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**Jamestown Journey: Decision, April
1861 - I**

Lead: The election of Abraham Lincoln in November 1860, set the course of secession, but the decisive decision did not come until April 1861.

Intro.: Dan Roberts and *A Moment in Time with Jamestown - Journey of Democracy*, tracing the global advance of democratic ideals since the founding of Jamestown, Virginia in 1607.

Content: During the 1850s, an increasing number of southern

partisans had come to the conclusion that state sovereignty and the institution of slavery could no longer survive within the Union. The numbers were then beginning to work against the South. The white population of the North was increasing exponentially. Within the South's failsafe institution, the U.S. Senate, the number of senators opposed to the spread of slavery was increasing with the addition of each new territory. When Kansas was at last admitted as a free state after years of turmoil and bloody conflict, the handwriting was on the wall. The election of Abraham Lincoln, a man unreservedly opposed to the spread of slavery, convinced many Southerners, indeed most stubborn that the time

had come to leave.

Soon after the election deep South states in quick succession passed ordinances of secession and gradually set into place the infrastructure of the Confederacy. Much less certain, however, with the intentions of the upper South and border states. The destiny and preservation of the Union depended on the decision of the most national of states, that state whose sons had made possible the Revolution and were instrumental in establishing the national charter. What would Virginia do?

Next time: decision, 1861.

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with its International Conference Series on the Foundations and Future of Democracy, see jamestownjourney.org, at the University of Richmond, this is Dan Roberts.

Resources

Catton, Bruce. *The Coming Fury*. New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1961.

Davis, William C. and James I. Robertson, Jr., eds. *Virginia War: 1861*. Lexington: the University of Kentucky Press, 2005.

A powerful new resource on the Civil War is now available to the listeners of *A Moment in Time*. In 2006 the American Civil War Center opened in the old Tredegar Iron Works near the Canal Walk in downtown Richmond, Virginia. Telling the story from the perspective of Blue, Gray and Black, the center will help visitors see the war as part of a national struggle to define the legacy of the American Revolution and that of the founders. See:

www.tredegar.org.

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