Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum
PresidentLincoln.org

Confederate Confiscations: A Digital Exhibit

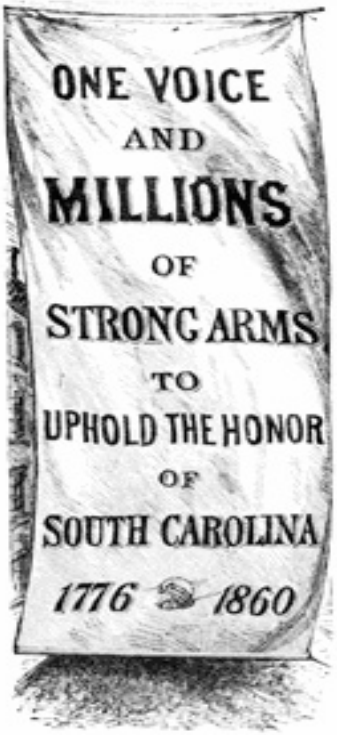
Grade Level: 6–12

Illinois Learning Standards:
16A, Stage F; 16B, Stage F; 16 A, Stage G; 16 B, Stage G; 16D, Stage G; 16 A, Stage H; 16A, Stage I; 16B, Stage I; 16D, Stage I

Objectives:
- Gain familiarity with primary source documents
- Develop analytical skills while interpreting historical events
- Accurately access electronic historical records
- Recognize chronology of secession movement
- Gain awareness of multiple historic interpretations
- Develop exhibit preparation skills/strategies

Materials Needed:
List of federal property confiscated by the Confederacy included in this lesson
Computer with Internet access
Computer with PowerPoint, Prezi or other presentation software applications

Background:
When Abraham Lincoln was elected president on November 6, 1860 the widespread fear among people of the South that he would abolish slavery was very real. Initially, Lincoln never said he wanted to abolish slavery but continually said he wanted to contain its growth by limiting it to areas where it already existed. Anxious that their way of life would be changed, southerners debated what their reaction would be if Lincoln won the presidency, even though many believed secession was illegal and wrong. Meeting in state conventions, many southerners claimed they had the right to secede peacefully, while most northerners believed secession amounted to confrontational and warlike talk. Anticipating conflict, communities throughout the South organized additional vigilant committees, minutemen and home guards which actively drilled and advocated secession while intimidating those who did not hold the same opinion.



On December 20, 1860, South Carolina became the first state to secede issuing an Ordinance of Secession stating:

"We, the people of the State of South Carolina in convention assembled, do declare and ordain, ... that the Union now substituting between South Carolina and other seceding states' under the name of 'the United States of America,' is hereby dissolved."

After the Ordinance of Secession was issued, most federal officials in South Carolina, including tax collectors and judges, resigned their positions. South Carolina officials (and subsequently other seceding states' officials) acted quickly to confiscate federal property in the state. Influenced by secession sympathizers in his cabinet, Lincoln's predecessor, President James Buchanan, failed to reinforce the federal forts in the South, leading to difficulty in defending them and leaving them vulnerable to attack.

One month after Lincoln's election, Southern state authorities, meeting little resistance from lame duck President Buchanan, began seizing federal property within their boundaries. Seizures included forts, lighthouses, mints, post offices, ships and arsenals. The confiscation of federal assets helped to solidify the public's ambivalent position toward secession in both the North and South, getting people "off the fence." Faced with millions of dollars in lost revenue and impeded mail service, northerners felt a sense of betrayal; many southerners, once secession was declared in their states, felt they had no choice but to support it. Buchanan blamed the secession crisis on Northern abolitionists and publically denied the constitutional right of states to secede, but also took the position that the federal government had no power to prevent the secession.

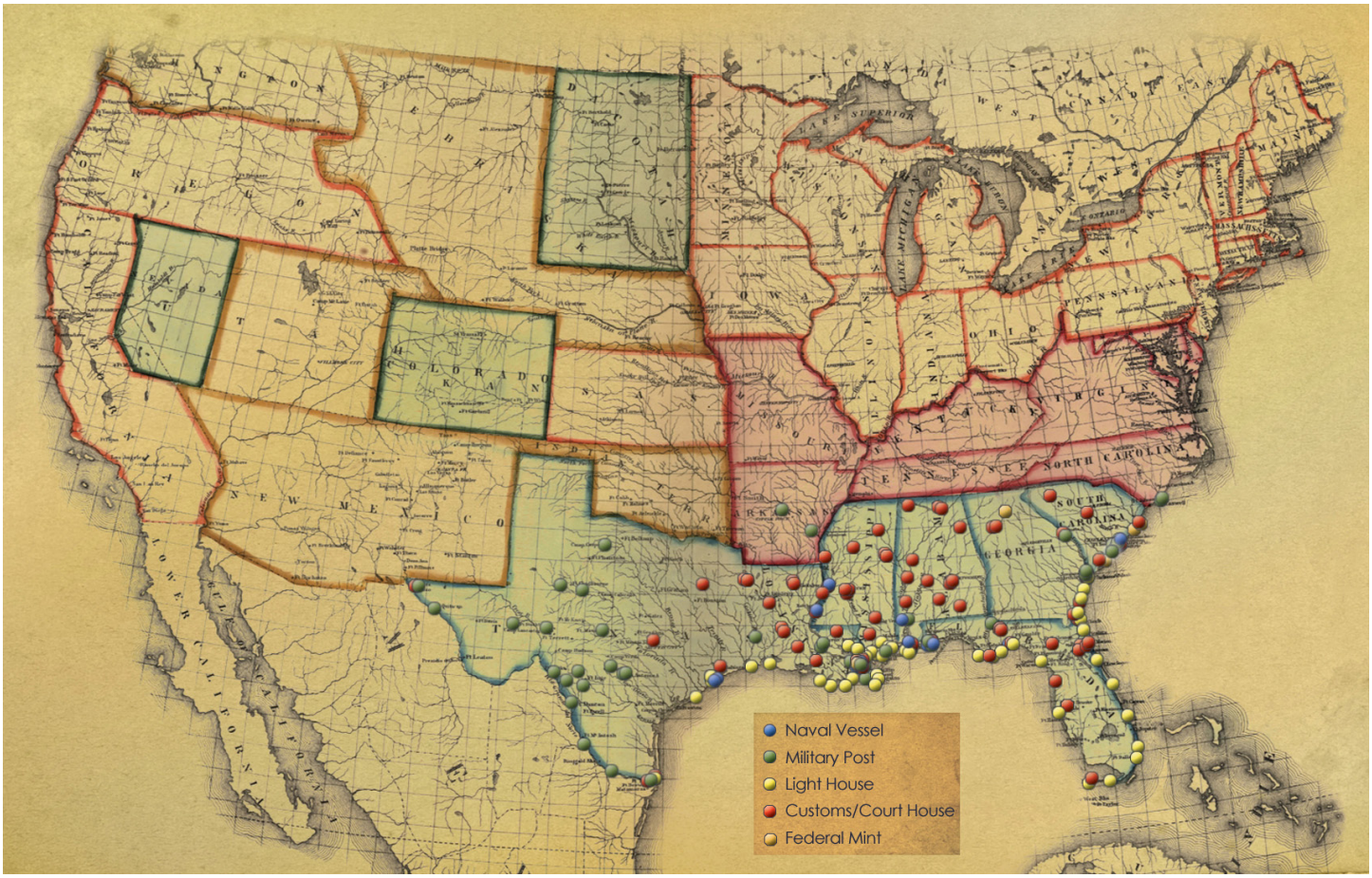
By February 1, 1861, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas had followed South Carolina out of the Union. Days later, representatives from the initial seven seceded states met in Montgomery, Alabama and created a Confederate Constitution that stressed state autonomy. After the attack at Fort Sumter, Virginia, Arkansas, North Carolina, and Tennessee also severed their ties to the Union and joined the Confederacy.

Activity Procedure:
Develop a digital exhibit on the South's seizure of federal property between Abraham Lincoln's election on November 6, 1860 through the secession of Tennessee on June 8, 1861.

- Refer to the list of Confederate seizures included in this activity.
- Assign each student one federal installation/property seized by state authorities.
- Exhibit should include the following:
    - Historic map/diagram of the state
    - Detailed map/diagram of the area where property was located
    - Illustration/photograph of site
    - History of installation and its purpose
    - Statement of what made this site important or valuable

- General description of the seizure including who, what, when, where, why, and how
- Copies/excerpts of orders/reports/letters of seizure in *The Official Records of the War of the Rebellion*, Volume 1. 1880. (vol. 1, Chap. 1-8) accessed at: http://digital.library.cornell.edu/m/moawar/waro.html
- Length of time the Confederates kept control of the facility
- Brief biography of officers/officials involved
- Illustration/photograph of officer/state official involved
- Information about the site's current status
- Period music to enhance exhibit (optional)

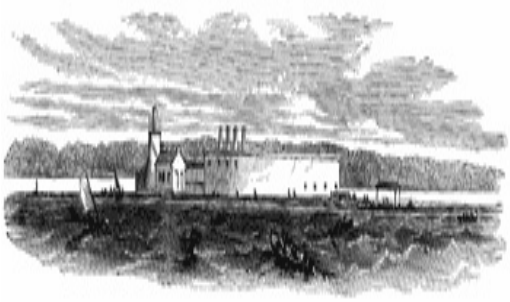
• Students should present digital exhibit to class



The Cost of Secession, a digital map depicting the seizure of federal properties by the South, has been mailed to all Illinois public and private school libraries. Use of this digital map may be used to enhance this lesson plan. The Cost of Secession DVD is available for purchase at the presidential Museum Store or on-line at www.PresidentLincoln.org

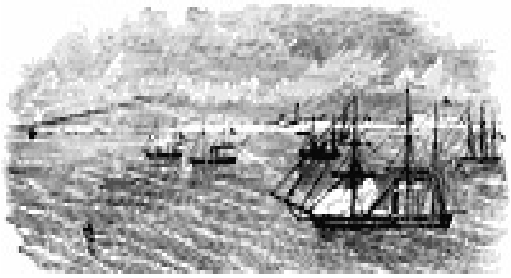
Confederate Confiscations

South Carolina seizures:
Castle Pinckney
Fort Moultrie
United States Arsenal at Charleston
Fort Johnson



Georgia seizures:
Fort Pulaski
United States Arsenal at Augusta
Oglethorpe Barracks
Fort Jackson
Dahlonega Mint

Alabama seizures:
United States Arsenal at Mount Vernon
Fort Morgan
Fort Gaines



Mississippi seizure:
Fort Massachusetts on Ship Island

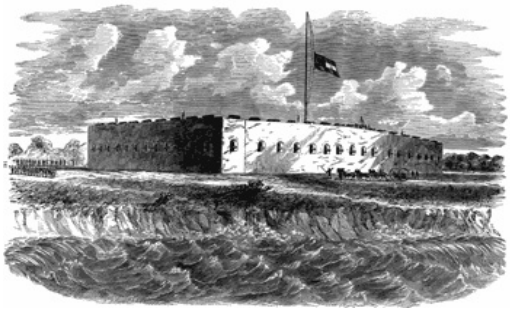
Florida seizures:
United States Arsenal at Apalachicola
Fort Marion
Barrancas Barracks
Fort Barrancas
Fort McRee
Pensacola Navy Yard (Warrington Ship Yard)

North Carolina seizures:
Fort Johnston
Fort Caswell
Fort Macon
United States Arsenal at Fayetteville
Charlotte Mint

Louisiana seizures:
United States Arsenal at Baton Rouge
Baton Rouge Barrack
Fort Jackson
Fort Saint Philip
Fort Pike
Fort Macomb
United States paymaster's office at New Orleans
New Orleans Mint

Texas seizures:
United States Arsenal at San Antonio
San Antonio Barracks
Camp Verde
Fort Clark

Arkansas seizures:
United States Arsenal at Little Rock
United States ordnance stores at Napoleon
United States subsistence stores at Pine Bluff
Fort Smith



Missouri seizures:
United States Arsenal at Liberty
United States ordnance stores at Kansas City