The Antebellum Era and The Causes of the Civil War

Topics of Discussion

I. The long-term preconditions that made the Civil War a possibility?

II. The mid-term precipitants that turned the prospects of political breakdown and secession from a possibility to a probability?

III. The short-term triggers that turned the probability into a certainty?
The Antebellum Era and The Causes of the Civil War

I. Long-term Preconditions

A. Focus on the Founding period and the establishment of the new federal government: 1776 to 1803.

B. Some Questions:

1. Was a divide between the North and the South evident during this period?
2. If so, what divided the regions?
3. What conditions made Civil War a possibility in the future?
The Antebellum Era and The Causes of the Civil War

I. Long-term Preconditions

The Founding Fathers and Slavery

Historiography

Orthodox

Revisionist

Post-Revisionist
The Antebellum Era and The Causes of the Civil War

I. Long-term Preconditions

C. The nation was born divided on the issue that caused the Civil War -- slavery

1. Northern states gradually abolished slavery during the American Revolution

2. Southern states maintained their slave systems after the Revolution
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1790</th>
<th></th>
<th>1860</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>United States</strong></td>
<td>697,897</td>
<td>(17.8%)</td>
<td>3,953,760</td>
<td>(12.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>North regional share</strong></td>
<td>40,370</td>
<td>(2.1%)</td>
<td>64†</td>
<td>(0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>South</strong></td>
<td>657,527</td>
<td>(33.5%)</td>
<td>3,953,696</td>
<td>(32.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>South regional share</strong></td>
<td>94.2%</td>
<td></td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Upper South</strong></td>
<td>521,169</td>
<td>(32.0%)</td>
<td>1,530,229</td>
<td>(22.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Upper South regional share</strong></td>
<td>74.7%</td>
<td></td>
<td>38.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Deep South</strong></td>
<td>136,358</td>
<td>(41.1%)</td>
<td>2,423,467</td>
<td>(44.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Deep South regional share</strong></td>
<td>19.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td>61.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**UPPER SOUTH**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>1790</th>
<th></th>
<th>1860</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delaware</td>
<td>8,887</td>
<td>(15.0%)</td>
<td>1,798</td>
<td>(1.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>103,036</td>
<td>(32.2%)</td>
<td>87,189</td>
<td>(12.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.C.</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
<td>3,185</td>
<td>(4.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>293,427</td>
<td>(39.2%)</td>
<td>490,865</td>
<td>(30.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>100,572</td>
<td>(25.5%)</td>
<td>331,059</td>
<td>(33.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>11,830</td>
<td>(16.2%)</td>
<td>225,483</td>
<td>(19.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
<td>114,931</td>
<td>(9.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>3,417</td>
<td>(9.5%)</td>
<td>275,719</td>
<td>(24.8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DEEP SOUTH**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>1790</th>
<th></th>
<th>1860</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>107,094</td>
<td>(43.0%)</td>
<td>402,406</td>
<td>(57.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>29,264</td>
<td>(35.5%)</td>
<td>462,198</td>
<td>(43.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
<td>61,745</td>
<td>(44.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
<td>111,115</td>
<td>(25.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
<td>435,080</td>
<td>(45.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>16,544*</td>
<td>(51.6%)</td>
<td>331,726</td>
<td>(46.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
<td>436,631</td>
<td>(55.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
<td>182,566</td>
<td>(30.2%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* In 1785; not included in regional or national totals.
† Includes 18 lifetime "apprentices" in New Jersey.
The Antebellum Era and The Causes of the Civil War

I. Long-term Preconditions

D. There were revolutionary attempts to limit slavery’s expansion into the West -- but these ended up focusing only on the Northwest

1. Thomas Jefferson’s failed 1784 attempt to outlaw slavery in all U.S. territories

2. The Northwest Ordinance (1787)

3. Slavery expanded in the southwest.
The Antebellum Era and The Causes of the Civil War

I. Long-term Preconditions

E. Even though the North and South were divided, they compromised on slavery at the Constitutional Convention

1. 3/5 clause
2. The “fugitive slave” clause
3. The international slave trade provision
4. Both sides saw slavery as a “necessary evil” -- thus “slave” and “slavery” don’t appear in the Constitution
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II. Mid-term Precipitants

A. Growing Divide Between North and South after 1800

A1. Transportation Revolution

A2. Communications Revolution

A3. Market Revolution
The Antebellum Era and The Causes of the Civil War

II. Mid-term Precipitants

A1. Transportation Revolution

1. Roads
2. Canals
3. Steamboats
4. Railroads

-- Much of this was made possible By the invention of the steam engine

1769 – patented by James Watt
1807 – Robert Fulton employs on first commercially successful steamboat
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II. Mid-term Precipitants
The Antebellum Era and The Causes of the Civil War

II. Mid-term Precipitants

A2. Communication Revolution

The Telegraph

January 6, 1838 Samuel Morse first successfully tested the device and on February 8 he publicly demonstrated it to a scientific committee at the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
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II. Mid-term Precipitants
The Antebellum Era and The Causes of the Civil War

II. Mid-term Precipitants

A3. Market Revolution (1815-1846)

1. Old Society
   a. rural
   b. agricultural
   c. isolated societies
   d. self-sufficient
   e. local markets
The Antebellum Era and The Causes of the Civil War

II. Mid-term Precipitants

A3. Market Revolution (1815-1846)

2. New Developing Society
   a. rural--urban
   b. agricultural--industrial--investment
   c. merging societies
   d. interdependence
   e. national--international markets
Lowell, Massachusetts, 1832
The Antebellum Era and The Causes of the Civil War

II. Mid-term Precipitants
B. Comparisons Made by James McPherson

a. Northern states become increasingly “modern”
   1) greater urbanization (24)
   2) fewer people involved in agricultural production (24)
   3) more mechanized production (24)
   4) more investment in manufacturing (24)
   5) positive attitude of North toward “change” or “modernization” (24)

b. Southern states become increasingly suspicious of change
   1) praise farming (25)
   2) oppose manufacturing (24-25)
   3) oppose urbanization (24-25)
   4) lag in literacy (27)
   5) negative attitude toward “change” or “modernization” (25)
C. The Growth of the United States and the Resulting conflict over slavery

C1. 1803 Louisiana Purchase

C2. 1820 Missouri Compromise -- Tallmadge Amendments, Gridlock, Compromise

C3. Critical Points Pre-1830s
The Antebellum Era and The Causes of the Civil War

II. Mid-term Precipitants

C3. Critical Points Pre-1830s:

Slavery Struggle between 1803-1830s Remains a Political & Economic Debate . . . .

Not primarily a Moral Debate.

Abolitionists are few in Number . . . .

Apologists defending the Moral Good of Slavery are few in Number . . . .
C3. Critical Points Pre-1830s:

Most white Southerners don’t own enslaved people

Role of Slavery:

- Labor
- Economic
- Order
The Antebellum Era and The Causes of the Civil War

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Slaves in 1860</th>
<th>Slaveholders in 1860</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 slave</td>
<td>77,333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 slaves</td>
<td>46,165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 slaves</td>
<td>34,859</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 slaves</td>
<td>28,979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 slaves</td>
<td>24,278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-9 slaves</td>
<td>65,278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-14 slaves</td>
<td>40,388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19 slaves</td>
<td>21,322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29 slaves</td>
<td>20,796</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-99 slaves</td>
<td>23,194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-1000 slaves</td>
<td>2,292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Slaves</td>
<td>3,953,742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Slaveholders</td>
<td>384,884</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Non-Slaveholding Population</td>
<td>8,464,324</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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II. Mid-term Precipitants

C3. Critical Points Pre-1830s:

Most white Northerners don’t oppose slavery for moral reasons

Racism is prevalent

Economic reasons

After 1830, this scene begins to change . . . .
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II. Mid-term Precipitants

D. 1831: Nat Turner’s Rebellion

Film clip: Africans in America
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II. Mid-term Precipitants

E. Growing Aggressiveness of Abolitionists after Missouri Compromise

E1. William Lloyd Garrison, *The Liberator*

E2. New England Anti-Slavery Society

E3. American Anti-Slavery Society
The Antebellum Era and The Causes of the Civil War

II. Mid-term Precipitants

F. Increasingly defensive stance of Southern slave apologists in the face of abolitionism

F1. Nat Turner’s Rebellion 1831

F2. Thomas Dew, A Review of the Debates

F3. Gag Rule in Congress
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II. Mid-term Precipitants

G. Growth of the United States (1845-48)

G1. 1845 Texas enters the Union -- slavery is legal in the new state

G2. 1846: Oregon territory

G3. Mexican War, 1846-48

G4. Mexican Cession: Wilmot Proviso & Gridlock
States and Territories of the United States of America
February 2 1848 to May 29 1848
The Antebellum Era and The Causes of the Civil War

II. Mid-term Precipitants

G. Growth of the United States (1845-48)

G5. Compromise of 1850

A. California free state

B. Utah and New Mexico popular sovereignty

C. Slave trade outlawed in D.C.

D. Stronger Fugitive Slave Law of 1850

[Map showing the Compromise of 1850]
The Antebellum Era and The Causes of the Civil War

II. Mid-term Precipitants

H. The 1850s break the spirit of compromise
   
   H1. Harriett Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852)
   
   H2. The Kansas-Nebraska Act (1854)
   
   H3. Creation of the Republican Party (1854-56)
   
   H4. George Fitzhugh, *Sociology for the South* (1854)
   
   H5. Dred Scott case (1857)
   
The Antebellum Era and The Causes of the Civil War

II. Mid-term Precipitants

H. The 1850s break the spirit of compromise

H1. Harriett Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*

a. HBS born in Connecticut in 1811
b. Daughter of Rev. Lyman Beecher – Calvinist
c. Father President Lane Theological Seminary
d. HBS taught at Lane for a time
e. Married Prof. Calvin E. Stowe, Bible scholar, 7 children
f. 1850, moved to Bowdoin college at Andover, Mass.
g. 1851, UTC in *The National Era*, abolitionist paper
h. 1852, published as a book - international bestseller
i. Theme one: effect of slavery on morality and family
j. Theme two: Christianity as force to overcome adversity.
k. Heightened tensions between North and South
The Antebellum Era and The Causes of the Civil War

II. Mid-term Precipitants

H. The 1850s break the spirit of compromise

H2. The Kansas-Nebraska Act (1854)

a. Stephen A. Douglas, chair Senate Committee on Territories
b. 1854, promotes bill to organize territories of Kansas and Nebraska
c. Promotes popular sovereignty for 2 territories
d. Possible Reasons: Railroad, Presidency, Needs assistance of Southern Congressmen
e. Debate = Repeal of Missouri Compromise
f. Sets off national debate
g. Bleeding Kansas
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The Antebellum Era and The Causes of the Civil War
The Antebellum Era and The Causes of the Civil War

II. Mid-term Precipitants

H. The 1850s break the spirit of compromise

H3. Creation of the Republican Party

a. The extension of slavery into the territories split the Democratic party and the Whig party
b. Opponents of the Kansas-Nebraska Act organized the new Republican party.
c. Birthplace: Jackson, Michigan, July 6, 1854
d. Conglomeration of different groups: Know-Nothings, Free-Soilers, Abolitionists, anti-Nebraska Democrats.
e. Initial Leaders: William Seward, John Fremont
f. National organization solidified: Pittsburgh, 1856
g. First presidential candidate: John C. Fremont
h. “Free Labor, Free Soil, Free Men”
i. Opposed repeal of the Missouri Compromise, extension of slavery, and the Supreme Court's decision in the Dred Scott
j. Favored the admission of Kansas as a free state.
H. The 1850s break the spirit of compromise

H4. George Fitzhugh, Sociology for the South
   a. Port Royal, Virginia
   b. Practiced law and struggled as a small planter
   c. Celebrated Southern Slavery
   d. Critic of Northern Free Economy
   e. North: free labor spelled class war and anarchy
   f. South: perfect example of communism
   g. Defense of slavery alarmed Republicans
   h. Roused Southerners to new defense of slavery.
The Antebellum Era and The Causes of the Civil War

II. Mid-term Precipitants

H. The 1850s break the spirit of compromise

H5. Dred Scott case (1857)

a. Scott born around 1800
b. Scott migrated westward with his master, Peter Blow.
c. Traveled from Virginia to Alabama to St. Louis, Missouri.
d. 1832: Scott’s master dies
e. Bought by John Emerson, and taken to Illinois (free state)
f. 1836: Scott taken to Wisconsin territory
g. Later: Scott goes to Louisiana
h. After Emerson’s death in 1843, Scott seeks freedom
i. 1847: Trial begins – Scott v. Sanford (name Sanford)
j. 1856: Case heard at Supreme Court of US
k. Decision . . . .
H. The 1850s break the spirit of compromise


- Leader of Pottawatomie Massacre in Kansas, 1856

- Harper’s Ferry Virginia

- Slave Rebellion

- Executed

- Martyr for abolitionists
III. Short-term Triggers

A. Election of Abraham Lincoln, November 1860

1. Lincoln’s Position on Slavery

2. Split in Democratic Party
Northern - Stephen Douglas
Southern - John C. Breckinridge

3. Constitutional Union Party – John Bell
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II. Short-term Triggers

B. Secession of 7 Southern states by Feb. 1861.

1. Southern leaders threatened to secede from the Union if Lincoln was elected in 1860.

2. When the election result was clear, South Carolina legislature summoned a convention to secede.

3. December, 1860: the convention unanimously passed an ordinance dissolving "the union now subsisting between South Carolina and other States."

4. 6 Southern states held conventions and seceded.

5. Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas all left the Union by 1 February 1861.
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The Antebellum Era and The Causes of the Civil War

II. Short-term Triggers

C. The establishment of the Confederate States of America on March 11, 1861

11. After secession, delegates from six southern states met in Montgomery, Alabama on 4 February 1861 to set up a provisional government for the Confederate States of America.

12. On 8 February, they adopted a constitution, and the next day the provisional Confederate Congress elected Jefferson Davis of Mississippi as President and Alexander Stephens of Georgia as Vice President.
The eastern portion of Kansas Territory was admitted as the state of Kansas on January 29, 1861. The western portion was not transferred to Colorado Territory until February 28, 1861. It is unclear what the status of this land was during that time, it was also de facto under control of Jefferson Territory.

The Confederate States of America (CSA) was created on February 4, 1861. The states all seceded from the union and joined the CSA at different dates. Confederate States of America shown in green.

States and Territories of the United States of America
February 4 1861 to February 28 1861
II. Short-term Triggers

D. Firing on Fort Sumter, South Carolina by the Confederates on April 12, 1861.

1. Abraham Lincoln - 4 March 1861 - federal government will not "assail" Southern states, but will "hold, occupy, and possess the property . . . belonging to the government."

2. Within a month, however, Confederates had pushed yielding Union military forces out of the South, with one exception: Fort Sumter, in Charleston Harbor, South Carolina.

3. War began there when Confederate General Pierre Beauregard, ordered his troops to flush the Union forces out on 12 April 1861.

4. The next day, Sumter fell to Confederacy.
II. Short-term Triggers

E. Lincoln’s call for 75,000 federal troops to stop the Southern rebellion

1. Following Fort Sumter, Lincoln called up 75,000 troops on 15 April 1861.
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II. Short-term Triggers

F. The secession of the upper South

1. In response, Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina seceded, doubling the population of the Confederacy and adding significant power to the new Southern nation.

2. Following this, a full-scale war began.

3. Battles: Confederates named battles for the nearest town or city; the Union named battles for the nearest natural feature.
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II. Short-term Triggers

G. The First Battle of Bull Run (July, 1861): Though four slave states -- Delaware, Maryland, Missouri, and Kentucky -- remained in the Union, the North and South went to war.

1. The North had 23 states and a population of 22 million

2. The Confederacy had 11 states and 9 million people, including 3.5 million slaves.