The American Nation
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Contents

xi  Alphabetical Table of Contents
xiii Alphabetical List of Authors
xiv List of Illustrations
xvii Introduction
xxvi Note on the Texts

PART I: The Civil War
  4  The Crittenden Compromise, 1860
  7  South Carolina Ordinance of Secession, 1860
  9  South Carolina Declaration of Causes of Secession, 1860
  12 Mississippi Ordinance of Secession, 1861
  14 Mississippi Declaration of Causes of Secession, 1861
  15  Virginia Ordinance to Repeal the Ratification of the Constitution of the United States of America, 1861
  15  Missouri Act Declaring the Political Ties Heretofore Existing between the State of Missouri and the United States of America Dissolved, 1861
  16  Ordinance of the Kentucky Convention, 1861
  20  Constitution of the Confederate States of America, 1861
  29  Farewell Speech to Congress, Jefferson Davis, 1861
  31  Inaugural Address, Jefferson Davis, 1861
  34  First Inaugural Address, Abraham Lincoln, 1861
  39  Proclamation Calling the Militia and Convening Congress, Abraham Lincoln, 1861
  40  Proclamation of Blockade against Southern Ports, Abraham Lincoln, 1861
  41  Message to Congress in Special Session, Abraham Lincoln, 1861
  48  Proclamation Suspending Writ of Habeas Corpus, Abraham Lincoln, 1863
  51  Message to Congress on Gradual Abolishment of Slavery, Abraham Lincoln, 1862
  52  Proclamation Revoking General Hunter’s Emancipation Order, Abraham Lincoln, 1862
  53  Emancipation Proclamation, Abraham Lincoln, 1862
  54  Emancipation Proclamation, Abraham Lincoln, 1863
  56  Gettysburg Address, Abraham Lincoln, 1863
  57  Message to the Congress of Confederate States, Jefferson Davis, 1864

  60  Act to Increase the Military Force of the Confederate States, 1865
  61  Last Order, Robert E. Lee, 1865

PART II: Reconstruction

  68  Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction, Abraham Lincoln, 1863
  70  Veto Message with Wade-Davis Proclamation and Bill, Abraham Lincoln, 1864
  73  Wade-Davis Manifesto, 1864
  79  Special Field Order no. 15, William Tecumseh Sherman, 1865
  81  Second Inaugural Address, Abraham Lincoln, 1865
  82  Last Public Address, Abraham Lincoln, 1865
  85  Constitution of Indiana, Article XIII, 1851
  85  Black Code of Mississippi, 1865
  91  U.S. Constitution, Thirteenth Amendment, 1865
  91  Freedmen’s Bureau Bill, 1865
  92  Second Freedmen’s Bureau Bill, 1865
  94  Veto of the Second Freedmen’s Bureau Bill, Andrew Johnson, 1866
  99  Civil Rights Act of 1866
  102  First Reconstruction Act of 1867
  103  Veto of the First Reconstruction Act, Andrew Johnson, 1867
  111  First and Second Supplements to the First Reconstruction Act of 1867
  115  Articles of Impeachment of Andrew Johnson, 1868
  122  Debate on Proposed Fourteenth Amendment, 1866
  135  U.S. Constitution, Fourteenth Amendment, 1868
  136  U.S. Constitution, Fifteenth Amendment, 1870
  137  Enforcement Act of 1870
  142  Enforcement Act of 1871
  144  Enforcement Act of 1875
  146  Constitution of the State of Mississippi, 1868
  150  Slaughter-House Cases, 1873
  171  Inaugural Address, Rutherford B. Hayes, 1877
  175  Civil Rights Cases, 1883
  189  Constitution of the State of Mississippi, 1890
PART III: Consolidating Markets
198 The Homestead Act, 1862
200 The Pacific Railway Act, 1862
207 The Morrill Act, 1862
209 The Gospel of Wealth, Andrew Carnegie, 1889
215 Cross of Gold Speech, William Jennings Bryan, 1896
219 First Inaugural Address, William McKinley, 1897
223 First Annual Message, William McKinley, 1897
226 Lochner v. New York, 1905

PART IV: Consolidating Culture?
238 Twelfth Annual Report of the Massachusetts State School Board, Horace Mann, 1848
233 Address on Colonization, Abraham Lincoln, 1862
236 Atlanta Exposition Speech, Booker T. Washington, 1895
239 Plessy v. Ferguson, 1896
270 The Talented Tenth, W. E. B. DuBois, 1903
279 Navajo Treaty, 1868
284 Dawes (Indian Lands) Act, 1887
Blaine Amendments
287 Proposed Constitutional Amendment
Regarding Religious Establishment, 1876
287 Massachusetts Constitutional
Provision, 1855
The Mormon Polygamy Cases
288 Reynolds v. United States, 1879
292 The Late Corporation of the Church of
Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints v.
United States, 1890
Immigration Policy
298 Immigration Act of 1882
301 Immigration Act of 1921
302 Immigration Act of 1924
306 The Principles of Scientific Management, Frederick
Winslow Taylor, 1911
314 Buck v. Bell, 1927
316 Introduction to I'll Take My Stand, Twelve
Southerners, 1930

PART V: Reform Movements
324 Populist Party Platform, 1892
327 Coin's Financial School, William H. Harvey, 1894
331 What Pragmatism Means, William James, 1907
339 The Socialist Party and the Working Class,
Eugene V. Debs, 1908
347 Preamble to the Constitution and By-Laws of the
Industrial Workers of the World, 1908
348 The Subjective Necessity for Social Settlements,
Jane Addams, 1892
356 Why the Ward Boss Rules, Jane Addams, 1898
360 Declaration of Principles of the Progressive Party,
Theodore Roosevelt, 1912
The Income Tax
368 Speech on Constitutionality of an Income Tax,
William Howard Taft, 1909
369 U.S. Constitution, Sixteenth Amendment, 1913
Direct Election of U.S. Senators
370 Resolution Opposing Direct Election
of Senators, 1893
371 U.S. Constitution, Seventeenth
Amendment, 1913
372 Address to Woman's State Temperance Society,
Elizabeth Cady Stanton, 1853
375 Prohibition Debate, 1917
382 U.S. Constitution, Eighteenth Amendment, 1919
382 U.S. Constitution, Twenty-first Amendment, 1933
Women's Suffrage
383 The Fundamental Principle of a Republic,
Anna Howard Shaw, 1915
391 Debate on Women's Suffrage, 1919
396 U.S. Constitution, Nineteenth
Amendment, 1920

PART VI: Consolidating Government
400 The Pendleton Act, 1883
404 The Interstate Commerce Act, 1887
410 Veto of Texas Seed Bill, Grover Cleveland, 1887
412 Sherman Antitrust Act, 1890
414 First Message to Congress, Theodore Roosevelt, 1901
418 Federal Trade Commission Act, 1914
423 The Place of the Independent Commission,
Joseph B. Eastman, 1928
428 Radio Address on Unemployment Relief, Herbert
Hoover, 1931
431 Commonwealth Club Address, Franklin Delano
Roosevelt, 1932
438 First Inaugural Address, Franklin Delano
Roosevelt, 1933
441 Federal Emergency Relief Act, 1933
PART VII: America in the World

482 Monroe Doctrine, *James Monroe*, 1823
486 Roosevelt Corollary to Monroe Doctrine, *Theodore Roosevelt*, 1904
492 The Fallacy of Territorial Extension, *William Graham Sumner*, 1896
496 The Star of Empire, *Alfred J. Beveridge*, 1900
505 Open Door Note, *John Hay*, 1899
507 Woodrow Wilson on Neutrality and War
508 Statement on American Neutrality, 1914
508 Address to the Senate Calling for Declaration of War, 1917
513 Espionage Act, 1917
515 Free Speech in Wartime, *Robert La Follette*, 1917
527 Sedition Act, 1918
528 *Schenck v. United States*, 1919
531 Fourteen Points Speech, *Woodrow Wilson*, 1918
535 Covenant of the League of Nations, 1919
541 Speech against the League of Nations, *Henry Cabot Lodge*, 1919
555 Kellogg-Briand Pact, 1929
558 Note on Chinchow, *Henry L. Stimson*, 1932
559 Neutrality and War, *Charles A. Lindbergh*, 1939
562 The Atlantic Charter, 1941
564 The Four Freedoms, *Franklin Delano Roosevelt*, 1941
568 Pearl Harbor Speech, *Franklin Delano Roosevelt*, 1941
571 Sources
573 Index
### Alphabetical Table of Contents

- Act to Increase the Military Force of the Confederate States, 1865 / 60
- Address on Colonization, *Abraham Lincoln*, 1862 / 253
- Address to the Senate Calling for Declaration of War, *Woodrow Wilson*, 1917 / 508
- Address to Woman's State Temperance Society, *Elizabeth Cady Stanton*, 1853 / 372
- Articles of Impeachment of Andrew Johnson, 1868 / 115
- The Atlantic Charter, 1941 / 562
- Black Code of Mississippi, 1865 / 85
- *Buck v. Bell*, 1927 / 314
- Civil Rights Act of 1866 / 99
- Civil Rights Cases, 1883 / 175
- Coin's Financial School, *William H. Harvey*, 1894 / 327
- Commonwealth Club Address, *Franklin Delano Roosevelt*, 1932 / 431
- Constitution of Indiana, Article XIII, 1851 / 85
- Constitution of the Confederate States of America, 1861 / 20
- Constitution of the State of Mississippi, 1868 / 146
- Constitution of the State of Mississippi, 1890 / 189
- Covenant of the League of Nations, 1919 / 535
- The Crittenden Compromise, 1860 / 4
- Dawes (Indian Lands) Act, 1877 / 284
- Debate on Proposed Fourteenth Amendment, 1866 / 122
- Debate on Women's Suffrage, 1919 / 391
- Emancipation Proclamation, *Abraham Lincoln*, 1862 / 53
- Emancipation Proclamation, *Abraham Lincoln*, 1863 / 54
- Enforcement Act of 1870 / 137
- Enforcement Act of 1871 / 142
- Enforcement Act of 1875 / 144
- Espionage Act, 1917 / 515
- The Fallacy of Territorial Extension, *William Graham Sumner*, 1896 / 492
- Farewell Speech to Congress, *Jefferson Davis*, 1861 / 29
- Federal Emergency Relief Act, 1933 / 441
- Federal Trade Commission Act, 1914 / 418
- Fireside Chat on the Reorganization of the Judiciary, *Franklin Delano Roosevelt*, 1937 / 466
- First and Second Supplements to the First Reconstruction Act of 1867 / 111
- First Annual Message, *William McKinley*, 1897 / 223
- First Inaugural Address, *Abraham Lincoln*, 1861 / 34
- First Inaugural Address, *Franklin Delano Roosevelt*, 1933 / 438
- First Inaugural Address, *William McKinley*, 1897 / 219
- First Message to Congress, *Theodore Roosevelt*, 1901 / 414
- First Reconstruction Act of 1867 / 102
- The Four Freedoms, *Franklin Delano Roosevelt*, 1941 / 564
- Fourteen Points Speech, *Woodrow Wilson*, 1918 / 531
- Freedmen's Bureau Bill, 1865 / 91
- Free Speech in Wartime, *Robert LaFollette*, 1917 / 515
- Gettysburg Address, *Abraham Lincoln*, 1865 / 56
- The Homestead Act, 1862 / 198
- 'I'll Make My Stand' (Introduction), Twelve Southerners, 1930 / 316
- Immigration Act of 1882 / 298
- Immigration Act of 1921 / 301
- Immigration Act of 1924 / 302
- Inaugural Address, *Jefferson Davis*, 1861 / 31
- Inaugural Address, *Rutherford B. Hayes*, 1877 / 171
- The Interstate Commerce Act, 1887 / 404
- Kellogg-Briand Pact, 1929 / 555
- Last Public Address, *Abraham Lincoln*, 1865 / 82
- The Late Corporation of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints v. United States, 1890 / 292
- Lochner v. New York, 1905 / 226
- Massachusetts Constitutional Provision, 1855 / 287
- Message to Congress in Special Session, *Abraham Lincoln*, 1861 / 41
- Message to Congress on Gradual Abolishment of Slavery, *Abraham Lincoln*, 1862 / 51
Message to the Congress of Confederate States, Jefferson Davis, 1864 / 57
Mississippi Declaration of Causes of Secession, 1861 / 14
Mississippi Ordinance of Secession, 1861 / 12
Missouri Act Declaring the Political Ties Heretofore Existing between the State of Missouri and the United States of America Dissolved, 1861 / 15
Monroe Doctrine, James Monroe, 1823 / 482
The Morrill Act, 1862 / 207
National Industrial Recovery Act, 1933 / 444
National Labor Relations Board v. Jones & Laughlin Steel, 1937 / 472
Navajo Treaty, 1868 / 279
Neutrality and War, Charles A. Lindbergh, 1939 / 555
Note on Chinchow, Henry L. Stimson, 1932 / 558
Open Door Note, John Hay, 1899 / 505
Ordinance of the Kentucky Convention, 1861 / 16
The Pacific Railway Act, 1862 / 220
Pearl Harbor Speech, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, 1941 / 568
The Pendleton Act, 1883 / 400
The Place of the Independent Commission, Joseph B. Eastman, 1928 / 423
Plenary v. Ferguson, 1896 / 259
Populist Party Platform, 1892 / 374
Preamble to the Constitution and By-Laws of the Industrial Workers of the World, 1908 / 347
The Principles of Scientific Management, Frederick Winslow Taylor, 1911 / 306
Proclamation Calling the Militia and Convening Congress, Abraham Lincoln, 1861 / 39
Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction, Abraham Lincoln, 1863 / 68
Proclamation of Blockade against Southern Ports, Abraham Lincoln, 1861 / 40
Proclamation Revoking General Hunter’s Emancipation Order, Abraham Lincoln, 1862 / 52
Proclamation Suspending Writ of Habeas Corpus, Abraham Lincoln, 1863 / 48
Prohibition Debate, 1917 / 375
Proposed Constitutional Amendment Regarding Religious Establishment, 1876 / 287
Radio Address on Unemployment Relief, Herbert Hoover, 1931 / 428
Redistribution of Wealth, Huey Long, 1935 / 452
Resolution Opposing Direct Election of Senators, 1893 / 370
Reynolds v. United States, 1879 / 288
Roosevelt Corollary to Monroe Doctrine, Theodore Roosevelt, 1904 / 438
Schenck v. United States, 1919 / 528
Second Freedmen’s Bureau Bill, 1865 / 92
Second Inaugural Address, Abraham Lincoln, 1865 / 81
Sedition Act, 1918 / 527
Sherman Antitrust Act, 1890 / 412
Slaughter-House Cases, 1873 / 150
The Socialist Party and the Working Class, Eugene V. Debs, 1904 / 339
South Carolina Declaration of Causes of Secession, 1860 / 9
South Carolina Ordinance of Secession, 1860 / 7
Special Field Order no. 15, William Tecumseh Sherman, 1865 / 79
Speech against the League of Nations, Henry Cabot Lodge, 1919 / 541
Speech on Constitutionality of an Income Tax, William Howard Taft, 1909 / 368
The Star of Empire, Alfred J. Beveridge, 1900 / 496
Statement on American Neutrality, Woodrow Wilson, 1914 / 507
The Subjective Necessity for Social Settlements, Jane Addams, 1892 / 348
The Talented Tenth, W. E. B. DuBois, 1903 / 270
Twelfth Annual Report of the Massachusetts State School Board, Horace Mann, 1848 / 238
U.S. Constitution, Eighteenth Amendment, 1919 / 382
U.S. Constitution, Fifteenth Amendment, 1870 / 136
U.S. Constitution, Fourteenth Amendment, 1868 / 135
U.S. Constitution, Nineteenth Amendment, 1920 / 396
U.S. Constitution, Seventeenth Amendment, 1913 / 371
U.S. Constitution, Sixteenth Amendment, 1913 / 369
U.S. Constitution, Thirteenth Amendment, 1865 / 91
U.S. Constitution, Twenty-first Amendment, 1933 / 382
Veto Message with Wade-Davis Proclamation and Bill, Abraham Lincoln, 1864 / 70
Veto of Texas Seed Bill, Grover Cleveland, 1887 / 410
Veto of the First Reconstruction Act, Andrew Johnson, 1867 / 103
Veto of the Second Freedmen’s Bureau Bill, Andrew Johnson, 1866 / 94
Virginia Ordinance to Repeal the Ratification of the Constitution of the United States of America, 1861 / 15
Wade-Davis Manifesto, 1864 / 73
What Pragmatism Means, William James, 1907 / 331
Why the Ward Box Rules, Jane Addams, 1898 / 356
Alphabetical List of Authors

Addams, Jane / 348, 356
Beveridge, Alfred J. / 496
Bryan, William Jennings / 215
Carnegie, Andrew / 209
Cleveland, Grover / 410
Davis, Jefferson / 29, 31, 57
Debs, Eugene V. / 339
DuBois, W. E. B. / 270
Eastman, Joseph B. / 423
Harvey, William H. / 327
Hay, John / 505
Hayes, Rutherford B. / 171
Hoover, Herbert / 428
James, William / 331
Johnson, Andrew / 94, 103, 115
LaFollette, Robert / 515
Lee, Robert E. / 61
Lincoln, Abraham / 34, 39, 40, 44, 48, 51, 52, 53, 54, 56, 68, 70, 88, 82, 253

Lindbergh, Charles A. / 559
Lodge, Henry Cabot / 541
Long, Huey / 452
Mann, Horace / 238
McKinley, William / 219, 223
Monroe, James / 482
Roosevelt, Franklin Delano / 438, 466, 504, 568
Roosevelt, Theodore / 360, 414, 486
Shaw, Anna Howard / 383
Sherman, William Tecumseh / 79
Stanton, Elizabeth Cady / 372
Stimson, Henry L. / 558
Sumner, William Graham / 492
Taft, William Howard / 368
Taylor, Frederick Winslow / 306
Twelve Southerners / 316
Washington, Booker T. / 256
Wilson, Woodrow / 507, 508, 531
## Illustrations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Illustration</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alabama Secession Convention Flag, 1861</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Battle of Franklin, Tenn.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Freedmen's Bureau</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson's Veto of the Freedmen's Bureau</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Freeman, c. 1904</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Workers at Rhodes Manufacturing Co., Lincolnton, N.C.</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Booker T. Washington</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W. E. B. Du Bois</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-Saloon Flier, “Less Drink, More Homes”</td>
<td>322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-Saloon Flier, “Archbishop Ireland Says…”</td>
<td>322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men Waiting Outside Al Capone Soup Kitchen, 1930</td>
<td>398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cartoon depicting Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Court-Packing Plan</td>
<td>398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Lindbergh Speaking at a Peace Rally, 1941</td>
<td>480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President Franklin D. Roosevelt Signing the Lend-Lease Bill</td>
<td>480</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

This volume continues the work begun with *The American Republic: Primary Sources*. Like that work, this one seeks to make available within the covers of one volume the most crucial documents necessary for understanding the variety of policies and viewpoints driving American public life during an important, substantive part of its history. Picking up with the onset of the Civil War, documents in this volume will take students and other readers through the onset of World War II and America’s entrance into yet another major new phase in its existence.

For decades now, a host of debates have continued concerning the purpose, nature, and impact of the major popular, legal, and ideological movements shaping the United States during the period from approximately the onset of the Civil War through World War II. Was Reconstruction a noble, failed attempt to protect and empower African Americans in the South by reforming Southern institutions, a self-interested attempt to gain power and wealth for one political party and region through cynical appeals to abstract ideals, or a Utopian experiment in radical politics? Were national markets in goods and services the natural outgrowth of individual initiative and the American spirit of enterprise, or the creation of powerful interests? Is American culture intrinsically racist, ideologically intolerant of racial and cultural connections that might dilute a common emphasis on individual choice, or racially and culturally ambivalent? Were American reform movements homegrown or spawned by immigrants who brought with them European political habits and notions of class? Did the Great Depression necessitate establishment of the national welfare and administrative state, or was this a matter of ideological choice? Was America’s entry onto the world stage an inevitable consequence of its growing power, or a conscious choice, spawned by commitment to, and dreams of, universal peace and justice?

Such questions abound in discussions of these critical periods, but too rarely are informed by close reading of the public documents and pronouncements through which American thought has been expressed and policy made. In particular, the recent turn to social history has uncovered a great deal of information regarding the daily lives of Americans during the Civil War and through World War II. Unfortunately, this information often has come at the expense of in-depth study of crucial, relevant documents. The massive evidence marshaled by Raoul Berger in his landmark volume *Government by Judiciary* concerning the intentions of the framers of the Fourteenth Amendment, for example, has been all but ignored in the legal literature. Indeed, the history of the Fourteenth Amendment, which promised all Americans due process of law, equal protection of the laws, and the privileges and immunities of American citizenship, has become part of the ideological debate it was intended to illuminate.

The debate continues over whether public figures and policy makers after the Civil War sought to treat race as a set of intractable differences government should treat as guides to public policy, conventional differences public institutions should eliminate, or cultural differences government and society should respect. Almost unnoticed has been the specifically constitutional debate over which branch of government—Congress, the president, or the courts—should have primary responsibility for defining and enforcing the rights set forth in the Fourteenth Amendment. Thus re-presentation of key speeches and statutes relevant to that amendment’s passage remains imperative.

If students are to understand how and why the Supreme Court has gained increased power in the American system, they must be able to consult, directly, the relevant documents. The same may be said for the late-nineteenth-century growth of national markets, aided by Supreme Court decisions as it was opposed by an organized set of political actors (the Populists in particular) whose political program too often is reduced by commentators to issues of class struggle. Again, there has not been sufficient attention paid to actual party platforms and reforms.

In addition, while the work of the so-called Progressive historians has changed opinions greatly among academics concerning the nature and intent of the American founding, most students gain little exposure to the actual political

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program put forward by the Progressives themselves during the height of their influence. Direct documentary knowledge of Progressive legislative and constitutional enactments such as the direct election of senators would increase students’ understanding of the entire history of American public life. Likewise, the relationship between various political ideologies and the debate between so-called isolationists and internationalists—a relationship which changed radically at least once during the era represented in this volume—would be shown to be more complex, and more worthy of serious thought and investigation, by examination of relevant pronouncements and enactments.

A few words are required regarding editorial interpretation. As with the first work, this volume eschews editorial commentary on the contents of the documents presented. It presents only brief, historically oriented headnotes, intended to provide readers with the most basic information needed to understand the documents themselves. Given the breadth of material covered, it was necessary to organize the volume around themes. But those themes were chosen with the intention of providing a framework for the documents that does not accestitate or even push the reader toward any particular ideological conclusions. Whether one sees consolidation as a good or a bad thing, it can be agreed among students of all stripes that the era covered in this volume was one in which the power of the federal government increased and gained greater clarity, in which industrialization and the construction of national markets took place, in which regional movements opposed to consolidation, as well as truly national reform movements, were formed, in which a conflict of visions produced genuine conflict regarding race, ethnicity, and culture in America, and in which the United States came to play a far greater role in international affairs. The goal is simply to show the variety of positions and policies that shaped American public life during the era between the Civil War and World War II.

Organization of the Work

This work is in seven parts. As in the previous volume, each part is composed of selections of public writings intended to illustrate the major philosophical, cultural, and policy positions at issue during crucial eras of American political and cultural development.

The first part, “The Civil War,” provides documentary evidence of the positions of both sides as to the causes of that war, as well as the intentions behind eventual emancipation of African Americans and the impact of the war itself on American public life. The second part, “Reconstruction,” provides materials illustrating the nature and purpose of the programs initiated by the victorious states at the end of the Civil War, as well as reactions to that program in the Southern states that were these programs’ target. The third part, “Consolidating Markets,” includes materials showing the contested nature of the government’s role in American economic expansion and the growth of national markets for goods and services. The fourth part, “Consolidating Culture?” includes materials illustrating the various cultural conflicts—regarding race, religion, ethnicity, ideology, and culture—that characterized the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. The fifth part, “Reform Movements,” provides materials on the various reform movements that influenced public life and policy during this era, focusing on the constitutional changes they sought and achieved. The sixth part, “Consolidating Government,” traces the development of the federal administrative and welfare state through various legal, constitutional, and intellectual crises and developments. The seventh part, “America in the World,” provides materials tracing developments in America’s public position regarding the role it can and should take in international affairs.

This volume ends with the opening of the Second World War. While it would, perhaps, be helpful to include documents from beyond this era, it was judged prudent to stop there. Reasons for this decision include the need to keep the volume to some kind of manageable length, the existence of many courses in contemporary American history that begin at or immediately following World War II, and the general recognition that America’s participation in that war significantly altered its role in the world and the nature of debates regarding the nature of its people and the proper role of its government.

As with the previous volume, the placement of specific selections within this work is intended to answer two pedagogical needs: that of chronological consistency and that of issue focus, so that readers may see particular topics of importance in sufficient depth to give them serious examination. Given the increased complexity and prevalence of public debates, particularly concerning the role of government, during the era covered in this second volume, it proved more difficult to
maintain chronological consistency than in the first. Consequently, in this work there is somewhat greater overlap of eras among the documents. Moreover, in a very few cases it was necessary to present documents from eras before that which is the focus of this volume. For example, it would be confusing to readers to avoid presentation of the original statement of the Monroe Doctrine in “America in the World,” despite its dating from well before the Civil War, because that doctrine has been central to debates concerning America’s proper attitude toward international affairs and conflicts. In addition, Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s “Address to the Woman’s State Temperance Society” is presented, despite its having been delivered before the Civil War. This is because Stanton and that speech had influence beyond the Civil War era, because they presented arguably the most lucid and powerful statement of prohibition assumptions and ideology, and because Stanton herself embodied an important element in reform movements—the ties between abolitionism, prohibition, and the struggle for women’s rights.

Thanks are owed to the members of this volume’s editorial board, especially to Dr. Danton Kostandarithes, whose assistance went well beyond the call of duty. I also wish to thank the following for their assistance: Amy Ruark, Raymond McAuliffe, and Michael Thiefe. As always, my greatest thanks and my greatest debts belong to my wife, Gloria Antonia Frohnen, for reasons that include but go far beyond the many ways in which she made possible the completion of this work.
Note on the Texts

As with the previous volume, *The American Republic: Primary Sources*, the editor has sought to make as few changes as possible in the texts included, so as to convey the flavor as well as the content of the writings. Further, because the materials in this volume are from time periods closer to our own, very few changes were required. Asterisks inserted without clear meaning or intent have been deleted, as have marginalia, extraneous quotation marks, and page numbers from previous editions that had been inserted in various texts. Some of the longer titles have been shortened in accordance with modern usage. Headings in which the original text used anachronistic fonts or, for example, all capital letters, have been modernized and standardized. Only those footnotes deemed necessary for understanding the text have been reproduced.
PART ONE  The Civil War
Alabama Secession Convention Flag, 1861. Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama.

Abraham Lincoln’s election to the American presidency in 1860 shattered a truce among America’s sectional interests that had become increasingly fragile and tenuous. Lincoln won a majority of electoral votes, but none from a Southern state. Moreover, he failed to poll a majority of the popular vote, though he did win the most votes of any candidate in that four-way race. Numerous leaders in the South had made clear that they viewed Lincoln as an enemy because of his oft-stated conviction that slavery should be put on the road toward extinction, as well as his Republican Party’s explicit opposition to reopening the African slave trade or expanding slavery into the territories. Some threatened that Lincoln’s election to the presidency would cause slaveholding states to secede in short order. And so they did. By February 1861, seven states (South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas) had seceded. Four more states (Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina) would secede after the Confederate attack on the Union-controlled Fort Sumter in Charleston harbor in April of 1861. The four remaining slaveholding states (Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, and Missouri) along with West Virginia, which was carved out of Virginia at this time, remained in the Union but were the source of political and military instability. Indeed, in both Missouri and Kentucky secessionist elements formed their own governments loyal to the Confederacy.

There were a number of last-ditch efforts to stave off war. And leaders of the Confederacy insisted that no war was necessary—the North must simply recognize the right of any state to secede if it so desired, and peace would ensue. The issue of secession’s legality had been debated for decades and was settled only on the battlefield.

Disagreements abound as to the ultimate cause and moral status of the Civil War. Was it about slavery or states’ rights? Or perhaps both, and made more virulent on account of the ever-widening gulf between Northern and Southern ways of life? Before coming to any of these conclusions, one would do well to examine the constitutional arguments presented by both sides during secession and the Civil War itself.

This section includes official documents regarding secession, as well as political speeches and military orders related to the conflict and issues underlying it.
The Crittenden Compromise, 1860

After the 1860 elections had been held, but before the new Congress was seated, the old, lame duck Congress met to attempt one last compromise to save the Union. The best-known effort was led by Kentucky senator John J. Crittenden. The Crittenden Compromise was actually a joint resolution seeking a series of amendments to the American Constitution. Crittenden's resolutions would have expanded on the Missouri Compromise of 1820 and enshrined its provisions in the Constitution, declaring that territory held or acquired by the United States would be free from slavery if north of latitude 36° 30′ and open to chattel slavery if south of that line—a line the Crittenden Compromise would have extended to the Pacific Ocean. In addition, the Crittenden Compromise would have provided for congressional compensation to slave owners unable to recover fugitive slaves owing to abolitionist action, protected slaveholding in the District of Columbia, prevented Congress from prohibiting the interstate transportation of slaves, and provided that none of its provisions could thereafter be amended or repealed. The measures garnered majorities but failed to achieve the necessary two-thirds majority in either house of Congress.

The Crittenden Compromise

December 18, 1860

A joint resolution (S. No. 50) proposing certain amendments to the Constitution of the United States.

Whereas serious and alarming dissensions have arisen between the northern and southern States, concerning the rights and security of the rights of the slaveholding States, and especially their rights in the common territory of the United States; and whereas it is eminently desirable and proper that these dissensions, which now threaten the very existence of this Union, should be permanently quieted and settled by constitutional provisions, which shall do equal justice to all sections, and thereby restore to the people that peace and good-will which ought to prevail between all the citizens of the United States: Therefore,

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, (two thirds of both Houses concurring,) That the following articles be, and are hereby, proposed and submitted as amendments to the Constitution of the United States, which shall be valid to all intents and purposes, as part of said Constitution, when ratified by conventions of three fourths of the several States:

ARTICLE 1. In all the territory of the United States now held, or hereafter acquired, situate north of latitude 36° 30′, slavery or involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime, is prohibited while such territory shall remain under territorial government. In all the territory south of said line of latitude, slavery of the African race is hereby recognized as existing, and shall not be interfered with by Congress, but shall be protected as property by all the departments of the territorial government during its continuance. And when any Territory, north or south of said line, within such boundaries as Congress may prescribe, shall contain the population requisite for a member of Congress according to the then Federal ratio of representation of the people of the United States, it shall, if its form of government be republican, be admitted into the Union, on an equal footing with the original States, with or without slavery, as the constitution of such new State may provide.

ART. 2. Congress shall have no power to abolish slavery in