

The Road to War (1830 – 1860)

- **To what extent was there a developing concept of Religious Nationalism?**
- **What were the regional and ethno-Religious differences and conflicts between Northern Evangelicals, immigrant populations in the North, and the different religions and ethnic cultures in the South?**
- **Did the Media of the time reflect society or attempt to guide or form it?**

American Nationalism – Creating a National Religion

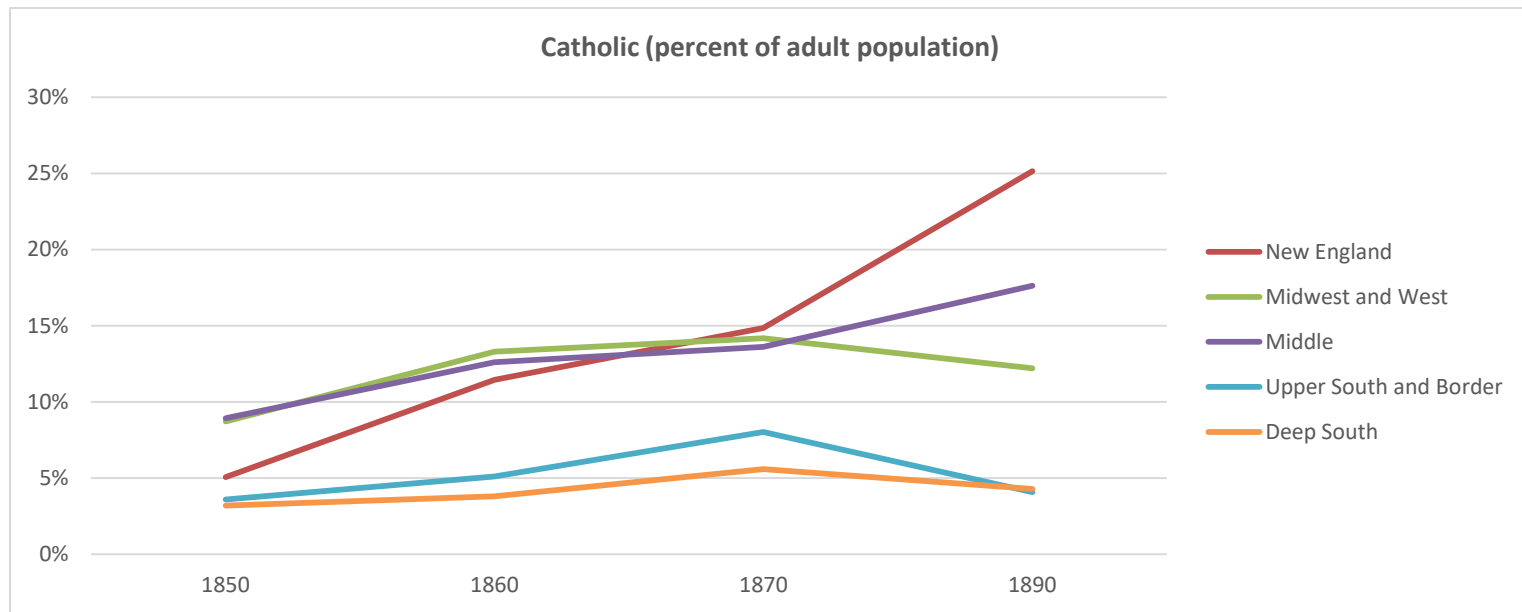
- Along with the development of economic nationalism and the evolution of political Christianity, there developed a new “*civil religion*”
 - Became a global endeavor, gradually leading to the “*deification of the national enterprise*”
 - “*In the North, especially in Yankee areas, the form of the new Protestantism was very different. It was aggressively evangelical and postmillennialist, that is, it became each believer’s sacred duty to devote his energies to trying to establish a Kingdom of God on Earth, to establishing the perfect society in America and eventually the world, to stamp out sin and “make America holy,” as essential preparation for the eventual Second Advent of Jesus Christ* Historian Murray Rothbard
- Followers saw themselves as the heirs to Cromwell’s Puritan Commonwealth
 - The awakening intensified and amplified these dissenting traditions and rejection of the social values of Christendom including a new understanding of, not just the church, but of the state
 - They identified very closely with their English heritage (referred to anglophile) and saw themselves as part of a transatlantic effort where English-speaking people would lead the worldwide advance of Protestantism
- Congregationalists, and significant numbers of Presbyterians and Episcopalians, were all culturally and theologically inclined to subscribe to civil religion
 - greatest influence was in how they influenced other groups, specifically the Baptists and Methodists in a top down manner starting with the clergy and prominent lay people in the North
 - Their “*New England Theology*” gradually steered the more evangelical denominations

Church Divisions

- Denominational divisions that occurred prior to the war of 1861 are commonly attributed simply to slavery
 - assumes that slavery was universally seen as a religious issue or that the church's purpose is to shape society through political action
 - The denominational differences were far deeper than a single issue or collection of issues and reflect fundamentally incompatible world views and cultures
- Of the denominational splits the one that was most documented was Presbyterian
 - When the New School faction challenged the doctrine of original sin and traditional ecclesiology, the conservative wing eventually opted for detachment in 1837
 - In 1857 and 1861 both the Old School and New School Presbyterians split into Northern and Southern
 - The arguments largely came down to a question of scriptural authority or “*sola scriptura*”
 - The abolitionist arguments appealed to a higher law founded not in either the bible or the constitution
- Methodist and Baptist stories were similar
- What would probably seem surprising is that the Southern denominations, while not treating slavery as a political issue, opposed the “*race science*” theory
 - Popular in the North including many abolitionists (also leads to Eugenics)
 - *Science, falsely so called, may attempt to exclude him from the brotherhood of humanity . . . but the instinctive impulses of our nature combined with the plainest declarations of the word of God, lead us to recognize in his form and lineaments – his moral, religious and intellectual nature – the same humanity in which we glory as the image of God. We are not ashamed to call him our brother*
Southern Theologian James Henley Thornwell

Catholic Immigration

- Catholic immigration accounted for the bulk of the population growth
- Catholics were not necessarily religiously affiliated upon arrival but became so due to protestant persecution and effective church and lay leadership
- Created ethnic enclaves in northern cities that remained largely in tact until after WWII along with some Midwestern cities (St. Louis)



The Indian Removal Act and the Indian Territories

- Under Jackson the Indian Removal Act was passed eventually leading to the relocation of the Southern Indian tribes to the Oklahoma and Arkansas territories
 - Cherokee, who were largely westernized by this time and were by far the largest of the five tribes, resisted this in court led by Chief John Ross who sued the state of Georgia in 1831
 - case eventually made its way to the Supreme Court where the Marshall Court ruled in favor of the Cherokees but Jackson wouldn't enforce the decision
- The tribes were eventually relocated in 1838 under the Van Buren administration in what has come to be known as the Trail of Tears
 - there were actually several trails
 - There are differing interpretations of this event but there were many deaths along the way. The Seminole were the only tribe to actively resist under Chief Osceola which led to the Seminole Wars
- The five Southern tribes (five “civilized tribes”) continue to make up a major presence in Oklahoma and Arkansas
 - Significant percentage of the population in these states have at least some degree of Indian ancestry

Texas

- After Mexico became independent from Spain in 1821 the northeastern region was the state of Coahuila
 - Thinly populated and dominated by the Comanche and Apache
 - Mexicans in Texas were referred to as Tejanos but few were willing to migrate to the region
 - Mexico decided to take in foreign settlers and also established tax incentives
 - In 1830 Mexico banned further immigration of foreigners
- War with the Apache and Comanche was nearly constant
 - The Comanche were an unsuccessful people prior to the arrival of the Spanish but became effective raiders with European weapons ranging from Mexico City to Utah
- Tariff was re-imposed in 1830
- Anahuac Disturbance in 1832 leading to Mexican garrisons being abandoned except in San Antonio and Goliad
- In Mexico Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna came to power
 - Federalist / centralizer in the mold of many world leaders of the time, also anti-cleric mason
 - Led successful rebellion against Pres. Anastasio Bustamante
 - Led expedition to put down Texas rebellion in 1836
- Texas won their independence from Mexico culminating in Santa Anna's defeat at the Battle of San Jacinto on April 21, 1836
- 1845 Texas joined the Union which brought about renewed problems with the New England states

Mexican – American War

- When James K. Polk became president in 1845 he stated to his cabinet that one of his main objectives was to acquire California from Mexico
 - “I stated to the cabinet that up to this time as they knew, we had heard of no open act of aggression by the Mexican army, but that the danger was imminent that such acts would be committed. I said that in my opinion we had ample cause of war.”
 - First argument for a “preemptive war”
- Went about creating an incident by sending American troops to a “disputed area” along the border with Mexico
 - Ulysses S. Grant wrote in his memoirs that, as a young soldier serving under the command of General Zachary Taylor during the 1846-1848 Mexican-American War, he understood that he had been sent there to provoke a fight
 - *“The presence of United States troops on the edge of the disputed territory furthest from the Mexican settlements, was not sufficient to provoke hostilities. We were sent to provoke a fight, but it was essential that Mexico should commence it. I was very doubtful whether Congress would declare war; but if Mexico should attack our troops, the Executive [President Polk] could announce, ‘Whereas war exist by the acts of, etc.’ and prosecute the contest with vigor.”* US Grant
- This worked in provoking the Mexican Army
 - In his war message to Congress he then declared that “Mexico has passed the boundary of the United States, has invaded our territory and shed American blood upon the American soil. . . .”
- American Troops eventually conquered Mexico City
 - Key players in the Civil War gained experience and notoriety

The Arrival of the “48er’s”

- Starting in the 1850’s following the failed socialist revolutions in Germanic regions and Eastern Europe of 1848, there was a political migration to America
 - was very significant but only for a few years prior to the American war
 - Frequently referred to as “free thinkers” who also rejected religion and the church
 - Also demonstrated in future socialist revolutions that they would need another approach to appealing to classes of people who in this case didn’t support the revolutions
- Red Republicans
 - Many prominent people of this group joined the new Republican Party and were called in the time period “*Red Republicans*”
 - Carl Schurz was a prominent liberal Republican at the time and his views specifically have been projected on to other Germanic immigrants
 - While Schurz was a vocal and prominent anti-cleric activist
 - Immigrants from Germanic areas (German wasn’t a country until the 1870’s), Hungary, and Eastern Europe, before and after this time period, according to analysis of voting records by historian Paul Kleppner, appears to have been staunchly Catholic or Lutheran (65 pp. 123-24) and voted Democrat after the war
- Significance of the 48er’s
 - Were dominant in certain areas of the Midwest
 - Saw close alignment with the goals of the puritan evangelicals while generally being anti-religious
 - Contributed large numbers of men and officers to the Union Army
 - Some became prominent in national politics

The Creation and Breakup of the Whigs

- The Whig Party was formed in response to Andrew Jackson
 - Formed with the elite of both North and South
 - In the South, the agrarian slave-holding aristocracy was primarily aligned with the Southern wing of the Whig Party
 - Northern business interests were typically aligned with the Northern Whigs
- The Democratic Party was the home of the South's small farmers and non-slave holding whites
 - In the North it was made up Catholics, Lutherans, and Immigrants (correlation was very strong)
 - On a national level, the Democratic Party was made of a diverse, "*large tent*" collection of people ranging from the lower end of the economic ladder to the middle rungs
 - in terms of heritage, was comprised principally of borderlanders and new European immigrants
- When the Whigs collapsed in the mid 1850's it caused a rapid and dangerous realignment
 - The northern Whigs formed the Republican Party that was entirely regional and was dominated by northern protestant evangelicals which gave them an avenue to implement their social objectives
 - Yankee nativist groups also became Republicans
 - Former Whig politicians, such as Lincoln, became outwardly at least more progressive to earn the support of the progressive Evangelical core
 - The Southern "fire-eaters", who favored separation and emphasized regional loyalty, were left without a party and took over the leadership of the Southern Democrats

Debate over Slavery in the Territories

- In 1846, the Wilmot Proviso added a rider to an appropriations bill that prohibited slavery from spreading to any territories taken from Mexico in the Mexican-American war
 - Wilmot, an anti-slavery northern Democrat, referred to slavery as the “*peculiar institution*” that belonged in the South, which is where the common name originated from
 - This eventually worked its way to the Compromise of 1850
 - While making for good political theatre, it hurt the South politically and further divided the country over regions where slavery never could have or would have existed
 - Senator James E. Blaine of Maine accurately summarized the situation by saying, “*The whole controversy over the Territories, as remarked by a witty representative from the South, related to an imaginary negro in an impossible place.*”
- The Kansas-Nebraska Act
 - Kansas was never going to be a slave state economically or demographically and it required people in Free states to be actively involved in the capture and return of fugitive slaves
 - Fugitive slaves never totaled more than 1,000 a year out of a population of 3.2 million in 1850
 - Abolitionist Horace Greeley of the New York Tribune stated that, “*the act created more abolitionists in two months than William Lloyd Garrison created in twenty years (arguable but relevant)*”
- Key Question to consider
 - Was the debate over slavery an attempt to limit the spread of the institution for moral reasons or was it an attempt to contain Blacks and other “undesirable” groups in the South?
 - “*The unproductive tillage of human cattle takes that which by right belongs to free labor, and which is necessary for the support and happiness of our own race*” David Wilmot

John Brown – Puritan Warrior

- The Harper's Fiery Incident and the subsequent trial may have created the final breach that made avoiding war, if not impossible, very difficult
- The archetype of the Puritan warrior, Brown descended from Puritans who arrived not long after the Mayflower
 - His father moved to Hudson Ohio just south of Cleveland in 1805
 - He was a strict Calvinist unaffected by the awakening movements
 - He had a tannery business that didn't do well and failed at a number of other business ventures due in large part to his poor interpersonal skills and inability to plan and manage details
 - He was drawn to large schemes and prone to financial overreach taking out 3 mortgages on the same property without notifying any of the lenders of the other loans
 - For Brown, the abolition movement gave purpose to an otherwise failed life
- One of the difficulties for the abolition movement is that they were trying to influence the actions of slave owners who lived several hundred miles away
 - There wasn't a point where the two sides came together until Kansas
 - The "*Emigrant Aid Company*" organized groups of anti-slavery settlers, armed them with breech loading Sharp rifles, and sent them to Kansas
 - By May of 1855 Brown and his sons were in Kansas near the abolitionist town of Osawatomie
 - When Brown freed two slaves he was dismissed as the captain of his rifle company
 - He was disgusted at the anti-Black views of the moderates and said he was ready to see the country "*drenched in blood*"

Pottawatomie Creek

- After back and forth violence a group of Southerners trashed Lawrence, which was the largest anti-slavery town in Kansas
 - Brown's rifle company didn't get there in time to engage them
 - To avenge the act, the next night Brown, his four sons, and other followers executed five unarmed men in the middle of the night along Pottawatomie Creek
 - They were executed with swords in front of their families and Brown forced his sons to commit the acts. The victims were not slave owners
- Following the murders, Brown and his sons were fugitives but still managed to move back and forth to Canada through abolitionist towns but he was not welcome in Kansas
 - Kansas had been pacified by a new territorial governor who disbanded the militias and was not nearly as dangerous or volatile as it is typically seen as being
 - Brown went on a fundraising trip through New England that ultimately wasn't successful
 - He made a strong impression on a couple of Concord's philosophers, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau, who came to see him as a figurative reincarnation of Oliver Cromwell
- his attempts to raise and finance his own army had failed and he needed to move onto another grander plan

Harper's Ferry

- With the help of a group of Boston backers (Secret Six) he began making plans to attack Harpers Ferry Armory
 - he assumed he knew a great deal more about his external environment than he actually did
 - Plan lacked any level of detail and showed no practical knowledge of the external environment
- The afternoon of October 16, 1859 the plan was put in motion
 - Attempted to get Fredrick Douglass to participate but realizing how badly planned opted out
- Brown was eventually captured and hung and two of his sons died slow agonizing deaths in his presence during the raid
 - He didn't initiate any sort of rebellion although he did cause some degree of local panic
 - His courtroom performance sealed his status as a martyr and messiah-like figure for radical abolitionists
- John Brown's trial was great political theatre for the abolitionists but he very nearly didn't make it to the trial showing how history can sometimes turn on a dime
 - When the marines stormed the armory, Brown ducked to avoid the initial blow from a saber that would have split his head and then the following thrust caught his belt buckle

Brown's Execution and Martyrdom

- In the end, modern history has recorded John Brown as a saint largely immortalized by the New England literary elite of his day:
 - *"The new saint, than whom none purer or more brave was ever led by love of men into conflict and death ... who would make the gallows as glorious as the cross"* Ralph Waldo Emerson
 - *"Some eighteen hundred years ago Christ was crucified; this morning, perchance, Captain Brown was hung. There are the two ends of a chain which is not without its links. He is not Old Brown any longer, he is an angel of light."* Henry David Thoreau
 - *"St. John the Just"* Louisa May Alcott (*Little women*)
- Another New England writer who consistently showed a deeper understanding of the Yankee Puritan character had a different take on the situation:
 - *"Nobody was ever more justly hanged"* Nathaniel Hawthorne
- The song *"John Brown's Body Lies A-Molding in the Grave"* was a catchy tune and was immortalized in the ***Battle Hymn of the Republic***

The 1860 Election and Events Leading to War

- Lincoln defeated William Seward in Republican primary who was considered the favorite.
 - William Seward would be Secretary of State in the Lincoln administration
 - Prior to that he was Governor of New York and then US Senator and could fairly be considered an opponent of slavery or at least the expansion of slavery
 - Seward, like Lincoln, was a former Whig and was also associated with an anti-Mason movement
- Lincoln defeated four Democratic candidates in 1860 after the party fragmented – Senator Stephen Douglas, also from Illinois, finished second in the popular vote
 - If the Democrat Party hadn't run three candidates in the general election dividing the vote, he almost certainly would have been president as Lincoln won with only about 40% of the popular vote and the electoral vote was entirely regional
 - Douglas was an opponent of both war and the idea of colonization or deportation of either slaves or in a broader sense, all African –Americans
 - Douglas died unexpectedly in June of 1861
- Douglas and Seward both played major roles in the run up to war

The Press

- While not having the power of modern media, the press was highly influential to decision makers of the time
 - Abolition dominated public debate around the time of the war but, based on abolition society rolls, active abolitionists were slightly over 1% of adult population in the North
 - In 1861, abolitionism was driven by as few as twenty five key people
 - Southern media also was focused on responding to abolitionists publications
 - Northern Catholics, liturgical protestants, and immigrants (Germans and Irish) didn't support abolition and feared mass southern migration to the North (economics)
- From December thru January about 2/3 of northern newspapers supported states rights to secede (appears to be common with overall population)
 - Starting in February, however, the editorial tone started to change when the potentially economic impact started to be seen more clearly
 - Business interests frequently supported initiation of war and saw business opportunities in supplying the military
- The northern public who would bare the brunt of a war effort, however, did not want war
 - This would require an event to galvanize public support.

How the War Started

- The specific event(s) that started the war were the Union decisions to resupply Fort Sumter and Fort Pickens and the Confederate response
 - Most federally occupied lands were transferred without incident
 - These two forts were both symbolic and strategic
 - Although arguable, probable legal ownership of these forts was with the states and the federal government were tenants (not how military bases are owned today)
- There were divisions within Lincoln's cabinet and the Union government
 - The states of the upper South had not left the Union and barring an invasion likely wouldn't
 - Seward (Sect. of State) and Scott (Dept. of War) favored turning over the forts and maintaining peace through negotiation (they well documented their positions)
 - Montgomery Blair (postmaster) and the Blair family were the primary proponents of war. They were advocates of Black colonization and were former Democrats
 - Stephens was a vocal opponent of war
 - By March 1861 it was generally clear that the Republican Party wanted and maybe even needed war to ensure its survival.
 - Northern financial interests who were the financial supporters of the party generally wanted war as it was strongly in their financial interests
 - yet there remained many merchants and bankers in the eastern cities who wanted peace
 - Lincoln's views remained guarded and were frequently contradictory

Timeline of War

- Jan 1861: Capt. John Vodges was sent with an armed force on the USS Brooklyn to reinforce Fort Pickens. An armistice was reached on January 29th where the US government agreed not to reinforce either Sumter or Fort Pickens. The force remained in Pensacola Harbor.
- 11 March: Lincoln directed Scott to write an order to Major Anderson (Union commander of Fort Sumter) to evacuate the Fort but tells him not to send it until instructed to do so
- 11 March: Confederate Congress enacted a low tariff of 5% increasing the economic threat to the North
- Mid-March: The Confederate Government sent three commissioners to Washington to negotiate terms of separation. Lincoln wouldn't receive them but they did communicate with Seward unofficially through a third party
- 15 March: Lincoln asks each of his cabinet members to provide him with a written opinion on provision Charleston Harbor. Seward, Chase, Welles, Bates, and Cameron all opposed it. Montgomery Blair was the only cabinet member who argued for war.
- 15 March: Senator Douglas attacked the Blair's in a speech in congress saying: *"What they really want is a civil war. They are determined, first, on seeing slavery abolished by force, and then on expelling the entire Negro race from the continent. This was old Blair's doctrine, Sir, long ago, and it is Montgomery's doctrine, Sir*
- 19 March: Senator Thomas Clingman of North Carolina said Lincoln would not call Congress into session because, if he would ask them to go to war against the Confederate states, *"I do not believe they would agree to do it."* He went on to predict: *"The Republicans intend ... as soon as they can collect the force to have a war, to begin; and then call Congress suddenly together and say, 'The honor of the country is concerned; the flag is insulted.'"*

Timeline of War (cont.)

- 21 March: South Carolina governor Pickens allows Union rep Fox (Blair family) to visit Major Anderson in what was a sort of fact finding mission for the administration
- 28 March: Lincoln read to his cabinet a letter from General Scott, strongly urging him to give up Fort Pickens and Fort Sumter stating that peace was infinitely better than war. Postmaster General Montgomery Blair threatened to resign if Lincoln did not invade
- 29 March: Lincoln ordered Fox to prepare a mission to Charleston Harbor using war ships after having agree to using merchant ships to evacuate garrison
- 31 March: Capt. Vogdes receives orders stating, *"at first favorable opportunity, you will land your company, reinforce Fort Pickens, and hold the same till further orders."* He did not comply with it recognizing the order to be an act of war.
- 4 April: John B. Baldwin, a Virginia pro-Union leader, tells Lincoln that if he will withdraw troops from Sumter and Pickens Virginia would not secede
- 8 or 9 April: Major Anderson received a letter from the War Department. He had been told to evacuate the fort without a fight, but was now told that he was to hold the fort at all costs pending the arrival of an invading fleet
- 9 April: The Union fleet arrived at Charleston
- 12 April: The Confederate leadership, weighing the political vs. military risk, determined to fire on the fort. The attack was more symbolic than effective.
- Upon hearing of the Confederate decision to fire, Lincoln declared, "I knew they would do it."
- Confederate Sec. of State Toombs opposed firing on Sumter saying, *"This puts us in the wrong. It would be suicide, murder, will lose us every friend in the North. It will inaugurate a civil war greater than any the world has yet seen."*

Secession Time Frame

- South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas seceded between December 20 1860 and February 1, 1861
 - After the election but before Lincoln took office
- Virginia, Arkansas, North Carolina, and Tennessee all seceded after the Union resupplied Sumter and Pickens and after the states were called upon to provide troops for an invading army
- All of the border states that remained in the Union were contested
 - Managing the potential spread of seceding states was an immediate problem for the Union administration following Sumter
 - Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, and Missouri were slave states that remained in the Union
 - Maryland was effectively taken over by the Union Army
 - While being in the Union, they were in a practical sense split
- Although not slave states, the non-Yankee areas of New York including New York City, and New Jersey generally favored the Confederacy

The Evolving Presentation of the War

- From around 1880 to the mid 20th century there was a general reconciliation where both sides were respected and allowed to honor their dead, grieve their losses, and tell their story.
 - Immediately after the war a large volume of material on President Lincoln was authored in the Northeast that largely redefined him – much or most of it had dubious sourcing
- Up until the mid 60's to early 70's the war was most commonly treated as a complex topic with many causes and perspectives
 - Numerous factors were accepted as potential causes including tariffs, federalism and nationalism or states' rights, changing demographics, deep seeded cultural differences, international banking, and a variety of other economic factors
- Political changes that took shape in the 1960's created a consensus from both left and right politically that portrayed the South as racist, ignorant, and generally backward
 - This actually doesn't address anything regarding the North but assumes a condition of moral and spiritual superiority and philosophic as opposed to economic motivation

How the War Changed Modern War

- The War of Southern Independence would change how large wars are fought politically, militarily, and in the press.
 - The Mexican American war used an exaggerated incident to generate public support but this was on another scale and would foreshadow all major future American foreign wars
- The politics of war changed
 - Wars prior to this were generally fought by professional armies for limited objectives
 - Future wars were to be presented as moral crusades between entire populations
 - War would be waged increasingly against civilian populations
- The economics of war
 - Supplying vast armies for long deployments with modern equipment created economic opportunities for military suppliers
 - Great wealth would be created, lost, and transferred through large scale war
- The tools of war
 - Formation fighting was replaced by trench warfare with longer and far more devastating artillery. Artillery going forward would win wars (still true today)
- The press would play a vital role in selling this war and future wars and maintaining a consistent narrative