



Lesson 57

Millerite History part 3

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In part 2 of this series on Millerite history, we looked at some external events. We saw that from the beginning of the line, we could see the issue of slavery. In part 3 of this series, we'll look at more of the external events in Millerite history, which nearly all have to do with Texas.

1844

The Subject of Texas

Americans wanted to annex Texas. They wanted to add Texas to the United States as another state. "When the Louisiana territory was acquired by the United States from France in 1803, many in the U.S. believed the new territory included parts or all of present-day Texas." *Wikipedia*. That's what began the problem. Texas was owned by Mexico at the time and they had no intention of giving it up. However, most Americans thought they already owned Texas. But acquiring Texas wasn't the only problem that needed to be dealt with. The question was: was Texas going to be a free state or a slave state. The North wanted it to be a free state while the South wanted it to be a slave state. At the time, there was already an equal divide of slave and free state. That was the big issue with the annexation of Texas. If they were going to annex Texas, what type of state would it become?

John Tyler

John Tyler (the vice president who became president after William H. Harrison died) wanted to be re-elected. But he had a problem: he didn't have a political party. The Whigs had kicked him out of their party and even tried to start impeaching him because they thought he had abused his veto power. Tyler had tried to befriend the Democrats: he filled his cabinet with them after the cabinet Harrison had appointed all quit (except one person). Still no one really liked him. He tried to get some people who would likely be his opponents, like Martin Van Buren, out of the race; he suggested Van Buren should be on the Supreme Court, but that didn't work. He also made a plan to try to get people to like him by doing something that they would like- annexing Texas. He wanted to do that to expand the US' influence. He thought that if he annexed Texas the people would think he was a hero and re-elect him. In 1843, secret negotiations began between the secretary of state and the leaders of Texas. In early 1844 news of the negotiations began to spread among politicians, but in late February the secretary of state died in a canon explosion- he had just finished the negotiations, but a treaty had not been signed nor sent to the Senate for approval. Tyler replaced him in early May with John C. Calhoun, who was an extreme Southerner, and wanted to annex Texas to expand the south and slavery. Shortly after the treaty was signed, and in late April Tyler sent it to the Senate. That started a fight over the issue of annexing Texas that divided the country and played a large part in the 1844 election; John Tyler's plan did not work and he could not get enough support to try to win re-election.

Martin Van Buren

Martin Van Buren had to drop out the race in 1844. Before he dropped out, Van Buren was running for re-election. During that time, we have seen that people were talking about annexing Texas. Most people wanted to annex Texas and among those people were Andrew Jackson. Jackson wanted to avoid the question of Texas while he was president because he didn't want war with Mexico. But now that Texas was an even bigger question, he supported the annexation. On April 20, 1844, Van Buren answered a question on whether he supported annexation. Van Buren worried about Mexico, so he tried to keep the possibility of annexation open but without making any commitments. This was a terrible mistake. He had just lost support of Jackson- his only hope of re-election. He also faced strong opposition from his fellow Democrats. One in particular, John C. Calhoun, shortly before this had written a letter stating his reasons for annexation. This letter was leaked after the statement from Van Buren and it only added to the opposition. This was it for Van Buren- he no longer had a chance of winning the 1844 election. Now Democrats had to find a new candidate.

Henry Clay and James Polk

In 1844, there was a US presidential election. It started off with multiple candidates but the final two were Henry Clay and James Polk. Henry Clay was an American politician, among other things, who served in the United States Senate and House of Representatives before running for president. He was one of the people who helped found the Whig Party and went on to be one of the most prominent Whigs in his day. Henry Clay was also a very liberal politician. James Polk, on the other hand, was a totally different story. Polk was also an American politician as well. He served in the United States House of Representatives and he was a governor. James Polk is known for extending the territory of the United States during the Mexican-American War (which we will talk about later). Polk was a Democrat, unlike Clay. The Democrats, at the time, were mostly the Southerners who supported slavery. They were also conservative. That was who Polk was. He owned a plantation in Mississippi. To put it simply, Henry Clay was the good guy and James Polk was the bad guy in this history.

The Presidential Election

In 1844 another election took place. In May, both parties (the Democrat party and the Whig party) held their conventions. Henry Clay was unanimously nominated to run for president, and they chose Theodore Frelinghuysen to run for vice president. Frelinghuysen was a strict Protestant so they chose him to balance Clay who was not. The Democrats, on the other hand, had a harder time nominating someone; Martin Van Buren, as we have seen, had lost his support. After several votes James K. Polk was nominated to run for president and George M. Dallas for vice president. John Tyler (the current president) created his own party: the Democratic-Republican party, which nominated him to run for president. He said that he was only running to get support for Polk, so in August he dropped out of the race and his supporters went over to Polk. There was also another party in that election: the Liberty party. They were strong abolitionists and they nominated James G. Birney to run for president (and Thomas Morris for vice president). The Whigs thought they would win like in 1840, but while Clay didn't want slavery to expand, he was unstable in his views of the annexation

of Texas and what he thought of slavery. The Democrats attacked him for this. Polk was clear that he wanted Texas (for the Southerners) and all of Oregon (for the Northerners); he believed in expanding the United States (which is called Manifest Destiny). These views were more popular. The election took place from early November to early December 1844. James K. Polk won both the popular vote and the electoral college vote. Because of Henry Clay's position on slavery (and because he was a slave owner himself) some abolitionists voted for James G. Birney (nominee of the abolitionist anti-annexation Liberty party). Enough people voted for Birney in two states which allowed Polk to win them; if Henry Clay had won one of those states (New York), he would have won the election. That did not happen, so Democrat James K. Polk became the 11th US president.

1845

Annexation of Texas

On December 29, 1845, Texas was accepted as the 28th state in the Union. After the election, in December of 1844, John Tyler called on Congress to pass his Texas treaty. On December 28, 1844, the House of Representatives, which was controlled by Democrats, passed an amended version of the bill, and sent it to the Senate. The Senate, which was controlled by Whigs, compromised and passed a version of the House's bill. On March 1, 1845, John Tyler signed the annexation bill, and sent the House's version, of course, to Texas two days later. James Polk took office on March 4, 1845. And on June 23rd, Texas' congress voted to accept the annexation. They voted against the will of their president who was against annexation. Polk signed the bill on December 29, 1845 and therefore Texas was accepted as the 28th state in the United States. Texas officially joined the US on February 19, 1846 as a slave state. So on December 29, 1844 Texas was annexed and became the 28th state and on February 19, 1846 it officially joined the United States.

1846-1848

Mexican-American War

The Mexican-American War was a war that was fought between Mexico and the United States from April 25, 1846 to February 2, 1848. It took place because the United States annexed Texas in 1845. In 1836, during the Texian revolution, a Mexican general was taken prisoner by the Texian army. He was made to sign a treaty which made Texas an independent country. Then in 1845, the United States annexed Texas. Most of the citizens in the United States wanted that to happen. But Mexico did not recognize the treaty and thus still considered Texas part of its own territory. The United States annexed Texas by peaceful means, but then sent troops into the area. Polk wanted Mexico to start a conflict so that he could declare war. It worked as planned and Mexico attacked the United States troops. In turn, the United States declared war on Mexico. The Mexican-American War began. The United States invaded the upper parts of Mexico, but when the Mexican government refused to sign a treaty; they moved further in. The United States defeated Mexico on the battlefield, but some parts of Mexico refused to acknowledge their loss and therefore wouldn't sign a treaty. That continued until 1848. Polk had previously sent an envoy to Mexico to sign a peace treaty, but after Mexico continued to refuse to sign one; he removed them in 1848. Against that order, Nicholas Trist (one of the people Polk sent to negotiate the treaty) stayed and finally signed a treaty with Mexico, bringing the war to an end. Mexico acknowledged the loss of Texas to the United States.

The Presidential election

In 1848, there was another presidential election. It was between a Whig and a Democrat again. At the Democratic convention (in May of 1848) the Democrats nominated Lewis Cass to run for president and William O. Butler to run for vice president. Cass did not mind the spread of slavery. Former President Martin Van Buren had wanted the Democrat nomination (again) but he didn't get it. So he formed the Free-Soil party that opposed slavery in the new territories. That party nominated him to run for president in August (and Charles F. Adams for vice president). The Whigs nominated Zachary Taylor to run for president and Millard Fillmore for vice president, in their June 1848 convention. Zachary Taylor was a slave owner, had never been a politician, and had never even voted; but he was a successful general in the Mexican-American War. He was very popular among the people and he said his ideas were more in line with the Whigs; he also slightly supported a bill that would have outlawed slavery in the new territories the United States had just gotten from Mexico (that bill failed in Congress though). The Whigs chose him because they needed someone popular since the Democrats were doing well because of the war. Taylor supported unity, and the Whigs didn't really talk about anything else for fear of alienating people. The Whig's vice president nominee, Fillmore, was not fully antislavery, but he was a Northerner (while Taylor was a Southerner). All three parties (Whigs, Democrats, and Free-Soilers) campaigned a lot. On November 7, 1848 the election took place- this was the first election where all of the states voted on the same day. The Whigs won. Martin Van Buren did well for a third party candidate, but his candidacy cost Cass the election because Democrats voted for the Free-Soil party, not the Democrat party, in New York: giving the state's electors to Taylor. The Whig, Zachary Taylor,

became the 12th president of the United States after winning both the popular vote and the electoral college vote.

1850

The 1850 compromise

In September of 1850 a compromise was made. After the Mexican-American War, the United States saw that they had won more cattle and land than just Texas. A debate then broke out on whether this extra land would become free states or slave states. The South wanted every new state to be free for slavery, but the North didn't want slavery to expand; knowing that if slavery didn't expand, it would decline to nothing. In January of 1850 Henry Clay introduced a 5-bill compromise. President Zachary Taylor opposed the bill because he didn't want to appease the South. But on July 9th, Zachary Taylor died. Millard Fillmore, his Vice President, then took the office of the President. In September of 1850 Congress passed the compromise, then sent it to the President. Fillmore was a Whig, but he was a compromiser, so he signed it into law. The 5 bills were: permitting slavery in Washington DC but not slave trade, allowing California (part of the extra land) to enter the US as a free state, making the state of Texas smaller and giving it \$10,000,000 in compensation, letting Utah and New Mexico (the rest of the extra land) decide whether they would be slave or free states, and the Fugitive Slave Law. Those were the 5 bills of the 1850 compromise. The first 4 were straight forward. Utah and New Mexico later permitted slavery. It is the Fugitive Slave Law that we want to focus on. At the beginning, it seemed like a big win for the South. The law forced citizens to help capture slaves even if the citizens were strong abolitionists in a free state. The law also hired people and payed them to hunt down escaped slaves. This law was met with more criticism from the North than the Fugitive Slave Law in 1793. Free states passed laws for the one purpose of going around the system (the law). It was in this time when the Underground Railroad came to its climax- this was the time when Harriet Tubman was doing her work. There were even some that broke into court houses to free escaped slaves in custody. So in 1850, a compromise was made in September- 5 bills were passed and probably the most important bill was the Fugitive Slave Law.

Whigs to Republicans

The Whig party ceased to exist in history- in name. It transformed into the Republican party. How did the Whig Party become the Republican Party? In 1854, an act was passed called the Kansas-Nebraska Act, which repealed the Missouri Compromise. Opposition to the act in the North arose which consisted of Democrats, "Independents", and Whigs. In Michigan and Wisconsin, the opposition group called themselves the Republican Party. The Republican Party didn't want to abolish slavery; they just didn't want it to expand. They effectively positioned themselves as the heirs to the crumbling Whig party by focusing on slavery. Their competition for the position was a group of anti-Catholics known as the Know-Nothings, who labored on the fact that there was a Catholic conspiracy. The Republican Party appealed to the North while the Know-Nothings appealed to the South and some of the North. In 1855, a man convinced a large portion of the remaining Whigs to join the Republican Party. That ended the Whig Party for good. The next year, in 1856, the presidential election was between Democrats, Know-Nothings, and Republicans; Whigs were off the scene.

The Presidential election

The first election that the Republican party won was the election of 1860. In that election four main people were competing to be president. A Democrat (James Buchanan) was the president before 1860, but he did not want a second term so the Democrat party had to choose someone else. In April/May the Democrats held their convention, but because of the issue of slavery some southern Democrats left the convention; they failed to nominate someone to run for president. So the convention was postponed. In mid-May the Republican party held their convention (the second one they ever had). There were a few people who could have been nominated, but on the third vote Abraham Lincoln was chosen as the nominee for president. He was a moderate and a not very experienced politician. The Republicans chose him because he had not alienated people from the party like the other men (abolitionists were upset about the decision though). The Republicans also nominated Hannibal Hamlin to run for vice president. In June, the Democrats held another convention, and again the southern Democrats left (this time most of them). But the remaining Democrats nominated someone (Stephen A. Douglas) for president and vice president anyway. The southern Democrats met in late June and also nominated someone for president and vice president; for their presidential nominee they chose the then current vice president John C. Breckinridge. Another, smaller party- the Constitutional Union party- also nominated people for president (slave holder John Bell) and vice president. The southern Democrats believed that the government should protect and expand slavery, they also strongly believed in states' rights. The other Democrats believed that the territories should decide for themselves for or against slavery. The Republicans did not want slavery to extend into the territories, but some of them (including Lincoln) didn't care to mess with slavery where it already was; they also believed in a strong federal government. The Constitution Union party did not want to talk about slavery at all. All four parties campaigned vigorously, but the actual candidates didn't do much. Abraham Lincoln did not want to split the Republican party so he told people in the campaign not to talk about sensitive things. His plan worked- the election was on November 6, 1860, more people than ever voted, and the Republicans won. While Lincoln won both the popular vote and the electoral college vote, he didn't win the popular vote by a large amount since there were three other candidates in the election. The Republicans didn't win a single southern state, nor did they get votes in any of those (except for a tiny amount in Virginia); Lincoln wasn't even on the ballots in many of the southern states. But still Abraham Lincoln became the first Republican and the 16th president of the United States.

1863-1865

The Civil War part 1

The first part of the Civil War was from 1861 to 1863. In 1860 Abraham Lincoln was elected. That caused many southern states to secede from the Union. South Carolina seceded from the Union on December 20, 1860. Mississippi seceded on January 9, 1861. Florida seceded the next day on January 10th. Alabama seceded the day after that on January 11th. Georgia seceded on January 19th and Louisiana seceded on January 26th. Together, in February of 1861 those six states formed the Confederacy- a new government with its own confederate constitution. With their own government, the Confederacy didn't want anything to do with the Union, so they began taking control of Union forts in their states. On March 2, 1861, Texas joined the confederacy. On April 12th, confederate forces in South Carolina opened fire on the Union held Fort Sumter. The next day the Union surrendered that fort. On April 15th, Abraham Lincoln called for 75,000 soldiers to put an end to the rebellion and thus the Civil War began. Later on April 17, 1862 Virginia Joined the Confederacy, followed by Arkansas on May 6th, North Carolina on May 20th, and Tennessee on June 8th. These eleven confederate states waged war against the twenty-five Union states. But the Confederacy's minority didn't cause them lose the war at the onset. For the first three years of the Civil War, the Confederacy was the one that was winning. But what was their excuse for fighting against their government? Four of the eleven states that seceded from the Union: Texas, Mississippi, Georgia, and South Carolina, issued Declarations of Causes. The Declarations said that the reason they were seceding was because the Union was violating their freedom, religious liberty, and state rights. This was what they said was their reason for seceding and eventually engaging in the Civil War, but we know that it was more than that. They would have liked Abraham Lincoln if he wasn't against slavery, so the reason the South fought the Civil War was because of slavery, but their excuse was rights. The turning point in the Civil War was the battle of Gettysburg. On July 1, 1863 a battle at Gettysburg took place. This first battle was a victory for the South. On July 2nd, the Confederates and the Union fought another battle. Finally, the next day, on July 3rd, the final battle at Gettysburg took place. The Confederates were sure that their "invincible" army would win once more, but they were wrong. This was the bloodiest battle in the whole Civil War, at Gettysburg, over 8,500 Union soldiers were killed, captured, or went missing, with over 14,000 injured. On the other side, over 9,300 Confederate soldiers were killed, captured, or went missing, with over 18,700 injured. The last battle of Gettysburg was a victory for the Union and marked a turning point in the Civil War to the Union's favor.

The Civil War part 2

The Civil War began in 1861 and ended in 1865. That means the second half of the Civil War began in 1863, which was the turning point. The following year, on March 9th, Ulysses S. Grant was appointed as the commander of the entire Union army. Battles between the North and South continued through that year. But that wasn't the only thing that was happening in the United States in 1864. There was a presidential election going on. The Democrat nominee was George B. McClellan and the Republican nominee was Abraham Lincoln.

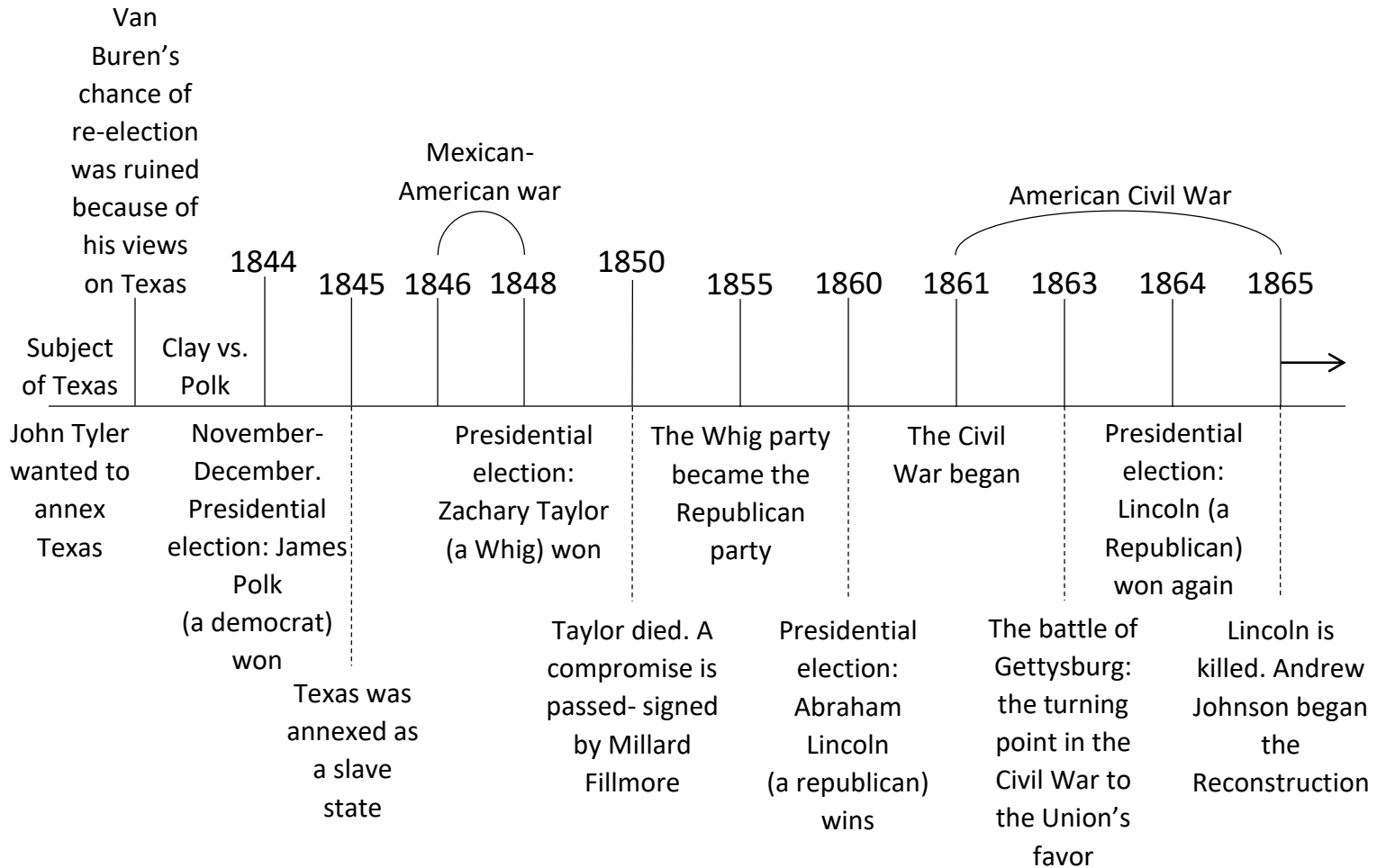
George McClellan was running with George H. Pendleton. Abraham Lincoln was running with Andrew Johnson. Just like the Whig Party before them, the Republican Party didn't know how to stand fast; they compromised. Andrew Johnson was a compromised Vice President. He and Abraham Lincoln went on to become the Vice President and President, respectively. On January 31, 1865, slavery was abolished with the 13th amendment. And on April 9th, Robert E. Lee (a Confederate general) surrendered to Grant. The Civil War was over; the North had won, and Abraham Lincoln was president.

Post 1865

The Reconstruction

The period after the Civil War is called the Reconstruction. Abraham Lincoln was re-elected on November 8, 1864, so he would have been the president in the beginning of the Reconstruction. But on April 15th he was killed by someone who didn't like that they couldn't talk bad about African Americans anymore. Andrew Johnson, since he was the Vice President, took over the presidency. But the Republicans had compromised with his nomination; they chose him to try to show unity. Johnson was a Democrat; specifically, he was a "war Democrat" so he was against the Confederacy and supportive of the Civil War. He supported a quick restoration of the Confederate states into the Union as long as they abolished slavery, but he did not support protection for the former slaves. Under him many southern states passed laws that restricted the rights of former slaves. The Republican dominated Congress passed many bills to try to stop the influence of the slave states and help the freed slaves. Johnson opposed many of their bills and he even vetoed a few, but Congress overruled his vetoes. The Congress even passed a bill limiting his power, but when he broke it they impeached him (in 1868) and he escaped removal from office by just one vote. All of this trouble just because they had compromised on the vice president and chose a Democrat.

In Summary:



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