

HUGE AMERICAN CHANGES OF THE MID-19TH CENTURY

1840's Immigration accounted for an almost 10 % population increase during this decade.¹ Most immigrants were Irish, German & Mexican Catholics. This greatly concerned the 95 % Protestant majority.

1844 - "The American Republican Party" (Later, "The Native American Party," and finally, "The American Party") tried to inhibit the impact of Catholic immigration upon American politics. They pushed for a 21-year citizen-ship process & took steps to keep Catholics from gaining positions of leadership within the government and within the school system.

----- The Methodist Episcopal Church, South basically "seceded" from the Methodist Episcopal Church over the issue of slavery.

1845 - The Southern Baptist Convention was also formed due to the issue of slavery.

1850's Catholic immigration continued to rise,² as did "nativistic"³ opposition.⁴

1852 - Harriet Beecher Stowe (41 yrs) published Uncle Tom's Cabin; Life Among the Lowly.

1854 - The Kansas-Nebraska Act repealed the Missouri Compromise of 1820.

----- The American Party (a.k.a., "The Know Nothings") did quite well in elections during this year by promoting their anti-Catholic immigrant "nativism."

----- The Republican Party was formed around the slogan: "free labor, free land, free men."

¹ During the 1820's it was around 2% & during the 1830's, 5%.

² Immigration during the first five years of the 1850s reached a level five times greater than a decade earlier. Most of the new arrivals were poor Catholic peasants or laborers from Ireland and Germany who crowded into the tenements of large cities. Crime and welfare costs soared. Cincinnati's crime rate, for example, tripled between 1846 and 1853 and its murder rate increased sevenfold. Boston's expenditures for poor relief rose threefold during the same period."

— James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, p. 131

³ A word applied to the anti-immigrant sentiments held by native born inhabitants, who, during 1850's America, were still 90 % Protestant.

⁴ FYI: The current religious make-up of the United States is...

GENERAL POPULATION	HOUSE	SENATE	SUPREME COURT
51 % Protestant	57 % Protestant	56 % Protestant	22 % Protestant
24 % Catholic	30 % Catholic	24 % Catholic	56 % Catholic
16 % None			
2 % Mormon	2 % Mormon	5 % Mormon	
3 % Jewish	6 % Jewish	12 % Jewish	22 % Jewish
2 % Other Faiths	1 % Other Faiths	2 % Other Faiths	
1 % Not Stated	1 % Not Stated	1 % Not Stated	
0.7 % Buddhist	0.7 % Buddhist		
0.6 % Muslim	0.5 % Muslim		

1855 - Excerpts from a letter between Abraham Lincoln and his friend, Joshua Speed.

"You say if Kansas fairly votes herself a free state, as a Christian you will rather rejoice at it. All decent slaveholders talk that way; and I do not doubt their candor. But they never vote that way. Although in a private letter, or conversation, you will express your preference that Kansas shall be free, you would vote for no man for Congress who would say the same thing publicly. No such man could be elected from any district in a slave-state. You think Stringfellow & Co. ought to be hung; and yet, at the next presidential election you will vote for the exact type and representative of Stringfellow. The slave-breeders and slave-traders, are a small, odious and detested class, among you; and yet in politics, they dictate the course of all of you, and are as completely your masters, as you are the master of your own negroes. You inquire where I now stand. That is a disputed point -- I think I am a whig; but others say there are no whigs, and that I am an abolitionist. When I was in Washington I voted for the Wilmot Proviso as good as forty times, and I never heard of any one attempting to unwhig me for that. I now do no more than oppose the extension of slavery.

"I am not a Know-Nothing. That is certain. How could I be? How can any one who abhors the oppression of negroes, be in favor or degrading classes of white people? Our progress in degeneracy appears to me to be pretty rapid. As a nation, we began by declaring that "all men are created equal." We now practically read it "all men are created equal, except negroes" When the Know-Nothings get control, it will read "all men are created equal, except negroes, and foreigners, and Catholics." When it comes to this I should prefer emigrating to some country where they make no pretence of loving liberty -- to Russia, for instance, where despotism can be taken pure, and without the base alloy of hypocrisy [sic]."

1856 - November: This was a very heated election year, centered mainly upon the expansion of slavery via the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854. The American Party "nativistic" slogan of "I know nothing but my Country, my whole Country and nothing but my Country" could not overcome the fact that the party's members were split over the issue of slavery.⁵

1857 - The Supreme Court majority (7-2) issued its Dred Scott decision that Africans were not & could never become "citizens."

⁵ By the 1860 Election, the anti-slavery members joined Lincoln's Republican Party, while many of the pro-slavery members tried to support an unsuccessful candidate (Bell) who wanted to retain both the Union & slavery.

1860 - Lincoln was elected President, due in large part to the support of "negro" voters in Ohio.

----- 24 December: South Carolina seceded from the Union.

1861 – 2 February: Texas seceded from the Union.

----- 11 March: Constitution of the Confederate States of America adopted by South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas.

1861 - 21 March: Excerpts from the "Cornerstone Speech" of Confederate Vice President Alexander Stephens.

"The new constitution has put at rest, forever, all the agitating questions relating to our peculiar institution African slavery as it exists amongst us the proper status of the negro in our form of civilization..."

"Our new government is founded upon exactly the opposite idea; its foundations are laid, its corner-stone rests, upon the great truth that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery subordination to the superior race is his natural and normal condition. This, our new government, is the first, in the history of the world, based upon this great physical, philosophical, and moral truth....

"...Many governments have been founded upon the principle of the subordination and serfdom of certain classes of the same race; such were and are in violation of the laws of nature. Our system commits no such violation of nature's laws. With us, all of the white race, however high or low, rich or poor, are equal in the eye of the law. Not so with the negro. Subordination is his place. He, by nature, or by the curse against Canaan, is fitted for that condition which he occupies in our system. The architect, in the construction of buildings, lays the foundation with the proper material-the granite; then comes the brick or the marble. The substratum of our society is made of the material fitted by nature for it, and by experience we know that it is best, not only for the superior, but for the inferior race, that it should be so. It is, indeed, in conformity with the ordinance of the Creator. It is not for us to inquire into the wisdom of His ordinances, or to question them. For His own purposes, He has made one race to differ from another, as He has made "one star to differ from another star in glory."...

"Thousands of people who begin to understand these truths are not yet completely out of the shell; they do not see them in their length and breadth. We hear much of the civilization and Christianization of the barbarous tribes of Africa. In my judgment, those ends will never be attained, but by first teaching them the lesson taught to Adam, that "in the sweat of his brow he should eat his bread," and teaching them to work, and feed, and clothe themselves.

1862 - September: Excerpts from a private meditation by Lincoln.

"The will of God prevails. In great contests each party claims to act in accordance with the will of God. Both may be, and one must be, wrong. God cannot be for and against the same thing at the same time. In the present civil war it is quite possible that God's purpose is something different from the purpose of either party -- and yet the human instrumentalities, working just as they do, are of the best adaptation to effect His purpose. I am almost ready to say that this is probably true -- that God wills this contest, and wills that it shall not end yet. By his mere great power, on the minds of the now contestants, He could have either saved or destroyed the Union without a human contest. Yet the contest began. And, having begun He could give the final victory to either side any day. Yet the contest proceeds."

1863 - 1-3 July: Battle of Gettysburg. A union victory, but at great cost. Casualty figures for both sides - 7,863 dead; 27,224 wounded.

----- 19 November: Gettysburg Address.

"Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

"Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

"But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate-- we can not consecrate-- we can not hallow-- this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us-- that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion-- that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain-- that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom-- and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

"Fellow-Countrymen: At this second appearing to take the oath of the Presidential office there is less occasion for an extended address than there was at the first. Then a statement somewhat in detail of a course to be pursued seemed fitting and proper. Now, at the expiration of four years, during which public declarations have been constantly called forth on every point and phase of the great contest which still absorbs the attention and engrosses the energies of the nation, little that is new could be presented. The progress of our arms, upon which all else chiefly depends, is as well known to the public as to myself, and it is, I trust, reasonably satisfactory and encouraging to all. With high hope for the future, no prediction in regard to it is ventured.

"On the occasion corresponding to this four years ago all thoughts were anxiously directed to an impending civil war. All dreaded it, all sought to avert it. While the inaugural address was being delivered from this place, devoted altogether to saving the Union without war, insurgent agents were in the city seeking to destroy it without war--seeking to dissolve the Union and divide effects by negotiation. Both parties deprecated war, but one of them would make war rather than let the nation survive, and the other would accept war rather than let it perish, and the war came.

"One-eighth of the whole population were colored slaves, not distributed generally over the Union, but localized in the southern part of it. These slaves constituted a peculiar and powerful interest. All knew that this interest was somehow the cause of the war. To strengthen, perpetuate, and extend this interest was the object for which the insurgents would rend the Union even by war, while the Government claimed no right to do more than to restrict the territorial enlargement of it. Neither party expected for the war the magnitude or the duration which it has already attained. Neither anticipated that the cause of the conflict might cease with or even before the conflict itself should cease. Each looked for an easier triumph, and a result less fundamental and astounding. Both read the same Bible and pray to the same God, and each invokes His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces, but let us judge not, that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered. That of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has His own purposes. "Woe unto the world because of offenses; for it must needs be that offenses come, but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh." If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South this terrible war as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to Him? Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said "the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

"With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations."

1865 – 9 April: General Lee surrenders his Southern Army at Appomattox Courthouse, Virginia.
The U. S. Army became responsible for administering the Southern States.

----- 14/15 April: President Lincoln was shot at Ford's Theater in D.C., dying the next morning.

----- 6 December: The 13th Amendment outlaws slavery throughout the United States.

----- 24 December: The Ku Klux Klan was birthed in Pulaski, Tennessee.

1866 - The “Radical Republican” gained control of Congress. “Reconstruction” began in earnest. Unfortunately, there was a lot of corruption which accompanied the re-establishment of post-slavery governmental order.

1868 - 9 July: The 14th Amendment basically reverses the Dred Scott decision of 1857, declaring any person born or naturalized in the United States to be a “citizen.”

1870 - 3 February: The 15th Amendment – “The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.” - was adopted to close voting loopholes being used in the South.

1876 - As the “Radical Republicans” began losing control of the “Reconstruction,” the Southern States adopted “Segregation” (“separate but equal”) as their new paradigm.

1877 - With the election of Rutherford B. Hayes, who immediately relieved the U.S. Army of its responsibilities in the Southern States, “Reconstruction” ended.