Chapter 13: The Impending Crisis
Critical Thinking Question

What was the impact of territorial expansion on national unity between 1800 and 1850?

- To what extent was it aggressive imperialism pursued at the expense of others?
Nationalism turns to Sectionalism

• An uneasy peace in the sectional conflict between the North and South held until the 1840s, when western expansion and slavery intersected.

• The nationalism that helped unify the country in the 1820s also inspired territorial growth, and that ultimately tore the nation apart.

  • Geographic, cultural, intellectual and economic barriers all would lead to an inevitable civil conflict
Looking West

- Westward expansion had always been at the core of American identity.

- However, starting in the 1840s the movement adopted a clear ideological justification.

- **Manifest Destiny** - was the divinely given right and destiny for Americans to occupy all land to the west of the Mississippi.

“It is 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 and federated self-government entrusted to us.”

- John O’Sullivan, editor of the New York Post, arguing for the annexation of Texas, July, 1845
American Progress
by John Gast 1872
Texas

Mexico won independence from Spain in 1821. Afterwards, Americans were welcomed to settle in the territory to keep Spain from reclaiming the land via land grants.

- Friction emerges regarding: religion (protestant v. catholic), land titles and government rule and slavery.

By 1830 Mexico

1. prohibited further immigration
2. stopped importation of slaves (1829)
3. Placed duties/taxes on American goods
4. Sent troops to frontier to enforce laws

By 1835, 30,000 Americans lived in Texas region.
Texas

Texans see similarities between oppression under George III and mandates made by Gen. Miguel Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna

- March 2, 1836 settlers declared independence from Mexico and established the Lone Star Republic.

Santa Anna sends army into Texas and overmatches the settlers initially.

- Battle of the Alamo - 13 day siege that resulted in all but two Texans being killed at the Alamo Mission.

- Became a rallying cry of the war “Remember the Alamo”

April 21, 1836 Gen. Sam Houston surprises Santa Anna’s army near Lynchburg Ferry

- Battle of San Jacinto ends in less than 30 minutes

- The losses for Santa Anna were over 630 soldiers (half his army) where the Texans lost only 9 total.
Annexation

● After winning their freedom from Mexico, Texas desired to enter into the Union to receive American military protection.

● Officially an independent nation: The Republic of Texas from 1836-45

In Congress debates were fought over two basic issues:

● 1. Balance of power (slave/non-slave)

● 2. Adding Texas could lead to war with Mexico
James K. Polk

- An ardent Jacksonian Democrat.
- He is the only president to actually accomplish all of his campaign promises.
- Campaigned as a 1-term president. Never sought out a 2nd term.
- Polk campaigned on a four point platform.
  - 1. Acquiring California
  - 2. Settling the Oregon dispute
  - 3. Reducing or removing tariffs
  - 4. Bringing back the Independent Treasury System
James K. Polk

- Ran against Henry Clay, who was much more modest with his promises
- Polk - instead, opted to run on expansion for both southern and northern interests.
  - Texas for South
  - Oregon for North
- Polk sworn into office March 4, 1845
- Texas added to Union in Dec. 1845
- Oregon dispute settled in Jan of 1846
The Oregon Trail

- Oregon country was an increasingly popular destination for Americans seeking to emigrate westward.

- Oregon Trail popularity soared after CA Gold Rush. Nearly 250,000 made the trip between 1840 and 1860.

- Crossing the Rocky Mtns and the descent through the Sierra Nevadas made the trip perilous.
  - Donner party only 48 of 83 survived

- Preferred route took many into joint-occupied Oregon country.
The Oregon Dispute

- Dispute over Oregon was over territorial claims made by American settlers and the British Empire.
- Democratic party claimed line was at 54’40.
- Polk offers 49th parallel as a compromise, but when refused, he bluffs that he will then succumb to his party’s cries for war.
  - “54-40 or fight!”
- Bluff works and agreement is made in 1846
War with Mexico

- **Causes**
  1. Americans in Texas unable to gain compensation for loses against Mexico
  2. Mexico angry over annexation of Texas
  3. Disputes over southern and western Texas boundaries
  4. Unstable Mexican gov’t made any negotiations difficult
  5. Polk determined to acquire New Mexico and California (by any means necessary)
War with Mexico 1846-47

Annexation of Texas, 1845

- After Texas annexation, Mexico refused to negotiate with US over border disputes.
- Argument over southern boundary
  - Rio Grande vs. Nueces River

The Slidell Mission: Nov, 1845

- Polk sends envoy (John Slidell) to settle border dispute and offer money for California and New Mex.
- $5 mill for New Mexico and $25 mill for CA
- US would forgive war debt against Mexico

Meanwhile, Polk sends Zachary Taylor and 1500 troops across disputed land to camp on Rio Grande River
As expected, Mexico refused to meet with the envoy and Polk readied for war. On April 25, 1846 news that Mexican troops had crossed the Rio Grande. Polk declared war based on a vague battle that killed or injured 16 Americans.

Citizens were divided over war issue. Northern Whigs viewed war as attempt by South to increase power in Congress.

John C. Fremont was sent by Polk prior to war starting. By June 14, 1846 Fremont declares CA an independent nation: The Bear Flag Republic

Stephen Kearny takes southern California and New Mexico. (New Mexico falls without any gunfire)

Gen. Winfield Scott captured Mexico City and forced the surrender of Mexican forces.
The arrival of the U.S. Navy gave a distinct advantage to American ground troops.

Battle of Vera Cruz March of 1847

U.S. Army occupies Mexico City by Sept. 1847
Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, 1848

- Feb 2, 1848, the US obtained California, New Mexico and Rio Grande border for $15 million and assumption of claims against Mexico ($3.5 mill)

- Senate approved but some wanted all of Mexico. Added 1 million sq miles, including part or all of CA, NM, AZ, TX, UT, NV, WY and CO
Effects of the Mexican War

- Total cost $100,000,000 and 13,000+ American lives (mostly of disease).
- U.S. added over 1 million square miles of land present-day TX, NM, AZ, CA, NV, UT, (+) It was 55% of pre-war Mexican land.
- The new territories brought into the Union forced the explosive issue of slavery to the center of national politics.
- These new territories would upset the balance of power between North and South.
- First war that used West Point Academy graduates
  - Robert E. Lee
  - Thomas J. Jackson
  - Ulysses S. Grant
  - George G. Meade
  - George McClellan
  - William T. Sherman
Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why were Americans unable to resolve sectional tensions during the 1850s?

2. To what extent was slavery a cause of the Civil War?

3. Was the Civil War inevitable?
Toward Civil War

- Series of “gag rules” passed in 1836 to ban the discussion of settling the slavery issue.

- With the failure of the Wilmot Proviso to prevent slavery in the new territory taken from Mexico, the sectional debate flared over every settlement issue from 1848 to 1860 “Impending Crisis”

- The 1820 Missouri Compromise had given temporary respite to the North (Balance of 11 to 11)

- Slaves in the North by 1860 fewer than 100

- Slaves in the South in 1860 was close to 4 million

- Both North and South agreed that blacks and whites were inherently unequal

neither slavery nor involuntary servitude shall ever exist in any part of said territory
States Rights

- The main crux of the issue was the debate over states rights; who had control over the new territories. Slavery was at the heart of this debate.

- Opponents of expansion were:
  - anti-southern
  - racist (keep all blacks out of territories
  - anti-slavery

- Proponents of expansion believed:
  - territories were common property of all states
  - Congress couldn’t prevent migration to territories with their property.
  - Only when applying for statehood could it prohibit slavery. This nullified the Missouri Compromise
Popular Sovereignty

- A moderate approach to the issue of expansion was Popular Sovereignty.

- This proposed to let settlers decide the issue for themselves (state rights/local gov’t)

- Free Soil Party emerges in 1848 - wanted to halt the expansion of slavery into the western territories

- Predecessor to Republican party

- This enraged the North (wanted abolition) and angered the South (wanted no restrictions)
Compromise of 1850 via Henry Clay (Unionist)

- In an attempt to avoid secession Clay put together a series of proposals to appease both sides of the issue.

- The Missouri Compromise was now worthless and both sides wanted their way

- Compromise of 1850 (Omnibus Bill)
  - Calif. be admitted as a free state
  - Territorial gov’ts for rest of Mexican territory without slavery restriction (New Mexico admitted in 1912)
  - Texas abandons claim for eastern New Mexico
  - Federal gov’t pay back Texas for public debt.
  - Slave trade in D.C. abolished
  - New and rigorous fugitive slave law (Sheriff could force citizens to catch slaves or go to jail)
  - Congress could not interfere with interstate slave trade.
Reaction to the Compromise of 1850

1. The South, in 99% of the cases, claimed states rights for any and all legislation to the point that they could nullify federal laws.

2. When it came to the slavery issue the South wants Federal gov’t enforcement.

3. North passes a series of personal liberty laws:
   - forbade state officers from assisting
   - insured trial for fugitive slaves
   - denied use of jails for detention
   - states judges forbidden to assist commissioners
The Case of Margaret Garner

Margaret Garner was a mixed blood slave who had lived in Kentucky for nearly twenty five years.

She had four children total. At least three of which were described as also mulattoes/mixed, meaning that they were almost certainly the result of a sexual encounter with her master, Archibald Gaines.

In 1856, Margaret, who was pregnant at the time, led her family out of Kentucky, across the frozen Ohio River to Cincinnati, OH.

Despite making to a ‘free-state’ US Marshals acting under the Fugitive Slave Act arrested her and her family.

Before being captured, Margaret killed her two year old daughter with a knife and was attempting to kill her other children when she was subdued by officers.
The Case of Margaret Garner

After being arrested, Margaret Garner’s case became complicated in Ohio.

Should she be tried for murder in Ohio as a person or be treated as property under the Fugitive Slave Law and returned to Kentucky.

The judge ruled Federal Fugitive Laws overrode state laws and ordered her returned to Kentucky.

Upon the trip home, Margaret’s ship was struck by another and both she and her baby were thrown overboard.

The baby drowned

Margaret would later die of typhoid in 1858.
Uncle Tom’s Cabin

- In response to the Fugitive Slave Law, Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote the novel that Lincoln believed caused the war.

- Novel sold 300,000 copies in 1852 and 2 million worldwide (equivalent to approx. 12 million today)

- Criticized the institution of slavery - not the South directly

- Dramatic portrayal of cruelty gave the North a moral reason for ending slavery.

“So this is the little lady who started the Civil War.”
– Abraham Lincoln
Kansas Nebraska bill 1854

- Stephen Douglas authored
  - Felt the West was the “true America”

- Kansas Nebraska Bill divides territory west of Iowa into Kansas and Nebraska.

- The purpose was that the country needed a “continuous line of settlement” to the West
  - added **popular sovereignty** to the bill to get Southern support

- passed March 3, 1854
Kansas Nebraska bill 1854

- In reaction to the bill passing Anti-Slavery Nebraska Whigs formed the Republican party

- Members of the Republican party were in favor of containment and they move into Kansas to push it through as a free state

- Missourians cross state lines to cast illegal votes in Kansas territory. “Spirit of Comp 1850” was broken by North

- Of the 5,247 ballots for slavery, 4,968 were bogus. (actual count 279 pro to 791 anti)

“border ruffians”
Bleeding Kansas

- Free soil groups denounced the "bogus" legislature and drew up a constitution in Topeka to end slavery in 1855

- Defeat of Topeka Constitution in the Senate led to Lecompton Constitution in 1857 and later Wyandotte Constitution

- Outraged by the defeat of the Topeka Constitution, John Brown leads a small group to Pottawatomie Creek where they hack 5 slave owners to death in front of their families

- 200 total killed in several minor skirmishes
Bleeding Kansas...and Senate

- Senator Charles Sumner (6’4 240) - made a speech that insulted Stephen Douglas IL and Andrew Butler SC

- In retaliation, Butler’s nephew Preston Brooks attacked Sumner in the Senate chamber, beating him with a thick wood and gold knobbed cane.
  - Tried a duel at first
  - Sumner was partially blinded and was out of office for over 4 years; suffered permanent blindness and memory loss
“The Crime Against Kansas”

**Douglas** (who was present in the chamber) was a "noise-some, squat, and nameless animal...not a proper model for an American senator." **Butler** was a pimp who took "a mistress who, though ugly to others, is always lovely to him; though polluted in the sight of the world, is chaste in his sight—I mean, the harlot, Slavery."

Sen. Charles Sumner (R-MA)

Congr. Preston Brooks (D-SC)
Dred Scott 1857

- March 6, 1857 Dred Scott decision

- Background: Scott was a slave whose master had taken him north into free territory

- After his master's death, he sued for his freedom from his new master claiming he had been living in free territory.

- Missouri Supreme Court agreed but ruling was appealed to Federal Supreme Court

- Taney ruling - Dred Scott could not sue because he was not and never could be a citizen. Also, being in a free state did not make a slave free. Finally, the 5th amendment protected property, which a slave was according to the court.

- Result: The US Gov’t was prohibited from limiting the spread of slavery in the territories.
Lincoln-Douglas debates 1858

- Lincoln, who is a relative nobody in politics challenges the popular Stephen Douglas to a series of debates during the 1858 election for the IL senate seat.

- Douglas won reelection arguing that territorial legislatures could exclude slavery by simply not passing laws to protect it.

- Lincoln despite losing gains significant notoriety by arguing free soil and free labor.

- Denounces the use of popular sovereignty

- Hopes to contain (not remove) slavery initially.

“A House divided against itself, cannot stand.”
John Brown: Menace or Martyr

- Born 1800 to a strict Calvinist family in Conn. Taught keeping slaves in bondage was a sin

- 1812 during the war, Brown witnessed a child slave of similar age, bludgeoned with an iron shovel

- 1837, Nov. 7th - Elijah Lovejoy is murdered. Brown vows to end slavery and begins to plan Harper’s Ferry Raid

- 1842-1859 - Brown spends his time causing havoc to slave holders in Kansas and Missouri as well as plotting the Harper’s Ferry attack
Harper’s Ferry, 1859

- 1859 - July 3 - rents a farmhouse outside Harper’s Ferry under alias Issac Smith

- August 16 - Brown reveals final plan to Frederick Douglass and recruits additional members in Penn.

- Oct. 16 - Brown and his 21 followers raid Harpers Ferry. 10 of his men are killed, 7 captured/ later hanged.
Final Words of John Brown

“I, John Brown, am now quite certain that the crimes of this guilty land will never be purged away but with blood. I had, as now think, vainly flattered myself that without very much bloodshed it might be done.”
Federal troops under Robert E. Lee captured Brown; he was later executed by hanging
John Brown: Martyr or Madman?

John Brown ca. 1850

“The Tragic Prelude (John Brown)”
Reactions to John Brown’s Raid

- Northern abolitionists made Brown into a martyr
- Ralph Waldo Emerson compares him to a modern Jesus Christ (Martyr)
- Southerners were terrified that other abolitionists would incite slave rebellions
- Did not understand how a mass murdering could be called a hero.
Republican Party Platform in 1860

1. Non-extension of slavery [for Free-Soilers].
2. Protective tariff [for No. Industrialists].
3. No abridgment of rights for immigrants [a disappointment for the “Know-Nothings”].
5. Internal improvements [for the West] at federal expense.
6. Free homesteads for the public domain [for farmers].
1860 Presidential Election

- Abraham Lincoln (Republican)
- John Bell (Constitutional Union)
- Stephen A. Douglas (Northern Democrat)
- John C. Breckinridge (Southern Democrat)
Election of 1860

- Lincoln’s election in Nov. of 1860 would create a permanent split between the north and south.

- **Crittenden Compromise - Dec 18, 1860** - John Crittenden proposes a last ditch effort to amend the sides.

- Proposed six constitutional amendments regarding slavery including the congressional recognition of African slavery.

- Rejected by Lincoln
Southern States Secede

- December 20, 1860 - S. Carolina secedes from the Union followed later by Miss., Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas by Feb.

- Feb. 9th, 1861 - Jefferson Davis is sworn in as president of the newly established Confederate States of America

- March 4, 1861 - Lincoln is sworn in as 16th president of the United States
Lincoln by Alexander Gardner, 1861
Photographer Mathew Brady captured this image of the solemn president-elect on February 23, 1861, a few weeks after the formation of the Confederacy and shortly before Lincoln's inauguration. (Library of Congress)
Lincoln’s Inauguration, March 4, 1861

- Position on secession – Union was perpetual and unbroken, and secession legally impossible.
- Offered a moderate position on slavery to help keep the Union together
- I am loth to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battle-field, and patriot grave, to every living heart and hearthstone, all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.
The Divided Nation
Fort Sumter

- April 12, 1861 - Confederate Gen. Pierre Beauregard attacks the fort at 4:30 AM.

- Civil War officially begins

- Fort Sumter largely destroyed from Rebel bombardment

- Under Confederate control by April 14

- Battle is a Confederate victory but unites the North
Lincoln Reacts

- April 15, 1861 - Lincoln calls for a special session of congress to meet on July 4
- Lincoln also asks initially for 75,000 militiamen
- Asks Robert E. Lee to command the Union army - after much thought, Lee declines
- April 17 - Virginia secedes from the Union. By the end of May, Arkansas, Tennessee and North Carolina join - 11 state Confederacy
Lincoln Reacts

• April 19 - Lincoln blocks all Southern ports from international trade. He hopes the blockade over the winter will force compliance.

• April 20 - Lee resigns from the US Army refusing to fight against his native Virginians.

• He is later offered command of the Confederate army and will accept.

• July 4 - Lincoln argues in Congress the importance of the US in the world as a place of freedom. 500,000 soldiers are called up by Congress