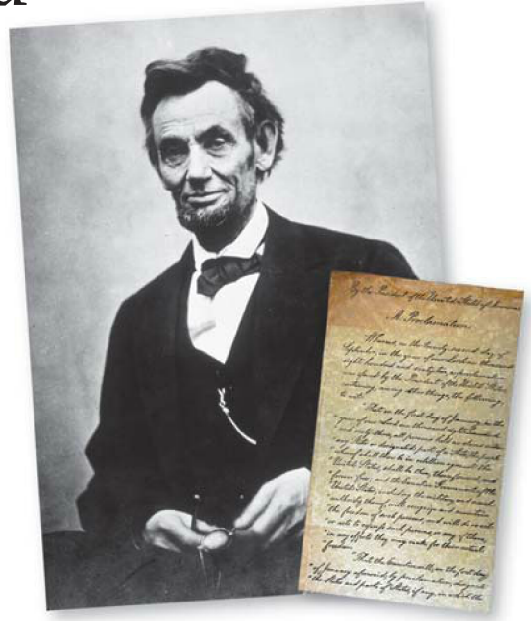


# Snapshot of the Period

The years between 1850 and 1914 witnessed a transformation of the United States. During those years, America came of age--the country changed from a decentralized, mostly agricultural nation to the modern industrial nation that we know today. This transformation began in the period leading up to the Civil War. In that war, Americans took up arms against one another to determine which should prevail: The Union of the North or the Confederacy of the South? the federal Union or states' rights? freedom or slavery? As the Civil War began, each side possessed significant strengths and notable weaknesses. The North had a tremendous advantage in population, and was far more industrialized and thus better prepared to wage war than the agrarian South. However, the Confederacy had the psychological advantage of greater motivation: it was fighting for its very survival. The South also had a strong military tradition and notably fine leaders. When the struggle was over, the North won, the Union held, and slavery was abolished, but at a devastating cost to the nation.



▲ Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, as the nation approached the third year of Civil War.



Twain



Douglass



Chopin



Crane



Cather



Chief Joseph



As you read the selections in this unit, you will be asked to think about them in view of three key questions:

What is the relationship  
between place and *literature*?

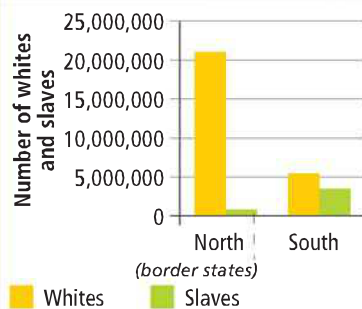
How does literature  
shape or reflect *society*?

What makes American  
literature *American*?

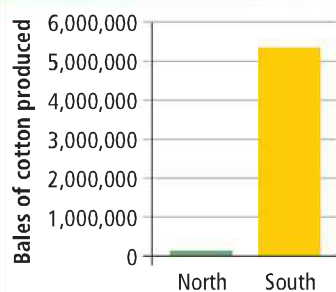
**Connect to the Period** What does the information shown in the charts below help you understand about differences between North and South in their economies, population densities, and overall lifestyles? How do you think these differences affected the outcome of the Civil War? **[Analyze]**



**U.S. Population, 1860**



**U.S. Cotton Production, 1860**



**U.S. Factories and Employees, 1861**

