Battle Cry of Freedom by James McPherson
Chapter 2 "Mexico Will Poison Us" p47-77

Topics to Address:

Please read carefully and list main ideas for each topic. After the break you will have a video discussion to show you have read and understand the topics in this reading.

Detailed annotations and notes are required for this assignment.

James McPherson in "Mexico Will Poison Us" explains the ramifications of the Mexican War for the American Political System. Each section was developing peacefully, the political system was stable, then a huge amount of territory disrupted everything… New states were on the way, and that touched fear of the spread of slavery and the fear of political domination by the North.

Address the following topics: (1-5)
List details for each section:

1. James K Polk legacy and war aims (47-50)
    a. Whig position on the Mexican War (47-50)
    b. Democrat position on the Mexican War (47-50)
    c. Bear Flag Republic (49)
    d. Nicholas Trist and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, controversy (50)
    e. Emerson Quote regarding the "Poison of Mexico"- (51)
2. Controversy, arguments and tension created by the issue of expansion of Slavery in Mexican Cession
    a. "Slave Power Conspiracy" (Was the "slave power conspiracy true?)(51-52)
3. Anti-Slavery Movement
    a. **Wilmot Proviso** causes the issue of slavery to a new intensity of conflict, it also affects the parties (53-54)
    b. **Free Soil** Movement values including white supremacy (54-55) (Collect Quotations to summarize their main ideas)
    c. Southern view of Free Soil movement, **Calhoun quotes** political beliefs (56-57) (Collect quotes, how did the Southerners view slavery?)
    d. Remedies to the Wilmot Proviso, Extend MO Compromise line, **Popular Sovereignty** (58)
    e. Whigs and Presidential election of 1848, the **Liberty Party** they split (59-63)
4. Southern view of **Zach Taylor** vs the reality of Zack Taylor (63-67)
    a. **William Seward** attitude on expansion of slavery (63)
    b. Sutter's Mill (64)
    c. Taylor Elected Whig president
5. **Compromise of 1850, role of Henry Clay and Stephan Douglas, and John C. Calhoun (70-75)**

1. James K Polk legacy and war aims (47-50)
    a. 2/3 increase in American Territory, acquired the most territory
    b. 1844 Election Expansion Platform
    c. Settled the Oregon Boundary
    d. Southern Boundary of the Rio Grande
    e. "Acquisition of Mexican territory was Polk's principal war aim." (49)
2. Whig position on the Mexican War (47-50)
    a. Whigs were against the Mexican War
    b. Democrats passed the war resolution
    c. Whigs accused Polk of provoking the war… "unnecessarily and unconstitutionally, begun by the President." (48)
    d. Lincoln, a Whig congressman, wanted evidence of where the war was started.
    e. Manifest Destiny was Polk's main theme when he ran for president
        i. "Democrats had pressed for expansion of American institutions across the whole of North America whether the residents – Indians, Spaniards, Mexicans, Canadaians, wanted them or not." (48)
        ii. Quote from Dem congressman, "When God crowned American arms with success in the Revolution. He had not designed that the original States should be the only abode of liberty on earth. On the Contrary, he only designed them as the great center from which civilization, religion, and liberty should radiate and radiate until the whole continent shall bask in their blessing." (48)
3. Democrat position on the Mexican War (47-50)
    a. Democrat Congressman said "When God crowned American arms with success in the Revolution… he had not designed that the original States should be the only abode of liberty on earth. On the contrary, He only designed them as the great center from which civilization, religion, and liberty should radiate and radiate until the whole continent shall bask in their blessing." (Democrat attitudes)
    b. John L. O'Sullivan, inventor of the term "Manifest Destiny" "Yes, more, more, more… till our national destiny is fulfilled and… the whole boundless continent is ours." (48)
4. Bear Flag Republic (49)
    a. Polk encouraged American migrants in CA to push for annexation… See "**Filibusters**"
    b. Bear Flag Republic formed by Americans, **John C. Fremont,** Army officer helped.
5. **Nicholas Trist** and the **Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo,** controversy (50)
    a. Trist was sent to negotiate terms for the settlement of the Mex War
    b. In Congress, fight between "No Territory Whigs" and the "All Mexico Dems"
    c. Trist was recalled but decided to stay and finish the treaty.
    d. "$15 plus the assumption of Mexican debts to Americans

    e. Mexico recognized Rio Grande boundary with Mexico.
    f. Ceded New Mexico and Alta California to the United States
6. Emerson Quote regarding the "Poison of Mexico"- (51)
    a. "The United States will conquer Mexico, but it will be as the man swallows arsenic, which brings, him down in turn." The poison was Slavery.
7. "Slave Power Conspiracy" (51)
    a. Northerners who did not like slavery began to interpret the war as an excuse to expand slavery. Said the war, extended slavery, Strategy to create a slave power, to control the free states.
8. Controversy, arguments and tension created by the issue over expansion of Slavery in Mexican Cession (52)
    a. Some moderates in the North did not understand the big controversy
    b. New territory was not suited for slavery
    c. Numerous Southern Senators disagreed, Cotton in NM, CA would work, Slavery in mining….
    d. Southerners saw it as political, "The right to carry slaves to NM or CA is no very great Matter."
    e. "The Right to have (slave) property protected in the territory is not a mere abstraction… It would secure to the South the balance of power in the Confederacy, and, for all time…give to her the control in the operations of the Government."
9. Wilmot Proviso causes the issue of slavery to a new intensity of conflict, it also affects the parties (53-54)
    a. Wilmot was an anti-slavery Democrat
    b. Appropriations bill
    c. Said "That as an express and fundamental condition of the acquisition of any territory from the Republic of Mexico… neither slavery or involuntary servitude shall ever exist in any part of said territory."
    d. Wilmot reflected growing displeasure with slavery and Polk among Northern Democrats.
    e. Gideon Welles of CN, "The time has come when the Northern democracy should make a stand. Everything has taken a Southern shape and been controlled by Southern caprice for years. We must satisfy the Northern people… that we are not to extend the institution of slavery as a result of this war."
    f. In the House of Reps, the parties split on Slavery, North Dems and Northern Whigs vs. Southern Dems and Southern Whigs over Wilmot.
    g. It broke the national discord into competition N vs. South not based on Party
    h. Senate beat the proviso
    i. 14 free to 15 slave
10. Free Soil Movement values including white supremacy (54-55)
    a. A core of abolitionists, a group of kinda moderate slavery is harmful to free states, "Socially repressive, economically backward, and politically harmful to the interests of the free states." And "Other", slavery was not the most crucial, compromise for Lincoln and Van Buren

b. Lincoln, said, Slavery was, “an unqualified evil to the negro, the white man, and the state, which deprives our republican example of its just influence in the world… while enabling the enemies of free institutions, with plausibility, to taunt us hypocrites.”
c. Lincoln also believed, “the promulgation of abolition doctrines tends rather to increase rather than abate its evils.”
d. Free Soilers believed: Free Labor is more efficiently than slave labor because it was motivated by the inducement of wages and the ambition for upward mobility rather than by the coercion of the lash:”
e. “Slavery undermined the dignity of manual work by associating it with servility and thereby degraded white labor wherever bondage existed; slavery inhibited education and social improvements, and kept slaves and poor whites in ignorance.”
f. “Slavery must be kept out of all new territories so that free labor could flourish there.”
g. The Wilmot people were still racist.

11. Southern view of Free Soil movement, Calhoun quotes political beliefs (56-57)
    a. Earlier interpretation of slavery as a Pre-1820 "necessary" "Evill" changed to a "a great, moral, social, and political blessing…" (56)
    b. Abolitionists criticized the South, the Southerners justified slavery.
    c. Pro Slavery comment, it was "a great moral, social, and political blessing- a blessing to the slave, a blessing to the master…"
    d. Pro-Southern Senators trying to explain Pro-slavery stance: "There is not a respectable system of civilization known to history whose foundation were not laid in the institution of domestic slavery."
    e. John C. Calhoun said, "Instead of an evil, slavery was a positive good…" said the territories were the "common property" of sovereign states. Acting as the joint agents of these states, Congress should no more prevent a slave owner from taking his human property to the territories than it could prevent him form taking his horse or hogs there. If the North insisted on ramming through the Wilmot proviso, the result would be "political revolution, anarchy, civil war."
    f. The attempt to prevent slavery in the new territories was resented, as an "insult to southern honor."
    g. Problem with Wilmot was potentially 10 new free states, "The North would ride over us rough shod in Congress… our only safety is in equality of power. If we do not act now, we deliberately consign our children to the flames."
    h. The Southerners felt resentment over exclusion of slavery, even though the territories would not be suited to cotton. The Southern attitude was based on perception of inferiority in the Union. They felt criticized for as "moral taint"
    i. Exclusion from the territories was seen as "degradation" of Southern rights.
    j. "The North would ride over us rough shod" in Congress, and "proclaim freedom or something equivalent to it to our slaves and reduce us to the condition of Hayti… out only safety is in equality of power… if we do not act now, we deliberately consign our children…to the flames." (57)
    k. History of limits on slavery: Northwest Ordinance, Missouri Compromise…
    l. Calhoun, old and dying, protested in Senate, "denying the right of Congress to exclude slave property from the territories." (57) His point, slave property must be allowed into the territories… if the Congress approves the Wilmot Proviso, "the result will be "political revolution, anarchy, and civil war." (58)
    m.
12. Remedies to the Wilmot Proviso, Extend MO Compromise line, Popular Sovereignty (58)
    a. To extend the Missouri Compromise to the Pacific
    b. Create Popular Sovereignty, let the people in those territories decide. (Calhoun rejected this)
    c. Democratic party tried to neutralize the conflict "continued the tradition of trying to preserve intersectional unity by avoiding a frim position." On slavery

13. Whigs and Presidential election of 1848, the Liberty Party they split (59-63)
    a. Whigs do not adopt and anti-slavery platform, they remain nebulous on the issue. "Conscience Whigs," Whigs who were abolitionists and "Cotton Whigs," non-committed on slavery, b/c they were textile industry in the North, were split.
    b. Zachary Taylor "Old Rough and Ready" becomes Whig candidate for Pres. No clear position on expansion of slavery or not. Taylor was a slave holder, the South liked him, hero of Buena Vista, Mexican War.
    c. Clay tries to run but loses… "The truth is Clay has sold himself body and soul to the Northern Anti-Slavery Whigs. Taylor on the other hand, was a Southern man, a slaveholder, a cotton planter…" he will identify with the South.
    d. Liberty Party was an abolition coalition of both "Conscience Whigs" Charles Sumner of Massachusetts, who leave the Whig party and anti-slavery Democrats who leave the Northern Democrat Party = "Barn Burners" and abolitionist Whigs nominate Van Buren for President. Another leader Salmon P. Chase, abolitionist, will become the "Free Soilers"
    e. Free Soilers, Joshua Giddings of Ohio, "Our political conflicts must be in future between slavery and freedom." (61)
    f. Democrats wanted Louis Cass (from North)
    g. "The Liberty Party is not dead… fight on and fight ever for Free Soil, Free Speech, Free Labor, and Free Men." (62)
14. Southern view of Zach Taylor and reality of Zack Taylor (59-67)
    a. Zachary Taylor was seen as a common man in Jacksonian terms.
    b. Hero of Buena Vista (his "Battle of New Orleans")
    c. Southern Whigs liked Taylor b/c they believed he would help extend slavery.
    d. Taylor owned plantations and slaves in Mississippi and Louisiana, 100s of slaves.
15. William Seward attitude on expansion of slavery (63)
    a. Seward and Lincoln were "Conscience Whigs" and support Taylor for President
    b. Seward will be a big abolitionist but will stick with the Whigs till 1854.
    c. Seward will be an important advisor to President Taylor.
    d. "Freedom and slavery are two antagonistic elements of society. Slavery can be limited to it's present bounds…" eventually, "it can and must be abolished."
    e. Free Soilers will lose the election, but they will be strategically positioned to continue the fight over slavery. "The public mind has been stirred on the subject of slavery to depths never reached before…"(63)
    f. Liberty Party, anti-Slavery Dems "Barb Burners" Anti Slavery Whigs "Conscience Whigs" "Free Soil, Free Speech, Free labor and Free Men."
    g. Seward and Lincoln were anti-spread of slavery Whigs.
    h. "The public mind has been stirred on the subject of slavery to depths never reached before the late election is only the Bunker Hill of the moral and political revolution which can terminate only in success to the side of freedom." (64)
16. Sutter's Mill (64)
    a. January 1848, gold discovered, by June people were searching for gold in the Sierras
    b. "49ers" 80k population, CA was ready for statehood.

c. Not much law in the gold fields

17. Taylor elected Whig.
    a. State Personal Liberty Laws (65)
    b. Wilmot Proviso still in the air.
    c. California about getting ready to enter the Union. Taylor wanted to bypass the territorial status and simply become a state, CA a free state.
    d. Calhoun tried to unite the Southerners in favor of Slavery expansion.
18. Compromise of 1850, role of Henry Clay and Stephan Douglas, and John C. Calhoun (70-75)
    a. Southerners call for disunion, "to resist the dictation of Northern hordes of Goths and Vandals… the South must make the necessary preparations of men and money, arms, and munitions to meet the emergency."
    b. Southerners were angry about losing the balance of power in the Senate.
    c. Southerners were also angry about Wilmot Proviso
    d. "If by your legislation you seek to drive us from the territories of California and New Mexico, I am for disunion." (68)
    e. We have calculated the value of the Union. We has you to give us our rights, if you refuse, I am for taking them by armed occupation." (68)
    f. "… that power to dictate what sort of property the State may allow a citizen to won and work – whether oxen, horses, or negroes… is alike despotic and tyrannical."
    g. Taylor had no patience for talk of secession.
    h. "Fire-eaters"
    i. Everyone was looking for a way out of the crisis, "Calhoun and other southerners continued to press for some timely and effective measure of concession by the North to avert secession." (69)
    j. Nashville Convention of Southern states to decide what to do… (things calmed down by then nothing happens)
    k. Clay came up with a compromise: CA free state, Slavery open in Mexican Cession on popular sovereignty, no slave trade in D. C., Fugitive Slave Act, Omnibus Bill, did not pass.
    l. Webster spoke to preserve the Union, "I wish to speak today, not as a Massachusetts man, nor as a Northern man, but as an American. I speak today for the preservation of the Union, Hear me for my cause."
    m. Last Calhoun speech is about equilibrium, "The great and primary cause is that the equilibrium between the South in population, wealth, power. This has happened because of discriminatory legislation favoring the North…to foster Northern enterprises at southern expense…Yankees had wantonly attacked southern institutions until one by one the bonds of Union had snapped;… nothing will be left to hold the States together except force. What could be don to forestall this fate? Because the North had always had always been the aggressor, it must cease criticizing slavery consent to a constitutional amendment…" (72)
    n. Seward spoke against compromise. "Any such compromise… slavery was an unjust backward, dying institution, its days are numbered… You cannot roll back the tide of social progress." (73)
    o. Taylor died of pickles.

p. Filmore new Whig President, delayed the New Mexico statehood.
q. Stephen Douglas, the "Little Giant" was able to get the compromise passed by breaking them up into smaller bills. "The Union is saved"

Chapter 3 "An Empire for Slavery"

Pg. 78-80) Fugitive Slave Law
"This law provided the fugitive with no protection of habeas corpus, no right to a jury trial, no right to testify in his own behalf." 78
- Slave catcher abuses
- **Personal Liberty Laws**- Try to protect runaway slaves
- Not so many slaves were running away. 100's a year.
"decade of 1850s 332 were returned" 80
"Negro population of Ontario doubled to eleven thousand."81

Pg. 81-86) Resistance to Fugitive Slave Act 1850, in North
Religious arguments to FSL
"We must trample this law under our feet… it is to be denounced, resisted, disobeyed… as moral and religious men we cannot obey an immoral or irreligious statute."82

Pg. 86) Fire Eater Response to Fugitive Slave Act
Pg. 87) Georgia Platform basically advocating Secession
"Upon faithful execution of the Fugitive Slave Law… depends the preservation of our beloved Union."
P88) Racism in the North
"Negrophobia that characterized much of the northern population… Indiana and Illinois enacted legislation barring the immigration of any black persons, free or slave."88 (the Butternuts)

Pg. 88-91) Uncle's Tom Cabin
- 300,000 couple's - 1852
- 2 Million in 10 years, Jesus figured
"Tom was a Christ figure. Like Jesus he suffered agony inflicted by evil secular power. Like Jesus he died for the sins of humankind in order to save the oppressors as well as his own people."91

-"Harriet Beecher Stowe had breathed the doctrinal air of sin, guilt, atonement, and salvation since childhood."
Summary of UTC 89
Lincoln, "So you're the little woman who wrote the book that made this great war."90
Southern response to UTC:
Southerners were outraged
"Within two years proslavery writers had answered UTC with at least fifteen novels whose thesis that slaves were better off than free workers in the North…" 90

Pg. 91 - 96) Stats (skim this, Then at page 96 Skip to page 102)
Southern Economic Development
70% export cotton
5% manufactured in the south
25% to the North
Shows limited Economic Situation in the South
Slavery limited the economic development

Pg. 102 Skim issue of repealing the ban of international slave trade
Pg. 103-107 Part III Cuba Discussion, Filibuster, 107
"Cuba must be ours."
Polk supported the idea.
"Filibuster" (from Spanish filibuster, meaning freebooter or pirate) 105
Ostend manifesto 110
William Walker is an interesting story of a filibuster 110, 111, 112
Southerners:
"A barbarous people can never become civilized without the salutary apprenticeship with slavery secured… It is the duty and decreed prerogative of the wise to guide and govern the ignorant… through slavery…"113
4th try at Nicaragua, "Walker surrendered to a British navy captain, expecting as usual to be returned to the United States. Instead the captain turned him over to local authorities…. Honduran firing squad"115

Chapter 4 Slavery, Rum, and Romanism (117-143)

1852 Election Whig Party is ready to disintegrate (117-119)

Northern Whigs began to join Democrat party
President, Dem, Franklin Pierce of NH, Pro-slavery
Pierce supported Fugitive Slave Law still a problem for anti-slavery people
Story of resistance to the FSL
Personal Liberty Laws
Story of Margaret Garner (fugitive) who was returned to slavery, kills one of her daughters to prevent her from going into slavery (120)

Kansas Nebraska Act May 1854 (121

"Even more important than the Fugitive Slave issue in arousing northern militancy was the Kansas Nebraska Act"

Killed the Whig Party
Started the Republican Party (GOP)
Rail Road connection
Southerners didn't care about the RR

Stephan Douglas was Senator from Illinois, wanted the RR, and was heavy into Chicago real estate. Douglas wanted the RR, needed southern votes, only way he could get the votes was to appeal to the southern Senators, they wanted more slave territory… Douglas made the deal. RR in exchange for the repeal of the MO Compromise they wanted to repeal the Missouri Compromise.
So the KNAct 1. Repealed the MO Compromise, push Popular Sovereignty (people who live in the territory decide the issue of slavery) in the old Louisiana Purchase, thereby, allowing for the possibility of slavery in that territory.

Douglas Argued:
The territory was not good for slavery.
He said self-government/democracy was the best solution

Senator David Atchison of MO, reflected Southern attitudes,
"Intemperate, profane, and bellicose, Atchison was the most outspoken defender of southern rights in the Senate." 122
MO would be "surrounded by free territory… with emissaries of abolitionists around us… this species of property would become insecure."

Abolitionist Responses to KNA

Congressmen spoke out against
- Salmon Chase
- Charles Sumner
- Joshua Giddings
- William Seward

Abolitionists societies scream!
"This crime shall not be consummated… Despite corruption, bribery, and treachery, Nebraska, the heart of our continent, shall forever continue free."
Douglas' bill, "a terrible outrage… the more I look at it the more enraged I become. It needs but little to make me an out & out abolitionist." 124

Southern Whigs joined the Dem party.
Anti-Slavery Coalition (Anti-Nebraska) Northern Whigs and anti-slavery Dems, create a new party the Republicans (GOP)

LINCOLN: Oct 1854, speeches in Peoria and Springfield (see p127)

Lincoln and the Nebraska Act,

Lincoln was "aroused as he had never been before."
He argued the legacy of the founders, to end slavery eventually and that repealing MO Comp was against the tradition…
Lincoln denied, "that there can be moral right in the enslaving of one man by another."127

He did not blame the Southerners for slavery, he was very understanding of the problem.

When they "tell us they are no more responsible for the origin of slavery, than we are, I acknowledge the fact… they are just what we would be in their situation… When it is said that the institution exists, and that it is very difficult to get rid of it."
"I surely will not blame them for not doing what I should not know how to do myself. If all earthly power were given me, I should not know what to do, as to the existing institution. My first impulse would be to free all the slaves, and send them to Liberia." (which he found impossible)
"What then, free them and keep them among us as underlings? Is it quite certain that this betters their condition? … What next? Free them, and make them politically and socially, our equals?... We well know those of the great mass of white people will not… A universal feeling, whether well of ill formed cannot be safely disregarded." 128

He recognized the Constitution allowed for slavery, but he did not want it spread:

But, "that furnishes no more excuse for permitting slavery to go into our own free territory, then it would for reviving the African Slave trade."
"The great moral wrong and injustice (opening up more territory to slavery, would put slavery) on the high road to extension and perpetuity…"128

He argued slavery was contrary to self-government.

"When the white man governs himself that is self-government; but when he governs himself and governs another man… that is despotism…. The negro is a man…. There can be no moral right in connection with one man's making a slave of another, let know one be deceived…" 128

He connected slavery to the American Revolution:

"Near eighty years ago we began by declaring that all men are created equal; but now from that beginning we have run to the other declaration, that for some men to enslave others is a "sacred right of self-government". These principles cannot stand together…. Our republican robe is soiled, and trailed in the dust. Let us repurify it. Let us re-adopt the Declaration of Independence, and with it the practices and policy…." 129

Lincoln's View of Know Nothings:

"of their principles I think little better than I do of the slavery extensions… 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 readit 'all men 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 pretense of loving liberty- to Russia, for instance, where despotism can be taken pure, and without the base alloy of hypocrisy." 141

Republican platform 1854 (129)

Abolition of Slavery in District of Columbia
Repeal of Fugitive Slave Law
Exclude slavery from territories
Slavery must not expand

1854 Election Dems lose power in state legislatures in North.

Know Nothing Party 130-134

This section explains the background of the Know Nothing Party
Nativism
Political Coalition between the Know Nothings and the GOP
Lots of power in North, NE, but also in the South
Discussion of immigration, especially Irish, and hostility to Catholics 131-132
Archbishop Hughes
More Know Nothings 135-143
Know Nothing Platform 136

Generally, Temperance
Opposed taxes to support parochial schools
Reduce the power of the foreign born (voter suppression)
(naturalization supposed to take 5 years but some cities allowed for immediate franchise)

"Competing with free blacks at the bottom of the social order, Irish Americans were intensely anti-negro and frequently rioted…" 137

Nativist view:
issues of "….freedom, temperance, and Protestantism against slavery, rum, and Romanism." 137

"You have an important duty to perform tomorrow in the election… Father Mullen and the Jesuits can no longer rule this city…The Irish are… making our elections scenes of violence and fraud… Americans! Shall we be ruled by Irish and Germans? 141

Lincoln's View of Know Nothings:
"of their principles I think little better than I do of the slavery extensions… 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 readit 'all men 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 pretense of loving liberty- to Russia, for instance, where despotism can be taken pure, and without the base alloy of hypocrisy." 141

Temperance Movement 133-134 (connecting to Nativism)

Protestant movement
Anti-Immigrant
Dry Laws/Wets
Nativist attitude:
"It is liquor which fills so many Catholic (as well as other) home with discord and violence… fills our prisons with Irish culprits, and makes the gallows hideous with so many Catholic murders…. The fact that the Catholics of this country keep a great many more grog shops and sell more liquor in proportion to their number than any other denomination, creates and keeps alive a strong prejudice against them." New York Tribune (1853) 135