

# HOW AND WHY ABRAHAM LINCOLN STARTED THE WAR OF NORTHERN AGGRESSION TO PROTECT HIS OWN POLITICAL CAREER

by Frank Conner



The following is a post by Compatriot Elijah Coleman and is for educational purposes only:

To justify their claims that our Confederate ancestors were like Nazi concentration-camp guards -- and therefore that all Confederate symbols must now be obliterated, the civil-rights activists argue as follows: the Southern states rebelled against the Union, and started and fought the "Civil War" to protect the unspeakably-evil institution of slavery.

Those are blatant lies, and it is very important for all Southerners to know that. But because the North won the war, you have to look very hard to find the books which tell the truth. John S. Tilley's "Lincoln Takes Command" and Ludwell Johnson's "North Against South" are two such books.

I took most of the material below from those books several days ago, to refute a claim in the SCV list server that Lincoln couldn't have been THAT bad a person. Well, he was.

The North's Republican party came out of nowhere in 1854, formed from the wreckage of the Whig party (the Northern Conscience-Whigs), and from the Free-Soilers and the Know-Nothings. It opposed slavery, and it demanded a powerful national-government which would subsidize Northern industrialization. The new Republican party grew very rapidly. Not surprisingly, its key bankrollers were Northern capitalists -- financiers, shippers, industrialists, etc. Two of its founders and strongest political-leaders were Salmon P. Chase (first a senator and then a governor); and William H. Seward (also a governor and a senator).

There were two factors about the election of 1860 which disturbed the Southerners so badly that Southern states subsequently seceded. First was the Republican-party

platform for 1860. Basically, the Northern capitalists wanted the U.S. government to tax (only) the South deeply, to finance the industrialization of the North, and the necessary transportation-net to support that. In those days, there was no income tax. The federal government received most of its revenue from tariffs (taxes) on imported goods. The Southern states imported from England most of the manufactured goods they used, thus paid most of the taxes to support the federal government. (The Northerners imported very little.) In 1860, for example, just four Southern-states paid in 50% of the total tariffs.

In 1860, the averaged tariff-rate was 18.84%; the Republicans spread the word that they were shooting for 40% -- which could bankrupt many Southerners and would make life much harder for most of them. The Republican platform included a transcontinental railroad (following a Northern route); extensive internal-improvements to extend the transportation net for the Northern manufacturers; a homestead act which would eliminate the only other important source of federal funding, etc.

Second, if the Republicans somehow managed to gain control of Congress AND the White House, they would then be able to use the federal government to enact and enforce their party platform -- and thus convert the prosperous Southern-states into the dirt-poor agricultural colonies of the Northern capitalists. And given the trends in demographics, the Southern states would never be able to reverse that process. The intent of the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution would then have been subverted completely: the Southern states would no longer be governed with the consent of the governed -- but instead bullied mercilessly by the Northern majority. Why, then, remain in the Union?

Came the election.

At the 1860 Republican convention in Chicago, Chase and Seward were the favored candidates. Lincoln was a dark horse. In national politics, he had served only in the House, and only for one two-year term --1847-49: he had left Congress 11 years earlier! Lincoln had only three things going for him: he was considered a political lightweight, who could easily be manipulated by the power brokers; he himself was from Illinois, so the convention hall was located on his own stomping-grounds; and both he and his campaign manager -- David E. Davis -- were extraordinarily-adroit politicians.

In 1860 the vast majority of the Republicans did not want war. But the relatively-mild Seward had earlier coined several phrases which led many to believe mistakenly that he was a warmonger. And if Seward might possibly lead the country into war, the hot-head Chase would probably do so. Lincoln the unknown murmured soothing words of peace -- which went down well. Meanwhile, he and Davis manipulated that convention behind the scenes in ways that would make today's dirty-tricks advocates turn green with envy. Consequently, Lincoln won the Republican nomination.

Meanwhile, the numerically-far-stronger national Democratic-party was busy self-destructing over the issue of slavery. So when the 1860 election-returns came in, it turned

out that the Republicans had won the White House, and substantial majorities in the House and the Senate. When that message sank in, Southern states began seceding from the Union -- beginning with South Carolina on 20 December 1860. Several of them said that the main issue was the protection of slavery, but that was strictly for local consumption by people who did their thinking solely in terms of simple slogans. The Southern legislators could do their math; thus they knew full well that the only truly-safe way to protect the institution of slavery would be for the Southern states to remain in the Union and simply refuse to ratify any proposed constitutional-amendment to emancipate the slaves. For slavery was specifically protected by the Constitution, and that protection could be removed only by an amendment ratified by three-quarters of the states. In 1860 there were 15 slave states and 18 free states. Had the number of slave states remained constant, 27 more free states would have had to be admitted into the Union -- for a total of 60 states -- before an abolition amendment could be ratified. That was not likely to occur anytime soon. But with the Southern states seceding, the issue of slavery could then be settled by force of arms at any time.

After the Republicans gained control of the presidency and the Congress, eleven Southern states eventually seceded from the Union -- specifically to avoid becoming the helpless agricultural-colonies of the Northern capitalists. This move took the Northern capitalists completely by surprise. The South was like the little boy who was forever crying "wolf." Southern states had been threatening to secede ever since the Tariff of Abominations and the days of Calhoun; the North no longer took those threats seriously. But with the South now gone, there would be no federal funding to industrialize the North -- for the Northern citizenry would certainly never agree to be taxed to pay for it. And far worse than that, the many, many Northern-capitalists who had been earning fortunes factoring the Southern cotton-crop, transporting the cotton, and buying the cotton for New England textile-mills now faced financial ruin. The South normally bought its manufactured goods from Britain, anyway. Now, as a sovereign nation, the South could easily cut far better deals with the British financiers, ship owners, and textile mills to supply the South with all of the necessary support-services--leaving the Northern capitalists out in the cold.

This was all Lincoln's fault! If he hadn't been elected, the South wouldn't have seceded; and the Northern capitalists would not now be in this mess.

So as President-elect Lincoln prepared to take office, he was in a world of hurt. He had the trappings of office--but not the power base to support him safely in office against the slings and arrows of his outrageous political-enemies. Both Seward and Chase had well-established power bases (financial backers, newspapers, magazines, personal political-organizations, etc.); both of them wanted Lincoln's job; both of them merely awaited the first opportunity to spring a political trap on him, subject him to deadly ridicule, and thereafter cut him off at the knees. Given time, Lincoln -- who, after all, did occupy the presidency -- could weld together a formidable power base of his own; but right at the beginning of his term he was perilously vulnerable. He MUST now have the support of the Northern capitalists.

Lincoln was a Whig masquerading as a Republican, because that was now the only game in town. He didn't care anything about the slavery issue; he preferred to temporize with the abolitionists. But he couldn't temporize with the Northern capitalists. He would have to drag the South back into the Union immediately, or he'd (figuratively) be shot out of the saddle and discredited very quickly; then Seward or Chase would really be running the country; and Lincoln could forget all about being reelected in 1864. That was unthinkable. But there was no way Lincoln or anyone else from the Republican party could possibly talk the Southern states back into the Union at this stage of the game; so he would have to conquer them in war. (He assumed it would be a 90-day war, which the Union Army would win in one battle.)

If you read Lincoln's first inaugural-address with any care at all, you'll see that it was simply a declaration of war against the South. It was also filled with lies and specious reasoning. In 1860, the official government-charter for the U.S. was the U.S. Constitution. In writing it, the delegates to the Constitutional Convention of 1787 (some of the most-canny politicians in the country) had pointedly omitted from it the "perpetual union" clause which had been a main feature of the unworkable Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union, the U.S.-government charter adopted only six years earlier in 1781. Under the Articles, no state could secede lawfully unless all states seceded simultaneously. But the Constitution -- which Lincoln had just taken an oath to uphold -- did not contain that clause (or any other like it); so any state could secede lawfully at any time. The South did secede lawfully. Honest Abe flat-out lied when he said that was not so; and he subsequently used his blatant lie to slaughter 623,000 Americans and Confederates eventually -- in order to perpetuate himself in political office.

Lincoln needed an excuse to start his war of aggression, because Congress did not want war and would not declare war of its own volition. The most likely hot-spot in which Lincoln could start his war was Charleston Harbor, where shots had already been fired in anger under the Buchanan administration. But the newly-elected governor of South Carolina, Francis Pickens, saw the danger--that Lincoln might, as an excuse, send a force of U.S. Navy warships to Charleston Harbor supposedly to resupply Maj Anderson's Union force holed up in Fort Sumter. So Gov Pickens opened negotiations with Maj Anderson, and concluded a deal permitting Anderson to send boats safely to the market in Charleston once a week, where Anderson's men would be allowed to buy whatever victuals they wished. (This arrangement remained in effect until a day or so before the U.S. Navy warships arrived at Charleston). Maj Anderson wrote privately to friends, saying that he hoped Lincoln would not use Fort Sumter as the excuse to start a war, by sending the U.S. Navy to resupply it.

Before his inauguration, Lincoln sent a secret message to Gen Winfield Scott, the U.S. general-in-chief, asking him to make preparations to relieve the Union forts in the South soon after Lincoln took office. Lincoln knew all along what he was going to do. President Jefferson Davis sent peace commissioners to Washington to negotiate a treaty with the Lincoln administration. Lincoln refused to meet with them; and he refused to permit

Secretary of State Seward to meet with them. After Lincoln assumed the presidency, his principal generals recommended the immediate evacuation of Maj Anderson's men from Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor--which was now located on foreign soil. To resupply it by force at this point would be a deliberate act-of-war against the C.S.A.

It turned out that Lincoln's postmaster general, Montgomery Blair, had a brother-in law, Gustavus V. Fox, who was a retired Navy-captain, and wanted to get back into action. Fox had come up with a plan for resupplying Fort Sumter which would force the Confederates to fire the first shots -- under circumstances which would force them to take the blame for the war. Lincoln sent Fox down to talk with Maj Anderson about the plan, but Anderson wanted no part of it. Lincoln had Fox pitch the plan to his Cabinet twice. The first time, the majority said that move would start a war. But the second time, the Cabinet members got Lincoln's pointed message, and capitulated. Meanwhile, Congress got wind of the plan. Horrified, they called Gen Scott and others to testify about it; Scott and the other witnesses said they wanted no part of the move against the Confederacy in Charleston (and nor did Congress). Congress demanded from Lincoln -- as was Congress's right -- Fox's report on Maj Anderson's reaction to the plan. Lincoln flatly refused to hand it over to them.

Lincoln sent to Secretary Cameron (for transmittal to Secretary Welles) orders in his own handwriting (!) to make the warships Pocahontas and Pawnee and the armed-cutter Harriet Lane ready for sailing, along with the passenger ship Baltic -- which would be used as a troop ship, and two ocean-going tugboats to aid the ships in traversing the tricky shallow harbor-entrance at Charleston. Fox's plan was to send 500 extra Union-soldiers to reinforce Maj Anderson's approximately-86-man force at Fort Sumter -- along with huge quantities of munitions, food, and other supplies. The Confederacy would, of course, resist this invasion--in the process firing upon the U.S. flag. The unarmed tugs would, of necessity, enter the harbor first, whereupon they would likely be fired upon by the C.S.A., giving Lincoln the best-possible propaganda to feed to the Northern newspapers, which would then rally the North to his "cause." Lincoln sent orders for the Union naval-force to begin its journey so as to enter Charleston Harbor on 11 or 12 April. Next, Lincoln sent a courier to deliver an ultimatum to Gov Pickens on 8 April, saying that Lincoln intended to resupply Fort Sumter peaceably or by force. There was no mistaking the intent of that message.

Lincoln had set the perfect trap. He had given President Davis just enough time to amass his forces and fire upon the U.S. Navy. But if Davis acquiesced instead, Lincoln need merely begin sending expeditionary forces to recapture all of the former Union-forts in the South now occupied by Confederate forces; sooner or later Davis would have to fight; and the more forts he allowed Lincoln to recapture in the interim, the weaker would be the military position of the C.S.A. As a practical matter, Davis was left with no choice.

Accordingly, the C.S.A., informed that the U.S. Navy was en route, demanded that Maj Anderson surrender the fort forthwith. Anderson refused; Beauregard's artillery bombarded Fort Sumter into junk (miraculously without loss of life inside); and Anderson

then surrendered with honor intact. The U.S. Navy arrived during the bombardment -- but because elements of the force had been delayed for various reasons, did not join in the fight. The Navy was allowed to transport Anderson's men back to the U.S. Thereafter Lincoln wrote to Fox, pronouncing the mission a great success.

Lincoln ended his letter by saying, "You and I both anticipated that the cause of the country would be advanced by making the attempt to provision Fort Sumter, even if it should fail; and it is no small consolation now to feel that our anticipation is justified by the result."

Folks, that ought to be plain enough for anybody to understand.

Now Lincoln had his excuse for a war (assuming that he continued to lie his head off about it -- which he did); but there was no reason for him to believe that Congress would declare war against the South on his say-so. In fact, there was every indication that they would not. So instead of calling Congress into emergency session and asking them to declare war (which was their prerogative, and not Lincoln's), Lincoln simply declared war himself -- by calling the C.S.A.'s defense of its sovereignty in Charleston Harbor an "insurrection" against the U.S. government. Lincoln did not call Congress into session until several months later -- when his war had progressed so far that Congress could not then call it off, but as a practical matter would have to rubber stamp it.

So Lincoln started the war virtually single-handed. Without vulnerable dark-horse Abraham Lincoln assuming the presidency in 1861, I do not believe we would have had a war. Nobody wanted one except Lincoln and a few rabid-abolitionists and some Northern-capitalists whose fortunes were threatened. I consider Lincoln a megalomaniacal sociopath whose like we have not yet seen -- and I pray we never will see.

For anyone who wishes confirmation of what I have said -- and to learn the important details, please read John S. Tilley's "Lincoln Takes Command," and Ludwell Johnson's "North Against South/An American Iliad." Both authors have a number of other major surprises in store for you in those books. Both books are available now from Confederate booksellers.

For those who (for shame!) do not at present patronize Confederate booksellers, Tilley's book is currently published by Bill Coats, Ltd. in Nashville (in 1991); and Johnson's by The Foundation for American Education, P.O. Box 11851, Columbia, SC 29211 (in 1995). Your local bookseller should be able to order a copy for you.

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