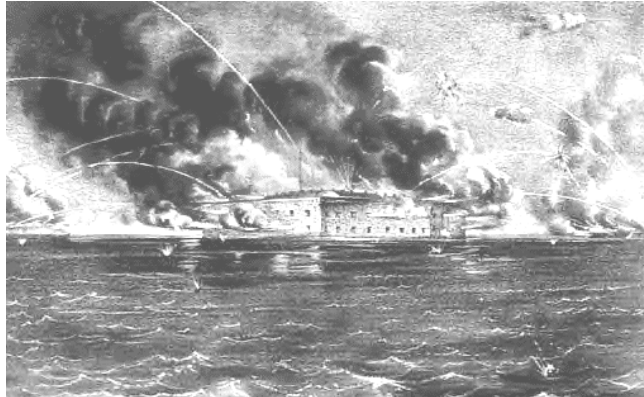


Chapter 1

The Sections

Guns from Charleston, S.C. spewed out smoke and hurled shells into the harbor fortress flying the United States flag as townspeople climbed to rooftops to cheer their heroes. Commanding the fort, Union Major Anderson, short of ammunition, waited till dawn to return fire. The time was 4:30 in the morning; the day was April 12, 1861. With this firing on Fort Sumter, the Civil War began. When at last it was over some four years later, the Union had been saved and slavery had ended at the cost of 600,000 American lives and more than four billion dollars in property damage.



What had caused the Union to split? Who was to blame for the tragedy? Was the war inevitable, or could it have been prevented by more enlightened leadership? These are some of the questions which will be raised in this unit. However, to understand anything about America's most costly war, you must first learn something about the nation which had blundered into it.

Even under British rule, Americans were not one people. Vast differences existed between the industrious merchants of Massachusetts, the proud planters of Virginia, and the independent farmers along the frontiers. They had united against a common enemy in 1776, cooperated in a war for their independence, and buried their differences while writing a constitution. These differences, papered over in compromises, were never forgotten. In the years after 1787, the sections grew further and further apart. This chapter will tell something of the distinct sections, North, South, and West which evolved and of the conflicting interests that led to the Civil War.

The North and Abbot Lawrence

By 1840, the North included Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine which had separated from Massachusetts in 1821.



Industry was rapidly developing in the North, which was by far the most industrialized part of the country. Well over half the nation's factories, far in excess of its total industrial investment, and over two-thirds of the nation's industrial products were in the North. New York City, Boston, and Philadelphia became industrial and cultural centers. Cotton, harvested in the South, was processed in the North to be made into clothes, blankets, and other such goods. Iron, mined in Pennsylvania, was formed into tools and utensils that were sold by Yankee peddlers throughout the land. Even the newspapers in the South were printed on paper made in the North. New England farms were

increasingly unproductive, and many Yankees either migrated to more fertile lands in the West or found work in the factories of the North. Merchant shipping, once the North's chief industry, increasingly gave way to manufacturing. Factory owners came to displace ship owners as the North's leading citizens.

With the completion of the Erie Canal in 1825, New York City was connected to Buffalo on Lake Erie via the Hudson and Mohawk Rivers. Thus, a great western outlet was provided for the products of Northern factories, and an easily reached Northern market was created for Western wheat, pork, and cattle. Philadelphia and other northern cities soon began building canals to the West in order to compete with New York City. By 1830 there were 1,277 miles of canals in the nation. At the end of the 1820's, however, attention was paid to a new method of transportation: the railroad. Beginning with the Baltimore and Ohio in 1820, some 2,800 miles of track had been laid in the twelve years that followed. Northern bankers extended credit to Western farmers and Southern planters. The North was the only section of the country which had the money to make these investments. Politics in the North were primarily controlled by the bankers, shippers, and wealthy manufacturers. Their economic interests, after all, corresponded to the political interests of the North; furthermore, bankers and manufacturers had the resources, time, and respect to mount and support political campaigns.

Typical of the emerging manufacturer in the North was Abbott Lawrence of Massachusetts. Born in Groton, Mass in 1792, Abbott came to Boston as a young lad with a bundle of clothes under his arm and a fortune of three dollars in his pocket. He apprenticed himself in his older brother, Amos's commercial house. By the age of 22, he had worked himself into a full partnership with Amos in A&A Lawrence & Co., and was soon recognized as one of Boston's great importers. Turning its attention more and more to production, Abbott's firm became instrumental in the manufacture of cotton goods. Abbott began by investing in the Waltham factory of Francis Lowell, and in 1830 he built a factory of his own in Lowell, Massachusetts. In 1845, he founded the textile manufacturing city that still bears the family name.

In order to protect his investments, Abbott Lawrence became involved in politics. During the mid and late 1830's he served in Congress, where he consistently supported protective tariffs on the grounds that the U.S. could otherwise not compete with cheaper foreign imports. He became a leader of the Whig Party and a friend and chief supporter of the great Congressman from Massachusetts, Daniel Webster. At one point, he was even considered as a possible Vice-Presidential candidate.

Aside from his varied economic and political interests, Abbott Lawrence concerned himself with education and reform. These interests were not unique to Abbott alone; they ran in the Lawrence family. His brother William gave generously to Groton Academy, and his nephew Amos helped establish colleges in Wisconsin and Kansas. This nephew was also known for giving money to John Brown for the raid at Harper's Ferry and for his defense afterwards. Abbott Lawrence gave \$100,000 to found the Lawrence Scientific School at Harvard, supported building model housing for Boston workers, and was an officer in the American Colonization Society which bought slaves from their owners and sent them to Africa. Abbott Lawrence died in 1855 a wealthy and well-respected manufacturer who had done much to mold the sectional identity of the North.

The South and Jimmy Hamilton

The South extended from Delaware to the Carolinas and Georgia, and included parts of Missouri, Tennessee and Kentucky. By the mid-1840's, Southerners had settled Arkansas and Mississippi, as well as Florida and Alabama, and had established themselves in Texas where they were clamoring to join the Union.

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If the factory symbolized the North, the plantation represented the Old South. Though wealthy planters were few in number (only one out of one hundred southerners owned 50 slaves or more), they were widely admired and imitated. Furthermore, because the plantation owners had the wealth, social connections, and education as well as the time to devote to politics, they dominated the political life of the South. From the stately Mt. Vernon estate of Washington's descendants to the hillbilly country of Tennessee, from the rich rice plantations of South Carolina to the snowy-white cotton fields of Alabama, the South was a section of white over black. The white men who controlled the South owned the black slaves who harvested cotton, tobacco, rice, and sugar. White men also bought those crops from planters, stored them, and sold them to northern or English merchants. The few merchants, manufacturers, and lawyers who worked in the South tended to be related to planters. Primogeniture, or the passing of one's entire estate to the eldest son, was still widely practiced. The younger sons therefore entered law, business, the clergy or the military.

The majority of Southerners were small farmers who did not own slaves. However, because they were too isolated, uninformed, or busy, they stayed out of politics, deferring in these matters to the wealthy planters.

Cotton and tobacco cultivation tended to wear out the soil to such an extent, that once proud Virginia actually lost population and influence. By 1840, the greatest plantations were to be found in South Carolina, Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi. Because of their crops' depletion of the soil, planters constantly needed virgin lands in large tracts to begin new plantations.

The rivers of the South provided the means of transporting the plantations' cotton and tobacco to market. Where the North was drawn to steam-powered railroads, the South was attracted to steam-powered boats. These riverboats, with engines mounted on their decks and propelled by giant paddle wheels, were designed to navigate shallow waters. New Orleans quickly became the largest city in the South because of the goods brought down the Mississippi River by the paddle wheel steamers. Baltimore, with its Chesapeake Bay location provided a port to the world, and Charleston, South Carolina, as well as Savannah, Georgia, which boasted a high society and rich social life, were the only other Southern cities

Typical of the southern planter aristocracy was James Hamilton of South Carolina. The son of a wealthy South Carolina planter, Jimmy Hamilton, was born in Charleston in 1786. With the benefits of riches, he was well educated and practiced law in his native city. Adding to a substantial inheritance, Jimmy became the wealthiest man in South Carolina while still in his 30's. He owned fourteen cotton plantations, worked by more than 2,000 slaves. As a slave owner he was said to be a kind and caring master, but who can rightly say how the slaves were treated day to day in the absence of their owner. It is known that Hamilton had a very hot temper and frequently engaged in the gentlemanly manner of settling disputes. He was said to have fought fourteen duels.

During the hot summer season, and during much of the rest of the year as well, Jimmy lived in Charleston. There he was a social leader, throwing lavish parties, racing horses, and leading the city's militia. He served in the War of 1812, rose to the rank of major, and then entered politics. By 1820, he had been elected mayor of Charleston and had served in the state legislature. He counted the great political spokesman of South Carolina, John C. Calhoun, as a very close friend. Between 1820 and 1830, Jimmy was

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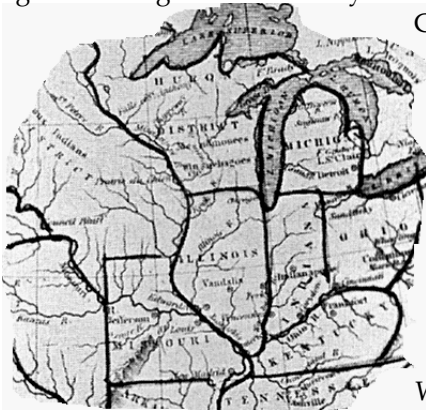
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ected to Congress repeatedly as a States Rights Free Trader. He was particularly critical of protective tariffs. In 1832-3, James Hamilton served as governor of South Carolina. During that time, he was so supportive of the states Nullification Act that he was put in command of 27,000 state troops to resist the Federal government's attempts to collect its tariff.

In the late 1830's Hamilton moved to Texas where he became a political leader. In 1841 he represented the Republic of Texas in Europe and succeeded in getting England and France to grant Texas diplomatic recognition. In 1857, four years before the guns of his native city thundered the opening of the Civil War, James Hamilton died. There is little doubt about which side he would have supported.

The West and Tom Lincoln

By 1840, the West included parts of Missouri, Tennessee, and Kentucky, as well as all of Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio. Settlers were eyeing Iowa, which became a state in 1846, and began looking beyond the Mississippi River to Minnesota, Oregon, Texas, and of course, California.



The West

Along the furthest fringes of the West, beyond the Mississippi River, lay the frontier. But even the more settled and developed areas were raw and wild. The West had no large cities and no major highways. Its main arteries of transportation were the mighty rivers, the Mississippi and the Ohio, and it was on those great rivers that the West's newly rising cities: Cincinnati, Louisville, St. Louis, and Memphis, would appear. Westerners desperately needed roads to connect themselves to the East, but they had no money with which to finance them. The North was the West's natural outlet for its corn, wheat, pork, and beef, and the primary source for needed manufactured goods. The East was also the old home of most of the new settlers, and as civilization spread westward, the new residents tended to re-establish Northern

society. Westerners generally opposed slavery and its extension into their domain. For one thing, the use of slaves was unprofitable in growing wheat, corn, and barely. Though agriculture was the main occupation of westerners, they also eagerly sought to become more industrialized.

Most Westerners felt a closer sense of kinship with the North, from where they had originated, than they did with the South. They read the books and admired the artists popular in the North, and they corresponded with the relatives they had left behind. The West thereby became tied to the North by bonds of sentiment, tradition, and economics. As the section became more civilized, its economic ties to the North grew in importance and drew the two sections closer together. In its more raw and less cultivated areas, however, the West resembled the rural and undeveloped parts of the South.

Finally, unhindered by an entrenched ruling class, western politicians frequently spoke the language of democracy. They opposed special privilege, favored such reforms as universal manhood suffrage, and often expressed distrust for the southern planter and the northern manufacturer.

Characteristic of the small farmers who inhabited the West was Thomas Lincoln. Born in 1778 in Rockingham County, Virginia, Tom's father moved his family to Kentucky where he joined his friend Daniel Boone in 1782. Having little time, inclination, or opportunity for book learning, Tom became a carpenter and cabinet-maker and hired out his labor as well. Around the turn of the century, he took to farming on a 238 acre tract of land in Hardin County, Kentucky. There in 1805 he got his first hard look at

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slavery when he was selected as one of four patrollers to seize slaves roving without permits. The following year, young Tom took himself a bride, Nancy Hanks. In 1807 came a child, a little girl, and soon thereafter Tom bought a second farm of 348 acres. On the new land, Tom found time to build a cabin of logs from the timber he cut. The floor was packed down dirt. One door and one window provided entry and light. In 1809 another child came, this time a boy. Three years later another baby boy was born but died within a few days.

Tom worked hard and had a reputation for paying his debts. One year he was appointed a road surveyor, a serious job for transportation conscious westerners. Meanwhile, slavery was on the rise in Kentucky and Tom Lincoln was not in favor of the institution. Thus in 1816, he decided to move to Indiana partly on account of slavery. Hacking a path through the wild raw country, the Lincoln family slowly made its way to Little Pigeon Creek where they erected a pole-shed and began clearing the land they had squatted on. It would be years before Tom could afford to buy his 160 acre plot from the Federal government for 320 hard-earned dollars. In the meantime, Tom and his son had to chop down trees, clear the underbrush, and plow the virgin land. Their food was mostly game, shot in the nearby woods, as well as nuts and wild fruits.

In 1818, the milk sick came to the clearing. Soon Nancy Lincoln was stricken and died. Along with a friend, a grieving husband and his son made a rough-hewn coffin in which to bury this hard-working wife and mother. A year later, Tom headed back to Kentucky alone, and there, within a few weeks, he found and married the widow Sarah Johnson. The need for a helpmate, as well as a mother for a growing family, was overwhelming on the frontier farm. With three children of her own, Sarah was affectionate to Tom's children as well, and they warmed to her easily. She taught them to read and write, and they grew up well-prepared for their own futures.

Tom's daughter, Sarah, married a neighborhood boy in Illinois after yet another move, but she died in childbirth within a year. Tom's boy grew in knowledge; became a storekeeper, a lawyer, a frontier politician, and eventually became the sixteenth president of the United States. That momentous event came nine years after Tom Lincoln was laid to rest in the ground of his Coles County, Illinois, farm.

Suggested Student Exercises:

1. Which of the sections, North, South, or West, would have the greatest need or for each of the following, and why:
 - a. Roads and canals built at the expense of the national government?
 - b. A tariff (tax) to protect its industries from competition with cheap foreign articles?
 - c. Uniform currency (money of equal value) in all the states, controlled by wealthy bankers?
 - d. Free land for all who want it?

2. Give arguments for or against each of the above, based on the interest of the dominant personality of the section you have been assigned to represent..

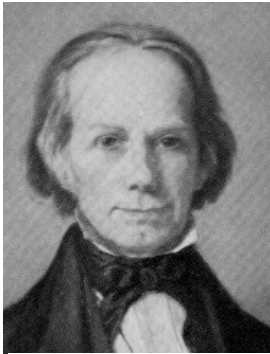
3. Be prepared to give arguments for or against each of the following, based upon what you think is morally right, except when you are defending the interest of your section's dominant character.
 - a. A strong law prohibiting the spread of slavery. (support by West)
 - b. A law guaranteeing Native Americans the right to remain on the lands occupied by their tribes.(support by North)
 - c. A law for a nine hour day in the factories (support by South)

3. Suggested class activity:

Meet in groups by section. Elect a leader for your group. Prepare arguments to protect your section's economic interests (a.-d.). Present these arguments orally in class, and argue against the groups that disagree with you. Meet with other groups (your leader may assign two or three students to go to each of the other groups) to exchange views and make deals. Then vote for moral issues (3 a.-c.) The section that succeeds in passing most of its proposals is the winner!

Epilogue: The American System

Was it possible for the sections to compromise their conflicting interest and work together to benefit the entire nation? Henry Clay of Kentucky believed it was. First elected to Congress in 1810 as a staunch nationalist, Clay's vision for over forty years in public service put national interest ahead of local. While other great Congressmen, like John Calhoun and Daniel Webster, generally championed the interests of their section, Clay championed the cause of the Union.



Henry Clay

As early as 1816, Clay proposed to unite the Union with a program that essentially resurrected Alexander Hamilton's proposals. Dressing them in new clothes, Clay called them the American System.

Henry Clay's American system contained four basic elements: western lands, roads, and canals, a protective tariff, and the Bank of the United States. This is how it would work:

The money the Federal government received from a revenue tariff, sales of western lands, and the profits from the be used to build roads and canals to unite the sections.

As Clay saw it, the tariff would protect American industry, allowing America to become strong and self sufficient, while the roads and canals would ensure the South and West an outlet to the markets in the North. The South and West, meanwhile, would be able to use the roads to transport goods manufactured in the North. Meanwhile, the Bank would provide a stable and uniform currency, thereby making it easier to do business in all parts of the country.

In the afterglow of victory against England in the War of 1812, parts of the American system were enacted into law. In 1816, Congress passed a protective tariff, re-established the Bank of the United States, and earmarked money for a national road from the Potomac River to Ohio. Thereafter, the American system faced difficult times. Holding to a strict interpretation of the elastic clause, President Madison vetoed other ambitious road building projects in 1817. In 1830, President Andrew Jackson vetoed the building of the Mayesville Road, through Henry Clay's Kentucky for essentially the same reasons given by Madison. As a result, states took to building their own roads and canals. The most notable of these projects was the Erie Canal linking the Hudson River to the Great Lakes and establishing New York City as the most important port in the Nation.

Other parts of the American system were defeated at various times. After 1816, the South, realizing it would never benefit from tariffs, began to oppose protection. By 1828, South Carolina threatened to declare all protective tariffs null, void and unenforceable within its borders. In 1832, President Jackson

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vetoed a bill to re-charter the Bank of the United States. In the meantime, fearing their section would lose population, Connecticut's Henry Foote, unsuccessfully offered a resolution that would stop the sale of western land. Years later, Abraham Lincoln was elected President on a platform essentially similar to the American System with the single addition of a promise to prevent the extension of slavery. In response, South Carolina led ten other states out of the Union.

Suggested Student Exercises:

1. Do you think that the North, South and West had an obligation to support the American system even if elements conflicted with the interests of their section. Why or why not?