**THE REPUBLIC IN CRISIS, 1848–1861**

*The Republic in Crisis, 1848–1861,* analyses the political climate in the years leading up to the Civil War, offering for students and general readers a clear, chronological account of the sectional conflict and the beginning of the Civil War. Emerging from the tumultuous political events of the 1840s and 1850s, the Civil War was caused by the maturing of the separate, distinctive forms of social organisation in the North and South and their resulting ideologies. John Ashworth emphasises factors often overlooked in explanations of the war, including the resistance of slaves in the South and the growth of wage labour in the North. Ashworth acquaints readers with modern writings on the period, providing a new interpretation of the American Civil War's causes.

John Ashworth is Professor of American History at the University of Nottingham in England. He is the author of numerous books, including *Slavery, Capitalism and Politics in the Antebellum Republic* (Cambridge 1995, 2007), the second volume of which won the James A. Rawley award given by the Southern Historical Association.
THE REPUBLIC IN CRISIS,
1848–1861

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Chronology of Events

1619 Arrival of the first African slaves in Virginia.
1776 The American Revolution results in the founding of the United States of America.
1787 Slavery is made illegal in the North West Territory.
1787 The U.S. Constitution states that Congress may not ban the slave trade until 1808. The Constitution also gives some protections to slaveholders, though without mentioning slaves or slavery by name.
1793 Eli Whitney’s invention of a cotton “gin” increases the demand for slave labour.
1800 Gabriel Prosser, an enslaved blacksmith, organises a slave revolt.
1800 Thomas Jefferson, a Republican, defeats John Adams, a Federalist, and wins the presidency.
1808 Congress bans the importation of slaves from Africa.
1800–1820 Gradual disintegration of the Federalist party and thus of the first party system.
1820 The Missouri Compromise bans slavery north of 36° 30’.
1822 Denmark Vesey’s slave revolt in South Carolina.
1828 Election of Andrew Jackson at the head of the party that will become known as the Democratic party.
1831 Nat Turner’s slave revolt in Virginia.
1831 William Lloyd Garrison founds the Liberator, advocating the immediate abolition of slavery.
1833–1834 Formation of the Whig party, which creates the second party system (of Democrats against Whigs).
CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

1846 The Wilmot Proviso attempts to ban slavery in territory gained from Mexico.

1846–1848 War with Mexico.

1850 The Compromise of 1850 admits California into the Union as a free state, decrees that the status of slavery in Utah and New Mexico territories is to be decided by popular sovereignty, outlaws the slave trade in Washington DC, and creates a much more stringent Fugitive Slave law.


1854 Congress passes the Kansas–Nebraska Act, establishing the territories of Kansas and Nebraska and repealing the Missouri Compromise of 1820.

1854 The Know Nothing (or American) party, displaying hostility to immigrants, enters politics and achieves some notable successes.

1854–1856 Collapse of the Whig party.

1856 The newly formed Republican party contests its first presidential election.

1857 The *Dred Scott* ruling from the Supreme Court decrees that Congress does not have the right to ban slavery in the territories and that African Americans are not citizens.

1859 John Brown attempts to launch a slave revolt at Harpers Ferry, Virginia.

1860 The Democratic party splits and nominates two candidates for president: Stephen A. Douglas and John C. Breckinridge.

1860 Election of Abraham Lincoln, a Republican, to the White House.

1860–1861 Between December and February seven states of the Deep South secede to form the Confederate States of America.

April 1861 President Lincoln re-provisions Fort Sumter, prompting the outbreak of the Civil War.
Chronology of Events

April 1861  In a presidential proclamation Lincoln calls for 75,000 troops to put down the rebellion of the southern states.

1861  In April and May, four more states join the Confederacy.

1863  President Lincoln issues the Emancipation Proclamation.

1865  The Civil War ends, Lincoln is assassinated, and the Thirteenth Amendment abolishes slavery.