

Sahana Sarangi

Metelak

History

20 November 2023

Lecture 10: Slavery and Expansion

Slavery's Nationwide Presence:

- Fix misnomer that slavery is only in the south
- Slavery was happening in north and south of US
- Not just southern phenomenon, spread through US before and after American Revolution
- Underpinning of southern agrarian economy
- Even in northern states, there is still economic dependence on slave labor (see lecture 7)

Limiting Slavery's Expansion:

- Some efforts to limit slavery early on, despite slavery being embedded in constitution early on
- Northwest Ordinance, 1787 → from Articles of Confederation
 - Sets up government for Northwest Ordinance (Midwest) region
 - Method for admitting states into the US
 - Applies bill of rights to that region
 - Forbids slavery in that territory
- Some states slowly begin to move away from slavery
 - Gradual emancipation → ex. Have to be indentured for 24 years, then you are free
 - Pass legislation to abolish slavery within that state
 - Some states didn't believe in slavery from the start (like puritans in Massachusetts)
- There are some steps before 1808 (gag rule)
 - In 1800: Congress passes "Act prohibiting the importation of slaves"
 - Makes it illegal to engage in international slave trade
 - Gives US government to right to confiscate any ship or ship cargo carrying enslaved people
 - Doesn't come into effect until 1808 (because of gag rule)
 - Triggered automatically once this clause runs out
 - Doesn't ban domestic slavery but bans international slave trade (slave owners start "breeding" their enslaved populations)

Adding New states:

- Main issue between states: maintaining balance of power between slave states and free states
 - Free states are not necessarily 100% free → just moving out of that direction
- "slave states" don't want to lose more power by adding more free states → lose power in congress

- “free states” don’t want to lose more power by adding more “slave states” → lose power in congress and forced to accept slavery

The Missouri Compromise:

- By 1818, there are 11 free and 11 slave states
- In 1818, Missouri asks to enter the US as a slave state → imbalance of free states/slave states
- Three defenses for Missouri’s right to slavery:
 - Equal rights → If all states are supposed to have equal rights under constitution, can’t impose laws on Missouri that weren’t applied to other states (no special treatment/extra requirement)
 - States’ rights → Constitution allows states to create their own laws and rights, so why can’t they make their own rights regarding slavery?
 - Property rights → can’t violate slave owners’ property rights by saying they cannot own slaves
- Henry Clay comes up with Missouri Compromise
 - Allows Missouri to enter as a slave states, but allows Maine to break off from Massachusetts and become a separate free states → balancing it out
 - No future “slave states” north of latitude 36 degrees 30’
- Slavery is not just going away because of Missouri compromise → remember Nat Turner’s Rebellion (see lecture 9):
 - Southern states more defensive about slavery (more people are attacking it)
 - Debates in congress are even hotter

The Republic of Texas, 1836:

- Right on the heels of this, next big conversation: how to expand the country (specifically around Texas)
- Mexico gained independence from Spain → 1821
 - Norther half of their land is sparsely populated, Mexico wants to settle this territory (basically claim it)
 - Start inviting Anglo-Americans to come live there by offering them land (land grants)
 - There are two stipulations to this: Have to become Mexican citizens and have to convert to Catholicism
- A lot of these people took these offers and set up plantations with slavery
- In 1829 → Mexico outlawed slavery
 - In the moment, Texans say they just want to ignore this law (gov. of Mexico much further south)
 - Then, Mexican government pushes to enforce this
 - This causes Anglo-American revolt in 1836 because they want to keep their enslaved labor
 - Battle of Alamo → Mexican army wipes out Anglo-American army (they lose)
- US newspapers romanticize Battle of Alamo → these Anglo-Americans are heroes (say this is a religious martyrdom)

- Gives them US support (rallies them), then they win the Battle of San Jacinto later on
- This battle establishes Texas as an independent republic (1837)

Annexation of Texas:

- Texas wants to become annexed, or become a state in the US
 - Occurs at the end of Jackson's presidency (2nd term), he doesn't want to deal with this, so he says no
 - Van Buren is in the middle of panic of 1837, so he says no
 - Henry and Tyler don't want to cause US/Mexico war, so they say no
- People are arguing over whether Texas should be a free state/slave state
 - Reheats debate over slavery again
- In 1836 → Congress passes another gag rule
 - Congress is not allowed to consider any petitions against slavery
 - Continues to be an issue up until 1844 election
 - Tyler goes to Democratic party and asks if he could run for president for them
 - They say no, he used to be Whig, got evicted
 - Democratic party picks Jackson protégé James K. Polk
 - He is a very big supporter of Manifest Destiny
 - Argues that Oregon and Texas belong to US → US should claim them
 - Polk wins election by a small margin
 - After winning, he wants to sign joint resolution with congress to annex Texas and make it a state → 1845 Joint Resolution
 - This only takes a simple majority to pass
 - They annex Texas as a "slave state" (after 8 years of argument over this)

Expansionist president Polk, 1845-1849

- Polk is such an aggressive expansionist that he is not happy with just Texas, wants to expand US to northwest and Mexico
- He picks a fight with Britain over border of Oregon Territory, says it should be theirs → "54' 40 or Fight"
 - This includes most of northwest Canada until Alaska
 - Really pushing for this latitude line
- Polk wants Mexico more than Oregon territory → can't go to Britain and Mexico at the same time
 - Decides he wants to fight Mexico more, so he signs Oregon treaty with Britain
- Oregon Treaty, 1846
 - Signs this treaty with Britain (as he cannot fight both) and establishes border at the top of Washington State
 - Instead of the 54th parallel, he gets until 49th parallel
 - The reason he can do this is because of Democratic support in Congress
 - Turns his attention to Mexico, as he now has peace with Britain

Mexican-American War Causes:

- He believes US deserves Mexico
- Sends Navy to San Francisco to seize ports in that area → 1846
- Sends John C. Fremont to CA to stir up trouble
 - Short lived CA republic (declared CA independent for a short period of time)
- Polk offers Mexico → to buy CA and NM
 - Mexican government not even listening (like half their country)
- Nothing is working, so he sends US soldiers into disputed border land between Mexico and Texas to pick a fight
 - Claims Mexico started it, but he had a draft of the Declaration of War before it even started (Polk attacks first)
 - Blames Mexico and has overwhelming support from Congress and public as well (they also believe in Manifest Destiny)

Mexican-American War:

- Characterized by US military superiority (Mexican gov only 20 years old)
 - Mainly fighting in California and at the border
- War doesn't stay very popular for long
 - Very bloody (Mexico was very fiercely fighting for their independence) → largest percentage of US casualties
 - Just seems like Polk's land grab for slavery (is this really good for the US, or are you just trying to sneak more slave states into the country?)
 - Leads to huge amounts of desertions of army and Anti-War activism
- This helps Whigs take over congress in November 1846 midterms → people not very happy with Democratic policies at this point of time
- Sends a signal to Polk to get this war over with quickly
 - Sends general Winfield Scott to the port city of Veracruz then marches into Mexico city
 - By 1847, Scott captures Mexico city
 - Now Mexico is forced to make peace

Mexico signs Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, 1848:

- Mexico forced to make peace, as they no longer have a capital
- End of Mexican-American war, highly debated within US
- Big debate: how much of Mexico to take
 - Some people say they should take all of Mexico
 - Other people say this is a dark-skinned Catholic, Spanish-speaking population → do they want to assimilate all these people into the US?
 - They decide to take the sparsely populated northern region of Mexico
 - Minimum people, maximum land
- Big juxtaposition between Nativism + White supremacy vs. Manifest Destiny
 - Did not take all the land that they could (manifest destiny) because of racism
 - "Our is a government of the white man," which should never "welcome into the Union any but Caucasian race." -John C. Calhoun

Wilmot Proviso, 1846:

- If they take Mexico's land, what happens with slavery in that land?
- Division in the Democratic party
 - Wilmot Proviso brought up by anti-slavery Democrats → argue that they should ban slavery from territories gained in Mexican-American war
 - Other side: expansionist Democrats and pro-slavery Whigs don't want to ban slavery
 - Pro: anti-slavery Democrats, Anti: expansionist Democrats, pro-slavery Whigs
 - Trends of slavery being talked about when more land is annexed
 - Doesn't go into effect, slavery is not abolished, but a debate produced by the war

1848 Election:

- Polk declines to run again, probably because he knew he was ill (died couple months later)
- War ends 1848
- Suddenly have new party on the scene: Free Soil Party
 - Platform is anti-slavery, but not because they believe in equality for Black people, but because it is a threat to republic and small farmers who can't afford slavery
 - This party gets no electoral votes
- Gen. Zachary Taylor → a Whig, also general in Mexican-American war
 - Is a slave owner but didn't support expansion of slavery
 - Helps him win the election
 - Appealing president because he owns slaves (semi-support basically) → appeals to both parties
 - He won't end slavery, but won't expand either
 - Dies in office in 1850 (gets half a term)
 - VP Millard Fillmore becomes president → because Tyler set up that precedent (this is not a law yet)

California Gold Rush:

- Same year Taylor was elected president, people discovered gold at Sutter's Mill outside Sacramento, CA
- As news traveled, thousands of mostly men (everywhere) flooded into CA republic
 - Called 49ers, as 1849 brought the largest waves of them
- Between 1838-1854 → 300k young men from east US flooded into CA and thousands of others came from
 - Asia, Australia, Latin America
 - Including first major groups of Chinese immigrants fleeing poverty + civil war in China
- Large influx of gold brings major boost to US economy
 - Inspires construction of transcontinental railroads
 - Telegraph lines
 - Things connecting coast to coast → people coming to CA, don't have easy way to get from place to place
- Expands US trade prospects in Asia
- Spread of mining leads to massive amounts of environmental damage

- Deforestation, erosion, pollution, things that come with widespread mining → damages CA countryside

Racial Conflict and the Gold Rush:

- Massive influx of young white men from US increased racial tensions
 - Already high due to US annexation of CA
 - Led to exploitation of non-white populations
- Miners who were native US-born stole + assaulted foreign born competitors
 - everyone wants gold, not a lot of law to keep them from doing this
- Indigenous people forced out of any area that gold is found
 - Killed if they resisted
 - In addition to being kicked out of homes → their homes and lands are destroyed by massive environmental impacts, massive destruction of indigenous land
- Californios → Spanish speaking residents already in CA (citizens of MX who stayed when treaty of Guadalupe gave half of MX to US)
 - Faced with massive confiscations of their land
- Chinese especially looked down upon
 - White miners would run them off their claims (place where they mined)
 - Violently attacked them
- After California statehood in 1850 → CA legislature passed foreign miner tax
 - Required miners who are not US citizens to pay \$20 per month (\$750 today) for the right to mine in the state
 - Tax only really collected from Chinese and Latin American miners, not Euro. Miners
 - Pushes lots out of mining bc they can't afford it
 - For Chinese → pushes them into other jobs like cooking and laundry
 - Seen as women's work, but provided steady source of income
 - Provided stability in establishing first long lasting Chinese communities in US

The Compromise of 1850:

- Because of gold rush, CA is rapidly settled
- Gold found in 1848, people rush in 1849, asking for CA statehood by 1850
- Passed state constitution banning slavery, wanted to be added as free state
 - AGAIN. LIKE USUAL. Adding another state makes giant arg. over slavery
- Request for CA statehood makes four major stances about what people should do about slavery → all in conflict, passionate debates:
 - One was by John C. Calhoun → wanted dual presidency
 - President for north and president for south
 - Congress won't have any power to regulate slavery
 - Moderate slave owners and southerners → supported extending Missouri Compromise line (36 30, southern border of Missouri, extending all the way to the Pacific)
 - Others supported idea of squatter sovereignty
 - Allowing whatever settlers in the territory to decide status of slavery by voting → popular sovereignty

- Strongest anti-slavery advocates → refused to consider allowing slavery in any of new territories whatsoever
- Four strong stances → US worried about war breaking out
 - Civil war not until another 11 years, but concerned about war
- Congress avoids war by passing 5 laws (compromise of 1850):
 - Creates Utah and New Mexico territories and says they will rely on popular sovereignty to decide slavery
 - Admits CA as a free state
 - Ended slave trade (but not slavery) in DC
 - Gives NM a little bit of land it was disputing with TX
 - Passed the Fugitive Slave Act

Fugitive Slave Act, 1850:

- Part of compromise of 1850
- Three major components that make it controversial:
 - Federal gov. is required to support slave catchers who are hunting down escaped enslaved people (law enforcement, gov. officials)
 - US citizens required by law to turn in escaped slaves, can be accused of breaking law if they don't
 - Establishes that enslaved people don't have right to trial by jury
- Many Black people, both enslaved and free, think this is dangerous and flee to Canada
 - For people escaping slavery in the south → now have to flee all the way to Canada, not just Massachusetts
- Abolitionists upset
 - Often broke the law to help enslaved people escape
 - Some are outraged enough they lean towards violence
 - They should just kill slave catchers because they are evil

Election of 1852:

- Free Soil Party still running on anti-slavery platform, Whig party massively divided (can't agree over slavery), this means Democrats win the presidency again
- Electing Franklin Pierce as 14th president
 - Widespread win, as Whigs are so divided (pro slavery and anti slavery)

Franklin Pierce, 1853 – 1857:

- Pro-slavery, pro-expansionist Democrat
- Authorizes Gadsden Purchase from Mexico
 - Brings a little piece of land into Arizona and NM
- Huge supporter of filibustering to gain control of Latin American countries (like Cuba)
- Wants to expand US economic influence in Asia
 - Focuses on forcing Japan (closed to most foreigners for about 200 years) to sign a trade treaty to appease northern businesses
 - July 1853 → pierce orders US Naval commodore Matthew Perry to sail into Tokyo bay

- Perry orders Japanese to open harbor to US trade ships and threatens to bombard Tokyo with cannon fire if they don't → trade with US, or we destroy capital
- Japanese don't want capital to be destroyed, so they are fine with this
- Huge win for US businesses and US foreign "diplomacy" but also massively increases Japanese resentment

Kansas-Nebraska Act, 1854:

- Major conflict over slavery in Pierce's presidency
- Prior to 1854, great plains had been set aside as Native American Reserve
 - Suddenly, businessmen looking at this and wanting that land for settlement
 - Maybe build transcontinental railroad
- Create huge free territory in the process
 - Slave supporters want to extend slavery westward, so they don't like this idea at all
- Another compromise: Kansas-Nebraska act → has two parts
 - Will create two territories instead of one big free one: Kansas and Nebraska → decided by popular sovereignty
 - Repeals Missouri compromise, as they are north of the southern border of Missouri
- Barely passed, leads to massive outbreak of violence that becomes known as Bleeding Kansas

Bleeding Kansas, 1854-56:

- Once they say popular sovereignty will decide slavery in these states, settlers rush to Kansas and Nebraska to influence elections + vote on slavery
- Some slavery supporters encourage residents of other states to cross into the territories, vote, then go back home (very very illegal)
- This starts a Guerilla war between abolitionists and pro slavery groups that is very violent
 - Over 200 people dying just to decide whether these states will have slavery or not
- Caused major changes in political sphere by helping create new Republican party
 - First, radicalizes anti-slavery Whigs
 - Whig party disintegrates
 - Also splits Democratic party → those who oppose KN act say they are done with Democratic party (become republican party)
- Republican party is formed out of former Whigs (who no longer have a party), Free Soilers, anti-slavery democrats, and abolitionists
 - Only thing they actually have in common is that they are against slavery (nothing else)

Election of 1856:

- Newly formed republican party supports John C Fremont
- Other candidate is democrat James Buchanan
- Another candidate is former president Millard Fillmore who runs for no nothing party (Native American party)

- Buchanan wins the election, becomes 15th president of US → reiterates how much issue of slavery is shaping politics
- Because all anti-slavery democrats quit democratic party, democrats are officially now the party of slavery
 - South and states in support of slavery solidly support Buchanan
 - Helps him become president
- Super pro-slavery, super pro expansionist
 - So much so that he tried multiple times to buy/annex Cuba to make it into another slave state

Dred Scott v. Sanford, 1857:

- On the heels of this election and early in Buchanan's presidency, this SC case addresses question of whether Congress has constitutional authority to decide anything about slavery
- Enslaved person Dred Scott + wife sued for freedom
 - On the basis that his owner had moved him to a free state
 - Since the state was free, Scott argued he should be free
- SC decides against Scott in 7-2 decision (not close), say no for a couple of reasons:
 - People of African descent aren't citizens at all
 - Would violate fifth amendment (taking property without due process) → can't take property away from somebody just because they move
 - Aren't any federal laws against slavery
 - Only states can make laws about slavery, so it isn't in SC's hand
- Super controversial, supporters of slavery are relieved
 - Abolitionists + states without slavery are angered
 - as this allowed slavery to expand anywhere so long as the enslaved people were originally brought from a state where slavery was legal
 - takes citizenship away from enslaved people and any free black person (any person of African descent is not a citizen)
- in some cases, now seen as one of the worst SC decisions ever
- leads us up to the years right before the outbreak of the civil war