

Towards Secession

By the 1840s, North and South were building very different societies, cultures, and economies. Southerners became more dependent on and attached to slavery, while northerners began to question its morality and its role in national politics. As the nation expanded west across the continent, the question of whether the new territories should allow slavery led to open conflict. In the South, those who spoke out against slavery were now shouted down and threatened with violence.

In this chapter, we'll examine the events of the 1840s and 1850s that led the South to secession and the nation to civil war. We'll also read the words of two white North Carolinians who opposed slavery, and we'll learn what happened to them as a result.

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- Primary Source: Benjamin Hedrick
- Primary Source: UNC Dismisses Benjamin Hedrick
- Primary Source: The Impending Crisis of the South
- Primary Source: Furor Over Hinton Helper's Book
- The Election of 1860

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"Bleeding Kansas" was one in a series of events that tore the nation apart in the 1850s. *Tragic Prelude*, oil painting. ^[1]

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