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The years 1849-1877 were among the most pivotal in the nation's history. Over the course of three decades, the United States endured a catastrophic civil war, abolished slavery, expanded westward and added eight states to the Union, and witnessed the beginnings of

industrialization. In politics, the era saw the demise of one national party, the birth of another, and the historic leadership of Abraham Lincoln. The country also faced difficult questions of state sovereignty and federal responsibility answered ultimately by secession and war. In short, it was a time of growth, consolidation, tragedy, and triumph for a dynamic and youthful nation. This resource of primary documents and commentary covers the Taylor through Grant administrations by selecting and describing five to ten of the foremost issues of the day and showing the actual text of the president's position along with the opposing viewpoint. The presidents from 1849-1877 were men of varied backgrounds and talents. Northerners and Southerners and even Northerners with Southern sensibilities occupied the White House. The period began and ended with war heroes as presidents; among the other men who served as president were a former textile worker, a country lawyer, and lifelong diplomat. Most of the chief executives struggled and perhaps even failed to overcome the immense challenges placed before them. By providing helpful background information and commentary about the presidents and the issues of the day in addition to the primary sources, this reference guide accurately depicts this fractious time in the country's past and provides an invaluable resource to any student of American history.
