

TERRITORIAL AND ECONOMIC EXPANSION, 1830–1860

Away, away with all these cobweb issues of the rights of discovery, exploration, settlement, . . . [The American claim] is by the right of our manifest destiny to overspread and to possess the whole of the continent which Providence has given us for the development of the great experiment of liberty.

John L. O'Sullivan, *Democratic Review*, 1845

After John O'Sullivan wrote about manifest destiny, supporters of territorial expansion spread the term across the land. In the 1840s and 1850s, expansionists wanted to see the United States extend westward to the Pacific and southward into Mexico, Cuba, and Central America. By the 1890s, expansionists fixed their sights on acquiring islands in the Pacific and the Caribbean.

The phrase *manifest destiny* expressed the popular belief that the United States had a divine mission to extend its power and civilization across the breadth of North America. Enthusiasm for expansion reached a fever pitch in the 1840s. It was driven by a number of forces: nationalism, population increase, rapid economic development, technological advances, and reform ideals. But not all Americans united behind the idea of manifest destiny and expansionism. Northern critics argued vehemently that at the root of the expansionist drive was the Southern ambition to spread slavery into western lands.

Conflicts Over Texas, Maine, and Oregon

U.S. interest in pushing its borders south into Texas (a Mexican province) and west into the Oregon Territory (claimed by Britain) largely resulted from American pioneers migrating into these lands during the 1820s and 1830s.

Texas

In 1823, after having won its national independence from Spain, Mexico hoped to attract settlers—including Anglo settlers—to farm its sparsely populated northern frontier province of Texas. Moses Austin, a Missouri banker, had obtained a large land grant in Texas but died before he could recruit American

settlers for the land. His son, Stephen Austin, succeeded in bringing 300 families into Texas and thereby beginning a steady migration of American settlers into the vast frontier territory. By 1830, Americans (both white farmers and enslaved blacks) outnumbered Mexicans in Texas by three to one.

Friction developed between the Americans and the Mexicans when, in 1829, Mexico outlawed slavery and required all immigrants to convert to Roman Catholicism. When many settlers refused to obey these laws, Mexico closed Texas to additional American immigrants. Land-hungry Americans from the Southern states ignored the Mexican prohibition and streamed into Texas by the thousands.

Revolt and Independence A change in Mexico's government intensified the conflict. In 1834, General Antonio López de Santa Anna made himself dictator of Mexico and abolished that nation's federal system of government. When Santa Anna attempted to enforce Mexico's laws in Texas, a group of American settlers led by Sam Houston revolted and declared Texas to be an independent republic (March 1836).

A Mexican army led by Santa Anna captured the town of Goliad and attacked the Alamo in San Antonio, killing every one of its American defenders. Shortly afterward, however, at the Battle of the San Jacinto River, an army under Sam Houston caught the Mexicans by surprise and captured their general, Santa Anna. Under the threat of death, the Mexican leader was forced to sign a treaty that recognized independence for Texas and granted the new republic all territory north of the Rio Grande. However, when the news of San Jacinto reached Mexico City, the Mexican legislature rejected the treaty and insisted that Texas was still part of Mexico.

Annexation Denied As the first president of the Republic of Texas (or Lone Star Republic), Houston applied to the U.S. government for his country to be annexed, or added to, the United States as a new state. However, presidents Jackson and Van Buren both put off the request for annexation primarily because of political opposition among Northerners to the expansion of slavery and the potential addition of up to five new slave states created out of the Texas territories. The threat of a costly war with Mexico also dampened expansionist zeal. The next president, John Tyler (1841–1845), was a Southern Whig who was worried about the growing influence of the British in Texas. He worked to annex Texas, but the U.S. Senate rejected his treaty of annexation in 1844.

Boundary Dispute in Maine

Another diplomatic issue arose in the 1840s over the ill-defined boundary between Maine and the Canadian province of New Brunswick. At this time, Canada was still under British rule, and many Americans regarded Britain as their country's worst enemy—an attitude carried over from two previous wars (the Revolution and the War of 1812). A conflict between rival groups of lumbermen on the Maine-Canadian border erupted into open fighting. Known as the Aroostook War, or “battle of the maps,” the conflict was soon resolved in a treaty negotiated by U.S. Secretary of State Daniel Webster and the British

ambassador, Lord Alexander Ashburton. In the Webster-Ashburton Treaty of 1842, the disputed territory was split between Maine and British Canada. The treaty also settled the boundary of the Minnesota territory, leaving what proved to be the iron-rich Mesabi range on the U.S. side of the border.

Boundary Dispute in Oregon

A far more serious British-American dispute involved Oregon, a vast territory on the Pacific Coast that originally stretched as far north as the Alaskan border. At one time, this territory was claimed by four different nations: Spain, Russia, Great Britain, and the United States. Spain gave up its claim to Oregon in a treaty with the United States (the Adams-Onís Treaty of 1819).

Britain based its claim to Oregon on the Hudson Fur Company's profitable fur trade with the American Indians of the Pacific Northwest. However, by 1846, fewer than a thousand British settlers lived north of the Columbia River.

The United States based its claim on (1) the discovery of the Columbia River by Captain Robert Gray in 1792, (2) the overland expedition to the Pacific Coast by Meriwether Lewis and William Clark in 1805, and (3) the fur trading post and fort in Astoria, Oregon, established by John Jacob Astor in 1811. Protestant missionaries and farmers from the United States settled in the Willamette Valley in the 1840s. Their success in farming this fertile valley caused 5,000 Americans to catch "Oregon fever" and travel 2,000 miles over the Oregon Trail to settle in the area south of the Columbia River.

By the 1844 election, many Americans believed it to be their country's manifest destiny to take undisputed possession of all of Oregon and to annex the Republic of Texas as well. In addition, expansionists hoped to persuade Mexico to give up its province on the West Coast—the huge land of California. By 1845, Mexican California had a small Spanish-Mexican population of some 7,000 along with a much larger number of American Indians, but American emigrants were arriving in sufficient numbers "to play the Texas game."

The Election of 1844

Because slavery was allowed in Texas, many Northerners were opposed to its annexation. Leading the Northern wing of the Democratic party, former president Martin Van Buren opposed immediate annexation. Challenging him for the Democratic nomination in 1844 was the proslavery, proannexation Southerner, John C. Calhoun. The dispute between these candidates caused the Democratic convention to deadlock. After hours of wrangling, the Democrats finally nominated a *dark horse* (lesser known candidate). The man they chose, James K. Polk of Tennessee, had been a protégé of Andrew Jackson. Firmly committed to expansion and manifest destiny, Polk favored the annexation of Texas, the "reoccupation" of all of Oregon, and the acquisition of California. The Democratic slogan "Fifty-four Forty or Fight!" appealed strongly to American westerners and Southerners who in 1844 were in an expansionist mood. ("Fifty-four forty" referred to the line of latitude, 54° 40', that marked the northern border between the Oregon Territory and Russian Alaska.)

Henry Clay of Kentucky, the Whig nominee, attempted to straddle the controversial issue of Texas annexation, saying at first that he was against it and later that he was for it. This strategy alienated a group of voters in New York State, who abandoned the Whig party to support the antislavery Liberty party (see Chapter 11). In a close election, the Whigs' loss of New York's electoral votes proved decisive, and Polk, the Democratic dark horse, was the victor. The Democrats interpreted the election as a mandate to add Texas to the Union.

Annexing Texas and Dividing Oregon

Outgoing president John Tyler took the election of Polk as a signal to push the annexation of Texas through Congress. Instead of seeking Senate approval of a treaty that would have required a two-thirds vote, Tyler persuaded both houses of Congress to pass a joint resolution for annexation. This procedure required only a simple majority of each house. Tyler left Polk with the problem of dealing with Mexico's reaction to annexation.

On the Oregon question, Polk decided to compromise with Britain and back down from his party's bellicose campaign slogan, "Fifty-four Forty or Fight!" Rather than fighting for all of Oregon, the president was willing to settle for just the southern half of it. British and American negotiators agreed to divide the Oregon territory at the 49th parallel (the parallel that had been established in 1818 for the Louisiana territory). Final settlement of the issue was delayed until the United States agreed to grant Vancouver Island to Britain and guarantee its right to navigate the Columbia River. In June 1846, the treaty was submitted to the Senate for ratification. Some Northerners viewed the treaty as a sellout to Southern interests because it removed British Columbia as a source of potential free states. Nevertheless, by this time war had broken out between the United States and Mexico. Not wanting to fight both Britain and Mexico, Senate opponents of the treaty reluctantly voted for the compromise settlement.

War with Mexico

The U.S. annexation of Texas quickly led to diplomatic trouble with Mexico. Upon taking office in 1845, President Polk dispatched John Slidell as his special envoy to the government in Mexico City. Polk wanted Slidell to (1) persuade Mexico to sell the California and New Mexico territories to the United States and (2) settle the disputed Mexico-Texas border. Slidell's mission failed on both counts. The Mexican government refused to sell California and insisted that Texas's southern border was on the Nueces River. Polk and Slidell asserted that the border lay farther to the south, along the Rio Grande.

Immediate Causes of the War

While Slidell waited for Mexico City's response to the U.S. offer, Polk ordered General Zachary Taylor to move his army toward the Rio Grande across territory claimed by Mexico. On April 24, 1846, a Mexican army crossed the Rio Grande and captured an American army patrol, killing 11. Polk used the

incident to justify sending his already prepared war message to Congress. Northern Whigs (among them a first-term Illinois representative named Abraham Lincoln) opposed going to war over the incident and doubted Polk's claim that American blood had been shed on American soil. Nevertheless, Whig protests were in vain; a large majority in both houses approved the war resolution.

Military Campaigns

Most of the war was fought in Mexican territory by relatively small armies of Americans. Leading a force that never exceeded 1,500, General Stephen Kearney succeeded in taking Santa Fe, the New Mexico territory, and southern California. Backed by only several dozen soldiers, a few navy officers, and American civilians who had recently settled in California, John C. Frémont quickly overthrew Mexican rule in northern California (June 1846) and proclaimed California to be an independent republic with a bear on its flag—the so-called Bear Flag Republic.

Meanwhile, Zachary Taylor's force of 6,000 men drove the Mexican army from Texas, crossed the Rio Grande into northern Mexico, and won a major victory at Buena Vista (February 1847). President Polk then selected General Winfield Scott to invade central Mexico. The army of 14,000 under Scott's command succeeded in taking the coastal city of Vera Cruz and then captured Mexico City in September 1847.

Consequences of the War

For Mexico, the war was a military disaster from the start, but the Mexican government was unwilling to sue for peace and concede the loss of its northern lands. Finally, after the fall of Mexico City, the government had little choice but to agree to U.S. terms.

Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848) The treaty negotiated in Mexico by American diplomat Nicholas Trist provided for the following:

1. Mexico recognized the Rio Grande as the southern border of Texas.
2. The United States took possession of the former Mexican provinces of California and New Mexico—the Mexican Cession. For these territories, the United States paid \$15 million and assumed responsibility for any claims of American citizens against Mexico.

In the Senate, some Whigs opposed the treaty because they saw the war as an immoral effort to expand slavery. A few Southern Democrats disliked the treaty for opposite reasons; as expansionists, they wanted the United States to take all of Mexico. Nevertheless, the treaty was finally ratified in the Senate by the required two-thirds vote.

Wilmot Proviso U.S. entry into a war with Mexico provoked controversy from start to finish. In 1846, the first year of war, Pennsylvania Congressman David Wilmot proposed that an appropriations bill be amended to forbid

slavery in any of the new territories acquired from Mexico. The Wilmot Proviso, as it was called, passed the House twice but was defeated in the Senate.

Prelude to Civil War? By increasing tensions between the North and the South, did the war to acquire territories from Mexico lead inevitably to the American Civil War? Without question, the acquisition of vast western lands did renew the sectional debate over the extension of slavery. Many Northerners viewed the war with Mexico as part of a Southern plot to extend the “slave power.” Some historians see the Wilmot Proviso as the first round in an escalating political conflict that led ultimately to civil war.

WESTWARD EXPANSION AND PIONEER TRAILS, 1840s



Manifest Destiny to the South

Many Southerners were dissatisfied with the territorial gains from the Mexican War. In the early 1850s, they hoped to acquire new territories, especially in areas of Latin America where they thought plantations worked by slaves were economically feasible. The most tempting, eagerly sought possibility in the eyes of Southern expansionists was the acquisition of Cuba.

Ostend Manifesto President Polk offered to purchase Cuba from Spain for \$100 million, but Spain refused to sell the last major remnant of its once glorious empire. Several Southern adventurers led small expeditions to Cuba in

an effort to take the island by force of arms. These forays, however, were easily defeated, and those who participated were executed by Spanish firing squads.

Elected to the presidency in 1852, Franklin Pierce adopted pro-Southern policies and dispatched three American diplomats to Ostend, Belgium, where they secretly negotiated to buy Cuba from Spain. The Ostend Manifesto that the diplomats drew up was leaked to the press in the United States and provoked an angry reaction from antislavery members of Congress. President Pierce was forced to drop the scheme.

Walker Expedition Expansionists continued to seek new empires with or without the federal government's support. Southern adventurer William Walker had tried unsuccessfully to take Baja California from Mexico in 1853. Then, leading a force mostly of Southerners, he took over Nicaragua in 1855. Walker's regime even gained temporary recognition from the United States in 1856. However, his grandiose scheme to develop a proslavery Central American empire collapsed, when a coalition of Central American countries invaded and defeated him. Walker was executed by Honduran authorities in 1860.

Clayton-Bulwer Treaty (1850) Another American ambition was to build a canal through Central America. Great Britain had the same ambition. To prevent each other from seizing this opportunity on its own, Great Britain and the United States agreed to the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty of 1850. It provided that neither nation would attempt to take exclusive control of any future canal route in Central America. This treaty continued in force until the end of the century. A new treaty signed in 1901 (the Hay-Pauncefote Treaty) gave the United States a free hand to build a canal without British participation.

Gadsden Purchase Although he failed to acquire Cuba, President Pierce succeeded in adding a strip of land to the American Southwest for a railroad. In 1853, Mexico agreed to sell thousands of acres of semidesert land to the United States for \$10 million. Known as the Gadsden Purchase, the land forms the southern sections of present-day New Mexico and Arizona.

Expansion After the Civil War

From 1855 until 1870, the issues of union, slavery, civil war, and postwar reconstruction would overshadow the drive to acquire new territory. Even so, manifest destiny continued to be an important force for shaping U.S. policy. In 1867, for example, Secretary of State William Seward succeeded in purchasing Alaska at a time when the nation was just recovering from the Civil War.

Settlement of the Western Territories

Following the peaceful acquisition of Oregon and the more violent acquisition of California, the migration of Americans into these lands began in earnest. The arid area between the Mississippi Valley and the Pacific Coast was popularly known in the 1850s and 1860s as the Great American Desert. Emigrants passed quickly over this vast, dry region to reach the more inviting lands on the West Coast. Therefore, California and Oregon were settled several decades before people attempted to farm the Great Plains.

Fur Traders' Frontier

Fur traders known as mountain men were the earliest nonnative individuals to open the Far West. In the 1820s, they held yearly rendezvous in the Rockies with American Indians to trade for animal skins. James Beckwourth, Jim Bridger, Kit Carson, and Jedediah Smith were among the hardy band of explorers and trappers who provided much of the early information about trails and frontier conditions to later settlers.

Overland Trails

After the mountain men, a much larger group of pioneers made the hazardous journey west in hopes of clearing the forests and farming the fertile valleys of California and Oregon. By 1860, hundreds of thousands had reached their westward goal by following the Oregon, California, Santa Fe, and Mormon trails. The long and arduous trek usually began in St. Joseph or Independence, Missouri, or in Council Bluffs, Iowa, and followed the river valleys through the Great Plains. Inching along at only 15 miles a day, a wagon train needed months to finally reach the foothills of the Rockies or face the hardships of the southwestern deserts. The final life-or-death challenge was to get through the mountain passes of the Sierras and Cascades before the first heavy snow. While pioneers feared attacks by American Indians, the most common and serious dangers were disease and depression from the harsh everyday conditions on the trail.

Mining Frontier

The discovery of gold in California in 1848 set off the first of many migrations to mineral-rich mountains of the West. Gold or silver rushes occurred in Colorado, Nevada, the Black Hills of the Dakotas, and other western territories. The mining boom brought tens of thousands of men (and afterward women as well) into the western mountains. Mining camps and towns—many of them short-lived—sprang up wherever a strike (discovery) was reported. Largely as a result of the gold rush, California's population soared from a mere 14,000 in 1848 to 380,000 by 1860. Booms attracted miners from around the world. By the 1860s, almost one-third of the miners in the West were Chinese.

Farming Frontier

Most pioneer families moved west to start homesteads and begin farming. Congress' Preemption Acts of the 1830s and 1840s gave squatters the right to settle public lands and purchase them for low prices once the government put them up for sale. In addition, the government made it easier for settlers by offering parcels of land as small as 40 acres for sale.

However, moving west was not for the penniless. A family needed at least \$200 to \$300 to make the overland trip, which eliminated many of the poor. The trek to California and Oregon was largely a middle-class movement.

The isolation of the frontier made life for pioneers especially difficult during the first years, but rural communities soon developed. The institutions that the people established (schools, churches, clubs, and political parties) were

modeled after those that they had known in the East or, for immigrants from abroad, in their native lands.

Urban Frontier

Western cities that arose as a result of railroads, mineral wealth, and farming attracted a number of professionals and business owners. For example, San Francisco and Denver became instant cities created by the gold and silver rushes. Salt Lake City grew because it offered fresh supplies to travelers on overland trails for the balance of their westward journey.

The Expanding Economy

The era of territorial expansion coincided with a period of remarkable economic growth from the 1840s to 1857.

Industrial Technology

Before 1840, factory production had been concentrated mainly in the textile mills of New England. After 1840, industrialization spread rapidly to the other states of the Northeast. The new factories produced shoes, sewing machines, ready-to-wear clothing, firearms, precision tools, and iron products for railroads and other new technologies. The invention of the sewing machine by Elias Howe took much of the production of clothing out of homes into factories. An electric telegraph successfully demonstrated in 1844 by its inventor, Samuel F. B. Morse, went hand in hand with the growth of railroads in enormously speeding up communication and transportation across the country.

Railroads

The canal-building era of the 1820s and 1830s was replaced in the next two decades with the rapid expansion of rail lines, especially across the Northeast and Midwest. The railroads soon emerged as America's largest industry. As such, they required immense amounts of capital and labor and gave rise to complex business organizations. Local merchants and farmers would often buy stocks in the new railroad companies in order to connect their area to the outside world. Local and state governments also helped the railroads grow by granting special loans and tax breaks. In 1850, the U.S. government granted 2.6 million acres of federal land to build the Illinois Central Railroad from Lake Michigan to the Gulf of Mexico, the first such federal land grant.

Cheap and rapid transportation particularly promoted western agriculture. Farmers in Illinois and Iowa were now more closely linked to the Northeast by rail than by the river routes to the South. The railroads not only united the common commercial interests of the Northeast and Midwest, but would also give the North strategic advantages in the Civil War.

Foreign Commerce

The growth in manufactured goods as well as in agricultural products (both Western grains and Southern cotton) caused a large growth of exports and imports. Other factors also played a role in the expansion of U.S. trade in the mid-1800s:

1. Shipping firms encouraged trade and travel across the Atlantic by having their sailing packets depart on a regular schedule (instead of the unscheduled departures that had been customary in the 18th century).
2. The demand for whale oil to light the homes of middle-class Americans caused a whaling boom between 1830 and 1860, in which New England merchants took the lead.
3. Improvements in the design of ships came just in time to speed gold-seekers on their journey to the California gold fields. The development of the American clipper ship cut the five- or six-month trip from New York around the Horn of South America to San Francisco to as little as 89 days.
4. Steamships took the place of clipper ships in the mid-1850s because they had greater storage capacity, could be maintained at lower cost, and could more easily follow a regular schedule.
5. The federal government expanded U.S. trade by sending Commodore Matthew C. Perry to Japan to force that country to open up its ports to trade with Americans. In 1854, Perry made Japan's government sign a treaty that opened two Japanese ports to U.S. trading vessels.

Panic of 1857 The midcentury economic boom ended in 1857 with a financial panic. Prices, especially for Midwestern farmers, dropped sharply, and unemployment in Northern cities increased. Since cotton prices remained high, the South was less affected. As a result, some Southerners believed that their plantation economy was superior and that continued union with the Northern economy was not needed.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES: WHAT CAUSED MANIFEST DESTINY?

Traditional historians stressed the accomplishments of westward expansion in bringing civilization and democratic institutions to a wilderness area. The heroic efforts of mountain men and pioneering families to overcome a hostile environment have long been celebrated by both historians and the popular media.

As a result of the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, historians today are more sensitive than earlier historians to racist language and beliefs. They recognized the racial undercurrents in the political speeches of the 1840s that argued for expansion into American Indian, Mexican, and Central American territories. Some historians argue that racist motives might even have prompted the decision to withdraw U.S. troops from Mexico instead of occupying it. They point out that Americans who opposed the idea of keeping Mexico had resorted to racist arguments, asserting that it would be undesirable to incorporate large non-Anglo populations into the republic.

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Recent historians have also broadened their research into westward movement. Rather than concentrating on the achievements of Anglo pioneers, they have focused more on these topics: (a) the impact on American Indians whose lands were taken, (b) the influence of Mexican culture on U.S. culture, (c) the contributions of African American and Asian American pioneers, and (d) the role of women in the development of western family and community life.

Mexican historians take a different point of view on the events of the 1840s. As they point out, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo took half of Mexico's territory. They argue that the war of 1846 gave rise to a number of long-standing economic and political problems that have impeded Mexico's development as a modern nation.

From another perspective, the war with Mexico and especially the taking of California were motivated by imperialism rather than by racism. Historians taking this position argue that the United States was chiefly interested in trade with China and Japan and needed California as a base for U.S. commercial ambitions in the Pacific. U.S. policy makers were afraid that California would fall into the hands of Great Britain or some other European power if the United States did not move in first.

KEY TERMS BY THEME

Belief (ID) manifest destiny Expanding Economy (WXT) industrial technology Elias Howe Samuel F. B. Morse railroads Panic of 1857 Westward (PEO/ENV) Great American Desert mountain men Far West overland trails mining frontier gold rush silver rush farming frontier urban frontier federal land grants	Expansion Politics (POL) John Tyler Oregon territory "Fifty-four Forty or Fight!" James K. Polk Wilmot Proviso Franklin Pierce Ostend Manifesto (1852) Military & Diplomatic Expansion (Wor) Texas Stephen Austin Antonio López de Santa Anna Sam Houston Alamo Aroostook War Webster-Ashburton Treaty (1842)	Rio Grande; Nueces River Mexican War (1846–1847) Zachary Taylor Stephen Kearney Winfield Scott John C. Frémont California; Bear Flag Republic Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848) Mexican Cession Walker Expedition Clayton-Bulwer Treaty (1850) Gadsden Purchase (1853) foreign commerce exports and imports Matthew C. Perry; Japan
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THE UNION IN PERIL, 1848–1861

The real issue in this controversy—the one pressing upon every mind—is the sentiment on the part of one class that looks upon the institution of slavery as a wrong, and of another class that does not look upon it as a wrong.

Abraham Lincoln, 1858

Nobody disagrees about the sequence of major events from 1848 to 1861 that led ultimately to the outbreak of the Civil War between the Union and the Confederacy. Facts in themselves, however, do not automatically assemble themselves into a convincing interpretation of *why* war occurred when it did. Historians have identified at least four main causes of the conflict between the North and the South: (1) *slavery*, as a growing moral issue in the North, versus its defense and expansion in the South; (2) *constitutional disputes* over the nature of the federal Union and states' rights; (3) *economic differences* between the industrializing North and the agricultural South over such issues as tariffs, banking, and internal improvements; (4) *political blunders and extremism* on both sides, which some historians conclude resulted in an unnecessary war. This chapter summarizes the events leading up to Lincoln's election and the secession of eleven Southern states from the Union.

Conflict Over Status of Territories

The issue of slavery in the territories gained in the Mexican War became the focus of sectional differences in the late 1840s. The Wilmot Proviso, which excluded slavery from the new territories, would have upset the Compromise of 1820 and the delicate balance of 15 free and 15 slave states. The proviso's defeat only intensified sectional feelings. On the issue of how to deal with these new western territories, there were essentially three conflicting positions.

Free-Soil Movement

Northern Democrats and Whigs supported the Wilmot Proviso and the position that all African Americans—slave and free—should be excluded from the Mexican Cession (territory ceded to the U.S. by Mexico in 1848). While abolitionists advocated eliminating slavery everywhere, many Northerners who opposed the westward expansion of slavery did not oppose slavery in the

South. They sought to keep the West a land of opportunity for whites only so that the white majority would not have to compete with the labor of slaves or free blacks. In 1848, Northerners who opposed allowing slavery in the territories organized the Free-Soil party, which adopted the slogan “free soil, free labor, and free men.” In addition to its chief objective—preventing the extension of slavery—the new party also advocated free homesteads (public land grants to small farmers) and internal improvements.

Southern Position

Most whites viewed any attempts to restrict the expansion of slavery as a violation of their constitutional right to take and use their property as they wished. They saw the Free-Soilers—and especially the abolitionists—as intent on the ultimate destruction of slavery. More moderate Southerners favored extending the Missouri Compromise line of 36°30’ westward to the Pacific Ocean and permitting territories north of that line to be nonslave.

Popular Sovereignty

Lewis Cass, a Democratic senator from Michigan, proposed a compromise solution that soon won considerable support from both moderate Northerners and moderate Southerners. Instead of Congress determining whether to allow slavery in a new western territory or state, Cass suggested that the matter be determined by a vote of the people who settled the territory. Cass’s approach to the problem was known as squatter, or popular, sovereignty.

The Election of 1848

In 1848, the Democrats nominated Senator Cass and adopted a platform pledged to popular sovereignty. The Whigs nominated Mexican War hero General Zachary Taylor, who had never been involved in politics and took no position on slavery in the territories. A third party, the Free-Soil party, nominated former president Martin Van Buren. It consisted of “conscience” Whigs (who opposed slavery) and antislavery Democrats; the latter group were ridiculed as “barnburners” because their defection threatened to destroy the Democratic party. Taylor narrowly defeated Cass, in part because of the vote given the Free-Soil party in such key Northern states as New York and Pennsylvania.

The Compromise of 1850

The gold rush of 1849 and the influx of about 100,000 settlers into California created the need for law and order in the West. In 1849, Californians drafted a constitution for their new state—a constitution that banned slavery. Even though President Taylor was a Southern slaveholder himself, he supported the immediate admission of both California and New Mexico as free states. (At this time, however, the Mexican population of the New Mexico territory had little interest in applying for statehood.)

Taylor’s plan sparked talk of secession among the “fire-eaters” (radicals) in the South. Some Southern extremists even met in Nashville in 1850 to discuss

secession. By this time, however, the astute Henry Clay had proposed yet another compromise for solving the political crisis:

- Admit California to the Union as a free state
- Divide the remainder of the Mexican Cession into two territories—Utah and New Mexico—and allow the settlers in these territories to decide the slavery issue by majority vote, or popular sovereignty
- Give the land in dispute between Texas and the New Mexico territory to the new territories in return for the federal government assuming Texas's public debt of \$10 million
- Ban the slave trade in the District of Columbia but permit whites to hold slaves as before
- Adopt a new Fugitive Slave Law and enforce it rigorously

In the ensuing Senate debate over the compromise proposal, the three congressional giants of the age—Henry Clay of Kentucky, Daniel Webster of Massachusetts, and John C. Calhoun of South Carolina—delivered the last great speeches of their lives. (Webster and Calhoun, who were both born in 1782, died in 1850; Clay died two years later.) Webster argued for compromise in order to save the Union, and in so doing alienated the Massachusetts abolitionists who formed the base of his support. Calhoun argued against compromise and insisted that the South be given equal rights in the acquired territory.

Northern opposition to compromise came from younger antislavery lawmakers, such as Senator William H. Seward of New York, who argued that a higher law than the Constitution existed. Opponents managed to prevail until the sudden death in 1850 of President Taylor, who had also opposed Clay's plan. Succeeding him was a strong supporter of compromise, Vice President Millard Fillmore. Stephen A. Douglas, a politically astute young senator from Illinois, engineered different coalitions to pass each part of the compromise separately. President Fillmore readily signed the bills into law.

Passage The passage of the Compromise of 1850 bought time for the Union. Because California was admitted as a free state, the compromise added to the North's political power, and the political debate deepened the commitment of many Northerners to saving the Union from secession. On the other hand, parts of the compromise became sources of controversy, especially the new Fugitive Slave Law and the provision for popular sovereignty.

Agitation Over Slavery

For a brief period—the four years between the Compromise of 1850 and the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854—political tensions abated slightly. However, the enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Act and the

publication of a best-selling antislavery novel kept the slavery question in the forefront of public attention in both the North and South.

Fugitive Slave Law

The passage of a strict Fugitive Slave Law persuaded many Southerners to accept the loss of California to the abolitionists and Free-Soilers. Yet the enforcement of the new law in the North was bitterly and sometimes forcibly resisted by antislavery Northerners. In effect, therefore, enforcement of the new law drove a wedge between the North and the South.

Enforcement and Opposition The law's chief purpose was to track down runaway (fugitive) slaves who had escaped to a Northern state, capture them, and return them to their Southern owners. The law placed fugitive slave cases under the exclusive jurisdiction of the federal government and authorized special U.S. commissioners to issue warrants to arrest fugitives. Captured persons who claimed to be a free African American and not a runaway slave were denied the right of trial by jury. Citizens who attempted to hide a runaway or obstruct enforcement of the law were subject to heavy penalties.

Underground Railroad

The Underground Railroad, the fabled network of “conductors” and “stations,” was a loose network of Northern free blacks and courageous ex-slaves, with the help of some white abolitionists, who helped escaped slaves reach freedom in the North or in Canada. The most famous conductor was an escaped slave woman, Harriet Tubman, who made at least 19 trips into the South to help some 300 slaves escape. Free blacks in the North and abolitionists also organized vigilance committees to protect fugitive slaves from the slave catchers. Once the Civil War broke out, African American leaders such as Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, and Sojourner Truth continued to work for the emancipation of slaves and to support black soldiers in the Union cause.

Books on Slavery—Pro and Con

Popular books as well as unpopular laws stirred the emotions of the people of all regions.

Uncle Tom's Cabin The most influential book of its day was a novel about the conflict between an enslaved man named Tom and the brutal white slave owner Simon Legree. The publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in 1852 by the Northern writer Harriet Beecher Stowe moved a generation of Northerners as well as many Europeans to regard all slave owners as monstrously cruel and inhuman. Southerners condemned the “untruths” in the novel and looked upon it as one more proof of the North's incurable prejudice against the Southern way of life. Later, when President Lincoln met Stowe, he is reported to have said, “So you're the little woman who wrote the book that made this great war.”

Impending Crisis of the South. Although it did not appear until 1857, Hinton R. Helper's book of nonfiction, *Impending Crisis of the South*, attacked slavery from another angle. The author, a native of North Carolina, used

statistics to demonstrate to fellow Southerners that slavery weakened the South's economy. Southern states acted quickly to ban the book, but it was widely distributed in the North by antislavery and Free-Soil leaders.

Comparing the Free and Slave States in the 1850s			
Category	Free States	Slave States	Slave States as Percentage of Free States
Population	18,484,922	9,612,979	52 percent
Patents for New Inventions	1,929	268	14 percent
Value of Church Buildings	\$67,778,477	\$21,674,581	32 percent
Newspapers and Periodicals	1,790	740	41 percent
Bank Capital	\$230,100,840	\$109,078,940	47 percent
Value of Exports	\$167,520,098	\$107,480,688	64 percent

Source: Hinton R. Helper, *Impending Crisis of the South*, 1857. Data from various years between 1850 and 1856.

Southern Reaction Responding to the Northern literature that condemned slavery as evil, proslavery Southern whites counterattacked by arguing that slavery was just the opposite—a positive good for slave and master alike. They argued that slavery was sanctioned by the Bible and was firmly grounded in philosophy and history. Southern authors contrasted the conditions of Northern wage workers—“wage slaves” forced to work long hours in factories and mines—with the familial bonds that could develop on plantations between slaves and master. George Fitzhugh, the boldest and best known of the proslavery authors, questioned the principle of equal rights for “unequal men” and attacked the capitalist wage system as worse than slavery. Among his works were *Sociology for the South* (1854) and *Cannibals All!* (1857).

Effect of Law and Literature

The Fugitive Slave Law, combined with the antislavery and proslavery literature, polarized the nation even more. Northerners who had earlier scorned abolition became more concerned about slavery as a moral issue. At the same time, a growing number of Southerners became convinced that the North's goal was to destroy the institution of slavery and the way of life based upon it.

National Parties in Crisis

The potency of the slavery controversy increased political instability, as shown in the weakening of the two major parties—the Democrats and the Whigs—and in a disastrous application of popular sovereignty in the territory of Kansas.

The Election of 1852

Signs of trouble for the Whig party were apparent in the 1852 election for president. The Whigs nominated another military hero of the Mexican War, General Winfield Scott. Attempting to ignore the slavery issue, the Whig campaign concentrated on the party's innocuous plans for improving roads and harbors. But Scott quickly discovered that sectional issues could not be held in check. The antislavery and Southern factions of the party fell to quarreling, and the party was on the verge of splitting apart.

The Democrats nominated a safe compromise candidate, Franklin Pierce of New Hampshire. Though a Northerner, Pierce was acceptable to Southern Democrats because he supported the Fugitive Slave Law. In the electoral college vote, Pierce and the Democrats won all but four states in a sweep that suggested the days of the Whig party were numbered.

The Kansas-Nebraska Act (1854)

With the Democrats firmly in control of national policy both in the White House and in Congress, a new law was passed that was to have disastrous consequences. Senator Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois devised a plan for building a railroad and promoting western settlement (while at the same time increasing the value of his own real estate holdings in Chicago). Douglas needed to win Southern approval for his plan to build a transcontinental railroad through the central United States, with a major terminus in Chicago. (Southern Democrats preferred a more southerly route for the railroad.) To obtain Southern approval for his railroad route, Douglas introduced a bill to divide the Nebraska Territory into two parts, the Kansas Territory and Nebraska Territory, and allow settlers in each territory to decide whether to allow slavery or not. Since these territories were located *north* of the 36°30' line, Douglas's bill gave Southern slave owners an opportunity to expand slavery that previously had been closed to them by the Missouri Compromise of 1820. Northern Democrats condemned the bill as a surrender to the "slave power."

After three months of bitter debate, both houses of Congress passed Douglas's bill as the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, and President Pierce signed it into law.

Extremists and Violence

The Kansas-Nebraska Act, in effect, repealed the Missouri Compromise that had kept a lid on regional tensions for more than three decades. After 1854, the conflicts between antislavery and proslavery forces exploded, both in Kansas and on the floor of the United States Senate.

THE UNITED STATES AFTER THE KANSAS-NEBRASKA ACT OF 1854



"Bleeding Kansas"

Stephen Douglas, the sponsor of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, expected the slavery issue in the territory to be settled peacefully by the antislavery farmers from the Midwest who migrated to Kansas. These settlers did in fact constitute a majority of the population. But slaveholders from the neighboring state of Missouri also set up homesteads in Kansas chiefly as a means of winning control of the territory for the South. Northern abolitionists and Free-Soilers responded by organizing the New England Emigrant Aid Company (1855), which paid for the transportation of antislavery settlers to Kansas. Fighting soon broke out between the proslavery and the antislavery groups, and the territory became known as "bleeding Kansas."

Proslavery Missourians, mockingly called "border ruffians" by their enemies, crossed the border to create a proslavery legislature in Lecompton, Kansas. Antislavery settlers refused to recognize this government and created their own legislature in Topeka. In 1856, proslavery forces attacked the free-soil town of Lawrence, killing two and destroying homes and businesses. Two days later, John Brown, a stern abolitionist who was born in Connecticut and living in New York, retaliated. He and his sons attacked a proslavery farm settlement at Pottawatomie Creek, killing five settlers.

In Washington, the Pierce administration kept aloof from the turmoil in Kansas. It did nothing to keep order in the territory and failed to support honest elections there. As “bleeding Kansas” became bloodier, the Democratic party became ever more divided between its Northern and Southern factions.

Caning of Senator Sumner The violence in Kansas spilled over into the halls of the U.S. Congress. In 1856, Massachusetts Senator Charles Sumner verbally attacked the Democratic administration in a vitriolic speech, “The Crime Against Kansas.” His intemperate remarks included personal charges against South Carolina Senator Andrew Butler. Butler’s nephew, Congressman Preston Brooks, defended his absent uncle’s honor by walking into the Senate chamber and beating Sumner over the head with a cane. (Brooks explained that dueling was too good for Sumner, but a cane was fit for a dog.) Sumner never fully recovered from the attack.

Brooks’ action outraged the North, and the House voted to censure him. Southerners, however, applauded Brooks’ deed and sent him numerous canes to replace the one he broke beating Sumner. The Sumner-Brooks incident was another sign of growing passions on both sides.

New Parties

The increasing tensions over slavery divided Northern and Southern Democrats, and it completely broke apart the Whig party. In hindsight, it is clear that the breakup of truly national political parties in the mid-1850s paralleled the breakup of the Union. The new parties came into being at this time—one temporary, the other permanent. Both played a role in bringing about the demise of a major national party, the Whigs.

Know-Nothing Party In addition to sectional divisions between North and South, there was also in the mid-1850s growing ethnic tension in the North between native-born Protestant Americans and immigrant Germans and Irish Catholics. Nativist hostility to these newcomers led to the formation of the American party—or the Know-Nothing party, as it was more commonly known (because party members commonly responded “I know nothing” to political questions). The Know-Nothings drew support away from the Whigs at a time when that party was reeling from its defeat in the 1852 election. Their one core issue was opposition to Catholics and immigrants who, in the 1840s and 1850s, were entering Northern cities in large numbers.

Although the Know-Nothings won a few local and state elections in the mid-1850s and helped to weaken the Whigs, they quickly lost influence, as sectional issues again became paramount.

Birth of the Republican Party The Republican party was founded in Wisconsin in 1854 as a direct reaction to the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Composed of a coalition of Free-Soilers and antislavery Whigs and Democrats, its overriding purpose was to oppose the spread of slavery in the territories—not to end slavery itself. Its first platform of 1854 called for the repeal of both the Kansas-Nebraska Act and the Fugitive Slave Law. As violence increased in Kansas, more and more people, including some abolitionists, joined the

Republican party, and it was soon the second largest party in the country. But because it remained in these years strictly a Northern or sectional party, its success alienated and threatened the South.

The Election of 1856

The Republicans' first test of strength came in the presidential election of 1856. Their nominee for president was a senator from California, the young explorer and "Pathfinder," John C. Frémont. The Republican platform called for no expansion of slavery, free homesteads, and a probusiness protective tariff. The Know-Nothings also competed strongly in this election, with their candidate, former President Millard Fillmore, winning 20 percent of the popular vote.

As the one major national party, the Democrats expected to win. They nominated James Buchanan of Pennsylvania, rejecting both President Pierce and Stephen Douglas because they were too closely identified with the controversial Kansas-Nebraska Act. As expected, the Democratic ticket won a majority of both the popular and electoral vote. But the Republicans made a remarkably strong showing for a sectional party. In the electoral college, Frémont carried 11 of the 16 free states. People could predict that the antislavery Republicans might soon win the White House without a single vote from the South.

The election of 1856 foreshadowed the emergence of a powerful political party that would win all but four presidential elections between 1860 and 1932.

Constitutional Issues

Both the Democrats' position of popular sovereignty and the Republicans' stand against the expansion of slavery received serious blows during the Buchanan administration (1857–1861). Republicans attacked Buchanan as a weak president.

Lecompton Constitution

One of Buchanan's first challenges as president in 1857 was to decide whether to accept or reject a proslavery state constitution for Kansas submitted by the Southern legislature at Lecompton. Buchanan knew that the Lecompton constitution, as it was called, did not have the support of the majority of settlers. Even so, he asked Congress to accept the document and admit Kansas as a slave state. Congress did not do so, because many Democrats, including Stephen Douglas, joined with the Republicans in rejecting the Lecompton constitution. The next year, 1858, the proslavery document was overwhelmingly rejected by Kansas settlers, most of whom were antislavery Republicans.

Dred Scott v. Sandford (1857)

Congressional folly and presidential ineptitude contributed to the sectional crisis of the 1850s. Then the Supreme Court worsened the crisis when it infuriated many Northerners with a controversial proslavery decision in the case of a slave named Dred Scott. Scott had been held in slavery in Missouri and then taken to the free territory of Wisconsin where he lived for two years before

returning to Missouri. Arguing that his residence on free soil made him a free citizen, Scott sued for his freedom in Missouri in 1846. The case worked its way through the court system. It finally reached the Supreme Court, which rendered its decision in March 1857, only two days after Buchanan was sworn in as president.

Presiding over the Court was Chief Justice Roger Taney, a Southern Democrat. A majority of the Court decided against Scott and gave these reasons:

- Dred Scott had no right to sue in a federal court because the Framers of the Constitution did not intend African Americans to be U.S. citizens.
- Congress did not have the power to deprive any person of property without due process of law; if slaves were a form of property, then Congress could not exclude slavery from any federal territory.
- The Missouri Compromise was unconstitutional because it excluded slavery from Wisconsin and other Northern territories.

The Court's ruling delighted Southern Democrats and infuriated Northern Republicans. In effect, the Supreme Court declared that all parts of the western territories were open to slavery. Republicans denounced the Dred Scott decision as "the greatest crime in the annals of the republic." Because of the timing of the decision, right after Buchanan's inauguration, many Northerners suspected that the Democratic president and the Democratic majority on the Supreme Court, including Taney, had secretly planned the Dred Scott decision, hoping that it would settle the slavery question once and for all. The decision increased Northerners' suspicions of a slave power conspiracy and induced thousands of former Democrats to vote Republican.

Northern Democrats such as Senator Douglas were left with the almost impossible task of supporting popular sovereignty without repudiating the Dred Scott decision. Douglas's hopes for a sectional compromise and his ambitions for the presidency were both in jeopardy.

Lincoln-Douglas Debates

In 1858, the focus of the nation was on Stephen Douglas's campaign for reelection as senator from Illinois. Challenging him for the Senate seat was a successful trial lawyer and former member of the Illinois legislature, Abraham Lincoln. The Republican candidate had served only one two-year term in Congress in the 1840s as a Whig. Nationally, he was an unknown compared to Douglas (the Little Giant), the champion of popular sovereignty and possibly the best hope for holding the nation together if elected president in 1860.

Lincoln was not an abolitionist. Even so, as a moderate who was against the expansion of slavery, he spoke effectively of slavery as a moral issue. ("If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong.") Accepting the Illinois Republicans' nomination, the candidate delivered his celebrated "house-divided" speech that won him fame. "This government," said Lincoln, "cannot endure permanently

half slave and half free,” a statement that made Southerners view Lincoln as a radical. In seven campaign debates held in different Illinois towns, Lincoln shared the platform with his famous opponent, Douglas. The Republican challenger attacked Douglas’s seeming indifference to slavery as a moral issue.

In a debate in Freeport, Illinois, Lincoln challenged Douglas to reconcile popular sovereignty with the Dred Scott decision. In what became known as the Freeport Doctrine, Douglas responded that slavery could not exist in a community if the local citizens did not pass laws (slave codes) maintaining it. His views angered Southern Democrats because, from their point of view, Douglas did not go far enough in supporting the implications of the Dred Scott decision.

Douglas won his campaign for reelection to the U.S. Senate. In the long run, however, he lost ground in his own party by alienating Southern Democrats. Lincoln, on the other hand, emerged from the debates as a national figure and a leading contender for the Republican nomination for president in 1860.

The Road to Secession

Outside Illinois, the Republicans did well in the congressional elections of 1858, which alarmed many Southerners. They worried not only about the anti-slavery plank in the Republicans’ program but also about that party’s economic program, which favored the interests of Northern industrialists at the expense of the South. The higher tariffs pledged in the Republican platform could only help Northern business and hurt the South’s dependence on the export of cotton. Therefore, Southerners feared that a Republican victory in 1860 would spell disaster for their economic interests and also threaten their “constitutional right,” as affirmed by the Supreme Court, to hold slaves as property. If this were not enough cause for alarm, Northern radicals provided money to John Brown, the man who had massacred five farmers in Kansas in 1856.

John Brown’s Raid at Harpers Ferry

John Brown confirmed the South’s worst fears of radical abolitionism when he tried to start a slave uprising in Virginia. In October 1859, he led a small band of followers, including his four sons and some former slaves, in an attack on the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry. His impractical plan was to use guns from the arsenal to arm Virginia’s slaves, whom he expected to rise up in general revolt. Federal troops under the command of Robert E. Lee captured Brown and his band after a two-day siege. Brown and six of his followers were tried for treason, convicted, and hanged by the state of Virginia.

Moderates in the North, including Republican leaders, condemned Brown’s use of violence, but Southerners were not convinced by their words. Southern whites saw the raid as final proof of the North’s true intentions—to use slave revolts to destroy the South. Because John Brown spoke with simple eloquence at his trial of his humanitarian motives in wanting to free the slaves, he was hailed as a martyr by many antislavery Northerners. (A few years later, when civil war broke out, John Brown was celebrated by advancing Northern armies singing: “Glory, glory, hallelujah! His soul is marching on.”)

The Election of 1860

After John Brown's raid, more and more Americans understood that their country was moving to the brink of disintegration. The presidential election of 1860 would be a test if the union could survive.

Breakup of the Democratic Party As 1860 began, the Democratic party represented the last practical hope for coalition and compromise. The Democrats held their national nominating convention in Charleston, South Carolina. Stephen Douglas was the party's leading candidate and the person most capable of winning the presidency. However, his nomination was blocked by a combination of angry Southerners and supporters of President Buchanan.

After deadlocking at Charleston, the Democrats held a second convention in Baltimore. Many delegates from the slave states walked out, enabling the remaining delegates to nominate Douglas on a platform of popular sovereignty and enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law. Southern Democrats then held their own convention in Baltimore and nominated Vice President John C. Breckinridge of Kentucky as their candidate. The Southern Democratic platform called for the unrestricted extension of slavery in the territories and the annexation of Cuba, a land where slavery was already flourishing.

Republican Nomination of Lincoln When the Republicans met in Chicago, they enjoyed the prospect of an easy win over the divided Democrats. They made the most of their advantage by drafting a platform that appealed strongly to the economic self-interest of Northerners and Westerners. In addition to calling for the exclusion of slavery from the territories, the Republican platform promised a protective tariff for industry, free land for homesteaders, and internal improvements to encourage western settlement, including a railroad to the Pacific. To ensure victory, the Republicans turned away from Senator William H. Seward, a well-known leader but more radical on slavery, to the strong debater from Illinois, Abraham Lincoln—a candidate who could carry the key Midwestern states of Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio.

One cloud on the horizon darkened the Republicans' otherwise bright future. In the South, secessionists warned that if Lincoln was elected president, their states would leave the Union.

A Fourth Political Party Fearing the consequences of a Republican victory, a group of former Whigs, Know-Nothings, and moderate Democrats formed a new party: the Constitutional Union party. For president, they nominated John Bell of Tennessee. The party's platform pledged enforcement of the laws and the Constitution and, above all, preserving the Union.

Election Results While Douglas campaigned across the country, Lincoln confidently remained at home in Springfield, Illinois, meeting with Republican leaders and giving statements to the press. The election results were predictable. Lincoln carried every one of the free states of the North, which represented a solid majority of 59 percent of the electoral votes. He won only 39.8 percent of the popular vote, however, and would therefore be a minority president. Breckinridge, the Southern Democrat, carried the Deep South, leaving Douglas and Bell with just a few electoral votes in the border states.

Together, the two Democrats, Douglas and Breckinridge, received many more *popular* votes than Lincoln, the Republican. Nevertheless, the new political reality was that the populous free states had enough electoral votes to select a president without the need for a single electoral vote from the South.

THE ELECTION OF 1860



Secession of the Deep South

The Republicans controlled neither the Congress nor the Supreme Court. Even so, the election of Lincoln was all that Southern secessionists needed to call for immediate disunion. In December 1860, a special convention in South Carolina voted unanimously to secede. Within the next six weeks, other state conventions in Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas did the same. In February 1861, representatives of the seven states of the Deep South met in Montgomery, Alabama, and created the Confederate States of America. The constitution of this would-be Southern nation was similar to the U.S. Constitution, except that the Confederacy placed limits on the government's power to impose tariffs and restrict slavery. Elected president and vice president of the Confederacy were Senator Jefferson Davis of Mississippi and Alexander Stephens of Georgia.

Crittenden Compromise. A lame-duck president (a leader completing a term after someone else has been elected to his or her office), Buchanan had five months in office before President-elect Lincoln was due to succeed him. Buchanan was a conservative who did nothing to prevent the secession of the seven states. Congress was more active. In a last-ditch effort to appease the South, Senator John Crittenden of Kentucky proposed a constitutional amendment that would guarantee the right to hold slaves in all territories south of 36°30'. Lincoln, however, said that he could not accept this compromise because it violated the Republican position against extension of slavery into the territories.

Southern whites who voted for secession believed they were acting in the tradition of the Revolution of 1776. They argued that they had a right to national independence and to dissolve a constitutional compact that no longer protected them from “tyranny” (the tyranny of Northern rule). Many of them also thought that Lincoln, like Buchanan, might permit secession without a fight. Those who thought this had badly miscalculated.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES: WHAT CAUSED THE CIVIL WAR?

Was slavery the primary cause of the Civil War? In the decades after the war, Northern historians argued emphatically that the South’s attachment to slavery was the principal, if not the only, cause. They blamed the war on a conspiracy of slave owners—a small minority of Southerners—who wanted only to expand slavery at the expense of whites and blacks alike.

Southern historians, on the other hand, viewed the conflict between the two sections, North and South, as a dispute over the nature of the Constitution. They argued that Northern abolitionists and Free-Soil politicians attempted to overturn the original compact of the states, and that the Southern states seceded to defend the constitutional rights threatened by Northern aggression.

By the early 20th century, passions had cooled on both sides, and scholars of the Progressive era (1900–1917) thought economic interests were the foundation of all political conflict. Thus, Charles Beard, a leading historian of this era, viewed the sectional conflict of the 1850s as a clash of two opposing economic systems: the industrial North versus the agricultural South. His economic interpretation of the Civil War stressed the importance of the Republicans’ commitment to the economic ambitions of Northern industrialists for high tariffs and of western farmers for free land.

American disillusionment with World War I led historians to question whether the Civil War was any more necessary or inevitable than the world war had been. Previously, people had assumed that the Civil War was, in William Seward’s words, an “irrepressible conflict between opposing forces.” Now, in the 1920s and 1930s, that assumption was

challenged by revisionist historians who argued that it was only the blundering of politicians and the rash acts of a few extremists such as John Brown that were chiefly responsible for secession and war. In an essay in 1940, James G. Randall summarized the thinking of the revisionist school: “If one word or phrase were selected to account for the war, that word would not be slavery, or states’ rights, or diverse civilizations. It would have to be such a word as fanaticism (on both sides), or misunderstanding, or perhaps politics.” Politicians of the 1850s who worked for compromise (Clay, Douglas, and Crittenden) were treated as the revisionists’ heroes, whereas Lincoln was criticized for fomenting sectional passions with his house-divided and other speeches.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the civil rights movement provided the backdrop for rethinking the causes of the Civil War. Historians who were sympathetic with African Americans’ struggles for civil rights returned to the view that slavery was the chief cause of disunion after all. They argued that moral issues such as slavery are impossible to compromise. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., a leading historian of the 1950s, wrote: “A society closed in the defense of evil institutions thus creates moral differences far too profound to be solved by compromise.” In this view, slavery as an inherently evil institution was at the root of a conflict that was indeed “irrepressible.”

KEY TERMS BY THEME

Battle for the Territories (PEO, POL) free-soil movement Free-Soil party conscience Whigs “barnburners” New England Emigrant Aid Company “bleeding Kansas” Pottawatomie Creek Lecompton constitution	Stephen A. Douglas Millard Fillmore Kansas-Nebraska Act (1854) Crittenden compromise	Abraham Lincoln Lincoln-Douglas debates house-divided speech Freeport Doctrine
Compromising (POL) popular sovereignty Lewis Cass Henry Clay Zachary Taylor Compromise of 1850	Politics in Crisis (POL) Franklin Pierce Know-Nothing party Republican party John C. Frémont James Buchanan election of 1860 secession	Violent Responses (POL) Sumner-Brooks incident John Brown Harpers Ferry raid
	Slavery (POL) Fugitive Slave Law Underground Railroad Harriet Tubman <i>Dred Scott v. Sandford</i> Roger Taney	Writing Power (CUL) Harriet Beecher Stowe, <i>Uncle Tom’s Cabin</i> Hinton R. Helper, <i>Impending Crisis of the South</i> George Fitzhugh, <i>Sociology of the South</i>

THE CIVIL WAR, 1861–1865

It is enough to make the whole world start to see the awful amount of death and destruction that now stalks abroad. Daily for the past two months has the work progressed and I see no signs of a remission till one or both the armies are destroyed. . . . I begin to regard the death and mangling of a couple of thousand men as a small affair, a kind of morning dash—and it may be well that we become so hardened.

General William T. Sherman, June 30, 1864

The Civil War between the Union and the Confederacy (1861–1865) was the most costly of all American wars in terms of the loss of human life—and also the most destructive war ever fought in the Western Hemisphere. The deaths of 750,000 people, a true national tragedy, constituted only part of the impact of the war on American society. Most important, the Civil War freed 4 million people from slavery, giving the nation what President Lincoln called a “new birth of freedom.” The war also transformed American society by accelerating industrialization and modernization in the North and destroying much of the South. These changes were so fundamental and profound that some historians refer to the Civil War as the Second American Revolution. While this chapter summarizes the major military aspects of the Civil War, it, like the AP exam, emphasizes the social, economic, and political changes that took place during the war.

The War Begins

When Lincoln took office as the first Republican president in March 1861, people wondered if he would challenge the secession of South Carolina and other states militarily. In his inaugural address, Lincoln assured Southerners that he would not interfere with slavery. At the same time, he warned, no state had the right to break up the Union. He concluded by appealing for restraint:

In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow-countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. The government will not assail you. You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors.

Fort Sumter

Despite the president's message of both conciliation and warning, the danger of a war breaking out was acute. Most critical was the status of two federal forts in states that had seceded. One of these, Fort Sumter, in the harbor of Charleston, South Carolina, was cut off from vital supplies and reinforcements by Southern control of the harbor. Rather than either giving up Fort Sumter or attempting to defend it, Lincoln announced that he was sending provisions of food to the small federal garrison. He thus gave South Carolina the choice of either permitting the fort to hold out or opening fire with its shore batteries. Carolina's guns thundered their reply and thus, on April 12, 1861, the war began. The attack on Fort Sumter and its capture after two days of incessant pounding united most Northerners behind a patriotic fight to save the Union.

Use of Executive Power More than any previous president, Lincoln acted in unprecedented ways, drawing upon his powers as both chief executive and commander in chief, often without the authorization or approval of Congress. For example, right after the Fort Sumter crisis he (1) called for 75,000 volunteers to put down the "insurrection" in the Confederacy, (2) authorized spending for a war, and (3) suspended the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus. Since Congress was not in session, the president acted completely on his own authority. Lincoln later explained that he had to take strong measures without congressional approval "as indispensable to the public safety."

Secession of the Upper South

Before the attack on Fort Sumter, only seven states of the Deep South had seceded. After it became clear that Lincoln would use troops in the crisis, four states of the Upper South—Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Arkansas—also seceded and joined the Confederacy. The Confederates then moved their capital to Richmond, Virginia. The people of western Virginia remained loyal to the Union, and the region became a separate state in 1863.

Keeping the Border States in the Union

Four other slaveholding states might have seceded, but instead remained in the Union. The decisions of Delaware, Maryland, Missouri, and Kentucky *not* to join the Confederacy was partly due to Union sentiment in those states and partly the result of shrewd federal policies. In Maryland, pro-secessionists attacked Union troops and threatened the railroad to Washington. The Union army resorted to martial law to keep the state under federal control. In Missouri, the presence of U.S. troops prevented the pro-South elements in the state from gaining control, although guerrilla forces sympathetic to the Confederacy were active throughout the war. In Kentucky, the state legislature voted to remain neutral in the conflict. Lincoln initially respected its neutrality and waited for the South to violate it before moving in federal troops.

Keeping the border states in the Union was a primary military and political goal for Lincoln. Their loss would have increased the Confederate population by more than 50 percent and would have severely weakened the North's

strategic position for conducting the war. Partly to avoid alienating Unionists in the border states, Lincoln rejected initial calls for the emancipation of slaves.

Wartime Advantages

The Union and the Confederacy each started the war with some strengths and some weaknesses.

Military The Confederacy entered the war with the advantage of having to fight only a defensive war to win, while the Union had to conquer an area as large as Western Europe. The Confederates had to move troops and supplies shorter distances than the Union. It had a long, indented coastline that was difficult to blockade and, most important, experienced military leaders and high troop morale. The Union hoped that its population of 22 million against the Confederate's population of only 5.5 million free whites would work to its favor in a war of attrition. The North's population advantage was enhanced during the war by 800,000 immigrants. Emancipation also brought 180,000 African Americans into the Union army in the critical final years of the war. The Union could also count on a loyal U.S. Navy, which ultimately gave it command of the rivers and territorial waters.

Economic The Union dominated the nation's economy, controlling most of the banking and capital of the country, more than 85 percent of the factories, more than 70 percent of the railroads, and even 65 percent of the farmland. The skills of Northern clerks and bookkeepers proved valuable in the logistical support of large military operations. Confederates hoped that European demand for its cotton would bring recognition and financial aid. Like other rebel movements in history, the Confederates counted on outside help to be successful.

Political The two sides had distinct goals. The Confederates were struggling for independence while the Union was fighting to preserve the Union. However, the ideology of states' rights proved a serious liability for the new Confederate government. The irony was that in order to win the war, the Confederates needed a strong central government with strong public support. The Confederates had neither, while the Union had a well-established central government, and in Abraham Lincoln and in the Republican and Democratic parties it had experienced politicians with a strong popular base. The ultimate hope of the Confederates was that the people of the Union would turn against Lincoln and the Republicans and quit the war because it was too costly.

The Confederate States of America

The Confederate constitution was modeled after the U.S. Constitution, except that it provided a single six-year term for the president and gave the president an item veto (the power to veto only part of a bill). Its constitution denied the Confederate congress the powers to levy a protective tariff and to appropriate funds for internal improvements, but it did prohibit the foreign slave trade. President Jefferson Davis tried to increase his executive powers during the war, but Southern governors resisted attempts at centralization, some holding back troops and resources to protect their own states. At one point, Vice President Alexander H.

Stephens, in defense of states' rights, even urged the secession of Georgia in response to the "despotic" actions of the Confederate government.

The Confederacy was chronically short of money. It tried loans, income taxes (including a 10 percent tax in-kind on farm produce), and even impressment of private property, but these revenues paid for only a small part of war costs. The government issued more than \$1 billion in paper money, so much that it caused severe inflation. By the end of the war, the value of a Confederate dollar was less than two cents. The Confederate congress nationalized the railroads and encouraged industrial development. The Confederacy sustained nearly 1 million troops at its peak, but a war of attrition doomed its efforts.

First Years of a Long War: 1861–1862

People at first expected the war to last no more than a few weeks. Lincoln called up the first volunteers for an enlistment period of only 90 days. "On to Richmond!" was the optimistic cry, but as Americans soon learned, it would take almost four years of ferocious fighting before Union troops finally did march into the Confederate capital.

First Battle of Bull Run In the first major battle of the war (July 1861), 30,000 federal troops marched from Washington, D.C., to attack Confederate forces positioned near Bull Run Creek at Manassas Junction, Virginia. Just as the Union forces seemed close to victory, Confederate reinforcements under General Thomas (Stonewall) Jackson counterattacked and sent the inexperienced Union troops in disorderly and panicky flight back to Washington (together with civilian curiosity-seekers and picnickers). The battle ended the illusion of a short war and also promoted the myth that the Rebels were invincible in battle.

Union Strategy General-in-Chief Winfield Scott, veteran of the 1812 and Mexican wars, devised a three-part strategy for winning a long war:

- Use the U.S. Navy to blockade Southern ports (called the Anaconda Plan), cutting off essential supplies from reaching the Confederacy
- Take control of the Mississippi River, dividing the Confederacy in two
- Raise and train an army 500,000 strong to conquer Richmond

The first two parts of the strategy proved easier to achieve than the third, but ultimately all three were important in achieving Northern victory.

After the Union's defeat at Bull Run, federal armies experienced a succession of crushing defeats as they attempted various campaigns in Virginia. Each was less successful than the one before.

Peninsula Campaign General George B. McClellan, the new commander of the Union army in the East, insisted that his troops be given a long period of training before going into battle. Finally, after many delays that sorely tested Lincoln's patience, McClellan's army invaded Virginia in March 1862. The

Union army was stopped as a result of brilliant tactical moves by Confederate General Robert E. Lee, who emerged as the commander of the South's eastern forces. After five months, McClellan was forced to retreat and was ordered back to the Potomac, where he was replaced by General John Pope.

THE CIVIL WAR: THE UNION VS. THE CONFEDERACY



Second Battle of Bull Run Lee took advantage of the change in Union generals to strike quickly at Pope's army in Northern Virginia. He drew Pope into a trap, then struck the enemy's flank, and sent the Union army backward to Bull Run. Pope withdrew to the defenses of Washington.

Antietam Following up his victory at Bull Run, Lee led his army across the Potomac into enemy territory in Maryland. In doing so, he hoped that a major Confederate victory in a Union state would convince Britain to give official recognition and support to the Confederacy. By this time (September 1862), Lincoln had restored McClellan to command of the Union army. McClellan had the advantage of knowing Lee's battle plan, because a copy of it had been dropped accidentally by a Confederate officer. The Union army intercepted the invading Confederates at Antietam Creek in the Maryland town of Sharpsburg.

Here the bloodiest single day of combat in the entire war took place, a day in which more than 22,000 soldiers were killed or wounded.

Unable to break through Union lines, Lee's army retreated to Virginia. Disappointed with McClellan for failing to pursue Lee's weakened and retreating army, Lincoln removed him for a final time as the Union commander. The president complained that his general had a "bad case of the slows." While a draw on the battlefield, Antietam proved to be a decisive battle because the Confederates failed to get what they so urgently needed—open recognition and aid from a foreign power. On the other side, Lincoln found enough encouragement in the results of Antietam to claim a Union victory. As explained later in this chapter, Lincoln used the partial triumph of Union arms to announce plans for a direct assault on the institution of slavery.

Fredericksburg Replacing McClellan with the more aggressive General Ambrose Burnside, Lincoln discovered that a strategy of reckless attack could have even worse consequences than McClellan's strategy of caution and inaction. In December 1862, a large Union army under Burnside attacked Lee's army at Fredericksburg, Virginia, and suffered immense losses: 12,000 dead or wounded compared to 5,000 Confederate casualties. Both Union and Confederate generals were slow to learn that improved weaponry, especially the deadly fire from enemy artillery, took the romance out of heroic charges against entrenched positions. By the end of 1862, the awful magnitude of the war was all too clear—with no prospect of military victory for either side.

The second year of war, 1862, was a disastrous one for the Union except for two engagements, one at sea and the other on the rivers of the West.

Monitor vs. Merrimac The Union's hopes for winning the war depended upon its ability to maximize its economic and naval advantages by an effective blockade of Confederate ports (the Anaconda plan). During McClellan's Peninsula campaign, the Union's blockade strategy was placed in jeopardy by the Confederate ironclad ship the *Merrimac* (a former Union ship, rebuilt and renamed the *Virginia*) that attacked and sunk several Union wooden ships on March 8, 1862, near Hampton Roads, Virginia. The ironclad ship seemed unstoppable. However, on March 9, the Union's own ironclad, the *Monitor*, engaged the *Merrimac* in a five-hour duel. Although the battle ended in a draw, the *Monitor* prevented the Confederate's formidable new weapon from challenging the U.S. naval blockade. More broadly, the *Monitor* and the *Merrimac* marked a turning point in naval warfare, with vulnerable wooden ships being replaced by far more formidable ironclad ones.

Grant in the West The battle of the ironclads occurred at about the same time as a far bloodier encounter in western Tennessee, a Confederate state. The Union's campaign for control of the Mississippi River was partly under the command of a West Point graduate, Ulysses S. Grant, who had joined up for the war after an unsuccessful civilian career. Striking south from Illinois in early 1862, Grant used a combination of gunboats and army maneuvers to capture Fort Henry and Fort Donelson on the Cumberland River (a branch of the Mississippi). These stunning victories, in which 14,000 Confederates were taken

prisoner, opened up the state of Mississippi to Union attack. A few weeks later, a Confederate army under Albert Johnston surprised Grant at Shiloh, Tennessee, but the Union army held its ground and finally forced the Confederates to retreat after terrible losses on both sides (more than 23,000 dead and wounded). Grant's drive down the Mississippi was complemented in April 1862 by the capture of New Orleans by the Union navy under David Farragut.

Foreign Affairs and Diplomacy

The Confederate's hopes for securing independence hinged as much on its diplomats as on soldiers. Confederate leaders fully expected that cotton would indeed prove to be "king" and induce Britain or France, or both, to give direct aid to the war effort. Besides depending on cotton for their textile mills, wealthy British industrialists and members of the British aristocracy looked forward with pleasure to the breakup of the American democratic experiment. From the Union's point of view, it was critically important to prevent the Confederacy from gaining the foreign support and recognition that it desperately needed.

Trent Affair

Britain came close to siding with the Confederacy in late 1861 over an incident at sea. Confederate diplomats James Mason and John Slidell were traveling to England on a British steamer, the *Trent*, on a mission to gain recognition for their government. A Union warship stopped the British ship, removed Mason and Slidell, and brought them to the United States as prisoners of war. Britain threatened war over the incident unless the two diplomats were released. Despite intense public criticism, Lincoln gave in to British demands. Mason and Slidell were duly set free, but after again sailing for Europe, they failed to obtain full recognition of the Confederacy from either Britain or France.

Confederate Raiders

The Confederates were able to gain enough recognition as a belligerent to purchase warships from British shipyards. Confederate commerce-raiders did serious harm to U.S. merchant ships. One of them, the *Alabama*, captured more than 60 vessels before being sunk off the coast of France by a Union warship. After the war, Great Britain eventually agreed to pay the United States \$15.5 million for damages caused by the South's commerce-raiders.

The U.S. minister to Britain, Charles Francis Adams, prevented a potentially much more serious threat. Learning that the Confederacy had arranged to purchase Laird rams (ships with iron rams) from Britain for use against the Union's naval blockade, Adams persuaded the British government to cancel the sale rather than risk war with the United States.

Failure of Cotton Diplomacy

In the end, the South's hopes for European intervention were disappointed. "King Cotton" did not have the power to dictate another nation's foreign policy, since Europe quickly found ways of obtaining cotton from other sources. By the time shortages of Southern cotton hit the British textile industry, adequate

shipments of cotton began arriving from Egypt and India. Also, materials other than cotton could be used for textiles, and the woolen and linen industries were not slow to take advantage of their opportunity.

Two other factors went into Britain's decision not to recognize the Confederacy. First, as mentioned, General Lee's setback at Antietam played a role; without seeing a decisive Confederate military victory, the British government would not risk recognition. Second, Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation (January 1863) made the end of slavery an objective of the Union, a position that appealed strongly to Britain's working class. While conservative leaders of Britain were sympathetic to the Confederates, they could not defy the pro-Northern, antislavery feelings of the British majority.

The End of Slavery

Even though Lincoln in the 1850s spoke out against slavery as "an unqualified evil," as president he seemed hesitant to take action against slavery as advocated by many of his Republican supporters. Lincoln's concerns included (1) keeping the support of the border states, (2) the constitutional protections of slavery, (3) the racial prejudice of many Northerners, and (4) the fear that premature action could be overturned in the next election. All these concerns made the timing and method of ending slavery fateful decisions. Enslaved individuals were freed during the Civil War as a result of military events, governmental policy, and their own actions.

Confiscation Acts

Early in the war (May 1861), Union General Benjamin Butler refused to return captured slaves to their Confederate owners, arguing that they were "contraband of war." The power to seize enemy property used to wage war against the United States was the legal basis for the first Confiscation Act passed by Congress in August 1861. Soon after the passage of this act, thousands of "contrabands" were using their feet to escape slavery by finding their way into Union camps. In July 1862, Congress passed a second Confiscation Act that freed persons enslaved by anyone engaged in rebellion against the United States. The law also empowered the president to use freed slaves in the Union army in any capacity, including battle.

Emancipation Proclamation

By July 1862, Lincoln had already decided to use his powers as commander in chief of the armed forces to free all enslaved persons in the states then at war with the United States. He justified his policy as a "military necessity." Lincoln delayed announcement of the policy, however, until he could win the support of conservative Northerners. At the same time, he encouraged the border states to come up with plans for emancipation, with compensation to the owners.

After the Battle of Antietam, on September 22, 1862, Lincoln issued a warning that enslaved people in all states still in rebellion on January 1, 1863, would be "then, thenceforward, and forever free." As promised, on the first

day of the new year, 1863, the president issued his Emancipation Proclamation. After listing states from Arkansas to Virginia that were in rebellion, the proclamation stated:

I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves within said designated States and parts of States are, and henceforward shall be, free; and that the Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authorities thereof, shall recognize and maintain the freedom of said persons.

Consequences Since the president's proclamation applied only to enslaved people residing in Confederate states *outside* Union control, it immediately freed only about 1 percent of slaves. Slavery in the border states was allowed to continue. Even so, the proclamation was of major importance because it enlarged the purpose of the war. For the first time, Union armies were fighting against slavery, not merely against secession. The proclamation added weight to the Confiscation acts, increasing the number of slaves who sought freedom by fleeing to Union lines. Thus, with each advance of Northern troops into the South, abolition advanced as well. As an added blow to the Confederacy, the proclamation also authorized the use of freed slaves as Union soldiers. Suddenly, the Union army had thousands of dedicated new recruits.

Thirteenth Amendment

Standing in the way of full emancipation were phrases in the U.S. Constitution that had long legitimized slavery. To free all enslaved people in the border states, the country needed to ratify a constitutional amendment. Even the abolitionists gave Lincoln credit for playing an active role in the political struggle to secure enough votes in Congress to pass the 13th Amendment. By December 1865 (months after Lincoln's death), this amendment abolishing slavery was ratified by the required number of states. The language of the amendment could not be simpler or clearer:

Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

Freedmen in the War

After the Emancipation Proclamation (January 1863), hundreds of thousands of Southern blacks—approximately one-quarter of the slave population—walked away from slavery to seek the protection of the approaching Union armies. Almost 200,000 African Americans, most of whom were newly freed slaves, served in the Union army and navy. Segregated into all-black units, such as the Massachusetts 54th Regiment, black troops performed courageously under fire and won the respect of Union white soldiers. More than 37,000 African American soldiers died in what became known as the Army of Freedom.

The Union Triumphs, 1863–1865

By early 1863, the fortunes of war were turning against the Confederates. Although General Lee started the year with another major victory at Chancellorsville, Virginia, the Confederate economy was in desperate shape, as planters and farmers lost control of their slave labor force, and an increasing number of poorly provisioned soldiers were deserting from the Confederate army.

Turning Point

The decisive turning point in the war came in the first week of July when the Confederacy suffered two crushing defeats in the West and the East.

Vicksburg In the West, by the spring of 1863, Union forces controlled New Orleans as well as most of the Mississippi River and surrounding valley. Thus, the Union objective of securing complete control of the Mississippi River was close to an accomplished fact when General Grant began his siege of the heavily fortified city of Vicksburg, Mississippi. Union artillery bombarded Vicksburg for seven weeks before the Confederates finally surrendered the city (and nearly 29,000 soldiers) on July 4. Federal warships now controlled the full length of the Mississippi and cut off Texas, Louisiana, and Arkansas from the rest of the Confederacy.

Gettysburg Meanwhile, in the East, Lee again took the offensive by leading an army into enemy territory: the Union states of Maryland and Pennsylvania. If he could either destroy the Union army or capture a major Northern city, Lee hoped to force the Union to call for peace—or at least to gain foreign intervention on behalf of the Confederacy. On July 1, 1863, the invading Confederate army surprised Union units at Gettysburg in southern Pennsylvania. What followed was the most crucial battle of the war and the bloodiest, with more than 50,000 casualties. Lee's assault on Union lines on the second and third days, including a famous but unsuccessful charge led by George Pickett, proved futile, and destroyed a key part of the Confederate army. What was left of Lee's forces retreated to Virginia, never to regain the offensive.

Grant in Command

Lincoln finally found a general who could fight and win. In early 1864, he brought Grant east to Virginia and made him commander of all the Union armies. Grant settled on a strategy of war by attrition. He aimed to wear down the Confederate's armies and systematically destroy their vital lines of supply. Fighting doggedly for months, Grant's Army of the Potomac suffered heavier casualties than Lee's forces in the battles of the Wilderness, Spotsylvania, and Cold Harbor. But by never letting up, Grant succeeded in reducing Lee's army in each battle and forcing it into a defensive line around Richmond. In this final stage of the Civil War, the fighting foreshadowed the trench warfare that would later characterize World War I. No longer was this a war "between gentlemen" but a modern "total" war against civilians as well as soldiers.

Sherman's March The chief instrument of Grant's aggressive tactics for subduing the South was a hardened veteran, General William Tecumseh

Sherman. Leading a force of 100,000 men, Sherman set out from Chattanooga, Tennessee, on a campaign of deliberate destruction that went clear across the state of Georgia and then swept north into South Carolina. Sherman was a pioneer of the tactics of total war. Marching relentlessly through Georgia, his troops destroyed everything in their path, burning cotton fields, barns, and houses—everything the enemy might use to survive. Sherman took Atlanta in September 1864 in time to help Lincoln’s prospects for reelection. He marched into Savannah in December and completed his campaign in February 1865 by setting fire to Columbia, the capital of South Carolina and cradle of secession.

Sherman’s march had its intended effects: helping to break the spirit of the Confederacy and destroying its will to fight on.

The Election of 1864 The Democrats’ nominee for president was the popular General George McClellan, whose platform calling for peace had wide appeal among millions of war-weary voters. The Republicans renamed their party the Unionist party as a way of attracting the votes of “War Democrats” (those who disagreed with the Democratic platform). A brief “ditch-Lincoln” movement fizzled out, and the Republican (Unionist) convention again chose Lincoln as its presidential candidate and a loyal War Democrat from Tennessee, Senator Andrew Johnson, as his running mate. The Lincoln-Johnson ticket won 212 electoral votes to the Democrats’ 21. The popular vote, however, was much closer, for McClellan took 45 percent of the total votes cast.

The End of the War

The effects of the Union blockade, combined with Sherman’s march of destruction, spread hunger through much of the South in the winter of 1864–1865. On the battlefield in Virginia, Grant continued to outflank Lee’s lines until they collapsed around Petersburg, resulting in the fall of Richmond on April 3, 1865. Everyone knew that the end was near.

Surrender at Appomattox The Confederate government tried to negotiate for peace, but Lincoln would accept nothing short of restoration of the Union, and Jefferson Davis still demanded nothing less than independence. Lee retreated from Richmond with an army of less than 30,000 men. He tried to escape to the mountains, only to be cut off and forced to surrender to Grant at Appomattox Court House on April 9, 1865. The Union general treated his longtime enemy with respect and allowed Lee’s men to return to their homes with their horses.

Assassination of Lincoln Only a month before Lee’s surrender, Lincoln delivered one of his greatest speeches—the second inaugural address. He urged that the defeated South be treated benevolently, “with malice toward none; with charity for all.”

On April 14, John Wilkes Booth, an embittered actor and Confederate sympathizer, shot and killed the president while he was attending a performance in Ford’s Theater in Washington. On the same night, a co-conspirator attacked but only wounded Secretary of State William Seward. These shocking events aroused the fury of Northerners at the very time that the Confederates

most needed a sympathetic hearing. The loss of Lincoln's leadership was widely mourned, but the extent of the loss was not fully appreciated until the two sections of a reunited country had to cope with the overwhelming problems of postwar Reconstruction.

Effects of the War on Civilian Life

Both during the war and in the years that followed, American society underwent deep and sometimes wrenching changes.

Political Change

The electoral process continued during the war with surprisingly few restrictions. Secession of the Southern states had created Republican majorities in both houses of Congress. Within Republican ranks, however, there were sharp differences between the radical faction (those who championed the cause of immediate abolition of slavery) and the moderate faction (Free-Soilers who were chiefly concerned about economic opportunities for whites). Most Democrats supported the war but criticized Lincoln's conduct of it. Peace Democrats and Copperheads opposed the war and wanted a negotiated peace. The most notorious Copperhead, Congressman Clement L. Vallandigham of Ohio, was briefly banished from the United States to Canada for his "treasonable," pro-Confederacy speeches against the war.

Civil Liberties Like many leaders in wartime governments, Lincoln focused more on prosecuting the war than with protecting citizens' constitutional rights. Early in the war, Lincoln suspended the writ of habeas corpus in Maryland and other states with strong pro-Confederate sentiment. Suspension of this constitutional right meant that persons could be arrested without being informed of the charges against them. During the war, an estimated 13,000 people were arrested on suspicion of aiding the enemy. Without a right to habeas corpus, many of them were held without trial.

Democrats charged that Lincoln acted no better than a tyrant. However, most historians have been less critical. Especially in the border states, people had difficulty distinguishing between combatants and noncombatants. Moreover, the Constitution does state that the writ of habeas corpus "shall not be suspended, unless when in cases of rebellion or invasion the public safety may require it." After the war, in the case of *Ex Parte Milligan* (1866), the Supreme Court ruled that the government had acted improperly in Indiana where, during the war, certain civilians had been subject to a military trial. The Court declared that such procedures could be used only when regular civilian courts were unavailable.

The Draft When the war began in 1861, those who fought were volunteers. However, as the need for replacements became acute, both the Union and the Confederacy resorted to laws for conscripting, or drafting, men into service. The Union's first Conscription Act, adopted in March 1863, made all men between the ages of 20 and 45 liable for military service but allowed a draftee to avoid service by either finding a substitute to serve or paying a

\$300 exemption fee. The law provoked fierce opposition among poorer laborers, who feared that—if and when they returned to civilian life—their jobs would be taken by freed African Americans. In July 1863, riots against the draft erupted in New York City, in which a mostly Irish American mob attacked blacks and wealthy whites. Some 117 people were killed before federal troops and a temporary suspension of the draft restored order.

Political Dominance of the North The suspension of habeas corpus and the operation of the draft were only temporary. Far more important were the long-term effects of the war on the balance of power between two sectional rivals, the North and the South. With the military triumph of the Union came a new definition of the nature of the federal union. Old arguments for nullification and secession ceased to be issues. After the Civil War, the supremacy of the federal government over the states was accepted as an established fact.

Furthermore, the abolition of slavery—in addition to its importance to freed African Americans—gave new meaning and legitimacy to the concept of American democracy. In his famous Gettysburg Address of November 19, 1863, Lincoln rallied Americans to the idea that their nation was “dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.” Lincoln was probably alluding to the Emancipation Proclamation when he spoke of the war bringing “a new birth of freedom.” His words—and even more, the abolition of slavery—advanced the cause of democratic government in the United States and inspired champions of democracy around the world.

Economic Change

The costs of the war in both money and men were staggering and called for extraordinary measures by both the Union and Confederate legislatures.

Financing the War The Union financed the war chiefly by borrowing \$2.6 billion, obtained through the sale of government bonds. Even this amount was not enough, so Congress raised tariffs (Morrill Tariff of 1861), added excise taxes, and instituted the first income tax. The U.S. Treasury also issued more than \$430 million in a paper currency known as Greenbacks. This paper money could not be redeemed in gold, which contributed to creeping inflation. Prices in the North rose by about 80 percent during the war. To manage the added revenue moving in and out of the Treasury, Congress created a national banking system in 1863. This was the first unified banking network since Andrew Jackson vetoed the recharter of the Bank of the United States in the 1830s.

Modernizing Northern Society The war’s impact on the Northern economy was dramatic. Economic historians differ on the question of whether, in the short run, the war promoted or retarded the growth of the Northern economy. On the negative side, workers’ wages did not keep pace with inflation. On the other hand, there is little doubt that many aspects of a modern industrial economy were accelerated by the war. Because the war placed a premium on mass production and complex organization, it sped up the consolidation of the North’s manufacturing businesses. War profiteers took advantage of the government’s urgent needs for military supplies to sell shoddy goods at high

prices—a problem that decreased after the federal government took control of the contract process away from the states. Fortunes made during the war produced a concentration of capital in the hands of a new class of millionaires, who would finance the North’s industrialization in the postwar years.

Civilians Employed by the Federal Government				
Year	Post Office	Defense	Other	Total
1841	14,290	598	3,150	18,038
1851	21,391	403	4,480	26,274
1861	30,269	946	5,457	36,672
1871	36,696	1,183	13,741	51,020
1881	56,421	16,297	27,302	100,020

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census. *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970*

Republican politics also played a major role in stimulating the economic growth of the North and the West. Taking advantage of their wartime majority in Congress, the Republicans passed an ambitious economic program that included not only a national banking system, but also the following:

- The *Morrill Tariff Act* (1861) raised tariff rates to increase revenue and protect American manufacturers. Its passage initiated a Republican program of high protective tariffs to help industrialists.
- The *Homestead Act* (1862) promoted settlement of the Great Plains by offering parcels of 160 acres of public land free to any person or family that farmed that land for at least five years.
- The *Morrill Land Grant Act* (1862) encouraged states to use the sale of federal land grants to maintain agricultural and technical colleges.
- The *Pacific Railway Act* (1862) authorized the building of a transcontinental railroad over a northern route in order to link the economies of California and the western territories with the eastern states.

Social Change

Although every part of American society away from the battlefield was touched by the war, those most directly affected were women, whose labors became more burdensome, and African Americans, who won emancipation.

Women at Work The absence of millions of men from their normal occupations in fields and factories added to the responsibilities of women in all regions. They stepped into the labor vacuum created by the war, operating

farms and plantations and taking factory jobs customarily held by men. In addition, women played a critical role as military nurses and as volunteers in soldiers' aid societies. When the war ended and the war veterans returned home, most urban women vacated their jobs in government and industry, while rural women gladly accepted male assistance on the farm. Of course, for the women whose men never returned—or returned disabled—the economic struggle continued for a lifetime.

The Civil War had at least two permanent effects on American women. First, the field of nursing was now open to women for the first time; previously, hospitals employed only men as doctors and nurses. Second, the enormous responsibilities undertaken by women during the war gave impetus to the movement to obtain equal voting rights for women. (The suffragists' goal would not be achieved until women's efforts in another war—World War I—finally convinced enough male conservatives to adopt the 19th Amendment.)

End of Slavery Both in the short run and the long run, the group in American society whose lives were most profoundly changed by the Civil War were those African Americans who had been born into slavery. After the adoption of the 13th Amendment in 1865, 4 million people (3.5 million in the Confederate states and 500,000 in the border states) were “freed men” and “freed women.” For these people and their descendants, economic hardship and political oppression would continue for generations. Even so, the end of slavery represented a momentous step. Suddenly, slaves with no rights were protected by the U.S. Constitution, with open-ended possibilities of freedom.

While four years of nearly total war, the tragic human loss of 750,000 lives, and an estimated \$15 billion in war costs and property losses had enormous effects on the nation, far greater changes were set in motion. The Civil War destroyed slavery and devastated the Southern economy, and it also acted as a catalyst to transform America into a complex modern industrial society of capital, technology, national organizations, and large corporations. During the war, the Republicans were able to enact the pro-business Whig program that was designed to stimulate the industrial and commercial growth of the United States. The characteristics of American democracy and its capitalist economy were strengthened by this Second American Revolution.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES: WHY DID THE UNION WIN?

The Union's victory in the Civil War was by no means inevitable. Why did the Union win and the Confederates lose? To be sure, the Union had the advantage of a larger population and superior wealth, industry, and transportation. On the other hand, the Confederacy's advantages were also formidable. The Confederacy needed merely to fight to a stalemate and hold out long enough to secure foreign recognition or intervention. The Union faced the more daunting challenge of having to conquer an area comparable in size to Western Europe.

Some historians blame the Confederacy's defeat on the overly aggressive military strategy of its generals. For example, Lee's two invasions of the North leading to Antietam and Gettysburg resulted in a much higher loss of his own men, in percentage terms, than of his opponent's forces. If the Confederates had used more defensive and cautious tactics, they might have secured a military stalemate—and political victory (independence).

Other historians blame the Confederacy's loss on its political leadership. They argue that, compared to the Lincoln administration, Jefferson Davis and his cabinet were ineffective. Another weakness was the lack of a strong political party system in the Confederacy. Without a strong party, Davis had trouble developing a base of popular support. Confederates' traditional emphasis on states' rights also worked against a unified war effort. Governors of Confederate states would withhold troops rather than yield to the central government's urgent requests for cooperation. Vital supplies were also held back in state warehouses, where they remained until war's end.

Historian Henry S. Commager argued that slavery may have been responsible for the Confederates' defeat. For one thing, slavery played a role in deterring European powers from intervening in support of the Confederacy and its backward institution. Beyond this, Commager also believed that slavery undermined the region's ability to adapt to new challenges. It fostered an intolerant society, which lacked the "habit of independent inquiry and criticism." Thus, according to Commager, the failure of the Confederacy was not a "failure of resolution or courage or will but of intelligence and morality." If so, then the Confederacy's attachment to an outdated institution—slavery—was what ultimately meant the difference between victory and defeat.

RECONSTRUCTION, 1863–1877

Though slavery was abolished, the wrongs of my people were not ended. Though they were not slaves, they were not yet quite free. No man can be truly free whose liberty is dependent upon the thought, feeling, and action of others, and who has no means in his own hands for guarding, protecting, defending, and maintaining his liberty.

Frederick Douglass, 1882

The silencing of the cannons of war left the victorious United States with immense challenges. How would the South rebuild its shattered society and economy after the damage inflicted by four years of war? What would be the place in that society of 4 million freed African Americans? To what extent, if any, was the federal government responsible for helping ex-slaves adjust to freedom? Should the former states of the Confederacy be treated as states that had never really left the Union (Lincoln's position) or as conquered territory subject to continued military occupation? Under what conditions would the Confederate states be fully accepted as coequal partners in the restored Union? Finally, who had the authority to decide these questions of Reconstruction: the president or the Congress?

The conflicts that existed before and during the Civil War—between regions, political parties, and economic interests—continued after the war. Republicans in the North wanted to continue the economic progress begun during the war. The Southern aristocracy still desired a cheap labor force to work its plantations. The freedmen and women hoped to achieve independence and equal rights. However, traditional beliefs limited the actions of the federal government. Constitutional concepts of limited government and states' rights discouraged national leaders from taking bold action. Little economic help was given to either whites or blacks in the South, because most Americans believed that free people in a free society had both an opportunity and a responsibility to provide for themselves. The physical rebuilding of the South was largely left up to the states and individuals, while the federal government concentrated on political issues.

Reconstruction Plans of Lincoln and Johnson

Throughout his presidency, Abraham Lincoln held firmly to the belief that the Southern states could not constitutionally leave the Union and therefore never did leave. He viewed the Confederates as only a disloyal minority. After Lincoln's assassination, Andrew Johnson attempted to carry out Lincoln's plan for the political Reconstruction of the 11 former states of the Confederacy.

Lincoln's Policies

Because Lincoln thought the Southern states had never left the Union, he hoped they could be reestablished by meeting a minimum test of political loyalty.

Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction (1863) As early as December 1863, Lincoln set up an apparently simple process for political reconstruction—that is, for reconstructing the state governments in the South so that Unionists were in charge rather than secessionists. The president's Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction provided for the following:

- Full presidential pardons would be granted to most Confederates who (1) took an oath of allegiance to the Union and the U.S. Constitution, and (2) accepted the emancipation of slaves.
- A state government could be reestablished and accepted as legitimate by the U.S. president as soon as at least 10 percent of the voters in that state took the loyalty oath.

In practice, Lincoln's proclamation meant that each Southern state would be required to rewrite its state constitution to eliminate the existence of slavery. Lincoln's seemingly lenient policy was designed both to shorten the war and to give added weight to his Emancipation Proclamation. (When Lincoln made this proposal in late 1863, he feared that if the Democrats won the 1864 election, they would overturn the proclamation.)

Wade-Davis Bill (1864) Many Republicans in Congress objected to Lincoln's 10 percent plan, arguing that it would allow a supposedly reconstructed state government to fall under the domination of disloyal secessionists. In 1864, Congress passed the Wade-Davis Bill, which proposed far more demanding and stringent terms for Reconstruction. The bill required 50 percent of the voters of a state to take a loyalty oath and permitted only non-Confederates to vote for a new state constitution. Lincoln refused to sign the bill, pocket-vetoing it after Congress adjourned. How serious was the conflict between President Lincoln and the Republican Congress over Reconstruction policy? Historians still debate this question. In any case, Congress was no doubt ready to reassert its powers in 1865, as Congresses traditionally do after a war.

Freedmen's Bureau In March 1865, Congress created an important new agency: the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, known simply as the Freedmen's Bureau. The bureau acted as an early welfare agency, providing food, shelter, and medical aid for those made destitute by

the war—both blacks (chiefly freed slaves) and homeless whites. At first, the Freedmen's Bureau had authority to resettle freed blacks on confiscated farm-lands in the South. Its efforts at resettlement, however, were later frustrated when President Johnson pardoned Confederate owners of the confiscated lands, and courts then restored most of the lands to their original owners.

The bureau's greatest success was in education. Under the able leadership of General Oliver O. Howard, it established nearly 3,000 schools for freed blacks, including several colleges. Before federal funding was stopped in 1870, the bureau's schools taught an estimated 200,000 African Americans how to read.

Lincoln's Last Speech In his last public address (April 11, 1865), Lincoln encouraged Northerners to accept Louisiana as a reconstructed state. (Louisiana had already drawn up a new constitution that abolished slavery in the state and provided for African Americans' education.) The president also addressed the question—highly controversial at the time—of whether freedmen should be granted the right to vote. Lincoln said: "I myself prefer that it were *now* conferred on the very intelligent, and on those who serve our cause as soldiers." Three days later, Lincoln's evolving plans for Reconstruction were ended with his assassination. His last speech suggested that, had he lived, he probably would have moved closer to the position taken by the progressive, or Radical, Republicans. In any event, hope for lasting reform was dealt a devastating blow by the sudden removal of Lincoln's skillful leadership.

Johnson and Reconstruction

Andrew Johnson's origins were as humble as Lincoln's. A self-taught tailor, he rose in Tennessee politics by championing the interests of poor whites in their economic conflict with rich planters. Johnson was the only senator from a Confederate state who remained loyal to the Union. After Tennessee was occupied by Union troops, he was appointed that state's war governor. Johnson was a Southern Democrat, but Republicans picked him to be Lincoln's running mate in 1864 in order to encourage pro-Union Democrats to vote for the Union (Republican) party. In one of the accidents of history, Johnson became the wrong man for the job. As a white supremacist, the new president was bound to clash with Republicans in Congress who believed that the war was fought not just to preserve the Union but also to liberate blacks from slavery.

Johnson's Reconstruction Policy At first, many Republicans in Congress welcomed Johnson's presidency because of his animosity for the Southern aristocrats who had led the Confederacy. In May 1865, Johnson issued his own Reconstruction proclamation that was very similar to Lincoln's 10 percent plan. In addition to Lincoln's terms, it provided for the disfranchisement (loss of the right to vote and hold office) of (1) all former leaders and officeholders of the Confederacy and (2) Confederates with more than \$20,000 in taxable property. However, the president retained the power to grant individual pardons to "disloyal" Southerners. This was an escape clause for the wealthy planters, and Johnson made frequent use of it. As a result of the president's pardons, many former Confederate leaders were back in office by the fall of 1865.

Southern Governments of 1865 Just eight months after Johnson took office, all 11 of the ex-Confederate states qualified under the president's Reconstruction plan to become functioning parts of the Union. The Southern states drew up constitutions that repudiated secession, negated the debts of the Confederate government, and ratified the 13th Amendment abolishing slavery. On the other hand, none of the new constitutions extended voting rights to blacks. Furthermore, to the dismay of Republicans, former leaders of the Confederacy won seats in Congress. For example, Alexander Stephens, the former Confederate vice president, was elected U.S. senator from Georgia.

Black Codes The Republicans became further disillusioned with Johnson as Southern state legislatures adopted Black Codes that restricted the rights and movements of the former slaves. The codes (1) prohibited blacks from either renting land or borrowing money to buy land; (2) placed freedmen into a form of semibondage by forcing them, as “vagrants” and “apprentices,” to sign work contracts; and (3) prohibited blacks from testifying against whites in court. The contract-labor system, in which blacks worked cotton fields under white supervision for deferred wages, seemed little different from slavery.

Appalled by reports of developments in the South, Republicans began to ask, “Who won the war?” In early 1866, unhappiness with Johnson developed into an open rift when the Northern Republicans in Congress challenged the results of elections in the South. They refused to seat Alexander Stephens and other duly elected representatives and senators from ex-Confederate states.

Johnson's Vetoes Johnson alienated even moderate Republicans in early 1866 when he vetoed a bill increasing the services and protection offered by the Freedmen's Bureau and a civil rights bill that nullified the Black Codes and guaranteed full citizenship and equal rights to African Americans. The vetoes marked the end of the first round of Reconstruction. During this round, Presidents Lincoln and Johnson had restored the 11 ex-Confederate states to their former position in the Union, ex-Confederates had returned to high offices, and Southern states began passing Black Codes.

Presidential Vetoes, 1853 to 1880	
President	Vetoes
Franklin Pierce	9
James Buchanan	7
Abraham Lincoln	7
Andrew Johnson	29
Ulysses S. Grant	93
Rutherford B. Hayes	13

Source: “Summary of Bills Vetoed, 1789–Present.” United States Senate, www.senate.gov

Congressional Reconstruction

By the spring of 1866, the angry response of many members of Congress to Johnson's policies led to the second round of Reconstruction. This one was dominated by Congress and featured policies that were harsher on Southern whites and more protective of freed African Americans.

Radical Republicans

Republicans had long been divided between (1) moderates, who were chiefly concerned with economic gains for the white middle class, and (2) radicals, who championed civil rights for blacks. Although most Republicans were moderates, several became more radical in 1866 partly out of fear that a reunified Democratic party might again become dominant. After all, now that the federal census counted all people equally (no longer applying the old three-fifths rule for enslaved persons), the South would have more representatives in Congress than before the war and more strength in the electoral college in future presidential elections.

The leading Radical Republican in the Senate was Charles Sumner of Massachusetts (who returned to the Senate three years after his caning by Brooks). In the House, Thaddeus Stevens of Pennsylvania hoped to revolutionize Southern society through an extended period of military rule in which African Americans would be free to exercise their civil rights, would be educated in schools operated by the federal government, and would receive lands confiscated from the planter class. Many Radical Republicans, such as Benjamin Wade of Ohio, endorsed several liberal causes: women's suffrage, rights for labor unions, and civil rights for Northern African Americans. Although their program was never fully implemented, the Radical Republicans struggled to extend equal rights to all Americans.

Civil Rights Act of 1866 Among the first actions in congressional Reconstruction were votes to override, with some modifications, Johnson's vetoes of both the Freedmen's Bureau Act and the first Civil Rights Act. The Civil Rights Act pronounced all African Americans to be U.S. citizens (thereby repudiating the decision in the Dred Scott case) and also attempted to provide a legal shield against the operation of the Southern states' Black Codes. Republicans feared, however, that the law could be repealed if the Democrats ever won control of Congress. They therefore looked for a more permanent solution in the form of a constitutional amendment.

Fourteenth Amendment In June 1866, Congress passed and sent to the states an amendment that, when ratified in 1868, had both immediate and long-term significance for American society. The 14th Amendment

- declared that all persons born or naturalized in the United States were citizens
- obligated the states to respect the rights of U.S. citizens and provide them with "equal protection of the laws" and "due process of law" (clauses full of meaning for future generations)

For the first time, the Constitution required *states* as well as the federal government to uphold the rights of citizens. The amendment's key clauses about citizenship and rights produced mixed results in 19th-century courtrooms. However, in the 1950s and later, the Supreme Court would make "equal protection of the laws" and the "due process" clause the keystone of civil rights for minorities, women, children, disabled persons, and those accused of crimes.

Other parts of the 14th Amendment applied specifically to Congress' plan of Reconstruction. These clauses

- disqualified former Confederate political leaders from holding either state or federal offices
- repudiated the debts of the defeated governments of the Confederacy
- penalized a state if it kept any eligible person from voting by reducing that state's proportional representation in Congress and the electoral college

Report of the Joint Committee In June 1866, a joint committee of the House and the Senate issued a report recommending that the reorganized former states of the Confederacy were not entitled to representation in Congress. Therefore, those elected from the South as senators and representatives should not be permitted to take their seats. The report further asserted that Congress, not the president, had the authority to determine the conditions for allowing reconstructed states to rejoin the Union. By this report, Congress officially rejected the presidential plan of Reconstruction and promised to substitute its own plan, part of which was embodied in the 14th Amendment.

The Election of 1866 Unable to work with Congress, Johnson took to the road in the fall of 1866 in his infamous "swing around the circle" to attack his opponents. His speeches appealed to the racial prejudices of whites by arguing that equal rights for blacks would result in an "Africanized" society. Republicans counterattacked by accusing Johnson of being a drunkard and a traitor. They appealed to anti-Southern prejudices by employing a campaign tactic known as "waving the bloody shirt"—inflaming the anger of Northern voters by reminding them of the hardships of war. Republican propaganda emphasized that Southerners were Democrats and, by a gross jump in logic, branded the entire Democratic party as a party of rebellion and treason.

Election results gave the Republicans an overwhelming victory. After 1866, Johnson's political adversaries—both moderate and Radical Republicans—had more than a two-thirds majority in both the House and the Senate.

Reconstruction Acts of 1867 Over Johnson's vetoes, Congress passed three Reconstruction acts in early 1867, which took the drastic step of placing the South under military occupation. The acts divided the former Confederate states into five military districts, each under the control of the Union army. In addition, the Reconstruction acts increased the requirements for gaining readmission to the Union. To win such readmission, an ex-Confederate state had to ratify the 14th Amendment and place guarantees in its constitution for granting the franchise (right to vote) to all adult males, regardless of race.

Impeachment of Andrew Johnson

Also in 1867, over Johnson's veto, Congress passed the Tenure of Office Act. This law, which may have been an unconstitutional violation of executive authority, prohibited the president from removing a federal official or military commander without the approval of the Senate. The purpose of the law was strictly political. Congress wanted to protect the Radical Republicans in Johnson's cabinet, such as Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, who was in charge of the military governments in the South.

Believing the new law to be unconstitutional, Johnson challenged it by dismissing Stanton on his own authority. The House responded by impeaching Johnson, charging him with 11 "high crimes and misdemeanors." Johnson thus became the first president to be impeached. (Bill Clinton was impeached in 1998.) In 1868, after a three-month trial in the Senate, Johnson's political enemies fell one vote short of the necessary two-thirds vote required to remove a president from office. Seven moderate Republicans joined the Democrats in voting against conviction because they thought it was a bad precedent to remove a president for political reasons.

Reforms After Grant's Election

The impeachment and trial of Andrew Johnson occurred in 1868, a presidential election year. At their convention, the Democrats nominated another candidate, Horatio Seymour, so that Johnson's presidency would have ended soon in any case, with or without impeachment by the Republicans.

The Election of 1868 At their convention, the Republicans turned to a war hero, giving their presidential nomination to General Ulysses S. Grant, even though Grant had no political experience. Despite Grant's popularity in the North, he managed to win only 300,000 more popular votes than his Democratic opponent. The votes of 500,000 blacks gave the Republican ticket its margin of victory. Even the most moderate Republicans began to realize that the voting rights of the freedmen needed federal protection if their party hoped to keep control of the White House in future elections.

Fifteenth Amendment Republican majorities in Congress acted quickly in 1869 to secure the vote for African Americans. Adding one more Reconstruction amendment to those already adopted (the 13th Amendment in 1865 and the 14th Amendment in 1868), Congress passed the 15th Amendment, which prohibited any state from denying or abridging a citizen's right to vote "on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude." It was ratified in 1870.

Civil Rights Act of 1875 The last civil rights reform enacted by Congress in Reconstruction was the Civil Rights Act of 1875. This law guaranteed equal accommodations in public places (hotels, railroads, and theaters) and prohibited courts from excluding African Americans from juries. However, the law was poorly enforced because moderate and conservative Republicans felt frustrated trying to reform an unwilling South—and feared losing white votes in the North. By 1877, Congress would abandon Reconstruction completely.

Reconstruction in the South

During the second round of Reconstruction, dictated by Congress, the Republican party in the South dominated the governments of the ex-Confederate states. Beginning in 1867, each Republican-controlled government was under the military protection of the U.S. Army until such time as Congress was satisfied that a state had met its Reconstruction requirements. Then the troops were withdrawn. The period of Republican rule in a Southern state lasted from as little as one year (Tennessee) to as much as nine years (Florida), depending on how long it took conservative Democrats to regain control.

Composition of the Reconstruction Governments

In every Radical, or Republican, state government in the South except one, whites were in the majority in both houses of the legislature. The exception was South Carolina, where the freedmen controlled the lower house in 1873. Republican legislators included native-born white Southerners, freedmen, and recently arrived Northerners.

“Scalawags” and “Carpetbaggers” Democratic opponents gave nicknames to their hated Republican rivals. They called Southern Republicans “scalawags” and Northern newcomers “carpetbaggers.” Southern whites who supported the Republican governments were usually former Whigs who were interested in economic development for their state and peace between the sections. Northerners went South after the war for various reasons. Some were investors interested in setting up new businesses, while others were ministers and teachers with humanitarian goals. Some went simply to plunder.

African American Legislators Most of the African Americans who held elective office in the reconstructed state governments were educated property holders who took moderate positions on most issues. During the Reconstruction era, Republicans in the South sent two African Americans (Blanche K. Bruce and Hiram Revels) to the Senate and more than a dozen African Americans to the House of Representatives. Revels was elected in 1870 to take the Senate seat from Mississippi once held by Jefferson Davis. Seeing African Americans and former slaves in positions of power caused bitter resentment among disfranchised ex-Confederates.

Evaluating the Republican Record

Much controversy still surrounds the legislative record of the Republicans during their brief control of Southern state politics. Did they abuse their power for selfish ends (plunder and corruption), or did they govern responsibly in the public interest? They did some of each.

Accomplishments On the positive side, Republican legislators liberalized state constitutions in the South by providing for universal male suffrage, property rights for women, debt relief, and modern penal codes. They also promoted the building of roads, bridges, railroads, and other internal improvements. They established such needed state institutions as hospitals, asylums, and homes for the disabled. The reformers established state-supported public

school systems in the South, which benefited whites and African Americans alike. They paid for these improvements by overhauling the tax system and selling bonds.

Failures Long after Reconstruction ended, many Southerners and some Northern historians continued to depict Republican rule as utterly wasteful and corrupt. Some instances of graft and wasteful spending did occur, as Republican politicians took advantage of their power to take kickbacks and bribes from contractors who did business with the state. However, corruption occurred throughout the country, Northern states and cities as well. No geographic section, political party, or ethnic group was immune to the general decline in ethics in government that marked the postwar era.

African Americans Adjusting to Freedom

Undoubtedly, the Southerners who had the greatest adjustment to make during the Reconstruction era were the freedmen and freedwomen. Having been so recently emancipated from slavery, they were faced with the challenges of securing their economic survival as well as their political rights as citizens.

Building Black Communities Freedom meant many things to Southern blacks: reuniting families, learning to read and write, migrating to cities where “freedom was free-er.” Most of all, ex-slaves viewed emancipation as an opportunity for achieving independence from white control. This drive for autonomy was most evident in the founding of hundreds of independent African American churches after the war. By the hundreds of thousands, African Americans left white-dominated churches for the Negro Baptist and African Methodist Episcopal churches. During Reconstruction, black ministers emerged as leaders in the African American community.

Percentage of School Age Children Enrolled, 1850 to 1880		
Year	White	African American
1850	56	2
1860	60	2
1870	54	10
1880	62	34

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census. *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970*

The desire for education induced large numbers of African Americans to use their scarce resources to establish independent schools for their children and to pay educated African Americans to become their teachers. Black colleges such as Howard, Atlanta, Fisk, and Morehouse were established during Reconstruction to prepare African American black ministers and teachers.

Another aspect of blacks' search for independence and self-sufficiency was the decision of many freedmen to migrate away from the South and establish new black communities in frontier states such as Kansas.

Sharecropping The South's agricultural economy was in turmoil after the war, in part because landowners had lost their compulsory labor force. At first, white landowners attempted to force freed African Americans into signing contracts to work the fields. These contracts set terms that nearly bound the signer to permanent and unrestricted labor—in effect, slavery by a different name. African Americans' insistence on autonomy, however, combined with changes in the postwar economy, led white landowners to adopt a system based on tenancy and sharecropping. Under sharecropping, the landlord provided the seed and other needed farm supplies in return for a share (usually half) of the harvest. While this system gave poor people of the rural South (whites as well as African Americans) the opportunity to work a piece of land for themselves, sharecroppers usually remained either dependent on the landowners or in debt to local merchants. By 1880, no more than 5 percent of Southern African Americans had become independent landowners. Sharecropping had evolved into a new form of servitude.

The North During Reconstruction

The North's economy in the postwar years continued to be driven by the Industrial Revolution and the pro-business policies of the Republicans. As the South struggled to reorganize its labor system, Northerners focused on railroads, steel, labor problems, and money.

Greed and Corruption

During the Grant administration, as the material interests of the age took center stage, the idealism of Lincoln's generation and the Radical Republicans' crusade for civil rights were pushed aside.

Rise of the Spoilsmen In the early 1870s, leadership of the Republican party passed from reformers (Thaddeus Stevens, Charles Sumner, and Benjamin Wade) to political manipulators such as Senators Roscoe Conkling of New York and James Blaine of Maine. These politicians were masters of the game of patronage—giving jobs and government favors (spoils) to their supporters.

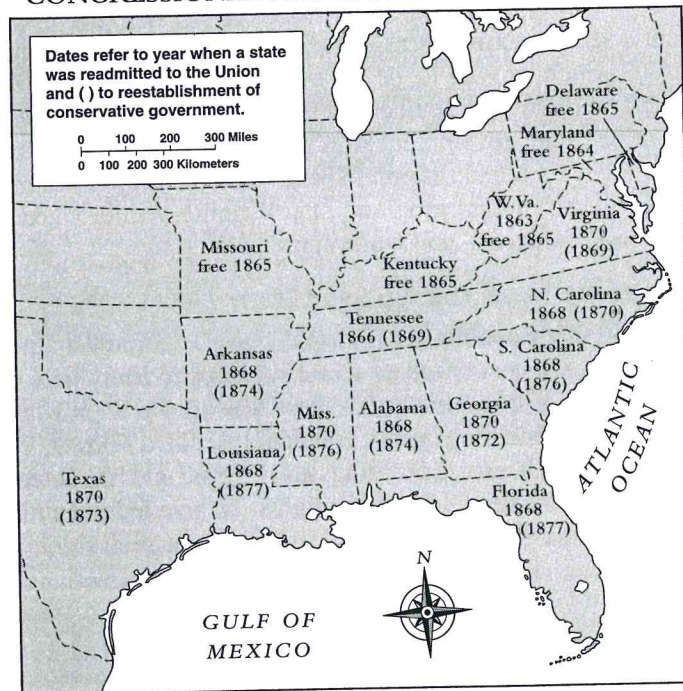
Corruption in Business and Government The postwar years were notorious for the corrupt schemes devised by business bosses and political bosses to enrich themselves at the public's expense. For example, in 1869, Wall Street financiers Jay Gould and James Fisk obtained the help of President Grant's brother-in-law in a scheme to corner the gold market. The Treasury Department broke the scheme, but not before Gould had made a huge profit.

In the Crédit Mobilier affair, insiders gave stock to influential members of Congress to avoid investigation of the profits they were making—as high as 348 percent—from government subsidies for building the transcontinental railroad. In the case of the Whiskey Ring, federal revenue agents conspired with the liquor industry to defraud the government of millions in

taxes. While Grant himself did not personally profit from the corruption, his loyalty to dishonest men around him badly tarnished his presidency.

Local politics in the Grant years were equally scandalous. In New York City, William Tweed, the boss of the local Democratic party, master-minded dozens of schemes for helping himself and cronies to large chunks of graft. The Tweed Ring virtually stole about \$200 million from New York's taxpayers before *The New York Times* and the cartoonist Thomas Nast exposed "Boss" Tweed and brought about his arrest and imprisonment in 1871.

CONGRESSIONAL RECONSTRUCTION 1865–1877



The Election of 1872

The scandals of the Grant administration drove reform-minded Republicans to break with the party in 1872 and select Horace Greeley, editor of the *New York Tribune*, as their presidential candidate. The Liberal Republicans advocated civil service reform, an end to railroad subsidies, withdrawal of troops from the South, reduced tariffs, and free trade. Surprisingly, the Democrats joined them and also nominated Greeley.

The regular Republicans countered by merely "waving the bloody shirt" again—and it worked. Grant was reelected in a landslide. Just days before the counting of the electoral vote, the luckless Horace Greeley died.

The Panic of 1873

Grant's second term began with an economic disaster that rendered thousands of Northern laborers both jobless and homeless. Overspeculation by financiers and overbuilding by industry and railroads led to widespread business failures and depression. Debtors on the farms and in the cities, suffering from the tight money policies, demanded the creation of greenback paper money that was not supported by gold. In 1874, Grant finally decided to side with the hard-money bankers and creditors who wanted a money supply backed by gold and vetoed a bill calling for the release of additional greenbacks.

The End of Reconstruction

During Grant's second term, it was apparent that Reconstruction had entered another phase, which proved to be its third and final round. With Radical Republicanism on the wane, Southern conservatives—known as redeemers—took control of one state government after another. This process was completed by 1877. The redeemers had different social and economic backgrounds, but they agreed on their political program: states' rights, reduced taxes, reduced spending on social programs, and white supremacy.

White Supremacy and the Ku Klux Klan

During the period that Republicans controlled state governments in the South, groups of Southern whites organized secret societies to intimidate blacks and white reformers. The most prominent of these was the Ku Klux Klan, founded in 1867 by an ex-Confederate general, Nathaniel Bedford Forrest. The "invisible empire" burned black-owned buildings and flogged and murdered freedmen to keep them from exercising their voting rights. To give federal authorities the power to stop Ku Klux Klan violence and to protect the civil rights of citizens in the South, Congress passed the Force Acts of 1870 and 1871.

The Amnesty Act of 1872

Seven years after Lee's surrender at Appomattox, many Northerners were ready to put hatred of the Confederacy behind them. As a sign of the changing times, Congress in 1872 passed a general amnesty act that removed the last of the restrictions on ex-Confederates, except for the top leaders. The chief political consequence of the Amnesty Act was that it allowed Southern conservatives to vote for Democrats to retake control of state governments.

The Election of 1876

By 1876, federal troops had been withdrawn from all but three Southern states—South Carolina, Florida, and Louisiana. The Democrats had returned to power in all ex-Confederate states except these. This fact was to play a critical role in the presidential election.

At their convention, the Republicans looked for someone untouched by the corruption of the Grant administration and nominated the governor of Ohio, Rutherford B. Hayes. The Democrats chose New York's reform governor,

Samuel J. Tilden, who had made a name for himself fighting the corrupt Tweed Ring. In the popular votes, the Democrats had won a clear majority and expected to put Tilden in the White House. However, in three Southern states, the returns were contested. To win the election, Tilden needed only one *electoral* vote from the contested returns of South Carolina, Florida, and Louisiana.

A special electoral commission was created to determine who was entitled to the disputed votes of the three states. In a straight party vote of 8–7, the commission gave all the electoral votes to Hayes, the Republican. Outraged Democrats threatened to filibuster the results and send the election to the House of Representatives, which they controlled.

The Compromise of 1877

Leaders of the two parties worked out an informal deal. The Democrats would allow Hayes to become president. In return, he would (1) immediately end federal support for the Republicans in the South, and (2) support the building of a Southern transcontinental railroad. Shortly after his inauguration, President Hayes fulfilled his part in the Compromise of 1877 and promptly withdrew the last of the federal troops protecting African Americans and other Republicans.

The end of a federal military presence in the South was not the only thing that brought Reconstruction to an end. In a series of decisions in the 1880s and 1890s, the Supreme Court struck down one Reconstruction law after another that protected blacks from discrimination. Supporters of the New South promised a future of industrial development, but most Southern African Americans and whites in the decades after the Civil War remained poor farmers, and they fell further behind the rest of the nation.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES: DID RECONSTRUCTION FAIL?

Reconstruction may be the most controversial period in U.S. history. Generations of both northern and southern historians, starting with William Dunning in the early 1900s, portrayed Reconstruction as a failure. According to this traditional interpretation, illiterate African Americans and corrupt Northern carpetbaggers abused the rights of Southern whites and stole vast sums from the state governments. The Radical Republicans brought on these conditions when, in an effort to punish the South, they gave the former slaves too many rights too soon. The Dunning school of historical thought provided a rationale for the racial segregation in the early 20th century. It was given popular expression in a 1915 movie, D. W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation*, which pictured the Ku Klux Klanmen as the heroes coming to the rescue of Southern whites oppressed by vindictive Northern radicals and African Americans.

continued

African American historians such as W. E. B. Du Bois and John Hope Franklin countered this interpretation by highlighting the positive achievements of the Reconstruction governments and black leaders. Their view was supported and expanded upon in 1965 with the publication of Kenneth Stampp's *Era of Reconstruction*. Other historians of the 1960s and 1970s followed Stampp's lead in stressing the significance of the civil rights legislation passed by the Radical Republicans and pointing out the humanitarian work performed by Northern reformers.

By the 1980s, some historians criticized Congress' approach to Reconstruction, not for being too radical, but for not being radical enough. They argued that the Radical Republicans neglected to provide land for African Americans, which would have enabled them to achieve economic independence. Furthermore, these historians argued, the military occupation of the South should have lasted longer to protect the freedmen's political rights. Eric Foner's comprehensive *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution* (1988) acknowledged the limitations of Reconstruction in achieving lasting reforms but also pointed out that, in the post-Civil War years, the freedmen established many of the institutions in the African American community upon which later progress depended. According to Foner, it took a "second Reconstruction" after World War II (the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s) to achieve the promise of the "first Reconstruction."

KEY NAMES, EVENTS, AND TERMS

Equality (ID, POL) Civil Rights Act of 1866 14th Amendment equal protection of the laws due process of law 15th Amendment Civil Rights Act of 1875 Corruption (WXT, POL) Jay Gould Crédit Mobilier William (Boss) Tweed Politics (POL) spoilsmen patronage Thomas Nast Liberal Republicans Horace Greeley	Panic of 1873 greenbacks redeemers Rutherford B. Hayes Samuel J. Tilden Compromise of 1877 Reconstruction (POL, CUL) presidential Reconstruction Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction (1863) Wade-Davis Bill (1864) Andrew Johnson Freedmen's Bureau Black Codes Congressional Reconstruction	Radical Republicans Charles Sumner Thaddeus Stephens Benjamin Wade Reconstruction Acts (1867) Tenure of Office Act (1867) Edwin Stanton impeachment scalawags carpetbaggers Blanche K. Bruce Hiram Revels sharecropping Ku Klux Klan Force Acts (1870, 1871) Amnesty Act of 1872
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