* Chapter 10
* The Union in Crisis
* 1846-1861
* Section 1
* Remember, the country is very divided on the issue of slavery.
* The North and South have very different ways of life:
  + The North has busy cities, technology and industry and many factories staffed by paid workers
  + The South was an agricultural society. Their economy was largely based on one crop: cotton. To grow cotton, southern farmers depended on the work of enslaved African Americans.
* As the U.S. grew, Americans faced a crucial question: Should slavery be allowed to spread to new American territories?
  + How did Northerners view slavery?
* Slavery ended early, but slow in the North. By 1800, there were about 50,000 enslaved people in the North, compared to 1 million in the South.
* Most white northerners viewed African Americans as inferior. Laws in the North severely limited the rights of free blacks.
* A small minority of white northerners were **abolitionists**, people who wanted to end slavery. They believed that slavery was morally wrong. Some abolitionists favored a gradual end while others wanted slavery to outlawed all at once.
* Not all northerners wanted slavery to end. Some made a lot of money off of southern cotton and tobacco or by trading and transporting slaves.
* How did Southerners view slavery?
* Many southerners believed that God intended that black people should provide the labor for white “civilized” society. (John Calhoun)
* Many southern politicians began to argue that the northern free labor system harmed society more than slavery did.
* Southerners claimed that enslaved people were healthier and happier than northern wage workers.
* Slavery was an integral part of everyday Southern life.
* Election of 1848
* In the presidential election of 1848, both Democrats and Whigs (the Democratic Republicans became the Whig Party) split over the question of whether to limit the expansion of slavery.
* The **Free-Soil Party** united in support of the Wilmot Proviso and their main goal was to keep slavery out of the western territories.
  + They promised “free soil, free speech and free men.”
  + The Free-Soil Party took a definite stance on slavery, which forced the 2 major political parties (Whigs and Democrats) to do the same.
* Both parties address the issue by embracing the idea of **popular sovereignty**, which is a political idea stating that people should hold the power. In this case, people should decide whether or not to allow slavery in their territory or state. This allowed the major parties a way around taking a firm stance on the issue.
* Election of 1848
* The Whigs nominated Zachary Taylor
  + Taylor was a military man who revealed little of his political opinions
  + He was a slaveholding Louisiana planter, so many southerne voters automatically assumed he supported slavery
* The Democrats nominated Governor Lewis Cass from Michigan
  + Cass opposed the Wilmot Proviso and supported popular sovereignty
* The Free-Soil Party nominated Martin Van Buren
  + Van Buren was a New Yorker
* When California applied for statehood as a free state in 1849, it created an uproar in the nation.
* For years the North and South had disagreed over the issue of slavery.
* The South felt that its honor and property were at stake.
* Many Northerners felt that slavery was not their problem and the federal government should not have to enforce/regulate it.
* Senator Henry Clay came forward and offered a compromise (**Clay’s Compromise** or the **Compromise of 1850**):
  + Congress admit CA as a free state
  + The people of the territories of New Mexico and Utah would decide the slavery question by popular sovereignty
  + The slave trade—but not slavery—would be ended in Washington DC
  + Congress would pass and enforce a strict new fugitive slave law
  + Texas would give up its claims to NM in return for $10 million
* Senator John Calhoun of South Carolina did not believe that Clay’s compromise gave the South enough protection. He argued that if the North did not make provisions to protect the South, then the South would be justified in **seceding**, or breaking away, from the Union.
* This greatly troubled Senator Daniel Webster who made a passionate, 3-hour speech attempting to bring the North and South to a compromise.
  + Webster suggested that cotton and tobacco crops that flourished under slavery would not grow in California. Thus, popular sovereignty would allow the South to feel a measure of comfort but would not result in the spread of slavery to the West, which should please the North.
  + Webster was successful in persuading many northerners to support the compromise.
* Still, the debate dragged on and Henry Clay fell into bad health. A young senator from Illinois named Stephen A Douglas took up the cause and steered Clay’s compromise through Congress, winning support.
* The Senate eventually adopted The Compromise of 1850.
* Section 2
* While the Compromise of 1850 was meant to calm people’s fears, the new fugitive slave law did the opposite.
* This law required citizens to catch and return runaway slaves and it enraged many northerners.
* The northerners saw this as increasing federal intervention in the affairs of independent states. In response to the Fugitive Slave Act, some northern states passed **personal liberty laws**, which nullified the Fugitive Slave Act and allowed the state to arrest slave catchers for kidnapping.
* Under the Fugitive Slave Law, many free blacks were captured and sold into slavery.
* Many white northerners and free blacks banned together in resistance. One of their biggest operations was the **Underground Railroad**, which was a loosely organized network that smuggled slaves from the south to the north. This secret network of “conductors” hid runaway slaves in farm wagons and river boats and then moved them to destination in the North or Canada.
* One of the most famous conductors was **Harriet Tubman**, a Maryland-born fugitive slave. After her own escape in 1849, she made about two-dozen more trips to the south helping resuce slaves, including her own parents.
* In 1852, **Harriet Beecher Stowe** published *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, a powerful condemnation of slavery.
* Set in the South, Stowe’s main character is the gentle and patient Uncle Tom.
* *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* is important because it gave slavery a face for those who had never experienced first-hand and it spread compassion for enslaved people in the north.

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* Congress’ repeated attempts to resolve the question of slavery resulted in a bunch of contradictory and often unenforceable policies. The Missouri Compromise, the Wilmot Proviso and the Compromise of 1850 all intended to offer the solution but, in reality, the issue lay beyond the ability of legislation.
* Senator Stephen A. Douglas forced the issue of slavery again by introducing a bill to set up a government in the Nebraska Territory. Douglas proposed the area be organized according to popular sovereignty. That is, the people of the territory would get to decide whether to allow or outlaw slavery when it applied for statehood.
* Once again, Congress was in bitter debate over the issue.
* After pressure from the South, who feared Nebraska might enter as a free state, Douglas amended the bill to split the territory in two: Kansas and Nebraska.
* The idea was that Kansas would become a slave state and Nebraska a free state, but these assumptions were not written into the bill.
* In 1854, Congress accepted the **Kansas-Nebraska Act**.
* Some argued that the Kansas-Nebraska Act nullified the Missouri Comprmise because it allowed slavery to spread that were to be free.
* Once Kansas was opened up, there was a lot of competition among the settlers. Some were farmers and other settlers had political motives. Each group wanted to outnumber the other so they could control the government when it came time to vote.
* A harsh battle began between the proslavery and antislavery group in the territory. They had essentially set up two different governments.
* On May 21, 1856, “Border Ruffians” raided the antislavery town of Lawrence, Kansas. They burned homes and destroyed the presses of *The Kansas Free State* newspaper.
* A New York abolitionist named John Brown led a retaliation and executed 5 proslavery settlers in Kansas.
* As news of “Bleeding Kansas” traveled west, abolititonists were outraged by the actions of both sides. Violent outbreaks continued in Kansas and they weren’t entered into the Union as a state until 1861, after the Civil War had begun.
* Violence was not limited to Kansas. Tempers ran high in Congress and many began coming to work armed.
* In 1856, Massachusetts Senator Charles Sumner insulted South Carolina Senator Andrew Butler, who was absent, in a speech.
* A few days later, Butler’s nephew, South Carolina representative Preston Brooks, attacked Sumner beating him unconscious with a cane.
* The Senate punished Brooks by removing him from office, but South Carolina just kept reelecting him and sending him back.
* Sumner was so badly injured that he could not return to the Senate for 3 years. Massachusetts continued to reelect him, letting his empty seat serve as a reminder of southern treachery.
* The divide between North and South continued to grow wider and deeper.
* Section 3
* In 1840s, American politics increasingly reflected regional tensions, especially over the issue of slavery.
* The Compromise of 1850, as well as the policies that grew out of it, caused political upheaval.
* In the election of 1852, the Whigs tried to get a candidate, but with the party’s 2 biggest leaders dead (Henry Clay and Daniel Webster), the party couldn’t do it. They were deeply divided over the issues and they had fiercely supported the Compromise of 1850 to preserve the Union. The Whig Party lost a lot of popularity and would die off after the election of 1852.
* By the mid-1800s, the country was changing due to the large immigrant population. These changes made many Americans nervous and this fueled an anti-immigration movement.
* A group called the “**Know-Nothings**” led the anti-immigration movement and they formed the **American Party** in 1855. Like the Whigs, however, the American Party would soon be divided over the issue of slavery.
* As these old parties broke up, the antislavery movement birthed the new **Republican Party** in 1854.
  + Opposition to slavery was the center of their philosophy.
  + They grew rapidly in the North, attracting antislavery Democrats, Whigs, Free-Soilers, and Know-Nothings.
* American Political Parties During the 1850s
* Election of 1856
* The Republicans nominated John C. Fremont
  + A colorful Mexican-American war hero
  + Their slogan was “Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men, Fremont!” to try and rally Americans to reject popular sovereignty and to insist on excluding slavery in the territories.
  + Won 1/3 of the popular vote!
  + Helped CA gain independence
* The Democrats nominated James Buchanan
  + Promised that as president he would stop the agitation of the slavery issue
* The Know-Nothings nominated former President Millard Fillmore
* The election of 1856 raised tensions in the U.S. Another event furthered the division.
* In 1857, the Supreme Court ruled in the case of a Missouri slave named Dred Scott, who had sued for his freedom. (*Dred Scott v Sandford*, 1857)
* Scott based his case on the fact that his master had taken him into free territory (Illinois and Wisconsin Territory) and rented him out.
* With the help of abolitionists, Scott’s case reached the Supreme Court under Chief Justice Roger Taney.
* The Court ruled against Scott, stating that slaves and their descendants were property, not citizens, and therefore were not entitled to sue in the courts. It also said that the Missouri Compromise was unconstitutional because it was illegal for Congress to deprive a citizen of their property (in this case, a slave) without due process of law.
* This decision was very controversial.
* The Lincoln-Douglas Debates
* In 1858, Stephen Douglas and Abraham Lincoln held a series of seven debates while competing for a seat in the U.S. Senate.
* Raised in rural poverty and mostly self-taught, **Abraham Licoln** began his political career at 25 when he was elected to a seat in the Illinois legislature.
  + By 1836, he had passed the bar exam and was practicing law in Springfield, Illinois.
  + He soon built a reputation of integrity that gained him the nickname “Honest Abe.”
  + Lincoln seemed to be very against slavery, but politically he remained more middle-of-the-road.
  + Lincoln’s real political career began with his opposition to the Kansas-Nebraska Act and its support of the expansion of slavery.
  + This is where he and Douglas become rivals.
* The Lincoln-Douglas Debates
* **Stephen Douglas** was also an Illinois politician and he was, in many ways, Lincoln’s opposite:
  + He was very short, round and energetic with a commanding voice. These qualities earned him the nickname “Little Giant.”
  + Douglas’ financial stakes in the railroad made many question his motives. Did he support popular sovereignty because he believed in it or because he was concerned about his financial interests?
  + Douglas had supporters in the North and the South. Although he did not own slaves, his wife had inherited slaves and he was somewhat sympathetic to slavery.
  + He insisted that popular sovereignty was the implied intent of the Constitution.
* In the end, Douglas won the election to the Senate by a slim margin, but Lincoln had not really lost. The debates are important because won a large following that would serve him well in his presidential election.
* Both Lincoln and Douglas believed that the issue of salvery should be solved within the framework of the nation’s laws. An abolitionist named John Brown felt differently.
* In 1859, John Brown led a group of 21 armed men to raid the federal arsenal in Harpers Ferry, VA in what became known as **John Brown’s** Raid or **The Raid at Harpers** Ferry. He hoped to inspire local slaves to join a revolution that would destroy slavery in the South.
* Brown’s revolution failed. Few were ready to join a fanatical white man in an uprising.
* A group of federal troops, led by Robert E. Lee, surrounded the arsenal and captured Brown and a few of his men, who were hanged.
* John Brown’s raid and his execution further divide North and South.
* Section 4
* Several factors made this election tense:
  + John Brown’s Raid and execution was still fresh on people’s minds
  + The question over Kansas and whether is would become a slave or free state
  + The loss of confidence in the Supreme Court in the North over the Dred Scott decision
  + The issue of states’ rights for both North and South:
    - Northern rage about the Fugitive Slave Act’s intrusion into states’ independence
    - Southerners feared northern radicals would conspire to eliminate slavery all together
  + Election of 1860
* After much debate, the Democrats called for a platform supporting federal protection of slavery in the territories. However, the Democrats split over popular sovereignty.
  + The **Northern Democrats** nominated Stephen Douglas, who believed strongly in popular sovereignty.
  + The **Southern Democrats** nominated the VP, John C. Breckinridge who was committed to expanding slavery in the territories and believed the government must protect it.
* The Whigs made a last-ditch effort and teamed up with the Know-Nothings to created the **Constitutional Union Party**, which aimed at healing the split between North and South.
  + They nominated John Bell, a little-known moderate from Tennessee, who said the government should support slavery and defend the Union.
* The **Republicans** nominated Abraham Lincoln, who did not support slavery in the territories.
* Election of 1860
* The Republicans called for an end to slavery in the territories but they also defended the right of each state to control its own affairs, stating that there should be no interference with slavery in the state where it already existed.
* Lincoln, with his great debating skills, moderate views and reputation for integrity, won 40% of the popular vote and won the election.
* He did not receive a single Southern vote.
* The election of 1860 demonstrated that Americans; worst fears had come to pass. There were no longer any national political parties. The North and South were effectively two separate political units, and there seemed to be no way to bridge the gap.
* Southerners were outraged that a president could be elected without a single southern vote. In their minds, they had no voice in the national government.
* As soon as Lincoln’s election was confirmed, the **South Carolina** legislature met and voted to secede from the Union citing “the election of a president whose opinions and purposes are hostile to slavery” as their reason.
* In the next few weeks, six other states of the Deep South seceded from the Union. (GA, FL, AL, MS, LA, TX)
* In February 1861, the seven seceding states established the **Confederate States of America** and named Jefferson Davis as their president. They formed a new constitution and a new government, which closely resembled that of the U.S. The main difference was the Confederacy stressed the independence of each state and implied that states had the right to secede.
* Not all Southern states were on board with secession. Some had their doubts, even though they were unhappy with Lincoln’s election.
* Some large southern planters had economic ties to the North and still hoped for a compromise.
* When Lincoln took office he approached the South in a firm but conciliatory way. Lincoln’s main goal was to preserve the Union. He was not unwilling to work with the South to make that happen.
* When the Southern states seceded, they seized the federal forts and arsenals within their borders. This left only 4 forts in Union hands. The most important of these was **Fort Sumter**, which guarded the harbor at Charleston, SC.
* In January of 1861 (before Lincoln took office), President Buchanan tried to resupply the fort, but the unarmed ship turned back when Confederate troops fired on it.
* Lincoln was faced with a difficult dilemma: Should he try and resupply the fort or should he let the Confederates take it? A wrong move could start a war. At last Lincoln sent word to SC that he was sending food and supplies, no arms, to the fort.
* The Confederates were suspicious of Lincoln’s motives and so they ordered the fort to surrender. When the Union troops refused, the Confederates opened fire on them. Because they had no way to resupply, the Union troops ran out of ammunition and were forced to surrender.
* The northerners were outraged. On April 15, Lincoln that insurrection existed and called for 75,000 volunteers to fight against the Confederacy.
* Fort Sumter is considered the beginning of the Civil War.
* After Fort Sumter, the states of Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina joined the Confederacy.
* Both sides predicted a short skirmish, with victory only a few months away.