Slide 1

Text: Contradictions that Bind: Expansion and Reform (1801-1861)

[Photo of slave with scars on his back from being whipped]

Audio: As this lecture covers the first half of the 19th century, the focus will be on two major features of life in US society, the extraordinary growth of this republic over a relatively short period of time and the chain of events to which the slavery question increasingly came to dominate political affairs putting the nation on the brink of war by the spring of 1861. In the process, I would like to appreciate how the contradictions embedded in fundamental American values would both hold this society together, however imperfectly, and encourage the sort of conflict that ultimately produced a civil war. These values were freedom, liberty, and manifest destiny.

Slide 2

Text: Related Topics Covered in Lecture 3

- Louisiana Purchase (1803) – Jefferson’s victory
- War of 1812 – A draw “spun” as a triumph
- Missouri Compromise (1820) – uneasy handling of slavery issues
- Andrew Jackson’s background and rise of Democratic Party – a gentleman of the frontier epitomizing new realities of mass-based politics

Audio: As a caveat, let me briefly summarize some overlapping material from lecture three that should be kept in mind while covering this Age of Reform. I had mentioned that the greatest accomplishment for President Thomas Jefferson, at least while he was holding that office, was his Louisiana Purchase from France in 1803. This opened up a massive portion of the North American continent for the United States at the time when there were plenty of citizens clamoring to move west. It was technically illegal for the president to do this himself and it went against Jefferson's own principles of wanting to hold any member of the federal government especially someone in the executive branch to very precise careful standards on how they exercise power. But he saw an opportunity and felt that he had to move quickly, ended up being the most popular accomplishment during his time as president. But as with other expansion we covered here in the first half of the 19th century, each time that America grew, it had its ways of bringing the slavery question back to the forefront. And with that in mind, I'll just jump for a moment down to item number three on this slide, which was the Missouri Compromise. When residents of the territory of Missouri were ready to apply for statehood, they had drawn up a constitution allowing slavery because the vast majority of those settlers were happy to keep that institution as the law of the land. But this threatened to upset the delicate equilibrium of power in Washington DC where at that time, they were an equal number of free states and slave states. So
for a time, congress was paralyzed over what to do about the possibility of Missouri coming into
the union as a slave state, it was then that Henry Clay and the US House of Representatives
engineered the Missouri Compromise also known as the Compromise of 1820 whereby Missouri
was allowed to come in as a free state. But Maine which had been part of Massachusetts are
going to back to the earliest years of colonial development, Maine was brought into the Union as
a free state to keep that delicate equilibrium. But in many ways, the fear over the Missouri
Compromise was a sign of things to come. In between the two developments that I've mentioned
so far was a second War with England, fought while James Madison was president. I described it
in lecture three as for the most part a pretty lackluster affair fought to withdraw the United States
by virtue of surviving a conflict with the most powerful empire in the world could certainly
spend this as something of a victory especially when it's final major engagement was a victory
for the Unites States in the Battle of New Orleans. A battle technically fought after peace that are
already been signed in Europe but it was an engagements that really helped to put the name
Andrew Jackson on the map for many Americans. He had been the Commander of US Forces
and this victory would help to catapult him into politics and ultimately help to make him the
most dominant political figure in America during the 1820s and 1830s. So at the end of lecture
three, I was giving you a bit of a background on Andrew Jackson himself. I mentioned that while
he was--to some extent, the George Washington of his generation in terms of being that most
dominant political figure, I think that if a President Washington had somehow been able to meet
a President Andrew Jackson, the former would have been absolutely appalled at what he saw.
Whereas George Washington had been devoting so much energy to be in the proper English
gentleman and really trying to best represent what was the unofficial aristocracy of colonial
America, you know, in the years leading up to the revolution. Andrew Jackson was a gentleman
of the frontier or at the backcountry, so to speak. In many ways, very rough around the edges,
certainly far too much so for someone like George Washington, certainly a very intelligent man
but somebody who had a very different sense of propriety than a George Washington. But
Jackson's background in the way that he marked himself would be ideal for the rise of more
popular politics in the 1820s, '30s on into the 1840s. A time when politics had a different set of
rules than what Washington had been accustomed to, where there was growing pressure that
even if in your heart of hearts, you weren't the least, you had to at least put some effort into
pretending that you were a man of the people. And Andrew Jackson would do a very good job of
marketing himself and the Democratic Party that was built around him into what appeared to be a
vehicle for the aspirations of common Americans. And the last thing I'll say for now to finish off
my caveat sort of stipulations, if you will, Andrew Jackson's first run for the presidency had been
back in 1824 which happened to be the first year that there was a popular vote taken in this
country. Thanks to a constitutional amendment that had revised the electoral process. Now, still
the Electoral College that decides who ultimately becomes president and vice president. But it
did change the nature of politics. And so, Andrew Jackson ran in 1824 relying heavily upon his
reputation as an Indian fighter and his exploits in the war of 1812 and he ended up finishing with
a plurality in both the Electoral College and the popular vote. But in the Electoral College, he did
not have the necessary majority to win outright. In other words, according to the constitutions rules, there was no outright winner in the Electoral College in 1824. And what the constitution provides for then is that the US House of Representatives, the People's House has to vote amongst itself to determine who becomes president. Now, because Jackson had the plurality, again, meaning he had more electoral votes than anyone else but his opponents had more total than he did, and therefore he didn't have the majority, Jackson and his supporters felt that because he had finished first, even if it wasn't a dominant first, that he should had been made president. Instead, what happened was that the US House of Representatives voted for the number two finisher in both the popular vote in the Electoral College to win. And that man happened to be John Quincy Adams, the son of John Adams whom we've covered a bit. And so the sixth president of the United States would be the son of the second president. Now, Jackson and his supporters cried foul, they claimed it was a corrupt bargain because when John Quincy Adams put together his presidential administration, he gave the plum position of Secretary of State to another candidate from the 1824 election, Henry Clay who had thrown his support behind Adams once the election was thrown into the House of Representatives. So Jackson and his people could argue that it really looked like a very inappropriate quid pro quo. And although there's no proof that there was ever a negotiation between Clay and Adams in the sense of, "Well, you scratch my back I'll scratch yours," perception is very important in politics. And this perception would haunt John Quincy Adams who went on to have a pretty frustrating first term in which he would be defeated for reelection four years later by Andrew Jackson. And in 1828, Jackson would have a stronger organization behind him because it would be the Democratic Party. A political alignment would occur between 1824 and 1828, there would be a North-South Alliance producing this Democratic Party. Andrew Jackson would win behind its banner and go on to have a two-term presidency, in a very volatile one.

Slide 3

Text: Jackson’s “War” on the National Bank

[Political cartoon titled “The Downfall of Mother Bank”]

Audio: I have chosen one of the major political battles from Andrew Jackson's presidency to try to give you a better sense of the man and his philosophy and why he was ultimately successful. At the time that Andrew Jackson first became president, this country did have, for all intents and purposes, a national bank. It was the institution where federal funds were deposited, not that this government had nearly as much revenue as were accustomed to in more modern periods but nevertheless, by virtue of being in the institution in which federal funds were deposited, this national bank had a certain amount of power. And it would normally provide a kind of restraining and responsible influence upon other banks in America because if you are going to borrow money as a bank and please keep in mind that banks are constantly investing and borrowing money as part of their operations, if you were a state level bank that was looking to
borrow from the national bank, it would not do business with you unless you were demonstrating responsible practices. So the national bank, by virtue of having this accumulation of funds and accumulation of influence ideally, what it was supposed to be doing is performing something of a watchdog function on smaller banks in the US economy. Now, as the year 1832 got underway and it was going to be a presidential campaign season, you know, Andrew Jackson running for reelection, his enemy is most notably Henry Clay in congress were figuring that they could use the issue of the national back and what it symbolized as a way to get at Andrew Jackson because he had made no secret of the fact that he despise the national bank. And the bank's charter was brought up in 1832 as an issue. The charter was basically the bank's license to continue operating. And Jackson's opponents in congress arranged for an early vote on potentially renewing the bank's charter because they figured Jackson would of course veto that renewal and they hoped that the American people would see in that act a veracious [assumed spelling] of power that would discredit Andrew Jackson and hurt him on the road towards trying to win the second term. Instead, things are going to backfire on Jackson's enemies but I'll get there in a moment. Now, why did Jackson have such an enemies against the national bank? For one thing, he really didn't care for the sort of people who ran the bank. Its president, its Board of Directors were Northeastern elite's, the sort of individuals that Jackson had tended to resent throughout his political career. Again, his built up his reputation as a man of the people, someone who's symbolizes the end of any form of aristocracy in America. Whereas some of Jackson's enemies, while they were no longer calling themselves aristocrats, they certainly liked the kind of order and tradition in sense of hierarchy that was embodied and still to some extent recognizing your better, so to speak. And so again, while they weren't so foolish in this day and age is to call themselves aristocrats. They did have certain pretensions about them and Jackson resented them for it. So to some extent, it was his view of social class relations in America that drove him to be resentful of this bank. He also believed this matter of economic philosophy that bank should conduct their transactions with what was called "hard money", in other words precious metals, gold, and silver instead of the paper money that banks could print. So please keep in mind, there is no one national currency at this point in American history. Banks could produce--typically, they were called notes, you know, banks produced their own notes that functioned as a kind of paper currency. But Jackson felt that this was dangerous. And certainly, if you printed too many of these bank notes, if you weren't careful it could have a very inflationary or deflationary impact on the economy. So Jackson wasn't completely out and left field on this one but he does go a bit overboard in deciding that he wants to completely destroy this national bank. And so, he really declares in effect war on the bank, he vetoes the renewal of the bank's charter. And his able to convinced enough of the American people that this is a good move that he does--he ends up getting political dividends out of the whole thing instead of it blowing up in the space. And it was unfortunate for Jackson's successor because the US economy would go into a tailspin for Martin Van Buren who followed Jackson's second term of serving in the late 1830s. But sometimes, it takes a few years for bad economic policy to really show its full impact. But the United States economy did go in into a significant depression not long after Andrew Jackson had
left office. And part of the reason for this was that he ended up by destroying the national bank. He removed the stabilized and influence that are provided because Jackson pulled federal deposits out of the bank and so basically, it became just another very minor player in the grand scheme of things. And what Jackson was not telling the American people while he was on his high horse about the need to do a way with the national bank was that he had an important supporters in his party who were heavily invested in various state level banks, the so-called "pet banks" of Jackson. And that's where the federal funds went once he pulled them out of the national bank. So he quietly rewarded political supporters by putting federal funds into their institutions. And so that cast a somewhat different light on this whole episode anyway. But as I think I mentioned briefly in lecture three, Jackson took everything personally in politics. Some of it stems from the fact that his wife Rachel died at the end of his 1828 presidential campaign after she was absolutely savaged in the press by Jackson's opponents. In part because she had not been divorced unknowingly, she had not been divorced from her first husband at the time that she married Andrew so back then it was fair game for media figures to insult the woman's character in the worst sort of way and all kinds of vicious name calling. So he never forgave his enemies because he felt that their treatment of his wife had contributed to her death, and he also just in general, had a very hard time separating Andrew Jackson the man from Andrew Jackson the president. So opposition to his policies was to a large extent to him seeing as a personal attacked on his character, his intelligence, his judgment. So he was playing for keeps to say the very least.

**Slide 4**

**Text:** Nullification Crisis (1832-1833)

- Nominally fought over a protective tariff, but slavery was the proverbial 800 pound elephant in the room
- Could states render individual federal laws null and void?
- Jackson battled his own vice-president, John C. Calhoun, before a compromise was reached

**Audio:** Another illustrative political battle began in 1832. It concerned economic policy but in reality, much of the intensity surrounding this fight dealt with the slavery question. For a little background, let me begin by defining what a protective tariff is. Basically, a tariff is a special tax, if you will, that one country may decide to put upon certain foreign imports as a way to protect your own domestic industries that make similar products. A modern example would be, let's say the auto industry, if a tariff was put on Japanese vehicles as a way to try to keep the Detroit based American auto industry on a stronger footing. So the consumer--no, the cost of a tariff ultimately ends up being passed on to the consumer, in that case, so that it becomes more expensive to buy foreign vehicle so maybe you're a bit more likely to buy American. Going back to the early 19th century here, the protective tariff that was arranged in 1832, once again, by Henry Clay who recognized that this was going to cause some problems for the Democratic
Party that had a strong base in the South. That protective tariff was designed to protect US industry. And please keep in mind that much of America's industrial base at this point was in Free states in the Northeast. But what happens when you institute a protective tariff is that typically, whatever foreign countries are involved are going to retaliate. They're going to put tariffs on your imports as a way to even the score and discourage you to do a way with your policy. And when foreign nations retaliated against the America's protective tariff, it didn't hurt the North nearly as much as it hurts the South because the South's main export was cotton and the Southern economy was very heavily based on the successful sale of cotton overseas for textile industries and places like England and France. So when the British and the French retaliated over America's protective tariff on industry with their own protective tariff affecting Southern cotton, it was really the South that was bearing the brunt of the cost for a policy that favored Northern states. So needless to say, Southern states cried file over this beginning in 1832, and South Carolina really lead the way. And as a matter of fact, as my lecture material builds towards the Civil War, I'll just remind you that South Carolina in general, in Charleston in particular, were really the cradle of what becomes the Southern confederacy. Although obviously here in the 1830s were still a good ways off from the Civil War. But in many case, Southerners in general, but South Carolina--South Carolinians specially are open arms over this protective tariff. And some of their politicians resurrect an argument that went back to the previous decade, an argument that was made by Southern politicians like Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, an argument called nullification. The essence of the nullification argument was that the individual, or I should say, the initial contract that brought those first 13 states together, in other words, the constitutional contract, the original constitution was in the eyes of many Southerners are rather lose in only moderately binding agreement and that it was not an agreement between the American people. It was really an agreement between the American states that the states were the key players. As a matter of fact, for many Southerners, they are always had the states rights focus, that's why the original Republican Party with it's states right focus had a stronger power base in the South than it did elsewhere. And now in this new era, the Democratic Party has its strongest power base in the South and it too has the states rights focus. And Democrats in South Carolina and in other Southern states were increasingly arguing that an individual state have the right to pick and choose which federal laws that it was going to obey. In other words, that individual states could declare a certain federal laws null and void in effect to nullify them. And leading the way making this argument was none other than Andrew Jackson's own Vice President, John C. Calhoun, who had been a senator from South Carolina for a good number of years and then it gone on the ticket with Andrew Jackson as his vice presidential running mate in 1828. So we now have an incredibly ironic situation and that the number two men in Jackson's administration is the leader of the opposition over this particular policy. And they put Jackson in a very ironic position. If he had still been back in the senate where he did serve briefly earlier in his career, as a Southerner and as a Democrat, Andrew Jackson may very well have been joining the course of Southern politicians complaining about the protective tariff and arguing that Southern states had the right to ignore it. But now, he was the embodiment of
the federal government especially the executive branch and he is a president who takes everything personally. When he hears this argument about nullification, he takes it as an assault on his personal authority. And so he just can't let it stand. So it doesn't matter that most of the nullifiers are members of his own party and it doesn't matter that the leader of the nullifiers is the number two men in his own administration. This is something that he just cannot tolerate. So there is a war of words that goes on for a while. At one point, Jackson threatens that if necessary, he'll have his own vice president hanged for treason, for all of this talk about ignoring federal law. And if necessary, Jackson will send an army to invade South Carolina to enforce federal law. Meanwhile, John C. Calhoun is threatening to go back to his native South Carolina and raise an army to defend the state against what he sees as executive tyranny. So the rhetoric has become very inflammatory. And I wanted to mention one episode that helps to bring this situation into focus. Democrats had begun to have it of celebrating Thomas Jefferson's birthday as an important event within the life of their party. Even though Jefferson had not been a Democrat, there was no Democratic Party while Jefferson was active in politics. Intellectually, Jefferson's philosophy, his views, really made him the intellectual father of what became the Democratic Party. Today, there's actually a Jefferson-Jackson Day Dinner, which kind of suggests the significance that Jackson eventually took on. Today, Democrats jointly celebrate both of those former presidents. But back in this time, it was--had become common for Democrats to get together the whole events to celebrate the legacy of Thomas Jefferson. So in the nation's capital, there's one of this Jefferson Day Dinners and both the president and the vice president are in attendance. And of course, there's a real aura of tension in the room because they've got this ongoing battle between one another. Now, being that he is the President, Andrew Jackson gets to give the first toast at this event. And of course, normally, people would not be hanging on the president's every word here just giving the toast. But again, there's this ongoing crisis and Jackson decides to use the opportunity of this toast to throw a shot across the bow of John C. Calhoun. When as Jackson's turned to stand and speak, he says, "Our Union must and shall be preserved. Our Union must and shall be preserved." So he's asking everyone in the room to drink a toast to that statement. And of course, he's throwing down the gauntlet at his vice president who seems to be making the arguments that federal authority is not is all encompassing has had been generally thought so far in this country's history. When it's time for the vice president to offer his toast, he decides he's not going to back down. John C. Calhoun states the following words when he has the floor. He says, "Our Union next to our liberty most dear. Our Union next to our liberty most dear." So Calhoun is establishing a different set of priorities. He's trying on the one hand to still acknowledge a love for his country and a respect for the constitutional system that's been created, but obviously, there's still a concern over states rights in a somewhat different interpretation of the contractual agreement through the constitution that's it work here. Now Henry Clay ends up allowing South Carolinians like John C. Calhoun to say face. In 1833, Clay got a compromise tariff through Congress that kept enough of the original attention but did make some concessions to Southerners so that the nullifiers could agree to that and not look like they had really backed down. And so the crisis does pass in 1833, but it is a sign of things to
come because again, much of the controversy, much of the interest that was paid to this argument over a protective tariff which I realize is a subject that make student's eyes, you know, glass over and then, you know, leaves them some naps in the classroom. The real issue being debated here is slavery, because what many Southerners are wondering and for that matter what many who live in free states are wondering, is there going to be a time in the future when Southern politician step forward and argue that even if there are federal laws that in various ways crack down on the slave trade and the practice for slavery in general, would Southern states have a right to pick and choose what are they're going to respect, those laws or not. So this is to some extent, a preamble to a much broader and more intense fight that will sweep through American the 1860s through the Civil War.

Slide 5

Text: Emergence of Whig Party

[Political cartoon of Andrew Jackson as a king]

Audio: I believe I mentioned in the previous lecture that Andrew Jackson would use the veto power more often than all of his predecessors combined. And this would help to lead to the emergence of an organized opposition to his policies. By 1834, a new political party was coming into being to challenge the Democrats. They call themselves Whig, the Whig Party, in reference to English history. The Whigs in England have been the opponents of monarchical power and monarchical excesses. As a matter of fact, Whig ideology had been part of the justification for why certain columnists became patriots and argued for the need for independence, or at the very least, for the need to reform the way that the British Empire did business. So these new Whigs here in US history were not choosing that name randomly. Obviously, they were trying to harken back to certain traditions that they hope would resonate with the American people. And this might be the most famous political cartoon that was ever produced about Andrew Jackson as president. It does depict him as a king trampling on the shredded US constitution using that veto power. And so the fundamental argument that Whigs were making was that Andrew Jackson was abusing his power as president of the United States. Now, ironically, the Whig Party in general will be a group that favors a strong use of federal power and power of the executive branch in particular, but their members just felt that Andrew Jackson had been doing it wrong. But they certainly didn't mind the idea of a strong president. They will be a party for example that wants to get the federal government more involved in funding improvements to the economic infrastructure. They are not a states rights focused party, unlike the Democrats. Nevertheless, again, they have this case being made here that Andrew Jackson had ultimately usurped his authority. Now, the Whigs, I don't know how much I'll say about them beyond this particular slide. They end up being what we call a star-crossed or cursed party. They'll end up electing two presidents during their period of existence, and both of those presidents will die in office, which we'll contribute to the Whigs not really having a great deal of durability. Their first elected
president, whom I will mention some more in a moment, was William Henry Harrison, elected in 1840, and what was a very symbolic election and I'll talk about why in a moment. But Harrison ended up giving his outdoor inaugural address in bad weather without wearing an overcoat and would die after only about a month in office. So he is by far the briefest serving president that this country has ever had. And in order to balance the ticket, Harrison had actually chosen a Democrat to be his vice presidential running mate. So it was Democrat John Tyler who succeeded him in the office. And so the Whigs were left with the White House without having a president and John Tyler was the president without really having a party, because neither Whigs nor Democrats trusted him. So that was the situation with the first Whig president. And then in 1848, the Whigs will triumph with a former general from the Mexican War, Zachary Taylor, but Taylor will die in office as well. So the Whigs were the victims of bad luck to some extent, they'll go out of existence in 1852. But also, to some extent, many of their members were not so concerned about the health of the party, leave it as they were part of it because, I think it's--as some scholars have done, it's more accurate to call the Whig Party a reform movement than a political party. In other words, what had brought many of these Americans together to call themselves the Whig Party were certain reform issues that at the end of the day were more valuable to them than the practical things you do to survive as a political party. Now, let me mention what a few of these reform issues were. Antislavery was certainly one of them. Although the Whig Party did have a southern wing and it did have members who are willing to make their peace with the continuing existence of slavery, the Whigs had a much tougher time than the Democrats in terms of finding a way to submerge that slavery question and not have it rip apart a political party so that it could be a national force. Also, to some extent, the temperance movement to restrain alcohol consumption in this country perhaps even out-lot was also a reform issue that many members of the Whig Party were involved with. There was the disturbance of female suffrage, giving women the right to vote, that was something else that brought individuals together. They were also a product of a way of religious revivals that were sweeping across the country in 1830s and '40s, was called the second great awakening. And again for many who had tried to rejuvenate America's spiritual life to the second great awakening, they found a home in the Whig Party. There were prison reformers as well who were trying to make conditions more humane. Also, there were reformers looking to change the trend in how Native Americans were treated in this country, who also found a home in the Whig Party. Now, I'm not making a value judgment here, but if I can speak in generalities, what I'm trying to get at is that whereas the democrats were more likely to think practicality about their survival, which means at times been willing to compromise their principles and cut deals that may seem rather disgusting to some of your constituents. The Whigs are not going to have that same focus. They're going to be more concerned about staying true to their principles than surviving as a political party. So it should not come as a huge surprise that ultimately, the Democrats outlast the Whigs. But both parties end up splintering over the slavery question, it's just that the Democrats will eventually comeback together, the Whigs will go out of existence. And it's out of the ashes of the Whig Party and some other groups that we will eventually get the Republican Party, the
Grand Old Party, the same party that is in our political system today. But it was really opposition to Andrew Jackson and his policies that bring this Whig Party into its initial existence in the 1830s. So the second party system that you might see referred to in textbooks refers to the competition between Democrats and Whigs. The Democrats came first and also lasts longer, obviously, and still with us today here in this country, but the Whigs will be their main competitor for a period of time.

Slide 6

Text: Trail of Tears

[Map of tribal lands, reservations and removal routes]

Audio: A few moments ago, I mentioned that the reforming of Native American affairs was one issue that was of growing concern to Americans. Now, while I say growing concern, everything is relative and certainly for plenty of Americans, the ability for this country to expand trumped any concerns about what was happening to Native American tribes. But as I build towards covering the concept of manifest destiny and how it played out in US history, it's important to mention one of the more unfortunate episodes in how the US republic treated certain Native American tribes. And this episode goes loosely under the heading of the Trail of Tears so let me explain what I mean by that. Shown here on this map are in a relatively orangey-yellow [assumed spelling] areas are the five major tribes of the American Southeast, the Seminoles, the Cherokee, the Creek, the Chickasaw, and the Choctaw. During a 20-year period from about 1820 to 1840 though most of it happened in the 1830s, these five tribes were forcibly removed from areas where they had negotiated with the US government to have the right to live, the right to coexist peacefully, the right to be treated really as their own nations despite the fact that they lay within the United States. But over a 20-year period with an emphasis on the 1830s, more than 100,000 members of these tribes were forcibly relocated in most cases by marches. In the case of the Seminoles, there was also some water transport provided as well and along the way and of course, the record keeping was far from perfect but as best the scholars can estimate, anywhere from one quarter to one third of these Native Americans died due to some combination of disease and malnutrition. This sort of forced march environment was not designed to be very accommodating for these Native Americans. Their ultimate destination was what was then called the Indian territory was really part of the Oklahoma territory, a place by the way where there were already preexisting tribes living so was going to be a real overcrowding and competition for resources once these five southeastern tribes got there. So it was a very, very bad arrangement for the Native Americans all the way around but this was a time when the American Southeast was really becoming a continent kingdom. And so for many white settlers, there was a hunger for land. In the case of the Cherokee in Georgia, there was also a hunger for going after precious metals that might be located in certain spots and so there will be a tremendous pressure to get these Native American tribes move to west. And in the process, the US legal system is going to
be largely ignored. One episode that really helps to bring this entire phenomenon to light took place with the Cherokee Nation that was located as you can see here in portions of Georgia, mostly Georgia but also at some extent Tennessee and Alabama. The Cherokee actually used the US legal system to try to guarantee that they could stay on their land and their case went all the way to the US Supreme Court. And in 1832, while Andrew Jackson was President, the Supreme Court in the case of Worcester versus Georgia declared that only the US government, the federal government could deal with these Indian nations and determine any major changes in policy like relocating Indians that individual states such as Georgia did not have that power. So in other words, the US Supreme Court at the time when, you know, plenty of Americans were still willing to ignore Native American rights, the Supreme Court had actually issued a ruling that essentially defended the Cherokee. But in one of his less sterling moments as President, Andrew Jackson announced that the Supreme Court may have made its decision but now let them try to enforce it. With the way the US constitutional system is set up, the judicial branch determines the constitutionality of laws but it's the executive branch that actually enforces them. And so Andrew Jackson as President at that time is the chief enforcement officer and with his tract record, he had no interest in coming to the aid of the Cherokee in this particular case so they will be relocated despite their legal victory. And the route along which the Cherokee were forced to take to get to the Oklahoma territory was dubbed the Trail of Tears as shown in the map, the route that eventually goes through Nashville and on to Kentucky and so forth. And all though the Trail of Tears was originally the Cherokee route, that term has basically become something of a catchall for this entire episode involving all five tribes. And so essentially, these tribes were crippled by this forced march and it is one sign of the difference between a concept that I know many of you have heard of in high school, the concept of manifest destiny that will be used to justify Americas Westward expansion. As I'm about to get to manifest destiny in theory was peaceful but in practice, impatien for resources and a certain of thinking about race in this country tended to make manifest destiny very impatient and very harsh in practice and you can think of the Trail of Tears as a tremendous example of the harshness of manifest destiny in practice. And by the way, I just want to attach one caveat to the previous slide when I said that the wigs [phonetic] end up with the white house but they don't have the President, it wasn't until the early 20th century with the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt that the executive mansion was called The White House, it was Teddy Roosevelt himself who gave it that name. So I kind of used that term loosely because that's what we call the executive mansion today but that term was not in use back in the early 19th century.

**Slide 7**

**Text:** Election of 1840 – “Log Cabin and Hard Cider” Campaign

[Image of campaign ad for William Henry Harrison]
Audio: I will return the manifest text in a moment. But just to try to keep up the rough chronological order things, I want to come back directly into US politics. Two slides ago, I had talked about how the Whigs were less practical of the major political competitors during the second party system, the Democrats usually ran circles around them in that regard. But there was one election cycle that was a major exception to what I just said. It was a time when the Whigs really took a page out of the Democratic playbook, so to speak, and it produced one of the more colorful campaigns for president of the 19th century. In 1840, this was the year that the Whigs went with William Henry Harrison who had been another hero of the War of 1812, not quite up to the stature of an Andrew Jackson but he had won an important battle against the British and their Indian allies of the Battle of Tippecanoe which was fought in what is today the American Midwest. If any of you have heard of the Indian chief Tecumseh or this is the battle where he lost his life against US forces. In any case, what the Whigs decided to do—in some ways, you could call it the KISS method, keep it simple, stupid. For one thing, they emphasized William Henry Harrison's military background which at times is a way that you can sort of keep the attention off of issue positions in having to explain a more elaborate philosophy, you know, you rely upon some, you know, rather glorious episode or sometimes embellished episode. Also, it was becoming increasingly common in 19th century politics that no matter what your candidate's actual background might be, if this is an area where you really have to appeal to the common man and make it seem like you have no pretensions and, you know, you're out for the little guy, so to speak, then you want to emphasize that your candidate was born in a log cabin. This was a way to suggest that, you know, I didn't have a silver spoon in my mouth to borrow a much more modern expression from Bill Clinton, you know, I feel your pain, I know what it's like to be in the situation that you're in. And so, the log cabin motif was used quite a bit for William Henry Harrison even though he actually came from a pretty well to do family. He was not born in a log cabin but nevertheless, you emphasize that. So you see the campaign advertisement here a, "Tippecanoe and Tyler Too" referring to his vice president or running mate John Tyler. I mentioned the log cabin. And another important feature of this campaign is hard cider. A hard cider is a common form of alcohol especially in the rural areas. And there is a long history in the politics of this land, I mean, going back to the colonial period of having a pretty good deal of free flowing alcohol at political events. But I've already mentioned that one of the issues that was bringing the Whigs together was the Temperance Movements. So you might think, well, you know, how can you really state true to that principle if you're letting to speak its flow with hard cider at your campaign events? And obviously, that was inconsistent. But as I said, this was a year when the Whigs kind of took a deep breath and compromised their principles to some extent. But they won. And what's also significant about the election of 1840 is that the best estimates are at about 79 percent of eligible voters went to the poll, 79 percent. And this country has just never really seen anything quite like that before or since. These days, I think most people would be ecstatic assuming voters are making inform decisions but would be ecstatic to see a 79 percent turnout rate. I'd like to emphasize as I might have done in lecture number three that back at the time when baseball has not been developed yet, politics really was, for many, the national
pastime. And people paid a great deal of attention to political campaigns and were very enthusiastic about their party identification, newspapers openly sided with one party or another, sometimes they took names like Whig and Democrat into the names of their newspapers so that there was no questions as to where you stood with your editorials and so forth. So the Whigs did triumph for this log cabin and hard cider campaign although it proves to be a short-lived triumph because of the death from pneumonia of William Henry Harrison. And one little anecdote, the reason why the word booze is now synonymous with alcohol in our culture is because of a Philadelphia liquor distributor by the last name of B-O-O-Z who has tried to capitalize on this whole log cabin and hard cider phenomenon during the campaign of 1840. And so he started putting his whisky into log cabin-shaped bottles. Again, it's a way to kind of latch on to the political waves sweeping the country and so booze has gradually become part of the way we were referring to our alcohol subculture in this country.

Slide 8

Text: Manifest Destiny

[Image of pioneers crossing the plains with an angel in the foreground]

Audio: Now, we return to one of the central concepts in US history, and one that I think gets at least some coverage in high school history courses and that's manifest destiny. Now, manifest as an adjective refers to something that is overt, something that is self-evident, something that is obvious. And that's important to keep in mind here because during the first half of the 19th century, many US citizens felt as though it was divinely ordained in just practical and so many levels that the US Republic should expand not only westward to the Pacific but I'd like you to keep in mind that for much of the 19th century, in these heady times, there was all sorts of talk about someday the entire Western Hemisphere fly in the stars and stripes, that someday, perhaps even the national capital would have to be moved somewhere south of Washington, DC, considerably south of DC because, you know, as the nation expanded and expanded up into Canada and down into South America, that if you wanted your national capital to be in the central location, you were going to have to make a significant adjustment. And, you know, back to something I hinted at earlier, because of the way that manifest destiny was rooted oftentimes in US spirituality, but also, as I'm about to talk about rooted in a certain way of thinking about race in a certain way of ranking different races and ethnicities, I'd like you to keep in mind that for many Americans, they didn't think that manifest destiny would have to be promoted through war. They really felt that this republic and its underlying society was so superior to its neighbors, that by and large, these neighbors, I mean, be they Canadians and, of course, this was at a time when Canada was still part of the British Empire, whether you're talking about Canadians, Mexicans, Native Americans, other Latin Americans, that these different groups would want to join the United States, that it would not be necessary to use coercive measures. And while nobody had an exact timetable on mind, it was just sort of believed that everything would
eventually fall into place and United States would absorb these lands. But as I hinted to a few slides back, in practice, manifest destiny does end up being violent. It does end up being based on a certain impatience, in a certain disdain for these other groups that are involved in the process. Now, what you see here on the slide is probably the most famous visual illustration of manifest destiny. Now, it's painting from the 1870s and obviously, we're not there yet in my chronology of US history. But the embedded themes in this painting, I think, work very well for going back and looking at periods like the 1830s, '40s and '50s as well. Now, the female figure that you see in the middle of the painting is Columbia, which was one way of referring to the United States. And I'd like to suggest to you that the fact that this is a white woman is no coincidence in how the author chose to symbolize the United States. First of all, by making it female, there was a dominant way of thinking in the 19th century in the western world that women had the greater moral virtue compared to men. So in other words, if you wanted to sanctify something, making it female was certainly a major technique to get that point across. So it's important that this is a woman and also, she could not be any whiter as you see here in this painting. And this really touches upon race thinking in America. To make a long and very important story short, the United States, going back to colonial times, had a very evident hierarchy of race. Now, by and large, it's not something that you'd ever see listed in a textbook although, oftentimes, media sources and academic sources would not be too subtle about this. But the hierarchy of race was based upon the idea that you could scientifically rank different races and ethnicities according to their intelligence, according to their moral character. And once you'd made arguments in those regards, you could suggest all sorts of things about what differentiated one people from another. Now, the United States, again, even going back to before there was the United States in colonial times, was hardly the only society that's ever had a hierarchy of race. I mean, one reason why the Japanese Empire will collide with the United States culminated in the Pearl Harbor Attack of 1941 is that the Japanese had their own hierarchy of race that looked down upon westerners among other peoples. So it's not unique that the United States has had this but we're going to focus on the US example for obvious reasons. And in the US hierarchy of race, Africans sat at the very bottom, which has quite to do with--quite a lot to do with the institution of slavery. Native Americans occupied, actually, compared to Africans, Asians, and Latinos, Native Americans were actually higher than those groups as best as we can kind of fit these all together, but nevertheless, in a category clearly below that of whites. So if you're going to sanctify something, in this case, the United States in a sense of mission by the United States, it's important not only that your symbol be female but also that you're symbol be white. You know, there are connotations of purity and superiority here. So you have this Columbia, this epitome of the United States. And among other things, she is stringing telegraph wire across the western Frontier. And following in her wake and also, to some extent, a little bit in front of her, you see railroads, you see--you see wagons, you see settlers moving west with their livestock, you see evidence of farming. And so in other words, this manifest destiny is being associated with technological innovation. It's being associated with traditional western definitions of progress, which are economic growth, and inventions that ease the human
condition and make us more economically efficient that allow us to become more sophisticated societies. And in contrast to all these symbols of civilization and progress, who do you see being driven ahead of Columbia here? Well, of course, it's Native Americans. This painting in a non-too-subtle way is defining Native Americans as the antithesis to progress. And frankly, that was an old story by the 19th century, I mean, the first British settlers back in the 1580s when they landed at what they called Roanoke Island and tried unsuccessfully to establish a colony. And that's a story for another time but some of the first English settlers to ride back to the mother country were making assumptions that because Native American villages were rather well, at least, it seemed to them to be rather rudimentary affairs and that they didn't use all of their land and they didn't build a kind of elaborate structures that you would see in a major European City. There were all sorts of assumptions that Native Americans, whatever they were, they did not constitute civilization. And so it's this kind of thinking that ultimately feeds into a hierarchy of race. So manifest destiny is this idea, so again, part of its justification can be spiritual, built in to traditions of Christianity and interpretations of the Bible, part of its justification is racial as well. Manifest destiny is the ideology that's used to justify westward expansion. There was an editor by the name of John O'Sullivan who, in the 1840s, gave the clearest articulation at that time of what manifest destiny really was. And then--so we associate that term with him. But I'd like to suggest to you for a moment that manifest destiny was really a subset of an even bigger concept in US history, and one that I introduced back in the colonial period, and that's the concept of American exceptionalism. And just to review that for a moment, American exceptionalism is this very deeply rooted and long-standing idea. You know, going back to before anyone really had a sense of what these European communities are going to be come in this land, but it was of sense that whatever these communities are going to coalesce into, that it was going to be unique and that it was going to be destined for some sort of international greatness and leadership, whether it's more leading by example or leading more proactively, that depends on whom you listen to. And I've tried to emphasize that there had been many different contributors in US history to American exceptionalism and therefore, there are different variations on the theme. What you heard, for example, from the early period--and this is Massachusetts Bay Colony is not quite the same as what you would hear from Tom Paine in 1776 or from John O'Sullivan in the 1840s or from Ronald Reagan when he celebrated American exceptionalism while he was president in the 1980s. But I've referred to American exceptionalism as being in the proverbial water supply in this country so that if you have grown up in the United States, even the much more recent USA of these days, to some extent, you have been exposed to this. And I've also said that today, American exceptionalism is a very politically charged concept. And that you see far more comfort with it on a political right than you see on a political left. And that's something that I may come back to in a future lecture as well. But manifest destiny is going to be the primary rationale for America's westward expansion. And so you, you know, you can think of the Trail of Tears as one example of manifest destiny in practice. The events leading up to the Mexican War of the 1840s will be another such episode or example, and that's where I'm about to go.
Slide 9

**Text:** Mexican War (1846-1848)

[Map of Mexican War troop movements]

**Audio:** The concept to manifest destiny is part of the background to what becomes the Mexican War of the late 1840's, but another part of the background are the peculiar circumstances in the land of Texas. So let me provide a little more background in that regard. In the 1820's when Mexico won its independence from Spain, Texas became initially just the northern most province of Mexico itself, but there weren't a great many Mexican citizens living there. And in what became a very ill fated decision, the Mexican government has awaited to fill up this land and make it more profitable and productive. The Mexican government encouraged US settlers to come to Texas. And so, beginning in the 1820's and accelerated on into the 1830's, there were thousands of Americans who came to Texas. And if you are going to do this, there were certain ground rules. You were supposed to abide by Mexican law which included by the way a ban on slavery. Given their own experience with the old Spanish empire, the Mexicans were pretty sensitive on that point so you were not suppose to bring slaves to Texas or purchase any while you were there. And with Mexico being a very heavily Catholic country, the Mexican government also expected settlers to take an oath of loyalty to the Catholic Church. At this set of time when the United States was still a predominantly protestant country and especially in terms of who really held political and economic power, it was very much a protestant dominated country. So, there was a bit of a collision course taking shape here. And by the mid 1830's, there were many Texans, you know, American born Texans if you will or US settlers in Texas who were bringing slaves, who were ignoring that, that ban on slavery, and who also were not particularly interested in Catholic authority or Mexican authority in general. And a Texas independence movement will begin to grow in that land. And I want to be fair to both sides. While US settlers certainly are coming over with their own agendas and they're ignoring the ground rules, this was a very turbulent time in Mexican history. Their country was going through series of revolutions and civil wars. And at one point in the 1830's, when a new ruler came to power in Mexico, Texans chose to take that moment to declare their independence from Mexico and this led of course to military operations against them. And it was--This was the era of the Texas revolution and its single most famous engagement was probably the siege of the Alamo in San Antonio. The Alamo was a former Spanish mission where roughly 200 US settlers including the famous frontiersman, Davy Crockett, held off a significantly larger Mexican force about 1,800 men led by General Santa Anna, held off that force for about two weeks before they were overwhelmed. And there are some dispute about this but it appears most likely that the Mexicans slaughtered these surviving defenders who otherwise could have been taken prisoner and it was also a lesser known massacre at the Texas town of Goliad and the combination of this two incidence really fired up, you know, Texas residence to the cause and eventually at the battle of San Jacinto. Santa Anna was defeated and forced to sign the treaty that acknowledged the
independence of Texas. Now, many in Mexico were still not willing to accept that as a reality but in any case in the late 1830's, Texas did become an independent government and hence some of the jokes we have about those from Texas being a little bit too big for their breaches and so forth. They formed what they called the Lone Star Republic and it did become their own country. And because of that delicate balance of power between free and slave states, the situation in Texas became a political hot potato in Washington DC. Texas obviously, a majority of its residence who are going to want to come into the union as a slave state but because of that delicate equilibrium, even pro-slavery politicians were prereluctant in the 1830's and early 1840's to make Texas an issue. So for a period of time, Texas did exist independently, it was not technically part of Mexico although certainly plenty in the Mexican government wanted to make it so and it was also not a state or even a territory within the United States, though again, there are certainly were some pro-slavery politicians who wanted to change that situation. Finally in 1844, a democratic presidential candidate by the name of James Polk announces that the annexation of Texas into the union with its slaves is a centerpiece of his campaign and it does contribute to his victory. He wins in 1844 and now as president he's going to take steps to try to encourage the entry of Texas into the union. And those steps are going to put America on a direct collision course with Mexico. As shown here on the map, there were some disputed territory between Texas and Mexico. As far as Texans were concerned, the boundary between the two countries was the Rio Grande River. As far as the Mexican government was concerned, it was the Brazos River somewhat farther to the north. Knowing this, James Polk basically put US forces in a position where a fight was just about inevitably going to break out. He sent an army under Zachary Taylor down to the northern banks of the Rio Grande River. Of course, the Mexicans had their own army on the southern banks and this is a river shallow enough that you can wait across it so it's very easy for patrols on both sides to get to the opposite banks. And eventually, a US patrol was ambushed by Mexican forces and this became the pretext to term an incident into a full-fledged war. And so, in 1846, the United States and Mexico go to war and this was a conflict that James Polk wanted. I mean, he basically engineered this because he had been an expansionist presidential candidate and now he was an expansionist president and he didn't just have his eyes on Texas, he had certain designs on other northern provinces of Mexico to include what is today California, what is today New Mexico and Arizona. And by the way, you know, back to what I said a few slides ago, there was real talk about eventually the entire western hemisphere flying the US flag and so, none of Mexico was necessarily off limits here. Now, the Mexican war will last for several years and when it first began, it was not entirely clear who was going to get the better of it, after all the United States in the 19th century did not have much of a permanent standing army or navy for that matter and this was growing out of a tradition going back to the era of the revolution where a great fear was that if you had a large permanent army, especially an army that it was more likely to be used to terrorize its own citizens than to perform any useful defense missions against other countries. And so, what typically happened during the 19th century and really on into a good part of the 20th century is that whenever a war broke out, the United States would have to play a certain amount of catch
up, it would have to mobilize in one heck of a hurry, it would have to call upon a great many citizens who were not professional soldiers to get some military training, step into the ranks and accomplish our national security missions. Meanwhile, the Mexican government did have a standing army and it did have European advisors so supposedly they were getting the most sophisticated military training available. So it was not abundantly clear that this war was going to go well for the United States. However, ultimately it did. The Mexican war would be in almost uninterrupted string of successes for the United States. They saw a very different picture than the war of 1812, a couple of decades before. Just to use this map a little bit more, there were three major battle theaters. There was a western theater centered in California where US forces had a great deal of success in planting the flag. There was a theater where Zachary Taylor's army invaded into Mexico from Texas. And then there was also another theater where General Winfield Scott made a series of amphibious landings, most notably at Vera Cruz there on the eastern coast of Mexico and drove in towards the capital of Mexico City. And ultimately by 1848, the Mexicans have been pretty thoroughly defeated. There had been ongoing negotiations for how to bring this war to an end. And ultimately for about 24 million dollars, the United States purchased a huge expense of territory from Mexico and there have been talk of taking even more of the country but frankly the hierarchy of race came into play again and then there were many who were concerned that the one advantage of taking just the northern provinces of Mexico was that quite frankly there weren't nearly as many Latinos living there as if you moved farther south. And so if you did consider those individuals to supposedly be of lesser character and less productive and so forth, I mean if you were somebody who bought into the hierarchy of race, that could actually be a justification to be less aggressive in taking territory. So instead of taking all of Mexico which quite frankly could've been done if that was the agreed upon goal, instead, the United States purchased what is today California and Nevada, the bulk of Utah and Colorado, most of Arizona, and the bulk of New Mexico plus the whole question of Texas was settled as well. So, all told about 500,000 square miles of territory came into the union as a result of triumph from the Mexican war. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo put the whole situation to rest. And in what would be a great irony, there were soldiers who fought together on the battlefield in US uniforms, in some cases should also gone to school together replaces like west point the US military academy who thought that they'd be comrades forever but who ended up on opposite sides in the Civil War. And as a matter of fact, the two mid-grade officers who both fought with distinction near each other in the Mexican war where Ulysses Grant and Robert E. Lee, Robert E. Lee going on to become the story--commander of the army of Northern Virginia for the confederacy and Ulysses Grant eventually having field command of all union forces in the Civil War and going head to head against Lee during the latter stages of that conflict. But while the Mexican war was a pretty resounding military success for the United States and certainly brought quite a bit of additional territory into the union and now gives America a much firmer position on the Pacific Coast, there were many political complications that grew out of the Mexican war and that's were I'm going to turn next.
Consequences of Mexican War

- Case of “territorial indigestion” – slavery question exacerbated due to Wilmot Proviso
- Fears among anti-slavery advocates of “slave power” conspiracy
- Heightened partisanship amidst claims of “Mr. Polk’s War”

So the Mexican War concluded in 1848 with the addition of 500,000 square miles into the union, and that didn't even include Texas. But America's stunning victory only exacerbated the slavery debate, as the question became whether to allow this institution to spread into US territories. In exploring the impact of the Mexican War, I need to provide some background on how politics really--how the political game is played in Washington. One practice in Congress that still frustrates many citizens today is the ability to attach a proviso or rider, if you will, unto any bill that's being processed through the legislative branch. I mean, for example, I mean, let's say, you know, let's say it's a bill for funding military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. But in order to get let's say, one Arizona politician on board, you know, you've got to build a new post office in Tempe or something. So, that proviso or rider for the post office in Tempe, this is an example of what we call pork barrel politics, or more recently, the word earmarks has been used by those who were trying to downplay its controversial nature. It's basically a situation where members of Congress can attach provisions to bills that may have nothing to do with the essential subject of that legislation, but these provisions are a way to induce certain members of Congress to vote in particular way. It does have the feeling of, you know, if you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours. So during the Mexican War, early on in 1846 at a point when no one knew how well the war was going to turn out yet, there was a northern Democrat and more specifically an antislavery Democrat by the name of David Wilmot of Pennsylvania who introduced a proviso to ban slavery in any territory that might end up being acquired through the conflict. So I'll say that again, a northern antislavery Democrat name David Wilmot introduced a proviso that would ban slavery on any territory that would potentially be acquired through this war with Mexico. Now, the measure passed in the house where Northerners had a distinct majority because, you know, they had the greater population numbers, but it ended up being defeated in the Senate where all states are represented equally and were obviously then Southerners have the greater ability to frustrate things. But while the measure was defeated, Wilmot did touch off a political firestorm. And we you look at who supported this initiative, you learn a bit about why slavery was supported and opposed. By the 1840s, there was a group most prominently found in free states are known as abolitionists. And because we respect where they stood on things today, because we have so much respect for the stand that they took against slavery, there's a tendency for American students to feel as though abolitionists existed in huge numbers back in the 1840s and '50s, and right up to the eve of the Civil War. I would like to be very clear that that was not the case. Abolitionists were distinct minority at this time, but they were a vocal minority. And abolitionists were the only ones who were really making a sustained moral argument against
slavery. And so they, of course, favored the Wilmot proviso because any step that weakened the
hold of slavery in America was a positive one in your minds. And so abolitionists or antislavery
reformers that include plenty of women, by the way, who are finding that taking up certain
public causes is a way to challenge the traditional emphasis on keeping women in domestic
pursuits. So becoming a reformer is one way to kind of push the boundaries of your time. But
abolitionists were seen in slave states as virtual terrorists, and I'm not throwing that term around
loosely. As a matter of fact, if you lived in a slave state especially in a slave community, you
could not be particularly open about abolitionist views without really risking your physical
safety. But there was another group that also supported the Wilmot proviso despite having no
sympathy for African slaves, and that was many working class Northerners. Now, why would
they support the Wilmot proviso? Well, the reality was that many of these northern class or
northern working class individuals were frustrated laborers in the early stages of the industrial
revolution. And they often were frustrated with free blacks in their own communities and treated
them poorly at the time, by the way, when free blacks did not live as full-fledged citizens in free
states. So I also bring this up because I want to caution you that as my material here moves us
closer and closer to the Civil War, I don't want you to draw start of the economy between racial
views in slave states and racial views in free states. Plenty of Americans in both of those areas
subscribed to hierarchy of race. And just because slavery is illegal in certain states does not mean
that everyone there has progressive views racially, in fact, are far from it. And free blacks who
lived in free states did not have the full rights of citizenship. Now, they typically could not vote
and there were various other restrictions upon them as well. So I just want to caution you here to
be careful. And so when we look at northern industrial workers, their reasons for supporting the
Wilmot proviso tended to be far more practical. And for one thing, they were afraid that if
slavery continued to spread west that their own dream of being able to eventually buy some land
out west and become their own boss by, you know, owning a farm and having that dignity that
comes with, you know, with owning your own land and having your own economic operations.
They were afraid that if slavery spread too rapidly west that their own economic opportunities
would be swallowed up in the process. And at the same time, the northern working class was
often against abolition because they were afraid that if you suddenly freed every slave in
America that naturally, many of them would migrate north, looking for new opportunities and
they'd end up flooding the northern industrial job market, and that employers would recognize
that they could pay a recently freed slave less than your average white industrial worker,
especially at a time when there was no minimum wage and legal union of--labor unions don't
have any legal rights. So what I'm just trying to get at here is that you could be antislavery in one
form or another, but for very different reasons. And abolitionists had considerably different
reason for being antislavery than the majority of northern industrial workers. And so in a very
complicated way, that's what I'm getting at here. Many northern industrial workers and they were
predominantly white, they saw themselves as wage slaves and that was the kind of slavery in this
country that they were the most concerned about. And they were not terribly sympathetic to what
was happening to African slaves in the south. But be that as it may, the debate over the Wilmot
proviso really helps to heighten the contradiction opposed by the survival of slavery in America and the fact that you have both free states and slave states. As one historian put it, America had a bad case of territorial indigestion during the first half of the 19th century because all of this new land is being acquired but every time there's a new pick up of territory, it resurfaces that slavery question, and so it's harder for politicians to treat it like the 800 pound elephant in the middle of the room that everyone know, and everyone knows it's there but no one wants to talk about it. It's very difficult not to talk about this while the Mexican War is in progress, and shortly thereafter. Now, let me turn to another consequence of the Mexican War that's important. By the 1840s, if you look back at northern newspapers and other periodicals, historians had begun to notice the terms slave power or slave power conspiracy showing up again and again. And this refers to the notion that powerful southern slaveholders were gradually seeking to control the nation's political future, even though they were a distinct minority of the population. And notions of slave power conspiracy go at least as far back as 1836, when southern politicians would not let antislavery petitions be read in Congress. In fact, former President John Quincy Adams, the some of John Adams, died on the floor of the house. He had joined the Congress. He had gotten elected to Congress after he retired from presidency when he was defeated. He served Congress from Massachusetts for a good number of years. He became a Whig, and he died on the floor of the house after speaking out against the so-called gag rule that have been preventing these antislavery petitions from being read. But in any case, the outcome of the Mexican War with these vast lands being brought into the union reinforced northern fears that slave power conspiracy would use this new land to expand their influence. So another way to think of this slave power conspiracy, if Southerners in general but slave holders in particular are a clear minority of the entire population, why is it that every time the slavery question really seems to come up as a national issue, why is it that slave holders seem to be able to secure such good outcomes? And what this increasingly leads to is fears that somehow slave holding interests have managed to insinuate themselves into every key institution of government so that whenever there is a major battle, they're going to get a positive result. And so if you're somebody who believes in the slave power conspiracy, the way that you look at it, slave-holding interests are basically highjacking the republic. And so this is going to be a growing concern that you see expressed by northern politicians. Now, for northern Democrats, it's a tricky thing because the Democrats try to be practical, they're going try to hold their party together as a national force, which means on some level, you've got to allow southern members to defend slavery. But even for some northern Democrats, including David Wilmot, this is hard to do. But even more so when you look at Whigs, and you look at parties that gradually replace the Whigs, their members are going to be even more likely to see the slave power conspiracy as a very serious thing. As a matter of fact, one Whig congressman during the Mexican War was none other than Abraham Lincoln of Illinois, and Lincoln was one who spoke out against this possibility of slave power conspiracy. And so this is an important consequence of the Mexican War. It really intensifies those fears that there's a kind of cabal, there are certain plotters out there who are promoting a very minority position but doing so quite effectively. A final consequence of the Mexican War is that it
heightens partisanship in the Second Party System, because to a large extent, there's the feeling that James Polk made this his own personal war, I mean, as I've indicated here in the slide, opponents called it Mr. Polk's war. Now, the Mexican War was very unpopular with the Whig Party. And among many northern Democrats, there were concerns about it as well, because many saw this as only a war to gain territory where slavery could be used. And that there was really no other reason that the conflict ever had to be fought except to promote the cause of slavery. So it does make people more cynical about how the political process works and Abraham Lincoln, again, was one of those antiwar members of the Whig Party during the conflict with Mexico.

Slide 11

Text: Spectrum of Opinion on Slavery (In order of greatest defenders to strongest opponents)

- Southern Democrats (siege mentality)
- Northern Democrats
- Free Soilers and, eventually, Republicans
- Whigs
- Abolitionists
- John Brown

Audio: To help make sense of how the slavery question played their self out in the US political system, what I'd like to try to do here is to summarize the entire spectrum of opinion on the slavery question. And I've laid this out. I'm going to start with the strongest defenders of slavery and work my way down the list to its greatest opponents. And so I'd like you to keep in mind, you know, who are the radicals in this debate, who are the moderates. And I'm going to have to speak in generalities here, but I think that laying things out this way will help you a bit in understanding the causes of the Civil War and ultimately why America's political system was not able to contain the slavery question. By and large, you're strongest supporters of slavery were your Southern Democrats who eventually, in many cases, came to be known as the "fire-eaters" because of the sort of rhetoric they were using, a rhetoric that moved increasingly in the direction of favoring secession, that is the political act of one state breaking away from the larger union of which it is a part. I believe I've already told that for the Democratic Party going even back to the days of Andrew Jackson, its strongest political base was in Southern States, and these are obviously the places where slavery is the most durable. And as I might have mentioned in an earlier slide, what is important to note is that especially by the 1850s, there really seems to be a kind of siege mentality that has set in among many Southern politicians. And again, with the Democratic Party having its greatest power based on the south, you see it among Democrats the most. And that is by siege mentality, I mean that many Southern politicians are so tired of having to apologize on some level for slavery and to defend slavery, that they've actually, their frustration has pushed them to the point where they finally just said enough is enough. I'm actually going to speak of slavery not as a necessary evil anymore, which you would have heard
from Southern politicians back in the 1770s and 1780s. But now, I'm going to proudly uphold it as an example of how superior our particular society is. And that's where many of these fire-eaters have evolved to by the 1850s and on into the early 1860s. It's pretty remarkable, I think, for many of us today with our modern sensibilities. So Southern Democrats by and large tend to be your strongest defenders of slavery and nowhere is that defense stronger than in South Carolina, which is going to be our flash point for how the Civil War ultimately breaks out. Now, if I move a little bit further down the list, next we get to Northern Democrats. Now, Northern Democrats do not have the same passion as their Southern counterparts by and large, but they're still a rather practical group. They recognize that if the Democratic Party is going to have power at a national level, then there has to be a reasonable degree of unity and cooperation between its Northern members and its Southern members. Therefore, and I've already said, the Democrats in comparison to the Whigs, they do tend to be the more practical party. Rightly or wrongly, that tends to be their focus. So many Northern Democrats, even if personally they rather discuss it with slavery, up to some point, they're willing to make their peace with it for the sake of holding the party together to see to it that they can be, perhaps, the only national voice, that they can feel that the only truly national candidates for president that other groups may be unable to submerge the slavery question and they'll splinter, they'll break apart, but democrats can stay together. The risk if you're a Northern Democrat who has this kind of mentality, however, is that Northern voters are going to see you as a pawn of the slave power conspiracy that I've been talking about. And I use Senator Stephen Douglas of Illinois is the greatest example, a man with presidential ambition is the ultimate deal maker but someone who also suffers from having that charged level against them that at the end of the day, he's willing to work with anybody so Southern slave holding an interest can push him around and that he'll be a useful pawn in their ambitions to preserve slavery. Moving a little bit further down our list, next we get to the Free Soil Party that I had brought up. They run candidates in 1848 and 1852. They don't stick around very long because they're basically a single-issue party. But out of the wreckage of the Free Soil Party, eventually out of the Whig Party, comes in 1854, the Republican Party. And basically, the Republicans like the Free Soilers before them occupy a kind of middle position on the slavery question. Republicans and Free Soilers basically arguing that slavery can be allowed to exist for now in the places where it's already legal and those states where it's legal. But in terms of this country continuing to expand west and opening up new territories, out west and those areas, slavery has to be banned. So in other words, it's basically a containment policy. We let it stand where it exists, I mean, not that we're thrilled about it but we let it stand where it exist but we will contain its spread. And as I've also, I think, talked about in some other slides, many Free Soilers and eventually Republicans are actually not in a hurry to abolish slavery where it already exist because they're afraid that for example, recently freed slaves will glut the labor market in the north and drive down wages and lead the higher unemployment among white workers and they're also afraid that the spread of slavery west will cut off the opportunity for Northerners to be able to buy a plant and get their a little piece of the American Dream. So Abraham Lincoln, although he tends to be remembered as the great
emancipator, it's more complicated than that. His party and the years leading up to the Civil War actually occupied a moderate position on the slavery question. Then continuing in the anti-slavery direction, although it is complicated, you've got the Whigs. Now, the Whigs are somewhat of a confusing group. I mean, they do have a southern wing that includes politicians who are willing to defend slavery. But for the most part, the Whigs have a real problem dealing with the slavery question, which is why they will disintegrate in 1852, years before the democrats. As I think I've mentioned in another slide, what brings the Whigs together more than anything else are a series of reform causes, temperance when it comes to alcohol consumption, even a little bit of a woman's right to vote, but also anti-slavery among other things. Penal reform, in other words, the prison system, there are variety of reformed issues that bring Whigs together. And because of their reformed focus, they do tend to be a somewhat more idealistic group, they're not as willing to play practical politics the way the democrats are. And especially when one of their reform issues is anti-slavery, obviously, they're not going to be as moved to try to find some compromise on the slavery question just because it keeps their party together. Many Whigs feel as though their principles are more important than their survival as a political party. So not surprisingly, they will not last as long as the Democrats. The next group would be Abolitionists. And here it's very important to remember that a low, you know, if you take high school history classes these days in America, you're probably going to learn quite a bit about the Abolitionist and they're going to be celebrated in such way that you may want to look back in history and feel like there must have been plenty of Abolitionists in the years leading up to the Civil War. But I would just like to remind you to be fair to the historical record that Abolitionists were actually in a very distinct minority of the American population. And of course, you'd be very seldom to see any in Southern states or at least if they were more or they were keeping their voices down for fear of reprisals. Abolitionists were a focal minority but they were a very distinct minority. And they are the only ones who were making a sustained moral argument against slavery, not worrying about partisan implications and so forth. But again, they are a relatively small group. The nature of the Civil War will enlarge their numbers by the time that the war is over and of course, ultimately, they win the day. So there is a tendency to look back on the Civil War and the causes of the war and make the Abolitionist out to be a bigger group than they actually were, but in reality, a small group. And they did include some individuals like William Lloyd Garrison who actually argued that no matter where you lived in this country, whether you lived in a slave state or a free state, whether you voted for politicians who cooperated with slavery interest or whether you voted for candidates who didn't, that if you participated in America's political process, you were guilty of the sin of slavery. So some Abolitionist like William Lloyd Garrison actually argued that free states should succeed from the union, not the slave states where that free state should go because ultimately, everyone's soul was stained by the sin of slavery, that if you agreed to continue to be a part of the United States, then some of that guilt was attached to you. Not every Abolitionist felt this way, somewhere a bit more practical and at least argued that you needed to use your vote to try to change policy. Others said, even that was a sell out to slave holding interest. And finally, there's one
Abolitionist who really belongs in a category all of his own and I'm going to talk more about his exploits in future slides. But John Brown, originally of Connecticut, ends up being the single most radical figure to be found anywhere on the American landscape when it came to slavery. Because he was only an Abolitionist but one who believed that violence should be used to settle this question. So for example, during the turbulent events on the Kansas territory in the 1850s, John Brown and some of his followers will pull some slave holders out of bed, you know, unarmed men and will hack them to death with broadswords. He did this at a place called Pottawatomie Creek. And as will be discussed in the future slide, in 1859, John Brown and his followers were raid a weapon's arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia, to try to set off a massive slave rebellion that he hoped would sweep through the entire South and eradicate slavery forever. His attempt will not go very far. He'll be captured. He'll be put to death for treason against the State of Virginia oddly enough. But he really deserves his own position in the spectrum of opinion on slavery.

Slide 12

Text: Free Soilers as Third Party

[Political cartoon titled “Forcing Slavery Down the Throat of a Free Soiler]

Audio: So, let me step now back into the chronology of events. Amidst this growing debate over the expansion of slavery in 1848, one principle was offered as a potential compromise, something known as popular sovereignty. Popular sovereignty entailed letting the residents of America's territories decide for themselves on whether slavery would be allowed. In other words, before you ever applied for statehood, you know, let those who have moved out to those Western lands, let them figure this out before the matter ever gets to Congress. And so, popular sovereignty potentially allowed Congress a chance to avoid the long periods of bickering that had already characterized its existence and instead left the matter to American settlers heading West. The Democrats in particular being the party more torn over the question of slavery, adopted popular sovereignty as their official position in the presidential campaign of 1848. Meanwhile, during that same year, the Whigs nominated Zachary Taylor from the Mexican War who also happens to be a Southern slaveholder. And, this helps me explain a strategy that the Democrats and Whigs tended to use. I'm going to draw an analogy to a god in Roman mythology, the two-face god Janus. One way that the Democrats and Whigs both try to maneuver around the slavery question at a time when nobody had a great answer for it was to present a two faced image to the American nation. In other words, you'd sort of present one image when you're campaigning in free states and another image when you're campaigning in slave states. So, let's say you're the Whigs. I've already mentioned, the Whigs have their strongest power-base in the Northeast and they have stronger anti-slavery than pro-slavery elements. But if you're running for president, you know, you want to have a national candidate and you want to have a national appeal. So, how do you do that if you're a Whig? Well, you
nominate a Southerner especially a Southern slaveholder as your presidential candidate. So, now, you're balancing the slavery question. You're the bigger anti-slavery party, but you've got a Southerner and preferably a slaveholder at the head of your ticket. So, you're sort of signaling the South that, yeah, this are our core values but you know what, I mean, how much are we really going to tamper with slavery if we have a southern slave holder in the executive mansion. The situation is reversed for the Democrats. The Democrats were the party with the stronger Southern base. They are the party with a more pro-slavery orientation. So they balanced that by typically nominating Northerners as their candidates because then that kind of sense a signal or a sense of code in free states that, you know, you don't have to worry about things going too far when you've got a Northerner running the show. And so, this is one way that these two parties presented a kind of Janus-faced image if you will to the nation. Now, not everybody was satisfied with the typical messages that you we're getting from Democrats and Whigs. And therefore, in 1848 you did see a third party emerge, they call themselves, the Free Soilers. Members of the Free Soil Party felt that the Whigs had been too accommodating to their Southern members. Among their goals, the Free Soilers wanted to pass that Wilmot Proviso from back in the war years. Their platform used the slogan "Free soil, free speech, free labor, free men". The free speech phrase referred to the aforementioned gag rule I talked about. In other words, letting members of Congress have free speech to talk about slavery. But it's really the term free labor that was most important to this third party. Many Northern white workers who are gravitating to the Free Soil Party were redefining their sense of whiteness. And in the process, they redefined blackness in order to feel more comfortable where the change is brought on by the industrial revolution because again, this is their fundamental economic reality. They are trying to make a decent living and survive the early stages of the industrial revolution in this country and it was not easy. So, when we go back and we look at the white industrial workers who are getting behind the Free Soilers, we find that they often treated free blacks in their communities very badly and had no great sympathy for the fact that there was a hierarchy of race that kept Africans down. And what happened is that, many of them join this Free Soil Party because its leaders succeeded in transferring the frustration that these workers felt about the change in nature of capitalism that made them feel like wade slaves. They transferred that frustration into an anger towards the slave power. And so, in an odd kind of political twist of faith, both abolitionist and Northern white workers could find a home in this Free Soil Party despite the fact that they had very different views of the black race. Now, don't get me wrong, abolitionist could also be very paternalistic, they could buy into certain stereotypes that we associate with the hierarchy of race. But generally speaking, they were more progressive in looking at people of color. But both abolitionist and Northern white workers could find the Free Soil Party as a home not as a place where--in which to unite to try to win presidential elections. And ironically, their presidential nominee in 1848 was former President Martin Van Buren who had essentially built the Democratic Party for Andrew Jackson back in 1828. But Van Buren who was originally from New York had gradually grown tired of the thrust to the Democratic Party and defending slavery and so now, he'll try to run for the presidency as a third party candidate.
And he did take over 300,000 votes all of them in the North of course. So, the Free Soil Party didn't win in 1848, but it made enough of an impact that people had to wonder, are the Democrats and Whigs going to continue to be the only games in town? Now, meanwhile, that popular sovereignty principle that the Democrats have done so much to promote, ultimately failed. And it failed because Americans chose to interpret the term very differently to suit their own purposes. And in the spirit of Janus, the two-faced god, Whigs and Democrats kept the details fuzzy in the hope that nobody was really paying close attention to what popular sovereignty really meant. For example, Northerners assumed that once you had 60,000 settlers in the Western territory, and this was the number you needed to be able to form a legislature. That as long as you had a majority of anti-slavery settlers at that moment, when you hit 60,000, then you could settle the slavery question once and for all. You just wrote a constitution that banned slavery. So eventually, when you applied for statehood, you'd be coming in as a free state. But Southerners tended to believe that popular sovereignty meant that at any point in the process to which a territory became a state, you could always revisit the slavery question. Frankly, that you could even revisit it at a time when most of your settlers there were actually against slavery. So, this is another example of why there just isn't going to be some grand compromise that brings this issue to heal. Ultimately, somebody is just going to have to win.

Slide 13

Text: Compromise of 1850 – another “band aid” fix

[Map of Compromise of 1850]

Audio: Not long after the elections of 1848, Congress would be faced with another crisis over with many new states to the union and determining whether slavery would be allowed there. The territory of California, a part of what was purchased from Mexico was growing rapidly in part due to the gold rush that began there in 1849. By 1850, Californians were already applying for statehood with a constitution that bans slavery. Now, most of California's climate was such that it didn't really support the kind of cash crops where you needed slavery anyway. But even while Southerners recognized that, they recognized that slavery was really not practical for the bulk of California. They still refused to admit California under terms that completely ruled out slavery. In other words, with that siege mentally I referred to earlier, more and more Southerners are feeling as though there is actually a principle they have to stand on in defending slavery. They have to even defend slavery in scenarios where it wouldn't be practical to allow it. I mean even if you took all the morality out of it and just argued in economic terms about the practicality of slavery, many Southern politicians feel as though even then, you still have to come up with arguments to defend it. So and what might seem bizarre to students today, I mean many Southerners have reached the point where they were proud of slavery. And they've gone from being that necessary evil back in the 1780s and 1790s to something that you could now put a great deal of gusto into defending. So let's go back to 1815. Now, we've got the situation in
California where most of its residents want to come in as a free state. Now, Congressman Henry Clay who is near the end of his life, he's run for the presidency three times unsuccessfully which makes him something of a well-known footnote in presidential history. He is looking to engineer the last great compromise of his political career. He is fervently hoping to be able to keep the union together as there is more and more talk about somehow spreading it up. His main partner in his compromised efforts was an up and incoming senator from Illinois whom I've already mentioned Democrat Stephen Douglas. These two men attempted to tackle a wide range of issues that were all caught up in the debate over California and slavery. Since California had been acquired to the Mexican War, congress would have to finally decide what do to with all of the lands gained through that conflict. This territorial indigestion was really reaching its most intense point. Meanwhile, Southerners were complaining that there are escaped slaves who made it to the North who are not being apprehended and returned to their owners. Northerners were also upset that slavery was being allowed in our nation's capital, the District of Columbia because this seemed to be particularly hypocritical given our democratic values where these various questions were threatening to ruin the second party system. After 8 months of negotiating, a breakthrough finally occurred. By this time, Henry Clay was rather incapacitated from illness and it would really be Steven Douglas who was the principal architect. His tactic was to get congress to vote on each issue separately rather than considering all the disputes in one package. Nevertheless, he referred all of these deals under one label, the Compromise of 1850. Here is how it worked out. California was admitted to the union as a Free State meaning there's a ban on slavery. The Western boundary of Texas was established which helped lead to the creation of the Utah and the Mexico territories, the New Mexico territory including most of the present day Arizona. These two territories and purple in your map will be free to determine the slavery question for themselves. In other words, the principle of popular sovereignty would be in effect in those lands. So Southerners could at least hope that slavery would take root there even though again, the climate was not terribly promising for the kind of cash crops that would really cost there to be an economic need for slavery. Also is part of the Compromise of 1850, a fugitive, are very tough fugitive slave act was put into place that requires citizens to assist in the recovery of slaves no matter how they felt about the practice. Although slavery could still exist in the nation's capital, the trading of slaves in Washington DC was abolished. So abolitionist could claim that they at least got something out of it and so too could the strongest defenders of slavery. These were the major features of the Compromise of 1850. Much like the Missouri compromise 30 years before, this agreement merely bought time. The fundamental issues dividing North and South remained in place. The compromised language concerning the Utah and New Mexico territories was deliberately vague so that both sides could feel satisfied. The new fugitive slave law also allows Southern courts to demand a return of individuals believed to be escaped slaves without a trial. Increasingly in the North, abolitionist would hide escaped slaves and harass the federal marshals looking for them. I mean this was an early form of civil disobedience when you look at how abolitionists bonded together to create clan-destined [phonetic] networks that would allow escaped slaves either to sort of live underneath the radar so
to speak in free states or even go as far North as Canada to secure their freedom so tensions are building.

**Slide 14**

**Text:** Uncle Tom’s Cabin

[Image of an ad for Uncle Tom's Cabin]

**Audio:** In 1852, a work of literature will further intensify the slavery debate. Harriet Beecher Stowe, the daughter of a prominent abolitionist, published the book "Uncle Tom's Cabin". This novel very dramatically portrayed the plight of slaves in humanity of their southern masters. I mentioned that many of you had to read it in high school. By mid 1853, more than one million copies have been sold as Northerners devoured this work as a critic of slavery. Stowe's characters leaped from the page and here was the gentle slave, Uncle Tom, a Christian saint who forgave those who beat them to death. The courageous slave Eliza who fled with her child across the frozen Ohio River in the fiend of Simon Legree whose Louisiana plantation was a nightmare of torture and death although southerners like to note that this character was a transplanted Yankee after all. Stowe aimed her most powerful blows of slavery's destructive impact on the family. Although Eliza succeeded in saving her son, another slave mother in the story drowns herself when she learns that her son has been sold away from her. A third mother is driven half-mad by the sale of two of her children and gives her last child an opiate and watches her pass away quietly rather than having to endure growing up as slave. But Uncle Tom's Cabin was meant to sort of rebuke against the entire nation for child right into slavery. Again, the main villain Simon Legree was a Northerner. Although it is difficult to measure precisely the impact of a literary work, this novel appears to have helped crystalize sentiment on both sides of the slavery question. Not only was northern outrage enhanced but many southerners felt more embolden than ever to defend their peculiar institution against the abolitionist. A decade after its publication when Harriet Beecher Stowe visited Abraham Lincoln at the executive mansion, he reportedly said, "So you were the little woman who wrote the book that made this Great War." Of course by "great" he was referring to its scope rather than celebrating any sort of bloodlust. And he was not literally suggesting that Stowe's words singlehandedly that sort of created the Republic but his comment was a testimony to the fact that she had a struck a chord with this best-selling novel. Meanwhile, southerners attempted to refute notions of slavery as a moral; sometimes they employed quasi-scientific arguments about the inferiority of the black race, which justify their subservience status. Others look at the hardships of the industrial revolution and determine that slavery was less inhumane than free industrial labor. At least southern slaveholders supposedly took care of their slaves once they were elderly or ill although if you read Frederick Douglass' famous slave narrative, you would find a refutation of that claim. Northern capitalists just got rid of their workers on a similar position or so southerners would say. As Northerners watched these defenses of slavery being mounted, many grew more
concerned that the slave power conspiracy was a legitimate threat. Southern ministers even looked to the bible for apparent legitimizations of slavery just as their northern counterparts search for condemnation in the same work.

Slide 15

Text: Kansas-Nebraska Act (“slave power” conspiracy at work?)

[Map of Kansas-Nebraska Act]

Audio: A new controversy would soon disrupt the fragile con senses surrounding the compromise of 1850. Some territory in the present day Midwest needed to be organized by congress. But few politicians were willing to touch that question, because they knew it would inflame the north-south rivalry. But Senator Steven Douglas of Illinois thought otherwise. He was trying to get a transcontinental railroad built that would run through the Midwest. He had extensive land holdings in Illinois and Wisconsin and was hoping the government would buy his acreage at a higher price, if it was needed for this project. But the areas known as the Kansas and Nebraska territories would also be affected, so there status had to be dealt with. His congress examined the Kansas-Nebraska question. Those conflicting interpretations of the compromise of 1850 came home to roost. Southerners believed the compromise meant that slavery could not be prohibited while a territory was waiting to become a state. Northerners felt that the compromise allowed settlers to ban slavery as soon as they had enough for a territorial legislature and a constitution. Basically, what you had was about 60,000 people. The Kansas-Nebraska debate exposed these conflicting views, and there was another problem. Kansas and Nebraska laid north of that latitude line that had been established as the slavery boundary. In the Missouri compromise of 1820, there was not supposed to be any slavery north of the 3630 line. But popular sovereignty as southerners defined it, meant that this part of the Missouri compromise would have to be revoked. After several months of debate, Steven Douglas agreed with southerners on this point, as did democratic president, Franklin Pearce. So in 1854, the Kansas Nebraska act opened these two territories for slavery. According to the principal of popular sovereignty. Steven Douglas was no fan of slavery himself. He was hoping that the climate and terrain of these regions would make slavery impractical, anyhow. But he underestimated the angry reaction of northerners. The law would give the free serial party greater strength again in the outgoing presidential election.

Slide 16

Text: Birth of Republican Party (1854)

- Moderate in that it advocated only containing the expansion of slavery rather than eliminating it where it already existed
- At this point only a sectional party
Audio: In 1854 a new political party was formed out of Free Soilers, who had pretty much been a one-issue group, former wigs, now that that party had resolved in 1852, and Democrats who opposed slavery. This new party was the Republican Party. Republicans were committed to preventing the spread of slavery into the territories. In the 1854 Congressional midterm elections the Republicans, or GOP, did quite well. But it's important to note that in these early years, the Republican Party was only a sectional party, meaning that it had no significant support in slave states whatsoever. So now by 1854 the only national party to any extent is the Democratic Party. And so the nation is getting closer to a kind of nightmare scenario where there's not going to be any one candidate or one party that can truly create a national appeal, we're not quite there yet but we're getting closer to that scenario that will come to light in 1860.

Slide 17

Text: “Bleeding Kansas”/Caning of Charles Sumner

[Political cartoon of Charles Sumner being attacked on the floor of the senate]

Audio: Thanks to the Kansas-Nebraska Act, which left many Northerners feeling as though the rug had been pulled out from under them. There was a great rush of settlement into those territories particularly Kansas after 1854. Soon, the term "Bleeding Kansas" entered discussions of current events as both pro-slavery and anti-slavery settlers relied more and more upon violence rather than the rule of law to settle their differences. One example involved the so-called "Border Ruffians" who were pro-slavery Missourians who voted fraudulently in Kansas’s elections and intimidated anti-slavery settlers from coming to the polls. Eventually, Kansas ended up with two governments and two constitutions: one, forbidding slavery; the other, embracing it. The problems of Kansas seemed to symbolize those of the nation as a whole, absorbing and mediating this issue of slavery was becoming increasingly difficult. In May 1856, the debate over Kansas reached another shocking level of brutality. On the floor of the US senate, Charles Sumner of Massachusetts made some comments attacking fellow Senator Andrew Butler of South Carolina forced defense of slavery in Kansas. Butler had a cousin, Preston Brooks, serving as a congressman from South Carolina. When Brooks heard of Sumner's remarks against his cousin, he became enraged and felt that his family's honor needed to be avenged. He stormed in to the senate chambers and found Sumner seated at his desk. Brooks took his cane, and let me be clear the cane was merely for show. Brooks was a healthy, relatively young man. He took his cane and began beating Sumner repeatedly on the head. Trapped in his desk, there was little that the senator could do to defend himself. He tried so hard to get up that he eventually broke the desk loose from the bolts that held it into the floor. But by then, Sumner had suffered brain damage. He was incapacitated for several years. The voters in Massachusetts later returned into the senate in honor of the sacrifice. In 1856, many Northerners whether they had attested slavery or not were stunned at the audacity and violence of the Southern politician.
They were also repulse that much of the South lionized Brooks as a great hero and reelected him. Some of his constituents send him new canes afterwards. Later in 1856, the presidential election saw a victory for the Democrats who were the nation's only truly national party at this time. But their candidate, James Buchanan, did not get a great deal of support from free states despite being a Northerner himself. He, like Steven Douglas, was another one of these Northern politicians who was willing to make peace with slavery to keep the nation together. Buchanan's greatest claim to fame was that he had been out of the country for the past four years serving as an ambassador. So he had been uninvolved in the most recent controversies. And this is really one of the saddest features of politics at this point. When you look at several presidents in a row, Zachary Taylor, Millard Fillmore, who was his vice president, took over after he died. Franklin Pierce, James Buchanan, they're not terribly effective political leaders and the political climate was such that it was hard to put a strong outspoken leader into place as the nominee of your party because when the two parties are trying so hard to be Janus-faced to different sections of the country, I mean, you can't have a terribly strong effective ethical leader doing something like that. I mean chances are you won't be able to pull it off because you'll see it as beneath him. So the system was really militating against the kind of person who might actually be able to hold the country together. Now, meanwhile in 1856, the new Republican Party ran its first presidential candidate, John Fremont who had been a famous explorer out west and had fought in the Mexican War. And the GOP did its best in free states not surprisingly. In fact, it had virtually no support in the south. So we are getting closer to that nightmare scenario where there is no national party or a party with national appeal.

**Slide 18**

**Text:** Dred Scott Decisions by Supreme Court (1857)

- Ruling occurred at a time when the majority of justices were slaveholders and/or supported the practice
- Court found that Scott never should have been able to bring suit in the first place
- If a slave lives in a free territory, that has no bearing on one’s legal status
- Congress has no right to bar slavery in the territories (thus Compromise of 1820 was null and void)

**Audio:** In 1857, the focus of the slavery controversy shifted to the nation's highest court, as it considered a complicated case involving a slave. A Missouri slave by the name of Dred Scott was suing his master for his freedom because he had spend a portion of his servitude in the free State of Illinois and also the Wisconsin territory where slavery had been forbidden going all the way back to the 1780s. Scott's case had worked its way through several appeals and after 11 years, reached the US Supreme Court. Supreme Court justices normally left the institution of slavery for state courts to handle. And there was legal precedent for changing this approach. But at this moment in history, there were many--there were more Southerners than Northerners.
among the justices. And so, they decided to use this opportunity to try to settle the debate over
slavery once and for all. Led by a Chief Justice from slaveholding Maryland, the Supreme Court
made the following ruling. First of all, as a slave, Dred Scott could not be a citizen of any state or
the United States in general. Therefore, he really had no right to get the legal process started in
the first place. Secondly, if a slave lives for a time in a free territory, this has no impact on his
legal status, he remains a slave. Finally, the Supreme Court took a dramatic step and declared
that congress did not have the constitutional right to bar slavery from any territory. This meant
that in the eyes of the Supreme Court, the Missouri Compromise of 1820 had been illegal, that
the proposed Wilmot Proviso of 1846 had been illegal. And they suggested that the compromise
implied in the principle of popular sovereignty might be illegal as well. Some Northerners on the
court [inaudible] opinion but the damage was done. To many Northerners, the Dred Scott
decision seemed to be the ultimate expression of the slave power conspiracy. Despite comprising
of minority of the voting population, Southerners had secured a majority on the Supreme Court
and used its power--their power to strike a crushing legal blow on behalf of slavery. Abolitionist
detested this verdict for its legal defense of slavery. Other Northerners were upset because of the
political power that the planter aristocracy seemed to be exerting out of proportion to its
numbers. This is a huge point. The fact that for many Northerners, it was more about the power
secured through slavery that outraged them than the actual keeping of humans and bondage.

Slide 19

Text: Lincoln-Douglas Debates (1858)

[Image of Abraham Lincoln speaking to a crowd]

Audio: In 1858, the Senate campaign in Illinois captured the nation's attention and imagination
for a brief period of time. Stephen Douglas, the architect of the Compromise of 1850 and the
Kansas-Nebraska Act was up for reelection as a Northern Democrat. He hoped to run for the
Presidency in 1860 as the great compromising candidate with national appeal who could hold the
nation together. Opposing him in this Senate race was Republican, Abraham Lincoln. Over
several months during their campaign, they appeared in seven debates against one another. They
each provided some of the most articulate and persuasive positions on the slavery question to be
found anywhere in this era of history. Therefore, their speeches were published widely outside of
Illinois as many Americans took their cues on this issue from the stances of these two men.
Douglas would ultimately win the Senatorial election, but this campaign would make Lincoln a
famous public figure who would triumph in the Presidential election of 1860. By the way, as a
side note, Mary Todd who eventually wedded Abraham Lincoln had also been courted by Steven
Douglas. So these two had more than just a political rivalry that divided them. In any case, back
to the debates, during the debates, Douglas tried to revive that concept of popular sovereignty as
a way to offer a compromise that Northerners and Southerners might share. According to
Douglas's Freeport Doctrine, popular sovereignty could still work because the Supreme Court
had only dealt with Congresses' right to restrict slavery, not the right of settlers themselves to do so. But in the political climate plagued by the violence in Kansas and conspiracy theories on both sides, popular sovereignty was fast losing its viability as a compromise solution. Now I've already mentioned the popular Northern conspiracy theory that there was this slave power cabal or slave power conspiracy out there. But what was the Southern conspiracy theory? Well, for many Southerners when they looked at this new Republican Party that was promising only to stop the spread of slavery, many Southerners felt that you could not trust Republicans, that what they really wanted to do was to sweep it away entirely but they were just trying to appear more moderate to win votes and get their opportunity in office. Be that as it may, one of Douglas' most consistent strategies in these debates was to label Abraham Lincoln and his allies black Republicans. Now, why was that the case? Referring to the--to Lincoln and others like him as black Republicans served two purposes. Number one, given that hierarchy of race that I've been referring to, what you're doing is you're tapping into that visceral ignorance and loathing and fear that many working class whites held towards African-Americans. Secondly, he were also suggesting that the Republican Party, instead of being a relatively moderate force in politics, was actually a radical or extremist group dominated by Abolitionist and ex-slaves who, again, you know, suggesting their only message is that they want to get rid of slavery entirely. And I want to be clear, and today when you say words like radical and extremist, they tend to have a pejorative or negative connotation. But Abolitionists were radicals and extremists because they did believe in one of the extreme positions on slavery. But that doesn't mean you have to see it as a negative one, so just keep in mind that those terms can be used more neutrally. But in any case, one feature of the Lincoln-Douglas debates that tends to get overlooked is that in defense of himself against being supposedly a black Republican, Abraham Lincoln said a number of times in his debates that he didn't really think that the authors in the Declaration of Independence meant that all men are created equal, means that all men are created equal in all respects. In other words, Lincoln found ways to defend the hierarchy of race even as he was ultimately arguing that he hoped slavery would be eradicated from the land someday. In other words, what I'm trying to do with Abraham Lincoln is to make the larger point that for plenty of Northerners, it was possible to be anti-slavery, but also not hold the most progressive views racially. And it's very important to keep that in mind. And there has been scholarship on Lincoln that is made this kind of case, but in our popular memory we’re still a bit slow to pick up on this. For many Northerners, they were not progressive in the way that they thought about the capabilities, the maturity, the sophistication of African-Americans.

**Slide 20**

**Text:** John Brown’s Raid at Harper’s Ferry

[Image of “Tragic Prelude” by John Steuart Curry]
Audio: The next page or episode that propelled America towards war occurred in 1859. My spectrum of opinion on slavery had put John Brown of Connecticut at one end. As radical as southerners considered all abolitionists, Brown was truly in the category of his own. As I mentioned before he had failed in many business ventures in life before finding what he saw as his true calling as an avenging angel of God, devoting himself to the eradication of slavery by every available means. He and his sons had gone out to bleeding Kansas after the Kansas Nebraska act of 1854. And at one point it aroused the number of slaveholders out of their beds and hacked them to death with broad swords. Seeing himself as--by the way this took place at a location called Pottawatomie Creek, feel very fortunate I was able to get that word out the way I did but this was one of the more famous episodes in the history of bleeding Kansas. But seeing himself as a sort of messiah for America's slaves, he developed a very ambitious plan. He and a small band of followers including his own sons plotted to raid the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia. The--he actually gave, a now escape slave Frederick Douglass a chance to join the operation, Douglass was fast becoming a leading abolitionist but Douglass declined and later felt guilty about it. This raid at Harpers Ferry would hopefully give Brown and his followers some weapons with which to start a massive slave revolt that they thought could sweep throughout the South. Brown hoped to form a guerrilla army that would use the Appalachian Mountains as a hiding place in between attacks on southern slaveholders. This entire operation with all of its ambition began with just 13 white men and five free blacks who raided Harpers Ferry. So needless to say this was a flight of fancy to think that this as going to turn into a massive slave rebellion. Brown did capture the federal arsenal but he delayed in leaving the town, which allowed time for federal troops to arrive under the command ironically of Robert E. Lee, the future leader of the confederacy's most successful army. Lee surrounded the arsenal and exchanged gunfire with Brown until the abolitionist surrendered. He had only four men left while both of his sons had been killed and Brown himself was seriously wounded. He was tried to treason by the state of Virginia ended up itself since treason is normally a national crime and he was hanged later that year. One of the Virginian military cadets who observed the execution was John Wilkes Booth, future assassin of President Lincoln. Frederick Douglass felt a bit guilty afterwards commenting that, well, he had demonstrated that he could live for the slaves Brown had actually died for them. It was unusual for a white man to die on behalf of the anti-slavery cause. In any case, Brown became a great martyr even if many abolitionists disapproved of his violent tactics, they agreed with the spirit behind them. In northern communities there were numerous moments of silence, church bells toll in commemoration, canon salutes in the center of town. When southerners saw how Brown was glorified in death, it reinforced their fears that slavery was on its way out no matter what northern politicians said about compromise. Keep in mind that the Republican Party dominant in the north went to great pains to promise that it would only halt the spread of slavery rather than eliminating it completely. Slaveholders or abolitionist is the worst sort of extremist and Brown's raid only confirmed this impression. Although, no slaves had joined Brown's little operation that southern paranoia about another slave result--revolt was dramatically heightened. Incidence such as John Brown's raid made it increasingly
difficult for America's leaders to sit down and rationally discuss the divisions between north and south and to come up with any compromises. As Brown was being led to the gallows, he handed his guard a note in which he predicted that the crimes of this nation could only be purged with blood, a prophetic statement to say the least. This painting here is actually from the 1930s and links with another lecture of mine in this series. I have mentioned that during the great depression part of Franklin Roosevelt's new deal was the works progress administration that among other things put unemployed artist to work painting murals and so forth in public buildings and this image here is a product of the WPA and it shows John Brown in an obvious Christ-like post here emphasizing his martyrdom.

**Slide 21**

**Text:** Election of 1860

[Map of electoral and popular votes for the election of 1860]

**Audio:** In 1860, the nation faced another Presidential election with great anticipation and anxiety. The incumbent Democrat, James Buchanan, had been very much a do-nothing leader who tolerated the institution of slavery despite being a Northerner himself. He had no intention of running again or offering any meaningful leadership as the situation degenerated. In what was an unfortunate twist of faith, the Democratic Party's nominating convention was held in Charleston in South Carolina, the center of Southern extremism on the slavery question. If Boston was the cradle of the American War for Independence, Charleston was to be the spiritual birthplace of the confederacy. As Democratic leaders from all over the country gathered in Charleston, Senator Stephen Douglas hoped to be the great comprised candidate who could hold the Democratic Party together and the nation in general. At first, he appeared to be the front-runner for the nomination. Historians still wondered today that if a Democratic convention had been held anywhere else within this particularly radical atmosphere would Douglas had been nominated? And if he had been nominated as the only candidate with something of a national appeal to voters, instead of just being attractive to Northerners or Southerners alone, would he have won the election of 1860? The answer to both questions may very well be yes and a President Stephen Douglas in this election would have meant no Civil War. But a Charleston Douglas was sabotage by some elements of his own party. Many Southern Democrats felt that Douglas had not been supportive enough of slavery during the debates on Kansas and Nebraska. Now this is pretty amazing since Northerners criticized Douglas as a sell out, but for Southerners, his Freeport Doctrine seemed to them too wishy-washy on the slavery issue. As one Southern senator put it, the Democratic Party must take the position that slavery was right. As indicated in some previous material, Southerners felt so threatened over slavery and everything that it stood for that they were less willing to compromise. They were tired of defending it. They wanted the Democratic Party to state in unadulterated terms that slavery was not only necessary but proper. Radical Southerners even out of the plank to the Party platform that called for annex
in Cuba from Spain in order to continue the island slave based economy in behalf of a rich sugar crop. Stephen Douglas and many other Northern Democrats could not go that far. They knew this position would be too controversial back home. They had bend over backwards as compromisers they could not go any further. So after numerous ballots, the Party could not agree on a presidential candidate. No one had the necessary majority. The convention adjourned with the plan of reconvening in Baltimore. Many Southern Democrats decided not to attend that second convention as a protest. When the Baltimore meeting took place, it was now largely Northerners who were there and they did nominate Stephen Douglas, but the Democratic Party was no longer a national force politically. Douglas was not to be that great compromised candidate. Southern Democrats later held their own convention and nominated the nation's Vice President John C. Breckinridge of Kentucky. The platform of these Southern Democrats was to extend slavery in the territories in addition to taking Cuba. The Republicans then held their convention in Chicago. Abraham Lincoln was nominated because he seemed to be rather moderate on the slavery question and the platform of the Party did include the desire to only prevent the extension of slavery into the Western territories. The Republican Party made no mention of any desire to do away with slavery where it already existed. Yet, back to that conspiracy theory I mentioned earlier, many Southerners assumed that the Republican Party was in the pocket of the abolition and so condemn slavery as a moral evil and wish to eradicate it. Even though the Republican platform also denounced John Brown's raid is going too far. 19th century elections, particularly those held in urban areas, were known to be unsafe events with plenty of voter intimidation on both sides. Republicans, for example, relied upon a marching club of young men called the Wide Awakes who would conduct colorful torch light parades to celebrate their candidates and an election day to discourage violence against Republican voters. Douglas' supporters tried to play the race card once again by labeling the GOP as a bunch of so-called black Republicans who would cater to the demands of African-Americans and Abolitionist. I cannot over stress the fact that the general race thinking seen in free states was only modestly more progressive than what was typically seen in slave states. Because they were some so-called boarder states like Maryland, Delaware, Kentucky and Missouri, that had mix feelings about slavery and still allowed it, a third party was created in an attempt to hold the nation together. This third party which would do best in the boarder states called themselves the Constitutional Unionist. They nominated John Bell who was a Southerner, and their platform, they kept it very simple. It was basically stressing the need to hold the nation together. The party advocated nothing else because the supporters knew that to do so would basically rip it apart. So as we look at this election results here, what I'd like to stress to you is that while they were four major candidates in this election, they're really were in effect, two different elections taking place. In most Southern communities, Lincoln was not even on the ballot. While in many Northern communities, Bell and Breckinridge were not on the ballot either. So it was this though two entirely different elections took place. So let's examine the results. We know that it's the electoral vote that determines who becomes president and because he consistently finished first in the free states, Abraham Lincoln did legitimately win the necessary majority in the electoral
college to become President. I mean, nobody was questioning that. By the mandate of the Constitution, Abraham Lincoln with his 180 electoral votes taking almost all of the free states. So basically, except for about half of New Jersey's electoral votes, Lincoln took every free state in the Union. So he had the 180, he was President. But the problem was what kind of a mandate did he really have? If you look at the popular vote, Lincoln got about 40 percent. And of that 40 percent, virtually, all of it came from free states. The best testaments that we have is that Lincoln took only about 26,000 votes from States that eventually became part of the Southern confederacy and fought against the union on the Civil War. So Lincoln's appeal was almost entirely in free states. So the big question was, now that he had triumphed even though it was completely legal, would members of slave states be willing to respect that result or would they decide that they were better off breaking away and forming their own country? Now let me say a few things about the other candidates. You'll notice that Breckinridge finished second in the electoral college because he did predominantly well in slave states especially in the Deep South where slavery was more in trench to the economy. But notice the difference in the Southern population. Even taking 72 electoral votes in the South, Breckinridge only had 18 percent of the nationwide popular vote and that really helps to reinforce the fact that there are more voters in free states. And then Stephen Douglas finished second in the popular vote with 29.5 percent. Again, attesting to the fact that, you know, as he gets votes in the free states that there's more population up there, but because he was consistently finishing behind Lincoln, he ended up with only 12 electoral votes. And meanwhile, John Bell did rather well in those border states with 39 electoral votes, but again, with the Southern population being what it was, that amounted to only 12.6 in the popular vote. So the anti-Lincoln vote added up to 60 percent of the total vote. And to make matters worst, Lincoln now had to wait several months before he could actually take office. So although he off courses the President elect and there's a great deal that he symbolizes, he doesn't really have too much ability to influence events until he actually takes office. And the question is in these slave states, is there going to be a desire to wait and see what a President Lincoln looks like or instead, are people going to respond to their anxieties and fears and break away before he even reaches the executive mansion? As one grandson of John Adams and son of John Quincy Adams commented, the great revolution has actually taken place. The country has once and for all thrown off the domination of the slaveholders. I mean, obviously, for those who feared the slave power conspiracy, the election of Abraham Lincoln seemed like a real breath of fresh air. But if many Northerners saw the election of Lincoln as a continuation of the American Revolution, ironically, many Southerners would find the act of leaving the union as in keeping with their own interpretation of the American Revolution. I cannot over stress the irony. In December of 1860, while Abraham Lincoln is still waiting to be able to take the Oath of Office, a majority of South Carolina voters at their special convention decided to leave the union based on the threat that they felt was post by Lincoln's election. By February 1861, this virus, if you will, of secessionists, secession is the legal act, well, not everyone sees it as legal but secession is the act of breaking away from your country. By February 1861, secessionists were spreading rapidly and South Carolina had been joined by Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and
Texas. A total of 8 Deep Southern States, I should mean 7, Deep Southern States. In Texas, one of the great heroes of the Texas Revolution, Sam Houston who was now Governor, urged his fellow Texans to stay put. It didn't work. Now as I said a moment ago, all of the states that had left the union at this point were located in the Deep South and had the greatest number of slaves since they were caught up in the cash crop economy. A fair number of non-slave holding whites set out this election, as they were unsure of how far they're willing to go to support the plan of aristocracy. Many Southern scholars have argued that this region always operated with the different perception of the constitutional contract that had brought the nation in the bin. Apparently, Southerners tended to believe that it was the individual states not the American people per se that joined together. Since states were the key players, they retained the right to reject individual laws. In other words, this is that nullification argument coming up again. And they did not care for, you know, they could reject individual laws that they didn't care for. Many Southerners had always been sensitive to the survivability of slavery in a Republic where they were in the minority. So the question of states rights was a powerful issue with Southerners whether they own slaves or really benefited from it at all. There are other reasons why slavery could be supported by individuals who did not actually own slaves and it's a complicated story. But here's an irony. In 1861, only about 25 percent of Southern households own slaves. So the majority of Southerners, a healthy majority of Southerners, actually did not own slaves and yet here are 7 and eventually 11 states that are going to breakaway from the union. So when you have the opportunity to study this subject in more detail and support it to get to the bottom of why is it that so many non slave holding whites would still go ahead and support secession. The new Confederate States of America with its capital at Montgomery, Alabama, included at this point only the Deep South, and Mississippi and Jefferson Davis was elected as President. He was a former Senator and Secretary of War. But as a segway into my next lecture, keep in mind, they were several other slave states that were still to varying degrees, on the fence, most notably, Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Missouri, to a lesser extent Delaware and Maryland as well. And just to preview my next lecture, once there is an artillery engagement, at Fort Sumter in the Harbor of Charleston South Carolina, there will be four more states that lead the union, namely North Carolina, Virginia, Tennessee, and Arkansas. But at this point, as Abraham Lincoln has still not yet taken office, the Confederate States of America consist of 7 states.

Slide 22

Text: Useful Primary Sources

- Webster-Hayne Debate (1830)
- Speckled Snake reply to Andrew Jackson (1830)
- “Appeal to the Christian Women of the South” by Angelina Grimke (1836)
- “Annexation” by John O’Sullivan (1845)
- First Republican Party Platform (1856)
Slide 23

Text: Useful Primary Sources

- Experts from Hinton Helper’s the Impending Crisis of the South (1857)
- Excerpts from Lincoln-Douglas Debates (1858)
- South Carolina Declaration of Independence (1860)
- “Cornerstone” Speech by Alexander Stephens (1861)