Unit 4 CIVIL WAR Era
Period 5: 1844-1877

Brief Summary
This summary is not meant to replace your reading and study time in your AMSCO guide, and it by no means covers every significant fact from the era… but it will provide a simple overview/review of the era with some important terms in bold as well as some additional information on California not found in your text.

Manifest Destiny, Slavery, and Sectionalism

In a nutshell, **territorial and economic expansion** from 1844 – 1860 (plus the purchase of **Alaska** after the **Civil War**) led to increased **Anglo-American** dominance of **North America**. As this expansion occurred, **sectional tensions** intensified – especially over the issue of **slavery** – which led to **Civil War**. Following the war, **reconstruction** efforts had limited success in reforming social, cultural, and economic structures.

Americans were caught up in **Manifest Destiny** in the 1840's and desired to get as much land as possible (predestined by God?)… Including **Texas, Oregon, Utah, & California**. **California** was the most significant, as **Pacific ports** were needed to develop coveted trade with **Asia**. We eventually reached a peaceful settlement with Britain over possession of **Oregon** despite it not being 54-40 as **Polk** had promised (they just continued the 49 degree line). Expansion westward was motivated by several forces including—land, gold, mining, religious freedom (**Mormons**), ranching, farming, and spirited individualism. Concepts of **white and American superiority** supported the economic forces driving expansion. Expansion led to conflict with **American Indians, Mexicans, Californios,** and some smaller groups as conflict over territory and resources intensified.

Alta California (Mexican California, named Alta to distinguish it from Baja California, had a declining **American Indian** population which was struggling to maintain culture while under supervision of **Spanish missions** and while also trying to stay away from Mexicans, **Californios** (Spanish speaking Catholic settlers and their descendants from Latin America, regardless of race), and Anglos. At the time of the **Mexican American War**, California had a string of missions that were begun in 1769 in order to protect the **Spanish claim** to the region from the encroaching **Russians**. When **Mexico** declared its independence from **Spain** in 1821, Mexicans rejected not only monarchy but the power of the **Catholic Church**. This led to the **Spanish missions** being sold to wealthy ranchers. American settlers typically learned Spanish and converted to Catholicism before the War (unlike settlers in Texas). These settlers became Mexican citizens. However, when Polk took office, American settlers were more likely interested in seizing the territory.

The question over whether to annex **Texas** or not was based on the divisive issue of **slavery**. **Texas** won its independence from **Mexico** in 1836 (**Texas War for Independence – Remember the Alamo!)** and remained an independent **Republic of Texas** until it was finally **annexed** in 1845, the same year that **Florida** became a state. **The Mexican American War, 1846-1848,** was fought to add land to the United States, namely **California**. Once the land was acquired the major issue became whether **slavery** should be allowed into the new territory. **California** became a state in 1850… beginning a bloody decade which propelled the nation into **Civil War**. The **Mexican American War from 1846-1848** was politically divisive as the **Democratic Party** led by **Polk** was determined to get **California** while the **Whig Party** perceived the war to be a greedy land grab with dangerous consequences for national stability. **Whigs** protested, including **Abraham Lincoln** who served one term as a Congressman from Illinois and protested with the **spot resolutions**. The battles in **Texas** were the most difficult, although some were fought in **New Mexico** and **California**. During the war, he symbolic Spanish leader of **California**, General Mariano Vallejo, was jailed and American immigrants declared the **Bear Flag Republic** independent from Mexico. From the Spanish perspective, the "bear" was the 'American thief 'seizing their land and cattle. However, **Mexico** was far more interested in **Texas** than in **California**. When victory was declared, Americans replaced the **Bear Flag** with the **Stars and Stripes**. (Overall, the U.S. thoroughly dominated the Mexican army, and under the terms of the **Treaty of Guadeloupe Hidalgo**, we reached a settlement for the **Mexican Cession** which finalized the Texas Southern border at the Rio Grande and transferred California, Arizona, Nevada, Utah, New Mexico and other portions of modern **Southwestern states** into the U.S. We also agreed to pay an indemnity of 15 million. **Ranching** flourished in **Texas** (and was the #1 economic activity until the mid 20th century when oil surpassed it.) In **California**, **whaling**, farming, trading, and the **gold rush** helped the economy boom. Later, **President Franklin Pierce**, in 1853, added the last piece of the **continental United States** when he bought 39,000 square miles of sparsely populated land along the southern borders of Arizona and Mexico for a Southern railroad; this was called the **Gadsden Purchase**. However, when the **transcontinental railroad** was finally built in the 1860s, it did not go through this territory. Thank you, dynamite. In 1854, **Commodore Matthew Perry** went to **Asia** and helped open up trade with **Japan**. The **Mexican Cession** and its **Pacific Ports** would lead **California** to becoming a key part of the growing American economy.

The **Underground Railroad** was operating quite effectively in this era and it inspired **Harriet Beecher Stowe** to write *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in 1852. This book brought to light the personal horrors of slavery. The book was warmly received in the North, but despised, burned, and banned in the South. This further emphasized the division between the land regions over the issue of slavery. **Abolitionist**s such as **William Lloyd Garrison**, **Frederick Douglass**, and the **Grimke sisters** had already stirred things up but this book took it to a new level. Lincoln reportedly said it started the war. The only book that sold more copies was the Bible, and the third best seller, *Ten Nights in a Barroom* (fueled by and fueling a growing **temperance movement**) couldn't beat it.

The **Kansas-Nebraska act** was passed in 1854. This opened up slavery in both of those territories by **popular sovereignty**, a concept first developed by **Lewis Cass** but championed in this Act by **Senator Stephen Douglas**. It led to portions from the pro-slavery and antislavery camps to attack each other ferociously. This became known as **Bleeding Kansas**. Kansas applied for statehood twice… the **Lecompton** capital supported Kansas as a slave state with it's **Lecompton Constitution**, and the Topeka capital supported Kansas as a free state. Both were rejected by Congress, and Kansas later came in as a free state in 1863… in the middle of Civil War. It even spilled onto the floor of congress. Southern Congressman **Preston Brooks** savagely beat Northern Senator **Charles Sumner**. Florida approved of the action and named a town in honor of Brooks (Brooksville). This event illustrates how the United States was becoming polarized over the issue of slavery.

The **Second Two Party System** ended when the **Whigs** split over the issue of slavery. The **Republican Party** was founded to oppose the expansion of slavery into the territories (Party solidified nationally in 1854, giving us our current or **Third Two Party System**). **Abraham Lincoln** ran for Senator from Illinois in 1858 as a Republican against **Stephen Douglas,** and they provided the famous **Lincoln-Douglass Debates** in this battle. Although he lost, Lincoln gained national recognition and set himself up for a presidential bid in 1860. Douglas touted his **Freeport Doctrine** as a solution to the sectional mess, but by this point Kansas was already coming apart at the seams and the Supreme Court had already destroyed all hope in its **Dred Scot decision**. Basically, the **Supreme Court** decided the issue of slavery in the case of **Dred Scott vs. Sanford**. Much to the chagrin of the North, the court decided that slaves were property, and slavery could not be outlawed at all. This pretty much declared the **Missouri Compromise** unconstitutional and efforts to end slavery anywhere impossible. The failure of **Congressional compromise** was solidified in this ruling. #Way2GoRogerTaney.

Immediately after the **Mexican – American War** gold was discovered in **California** sparking the **Gold Rush of 1849**. This led to the quick population and request for statehood of **California**. This became a thorny question, as it would tip the balance of free and slave states. The other issues of slavery in the territories and of runaway slaves were equally contentious. Two senators, **Daniel Webster** and **Henry Clay**, pulled together one last time to save the Union with **compromise**. Although, not everyone was pleased. Senator **John Calhoun** argued vehemently for **state rights**. Eventually, Congress, led by the Great Compromiser **Henry Clay**, passed the **Compromise of 1850**. The terms of which were: **California** was admitted as a free state, a stronger **fugitive slave law** was passed, slavery in the territories were opened up to a vote,- **popular sovereignty**- and the **slave trade** (but not slavery) was outlawed in **Washington D.C**.

In 1859, a white **radical abolitionist**, Northerner named **John Brown** decided to take over a federal arsenal and give guns to the slaves. He was executed for this **Raid on Harper's Ferry**, which had caused a deep rift of mistrust in the South towards the North, as they feared more radical attempts to force them to give up slavery. In the North, Brown was seen as a **martyr**. (Before this, he had also murdered pro-slaveryites in **Bleeding Kansas** at the **Raid on Pottawatomie Creek**).

By the time of the **Presidential election of 1860** the political situation had worsened. **Abraham Lincoln's** victory, (his name wasn't even on a single Southern state's ballot despite the Republican Party's promise to leave slavery alone in Southern states) in the **election of 1860** led to Southern states **seceding** from the Union, beginning with – shocker – **South Carolina**. One last effort at compromise occurred as the **Crittenden Compromise** proposed a return to the **Missouri Compromise line**. The South didn't want it because **Dred Scott** had legalized and legitimized slavery. The North, especially Lincoln and the **Republicans,** opposed the spread of slavery and rejected the idea as well. **President James Buchanan** "let" them leave (doing nothing in response to both Bleeding Kansas and Southern secession). This would have a huge impact over the next four years of bloody conflict. Lincoln was not sworn in until March of 1861 at which time 7 states had left.

Civil War

The **Civil War** caught both the North and South ill prepared. Both sides assumed that the war would be short. The war would drag on for five long, bloody years. Society transformed as slaves were freed and the South was destroyed economically. The process of rebuilding the South, called **reconstruction**, would be contentious. Some Northerners wanted a fast reintegration of the Southern states to the union. While other Northerners wanted to exact revenge upon the rebellious South. The **freedmen** began acquiring rights and exercising their new freedom. Unfortunately, this would be a brief period and the freedmen would have to wait until the 1960's to finally acquire the rights promised to them during reconstruction. (#JimCrow)

The South fired on **Fort Sumter**, beginning the Civil War (although only a horse died... the Union was forced to surrender this Southern fort). Both the North and South assumed the war would be decided in one big battle, sadly that would not be the case. The first big battle, the **Battle of Bull Run**, would prove it was going to be a larger, much longer conflict. In 1862 the North won the **Battle of Antietam**. This gave Lincoln the opportunity to issue the **Emancipation Proclamation**, which began freeing some slaves. It also kept Britain and France from entering in the war and supporting the South by redefining the war… it started out to preserve the union… ended with to end slavery and preserve union. The **Battles of Gettysburg and Vicksburg** (July 3 & 4 1863) were turning points in the war. The North's overall strategy called the **Anaconda Plan** was coming to fruition with the tightening of the **blockade**. The second part of the plan, controlling the **Mississippi River**, was complete. The only part left was capturing the confederate capital of Richmond. Lincolns **Gettysburg Address**, given in November 1863, reminded the nation that its founding principles were independence, self-rule, and equality. Lincoln had no luck in finding a capable general in the eastern theater of war. He went through a succession of worthless ones. Finally, he moved General **Ulysses S. Grant** from the west. Opposing Grant was **Robert E. Lee**. Lee, like much of his staff, had once been an officer in the U.S. Army. He was a very skilled general and had defeated all of Lincoln's generals except for **General Grant**.

In domestic affairs, the Northern Congress passed the **Homestead Act**, the **Morrill Act**, and the **Pacific Railway Act** (**transcontinental railroad)**. These acts would fuel the growth westward in the following decades. While the **Democrats** (Southerners) were away… the **Republicans** (Northerners) moved forward mightily on the **Hamiltonian vision** and **American System** of earlier eras now that the opposition was mute. As westward migration increased, conflict did as well. American Indians were slaughtered at **Sand Creek** , Colorado in 1864 and other territories were seized including the Black Hills in Montana (**Battle of Little Big Horn** aka **Custer's Last Stand** ended with Indian victory, although temporary, in the Montana Territory in 1876. Immigrants faced intense **nativist** persecution, but great accomplishments such as the **transcontinental railroad** wouldn't have been made without the labor of the **Irish immigrants** in the east and the **Chinese immigrants** in the west.

The year 1864 was a presidential election year. While we may think it was a forgone conclusion that Lincoln would win, it was quite uncertain that he would be re-elected. The **Democrats** chose a peace platform, which appealed to many war weary Northerners. Lincoln faced off not as a **Republican** but as **Union Party** member against his former commander, **McClellan**. Without **Sherman's March to the Sea**, Lincoln may have lost. In the west that year, **William Tecumseh Sherman** was the Union General that Grant put in charge. He, like Grant, believed in **total war**. This new concept involved, putting pressure on your opponent's army, but also destroying anything of value to him including crops, cattle, and civilian property. **Sherman** first applied this in **Atlanta**, where he burned the city to the ground in September of 1864. **Sherman** then conducted his **March to the Sea** that destroyed a sixty mile wide swath from Atlanta to Savannah. Then he turned North and destroyed **the Carolinas**. This had a devastating effect on **Southern morale**.

In the east, **Gran**t was slugging it out with Lee in the **Wilderness Campaign**. Though he lost more men than the South did, he could replace them. The South, whose draft policy was cradle to grave already; they couldn't replace the lost men. Eventually, Grant backed Lee into the confederate capital Richmond, and the city of Petersburg. He then set up a siege where he surrounded the cities and tried to cut off all supplies. Lee fled and surrendered to Grant at **Appotmatox Courthouse**, Virginia in April 1865. The **Civil War**, which had lasted five long years (**1861-1865**) and had claimed more Americans than all other wars combined - up until 2010 when the total number finally surpassed Civil War casualties - (600,000) was finally over.

Reconstruction

Unfortunately, Lincoln wouldn't get to enjoy the victory as he was **assassinated** just days later. With Lincoln's death the process of **reconstruction**, or rebuilding the South, would become significantly harsher on the South. Lincoln favored a **10% plan**, in which only 10% of a state's population had to swear loyalty to the U.S. government to rejoin the Union. His plan was altered then abandoned following his death. Vice President **Andrew Johnson**, who became president, had a similar plan to Lincoln's in mind when he took over. Johnson was a racist plus hated the **planter elite**. He made it tough on those groups (blacks and rich Southern whites), although all other groups could rejoin the U.S. very easily. **Presidential Reconstruction** lasted from 1865-1866 based on the idea that southern states were in rebellion. **Congressional Reconstruction** took over from 1866-1877 and it was based on the idea the **Confederacy** was a foreign nation. Opposing **Presidential Reconstruction** centered in a group of **Radical Republicans** in Congress. They wanted to punish the South for causing the Civil War and give **former slaves** equal status in society. To do this, they needed to incapacitate Johnson's power (**President Andrew Johnson** vetoed Acts of Congress aimed at **radical reconstruction**). Congress passed the **Tenure of Office Act**, which made it a crime to fire a cabinet member after the Senate had approved them. Johnson, believing the act to be unconstitutional, took the bait and fired **Secretary of War Edwin Stanton**.   In 1868 Johnson was **impeached** by the House, but found not guilty by one vote (not removed from office by the Senate). But… the **radical republicans** took over **reconstruction** as they won enough seats in the off-year election to override vetoes.

The radicals pressured the South to ratify the **14ᵗʰ and 15ᵗʰ amendments** as part of their re-admittance to the union. The **13ᵗʰ amendment** had already been ratified. The **13ᵗʰ Amendment** freed the slaves, the **14ᵗʰ** made them citizens, and the **15ᵗʰ** gave them the right to vote (but not women… and oh were they peeved to have been left out after fighting hand in hand with abolitionists for decades).

To assist the newly freed slaves the government set up **the Freedmen's Bureau**. The bureau gave economic and educational assistance to the freedmen. This is the first intervention by the government to directly assist citizens. Lincoln opposed this idea at first on the grounds that Southern states had the right to integrate their societies on their own, but he compromised with the radicals and signed on. Later, after Johnson's vetoes were overpowered followed by President **U.S. Grant** taking over in 1869 support for the Bureau was high among Republicans for the rest of the era (ending in 1877).

The South was economically destroyed after the war. The former leaders were not allowed to have positions of political power. To fill this void, three groups stepped into political office. The **scalawags** were **yeoman** farmers who didn't like the rich and the elite who saw them as traitors despised them. Scalawags were labeled pro-Northern Southerners and were seen as traitors by the planter elite, as well. The **carpetbaggers** were Northerners who moved to the South. Some of them came to assist the South and others came to exploit them economically for personal financial gain. The third group was the **African Americans**. They voted often and won seats to the U.S. Congress including **Hiram Revels**, the first African American senator.. The **Ku Klux Klan**, founded by a former confederate General **Nathan Bedford Forrest**, was designed to scare off republican voters from the **polls**. It also terrorized **freedmen** who dared to exercise their newfound freedoms and any **whites that supported equality**. The image of the sheeted & hooded **KKK** became the image of **white supremacy** for generations. **President Grant** and the **Republican Congress** passed the **Force Acts** which in part were tasked with ending the **KKK**. It was so effective that by 1880, the **KKK** was nearly extinct. Unfortunately the end of reconstruction and beginning the **New South** would provide the environment for it to come back to life.

Grant's election began a period of Republican presidential dominance *(Johnson was a "Union Party" member chosen by the Republican Lincoln because he was a Southerner… but he was essentially a Democrat… and after Grant the only Democrat in between Grant and Woodrow Wilson -elected in 1912- was Grover Cleveland…).* The North was encouraged to **vote "as you shot"** (against the democratic South) and they vigorously waved the "**bloody shirt"** to show that they had fought to save the **Union**. Grant himself was honest, but he was a terrible judge of character, and the people he appointed to office stole millions of dollars from the Federal government. These scandals place Grant's two terms in both the **Reconstruction Era** (1865-1877) and the **Gilded Age** (roughly 1873-1896) which is characterized in part by political scandal. The **Whiskey Ring scandal** was a tax skimming operation, but the biggest scandal involved bribes from railroad officials to bail out a company, this was called the **Credit Mobilier Scandal**. Even worse was the **Indian Ring** scandal which revealed greedy government workers steeling from supplies intended for Indian reservations. This led to starvation in some areas as Indians were increasingly dependent on the U.S. government for their survival and basic needs.

At the conclusion of the war, many blacks moved around in search of family members who had been sold. Most stayed in the South. Others moved to **Kansas** and were known as **exodusters**. This is known as the **first great African American migration** (the next one came after WWI). Those who stayed in the South ended up as **tenant farmers** or **sharecroppers**. It was nearly identical to slavery, with the former masters in charge once again. The **redeemer's government** passed harsh **Jim Crow laws** which gradually replaced the Black Code strategy to keep the races separate and African Americans subservient. They also passed **poll taxes**, **literacy tests**, and **grandfather laws** to keep them from voting.

By the **election of 1876**, people in the North had tired of spending so much money to rebuild the South, especially after the economic **Panic of 1873** which left the nation in an economic depression. The people who lost jobs didn't" care" about the freedmen anymore nor cared about restructuring the South. The election itself was acrimonious with rampant charges of voter fraud; Florida was in a dispute with both the Democrats and Republicans claiming victory (#2000!). The country nearly went to war again. The Democratic candidate had won more votes, but in a compromise deal the Republican candidate **Rutherford B. Hayes** became president. To appease the South, all Northern troops were removed from occupying the South which effectively ended Reconstruction. When the Republicans lost political control in the South the former Democratic leaders stepped back into power. This new (old) leadership is known as the **redeemers**. They sought to revert the South to the **antebellum (before the Civil War) period** and make blacks second class citizens in a role nearly identical to slavery. They forced the freedmen into an economic subservient situation similar to slavery known as **sharecropping** and **tenant farming** while also passing **more Jim Crow Laws** which limited any true expansion of rights. This political deal was yet another compromise between North and South… and once again those who were short changed from the goals of reconstruction and the **Compromise of 1877** were freedmen. Conditions would remain horrible for African Americans until the **Civil Rights Movement** of the 1950's and 1960's which finally made those **Civil War Amendments** (aka **Reconstruction Amendments**) mean something.