**Unit 5: Dividing a Nation Guided Reading Packet**

***SSUSH8 Explore the relationship between slavery, growing north-south divisions, and westward expansion that led to the outbreak of the Civil War.***

***a. Explain the impact of the Missouri Compromise on the admission of states from the Louisiana Territory.***

**Impact of the Missouri Compromise**

The Louisiana Territory encompassed a wide swath of land in the middle of the North American continent. Thomas Jefferson purchased the land from France in 1803. By mid-century, the population in portions of the territory had increased dramatically and their next step was to apply for statehood through the United States Congress. Missouri was one such territory, primed for acceptance as a full and equal state. At the time of its application, however, there was already a balanced number of free and slave states. The sectional divisions of the nation were demonstrated in the hard fought negotiations over whether **Missouri** would enter the Union as a slave or free state.

The admission of Missouri as a new state is an excellent illustration of how Congress sought to maintain a “perfect equilibrium” between the number of free and slave states. In 1819, right before Missouri applied for admission to the United States, there were 11 free states and 11 slave states. The balance was politically important. The North had a larger population, which gave that region an advantage through the proportional representation of the House of Representatives. The Senate, however, was evenly balanced between free and slave states because each state had equal representation in that chamber. For a bill to become a law, it had to be passed by both bodies of the legislature. Therefore, the balanced Senate prevented either region of the country from mandating policy concerning the contentious slavery issue.

Slavery was already a common practice in the Missouri territory that was applying to become a state, which concerned the Northern Senators. If Missouri came into the United States as a slave state, it would tip the balance of the Senate in favor of the South. Another issue that concerned the North about Missouri’s application for statehood was the fact that it was the first territory from the region of the Louisiana Purchase that was prepared to enter the Union as a state. Missouri’s slave status would set a precedent for future states forming from that area. The South also worried about attempts by Northern Senators to limit slavery within the new state. Debate over Missouri’s admission was heated in the Congress and lasted for months. **Henry Clay**, a leading Congressman from Kentucky, is credited with putting together a compromise that resolved the issue. A key component of his plan hinged on the fact that **Maine** had also petitioned the Senate for admission to the Union. Maine had previously been part of Massachusetts and was slated to become a separate state. Clay’s **Missouri Compromise** included the following provisions: First, Maine and Missouri would both enter the Union. Maine would enter as a free state and Missouri would enter as a slave state, thus preserving the balance in the Senate. Second, the rest of the Louisiana Territory would be subject to a geographic division at the **36⁰, 30”** line of latitude (Missouri’s southern border). Slavery would be prohibited north of the line, except in Missouri. Slavery would remain untouched south of the line. The Missouri Compromise passed both bodies of Congress and James Monroe signed it into law in March 1820. The seeds of sectionalism were beginning to sprout.

**Document Analysis** **1**

***b. Examine James K. Polk’s presidency in the fulfillment of Manifest Destiny including the Texas annexation and Oregon.***

**Presidency of James K. Polk**

James K. Polk became the eleventh President of the United States after winning a close election in 1844. Once in office, Polk added to the nation's western lands by annexing **Texas** and part of **Oregon**. Many Americans believed that expansion across the continent was the destiny of the United States. Others worried that the bold acquisition of land would lead to war. The actions of James K. Polk during his presidency did both- he added territory to the United States and fought a war with Mexico over expansion.

Americans have always looked westward. As the coastal plains filled, colonists arriving from Europe sought unclaimed land in the backcountry of each colony. After the French and Indian War, settlers crossed the Appalachians and entered the Tennessee and Ohio River Basins. After the American Revolution, settlers began to fill the Ohio Valley and moved out into western Georgia and Alabama. The Louisiana Purchase in 1803 doubled the size of America's land holdings and brought new opportunities to move westward into the Mississippi River Valley. Florida, the last piece of foreign held territory in the east was acquired in 1819 from Spain. By 1850, Americans had settled California, Oregon, and Washington on the Pacific coast. The process of settlement took 150 years to reach the Appalachians, 50 years to reach the Mississippi River and another 30 years to settle the Pacific states. In 230 years, Americans had come to dominate the continent. Americans believed such rapid expansion must have been a result of divine favor referred to as Manifest Destiny.

**Manifest Destiny** was a phrase coined to describe the belief that America was to expand and settle the entire continent of North America. The phrase originated in 1845 when John L. O'Sullivan, a newspaper editor, wrote that it was America's "Manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions."

The center of population growth in the years after the War of 1812 was in the future states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and northern Kentucky. In this region three factors encouraged families in the eastern states to move into the Midwest. First, American Indians were removed from the region. Second, land speculators acquired large tracts of land and were eager to sell. Third, as the national infrastructure moved westward it was easier to migrate west. Although interest rates on land were high, so were grain prices throughout the 1830s and 1840s. Fertile soil and the development of better plows and harvesters allowed farmers to produce large crop yields, which increased the allure of westward expansion.

Westward expansion was a pivotal issue in the 1844 Presidential election. Texas was not a state at the time and was a region heavily entrenched in slavery. Many Northerners were opposed to the annexation of Texas due to the slavery issue and its political implications. The Democratic Party struggled with the issue and was divided over which candidate to nominate to be their party's representative in the election. Former President Martin Van Buren of New York was opposed to annexation. The Southern members of the Democratic Party supported John C. Calhoun of South Carolina for the nomination. Calhoun was in favor of slavery and the immediate annexation of Texas. The nominating convention was at an impasse between the two Democrats until the Party finally nominated **James K. Polk** from Tennessee. He was a true expansionist who believed in Manifest Destiny and wanted to annex Texas and take claim of Oregon and California. His campaign slogan, "Fifty-four Forty or Fight!" was a reference to the latitudinal boundary between the Oregon Territory and Russian held Alaska. Polk's opponent in the election was the famous Whig candidate, Henry Clay of Kentucky. Clay's position on annexation of Texas was uncertain, as he preferred to promote his American System agenda of internal improvements rather than weigh in on the expansion issue. As a result, the New York wing of the Whig Party abandoned Clay and instead supported the anti-slavery Liberty Party in the election. The 36 New York Electoral College votes proved decisive in James K. Polk's 170-105 victory.

The Democratic victory in 1844 was thought to be a signal from the public that annexation of Texas was the desire of the people. Texas was annexed and when Polk took office it was up to him to deal with Mexico's reaction to the American claim to land they viewed as their own. Polk also faced a decision about how to fulfill the campaign promise of acquiring Oregon that was also claimed by Great Britain. Since 1818, Great Britain and the United States had essentially shared claim to Oregon through a treaty that was signed between the two nations calling for joint occupation. It was likely that Polk would have to fight **Mexico** to resolve the southern border dispute in Texas and also fight Great Britain to secure claim to the **Oregon territory**. Fighting Great Britain for a third time was the least appealing option. Mexico had recently won its independence from Spain in 1821 after hundreds of years of occupation. Given Mexico's new status and uncertain leadership, Britain would be the less desirable opponent in a conflict over expansion. Polk ultimately negotiated with Great Britain concerning Oregon in an attempt to avoid armed conflict over the region. Instead of acquiring the entire Oregon territory to the 54⁰ 40" line, a compromise was reached. The Oregon territory would be divided and the northern section would remain in Great Britain's possession and the southern section would be annexed by the United States. The Senate ratified the **Oregon Treaty** in 1846, the same year the United States went to war with Mexico over Texas. Polk had fulfilled the Manifest Destiny of the United States to span the North American continent from the Atlantic to the Pacific coastlines.

***c. Analyze the impact of the Mexican War on growing sectionalism.***

**Mexican-American War**

The United States, under the leadership of President James K. Polk, took Texas into the Union in 1845. As a result, war broke out between the United States and Mexico over differing frontier claims in Texas. The war proved to be swift and decisive as Mexico lost not only their land claim in Texas, but also all of California and New Mexico to the United States. The victory in the Mexican War soon pitted the North and South against one another as the United States wrestled with the slavery issue in the newly acquired lands. Sectionalism became even more bitter and the United States was quickly headed down a path towards Civil War.

The **Mexican War** began after the United States annexed Texas and insisted that the new border with Mexico was the Rio Grande River. Mexico, however, insisted that the border was the Nueces River (150 miles north of the Rio Grande). In addition, Mexico believed that the United States had set its sights on the Mexican territories of New Mexico and California. The United States had twice attempted to purchase the territories from Mexico. When President Polk sent American soldiers under the command of **General Zachary Taylor** south of the Nueces River to the banks of the Rio Grande River, the Mexican Army attacked Taylor's cavalry patrols. The incident was portrayed differently in each country. The Mexican version emphasized Taylor as having invaded Mexican land south of the Nueces River. The American version emphasized Mexico's army as having invaded American land north of the Rio Grande River.

Polk used the incident to justify war in his message to Congress on May 11, 1846. The Declaration of War was overwhelmingly approved two days later. As the war developed, the United States attacked on two fronts. First, US forces occupied California. Second, a large American force invaded Mexico from Texas. Mexican forces were defeated and the United States occupied much of northern Mexico. As General Taylor's northern force advanced south, a second force landed at Vera Cruz led by **General Winfield Scott**. Scott's forces advanced overland from the coast, attacked, and ultimately captured Mexico City on August 7, 1846.

As the war was coming to a quick conclusion, Nicholas Trist was sent by President Polk to represent the United States in meetings with the Mexican government to end the war. Trist found the political situation in Mexico chaotic and worked out a peace treaty with members of the Mexican government other than the President Santa Anna. The **Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo** was negotiated and signed in early 1848. The provisions of the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo included:

1. The Rio Grande River would be the recognized border between the United States and Mexico.

2. Mexico ceded the territories of California and New Mexico (eventually becoming all or parts of seven states). The area became known as the Mexican Cession.

3. The United States paid $15 million to the Mexican government and assumed the claims of American citizens against the Mexican government.

**Document Analysis 2**



**Wilmot Proviso**

When the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo was introduced in the United States for ratification, it was immediately caught up in the sectional tension between pro-slavery and anti-slavery factions. Pennsylvania Representative **David Wilmot** introduced legislation in the House of Representatives that boldly declared "neither slavery nor involuntary servitude shall ever exist" in lands won in the Mexican War. Wilmot and other Northern representatives had grown tired of President Polk and his allies’ continual block of internal improvement bills in the House and were worried that the extension of slavery into California would harm free labor. The **Wilmot Proviso** passed through the House, where northern states held the majority. However, the Proviso failed in the Senate, where the division between free and slave states was equal. The issue of whether to allow or prohibit slavery in new states remained unresolved and **sectionalism** was growing more intense. The political differences between the northern and southern sections of the country over slavery in the territories were an introduction to the violent acts that would soon lead to full-scale war.

***d. Explain how the Compromise of 1850 arose out of territorial expansion and population growth.***

**California**

In 1848, settlers discovered gold just north of Sacramento, California. The following year, gold seekers came from all over the world as part of the **California Gold Rush of 1849**. These new arrivals came to be known as "49ers," and they served to rapidly increase California's population. This growth produced a need for stable government almost overnight. When the debate over slavery prevented Congress from organizing the territory, Californians took matters into their own hands by drafting and approving their own constitution. Finally, thanks to the **Compromise of 1850**, Congress admitted California as a **free state** on September 9, 1850.

**Compromise of 1850**

The Compromise of 1850 was four years in the making. Northern Whigs and Southern Democrats engaged in heated attacks on one another over the status of slavery in the Mexican Cession. Then the discovery of gold in California in 1848 rapidly increased the population of the territory past the 100,000 citizens necessary for statehood. As a part of their plan of statehood, Californians drew up a state constitution that outlawed slavery in the proposed state.

Southern politicians objected to California's admission as a free state on two points. First, Southerners argued that the exclusion of slavery in the territory violated the Missouri Compromise (the compromise line would split the state). Second, Northerners already controlled the House of Representatives and Southerners feared the admission of California would upset the balance of free and slave states in the Senate. Northern and Southern representatives argued bitterly over California.

Henry Clay, who diffused tensions previously with the Missouri Compromise in 1820 and a compromise tariff in 1833, finally presented a plan that he hoped would solve this heated impasse. Clay became known as the **"Great Compromiser"** due to his pivotal role in negotiating resolutions to challenging political issues. Concerning the present debate over California's admission to the Union, tension was continuing to escalate between the North and the South. Debates between **John C. Calhoun**, representing the Southern position, and **Daniel Webster,** representing the Northern position, raged over the bill. Numerous votes were taken, but the extremists on both sides prevented passage of the bill. Clay and Calhoun both left the Senate too ill to continue, as they were quite advanced in age.

In Clay and Calhoun's absence, Senator **Stephen A. Douglas** of Illinois and Daniel Webster of Massachusetts worked to split the proposal into separate bills so that Congressmen could vote on each separately. The five bills then moved through the Congress individually and were ultimately passed. Collectively, the five laws were known as the Compromise of 1850. The provisions of the compromise included:

1. The state of New Mexico would be established by carving its borders from the state of Texas.

2. New Mexico's voters would determine whether the state would permit or prohibit slavery.

3. California would be admitted as a free state.

4. All citizens of the United States, regardless of region, would be required to apprehend runaway slaves and return them to their owners. Those who failed to do so would be fined or imprisoned.

5. The slave trade would be abolished in the District of Columbia, but the practice of slavery would be allowed to continue there.

Despite the Compromise of 1850's passage, sectional tension over slavery was eased for only a short time. The expansion of US territory to the Pacific Ocean had happened quickly and was viewed by many to be the country's Manifest Destiny. As populations of western areas grew to the level of statehood, the issue of slavery had to be negotiated through compromise due to the intense sectionalism of the period.

***e. Evaluate the Kansas-Nebraska Act, the failure of popular sovereignty,*Scott v. Sanford*, John Brown’s Raid on Harper’s Ferry, and the election of 1860 as events leading to the Civil War.***

**Kansas-Nebraska Act**

The rich farmlands west of Missouri beckoned families and investors. In 1852 and 1853, Congress considered creating the territories of Kansas and Nebraska for settlement. The legislation caught the attention of Southern Congressmen who refused to consider the creation of the new territories unless the provision was made for Southerners to bring slaves into the region. Northern representatives argued that the expansion of slavery into the new territories was a violation of the Missouri Compromise, as the land was above the provision line set in 1820 to divide slave and free states.

In 1854, Congress again took up the issue of slavery in proposed states and territories. Stephen A. Douglas included a provision using **popular sovereignty** (rule by the people), which would allow the citizens of the territory to decide whether or not slavery would be allowed. Southerners hoped that by allowing the people to decide the issue that more slave states could be added. After a great deal of rancorous debate in both Houses, the bill was approved and became known as the Kansas-Nebraska Act.

The passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act had several effects. First, the law virtually repealed the Missouri Compromise of 1820 and the Compromise of 1850. Settlers in all new territories would have the right to decide for themselves whether their new home would be a free or slave state. The previous compromises that established policy concerning where free and slave states would form in future territories were dismissed by the more democratic sounding approach of popular sovereignty.

The Kansas-Nebraska Act's second effect was that pro- and antislavery groups both hurried into Kansas in an attempt to create voting majorities there. Antislavery abolitionists came from eastern states; proslavery settlers came mainly from neighboring Missouri. Some of these proslavery supporters settled in Kansas, but many more stayed there only long enough to vote for slavery and then returned home to Missouri. Proslavery voters elected a legislature ready to make Kansas a slave state. Abolitionists then elected a rival Kansas government, wrote an antislavery constitution, established a different capital city, and raised an army. Proslavery Kansans reacted by raising their own army. Violence between the two sides created warlike conditions that led to the territory being referred to as **"Bleeding Kansas."** Popular sovereignty had failed.

The third effect of the Kansas-Nebraska Act was that it split existing political parties into regional factions and gave rise to the new **Republican Party**. The new party developed after President Pierce signed the Kansas-Nebraska Act into law. The common cause that attracted supporters to the Republican Party was opposition to slavery. The groups that came together to make the new party included members of the **Free-Soil Party**, whose main platform opposed the expansion of slavery. Disgruntled followers of the existing political parties, the **antislavery Whigs** and **antislavery Democrats**, joined the Free-Soilers in creating the new Republican Party. President Pierce's inability to control the violence in Kansas led to his defeat in the election of 1856. The Republicans were gaining momentum. So too was **Abraham Lincoln**, who was soon to be the Republican Party's star candidate.

**Scott v. Sanford**

Another event that led the country toward Civil War was the Supreme Court ruling in Scott v. Sanford. Often referred to as the **Dred Scott decision**, the 1857 ruling settled a lawsuit in which a slave named Dred Scott claimed he should be a free man. Scott had lived with his master in slave states and in free states and believed he had been held illegally in the free states. The Supreme Court rejected Scott's claim, ruling that no enslaved or free Black could be a citizen of the United States. The Court said Congress could not prohibit slavery in federal territories. Thus, the Court found that popular sovereignty and the Missouri Compromise of 1820 were unconstitutional.

The Dred Scott decision gave slavery the protection of the United States Constitution. In essence, nothing short of a constitutional amendment could end slavery - an event not likely to occur. Proslavery Americans welcomed the Court's ruling as proof they had been right during their long struggle against abolitionists. In contrast, abolitionists convinced many state legislatures to declare the Dred Scott decision not binding within their state borders. The new Republican Party said that if its candidate were elected President in 1860, he would appoint a new Supreme Court that would reverse the Dred Scott ruling.

**Document Analysis 3**

*“Until mankind recognizes that all men have the right to be born free, society will never warrant being called civilized. No matter what color a man’s skin, he is entitled to liberty, and if it takes blood to gain it, so be it!”*

Source: John Brown

**John Brown’s Raid**

Violence over slavery escalated as the political maneuvering on the subject was not producing a lasting policy. John Brown's Raid is another event that led to the Civil War. **John Brown**, an ardent abolitionist, decided to fight slavery with violence and killing. In 1856, believing he was chosen by God to end slavery, Brown commanded family members and other abolitionists to attack proslavery settlers in Kansas killing five men. Leaving Kansas, Brown decided to begin a slave war in the east by seizing arms and munitions and leading slaves in rebellion. In 1859, John Brown led a group of White and Black men in a raid on the federal armory at **Harper's Ferry, Virginia** (in modern-day West Virginia) in hopes of arming slaves for a rebellion. The raid failed and US Marines, led by Colonel Robert E. Lee, captured Brown. Eventually, Brown was convicted of treason against the state of Virginia and executed by hanging. At first, many Northerners and Southerners were horrified by Brown's actions. Eventually, many Northerners came to respect what Brown had done, viewing him as a martyr for the abolitionist movement. Southerners were angered. Many in the South viewed Brown as a terrorist killer, a man that sought to incite a slave rebellion that would have led to the slaughter of hundreds of men, women, and children. Vocal Northern support of Brown's actions did little to calm an anxious South. Invoking the specter of the Nat Turner Rebellion nearly 20 years earlier, southern states began to strengthen and train their state militias. A war between the North and the South was becoming a real possibility.

**Document Analysis 4**

*“The Election (of Abraham Lincoln) was not the Cause [of secession] it was but the last feather which you know breaks the Camel’s back. Sectional hostility manifested in hostile legislation by states and raids of organized bodies sustained by Contributions . . . of northern Society furnish to us sufficient cause. . . .”*

Source: letter that Jefferson Davis wrote to George Lunt on January 17, 1861

**Abraham Lincoln and the Election of 1860**

The trigger that set the **Civil War** in motion was the victory of the Republican candidate, **Abraham Lincoln**, in the **election of 1860**. The sectionalism of the 1850s led to a split within the Democratic Party. The Northern Democrats nominated Stephen Douglas of Illinois and the Southern Democrats nominated John Breckenridge of Kentucky to be the nominees in the 1860 Presidential election. Some of the old Whigs who did not support either the Democrats or the Republican candidate formed the Constitutional Union Party and nominated John Bell of Tennessee as their candidate. The field was full with four candidates for the November election. Their positions on slavery were important to the outcome of the election. Lincoln believed that slavery should not be allowed to expand to the territories, but he would not interfere in states where it already existed. Douglas believed popular sovereignty should be the policy regarding slavery. Breckenridge viewed slaves as property and therefore believed that the government could not deny citizens of their property regardless of their location. Bell did not commit to a position regarding slavery but maintained that he was most interested in the union of the United States. The final votes in the election fell along regional lines with Lincoln carrying the more populated North and thus the Electoral College.

Upon Lincoln's election, South Carolina voted to **secede** (separate from) the United States. Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and then Texas followed South Carolina in their break from the United States. These Lower South states were the original seven members of the **Confederate States of America**. Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina also joined the Confederacy. All of the events of the 1850s contributed to the outbreak of Civil War, but it was the election of Lincoln that triggered its actual beginning.

**Document Analysis 5**

