Chapter 10
The Coming of the Civil War (1846–1861)
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Section 2: The Mexican War and Slavery Extension

Section 3: New Political Parties

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Two Nations

Chapter 10, Section 1

- Why do some historians think the Civil War was unavoidable?
- What arguments did abolitionists use against slavery?
- How did Southerners view slavery?
- What were some important differences between the North and the South?
Historians and the Civil War

Many historians have debated whether or not the United States could have avoided the Civil War, a conflict whose outcome determined the fate of the Union, or the unified nation.

Some historians have suggested that with stronger leaders, opposing groups of Americans could have settled their differences and avoided war.

However, others believe that the differences between the regions, racial groups, and social classes of the North and the South outweighed their similarities, making conflict inevitable.
Slavery’s White Opponents

- By the 1850s, many white Northerners had come to believe that slavery violated both American and Christian principles.

- However, these opponents did not necessarily also believe in equality. Many felt prejudice, or an unreasonable opinion of another group that is not based on fact, toward African Americans.

Uncle Tom’s Cabin

- Harriet Beecher Stowe’s 1852 novel *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* became a powerful statement about the impact of slavery.

- *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* presented a vivid, if exaggerated, picture of slavery which convinced many Northerners that slavery would ruin United States society.
Many white Southerners saw Northerners as arrogant and self-righteous, and they resented being told how they should live. Southerners defended their views on slavery, arguing that slave owners treated their slaves better than northern industrialists treated their workers. Many Southerners objected to *Uncle Tom’s Cabin’s* portrayal of slave owners and pointed out that many Revolutionary War heroes had also owned slaves.
Differences Between the North and the South

Trains and Trade
- Newly built railroads were quickly making canals obsolete, or outdated.
- The 1850s saw a large increase in the number of United States railroads. Most of these new railroads, though, were in the North.
- Railroads had a heavy impact on trade as well as the growth of both northern and southern cities.

The Telegraph
- Samuel F. B. Morse’s invention of the telegraph in 1844 improved communication, nourishing the booming industries of the North.
- Because telegraph wires were strung along railroad tracks, the North benefited more than the South from this new communication technology.
The North and the South held competing visions of what American society should become. These differences, as well as economic contrasts and differences in population levels, would soon lead to conflict.
What was the significance of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*?

(A) It whipped up northern sentiment against slavery.
(B) It pointed out the need for more railroads.
(C) It advocated white southerners’ views.
(D) It showed the economic contrasts between the north and the south.

Which of the following was a southern argument in favor of slavery?

(A) Slavery violated American and Christian principles.
(B) Southern slaves were treated better than northern free workers.
(C) Slavery was essential to southern industry.
(D) Northern prejudice was damaging to African Americans.
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The Mexican War and Slavery Extension

Chapter 10, Section 2

- What events led to the annexation of Texas?
- Why did the United States go to war with Mexico?
- Why did the Wilmot Proviso lead to conflict?
During the 1830s and 1840s, many Americans favored expanding United States territory. The term *manifest destiny*, meaning obvious or undeniable fate, was applied to this goal.

After winning its independence from Mexico, Texas voted in 1836 to be *annexed*, or joined, to the United States.

Most Southerners and Democrats approved of annexing Texas, hoping to create additional slave states out of the Texas territory. Northerners and Whigs, though, did not want to shift the balance of power to the South. Both sides also worried that annexation would lead to war with Mexico.

Texas was annexed in early 1845, and became the twenty-eighth state in the Union later that year.
War With Mexico

Chapter 10, Section 2

Beginnings of the Mexican War

A dispute over the southern border of Texas, President Polk’s dreams of acquiring Mexican lands, and a skirmish in April 1846 led to the Mexican War.

The Bear Flag Revolt

Before news of the war had reached California, settlers there declared an independent Republic of California. The uprising became known as the Bear Flag Revolt after the bear pictured on the new republic’s flag.

Fighting the War

By January 1847, United States forces had taken control of the territories of New Mexico and California. The fighting continued in Mexico until September 14, 1847, when America captured Mexico City, the capital of Mexico.
The Mexican War provided an opportunity to extend America’s borders across the continent.
The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo

• The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ended the Mexican War with substantial gains for the United States.

• In the treaty, Mexico gave up its claims to Texas, California, and New Mexico in return for $15 million.

• Five years later, Mexico sold more land to the United States. This Gadsden Purchase included land that became southern New Mexico and Arizona.

Results of the Mexican War

• The Mexican War, together with the Gadsden Purchase and the 1846 division of Oregon, established the borders of the continental United States as they are today.

• In Mexico, bitterness developed toward the United States that would last for decades.

• New American territory in the West opened the door to an even larger wave of western migration.
Another important effect of the Mexican War was its role in bringing the question of slavery to the forefront of American politics.

Congress faced a decision about whether or not to allow slavery in the newly acquired territories. Its decision could tip the balance of political power toward either the North or the South.

The **Wilmot Proviso**, first attached to an 1846 bill, stated that slavery would be forbidden in new territories acquired from Mexico. Although the proviso was not passed, it continued to be added to bills concerning the new territories.

The Wilmot Proviso never became law. However, it revealed the growing gap between the North and the South over slavery.
What was manifest destiny?
(A) The balance of power between northern and southern states
(B) The fate of the United States to expand across the continent
(C) The conquest of Mexico City by American forces
(D) The decision that all new territories would become free states

Which of these lists the territories acquired by the United States as a result of the Mexican War?
(A) Florida, Louisiana, and California
(B) Texas, California, and New Mexico
(C) New Mexico, Oregon, and California
(D) Texas, New Mexico, and Florida

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New Political Parties

- What were the effects of the Missouri Compromise?
- What did the Compromise of 1850 accomplish?
- How did political parties change in the 1850s?
- Why did Stephen Douglas propose the Kansas-Nebraska Act?
Effects of the Missouri Compromise

Territories acquired after the Mexican War forced an old question back into politics about whether or not slavery would be permitted in new territories.

Each new state that was admitted to the Union could tip the balance for or against slavery. Both sides wanted to establish their practices in the new territories before these territories became states.

The Missouri Compromise of 1820 had stated that any new states created north of 36° 30' N latitude had to be free states. Much of the new territory, however, was south of this line.

Some members of both parties who opposed slavery in the territories formed the Free Soil Party. The Free Soil Party did not win any states in the presidential election of 1848, but it did tip the balance in favor of Whig candidate Zachary Taylor.
The Compromise of 1850

Clay Proposes a Compromise
In 1849, Senator Henry Clay of Kentucky proposed what would become known as the Compromise of 1850 as a middle ground on the slavery debate.

Terms of the Compromise
As part of the Compromise, California would become a free state, New Mexico and Utah would decide their own slavery status, and a Fugitive Slave Act would order United States citizens to help return enslaved people who had escaped.

Calhoun’s Opposition
Senator John C. Calhoun of South Carolina represented much of the South’s view when he opposed the Compromise. Calhoun believed that southern states had the right to leave the Union if their rights were no longer being respected.

Webster’s Support
Senator Daniel Webster of Massachusetts supported the Compromise, believing that it would help keep the Union together. Northern abolitionists, however, felt that Webster was putting financial matters ahead of humanitarian issues.

Congress Approves the Compromise
The Compromise of 1850 was passed, but it did little besides establish California as a free state. The Fugitive Slave Act infuriated northern abolitionists, including author Harriet Beecher Stowe.
The Compromise of 1850 helped define which states and territories would become free states and which would become slave states.
Decline of the Whigs

• The slavery issue divided the Whigs, as northern Whigs became disgusted with Whig leaders’ willingness to compromise on slavery.
• Issues such as banks, which had once been central to the Whig Party, had been resolved, and many Whig leaders were dead or dying.
• By the end of the 1850s, the Whig Party had largely disappeared.

Rise of the Know-Nothings

• Nativism, a movement to ensure that native-born Americans received better treatment than immigrants, helped a new political party arise.
• The American Party, also called the Know-Nothings after its association with a secret society, opposed immigration, believing that it would lead to crime, vice, and unemployment.
Illinois Senator Stephen Douglas had two goals: to make Chicago benefit from trade with the West and to run for President. To accomplish these goals, Douglas needed Kansas and Nebraska to become states, but without angering Southerners by becoming free states.

To accomplish these goals, Douglas proposed the Kansas-Nebraska Act in January 1854. This act would essentially repeal the Missouri Compromise by letting the people of a territory decide for themselves whether to become a free or slave state according to the principles of popular sovereignty.

Douglas envisioned that Kansas and Nebraska would peacefully vote to become free states.

The act passed, but Northerners were enraged by what they saw as a sellout to the South.
The Creation of the Republican Party

During the summer of 1854, disgusted Northerners launched a new political party that they named the Republican Party. The Republicans argued against slavery and fought for the repeal of the Kansas-Nebraska Act and the Fugitive Slave Act.

The Republican Party soon became a strong party that competed with the Know-Nothings for political power.
Which of the following people opposed the Compromise of 1850?

(A) Senator Daniel Webster of Massachusetts  
(B) Senator John C. Calhoun of South Carolina  
(C) Senator Henry Clay of Kentucky  
(D) Senator Stephen Douglas of Illinois

What did the Kansas-Nebraska Act propose?

(A) New states north of 36° 30' N latitude had to be free states.  
(B) New states could decide whether to be free or slave states.  
(C) New states from Mexican territory had to be slave states.  
(D) California would become a free state, and Utah and Nebraska would decide for themselves whether to be free or slave states.

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New Political Parties — Assessment

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Why did violence erupt in Kansas in the mid-1850s?
How did slavery affect national politics in this period?
What problems did the Lecompton Constitution cause?
What important issues were discussed in the Lincoln-Douglas Debates?
How did John Brown’s raid increase tensions between the North and the South?
According to the Kansas-Nebraska Act, voters in the Kansas Territory would decide for themselves whether to become a free or slave state. Both proslavery and antislavery forces moved into Kansas to influence the territory’s decision.

New England settlers known as free soilers, after the Free Soil party, worked to end slavery in the territory. Meanwhile, proslavery settlers organized secret societies to oppose the free soilers.

Violence erupted in 1856 as murders, raids, and counterraids took place throughout Kansas, earning it the name “Bleeding Kansas.”

The violence spread to Washington, D.C., where proslavery Representative Preston Brooks attacked antislavery Senator Charles Sumner by beating him with a cane. Sumner never fully recovered, and his empty Senate seat served as reminder of brutal North-South tensions.
The Election of 1856
- All three major parties were eager to choose candidates with no ties to “Bleeding Kansas.”
- Democratic nominee James Buchanan won the election, promising to stop “the agitation of the slavery issue.”
- President Buchanan hoped that the Supreme Court would resolve the slavery issue.

The Dred Scott Decision
- The Supreme Court’s March 1857 *Dred Scott v. Sandford* decision angered antislavery forces.
- In the decision, the Court reasoned that slaves were the property of their owners, and that the Constitution protected the right to own property. It ruled that slaves were not citizens, had no right to sue in court, and could not be considered free even if living in a free state or territory.
- The decision meant that Congress had no power to ban slavery anywhere.
The Lecompton Constitution

- In the fall of 1857, a small proslavery group wrote a constitution for Kansas, a necessary step toward statehood.
- The document they produced was called the Lecompton Constitution, after the proslavery capital of Kansas.

Reactions to the Lecompton Constitution

- Most Kansans were opposed to slavery and to the Lecompton Constitution. President Buchanan, hoping to end the slavery problem in Kansas, endorsed it.
- The people of Kansas rejected the Lecompton Constitution in 1858.
- Slavery remained legal in the territory of Kansas, although the antislavery majority prohibited it in practice.
• In the Illinois Senate campaign of 1858, Democratic Senator Stephen Douglas ran for reelection against Republican Abraham Lincoln.

• The campaign drew nationwide attention for the Lincoln-Douglas debates, a series of seven debates on the issue of slavery in the territories.

• Neither Lincoln nor Douglas believed in racial equality. Lincoln thought slavery was morally wrong and wanted to confine it to the states where it already existed. Douglas, however, tolerated slavery, believing that white Americans should choose the kind of society that they wanted.

• In a now-famous speech, Lincoln stated that, “A house divided against itself cannot stand,” referring to the division between free and slave states.

• Douglas won the election, but Lincoln earned a reputation for eloquence and moral commitment.
On October 16, 1859, abolitionist John Brown and a group of followers attacked the federal arsenal, a place where weapons are made or stored, at Harper’s Ferry, Virginia. Brown hoped to give the weapons from the arsenal to enslaved people so that they could rebel. United States troops, under Colonel Robert E. Lee, surrounded the arsenal, killed half of Brown’s men, and forced the rest to surrender. Brown was convicted of treason and sentenced to death. Northerners hailed Brown as a martyr, while Southerners saw him as a criminal. The reactions caused by Brown’s raid deepened the anger between the North and the South.
Which of the following groups were probably pleased with the Dred Scott decision?

(A) Proslavery forces  
(B) Antislavery forces  
(C) Former slaves living in free territories  
(D) Supporters of John Brown

Which of the following best describes Lincoln’s early attitude toward slavery?

(A) He believed in equality between whites and African Americans.  
(B) He believed that Kansas should become a slave state.  
(C) He wanted to confine slavery to states where it already existed.  
(D) He wanted to help enslaved people rebel against their owners.

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The System Fails—Assessment

Chapter 10, Section 4

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A Nation Divided Against Itself

How did the election of 1860 demonstrate the split between the North and the South?

What concerns led the Lower South to secede from the Union?

What event started the Civil War?
The presidential election of 1860 further demonstrated the division between the North and the South.

National political parties no longer existed. Voters in the North chose between Northern Democrat Stephen Douglas and Republican Abraham Lincoln, while Southerners voted for Southern Democrat J.C. Breckinridge or John Bell of the newly formed Constitutional Union Party.

While votes in the Border States (Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri) were mixed, many in the Lower South (Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina) supported Breckinridge.

Abraham Lincoln won the election without winning a single electoral from a southern state.
The Lower South Secedes

• Southerners were outraged that a President had been elected without any southern electoral votes. They were also worried that the Republican Party would ruin the southern way of life.

• Secessionists, or those who wanted the South to secede, argued that since the states had voluntarily joined the Union, they could also voluntarily leave it.

• On December 20, 1860, South Carolina officially seceded. Six other states of the Lower South followed.

• In early February 1861, these states proclaimed themselves a new nation, the **Confederate States of America**, or Confederacy. Jefferson Davis, a former senator from Mississippi, became president of the Confederacy.
Views on Secession

- Some Americans felt that the South should be allowed to secede peacefully.
- Others objected, citing the loss of business with the South as well as a desire to keep the Union together.
- President-elect Lincoln believed that secession was wrong, but told the South that he would not attack them unless they struck first.

Conflict at Fort Sumter

- When Fort Sumter in South Carolina requested supplies from the federal government, Lincoln faced a dilemma.
- Lincoln had to decide between appearing to be an aggressor against the South and maintaining federal property. He chose to send food but not soldiers or arms.
- When Major Robert Anderson, the leader at Fort Sumter, refused to surrender the fort, Confederates attacked it, winning Anderson’s surrender.
By firing on federal property, the southern states had committed an act of open rebellion. Lincoln reacted by calling for volunteers to fight the seceding states.

Southerners saw Lincoln’s action as an act of war. The Upper South states of Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Arkansas seceded and joined the Confederacy, while the Border States remained uncommitted to either side.
The Union and Confederacy

After the surrender of Fort Sumter, more states joined the Confederacy, making it one of the largest republics in the world.

*West Virginia was part of Virginia in 1861, but it joined the Union as a new state in 1863.*
Which of the following states were part of the Lower South?

(A) Tennessee, Arkansas, and Virginia
(B) Kentucky, Missouri, and Maryland
(C) Mississippi, Alabama, and South Carolina
(D) North Carolina, South Carolina, and Missouri

Why did Lincoln start calling for volunteers to fight the seceding states?

(A) He had been elected without their electoral votes.
(B) The Confederates had attacked federal property.
(C) The states of the Upper South had seceded.
(D) The seceding states had elected their own president.

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