A Precursor to War: The Election of 1860

The election of 1860 provides an illustration of the coming division of the nation. Sectional candidates dominated the race and none of the four candidates received a majority. The split in the Democratic party foreshadowed the split in the nation.

Objectives:	• Students will demonstrate an understanding of the complex election of 1860 and the events that caused a four-way race. • Students will research the candidates and issues of the 1860 elections and evaluate the different platforms. • Students will analyze how the outcome of this race contributed to the coming of the Civil War. • Students will demonstrate proficiency in analyzing political cartoons and other primary sources.
Recommended Time Frame:	3-6 weeks, 50 minute class periods
Grade Level:	Grades 10-12
Curriculum:	Advanced Placement US History, US History

Standards

Michigan state standards do not require the teaching of this topic at the high school level, however, the AP curriculum framework does require this time period, so the following standards and themes come from the Advanced Placement United States History framework draft from 2008, the National Standards, and the skills standards from the Michigan standards.

AP Framework
- Theme 1-Identity: Students will understand the interactions of regional identities within the larger American identity.
- Theme 2-Politics and Power: Students will understand popular participation in political life
- Key Concept 5.5: Debate over slavery and other economic, cultural and political issues intensified by expansion and deeper regional divisions led to the Civil War.

National History Standards
 Era 5 Civil War and Reconstruction, Standard One-Causes of the Civil War
- Analyze how the disruption of the second American party system frayed the durable bonds of union, leading to the ascent of the Republican Party in the 1850s. [**Analyze multiple causation**]
- Analyze the importance of the "free labor" ideology in the North and its appeal in preventing the further extension of slavery in the new territories. [**Examine the influence of ideas**]

Michigan Standards
- K.1.4 Understand historical and geographic perspective
- K.1.6 Analyze events and circumstances from the vantage point of others
- K.1.8 Apply social studies concepts to better understand major current local, national, and world events, issues and problems.
- P.1.2 Analyze point of view, context and bias to interpret primary and secondary sources.
- P.1.4 Communicate clearly and coherently in writing, speaking, and visually expressing ideas pertaining to social science topics, acknowledging audience and purpose.
- P.1.5 Present a coherent thesis when making an argument, support with evidence, articulate and answer possible objections, and present on concise, clear closing.

P.2.4 Use multiple perspective and resources to identify and analyze issues appropriate to the social studies discipline being studied.

Materials

- Computer Lab Time (2-3 days)
- Internet Access (Access to Library of Congress Website)
- Digital Video Camera or Digital Camera
- Platforms of the four political parties (links included in student assignment sheet)

Procedures

Previous to the assignment, students should have learned about the issues of the Antebellum period that contributed to the Civil War. Students should do some background reading on the Election of 1860.

On the day before the activity, give students the homework assignment that can be found below.

Day One:
- Project the cartoons from the homework and go over the assignment. Have the student point out their findings.
- Project each of the following "advertising envelopes." Discuss the symbols, quotations, drawings, etc. Is there evidence about the positions of the parties or candidates? What is the purpose of each one?
  - Douglas: http://memory.loc.gov/ndlpcoop/nhnycw/aj/aj22/aj22007v.jpg
  - Lincoln: http://memory.loc.gov/ndlpcoop/nhnycw/aj/aj29/aj29048v.jpg
  - Breckinridge: http://memory.loc.gov/ndlpcoop/nhnycw/aj/aj17/aj17029v.jpg
  - Bell: http://memory.loc.gov/ndlpcoop/nhnycw/aj/aj17/aj17017v.jpg
- Optional: Show students a few modern day political advertisements (from the most recent election) available on livingroomcandidate.org
- Pass out the instructions (attached below) for the project and (if necessary) instruct students how to use the equipment. Students should be divided into groups of 3 or 4.

Days 2-3:
- Students will work on project.

Day 4:
- Students will present their projects to the class (rubric attached below)

Day 5:
- Assessment (sample assessment provided below)

For Further Examination

- Students can do research using the LOC and other sources to find out what happened to each candidate, after the election of 1860.
- Students can research the north south split in the Baptist Church and relate it back to the split in the Democratic Party.

Homework Assignment

Analyze each of the cartoons below. For a clearer view, go to the link provided (you will be able to make cartoon bigger and you will be able to read the text better).

On a separate sheet, answer the following questions for EACH of the cartoons

1. What is the title or caption of the cartoon?
2. Who are the characters in this cartoon (from left to right)?
3. What objects are symbols? What do they mean?
4. Describe the action taking place in the cartoon.
5. Do any of the words in the cartoon help to clarify things? Why or why not?
6. What event or idea is the cartoon referring to? How do you know?
7. Asses the extent to which the actions of the people reflect what was actually going on at the time?
8. What is the cartoonist's viewpoint or message?
9. Is the cartoon effective? Why or why not?
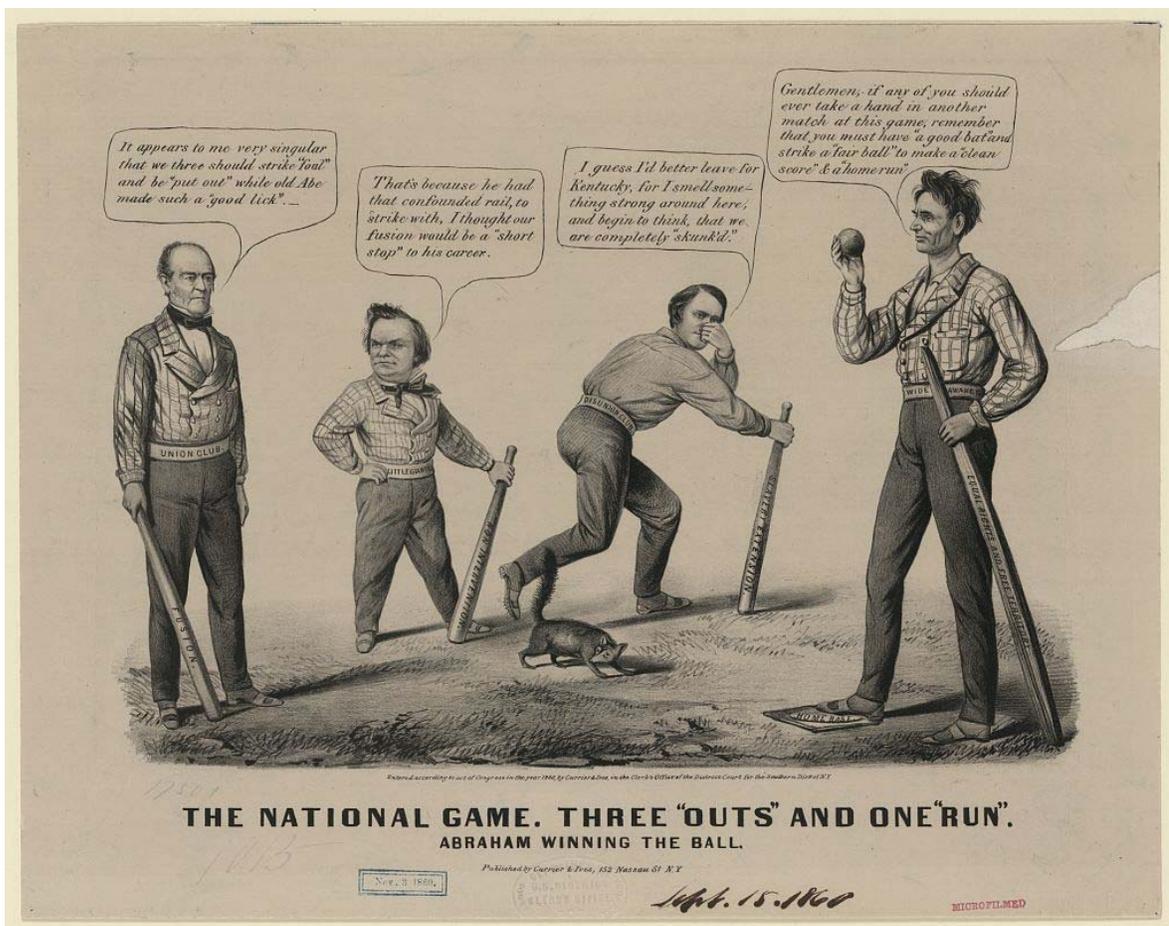
http://memory.loc.gov/service/pnp/ppmsca/09300/09311v.jpg

http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/I?fsaall,brum,detr,swann,look,gottscho,pan,horyd,genthe,var,cai,cd,hh,yan,lomax,ils,prok,brhc,nclc,matpc,iucpub,tgmi,lamb,hec,krb:56:./temp/~pp_4PHO::displayType=1:m856sd=cph:m856sf=3a12915:@@@mdb=fsaall,brum,detr,swann,look,gottscho,pan,horyd,genthe,var,cai,cd,hh,yan,lomax,ils,prok,brhc,nclc,matpc,iucpub,tgmi,lamb,hec,krb

http://memory.loc.gov/service/pnp/ppmsca/15700/15777v.jpg
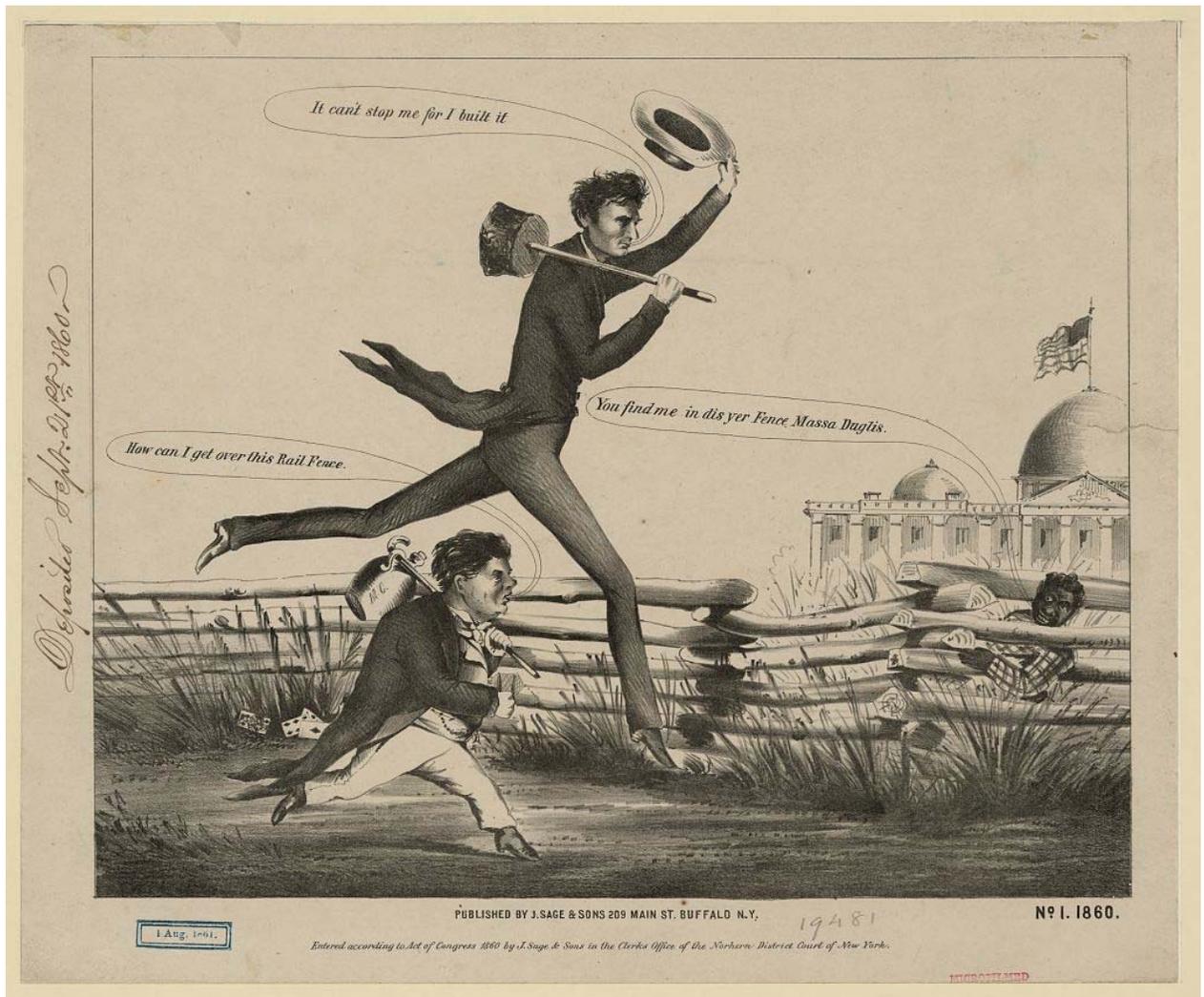
A Modern-day Take on the Election of 1860

You are to do a modern, 1-2 minute commercial for one each four candidates of 1890. This commercial can be a positive commercial highlighting the strengths of your candidate, or it can be a negative advertisement to hurt one or all of your opponents.

You will have all of the parties' platforms and I will give you one day in the computer lab to look up more information on your candidate. This time should also be used to plan your commercial. The commercials will be due on _____.

For each candidate, think about the following:
- Who is your candidate? Strengths? Weaknesses?
- What are the major ideas your party is for and against?
- What are the most important issues you should focus on in your campaign? (Slavery, role of Federal Government, etc.)
- Why should people vote for your candidate instead of one of the other three choices?
- What might your enemy attack and how can you deflect some of that criticism?

Who is your target audience? What are you trying to do with this commercial?

Sources

For some "anti-Lincoln" cartoons and for some information on political campaigns throughout US History, see me for a copy of one of the following:
The Political Cartoons of the Whispering Gallery. Terell Creative, 2005.
Voss, Frederick. Packaging Presidents: 200 Years of Campaigns & Candidates. Springfield, Illinois: Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Foundation, 2008.
All links originate at Library of Congress online

Links to the Party platforms:
Republican Platform: http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/rbpe:@field(DOCID+@lit(rbpe0180010a))
Northern Democratic Platform:
Southern Democratic Platform:
http://www.archive.org/stream/portraitssketche00jcbu/portraitssketche00jcbu_djvu.txt
Constitutional Union Party Platform:
http://memory.loc.gov/service/pnp/cph/3a10000/3a11000/3a11400/3a11414r.jpg
http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn86069309/1900-05-30/ed-1/seq-7/;words=party+constitution+UNION+parties+CONSTITUTIONAL+Union+Party+PARTY+Gov+union
General information on the Candidates and Platforms
http://memory.loc.gov/service/rbc/lprbscsm/scsm1010/001r.jpg
http://www.archive.org/stream/portraitssketche00yapa#page/n29/mode/2up
http://memory.loc.gov/service/rbc/lprbscsm/scsm0926/001r.jpg
http://memory.loc.gov/service/rbc/lprbscsm/scsm0236/002.txt

Rubric for Political Commercial

Participation

Student was an equal participant every day	5 pts
Student participated most of time	3 pts
Student was off task most of the time	0 pts

Content

Project excelled at showing party's strengths (including platform) and/or other party's weaknesses	15 pts
Project adequately showed party's strengths (including platform) and/or other party's weaknesses	10 pts
Project showed party's strengths (including platform) and/or other party's weaknesses superficially	5 pts

Creativity

Project showed great creativity	5 pts
Project was adequately creative	3 pts
Project showed limited creativity	1 pts

Total points possible	**25 pts**

Assessment—Short Essays

Show the election map (popular vote) while the students are writing.
http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/elections/maps/1860.gif

Answer the following short answer questions (1-2 paragraphs):

1. What do the results of the election suggest about the divisions in the United States in 1860?

2. What role did the personalities of the candidates play in the outcome of the election? The issues?

3. What do you think would have happened if the Democratic Party had not split? Would the outcome of the election have been different? Justify your position.

4. How did the south use the election as further justification for secession?

Analyze the following political cartoons—in a paragraph explain what the cartoon means, what events are described, what symbols are used, who the characters are, the actions taking place and what is the viewpoint of the cartoonist. Finally assess why you believe the cartoon is effective or not.

Southern Ass-stock-crazy.

http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/I?fsaall,brum,detr,swann,look,gottscho,pan,horyd,genthe,var,cai,cd,hh,yan,lomax,ils,prok,brhc,nclc,matpc,iucpub,tgmi,lamb,hec,krb,:1:./temp/~pp_4ldz::displayType=1:m856sd=cph:m856sf=3b37788:@@@mdb=fsaall,brum,detr,swann,look,gottscho,pan,horyd,genthe,var,cai,cd,hh,yan,lomax,ils,prok,brhc,nclc,matpc,iucpub,tgmi,lamb,hec,krb,

PROGRESSIVE DEMOCRACY—PROSPECT OF A SMASH UP.