

Topic #12 Overview

Main Themes:

1. How the question of the expansion of slavery deepened divisions between the North and the South.
2. How the issue of slavery reshaped the American political-party system.
3. How the South came to attempt secession and how the government of the United States responded.

Objectives: [You should be able to explain each of these in some detail]

1. The role of the major political parties in the widening sectional split.
2. The part played by Stephen A. Douglas in the enactment of the Kansas-Nebraska Act.
3. The impact of the *Dred Scott* decision on sectional attitudes and on the prestige of the Supreme Court.
4. The reasons for Abraham Lincoln's victory in 1860 and the effect of his election on the sectional crisis.
5. The reasons all attempts to reach a compromise in the time-honored way failed in 1860 and 1861.
6. The unique problems faced by newly inaugurated President Lincoln, and his use of executive powers to solve them up to July 4, 1861.
7. The many interpretations of the causes of the Civil War advanced by historians.