abolitionists were not popular. That is because they wanted the



Despite the stories of formerly enslaved people, such as Frederick Douglass, abolitionists struggled to win support for their cause.

country to completely abolish slavery—immediately. Abolitionists spoke at public meetings. They described the cruel treatment enslaved workers received. In time, more and more people came to understand the true horrors of slavery. Some joined the abolitionist movement. Others believed that slavery must not be allowed

to spread into new territories. Still, it was not until the end of the Civil War in 1865, when **constitutional amendments** made slavery illegal, that the abolitionists saw their hope become a reality.

Vocabulary constitutional amendment, n. a change made to the United States Constitution

## **The Underground Railroad**

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Harriet Tubman had also once been enslaved. In 1849, she escaped from the South to the North. Many people would have been happy just to escape. But Harriet Tubman was very brave. She went back to the South to rescue her family and others. She made at least nineteen trips into the South and helped to free hundreds of enslaved people.

Harriet Tubman was part of a group who worked to help enslaved people escape to the North or to Canada. They organized the Underground Railroad. The Underground Railroad was not really a railroad. It was called a *railroad* because runaway slaves were given transportation from one place to the next. And it was called *underground* because this work was a secret.

Helpers, or guides such as Harriet Tubman, were called *conductors*. The conductors had to think of all kinds of clever tricks to keep the slaves from getting caught. They traveled at night. They hid their "passengers" in attics and basements during the daytime. These safe spots were known as *stations*.

### **Harriet Beecher Stowe**

Harriet Beecher Stowe came from a family of New England abolitionists. She wrote a story that told about the cruelty of slavery. Her book, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, was an immediate sensation. One part of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* tells of a young slave mother, Eliza, who discovers that her baby has been sold and will be taken from her the next day. Eliza makes a desperate dash for freedom with the child and escapes into the free state of Ohio, just ahead of her pursuers. Published in 1852, more than three hundred thousand copies of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* were sold in the book's first year.



*Uncle Tom's Cabin* helped many people recognize the evils of slavery. This is a poster advertising the book.





Conductors led people escaping slavery north, through forests and swamps, using guides, such as the North Star.

The conductors also knew how to survive in the wilderness. They knew which plants and berries were safe to eat. They studied the stars in the sky to figure out the way north. When the sky was too cloudy to see the stars, the conductors would feel around the bottoms of trees. Moss usually grows on the north side of trees, and north was where they were going.

## Abraham Lincoln

During the 1800s, the argument over slavery in the United States came to the forefront. The North and South debated where slavery should be allowed to continue and where it should not be allowed at all. In the end, though, people in the South argued that they needed enslaved people to continue to grow the crops that brought in large amounts of money.

When Abraham Lincoln ran for president in 1860, some in the Southern states started to worry. Lincoln spoke out against slavery. This made him unpopular with many Southerners. Lincoln said he wanted to stop the practice of slavery from spreading into new states. But Southerners believed he really wanted to end slavery everywhere—even in the South. Some Southerners said that the

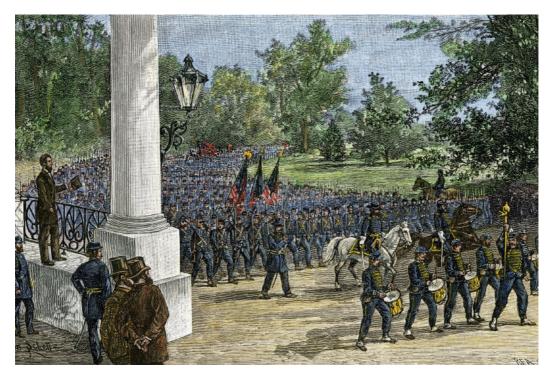
South should **secede**, or leave the United States, if he became president. When Lincoln won the election and became president, seven Southern states, including Louisiana, did just that!

Vocabulary secede, v. to formally withdraw membership

## **Civil War**

These Southern states said they were breaking away from the United States, just as the original thirteen colonies had broken away from Great Britain. They were forming a new country named the Confederate States of America. They even elected their own president, a politician and military leader named Jefferson Davis.

Tensions continued to grow between the North and the South. In April 1861, Confederate soldiers attacked Fort Sumter in South Carolina. President Abraham Lincoln then began assembling forces to destroy the Confederacy. Four more Southern states seceded in response. Lincoln and others in the North decided that the only way to save the country was to go



President Abraham Lincoln watches as Union troops march past the White House to join the Civil War.

to war—a **civil war**. The Northern side was called the Union, which is another name for the United States. The Southern side was called the Confederacy, which is short for the Confederate States of America.

Vocabulary civil war, n. a war between people who live in the same country

Most people thought the war would be over quickly. But there was no easy victory.

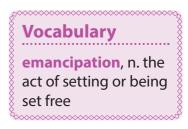
About a year and a half into the war, President Lincoln made a bold move. The time had come to say that not only was the war being fought to keep the country together. It was now also being fought to free the slaves in the Confederate states.

## **The Emancipation Proclamation**

On January 1, 1863, President Lincoln signed the **Emancipation** Proclamation. It said that slaves in the Confederate states were

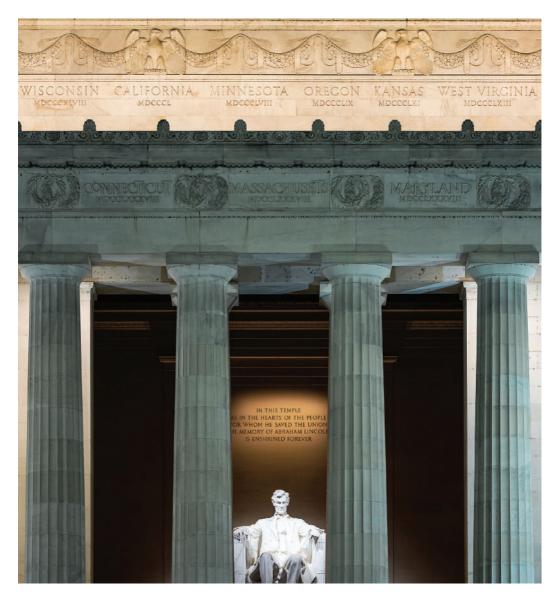
now legally free. Some enslaved people knew about this long-awaited news right away. Union soldiers helped spread the word through the cities and plantations of the South. Still, as long as states were

under Confederate control, they would not be free, regardless of the proclamation. The Union still had to win the war. More than two years would go by before the residents of Texas finally learned that slavery was abolished. Freedom arrived there on June 19, 1865, when Union troops marched into Galveston. The day became known as "Juneteenth" by the newly free people of Texas. In 2021, the day became a national holiday. But what had it taken for the Union to win the war?



## **Freedom for Enslaved People**

Black Americans and abolitionists were excited about the Emancipation Proclamation. Abraham Lincoln was proud of it, too. But Lincoln knew that enslaved people would not be truly free if the Union did not win the war. To do that, he needed a great general. That man was Ulysses S. Grant.



The Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., commemorates Lincoln's presidency and work toward ending slavery.

In the spring of 1864, President Lincoln appointed Grant to be the new general in charge of the Union army. Grant's job was to defeat Robert E. Lee. Lee was the general in charge of the Confederacy's largest army. Grant needed to capture the Confederate capital in Richmond, Virginia. By doing this, he would win the war.

Many terrible battles were fought in Virginia. In most of these battles, Grant lost more men than Lee. Still, he never stopped advancing and attacking. Gradually, he closed in on Richmond. In April 1865, Grant's soldiers captured the city. About one week later, on April 9, 1865, Lee surrendered to Grant.

Just as Lincoln had known that he needed the right general, he knew that the ideas expressed in the Emancipation Proclamation needed to be part of the Constitution. During the last days of the Civil War, Lincoln worked toward the passage of a constitutional amendment that would abolish slavery. The Thirteenth Amendment passed just months before the war ended. After years of fighting and with this constitutional amendment, the war was finally over. Lincoln had saved the Union and ended slavery. The job now was to get back to being one nation and to fulfill that nation's promise of greatness.

## PRIMARY SOURCE: EXCERPT FROM "WHAT TO THE SLAVE IS THE FOURTH OF JULY?" BY FREDERICK DOUGLASS

The following is an excerpt of a speech delivered by Frederick Douglass on July 4, 1852. He was a speaker at an event in Rochester, New York, commemorating the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

What, to the American slave, is the Fourth of July? I answer, a day that reveals to him, more than all other days in the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim. To him, your celebration is a sham; ... your shouts of liberty and equality, hollow mockery; ... a thin veil to cover up crimes which would disgrace a nation of savages. There is not a nation on the earth guilty of practices more shocking and more bloody than are the people of these United States at this very hour.

**Source:** Gregory, James M. *Frederick Douglass the Orator*. Springfield, MA: Willey Company, 1907. pp. 105–106.

# Glossary

### A

abolish, v. to end; to stop something completely (18)

#### С

- civil war, n. a war between people who live in the same country (25)
- constitutional amendment, n. a change made to the United States Constitution (20)
- consumer, n. a person who purchases goods (8)

#### D

distinct, adj. recognized as being different from something else (4)

#### E

- emancipation, n. the act of setting or being set free (25)
- export, v. to send goods to sell in another country (8)

#### F

- flatboat, n. a boat with a flat bottom and square corners that can be used to carry loads and can also be used as a house (10)
- free enterprise, n. a system in which businesses operate with minimal government involvement (7)

### I

import, v. to bring goods into a country to sell there (8)

#### L

locomotive, n. a railroad engine (12)

#### Μ

- manufacturing, n. the production of items in large numbers for sale or trade (4)
- mill, n. a building or group of buildings where goods are produced (4)

#### Ρ

- plantation, n. a large farm where cash crops are grown on behalf of the person who owns the land (7)
- **producer, n.** a person or company that makes or grows goods for sale (7)

#### S

secede, v. to formally withdraw membership
(23)

#### U

unalienable, adj. unable to be taken away or denied (16)



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Poster advertising 'Uncle Tom's Cabin', 1852 (colour litho)/American School, (19th century) / American/Collection of the New-York Historical Society, USA/© New York Historical Society / Bridgeman Images: 21

Randolph Street, Chicago City, 1850s, United States. Colour engraving of the 19th century/Photo © North Wind Pictures / Bridgeman Images: 15a

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Textile mills along the Merrimack (Merrimac) and Concord rivers, Lowell, Massachusetts, USA in the 1830s. Coloured engraving of the 19th century./Photo © North Wind Pictures / Bridgeman Images: Cover D, 14a

The Best Friend of Charleston, from 'The History of Our Country', published 1905 (litho), American School, (20th century) / Private Collection / Photo © Ken Welsh / Bridgeman Images: 13

The first cotton mill in America, established by Samuel Slater on the Blackstone River at Pawtucket, Rhode Island, c.1790 (oil on canvas), American School, (18th century) / Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC, USA / Bridgeman Images: 5b

The Olivier Plantation, 1861 (w/c on paper)/Persac, Adrien (1823–73) / American/Louisiana State Museum, USA/Bridgeman Images: 14b



## Bayou Bridges: A K-8 Louisiana Social Studies Curriculum

A comprehensive program in world and U.S. history, integrating topics in geography, civics, economics, and the arts, exploring civilizations, cultures, concepts, and skills specified in the 2022 Louisiana Student Standards for Social Studies

