

Period 5: 1844–1877

In a Nutshell

As the nation expanded and its population grew, regional tensions, especially over slavery, led to a civil war — the course and aftermath of which transformed American society.

Key Concepts

Part 1

- A. The United States became more connected with the world as it pursued an expansionist foreign policy in the Western Hemisphere and emerged as the destination for many migrants from other countries.
- B. Enthusiasm for U.S. territorial expansion, fueled by economic and national security interests and supported by claims of U.S. racial and cultural superiority, resulted in war, the opening of new markets, acquisition of new territory, and increased ideological conflicts.
- C. Westward expansion, migration to and within the United States, and the end of slavery reshaped North American boundaries and caused conflicts over American cultural identities, citizenship, and the question of extending and protecting rights for various groups of U.S. inhabitants.

Part 2

- D. Intensified by expansion and deepening regional divisions, debates over slavery and other economic, cultural, and political issues led the nation into civil war.
- E. The institution of slavery and its attendant ideological debates, along with regional economic and demographic changes, territorial expansion in the 1840s and 1850s, and cultural differences between the North and the South, all intensified sectionalism.
- F. Repeated attempts at political compromise failed to calm tensions over slavery and often made sectional tensions worse, breaking down the trust between sectional leaders and culminating in the bitter election of 1860, followed by the secession of southern states.

Part 3

- G. The Union victory in the Civil War and the contested Reconstruction of the South settled the issues of slavery and secession, but left unresolved many questions about the power of the federal government and citizenship rights.
- H. The North's greater manpower and industrial resources, its leadership, and the decision for emancipation eventually led to the Union military victory over the Confederacy in the devastating Civil War.
- I. The Civil War and Reconstruction altered power relationships between the states and the federal government and among the executive, legislative, and judicial branches, ending slavery and the notion of a divisible union, but leaving unresolved questions of relative power and largely unchanged social and economic patterns.
- J. The constitutional changes of the Reconstruction period embodied a Northern idea of American identity and national purpose and led to conflicts over new definitions of citizenship, particularly regarding the rights of African Americans, women, and other minorities.

Significant Topics

1. Manifest Destiny

The idea of Manifest Destiny, which asserted U.S. power in the Western Hemisphere and supported U.S. expansion westward, was built on a belief in white racial superiority and a sense of American cultural superiority, and helped to shape the era's political debates. The desire for access to western resources led to the environmental transformation of the region, new economic activities, and increased settlement in areas forcibly taken from American Indians.

- a. Gadsden Purchase, 1853

2. Settlement of the American West

Asian, African American, and white peoples sought new economic opportunities or religious refuge in the West, efforts that were boosted during and after the Civil War with the passage of new legislation promoting national economic development.

- a. Mormons

- b. California gold rush, 1849

- c. Homestead Act, 1862

- d. Pacific Railway Act, 1862

- e. Promontory Point, Utah, 1869

3. The Westward Movement's Effect on Hispanics and American Indians

As the territorial boundaries of the United States expanded and the migrant population increased, U.S. government interaction and conflict with Hispanics and American Indians increased, altering these groups' cultures and ways of life and raising questions about their status and legal rights.

- a. Mariano Vallejo

- b. Sand Creek Massacre, 1864

4. **Slavery in the Territories**

The acquisition of new territory in the West and the U.S. victory in the Mexican-American War were accompanied by a heated controversy over allowing or forbidding slavery in newly acquired territories.

5. **The United States and Asia**

U.S. interest in expanding trade led to economic, diplomatic, and cultural initiatives westward to Asia.

- a. clipper ships

- b. Commodore Matthew Perry

- c. missionaries

6. **Nativism in the United States**

Substantial numbers of new international migrants — who often lived in ethnic communities and retained their religion, language, and customs — entered the country prior to the Civil War, giving rise to a major, often violent nativist movement that was strongly anti-Catholic and aimed at limiting immigrants' cultural influence and political and economic power.

- a. nativism

- b. Know Nothings

7. **Northern Industrialism and Southern Agriculture**

The North's expanding economy and its increasing reliance on a free-labor manufacturing economy contrasted with the South's dependence on an economic system characterized by slave-based agriculture and slow population growth.

8. **Northern Abolitionism**

Abolitionists, although a minority in the North, mounted a highly visible campaign against slavery, adopting strategies of resistance ranging from fierce arguments against the institution and assistance in helping slaves escape to willingness to use violence to achieve their goals.

a. Underground Railroad, 1850-1860

b. *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, 1852

c. Harper's Ferry, 1859

9. **Southern Defense of Slavery**

States' rights, nullification, and racist stereotyping provided the foundation for the Southern defense of slavery as a positive good.

a. John C. Calhoun

b. peculiar institution

c. minstrel shows

10. **Attempts to Solve the Issue of Slavery in the Territories**

National leaders made a variety of proposals to resolve the issue of slavery in the territories, including the Compromise of 1850, the Kansas-Nebraska Act, and the *Dred Scott* decision, but these ultimately failed to reduce sectional conflict.

a. Wilmot Proviso, 1846

b. Compromise of 1850

c. popular sovereignty

- d. Fugitive Slave Law, 1850

- e. Kansas-Nebraska Act, 1854

- f. *Dred Scott v. Sandford*, 1857

- g. Freeport Doctrine, 1858

- h. Harper's Ferry, 1859

11. Creation of the Republican Party

The second party system ended when the issues of slavery and anti-immigrant nativism weakened loyalties to the two major parties and fostered the emergence of sectional parties, most notably the Republican Party in the North and the Midwest.

- a. Republican Party, 1854

- b. Lincoln-Douglas Debates, 1858

12. The Election of 1860

Lincoln's election on a free soil platform in the election of 1860 led various Southern leaders to conclude that their states must secede from the Union, precipitating civil war.

- a. Abraham Lincoln

b. Crittenden Compromise, 1860

c. Southern Secession

d. Confederate States of America

e. Fort Sumter, 1861

13. The Civil War, 1861-1865

Both the Union and the Confederacy mobilized their economies and societies to wage the war even while facing considerable home front opposition. Although Confederate leadership showed initiative and daring early in the war, the Union ultimately succeeded due to improved military leadership, more effective strategies, key victories, greater resources, and the wartime destruction of the South's environment and infrastructure.

a. Antietam, 1862

b. Vicksburg, 1863

c. Gettysburg, 1863

d. March to the Sea, 1864

e. Appomattox Court House, 1865

14. **The Abolition of Slavery**

Lincoln's decision to issue the Emancipation Proclamation changed the purpose of the war, enabling many African Americans to fight in the Union Army, and helping prevent the Confederacy from gaining full diplomatic support from European powers. The 13th Amendment abolished slavery, bringing about the war's most dramatic social and economic change, but the exploitative and soil-intensive sharecropping system endured for several generations.

1. Emancipation Proclamation, 1863

2. 13th Amendment, 1865

3. 14th Amendment, 1868

4. 15th Amendment, 1870

5. sharecropping (tenant farming)

6. Black Codes

7. Civil Rights Act of 1875

15. **Reconstruction, 1865-1877**

Efforts by radical and moderate Republicans to reconstruct the defeated South changed the balance of power between Congress and the presidency and yielded some short-term successes, reuniting the union, opening up political opportunities and other leadership roles to former slaves, and temporarily rearranging the relationships between white and black people in the South.

a. Freedman's Bureau, 1865-1872

b. Black Reconstruction

c. Hiram Revels

d. Blanche K. Bruce

e. Robert Smalls

f. carpetbagger

g. scalawag

h. Ku Klux Klan

i. Redeemers

j. Compromise of 1877

16. Radical Republicans

Radical Republicans' efforts to change southern racial attitudes and culture and establish a base for their party in the South ultimately failed, due both to determined southern resistance and to the North's waning resolve.

- a. Radical Republicans

- b. Charles Sumner

- c. Thaddeus Stevens

- d. Impeachment of President Andrew Johnson, 1868

17. African Americans during the Reconstruction Era

Although citizenship, equal protection of the laws, and voting rights were granted to African Americans in the 14th and 15th Amendments, these rights were progressively stripped away through segregation, violence, Supreme Court decisions, and local political tactics.

18. Women's Rights during the Reconstruction Era

The women's rights movement was both emboldened and divided over the 14th and 15th Amendments to the Constitution.

- a. Susan B. Anthony

- b. Victoria Woodhull

19. Long Term Results of the Civil War Amendments

The Civil War Amendments (13th, 14th, and 15th) established judicial principles that were stalled for many decades but eventually became the basis for court decisions upholding civil rights.

