

The Secession of South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana and Texas, and the Creation of the Confederate States of America

by Gene Kizer, Jr.

For the South, 1861 was 1776 all over. The most widely quoted phrase of the secession debate in the South in the year before South Carolina seceded and got things going came from the Declaration of Independence:

Governments are instituted among Men,
deriving their just powers from the consent of
the governed, That whenever any Form of
Government becomes destructive of these ends,
it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish
it, and to institute new Government, laying its
foundation on such principles and organizing its
powers in such form, as to them shall seem most
likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

Southern leaders referred back to the Founding Fathers constantly and quoted them profusely. They had been proud of their country and government. Remember, a Southern man was author of the Declaration of Independence (Thomas Jefferson), Father of the Constitution (James Madison), military leader of the Revolution and first president who was proclaimed by Congress upon his death to be "First in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen" (George Washington).

At the end of the Revolutionary War, each state was sovereign as acknowledged by King George III and Great Britain. The colonies were now countries like any country in Europe. They banded together for common defense and to facilitate trade but did not give up their sovereignty. The Constitution gave only restricted power to the federal

government with all other power reserved to the states as the Constitution's 10th Amendment makes crystal clear:

The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people.

The population of the North began growing rapidly as the 1800s began and so did their desire for a stronger federal government that would enable them to control business and taxation and put their own economic interests first. The most astute observer of American democracy in the 19th century, Frenchman Alexis de Tocqueville, in his famous work *Democracy in America*, warned that if one state (or section) became powerful enough to control the government, it would rule in its own interest and make the rest of the country tributary to its wealth and power. He also said that across the world, during this time period, there was much pressure for governments to consolidate.

A consolidated, powerful federal government was not what the Founding Fathers had in mind. The Founding Fathers were highly critical of the concept of the "tyranny of the majority" in which 50% plus one vote could hang the other 49% or impose their will on the other 49%. That's what would happen with one all-powerful government in which special interests would be constantly fighting for control.

The Founding Fathers set up the original American republic with each state supreme, sovereign and in control of its destiny so that the people of each state could govern themselves as they saw fit. This was the kind of democracy and self-government the Founding Fathers intended. The federal government was to be weak, subservient and controlled by the states. The Founding Fathers did not think that one section should be able to tax and make laws for the other sections. That was the issue of the Revolutionary War. Great Britain wanted to tax the Colonies then spend that tax money in other parts of the British Empire.

President George Washington warned that sectional political parties would destroy the country but prominent Republican Wendell Phillips stated clearly that the Republican Party

is the first sectional party ever organized in this country. It does not know its own face, and calls itself national; but it is not national — it is sectional. The Republican Party is a party of the North pledged against the South.

The Republican Party of the North was pledged against the South because it had four times the white voting population of the South and knew if it could rally Northern votes, it could take over the entire country. Numerous special interest groups were brought together under the mis-named anti-slavery umbrella, mis-named because it was not in any sense a pro-black movement. It was mostly political, economic and racist, and should be more accurately called anti-South instead of anti-slavery. Historian Charles P. Roland said "There was a significant economic dimension in the Northern antislavery sentiment" and that "a racial factor contributed to the Northern attitude." He said "Antipathy against slavery often went hand in hand with racism" because

Many Northerners objected to the presence of slavery in their midst, in part, because they objected to the presence of blacks there.

Alexis de Tocqueville noticed the same thing and said "Race prejudice seems stronger in those states that have abolished slavery than in those where it still exists, and nowhere is it more intolerant than in those states where slavery was never known."

Republicans in 1856 and 1860 campaigned on an aggressive economic policy of protectionism for Northern industry with slogans such as "Vote yourself a tariff!" and "Vote yourself a farm!" They supported monopoly status for

Northern manufacturers, which took away free market competition and allowed them to charge the South whatever they wanted for their goods. Something that would cost \$100 on the free market might end up costing Southerners \$400, and all that extra money went right into the pockets of Northern businessmen because of the workings of the federal government.

That was just the tip of the iceberg. There were bounties, subsidies and payments out of the federal treasury for Northern businesses, and monopoly status for Northern shipping with accompanying high rates, though most of that shipping was Southern cotton. King Cotton alone was 60% of U.S. exports in 1860.

The Northern majority had fixed an oppressive tariff system on the South that caused the South to pay 3/4ths of the country's taxes, yet 3/4ths of the tax money was spent in the North. Georgia Sen. Robert Toombs said there were

bounties and protection to every interest and every pursuit in the North, to the extent of at least fifty millions per annum, besides the expenditure of at least sixty millions out of every seventy of the public expenditure among them, thus making the treasury a perpetual fertilizing stream to them and their industry, and a suction-pump to drain away our substance and parch up our lands.

One of the two major documents to come out of South Carolina's secession convention in December, 1860 was *The Address of the People of South Carolina, Assembled in Convention, to the People of the Slaveholding States of the United States*, and it said in part:

The Revolution of 1776 turned upon one great principle, self-government — and self-taxation, the criterion of self-government. . . . The Southern States now stand exactly in the same

position toward the Northern States that the Colonies did towards Great Britain. The Northern States, having the majority in Congress, claim the same power of omnipotence in legislation as the British Parliament. . . . The people of the Southern States are not only taxed for the benefit of the Northern States, but after the taxes are collected, three-fourths of them are expended at the North. . . . No man can, for a moment, believe that our ancestors intended to establish over their posterity, exactly the same sort of Government they had overthrown.

The economic issues were huge but even bigger was terrorist John Brown's raid at Harper's Ferry not long after he had hacked several innocent pro-South people to death in Kansas. Brown was financed and encouraged in the North, then celebrated as a hero after he was hanged. Two of his sons escaped and were protected in Ohio and Iowa though wanted for murder in Virginia. This violated the Constitution. They should have been extradited to Virginia to stand trial for murder. Southerners lost all faith that the North would ever abide by the Constitution.

Worse was Hinton Helper's book, *The Impending Crisis of the South*, which called for violent slave insurrections in which the throats of Southerners would be cut. The Republican Party adopted it as a campaign document and printed hundreds of thousands of copies and distributed them to every corner of the country. President James Buchanan, president before Lincoln, blamed this Republican hate and fanaticism for causing the war.

Southerners were not going to allow people who hated them to rule over them. When Abraham Lincoln was elected by a Northern sectional minority with the second lowest popular vote total in American history (39.7%), the South Carolina legislature called for the election of delegates to a Convention of the People and on December 20, 1860, that convention voted 169 - 0 to secede from the Union. The new

Republic of South Carolina was the catalyst for the secession of six more states over the next two months and the formation of a new nation, the Confederate States of America.

Here are the dates and votes of the seven deep South states making up the new Confederacy:

1. South Carolina, December 20, 1860, 169-0.
2. Mississippi, January 9, 1861, 84-15.
3. Florida, January 10, 1861, 62-7.
4. Alabama, January 11, 1861, 61-39.
5. Georgia, January 19, 1861, 208-89.
6. Louisiana, January 26, 1861, 113-17.
7. Texas, February 1, 1861, 166-8.

The first session of the Provisional Confederate Congress met on February 4, 1861 in Montgomery, Alabama.

On February 8, 1861 they adopted the Provisional Confederate Constitution. It was similar to the U.S. Constitution but strengthened States' Rights and made improvements to solve the contentious issues of the antebellum era. Slavery was not required under the Confederate Constitution. To have slavery or not have it was up to each individual state. Southerners anticipated that many free states would join the Confederacy because of its economic policies and this worried Abraham Lincoln greatly. Oppressive protective tariffs were unconstitutional in the South.

On February 9, 1861 Jefferson Davis was elected unanimously as provisional president of the Confederate States of America. He was a former senator from Mississippi, had graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, had fought in the Mexican War and had been U.S. Secretary of War from 1853 to 1857. Georgia's Alexander Stephens, "Little Alec," was also elected unanimously, as vice-president.

Deo Vindice!

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The Irrefutable Argument.*

Slavery

Was Not the Cause of the War Between the States

The Irrefutable Argument.



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Charles W. Ramsdell

GENE KIZER, Jr.

This book proves beyond the shadow of a doubt that the North did not go to war to free the slaves or end slavery.

The North went to war because it faced economic annihilation and a Southern competitor that controlled the most demanded commodity on earth: cotton. The North's economy was based mostly on manufacturing for the South and shipping Southern cotton around the world. Cotton alone was 60% of U.S. exports in 1860. When the South seceded, the Northern economy began a dramatic collapse, and by war time, there were hundreds of thousands of hungry, unemployed Northerners in the street — and the "tocsin of war" sounded.

Economically ignorant Northern leaders then passed the astronomical Morrill Tariff that threatened to destroy the Northern shipping industry by rerouting trade away from the high-tariff North and into the low-tariff South. The Morrill Tariff was like pumping gasoline into an already raging fire.

Abraham Lincoln was the first sectional president in American history. He was president of the North, and the North was clamoring for war. He saw an opportunity to start it without appearing to be the aggressor, so he took it. Thus, he started a war that killed 800,000 men and wounded a million.

The idea that the good North was so outraged over slavery that they marched armies into the South to free the slaves is an absurdity of biblical proportions and this book proves it.

Gene Kizer, Jr. graduated magna cum laude from the College of Charleston in 2000 at middle age with History Departmental Honors and the highest award for the History Department, the Outstanding Student Award. He won the Rebecca Motte American History Award the year before. He is author of *The Elements of Academic Success, How to Graduate Magna Cum Laude from College (or how to just graduate, PERIOD!)*, and *Charleston, SC Short Stories, Book One*. He lives on James Island in Charleston where he is also broker-in-charge of Charleston Saltwater Realty.