# Part One

## Slavery, Sectional Strife, and War

### Guiding Question #1

**Timeline**

**Events Leading to the Civil War**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1619</td>
<td>The first African slaves are brought to North America.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1777–1820</td>
<td>Northern states, starting with Vermont, abolish slavery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1787</td>
<td>The Founding Fathers write a &quot;three-fifths compromise&quot; into the Constitution, counting each slave as three-fifths of a free person for purposes of determining a state's representation in Congress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1793</td>
<td>Eli Whitney perfects the cotton gin, making the cultivation of cotton with slave labor profitable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800–65</td>
<td>Thousands of slaves escape north using the Underground Railroad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1807</td>
<td>Slave trade from Africa to the United States ends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>The Missouri Compromise: Missouri enters the Union as a slave state, Maine as a free state. Slavery is prohibited in the west above a line extending from Missouri's southern border to the Rocky Mountains.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1829</td>
<td>David Walker, a free black, publishes his <em>Appeal</em>, urging slave resistance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831</td>
<td>William Lloyd Garrison publishes the first issue of the abolitionist newspaper the <em>Liberator</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831</td>
<td>Nat Turner's slave revolt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1832</td>
<td>South Carolina asserts its right to declare U.S. laws null and void in the state, talks of secession, but retreats when President Andrew Jackson threatens force.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1832</td>
<td>The American Anti-Slavery Society (AAS) is founded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1836</td>
<td>Southern congressmen gain passage of the &quot;Gag Rule,&quot; directing Congress to ignore all anti-slavery petitions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1845</td>
<td>The former Mexican territory of Texas is annexed by the United States as a slave state.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1846–48</td>
<td>War with Mexico. The United States annexes half of Mexico.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
"Ration Day." A weekly newspaper report on the operations of a plantation shows a master distributing provisions. The engraving suggests that this planter provided his slaves with a varied and nutritious diet, which was not typically the case. The picture fails to show the gardens and other methods slaves used to supplement often meager or boring fare.

*Harper's Weekly, American Social History Project.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1845-49</td>
<td>Bitter debate in Congress over the Wilmot Proviso, which would have prohibited slavery in newly annexed territories. The proviso is defeated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>Compromise of 1850: California enters the union as a free state, but a new Fugitive Slave Law makes it easier to hunt escaped slaves in the North.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1854</td>
<td>The Kansas-Nebraska Act sets aside the Missouri Compromise line; the territories of Kansas and Nebraska can choose whether to be slave or free states.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1854</td>
<td>The Republican party is founded. It opposes the extension of slavery to the western territories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1856</td>
<td>&quot;Bloody Kansas&quot;: War breaks out between pro- and antislavery forces in Kansas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1856</td>
<td>Senator Charles Sumner, an abolitionist, is beaten unconscious in the chamber of the U.S. Senate by a proslavery congressman.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1857</td>
<td>The Dred Scott decision: The Supreme Court rules that the new western territories have no right to prohibit slavery. Chief Justice Roger Taney declares that no black person in the United States has &quot;any rights which the white man is bound to respect.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1859</td>
<td>John Brown leads a raid on the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, [West] Virginia, to seize weapons for an antislavery guerrilla war. He is captured and hanged.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>Lincoln is elected president on a Republican party platform opposed to the expansion of slavery. In response, most southern states secede by early 1861.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

The growth of the United States from the end of the Revolution (1783) to the beginning of the Civil War (1861) was breathtaking. In just over seventy-five years, a small, mainly agricultural nation on the Atlantic Ocean grew into a powerful, diverse economy, stretching across the continent to the Pacific. From the original thirteen states, the nation multiplied to thirty-three. By 1860, Americans manufactured, mined, and harvested a wealth of goods—textiles, shoes, iron, coal, lumber, grains, beef, sugar, tobacco, cotton, and other riches—which moved across continents and oceans to American and world markets, symbolizing U.S. economic progress and abundance.

It was an era marked by prosperity and conflict. Those who produced the wealth did not equally share its benefits. Tensions between classes, between races, between nationalities, and between men and women, as well as between geographical sections, divided increasing numbers of Americans. But one issue much more than any other split the nation: slavery.

In what ways did the United States change between the American Revolution and the Civil War?

FREE AND SLAVE STATES IN 1860.
Initially, most white Americans living north of slavery expressed little concern about the “peculiar institution” of slavery, or were openly hostile toward African Americans. But between 1820 and 1860, the extent and speed of westward expansion raised unsettling questions about slavery and race in general for all Americans. Would the new western territories come into the Union as free or slave states? What would happen to the balance of power between free and slave states in the U.S. Senate? Who would control the land in the West: slaveholding planters, capitalist entrepreneurs, or pioneer farmers and workers? The future of the West, and of the whole nation, depended on the answers to these political and economic questions.

But it was not only westward expansion and development that pushed slavery to center stage in American life. Slavery became a key moral and emotional issue after 1830 because of the growing resistance of slaves themselves and the militancy of black and white abolitionists. Americans reacted with fierce passion to Nat Turner’s slave revolt in 1831; to abolitionist rallies and literature; to the successes of the underground railroad in transporting slaves to freedom; to confrontations between escaped slaves and the bounty hunters who pursued them into free states in the North and West; to Harriet Beecher Stowe’s brutal descriptions of slavery in her 1852 bestselling novel, Uncle Tom’s Cabin, to John Brown’s attempt in 1859 to arm slaves by raiding a federal arsenals at Harpers Ferry, Virginia.

For forty years, political leaders in the nation’s two major parties, the Whigs and Democrats, tried first to avoid the slavery issue, then to reach a compromise. From 1820 to 1860, Congress engineered a series of political settlements—the 1820 Missouri Compromise, the Compromise of 1850, the 1854 Kansas-Nebraska Act—aimed at maintaining a rough balance of political power in the U.S. Senate between slave and free states.

“peculiar institution”—slavery, particularly as it became unique or peculiar to the South after 1800. By the mid-nineteenth century, the South became one of the few regions in the entire Western Hemisphere where slavery still existed.

capitalist—one who hires wage labor to produce goods and/or services for profit

entrepreneur—an investor or businessperson

militancy—aggressive action and attitudes in behalf of a cause

abolitionists—those who wanted to outlaw slavery and free all slaves

— SLAVERY, SECTIONAL STRIFE, AND WAR
But by 1860, the raw emotions dividing the sides left little room for compromise. In the presidential election of that year, a new party—the Republican party—and a new candidate, Abraham Lincoln, took a position that made a political settlement of the slavery issue nearly impossible. Lincoln won the presidency on a platform that called for prohibition of the expansion of slavery into the new western territories, but allowed slavery to continue in the old South. The slaveholding class that ruled the South would not permit even this compromise. By early 1861, the South seceded from the Union rather than accept limits to slavery's westward expansion. Within a year, Americans would be fighting other Americans in the bloodiest war in U.S. history.

UNDERGROUND RAILROAD—a network of free blacks and sympathetic whites who helped slaves escape north
BOUNTY HUNTERS—those who pursued and captured runaway slaves for reward
WIGS—a major political party, 1828–60. Advocated strong federal government to promote commerce and economic expansion.
DEMOCRATS—a major political party, 1800 to the present. Before the Civil War, called for less federal power and more state and local power.
SEORDE—to withdraw
Westward Expansion and National Division

Whatever their differences before the Civil War, most northern and southern whites agreed that rapid westward expansion and settlement were essential to the future well-being of the nation. Between 1820 and 1860, that expansion brought them into conflict with the Native Americans and Mexicans who occupied much of what was to become the American West. In turn, the success and speed with which the U.S. conquered Indians, absorbed Mexican territory, and pushed westward to the Pacific Ocean, raised questions that would provoke tensions among those very Americans who favored expansion. Who would control the new western territories? Who would reap the benefits of expansion? Northern capitalist developers and investors? Pioneers cultivating small family farms? Or a tiny but immensely powerful southern elite who envisioned a west of big plantations worked by slave labor?

Northern investors, merchants, manufacturers, promoters, and speculators envisioned rich, seemingly unlimited possibilities for economic development in the West. Their heads danced with images of railroads, mines, lumber camps, and commercial farms spreading across the continent—from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean.

FAMILY, OR SUBSISTENCE, FARMS—farms that raise crops and livestock for family use rather than for sale. In 1800, American agriculture was dominated by subsistence farms. By 1900, there were relatively few of them.
But for many more Americans, particularly white northerners, the West became the place where they could fulfill the "American Dream" of individual progress and freedom. Most ordinary working Americans never made it west, but that did not stop them from dreaming of a family homestead that would guarantee their future independence and self-sufficiency.

In the era just before and after the Civil War, large numbers of Americans believed that with cheap land, hard work, a little luck, and a lot of cooperation from Mother Nature, a pioneer family could produce almost everything it needed to survive. That meant food, clothing, shelter, and everyday household items such as soap and candles and even quilts and curtains. A family with a flourishing homestead could declare independence from the bankers, manufacturers, and merchants who controlled the economic destiny of so many other Americans. Next to the plans of enterprising northern businessmen for railroads, mines, mills, big farms, and economic development, the pioneer family farm seemed modest in its ambitions.

But the struggling frontier farmer and capitalist businessman thinking about profits in the West had something very important in common: they both had a stake in keeping slave labor out of the West. If southern-style plantations were to dominate the new West, then there would be no place for economic developers, subsistence farmers, or anybody else, for that matter. By the 1850s, northerners with very different economic agendas for expansion were uniting for free labor and against slave labor in the West.

Southern planters, on the other hand, came to see control of the West as essential to the survival of slavery. As overworked tobacco, cotton, rice, and sugar lands in Virginia, South Carolina, and other old-South states became infertile from overuse, the West, particularly the Southwest, became increasingly attractive. The fertile soil of Mississippi and Texas promised rich-commercial farms—farms that produce specialized crops, such as cotton, beef, or wheat, for national and world markets. Today, virtually all U.S. agriculture consists of commercial farms.

Homestead—a small tract of land, often one sold by the government to families or individuals at very low prices on the condition that they settle and farm it.

**Actions speak louder than words.**

"The Land of Liberty" is the title of this cartoon published in an 1847 edition of *Punch*, the British satirical weekly.

*Punch*, 1847. American Social History Project.
yields and higher profits. Even planters in the upper South, where there were too many slaves and not enough fertile land, wanted to see the slave labor system spread to the Southwest so that they could sell their excess slaves at a profit to planters there.

Planters also saw the West as a "safety valve" for the growing discontent of southern whites who did not own slaves. The plantations monopolized the best land and resources, pushing poorer whites to the margins of society. To maintain its political and economic power, the slaveholding class needed the support of poor whites. The West offered new opportunities, particularly land, for poorer whites living on the edges of the slave economy. By opening the West to southern settlement, the planter class could defuse the unhappiness of lower-class whites in the South.

The rapid continental expansion of a diversified northern market economy based on free labor made the thrust westward even more urgent for southern planters. Slavery had flourished in the North in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, particularly in the Middle Atlantic states. But in the nineteenth century, as antislavery sentiment grew, northern states abolished the system.

To prevent free states in the North from using the federal government against the interests of slaveholders, planters needed to retain equal representation in the U.S. Senate. As the nation grew westward, that meant admitting one new slave state into the Union for every free state.

For the system of slavery, it was expand or die. The "peculiar institution" could not survive politically without new slave states. Nor could it survive economically without new, more fertile lands for both slaveholding and non-slaveholding southern whites. "There is not a slaveholder in this House or out of it," one Georgia politician told Congress in the 1850s, who doesn't know "perfectly well that whenever slavery is confined within certain limits, its future existence is doomed."

---

**Why was the westward expansion of slavery essential to its survival in the United States?**

**Representation in the U.S. Senate**—each state has two senators, regardless of population. If there were more free states than slave, the balance of power in the U.S. Senate between North and South would be broken.

---

**Extending Westward Into Mexico**

Both northern and southern expansionists focused their territorial ambitions on a vast expanse of land originally settled and still claimed by Native Americans, but officially governed by Mexico. In 1835, the nation of Mexico extended well beyond its present borders with the United States. Its flag flew over a vast territory stretching from Texas to California populated by (1) Native Americans, (2) Spanish-speaking farmers, ranchers, and herdsmen (many of them of mixed European and Indian blood), and (3) increasing numbers of U.S. immigrants. In 1835, U.S. settlers in Texas (then a Mexican province) rebelled, declaring an independent republic a year later. Ten years later, in 1845, Congress approved the annexation of Texas into the Union as a slave state. Soon
after, the new territory of Oregon came into the Union as a free state, maintaining the balance of power in the U.S. Senate between North and South.

Expansionists north and south now cast their eyes on a still bigger Mexican prize—the huge territory that today includes the states of California, Arizona, Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah. Expansionist fever swept the nation from the Gulf of Mexico to the Canadian border. After a number of border skirmishes, the United States declared war against Mexico on May 13, 1846. A vocal antiwar movement could not stem the westward tide across the continent. U.S. forces quickly overwhelmed the Mexican Army. By 1848, the United States had annexed half of Mexico—1.2 million square miles of land.

The massive extension of U.S. territory at Mexico’s expense undercut thirty years of compromises that had kept the scales of power balanced between free and slave states in the U.S. Senate. The Missouri Compromise in 1820 had set a precedent. First, it admitted one slave state (Missouri) and one free state (Maine) into the Union. Second, it drew a line west from Missouri’s southern border to divide free and slave territories. But as both abolitionists and slaveholders surged into the lands newly seized from Mexico, the Missouri precedent unraveled.

The Conflict Sharpens
Almost immediately there was conflict over the spoils of the war with Mexico. In 1846, congressman David Wilmot of Pennsylvania proposed that slavery be prohibited in all the territories recently seized from Mexico. With overwhelming support from northern Congressmen, the Wilmot Proviso won approval in the U.S. House of Representatives. But the Senate ignored, then blocked its passage, and the proviso never became law. The debate over the Wilmot Proviso opened old wounds between North and South.
Those wounds were further aggravated when California, one of the territories taken from Mexico, applied in 1849 for admission into the Union as a free state. California's application threatened the even balance between free and slave states in the U.S. Senate.

But with the Compromise of 1850, North and South avoided—or more accurately, delayed—a struggle that threatened to rip the Union apart. Congress agreed to admit California as a free state, to prohibit the slave trade in Washington, D.C., where it once had flourished, yet permitted slavery in the new territories of New Mexico and Utah.

In addition, as part of the 1850 compromise, slave owners got a new Fugitive Slave Law. It denied a jury trial to anyone accused of escaping slavery, gave marshals tremendous leeway to pursue slaves into free states, and empowered the federal government to prosecute northern whites who shielded runaways. The Underground Railroad was put in jeopardy. Moreover, 

**PROVISO**—a clause in a document that imposes a restriction or condition.
bounty hunters sometimes wrongfully seized free blacks born in the North as escaped slaves. These frequent dramas between hunters and hunted shocked many and prodded the moral conscience of many northern citizens. In response, black Americans and their white allies used force to protect fugitive slaves, sometimes attacking and even killing their pursuers.

It was against this background that *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Harriet Beecher Stowe’s 1852 novel about slavery and slave hunters, appeared as a serial in an abolitionist newspaper. When eventually published as a book, it sold 300,000 copies, electrifying northern readers.
The Compromise of 1850 thus sowed the seeds of deeper divisions over slavery. The Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 further widened the split. The act was viewed by its sponsor, Senator Stephen Douglas of Illinois, as an impetus for economic development of the western Great Plains. To gain passage, however, Douglas needed the support of southern senators.

Douglas gained southern backing by agreeing to scrap the provision of the 1820 Missouri Compromise that prohibited slavery north of the Missouri Compromise line. The Kansas-Nebraska territories were in fact above the line. Under the act, the future of the territories as either “free” or “slave” would be decided in a vote by residents.

**Bloody Kansas**

Once the Kansas-Nebraska Act became law in 1854, all hell broke loose. Organized groups of both slaveholders and abolitionists migrated to Kansas. An undeclared guerrilla war erupted in what came to be called “Bloody Kansas.” With each act of intimidation, arson, and murder by both sides, emotions grew uglier and differences were settled by force.

In the end, the antislavery forces prevailed. The northern settlers in Kansas who called themselves abolitionists opposed

**Guerrilla War**—a war fought by small bands of men using hit-and-run tactics and the element of surprise.

---

**Bleeding Kansas.** A daguerreotype (an early form of photograph) taken in Topeka, Kansas Territory, during the summer of 1856, shows a free-state artillery battery.

Kansas State Historical Society.

---

**S l a v e r y , S e c t i o n a l S t r i f e , a n d W a r**
slavery on moral grounds and pushed to outlaw it everywhere in the United States. But a majority in Kansas avoided the label "abolitionist," and instead opposed slavery on the basis of narrower self-interest—which often was laced with racism. Consider this resolution adopted by Free Soilers in Pittsburg, Kansas:

If the Douglas [Kansas] Nebraska bill should ever go into peaceful operation, which we doubt, it would forever Africanize the heart of the North American continent and divide the free states of the Atlantic from the free states of the Pacific by colonies of African bondsmen and thereby exclude the free white race of the North from [Kansas and Nebraska]....

Majority antislavery sentiment in Kansas wanted the western territories kept free for white settlement only.

In May 1856, against the backdrop of "Bloody Kansas," abolitionist Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts gave a fiery speech denouncing proslavery activists in the territory of Kansas and their supporters in the U.S. Congress. The next day, while Sumner sat defenseless at his Senate desk, Congressman Preston Brooks of South Carolina beat him unconscious with a cane.

"Bloody Kansas" may have been the point beyond which further compromise was impossible. By 1854, the old two-party structure of Whigs and Democrats was virtually destroyed. Both parties were hopelessly divided by slavery into northern and southern wings. The Whig party would dissolve; the Democratic party would barely survive the 1850s, only to grow again and prosper after the Civil War.

By 1854, the Republican party was founded, which mobilized northerners around the themes of "free soil, free labor, free men." In 1856, Republicans united opposition to the extension of slavery in the West and ran John C. Frémont for president. Frémont lost nationwide, but captured eleven of the sixteen free states.

Unlike the Whig and Democratic parties, Republicans neither retreated from the issue of slavery, nor to compromise it away. They identified slavery as the issue dividing the nation. In 1855, Congressman Abraham Lincoln, who later became the first Republican president, asked, "Can we as a nation continue together permanently—forever—half slave and half free?" As the Republican party grew, southern slaveholders panicked, and sectional and political tensions increased.

**Why did "all hell break loose" with the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act?**

**Why were southern slaveholders so concerned about the rise of the Republican party?**
The Southern Press on the Brooks-Sumner Incident: “Let Us Have a Caning or Cowhiding Every Day”

In several of his speeches just days before Congressman Preston Brooks assaulted him, Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts fanned the anger of southern slaveholders and their supporters. Sumner characterized the assault on Kossuth as “malicious robbers,” “assassins,” and “criminals” guilty of “incredible atrocities.” The southern press responded with unflattering and sometimes inflammatory commentary about the senator. The hatred against Sumner continued, and even escalated, after Brooks’s assault on the Massachusetts senator. The southern press was almost unanimous in approving Brooks’s deed. Excerpted here are endorsements by three Virginia newspapers:

DOCUMENT THREE

A glorious deed! A most glorious deed! Mr. Brooks, of South Carolina, administered to Senator Sumner, a notorious abolitionist from Massachusetts, an effectual and classic caning. We are rejoiced. The only regret we feel is that Mr. Brooks did not employ a slave whip instead of a stick. We trust the ball may be kept in motion. Seward [another abolitionist senator] should catch it next.

—The Richmond Whig, 1856

DOCUMENT FOUR

We entirely concur with the Richmond Whig, that if thrashing is the only remedy by which the abolitionists can be controlled, that it will be well to give Senator William H. Seward a double dose at least every other day until it operates freely on his political bowels.

—The Petersburg Intelligencer, May 1856
Good!—good!—very good!!! The abolitionists have been suffered to run too long without collars. They must be lashed into submission. Sumner, in particular, ought to have nine-and-thirty [lashes] every morning....Senator Wilson...[is] also dying for a beating. Will not somebody take him in hand....If need be, let us have a caning or cowhiding every day.

—The RICHMOND EXAMINER, May 1856
From Dred Scott to John Brown

The divide between North and South grew more pronounced in 1857 with the Supreme Court's decision in the Dred Scott case. Dominated by southerners and their sympathizers, the Court rejected the claim to freedom of a Missouri slave named Dred Scott, whose master had taken him to Illinois and the Wisconsin territory, both of which prohibited slavery. Speaking for the Court, Chief Justice Roger Taney dismissed Scott's argument. Slaves were property, Taney said. He and the majority of justices then ruled unconstitutional all laws that restricted the free movement of property. Since Scott was property, the Court's ruling meant that no territory could interfere with the right of his slave-master to own slaves. But Taney went further: He maintained that Scott had no right to bring suit because no black person in the United States could become a citizen and enjoy "any rights which the white man was bound to respect."

The decision had staggering implications. If the Supreme Court chose to take its opinion in the Dred Scott case to its logical extreme, it could legalize slavery in every state and territory in the Union. The northern public was mortified. Proslavery forces in the South became even bolder in their demands. The Dred Scott decision had brought the nation to the brink of war.

For John Brown, a militant white abolitionist, the Dred Scott decision reaffirmed the moral necessity of taking direct action against slavery. In October 1859, Brown led a small band of black and white antislavery fighters in a bold assault on the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, [West] Virginia. Their goal was to capture a large store of weapons, liberate slaves, and then retreat to the hills. From there, they hoped to launch more raids on slave plantations and wage a guerilla war against local slaveholders.

Their plan quickly collapsed, however. Caught, tried, and hung, Brown and his men in life and death excited fierce passions in both the South and the North. Most slaveholders saw Brown as the devil in human form; most black and white abolitionists regarded Brown's raiders as righteous and moral crusaders.

---

"THE ARRAIMENT." A Harper's Weekly artist sketched John Brown and his coconspirators as they were charged with treason and murder in a Charleston, Virginia, courtroom.

Porte Crayon (David Hunter Strother), "The Arraignment."

---

SLAVERY, SECTIONAL STRIFE, AND WAR
Lincoln's Election and Southern Secession

Abraham Lincoln, the Republican leader and soon-to-be presidential candidate, still thinking that conflict between North and South could be avoided, made a point of publicly condemning John Brown's raid. But white slaveholding elite in the South saw little difference between Lincoln and Brown.

Elected president in November 1860, Lincoln was ready to make concessions to the slaveholding South. But he drew the line at the extension of slavery, a position that he had taken consistently throughout the 1850s and which he had explained in a famous speech in Peoria, Illinois, in 1856:

The whole nation is interested that the best use shall be made of these [new western] territories. We want them for homes for free white people. This they cannot be, to any considerable extent, if slavery shall be planted within them. Slave states are the places for poor white people to remove from, not to remove to. New free states are the places for poor people to go to, and better their condition. For this the nation needs these territories. [Emphasis added.]

It was a position that welcomed free whites to the West and excluded African Americans, whether slave or free. What mattered to the planters, though, was not Lincoln's support of white privilege but his uncompromising position against the expansion of slavery.

By early 1861, Lincoln's unvarying stand on excluding slavery from the new western territories triggered the secession of southern states from the Union. Most planters understood that without expansion, slavery could not survive.

The United States had reached a turning point in its history. The future of its democratic institutions, economic development, and territorial expansion would hang in the balance until the issue of slavery was resolved.

What was Lincoln's position on the West?  
Whom did he want to settle there?  
Whom did he want to exclude?  
When Lincoln was elected president, why did southern states secede?

---

WILLIAM WALKER'S "FILIBUSTERS" RELAX AFTER THE BATTLE OF GRANADA.
Slaveholders went to great extremes to expand slavery, turning to Mexico, western territories and even Central America. Supported by fifty-eight mercenaries, the Tennessee-born William Walker "invaded" Nicaragua in May 1855. Within six months he succeeded in exploiting civil unrest in the country and declared himself president. Walker's government, which opened the country to slavery, was recognized by the United States in 1856. But a year later, he was overthrown by forces financed by his former sponsor, railroad entrepreneur Cornelius Vanderbilt.

J W. Craig, Funk & Wagnalls' Illustrated Almanac, 1856.  
American Social History Project.