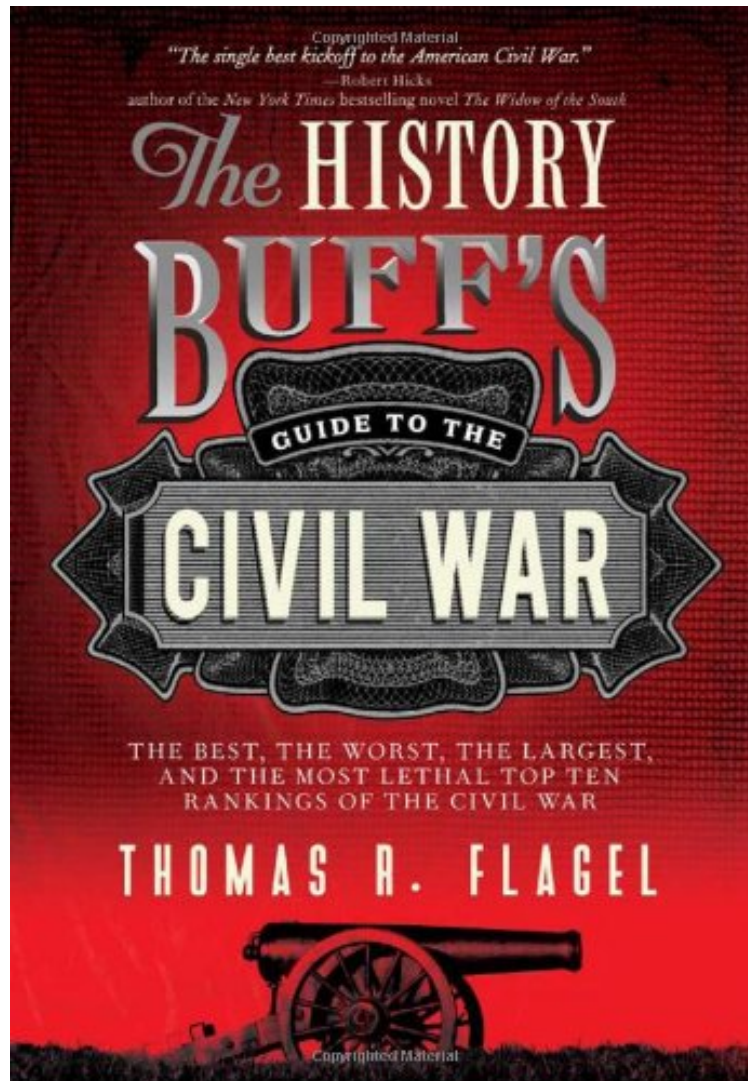


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The residents of the territory in question would decide. Calling it "popular sovereignty," Douglas and many of the congressmen who passed the bill assumed antislavery settlers would choose Nebraska and proslavery settlers would move into Kansas. Kansas, however, was north of the traditional 36° 30' line between free and slave soil. In a prequel to the larger version in 1861, the area devolved into civil war. In 1855 proslavery "Bushwackers" and anti-slavery "Jayhawkers" swarmed into the territory. Voter fraud turned into armed threats, and then open warfare. For five years, and well into the Civil War, the territory became aptly known as "Bleeding Kansas."⁽³⁾ On a national level, the conflict destroyed the Whig Party, cracked the dominant Democrats into North and South factions, and inspired a new party that would rise to the presidency in six years.⁽⁴⁾ _____ During the presidency of James K. Polk, the United States acquired more than five hundred thousand square miles of territory—more than the land area of France, Italy, and Germany combined. _____

2. Southern Dependence on Slavery To mention slavery as a primary cause of the Civil War is to invite arguments to the contrary. The reaction among many Americans is almost Pavlovian. Incentives to resist the slavery theory are manifold, but the over-lying motivation may be to preserve a sense of—for lack of a better term—reunion. A characteristic outcome of many wars is an eventual desire for reconciliation, which in the case of a reunified country is almost a matter of necessity. To create an environment of cooperation requires a reconstruction of dignity for the vanquished and a reforma-tion of the past for the victor.⁽⁵⁾ But the facts remain. Concerning the American Civil War, armed conflict erupted when one section split away and the other resisted. The departing section left to protect, among other things, a third of its wealth, over half of its cheap labor force, its primary vehicle for economic opportunity, and its fundamental definition of social struc-ture—in other words, slavery. When the Southern states seceded in 1860 and 1861, they did not leave in the order of their geographic location, economic standing, political qualities, or level of industrialization. They left in almost the exact order of their percentage of slaves. True, just one in three families in the South owned slaves, but in the 1861 convention that formed the Confederacy, 98 percent of the delegates were slave owners. The constitution they formed mentioned slavery ten times, more than any other subject. Selected as the Confederacy's vice president, Alexander H. Stephens declared in a speech made soon after the convention: "African slavery as it exists among us—the proper status of the negro in our form of civilization. This was the immediate cause of the late rupture and the present revo-lution." Robert H. Smith of Alabama concurred, adding, "We have dissolved the late Union chiefly because of the negro quarrel."⁽⁶⁾ _____ The United States in 1860: Total value of all capital investments in manufacturing = \$1 billion in gold. Total value of all capital investments in slaves = \$2 billion in gold. _____

3. Growing Disparity in Population Paralleling industry, the distribution of the national population between sections was relatively equal in the first years of the United States. Then high birth rates and immigration expanded the numbers quickly. In 1800 the national population stood at 5.3 million. By 1830 it had reached nearly 13 million. By 1860 the country climbed to 32 million people. Yet the sectional balance in the House of Representatives was long gone. More than 22 million Americans lived in free states. Fewer than 10 million lived in slave states, and 4 million of those were the slaves them-selves. Even with the constitutional measure of a slave as three-fifths of a person, Pennsylvania and New York had more seats in Congress than Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Texas put together. Early on, Southern lawmakers realized that to be as effective in national politics as they had been in earlier days, they would have to rely on conces-sions over consensus.⁽⁷⁾

_____ In 1860 the largest city in the United States was New York, with nearly one million inhabitants. The twenty-seventh largest city was Richmond, Virginia, with thirty-seven thousand.
