

DOCUMENT A.

I do not, then, hesitate to avow before this House and the country, and in the presence of the living God, that if by your legislation you [northerners] seek to drive us from the territories of California and New Mexico, purchased by the common blood and treasure of the whole people, and to abolish slavery in this District [Washington, D.C.] thereby attempting to fix national degradation upon half the states of this Confederacy, I am for disunion. And if my physical courage be equal to the maintenance of my convictions or right and duty, I will devote all I am and all I have on earth to its consummation.

Congressman Robert Toombs of Georgia,
Response on the floor of the House to northern efforts
to keep slavery out of the territories, December 13, 1849

DOCUMENT B.

Sir, there are those abolition societies, of which I am unwilling to speak, but in regard to which I have very clear notions and opinions. I do not think them useful. I think their operations of the last twenty years have produced nothing good or valuable.

I do not mean to impute gross motives even to the leaders of these societies, but I am not blind to the consequences. I cannot but see what mischiefs their interference with the South has produced. . . .

These abolition societies commenced their course of action in 1835. It is said—I do not know how true it may be—that they sent incendiary publications into the slave states. At any event, they attempted to arouse, and did arouse, a very strong feeling. In other words, they created great agitation in the North against Southern slavery.

Daniel Webster,
Speech in the Senate supporting the
Compromise of 1850, March 7, 1850

DOCUMENT C.

Tom spoke in a mild voice, but with a decision that could not be mistaken. Legree shook with anger; his greenish eyes glared fiercely, and his very whiskers seemed to curl with passion. But, like some ferocious beast, that plays with its victim before he devours it, he kept back his strong impulse to proceed to immediate violence, and broke into bitter raillery.

"Well, here's a pious dog, at last, let down among us sinners!—a saint, a gentleman, and no less, to talk to us sinners about our sins! Powerful holy crittur, he must be! Here, you rascal, you make to believe to be so pious—didn't you never hear, out of yer Bible, 'Servants, obey yer masters'? An't I yer master? Didn't I pay down twelve hundred dollars, cash, for all there is inside yer old cussed black shell? An't yer mine now body and soul?" he said, giving Tom a violent kick with his heavy boot; "tell me!"

In the very depth of physical suffering, bowed by brutal oppression, this question shot a gleam of joy and triumph through Tom's soul. He suddenly stretched himself up, and looking earnestly to heaven, while the tears and blood that flowed down his face mingled, he exclaimed,

"No! no! my soul an't yours, Mas'r! You haven't bought it—ye can't buy it! It's been bought and paid for by One that is able to keep it. No matter, no matter, you can't harm me!"

"I can't!" said Legree, with a sneer, "we'll see—we'll see! Here, Sambo, Qimbo, give this dog such a breakin' in as he won't get over this month!"

Harriet Beecher Stowe,
Uncle Tom's Cabin, 1852

DOCUMENT D.

Why . . . can we not withdraw this vexed question from politics? Why can we not adopt the principle of this bill as a rule of action in all new territorial organizations? Why can we not deprive these agitators of their vocation, and render it impossible for senators to come here upon bargains on the slavery question? . . . leave the people, under the Constitution, to do as they may see proper in respect to their own internal affairs. . . . The bill does equal and exact justice to the whole Union, and every part of it; it violates the rights of no state or territory . . . and leaves the people thereof to the free enjoyment of all their rights.

Speech of Stephen Douglas
defending the Kansas-Nebraska Act, 1854

DOCUMENT E.

Party Strength in Congress, 1849-1861

	Senate			House		
	Majority Party	Principal Minority Party	Other	Majority Party	Principal Minority Party	Other
1849-1851	D 35	W 25	2	D 112	W 109	9
1851-1853	D 35	W 24	3	D 140	W 88	5
1853-1855	D 38	W 22	2	D 159	W 71	4
1855-1857	D 40	R 15	5	R 108	D 83	43
1857-1859	D 36	R 20	8	D 118	R 92	26
1859-1861	D 36	R 26	4	R 114	D 92	31

D Democrat W Whig R Republican

U.S. Government Printing Office,
Historical Statistics of the United States, 1973

DOCUMENT F.

"A house divided against itself can not stand." I believe this Government can not endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved—I do not expect the house to fall—but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing, or all the other. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction; or its advocates will push it forward till it shall become alike lawful in all the States, old as well as new, North as well as South.

Abraham Lincoln,
Speech at the Republican state convention,
Springfield, Illinois, June 17, 1858

DOCUMENT G.

In my opinion our government can endure forever, divided into free and slave States as our fathers made it,—each State having the

right to prohibit, abolish, or sustain slavery, just as it pleases. This government was made upon the great basis of the sovereignty of the states, the right of each State to regulate its own domestic institutions to suit itself; and that right was conferred with the understanding and expectation that, inasmuch as each locality had separate interests, each locality must have different and distinct local and domestic institutions, corresponding to its wants and interests. Our fathers knew, when they made the government, that the laws and institutions which were well adapted to the green mountains of Vermont, were unsuited to the rice plantations of South Carolina.

Stephen Douglas,
Speech at Alton, Illinois, October 15, 1858

DOCUMENT H.

If John Brown did not end the war that ended slavery, he did, at least, begin the war that ended slavery. . . .
The irrepressible conflict was one of words, votes, and compromises. When John Brown stretched forth his arm the sky was cleared . . . and the clash of arms was at hand.

Frederick Douglass,
Speech at Storer College,
Harpers Ferry, Virginia, May, 1882

DOCUMENT I.

We affirm that these ends for which this government was instituted have been defeated and the Government itself has been destructive of them by the action of the non-slaveholding States. Those states have assumed the right of deciding upon the propriety of our domestic institutions; and have denied the rights of property established in fifteen of the states and recognized by the Constitution; they have denounced as sinful the institution of slavery; they have permitted the open establishment among them of societies, whose avowed object is to disturb the peace of and eloign [take away] the property of the citizens of other States. They have encouraged and assisted thousands of our slaves to leave their homes; and those who remain, have been incited by emissaries, books, and pictures, to servile insurrection.

For twenty-five years this agitation has been steadily increasing, until it has now secured to its aid the power of the common Government. Observing the forms of the Constitution, a sectional party has found within that article establishing the Executive Department, the

means of subverting the Constitution itself. A geographical line has been drawn across the Union, and all the States north of that line have united in the election of a man to the high office of President of the United States whose opinions and purposes are hostile to slavery. He is to be entrusted with the administration of the common Government, because he has declared that "Government can not endure permanently half slave [and] half free," and that the public mind must rest in the belief that slavery is in the course of ultimate extinction.

A Declaration of the Causes Which Induced
the Secession of South Carolina,
Charleston, South Carolina, December 24, 1860