

**COMPARING PRIMARY SOURCES**

## On the Southern Secession

After Abraham Lincoln's election as President in 1860, the nation was abuzz with the prospect of southern secession and possible responses to it. As you read the following passages, try to determine why those in favor of secession believed that the South could survive on its own.

**FOR SECESSION**

*E. B. Heyward, South Carolina cotton planter, letter to a friend in Connecticut, November 20, 1860*

In January next we shall take leave of the Union and shall construct with our Sister Cotton States a government for ourselves. Whether the other Slave States will join seems very uncertain at least for the present. The condition of affairs at the North since the election of an Abolitionist for President makes it necessary for us to get away as quickly as possible. We have on hand about three millions Bales of Cotton and plenty to eat & clothe ourselves with, and what is most important our working population have masters to take care of them and will not feel any pressure such as will soon come upon the operatives in the manufacturing States at the North. Of course we shall declare free trade with the whole world and having no manufactures of our own to protect we shall bring about such a competition with the manufactures of this Country and those of Europe that the profits in such business at the North will be seriously reduced. In the Country here the planters are all quiet and our crops going to market as usual. If there is no money in the banks we can go without it till England and France and perhaps the North send the gold for the cotton which they must have or go all to ruin. I have about 130 Bales of Cotton on my plantation to sell, and about 3000 bushels of corn and one hundred Hogs now fattening for the negroes to eat and their winter clothes I will get in a few days. I have plenty of Beef & mutton to feed my family upon and I think I and all around me could stand hard times better than some of the rich abolitionists of your part of the World.

**FOR SECESSION**

*William Howard Russell, war correspondent for the London Times, observations of the South, 1861*

That night I sat in the Charleston Club with John Manning. . . . There were others present, senators or congressmen, like Mr. Chestnut and Mr. Porcher Miles. We talked long, and at last angrily, as might be between friends, of political affairs.

I own it was a little irritating to me to hear men indulge in extravagant broad menace and rodomontade [bragging], such as came from their lips. . . . "They never could be conquered." . . . I was obliged to handle the question quietly at first—to ask them "if they admitted the French were a brave and warlike people!" "Yes, certainly." "Do you think you could better defend yourselves against invasion than the people of France?" "Well, no; but we'd make it pretty hard business for the Yankees." "Suppose the Yankees, as you call them, come with such preponderance of men and *matériel*, that they are three to your one, will you not be forced to submit?" "Never." "Then either you are braver, better disciplined, more warlike than the people and soldiers of France, or you alone, of all the nations in the world, possess the means of resisting physical laws which prevail in war, as in other affairs of life." "No. The Yankees are cowardly rascals. We have proved it by kicking and cuffing them till we are tired of it; besides, we know John Bull [Great Britain] very well. He will make a great fuss about non-interference at first, but when he begins to want cotton he'll come off his perch." I found this was the fixed idea everywhere. The doctrine of "cotton is king,"—to us who have not much considered the question a grievous delusion or an unmeaning babble—to them is a lively all-powerful faith without distracting heresies or schisms.