

# GO TO THE SOURCE!

## Observe

1. What reason or "object" does Stephens give for his speech?
2. According to Stephens, what is Georgia "pledged" to do?
3. What does Stephens say he will do if Georgia decides to secede?
4. What does he think is "the greatest curse that can befall a free people"?
5. What reasons does the Ordinance give for seceding?

## Evaluate

6. Why did Stephens believe Georgia would be in the wrong if it chose to secede? How did he think Georgia should react to Lincoln's election?
7. Why does the Ordinance mention "the last ten years"?
8. How does the Ordinance characterize the Republican Party?
9. Why do you think the Ordinance mentions the word "equality" at the end?
10. What role does the Constitution and/or the Founding play in each argument?

## Conclude

11. What connections do you make between these documents and Stephens's Cornerstone Speech on page 224?
12. In your opinion, why did Georgia ignore the wishes of Stephens and secede?

## Two Sides of Secession

Immediately following the election of Abraham Lincoln, Southern states addressed the issue of secession. Georgia's leaders gathered in Milledgeville to discuss the possibility. Many believed that Lincoln's election would lead to the end of slavery in the United States. First to address the legislature was Alexander Stephens, who sought to preserve the Union. Compare this excerpt from Stephens's plea to the excerpt from the Ordinance of Secession two months later.

*Fellow Citizens: I appear before you tonight at the request of Members of the Legislature and others, to speak of matters of the deepest interest that can possibly concern us all, of an earthly character. There is nothing, no question or subject connected with this life, that concerns a free people so intimately as that of the Government under which they live. ... My object is not to stir up strife, but to allay [prevent] it; not to appeal to your passions, but to your reason. ...*

*The first question that presents itself is, shall the people of Georgia secede from the Union in consequence of the election of Mr. Lincoln to the Presidency of the United States? My countrymen, I tell you frankly, candidly, and earnestly, that I do not think that they ought. In my judgment, the election of no man, constitutionally chosen to that high office, is sufficient cause to justify any State to separate from the Union. It ought to stand by and aid still in maintaining the Constitution of the country. To make a point of resistance to the Government, to withdraw from it because any man has been elected, would put us in the wrong. We are pledged to maintain the Constitution. ... Can we ... make a point of resistance to the Government, without becoming the breakers of that sacred instrument ourselves, by withdrawing ourselves from it? Would we not be in the wrong?*

*Should Georgia determine to go out of the Union, I speak for one, though my views might not agree with them, whatever the result may be, I shall bow to the will of her people. Their cause is my cause, and their destiny is my destiny; and I trust this will be the ultimate course of all. The greatest curse that can befall a free people, is civil war.*

—Alexander Stephens' Speech  
to the Georgia Legislature, November 14, 1860

*The people of Georgia having dissolved their political connection with the Government of the United States, present to our confederates and the world the causes which have led to the separation. For the last ten years we have had numerous and serious causes of complaint against our non-slaveholding states ... Recent events have fully dissipated all hopes and demonstrated the necessity of separation. ...*

*The party of Lincoln, called the Republican Party, is of recent origin. It is admitted to be an anti-slavery party ... anti-slavery is its mission and its purpose ... because their avowed purpose is to subvert our society and subject us not only to the loss of property but the destruction of ourselves, our wives, and our children, and the desolation of our homes, our altars, and our firesides. To avoid these evils we resume the powers which our fathers delegated to the Government of the United States and henceforth will seek new safeguards for our liberty, equality, security, and tranquility.*

—Georgia Ordinance of Secession, January 19, 1861

Font Paragraph 15

**8<sup>th</sup> Essay Question: Read the Sources on Pg. 247, then compose an essay using:**

**Paragraph 1 - Question 10**

**Paragraph 2 - Question 11**

**Paragraph 3 - Question 12**

**Each paragraph should cite 1-2 of the sources and be 5-7 sentences long.**