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THE POLITICS OF SECTIONALISM

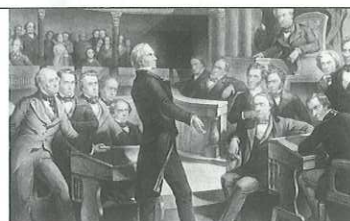
1846-1861

TROUPE



WHY DID the issue of slavery in the territories cause so much controversy?

WHAT WERE the causes and consequences of political realignment in the 1850s?



WHY WAS Lincoln elected in 1860?

WHY COULD the political system not fix the secession crisis?



1846 1861

2655



December 16, 1852

My Dear Madam,

So you want to know what sort of woman I am! Well, if this is any object, you shall have statistics free of charge. To begin, then, I am a little bit of a woman—somewhat more than forty, about as thin and dry as a pinch of snuff—never very much to look at in my best days and looking like a used up article now.

I was married when I was twenty-five years old to a man rich in Greek and Hebrew and Latin and Arabic, and alas, rich in nothing else. . . . But then I was abundantly furnished with wealth of another sort. I had two little curly headed twin daughters to begin with and my stock in this line has gradually increased, till I have been the mother of seven children, the most beautiful and the most loved of whom lies buried near my Cincinnati residence. It was at his dying bed and at his grave that I learned what a poor slave mother may feel when her child is torn away from her. In those depths of sorrow which seemed to me immeasurable, it was my only prayer to God that such anguish might not be suffered in vain. There were circumstances about his death of such peculiar bitterness, of what seemed almost cruel suffering that I felt that I could never be consoled for it unless this crushing of my own heart might enable me to work out some great good to others.

I allude to this here because I have often felt that much that is in that book had its root in the awful scenes and bitter sorrow of that summer. It has left now, I trust, no trace on my mind except a deep compassion for the sorrowful, especially for mothers who are separated from their children. . . .

This horror, this nightmare abomination! Can it be in my country! It lies like lead on my heart, it shadows my life with sorrow; the more so that I feel, as for my own brothers, for the South, and am pained by every horror I am obliged to write, as one who is forced by some awful oath to disclose in court some family disgrace. . . .

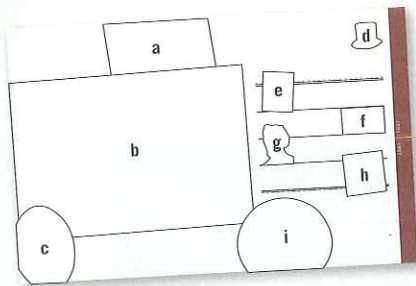
Yours affectionately,

—H. B. Stowe

Harriet Beecher Stowe to Eliza Cabot Follen, December 16, 1852; From Jeanne Boydston, Mary Kelley, Anne Margolis, *The Limit of Sisterhood* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988) 178–180.

IMAGE KEY

for pages 350–351



- Dredd Scott and his family, ca. 1857.
- The slave Eliza is attacked by vicious dogs while crossing ice floes of a frozen river with her baby in a poster advertising a production of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.
- John Brown portrait photo (1800–1859).
- An old fashioned black stovepipe hat with a narrow brim like the one worn by Abe Lincoln.
- A poster for "*Uncle Tom's Cabin*" with an illustration of a slave woman standing in the doorway of a log cabin where children play and a man approaches with a hoe over his shoulder. Copy describes various editions of the book available for sale.
- A thoughtful Henry Clay addresses attentive senators on the floor of the US Senate in 1850. Spectators sit in the balcony encircling the ornate domed ceiling while listening to the speech below.
- President Abraham Lincoln, Washington D.C., April 10, 1865.
- Inside the Armory at Harper's Ferry, Virginia, where John Brown and his men were trapped by the fire of the U.S. Marines under the command of Colonel Robert E Lee, 18 October 1859 in a contemporary colored engraving.
- Gold ore and gravel in a shallow pan.

HARRIET BEECHER STOWE, while writing to poet and fellow abolitionist Eliza Cabot Follen, in the year that *Uncle Tom's Cabin* became an international bestseller, revealed how being a wife and a mother influenced her perception of slavery and inspired her writing. The deep piety and self-effacement expressed in the letter, as well as her transparent grief over the loss of her son, typified mid-nineteenth-century correspondence between women. Her beloved son had died of cholera in 1849; that wrenching event, coupled with the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act a year later, galvanized Stowe to pour her grief and indignation into a novel about plantation slavery.

Stowe personalized slavery in a way that made white Northerners see it as an institution that oppressed black people, destroyed families, and debased Christian masters. The book changed people's moral perceptions about slavery.



Stowe's father, Lyman Beecher, was a prominent evangelical reformer. He believed that personal and societal salvation were closely connected, a principle that is apparent in Harriet's letter.

Stowe's personal journey transformed awareness into a moral crusade for the millions who read her book, the political became personal. Yet, the anguish she expressed in her writing and the outrage it generated among her readers were hardly prefigured when a Congressman from Pennsylvania stepped forward in 1846 with a modest proposal that not only placed slavery front and center as a national issue, but would also shake the Union to its very core.

Slavery was not a new political issue, but after 1846, the clashes between Northern and Southern congressmen over slavery became more frequent and more difficult to resolve. In the coming years, several developments—including white Southerners' growing consciousness of themselves as a minority, the mixture of political issues with religious questions, and the rise of the Republican party—would aggravate sectional antagonism. But the flash point that first brought slavery to the fore was the issue of slavery in the territories acquired from Mexico.

SLAVERY IN THE TERRITORIES

Whatever its boundaries over the years, the West symbolized the hopes and dreams of white Americans. It was the region of fresh starts, of possibilities. For white Southerners, to exclude slavery from the Western territories was to exclude them from pursuing their vision of the American dream. Northern politicians, on the other hand, argued that exclusion preserved equality—the equality of all white men and women to live and work without competition from slave labor or rule by despotic slaveholders. From the late 1840s until 1861, four proposals dominated the debate:

- Outright exclusion
- Extension of the Missouri Compromise line to the Pacific
- Popular sovereignty—allowing the residents of a territory to decide the issue
- Protection of the property of slaveholders (meaning their right to own slaves) even if few lived in the territory

The first major debate on these proposals occurred during the early days of the Mexican War and culminated with the Compromise of 1850.

THE WILMOT PROVISIO

In August 1846, David Wilmot, a Pennsylvania Democrat, offered an amendment to an appropriations bill for the Mexican War called the **Wilmot Proviso**, which stipulated that “as an express and fundamental condition to the acquisition of any territory from the Republic of Mexico . . . neither slavery nor involuntary servitude shall ever exist in any part of said territory.” This language deliberately reflected Thomas Jefferson's Northwest Ordinance of 1787, which had prohibited slavery in the Old Northwest. Wilmot had, he explained, no “morbid sympathy for the slave” but by linking the exclusion of slavery to freedom for white people, he hoped to generate support across the North and even some areas of the Upper South regardless of party.

Linking freedom for white people to the exclusion of slaves infuriated Southerners by implying that the mere proximity of slavery degraded white

WHY DID the issue of slavery in the territories cause so much controversy?

Wilmot Proviso The amendment offered by Pennsylvania Democrat David Wilmot in 1846 which stipulated that “as an express and fundamental condition to the acquisition of any territory from the Republic of Mexico . . . neither slavery nor involuntary servitude shall ever exist in any part of said territory.”



people and that Southerners were a degraded people, unfit to join other Americans in the territories. Georgia's Whig senator, Robert Toombs, issued a warning that reflected the feelings of many Southerners. "I do not hesitate to avow before this House and the Country, that if, by your legislation, you seek to drive us from territories of California and New Mexico, purchased by the common blood and treasure of the whole people . . . , thereby attempting to fix a national degradation upon half the states of this Confederacy, *I am for disunion.*" An Ohio congressman responded, "We [the North] will establish a cordon of free states that will surround you; and then we will light up the fires of liberty on every side until they melt your present chains and render all your people free."

This disagreement was reflected in Congress, where Northern congressmen, now a majority in the House of Representatives, passed more than fifty versions of the proviso between 1846 and 1850. In the Senate, where each state had equal representation, the proviso was consistently rejected.

The proviso debate sowed distrust and suspicion between Northerners and Southerners. Congress had divided along sectional lines before, but seldom had divisions become so personal. The leaders of both the Democratic and Whig parties, disturbed that the issue of slavery in the territories could so monopolize Congress and poison sectional relations, sought to defuse the issue as the presidential election of 1848 approached.

THE ELECTION OF 1848

Both Democrats and Whigs wanted to avoid identification with either side of the Wilmot Proviso controversy, and they selected their presidential candidates accordingly. The Democrats nominated Michigan senator Lewis Cass, a veteran party stalwart whose public career stretched back to the War of 1812. Cass understood the destructive potential of the slavery issue and suggested that territorial residents, not Congress, should decide slavery's fate. This solution, **popular sovereignty**, had a do-it-yourself charm: Keep the politicians out of it and let the people decide. Cass was deliberately ambiguous, however, on *when* the people should decide. If residents could decide only when applying for statehood, slavery would be legal up to that point. The ambiguity aroused more fears than it allayed.

The Whigs were silent on the slavery issue. Reverting to their winning 1840 formula of nominating a war hero, they selected General Zachary Taylor of Mexican War fame. Taylor belonged to no party and had never voted. He was also inarticulate to the point of unintended humor. If one had to guess his views, it may have been significant that he lived in Louisiana in the Lower South, owned a one-hundred-slave plantation, and he was related by marriage to Jefferson Davis, currently Mississippi's staunch proslavery senator.

Taylor's background disturbed many antislavery Northern Whigs. These *Conscience Whigs* along with remnants of the old Liberty party and a scattering of Northern Democrats bolted their parties and formed the *Free-Soil party*. Its slogan—"Free soil, free speech, free labor, free men"—was a catalog of white liberties that the South had allegedly violated. The Free-Soilers nominated former president Martin Van Buren, the old New Yorker, who had little hope of winning but might cause the election to be thrown into the House of Representatives. Van Buren ran strongly enough in eleven of the fifteen Northern states to deny the winning candidate in those states a majority of the votes cast, but he could not overcome Taylor's strength in the South. Taylor was elected, giving the nation its first president from the Lower South.

QUICK REVIEW

Slavery and the Election of 1848

- ◆ Democratic candidate Lewis Cass argued that territorial residents should decide issue of slavery.
- ◆ Whig nominee Zachary Taylor remained silent on slavery issue.
- ◆ Taylor's election gave country first president from Lower South.

Popular sovereignty A solution to the slavery crisis suggested by Michigan senator Lewis Cass by which territorial residents, not Congress, would decide slavery's fate.



THE COMPROMISE OF 1850

Taylor had little time to savor his victory. Gold had been discovered in California in January 1848, and in little more than a year, eighty thousand people, most of them from the North, had rushed into the territory. These *Forty-Niners*, as they were called, included free black people as well as slaves brought into the gold fields by their Southern masters. Open hostility flared between white prospectors and their black competitors. The territory's residents drafted a state constitution that contained no provision for slavery, reflecting antiblack rather than antislavery sentiment. Keeping California white shielded residents against social and economic interaction with black people. "Free" in the context of territorial politics became a synonym for "whites only."

If Congress accepted the residents' request for statehood, California would enter the Union as a free state, tipping the balance between the fifteen free and fifteen slave states in the Senate. New Mexico (which then included most of present-day New Mexico, Arizona, part of Nevada, and Colorado) appeared poised to follow suit and enter the Union as the seventeenth free state. Southerners saw their political power slipping away.

When Congress confronted the issue of California statehood in December 1849, partisans on both sides began marshaling forces for what promised to be a long and bitter struggle. South Carolina senator John C. Calhoun understood that only a politically unified South could protect its interests.

No one, at first, knew where Taylor stood. Later it became apparent that he favored allowing California and the other territories acquired from Mexico to decide the slavery issue for themselves. Since California already easily exceeded the population threshold for statehood, Taylor proposed bypassing the territorial stage—and congressional involvement in it—and having California and New Mexico admitted as states directly. The result would be to bring both into the Union as free states. Taylor did not oppose slavery, but he abhorred the slavery issue because it threatened his vision of a continental empire. He was thus willing to forgo the extension of slavery into the territories. "Whatever dangers may threaten [the Union] I shall stand by it and maintain it in its integrity."

Southerners resisted Taylor's plan, and Congress deadlocked on the territorial issue. Henry Clay then stepped forward with his last great compromise. To break the impasse, Clay urged that Congress should take four steps:

- Admit California as a free state, as its residents clearly preferred
- Allow the residents of the New Mexico and Utah territories to decide the slavery issue for themselves too
- End the slave trade in the District of Columbia
- Pass a new fugitive slave law to enforce the constitutional provision stating that a person "held to Service or Labor in one state . . . escaping into another . . . shall be delivered upon Claim of the party to whom such Service or Labor may be due."

Clay's proposal provoked a historic Senate debate in February 1850, featuring America's three most prominent elder statesmen—Clay, Calhoun, and Daniel Webster, all of whom would be dead in the next two years. After a tumultuous six-month debate that lasted into the summer of 1850, the Senate rejected the compromise. President Taylor, who had vowed to veto any compromise, died unexpectedly of a stomach ailment after overindulging in cherries and milk in the hot sun at a July 4 celebration in Washington. Vice President Millard Fillmore, a pro-Clay New Yorker, assumed the presidency after Taylor's death. A back-room

WHAT WERE the causes and consequences of political realignment in the 1850s?



CHRONOLOGY

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| <p>1846 Wilmot Proviso is submitted to Congress but is defeated.</p> <hr/> <p>1848 Gold is discovered in California. Whig party candidate Zachary Taylor defeats Democrat Lewis Cass and Free-Soiler Martin Van Buren for the presidency.</p> <hr/> <p>1850 California applies for statehood. President Taylor dies; Vice President Millard Fillmore succeeds him. Compromise of 1850 is passed.</p> <hr/> <p>1851 Harriet Beecher Stowe publishes <i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i>.</p> <hr/> <p>1852 Democrat Franklin Pierce is elected president in a landslide over Whig candidate Winfield Scott. Whig party disintegrates.</p> <hr/> <p>1853 National Black Convention called in Rochester, New York, to demand repeal of the Fugitive Slave Act.</p> <hr/> <p>1854 Ostend Manifesto is issued. Kansas-Nebraska Act repeals the Missouri Compromise. Know-Nothing and Republican parties are formed.</p> <hr/> <p>1855 Civil war erupts in "Bleeding Kansas." William Walker attempts a takeover of Nicaragua.</p> <hr/> <p>1856 "Sack of Lawrence" occurs in Kansas; John Brown makes a retaliatory raid at Pottawatomie Creek. Democratic congressman Preston Brooks of South Carolina canes Massachusetts senator Charles Sumner in the U.S. Senate.</p> | <p>Democrat James Buchanan is elected president over Republican John C. Frémont and American (Know-Nothing) candidate Millard Fillmore.</p> <hr/> <p>1857 Supreme Court issues <i>Dred Scott</i> decision. Kansas territorial legislature passes the proslavery Lecompton Constitution. Panic of 1857 begins.</p> <hr/> <p>1858 Senatorial candidates Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas hold series of debates in Illinois.</p> <hr/> <p>1859 John Brown's Raid fails at Harpers Ferry, Virginia.</p> <hr/> <p>1860 Constitutional Union party forms. Democratic party divides into northern and southern factions. Republican candidate Abraham Lincoln is elected president over Southern Democratic candidate John C. Breckinridge, Northern Democratic candidate Stephen A. Douglas, and Constitutional Unionist candidate John Bell. South Carolina secedes from the Union.</p> <hr/> <p>1861 The rest of the Lower South secedes from the Union. Crittenden Plan and Tyler's Washington peace conference fail. Jefferson Davis assumes presidency of the Confederate States of America. Lincoln is inaugurated. Fort Sumter is bombarded; Civil War begins. Several Upper South states secede.</p> |
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14-4

A Dying Statesman Speaks Out Against the Compromise of 1850

Compromise of 1850 The four-step compromise which admitted California as a free state, allowed the residents of the New Mexico and Utah territories to decide the slavery issue for themselves, ended the slave trade in the District of Columbia, and passed a new fugitive slave law to enforce the constitutional provision stating that a slave escaping into a free state shall be delivered back to the owner.

Fugitive Slave Act Law, part of the Compromise of 1850, that required the authorities in the North to assist Southern slave catchers and return runaway slaves to their owners.

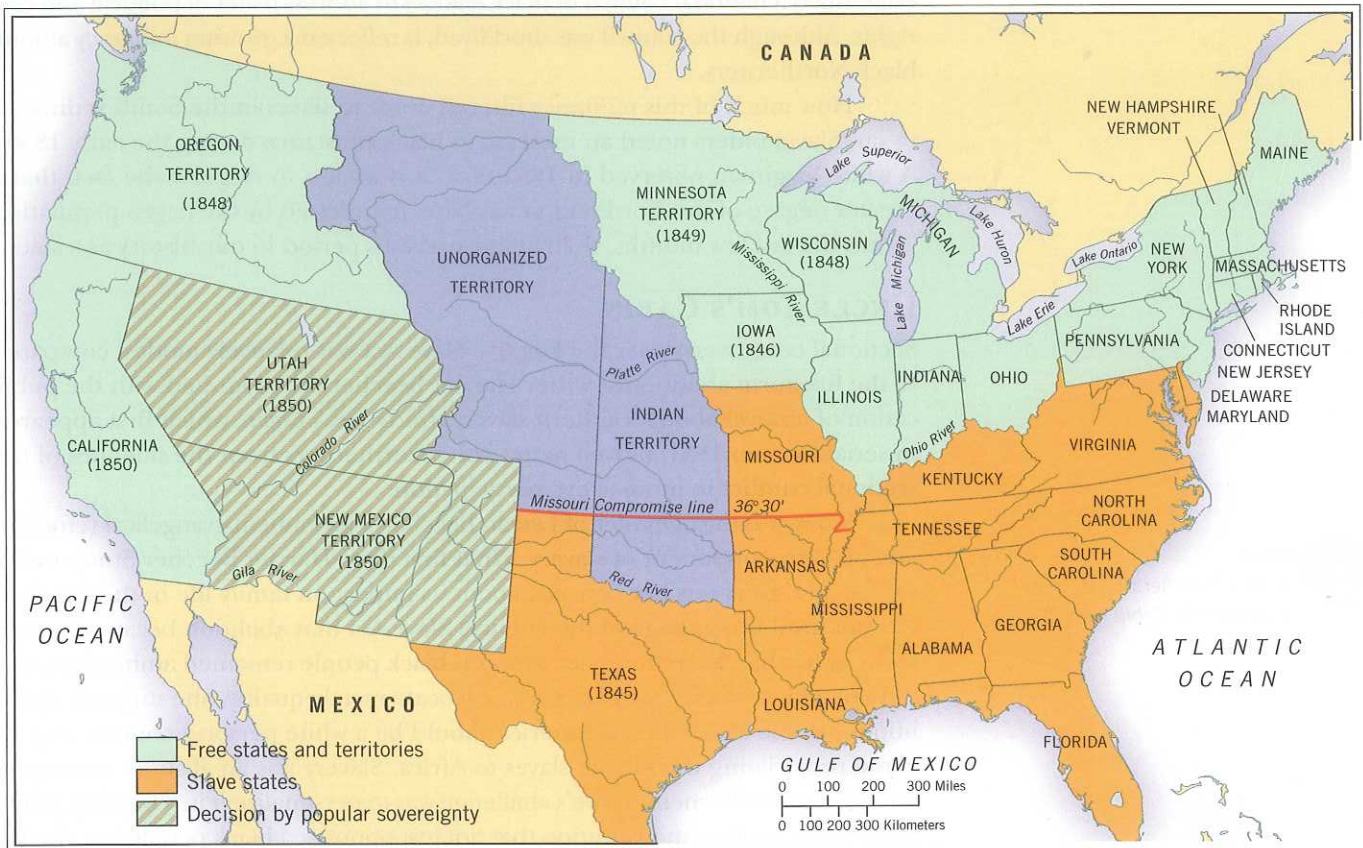
man, quiet, at home with the cigar-and-brandy crowd, and effective with the deal, Fillmore let it be known that he favored Clay's package and would sign it if passed.

Although the Senate had rejected the compromise, Illinois senator Stephen A. Douglas kept it alive. A small man with a large head that made him mushroomlike in appearance, Douglas epitomized the promise of American life for men of his generation. He envisioned an urban, industrial West linked to the East by a vast railroad network eventually extending to the Pacific. Like Webster, Douglas feared for the Union if the compromise failed. Realizing that it would never pass as a package, he proposed to break it up into its components and hold a separate vote on each. With a handful of senators voting for all parts, and with different sectional blocs supporting one provision or another, Douglas engineered a majority for the compromise, and Fillmore signed it.

The **Compromise of 1850** (see Map 14-1) was not a compromise in the sense of opposing sides consenting to certain terms desired by the other. Southern leaders looked to the West and saw no slave territories awaiting statehood. They gained the **Fugitive Slave Act**, which reinforced their right to seize and return to bondage slaves who had fled to free territory, but it was slight consolation. Few slave owners from the Lower South would bear the expense and uncertainty of chasing an escaped slave into free territory. And the North's hostile reception to the law made Southerners doubt their commitment to the compromise.

MAP EXPLORATION

To explore an interactive version of this map, go to <http://www.prenhall.com/goldfield2/map14.1>



MAP 14-1

The Compromise of 1850 Given the unlikely prospect that any of the Western territories would opt for slavery, the compromise sealed the South's minority status in the Union.

WHAT WERE the results of the Compromise of 1850, and how did the country react to the news of the Compromise?

RESPONSE TO THE FUGITIVE SLAVE ACT

The effect of the Fugitive Slave Act on public opinion, however, was to polarize North and South even further. The strongest reaction to the act was in the black communities of the urban North. Previously, black abolitionists in the North had focused on freeing slaves in the South. The Fugitive Slave Act brought the danger of slavery much closer to home. Black Northerners formed associations to protect each other and repel—violently, if necessary—any attempt to capture and reenslave fellow black people. Boston's black leaders created the League of Freedom. Black Chicagoans organized the Liberty Association, with teams assigned to “patrol the city, spying for possible slave-hunters.” Similar associations appeared in Cleveland and Cincinnati. Black leader Frederick Douglass, an escaped slave himself, explained the need for such organizations: “We must be prepared . . . to see the streets . . . running with blood . . . should this law be put into operation.”

WHERE TO LEARN MORE



The Underground Railroad Freedom Center, Cincinnati, Ohio
www.undergroundrailroad.org



During the early 1850s, black people across the North gathered in conventions to demand the repeal of the Fugitive Slave Act. Frederick Douglass convened the National Black Convention in Rochester, New York, in July 1853, at which he established a national council of black leaders to address issues of political and civil rights. Although the council was short-lived, it reflected a growing militancy among black Northerners.

How much of this militancy filtered down to slaves in the South is difficult to say. Slaveholders noted an increase in black resistance during the early 1850s. A white Virginian observed in 1852 that “it is useless to disguise the fact, that a greater degree of insubordination has been manifested by the negro population within the last few months, than at any previous period in our history as a state.”

UNCLE TOM’S CABIN

Sectional controversy over the Fugitive Slave Act was relatively modest compared to the firestorm abolitionist writer Harriet Beecher Stowe ignited with the publication of a novel about Southern slavery. *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, which first appeared in serial form in 1851, moved many white Northerners from the sidelines of the sectional conflict to more active participation.

Stowe was the daughter of Lyman Beecher, a prominent evangelical reformer, and an active opponent of slavery. What first drew Harriet Beecher Stowe to the subject of slavery was her concern about its impact on family life in the South. It was not until the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act that abolition became a major focus in her life. Even then, her views on black people remained ambivalent. She did not, like William Lloyd Garrison, advocate racial equality. She supported abolition, but she also believed America should be a white person’s country, and favored repatriating the former slaves to Africa. Slavery was an abstract concept to most white Northerners. Stowe’s challenge was to personalize it in a way that would make them see it as an institution that not just oppressed black people but also destroyed families and debased well-meaning Christian masters as well.

At the beginning of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, a Kentucky slave owner is reluctantly forced by financial ruin to sell some of his slaves. Among them are the son of two mulatto slaves, George and Eliza Harris, and an older slave, Tom. Eliza escapes across the ice-choked Ohio River, clutching her son to her breast as slavecatchers and their bloodhounds pursue them. Tom submits to sale to a New Orleans master. When that master dies, Tom is sold to Simon Legree, a Vermonter who owns a plantation on the Red River in Louisiana. Legree is vicious and sadistic—the only major slaveholding character in the book whom Stowe portrays in this manner. Tom, a devout Christian, remains loyal and obedient until Legree asks him to whip another slave. When Tom refuses, Legree beats him to death.

Stowe offered not abstractions but characters who seemed real. She aimed to evoke strong emotions in the reader. The broken family, the denial of freedom, and the Christian martyr were emotional themes. The presence of mulattoes in the book testified to widespread interracial and extramarital sex, which Northerners, then in the midst of a religious revival, viewed as an abhorrent sin destructive to family life. And the depiction of Southern masters struggling unsuccessfully with their consciences focused public attention on how slavery subverted Christianity.

Uncle Tom’s Cabin created a sensation in the United States and abroad. By the time of the Civil War, the book had sold an unprecedented 3 million copies in the United States and tens of thousands more in Europe. Stowe’s book gave slavery a face. Black Northerners embraced *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. Frederick Douglass’s National Black Convention resolved that the book was “a work plainly marked by the finger of God” on behalf of black people. Some black people hoped that the pop-



14-2

Harriet Beecher Stowe, from
Uncle Tom’s Cabin (1852)

CAUTION!!
COLORED PEOPLE
OF BOSTON, ONE & ALL,
You are hereby respectfully CAUTIONED and advised, to avoid conversing with the
Watchmen and Police Officers
of Boston,
For since the recent ORDER OF THE MAYOR & ALDERMEN, they are empowered to act as
KIDNAPPERS
AND
Slave Catchers,
And they have already been actually employed in KIDNAPPING, CATCHING, AND KEEPING SLAVES. Therefore, if you value your LIBERTY, and the Welfare of the Fugitives among you, **Watch** them in every possible manner, as so many **NO BODS** on the track of the most unfortunate of your race.
Keep a Sharp Look Out for
KIDNAPPERS, and have
TOP EYE open.
APRIL 24, 1851.

The Fugitive Slave Act threatened the freedom of escaped slaves living in the North, and even of free black Northerners. This notice, typical of warnings posted in northern cities, urged Boston’s African American population to take precautions.

Courtesy of Library of Congress

ularity of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* would highlight the hypocrisy of white Northerners who were quick to perceive evil in the South but were often blind to discrimination against African Americans in the North. For Southerners, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was a damnable lie, a political tract disguised as literature.

THE ELECTION OF 1852

While the nation read and reacted to *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, a presidential election campaign took place. The Compromise of 1850 had divided the Whigs deeply. The Democratic party entered the campaign more united. Despite reservations, both northern and southern wings of the party announced their support for the Compromise of 1850. Southern Democrats viewed the party's nominee, Franklin Pierce of New Hampshire, as safe on the slavery issue despite his New England heritage. Pierce satisfied Northerners as a nationalist devoted to the idea of Manifest Destiny. He belonged to *Young America*, a mostly Democratic group that advocated extending American influence into Central and South America and the Caribbean with an aggressive foreign policy. His service in the Mexican War and his good looks and charm won over doubters from both sections, winning him the election.

But Pierce's landslide victory could not obscure the deep fissures in the American party system. The Whigs were ultimately finished as a national party. And the Democrats, despite their electoral success, emerged frayed from the election. In the Lower South, conflicts within the party between supporters and opponents of the Compromise of 1850 had overshadowed the contests between Democrats and Whigs.

As Franklin Pierce took office in March 1853, it seemed that the only thing holding Democrats together was the thirst for political patronage. The low voter turnout in the 1852 election—Whig participation declined by 10 percent and Democratic participation by 17 percent, mostly in the Lower South—reflected public apathy and disgust at the prevailing party system. As the slavery issue confronted the nation with the most serious challenge it had faced since its inception, American voters were losing faith in their parties' ability to govern and in each other.

POLITICAL REALIGNMENT

Franklin Pierce, only 48 when he took office, was one of the youngest presidents in American history. He hoped to duck the slavery issue by focusing on *Young America's* dreams of empire. Americans were still susceptible to nationalist fervor. For all their sectional, religious, ethnic, and racial differences, they shared a common language and political institutions. New technologies like the railroad and the telegraph were working to bind them together physically as well. As Florida senator Stephen R. Mallory claimed, "It is no more possible for this country to pause in its career, than for the free and untrammled eagle to cease to soar." But President Pierce's attempts to forge national sentiment around an aggressive foreign policy failed. And his administration's inept handling of a new territorial controversy in Kansas forced him to confront the slavery debate.

No matter what policies a president pursued, Congress and the American people interpreted them in the light of their impact, real or potential, on slavery. The issue,



Harriet Beecher Stowe, the daughter of a prominent Northern evangelist, catapulted to international fame with the publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The novel helped raise the debate over slavery from a political to a moral level.

Southworth, Albert Sands (1811–1894), and Hawes, Josiah Johnson (1808–1901), Harriet Beecher Stowe. Daguerreotype, 4 1/2 × 3 1/2 in. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of I. N. Phelps Stokes, Edward S. Hawes, Alice Mary Hawes, and Marion Augusta Hawes, 1937

WHY WAS Lincoln elected in 1860?



said Missouri Senator Thomas Hart Benton, was like the plague of frogs that God had inflicted on the Egyptians to convince them to release the Hebrews from bondage. So it was with “this black question, forever on the table, on the nuptial couch, everywhere!”

Franklin Pierce lacked the skilled leadership the times demanded. Troubled by alcoholism, worried about his chronically ill wife, and grief-stricken over the death of three young sons, Pierce presided weakly over the nation and increasingly deferred to proslavery interests in his policies.

YOUNG AMERICA’S FOREIGN MISADVENTURES

Pierce’s first missteps occurred in pursuit of Young America’s foreign ambitions. The administration turned a greedy eye toward Spanish-ruled Cuba, just 90 miles off the coast of Florida. Southerners supported an aggressive Cuba policy, seeing the island as a possible new slave state. And nationalists saw great virtue in replacing what they perceived as a despotic colonial regime with a democratic government under the guidance of the United States.

In October 1854, three American diplomats met in Ostend, Belgium, to compose a document on Cuba called the *Ostend Manifesto* that claimed that the island belonged “naturally to the great family of states of which the Union is the Providential Nursery.” The implication was that if Spain wouldn’t sell, the United States could wrest control of Cuba. The Ostend Manifesto caused an uproar and embarrassed the Pierce administration when it became public. In the polite world of nineteenth-century diplomacy, it was a significant breach of etiquette. It also provoked a reaction in the United States, raising suspicions in the North that the South was willing to provoke a war with Spain to expand the number of slaveholding states. The Pierce administration also suffered from the greedy and ultimately unsuccessful exploits of self-styled “General” William Walker, who invaded Mexican-owned Baja California and later temporarily gained control of Nicaragua.

QUICK REVIEW

The Ostend Manifesto (1854)

- ◆ Pierce administration coveted Cuba.
- ◆ Manifesto claimed that Cuba naturally belonged in a family of states with United States.
- ◆ Public revelation of the manifesto produced criticism and embarrassment for administration.

STEPHEN DOUGLAS’S RAILROAD PROPOSAL

As Pierce was fumbling in foreign policy, Senator Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois was developing another national project that promised to draw the country together—the construction of a transcontinental railroad and the settling of the land it traversed. Douglas had in mind a transcontinental route extending westward from Chicago through the Nebraska Territory. Unfortunately for his plans, Indians already occupied this region, many of them on land the U.S. government had set aside as Indian Territory and barred to white settlement. Once again, and not for the last time, the federal government responded by reneging on earlier promises and forcing Indians to move. With the Indian “obstacle” removed, Douglas sought congressional approval to establish a government for the Nebraska Territory. As he predicted, the new bill did “raise a hell of a storm.”

THE KANSAS-NEBRASKA ACT

Douglas’s Kansas-Nebraska Bill split the Nebraska Territory into two territories, Kansas and Nebraska, with the implicit understanding that Kansas would become a slave state and Nebraska a free state. Consistent with Douglas’s belief in popular sovereignty, it left the actual decision on slavery to the residents of the territories. But because it allowed Southerners to bring slaves into an area formerly closed to slavery, it repealed the Missouri Compromise.

Northerners of all parties were outraged, using language indicative of the way religious and conspiratorial imagery had infected political debate. Transforming it into a contest of good against evil, of liberty against oppression, they said it was



“a gross violation of a sacred pledge,” “a criminal betrayal of precious rights,” and “part and parcel of an atrocious plot” to make a free territory a “dreary region of despotism, inhabited by masters and slaves.” President Pierce, however, backed the bill, assuring the support of enough Northern Democrats to secure it a narrow margin of victory. The **Kansas-Nebraska Act** was law, but dissatisfaction with it continued to fester.

In August 1854, shortly after Congress adjourned, Douglas left Washington for his home in Chicago, to rest and mend political fences. He did not enjoy a pleasant journey home. “I could travel,” he later recalled, “. . . by the light of my own effigy on every tree we passed.” Arriving in Chicago, he addressed a large, hostile crowd outside his hotel balcony. As he departed, he lost his temper and blurted, “It is now Sunday morning. I’ll go to church; you can go to hell.”

“BLEEDING KANSAS”

Because of its fertile soil, favorable climate, and location adjacent to the slave state of Missouri, Kansas was the most likely of the new territories to support slavery. As a result, both Southerners and antislavery Northerners began an intensive drive to recruit settlers and establish a majority there.

After much legislative maneuvering by both sides, a sporadic civil war erupted in Kansas in November 1855 and reached a climax in the spring of 1856. Journalists dubbed the conflict “**Bleeding Kansas**,” for it was characterized by an unprecedented level of personal hatred and hostility including a proslavery attack on the town of Lawrence, which the Northern press inflated into the “**sack of Lawrence**” and a bloody retaliatory raid by antislavery agitator John Brown.

KNOW-NOTHINGS AND REPUBLICANS: RELIGION AND POLITICS

The conflict in Kansas reflected deepening divisions throughout the nation that altered the political landscape and sharpened sectional conflict. From 1854 to 1856, Northerners moved into new political parties. Although the slavery issue was mainly responsible for party realignment in the North, other factors played a role as well. Nearly 3.5 million immigrants entered the United States between 1848 and 1860, the greatest influx in American history in proportion to the total population. Some of these newcomers, especially the Germans, were escaping failed democratic revolutions in Europe. They were predominantly middle-class Protestants who, along with fewer German Catholics and Jews, settled mostly in the cities, where they established shops and other businesses. More than 1 million of the immigrants, however, were poor Irish Roman Catholics fleeing their homeland to avoid starvation.

The Irish immigrants made their homes in Northern cities, at the time in the midst of Protestant revivals and reform. They also competed for jobs with native-born Protestant workers. Because the Irish would work for lower wages, the job competition bred animosity and sometimes violence. But it was their Roman Catholic religion that most concerned some urban Protestants. Democrats wooed the Irish newcomers. The champions of individual rights against intrusive government and meddling reformers, they supported the strict separation of church and state. Evangelical Protestants, especially those who were not Democrats, took a different view. As a Boston minister wrote during the debate on the Wilmot Proviso, “The great problem for the Christian world now to accomplish is to effect a closer union between religion and politics. . . . We must make men do good and be good.”



Armed Missourians cross the border into Kansas to vote for a proslavery government in 1855.

The Newberry Library

WHERE TO LEARN MORE



Adair Cabin and John Brown
Museum, John Brown Memorial
Park, Osawatimie, Kansas
www.kshs.org/places/adair.htm

Kansas-Nebraska Act Law passed in 1854 creating the Kansas and Nebraska Territories but leaving the question of slavery open to residents, thereby repealing the Missouri Compromise.

“Bleeding Kansas” Violence between pro- and antislavery forces in Kansas Territory after the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854.

“Sack of Lawrence” Vandalism and arson committed by a group of proslavery men in Lawrence, the free-state capital of Kansas Territory.



New parties emerged from this cauldron of religious, ethnic, and sectional strife. Anti-immigrant, anti-Catholic sentiment gave rise to the **Know-Nothing party**, which began as a secret organization in July 1854. Its name derived from the reply that members gave when asked about the party: “I know nothing.” In addition to their biases against Catholics and foreigners, the Know-Nothings shared a fear that the slavery issue could destroy the Union. Know-Nothing candidates fared surprisingly well in local and congressional elections during the fall of 1854, carrying 63 percent of the statewide vote in Massachusetts and making strong showings in New York and Pennsylvania. In office, Know-Nothings achieved some notable reforms. In Massachusetts, where they pursued an agenda similar to that of the Whigs in earlier years, they secured administrative reforms and supported public health and public education programs.

The Know-Nothings’ anti-Catholicism, however, overshadowed their reform agenda. Ethnic and religious bigotry were weak links to hold together a national party. Southern and Northern Know-Nothings fell to quarreling among themselves over slavery, despite their vow to avoid it, and the party split. Many Northern Know-Nothings soon found a congenial home in the new **Republican party**.

The Republican party formed in the summer of 1854 from a coalition of anti-slavery Conscience Whigs and Democrats disgusted with the Pierce administration’s Kansas policy. The Republicans supported many of the same kinds of reforms as the Know-Nothings, and like them, the Republicans also supported strong state and national governments to promote those reforms. The overriding bond among Republicans was their opposition to the extension of slavery in the territories. Unlike the Know-Nothings, the Republicans confronted the slavery issue head on.

Reflecting its opposition to slavery, the Republican party was an anti-Southern sectional party. The overwhelming majority of its members were Northerners. Northern Whig merchants and entrepreneurs who joined the party were impatient with Southern obstruction in Congress of federal programs for economic development, such as a transcontinental railroad, harbor and river improvements, and high tariffs to protect American industries (located mostly in the North) from foreign competition. In a bid to keep slavery out of the territories, the Republicans favored limiting homesteads in the West to 160 acres. Not incidentally, populating the territories with white Northerners would ensure a western base for the new party.

Heightened sectional animosity laced with religious and ethnic prejudice fueled the emergence of new parties and the weakening of old political affiliations in the early 1850s and the Republican party was becoming an important political force in the North and, to Southerners, the embodiment of evil.

THE ELECTION OF 1856

The presidential election of 1856 proved one of the strangest in American history. The Know-Nothings and the Republicans faced a national electorate for the first time. The Democrats were deeply divided over the Kansas issue. Rejecting both Pierce and Douglas, they turned instead to a longtime insider, James Buchanan, whose major asset was that he had been absent from the country the previous three years as ambassador to Great Britain and was thus untainted by the Kansas controversy. The Republicans passed over their most likely candidate, the New York senator and former Whig William H. Seward. Instead, they followed a tried-and-true Whig precedent and nominated a military hero, John C. Frémont, a handsome, dark-haired soldier of medium height and medium intelligence. His wife, Jessie Benton, the daughter of Missouri senator Thomas Hart Benton, was his greatest asset. In effect, she ran the campaign and wisely

QUICK REVIEW

Republican Values

- ◆ Supporters of reform.
- ◆ Opposed to slavery.
- ◆ Anti-Southern sectional party.

Know-Nothing party Anti-immigrant party formed from the wreckage of the Whig Party and some disaffected Northern democrats in 1854.

Republican party Party that emerged in the 1850s in the aftermath of the bitter controversy over the Kansas-Nebraska Act, consisting of former Whigs, some Northern Democrats, and many Know-Nothings.



encouraged her husband to remain silent. The Know-Nothings nominated former president Millard Fillmore.

Openly reviling what they called the "Black Republican party," Southerners threatened disunion if Frémont won. Buchanan claimed to be the only national candidate on the ballot. Voters agreed, for Buchanan bested Frémont in the North and Fillmore in the South to win the presidency.

The overall result pleased Southerners, but the details left them uncomfortable. Buchanan won by carrying every southern state and the Lower North—Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Illinois, Indiana, and California. But Frémont, a political novice running on his party's first national ticket, carried eleven free states, and the rest he lost by scant margins to Buchanan. It was a remarkable showing for a two-year-old party. In the South and border states, Fillmore managed more than 40 percent of the vote and carried Maryland, despite bearing the standard of a fragmented party.

Buchanan, who brought more than a generation of political experience to the presidency, would need every bit and more. He had scarcely settled into office when two major crises confronted him: a Supreme Court decision that challenged the right of Congress to regulate slavery in the territories and renewed conflict over Kansas.

THE DRED SCOTT CASE

Dred Scott was a slave owned by an army surgeon based in Missouri. In the 1830s and early 1840s, he had traveled with his master to the state of Illinois and the Wisconsin Territory before returning to Missouri. In 1846, Scott sued his master's widow for freedom on the grounds that the laws of Illinois and the Wisconsin Territory barred slavery. After a series of appeals, the case reached the Supreme Court.

Chief Justice Roger Taney of Maryland, joined by five other justices of the nine-member Supreme Court (five of whom came from slave states), dismissed Scott's suit two days after Buchanan's inauguration in March 1857. Taney's opinion contained two bombshells. First, using dubious logic and failing to take into account the status of black people in several Northern states, he argued that black people were not citizens of the United States. Because Scott was not a citizen, he could not sue. In reaching this conclusion, Taney noted that the framers of the Constitution had never intended citizenship for slaves.

Second, Taney held that even if Scott had standing in court, his residence in the Wisconsin Territory did not make him a free man. This was because the Missouri Compromise, which was still in effect in the 1840s, was, in Taney's view, unconstitutional. The compromise, the chief justice explained, deprived citizens of their property (slaves) without the due process of law granted by the Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. In effect, Taney ruled that Congress could not bar slavery from the territories.

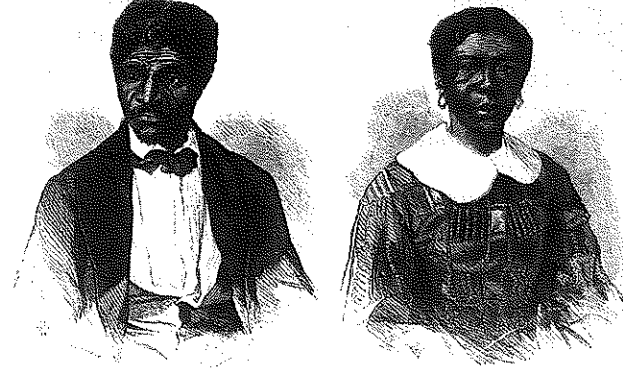
Black Americans reacted bitterly to the Dred Scott decision. Throughout the struggle of black abolitionists to free their compatriots in the South, they had appealed to the basic American ideals of freedom, liberty, and self-determination. Now Taney was saying that these ideals did not apply to black people. Throughout the urban North, black people held meetings to denounce the decision.

FRANK LESLIE'S ILLUSTRATED NEWSPAPER

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, JUNE 27, 1857. [Price 4 Cents.]



THE BOYS AND TRAVELERS.



DRED SCOTT AND HIS WIFE HARRIET ARE PORTRAYED HERE WITH THEIR CHILDREN AS AN AVERAGE MIDDLE-CLASS FAMILY...

Dred Scott and his wife Harriet are portrayed here with their children as an average middle-class family, an image that fueled Northern opposition to the Supreme Court's 1857 decision that denied both Scott's freedom and his citizenship.

Courtesy of Library of Congress

Dred Scott Decision Supreme Court ruling, in a lawsuit brought by Dred Scott, a slave demanding his freedom based on his residence in a free state, that slaves could not be U.S. citizens and that Congress had no jurisdiction over slavery in the territories.



The decision also shocked Republicans. The right of Congress to ban slavery from the territories, which Taney had apparently voided, was one of the party's central tenets. Republicans responded by ignoring the implications of the decision for the territories while promising to abide by it so far as it affected Dred Scott himself. Once in office, Republicans vowed, they would seek a reversal. This position allowed them to attack the decision without appearing to defy the law.

The *Dred Scott* decision boosted Republican fortunes in the North even as it seemed to undercut the party. Fears of a southern Slave Power conspiracy, which some had dismissed as fanciful and politically motivated, now seemed justified.

THE LECOMPTON CONSTITUTION

Establishing a legitimate government in Kansas was the second major issue to bedevil the Buchanan administration. The president made a good start, sending Mississippi resident Robert Walker, a man of integrity, to Kansas as territorial governor to oversee the election of a constitutional convention in June 1857.

But free-staters, fearing that the slavery forces planned to stuff the ballot box with fraudulent votes, announced a boycott of the June election. As a result, proslavery forces dominated the constitutional convention, which was held in Lecompton. And Walker, although a slaveholder, let it be known that he thought Kansas would never be a slave state and thereby put himself at odds with proslavery residents.

Walker convinced the free-staters to vote in October to elect a new territorial legislature. The returns gave the proslavery forces a narrow victory, but Walker discovered irregularities. Undeterred, the proslavery forces drafted a proslavery constitution at the constitutional convention in Lecompton. Buchanan, who had promised Southerners a proslavery government in Kansas, dismissed Walker before he could rule on the **Lecompton Constitution** and submitted the constitution to the Senate for approval even though it clearly sidestepped the popular sovereignty requirement of the Kansas-Nebraska Act.

As with the Kansas-Nebraska Act, many Northerners were outraged by the Lecompton Constitution. The proslavery Kansans behind the constitution had a record of fraud. Northern Democrats, among them Stephen A. Douglas, killed the constitution in Congress. Douglas knew that the *Dred Scott* decision and Buchanan's support of the Lecompton Constitution would help the Republicans and hurt him and his fellow Northern Democrats in the 1858 congressional elections.

The **Panic of 1857**, a severe economic recession that lingered into 1858, also worked to the advantage of the Republicans. The Democratic administration did nothing as unemployment rose, starvation stalked the streets of Northern cities, and homeless women and children begged for food and shelter.

The panic had scarcely touched the South. Cotton seemed indeed to be king. The financial crisis in the North reinforced the Southern belief that Northern society was corrupt and greedy. The Republicans' proposed legislative remedies, in their view, would enrich the North and beggar the South.

Such were the issues confronting Douglas as he returned home to Illinois in the summer of 1858 to begin his reelection campaign.

THE LINCOLN-DOUGLAS DEBATES

Douglas faced a forceful opponent. The Republicans had nominated Abraham Lincoln, a 49-year-old lawyer and former Whig congressman. The Kentucky-born Lincoln had risen from modest circumstances to become a prosperous lawyer in the Illinois state capital of Springfield. His marriage to wealthy and well-connected Mary Todd helped both his law practice and his pocketbook. Strongly opposed to



WHERE TO LEARN MORE

★ Constitution Hall,
Lecompton, Kansas

www.kshs.org/places/constit.htm

Lecompton Constitution Proslavery draft written in 1857 by Kansas territorial delegates elected under questionable circumstances; it was rejected by two governors, supported by President Buchanan, and decisively defeated by Congress.

Panic of 1857 Banking crisis that caused a credit crunch in the North; it was less severe in the South, where high cotton prices spurred a quick recovery.



the extension of slavery into the territories, Lincoln had developed a reputation as an excellent stump speaker with a homespun sense of humor, a quick wit, and a self-deprecating style that fit well with the small-town residents and farmers who composed the majority of the Illinois electorate.

But substance counted more than style with Illinois voters. Most of them opposed the extension of slavery into the territories, not out of concern for the slaves, but to keep the territories free for white people. Little known beyond the Springfield area, Lincoln also had to find a way to gain greater exposure. So in July 1858, he challenged Douglas to a series of debates across the state.

The **Lincoln-Douglas debates** were defining events in American politics that put the differences between Lincoln and Douglas, Republicans and Democrats, and North and South into sharp focus. In the debates, Lincoln asked Douglas to reconcile popular sovereignty, which Douglas had long championed, with the *Dred Scott* decision, which seemed to outlaw it by prohibiting a territorial legislature from excluding slavery before statehood. Douglas replied with what became known as the *Freeport Doctrine*. Slavery, he argued, could exist in a territory only if residents passed a law to protect it. Without such a law, no slaveholders would move in, and the territory would be free. Thus if residents did nothing, there could be no slavery in the territory.

For Douglas, slavery was not a moral issue. What mattered was what white people wanted. For Lincoln and many Republicans, slavery *was* a moral issue. As such, it was independent of what the residents of a territory wanted. In the final Lincoln-Douglas debate, Lincoln turned to his rival and explained, “The real issue in this controversy . . . is the sentiment on the part of one class that looks upon the institution of slavery *as a wrong*, and of another class that *does not* look upon it as a wrong. . . .”

Lincoln tempered his moralism with practical politics. He took care to distance himself from abolitionists, asserting that he abided by the Constitution and did not seek to interfere where slavery existed. Privately, however, he prayed for its demise. Nor did he agree, publicly at least, with abolitionist calls for racial equality. At the Springfield debate, he echoed the wishes of most white Illinoisans when he declared, “What I would most desire would be the separation of the white and black races.” The Republican party was antislavery, but it did not advocate racial equality. Lincoln lost the senatorial contest but won national respect and recognition.

Despite Lincoln’s defeat in Illinois, the Republicans made a strong showing in the 1858 congressional elections across the North. The increased Republican presence and the sharpening sectional divisions among Democrats portended a bitter debate over slavery in the new Congress. *Northern* and *Southern* took on meanings that expressed a great deal more than geography.

THE ROAD TO DISUNION

The unsatisfying Compromise of 1850, the various misadventures in the Caribbean and Central America, the controversies over Kansas and the *Dred Scott* case, and abolitionist John Brown’s failed attempt to spark a slave revolt in 1859 drove a wedge between the North and South.

The presidential election campaign of 1860 began before the uproar over Brown’s raid had subsided. In the course of that contest, one of the last nationally unifying institutions, the Democratic party, broke apart. The election of Abraham Lincoln, an avowedly sectional candidate, as president in 1860 triggered a crisis that defied peaceful resolution.



14-9

Abraham Lincoln, “A House Divided” (1858)

QUICK REVIEW

The Freeport Doctrine

- ◆ Proclaimed by Steven Douglas during Lincoln-Douglas debates.
- ◆ Slavery could exist in a territory only if the people passed a law to protect it.
- ◆ Without such a law, slavery could not exist and slaves could not enter that territory.

Lincoln-Douglas Debates Series of debates in the 1858 Illinois senatorial campaign during which Douglas and Lincoln staked out their differing opinions on the issue of slavery.

WHY COULD the political system not fix the secession crisis?



OVERVIEW

SOUTH AND NORTH COMPARED IN 1860

	South	North
Population	Biracial: 35 percent African American	Overwhelmingly white: less than 2 percent African American
Economy	Growing though relatively undiversified; 84 percent of work force in agriculture	Developing through industrialization and urbanization; 40 percent of work force in agriculture
Labor	Heavily dependent on slave labor, especially in Lower South	Free wage labor
Factories	15 percent of national total	85 percent of national total; concentrated in the Northeast
Railroads	Approximately 10,000 miles of track; primarily shorter lines, with fewer links to trunk lines	Approximately 20,000 miles of track; more effectively linked in trunk lines connecting east and west
Literacy	17 percent illiteracy rate for free population	6 percent illiteracy rate

Although the crisis spiraled into a civil war, this outcome did not signal the triumph of sectionalism over nationalism. Ironically, in defending their stands, both sides appealed to time-honored nationalist and democratic sentiments.

NORTH-SOUTH DIFFERENCES

Behind the ideological divide that separated North and South lay real and growing social and economic differences (see the overview table “South and North Compared in 1860”). As the North became increasingly urban and industrial, the South remained primarily rural and agricultural. The demand for farm machinery in the North reflected growing demand for manufactured products in general. The need of citydwellers for ready-to-wear shoes and clothing, household iron products, processed foods, homes, workplaces, and public amenities boosted industrial production in the North. In contrast, in the South, the slower rate of urbanization, the lower proportion of immigrants, and the region’s labor-intensive agriculture kept industrial development modest.

More subtle distinctions in culture and values between North and South became evident as well by midcentury. Southerners tended to be more violent than Northerners. Southern values stressed courtesy, honor, and courage. Southerners were more inclined to military service than Northerners. The South had a high illiteracy rate, nearly three times greater than the North—eight times greater if black Southerners are included.

Evangelical Protestantism attracted increasing numbers in both North and South, but its character differed in the two regions. The Methodist Church divided along sectional lines over slavery in 1844, and the Baptists split the following year. The Presbyterians splintered in 1837 over mainly doctrinal issues, but the rupture became complete in 1861. In the North, evangelical Protestants viewed



social reform as a prerequisite for the Second Coming of Christ. As a result, they were in the forefront of most reform movements. Just as Southern politics stressed individual rights, Southern religion emphasized individual salvation over social reform and defended slavery. Northern churches hunted sinners outside their congregations (and often found them in Southerners) and sermonized on political issues; Southern churches confined their preaching to their members and their message to the Gospel.

Slavery accounted for many of the differences between the North and the South. Investment in land and slaves limited investment in manufacturing. The availability of a large slave labor force reduced the need for farm machinery and limited the demand for manufactured products. Slavery contributed to the South's martial tradition and its lukewarm attitude toward public education. Fully 95 percent of the nation's black population lived in the South in 1860, 90 percent of them slaves.

The South's defense of slavery and the North's attack on it fostered an array of stereotypes that exaggerated the real differences between the sections. Like all stereotypes, these reduced individuals to dehumanized categories. They encouraged the people of each section to view those of the other less as fellow Americans than as aliens in their midst.

Ironically, although slavery increasingly defined the character of the South in the 1850s, a growing majority of white Southerners did not own slaves. Slavery nonetheless implicated nonslaveholders in ways that assured their support for it. By satisfying the demand for labor on large plantations, it relieved many rural white people from serving as farm hands and enabled them to work their own land. Slaveholders also recruited nonslaveholders to suppress slave violence or rebellion. Finally, regardless of a white man's social or economic status, he shared an important feature with the largest slaveholder: As long as racial slavery existed, the color of his skin made him a member of a privileged class that could never be enslaved.

While white Southerners were more united on slavery than on other issues, their defense of slavery presented them with a major dilemma: It left them vulnerable to moral condemnation because in the end, slavery was morally indefensible.

JOHN BROWN'S RAID

Ever intent on igniting a revolution among the slaves, abolitionist John Brown proposed in 1859 to attack and capture the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia, a small town near the Maryland border. The assault, Brown imagined, would spark a slave uprising in the area, eventually spreading to the rest of the state. With funds from his New England friends, he equipped a few dozen men and hired an English army officer to train them. When Brown outlined his scheme to Frederick Douglass, the noted black abolitionist warned him against it. But his white New England friends were less cautious, and a group of six prominent abolitionists (the "*Secret Six*") gave Brown additional funds for his project. On the night of October 16, 1859, Brown and twenty-two followers captured the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry and waited for the slaves to rally to his banner. Meanwhile, the townspeople alerted outside authorities. The Virginia militia and a detachment of United States Marines under the command of Colonel Robert E. Lee arrived and put a quick end to **John Brown's Raid**. They wounded Brown and killed or captured most of his force.

Brown had launched the ill-conceived operation without provisions and at a site from which escape was impossible. Although the primary goal of the attack

QUICK REVIEW

The Effects of Slavery on the South

- ◆ Slavery accounted for many of the differences between North and South.
- ◆ Investment in land and slaves limited investment in manufacturing.
- ◆ Slavery contributed to the South's martial tradition and attitude toward public education.

WHERE TO LEARN MORE



Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, West Virginia
www.nps.gov/hafe

John Brown's Raid New England abolitionist John Brown's ill-fated attempt to free Virginia's slaves with a raid on the federal arsenal at Harper's Ferry, Virginia, in 1859.



THE PRISONER BROWN AND HIS BOSTON COUNSEL, MR. HOYT.—DRAWN BY PORTER CRAYON.—[SEE PAGE 729.]

John Brown, wounded during his raid on the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, lies on a cot during his trial for murder and treason in Charlestown, Virginia, in 1859.

The Granger Collection, New York

had been to inspire a slave insurrection, no one had bothered to inform the local slaves. Was Brown crazy? As the *Boston Post* editorialized after the raid, “John Brown may be a lunatic, [but if so] then one-fourth of the people of Massachusetts are madmen.”

The raid, though foolish and unsuccessful, played on Southerners’ worst fears of slave rebellion, adding a new dimension: Here was an attack engineered not from within the South but from the North. Some white Southerners may have dismissed the ability or even the desire of slaves to mount revolts on their own, but they less easily dismissed the potential impact of outside white agitators.

The state of Virginia tried Brown on the charge of treason to the state, and the jury sentenced him to hang.

Throughout his brief imprisonment and trial, Brown maintained a quiet dignity that impressed even his jailers. The governor of Virginia spoke admirably of him as “a man of clear head, of courage, fortitude, and simple ingenuousness.” Some Northerners compared Brown’s execution with the death of a religious martyr. Abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison asked readers of *The Liberator* to “let the day of [Brown’s] execution . . . be the occasion of such a public moral demonstration against the bloody and merciless slave system as the land has never witnessed.” When the state of Virginia hanged Brown, church bells tolled across the North. Thoreau compared Brown with Jesus and called the abolitionist “an angel of light.” Emerson observed that Brown would “make the gallows glorious like the cross.” Condemning Brown’s deed, these Northerners nevertheless embraced the cause.

The outpouring of Northern grief over Brown’s death convinced white Southerners that the threat to their security was not over. John Brown’s Raid significantly changed Southern public opinion. It was one thing to condemn slavery in the territories but another to attack it violently where it was long established. Southerners now saw in the Republican party the embodiment of John Brown’s ideals and actions. So in their view, the election of a Republican president would be a death sentence for the South.

The impact of this shifting sentiment was immediately apparent in Congress when it reconvened three days after Virginia hanged Brown. Debate quickly turned tense and ugly. South Carolina senator James H. Hammond captured the mood well, remarking of his colleagues on the Senate floor that “the only persons who do not have a revolver and a knife are those who have two revolvers.”

THE ELECTION OF 1860

An atmosphere of mutual sectional distrust and animosity characterized the campaign for the presidential election of 1860. The Democrats disintegrated into two sectional factions united respectively behind Stephen A. Douglas and John C. Breckinridge. Former Whigs from the upper South who could not support Southern Democrat Breckinridge and Northern Whigs who had not defected to the Republicans or to Douglas formed the **Constitutional Union** party and nominated

Constitutional Union Party

National party formed in 1860, mainly by former Whigs, that emphasized allegiance to the Union and strict enforcement of all national legislation.



John Bell of Tennessee for president. Sensing victory, the Republicans convened in Chicago. If they could hold the states won by Frémont in 1856, add Minnesota (a new Republican-leaning state), and win Pennsylvania and one of three other Lower North states—Illinois, Indiana, or New Jersey—their candidate would win. These calculations dictated a platform and a candidate who could appeal to the four Lower North swing states where antislavery sentiment was not so strong. Along with the issue of slavery in the territories, the Republicans' now embraced a tariff plank calling for the protection of American industry.

In selecting an appropriate presidential nominee, the Republicans faced a dilemma. Senator William H. Seward came to Chicago as the leading Republican candidate, but his immoderate condemnation of Southerners and slavery made moderate northern voters wary of him. Reservations about Seward benefited Abraham Lincoln. A year after his losing 1858 Senate campaign, he had embarked on a speaking tour of the East at the invitation of influential newspaper editor Horace Greeley. Lincoln's lieutenants at the convention stressed their candidate's moderation and morality, distancing him from both the abolitionists and Seward. When Seward faltered, Lincoln rose and won the Republican nomination.

The presidential campaign of 1860 actually comprised two campaigns. In the South, the contest was between Breckinridge and Bell; in the North, it was Lincoln against Douglas. Lincoln did not even appear on the ballot in most southern states.

Lincoln's strategy was to say practically nothing. He spent the entire campaign in Springfield, Illinois. When he did speak, it was to a reporter or friends but not in a public forum. He discounted Southern threats of disunion if he were to become president.

States in those days held gubernatorial elections on different days, even in different months, from the national presidential election. When, in mid-October, Republicans had swept the statehouses in two crucial states, Pennsylvania and Indiana, Douglas made an extraordinary decision, but one consistent with his ardent nationalism. He abandoned his campaign and headed south at great personal peril to urge Southerners to remain in the Union now that Lincoln's election was inevitable.

Lincoln became the nation's sixteenth president with 40 percent of the popular vote (see Map 14–2). He took most Northern states by significant margins and won all the region's electoral votes except three in New Jersey. This gave him a substantial majority of 180 electoral votes.

SECESSION BEGINS

The events following Lincoln's election demonstrated how wildly mistaken were those who dismissed Southern threats of secession. Four days after Lincoln's victory, the South Carolina legislature called on the state's citizens to elect delegates to a convention to consider secession. Meeting on December 20, the delegates voted unanimously to leave the Union. By February 1, six other states—Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas—had all held similar conventions and decided to leave the Union. Representatives from the seven

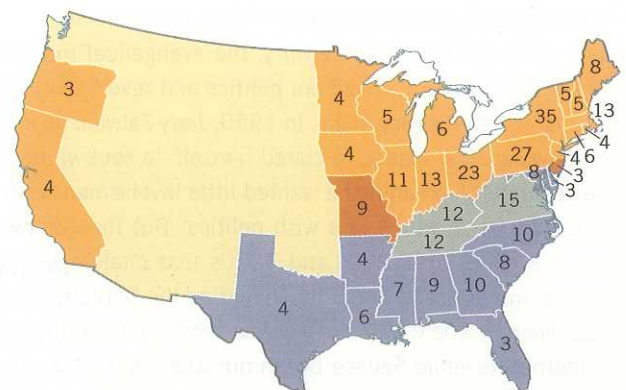
WHERE TO LEARN MORE



"A House Divided," mounted by the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois
www.chicagohs.org

MAP EXPLORATION

To explore an interactive version of this map, go to <http://www.prenhall.com/goldfield2/map14.2>



	Electoral Vote (%)	Popular Vote (%)
ABRAHAM LINCOLN (Republican)	180 (59)	1,865,593 (40)
John C. Breckinridge (Southern Democrat)	72 (24)	848,356 (18)
John Bell (Constitutional Union)	39 (13)	592,906 (13)
Stephen A. Douglas (Northern Democrat)	12 (4)	1,382,713 (29)

MAP 14–2

The Election of 1860 The election returns from 1860 vividly illustrate the geography of sectionalism.

BASED ON the geographic sectionalism shown in this map, what issues were important to voters in the election of 1860?



FROM THEN TO NOW

Religion and Politics

When evangelical Protestantism first emerged in the late eighteenth century, its adherents advocated the separation of church and state. By the 1850s, however, the social landscape of America had changed. A wave of immigrants, many of them Roman Catholic, threatened Protestant dominance. Growing cities and rapid technological and economic change strained the traditional moral and social order. Alarmed by these changes, evangelicals entered the political arena. Their convictions, as we saw in Chapter 12, helped drive the antebellum reform movement.

The give and take of politics, however, posed a challenge to the evangelical belief in an absolute truth grounded in the Bible. Eventually the two great evangelical crusades of the 1850s—anti-Catholicism and abolitionism—were subsumed within the Republican Party. And after the Civil War, the Republican Party gradually lost its radical fervor.

By the twentieth century, the evangelical movement had begun to turn away from politics and revert to its traditional focus on saving souls. In 1950, Jerry Falwell, an emerging evangelical leader, declared himself “a soul-winner and a separatist,” meaning he wanted little involvement with society at large, much less with politics. But then came the upheavals of the 1960s and 1970s that challenged traditional morality and authority, including the Supreme Court’s decision in *Roe v. Wade* to legalize abortion. In addition, the Internal Revenue Service began questioning the tax-exempt status of various religious groups. Once again, a changing social landscape compelled evangelicals to enter the political arena, this time to defend themselves against what they perceived to be an encroaching government. Organizations emerged to mobilize evangelical voters, including Jerry Falwell’s Moral Majority in the late 1970s and Pat Robertson’s Christian Coalition in 1989.

In the 1850s the Northeast was the center of evangelical politics. Now evangelical political organizations speak with a mostly Southern accent. In the 1850s opposition to slavery was the focus of evangelical politics. Now it is opposition to abortion and other social issues that have risen to prominence with the end of the Cold War and the nation’s

growing prosperity. Evangelical activists have once again found a home in the Republican Party. The Democrats, they believe, are too permissive and too committed to abortion rights, just as nineteenth century Democrats had been committed to the defense of slavery.

And again, as in the 1850s, evangelical involvement has heated political discourse with the language of righteousness. In 1992, Randall Terry, founder of Operation Rescue, a militant antiabortion organization, wrote in his newsletter that “to vote for Bill Clinton is to sin against God.” In a similar if more flowery declaration, a New England evangelical journal proclaimed the 1856 presidential contest a choice between “the bloodstained ticket of the Democratic party, responsible for the murder of your brothers and mine on the plains of Kansas,” and a Republican ticket designated by “the God of peace and purity as the one that shall smile upon you.”

Most Americans today, as in the 1850s, recoil from the overt intrusion of religion into politics, and groups like the Christian Coalition have had only limited success in electing their favored candidates. Despite these disappointments, they have been as wary of compromise as their nineteenth-century predecessors. As one evangelical leader explained in 1999: “I would rather go to bed with a clear conscience after losing.”

But if evangelical political organizations cannot gain control of Congress and the presidency, it is unlikely that their social agenda—which, in addition to antiabortion legislation, includes prayer in school, the posting of the Ten Commandments in public places, and laws restricting the rights of homosexuals—will be enacted. Today, some evangelical strategists call for a “popular front” approach, allying themselves with candidates not openly associated with the evangelical agenda. Abolitionists in the 1850s faced the same quandary between ideological purity and political pragmatism. Their support of Abraham Lincoln in 1860 reflected a bow toward pragmatism, a course that ultimately proved successful for their cause, but not without a bloody civil war.



seceding states met to form a separate country, the **Confederate States of America**. On February 18, Jefferson Davis was sworn in as its president.

Secessionists mounted an effective propaganda campaign, deftly using the press to convince voters to elect their delegates to the state conventions. Framing the issue as a personal challenge to every southern citizen, they argued that it would be cowardly to remain in the Union, a submission to despotism and enslavement. Southerners, they maintained, were the true heirs to the spirit of 1776. Lincoln and the Republicans were like King George III and the British—they meant to deny Southerners the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Unionists, in response, could only offer voters a wait-and-see strategy.

PRESIDENTIAL INACTION

Because Lincoln would not take office until March 4, 1861, it was the Buchanan administration that had to cope with the secession crisis during the critical months of December and January. The president's failure to work out a solution with Congress as secession fever swept the Lower South further undermined Unionist forces in the seceding states.

Thereafter, Buchanan's administration quickly fell apart. As the Lower South states left the Union, their representatives and senators left Washington, and with them went Buchanan's closest advisers and key cabinet officials. Commenting on the emotionally charged atmosphere in the Senate as prominent Southerners gave their farewells and departed, one observer wrote, "There was everywhere a feeling of suspense, as if, visibly, the pillars of the temple were being withdrawn and the great Government structure was tottering." Buchanan, a lame duck, bereft of friends and advisers, did little more than condemn secession. He hoped that waiting might bring an isolated Lower South to its senses and give efforts to mediate the sectional rift a chance to succeed.

PEACE PROPOSALS

Kentucky senator John J. Crittenden in January 1861 and later ex-President John Tyler in February proposed similar packages of constitutional amendments designed to solve the sectional crisis. The central feature of the *Crittenden Plan* was the extension of the Missouri Compromise line through the territories all the way to the state of California. The plan was of marginal interest to the South, however, because it was unlikely to result in any new slave states. Neither plan got anywhere in Congress.

LINCOLN'S VIEWS ON SECESSION

President-elect Lincoln monitored the secession of the Lower South states and the attempts to reach a compromise from his home in Springfield. Although he said nothing publicly, he made it known that he did not favor compromises such as those proposed by Crittenden and Tyler. Lincoln counted on Unionist sentiment to keep the Upper South from seceding. Like Buchanan, he felt that the longer the Lower South states remained isolated, the more likely they would be to return to the fold. For a while, events seemed to bear him out. In North Carolina, the *Wilmington Herald* responded to South Carolina's secession by asking readers, "Will you suffer yourself to be spit upon in this way? Are you *submissionists* to the

QUICK REVIEW

Buchanan and Secession

- ◆ Buchanan had to deal with secession crisis in the months between Lincoln's election and inauguration.
- ◆ Buchanan failed to work with Congress to find a solution.
- ◆ Buchanan hoped waiting would bring the South to its senses.

Confederate States of America
Nation proclaimed in Montgomery, Alabama, in February 1861, after the seven states of the Lower South seceded from the United States.



OVERVIEW

THE EMERGING SECTIONAL CRISIS

Event	Year	Effect
Wilmot Proviso	1846	Congressman David Wilmot's proposal to ban slavery from territories acquired from Mexico touched off a bitter sectional dispute in Congress.
Compromise of 1850	1850	Law admitted California as a free state, granted the population of Utah and New Mexico Territories the right to decide on slavery, and established a new and stronger Fugitive Slave Act, all of which "solved" the territorial issue raised by the Wilmot Proviso but satisfied neither North nor South and planted the seeds of future conflict.
Election of 1852	1852	Results confirmed demise of the Whig party, initiating a period of political realignment.
Kansas-Nebraska Act	1854	Law created the Kansas and Nebraska Territories and repealed the Missouri Compromise of 1820 by leaving the question of slavery to the territories' residents. Its passage enraged many Northerners, prompting some to form the new Republican party.
"Bleeding Kansas"	1855–1856	Sometimes violent conflict between pro- and antislavery forces in Kansas further polarized the sectional debate.
Election of 1856	1856	Presidency was won by Democrat James Buchanan of Pennsylvania, but a surprisingly strong showing by the recently formed Republican party in the North set the stage for the 1860 election.
<i>Dred Scott</i> Case	1857	The Supreme Court ruling that slaves were not citizens and that Congress had no authority to ban slavery from the territories boosted Republican prospects in the North.
Lecompton Constitution	1857	Proslavery document, framed by a fraudulently elected convention in Kansas and supported by President Buchanan, further convinced Northerners that the South was subverting their rights.
John Brown's Raid	1859	Unsuccessful attempt to free the South's slaves, this attack on a federal arsenal in Harpers Ferry, Virginia, increased sectional tension.
Election of 1860	1860	Republican Abraham Lincoln won a four-way race for the presidency. The last major national party, the Democrats, disintegrated. Lower South states seceded.
Fort Sumter	1861	Confederate forces attacked the fort in April 1861, Lincoln called for troops, and several Upper South states seceded. The Civil War was underway.

dictation of South Carolina . . .?" One by one, Upper South states registered their support for the Union. A closer look, however, reveals that there were limits to the Upper South's Unionism. Most voters in the region went to the polls assuming that Congress would eventually reach a compromise based on Crittenden's or Tyler's proposals, or some other remedy. Leaders in the Upper South saw themselves as peacemakers, but it was unlikely that the Upper South would ever abide the use of federal force against its Southern neighbors.



Lincoln believed that the slavery issue had to come to a crisis before the nation could solve it. Although he said in public that he would never interfere with slavery in the slave states, the deep moral revulsion he felt toward the institution left him more ambivalent in private. As he confided to a colleague in 1860, “The tug has to come, and better now, than any time hereafter.” (See *American Views: “Lincoln on Slavery*, p. 374.”)

FORT SUMTER: THE TUG COMES

In his inaugural address on March 4, 1861, Abraham Lincoln denounced secession and vowed to uphold federal law but tempered his firmness with a conciliatory conclusion. Addressing Southerners specifically, he assured them, “We are not enemies but friends. . . . Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield, and patriot grave, to every living heart and hearthstone, all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.”

Southerners wanted concessions, not conciliation, however. The new president said nothing about slavery in the territories, nothing about constitutional amendments proposed by Crittenden and Tyler, and nothing about the release of federal property in the South to the Confederacy. Even some Northerners hoping for an olive branch were disappointed.

One day after Lincoln’s inauguration, Major Robert Anderson (like Lincoln, a native Kentuckian), the commander of **Fort Sumter** in Charleston harbor, informed the administration that he had only four to six weeks’ worth of provisions left. Sumter was one of three Southern forts still under federal control. Anderson assumed that Lincoln would understand the hopeless military situation and order him to evacuate Fort Sumter.

News of Anderson’s plight changed the mood in the North. The Slave Power, some said, was holding him and his men hostage. Frustration grew over Lincoln’s silence and inaction. The Confederacy’s bold resolve seemed to contrast sharply with the federal government’s confusion and inertia. By the end of March, nearly a month after Anderson had informed Lincoln of the situation at Fort Sumter, the president finally made an effort to provision Major Anderson.

The president still hoped to avoid a confrontation. He did not send the troops that Anderson had requested. Instead he ordered unarmed boats to proceed to the fort, deliver the provisions, and leave. Only if the Confederates fired on them were they to force their way into the fort with the help of armed reinforcements.

President Davis wanted to take Sumter before the provisions arrived to avoid fighting Anderson and the reinforcements at the same time. He also realized that the outbreak of fighting could compel the Upper South to join the Confederacy, but his impatience to force the issue placed the Confederacy in the position of firing, unprovoked, on the American flag.

On April 10, Davis ordered Beauregard to demand the immediate evacuation of Fort Sumter. Anderson did not yield, and before dawn on April 12, 1861, the first Confederate shell whistled down on the fort. After more than a day of shelling, during which more than five thousand artillery rounds struck Fort Sumter, Anderson surrendered. Remarkably, neither side suffered any casualties, a deceptive beginning to an exceptionally bloody war.

QUICK REVIEW

From Inauguration to War

- ◆ Lincoln struck conciliatory tone in inaugural address.
- ◆ South wanted concessions, not conciliation.
- ◆ Crisis over Fort Sumter sparks the war.

WHERE TO LEARN MORE



Fort Sumter National Monument,
Charleston, South Carolina
www.nps.org/fosu

Fort Sumter A Fort Located in Charleston, South Carolina, where President Lincoln attempted to provision federal troops in 1861, triggering a hostile response from on-shore Confederate forces, opening the Civil War.



◆ AMERICAN VIEWS ◆

LINCOLN ON SLAVERY



After the 1860 election, Northern and Southern leaders sought out President-elect Abraham Lincoln for his views on slavery. Yet, Lincoln had spoken often on the institution before the election.

His speech two years earlier, excerpted here, offered an unequivocal statement of Lincoln's moral and philosophical opposition to slavery. It implied that the contradiction between American ideals and slavery could not be brokered, compromised, or ignored.

HOW DO Lincoln's actions from his election in November 1860 to the firing on Fort Sumter in April 1861 reflect the principles in his Springfield address? The two letters, one to fellow Illinois Republican Lyman Trumbull and the other to Virginia Democrat John A. Gilmer, indicate Lincoln's opposition to the extension of slavery into the territories. Are they consistent with the views expressed in Springfield two years earlier? Do you think the letters both say essentially the same thing?

Speech of Hon. Abraham Lincoln

Springfield, Illinois, June 17, 1858

We are now far into the fifth year since policy was initiated with the avowed object and confident promise of putting an end to slavery agitation. Under the operation of that policy, that agitation has not only not ceased, but has constantly augmented. In my opinion, it will not cease until a crisis shall have been reached and passed. "A house divided against itself cannot stand." I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved; I do not expect the house to fall; but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing, or the other. . . . So I say in relation to the principle that all men are created equal, let it be as nearly reached as we can. If we cannot give free-

dom to every creature, let us do nothing that will impose slavery upon any other creature. . . . I leave you, hoping that the lamp of liberty will burn in your bosoms until there shall no longer be a doubt that all men are created free and equal.

Springfield, Ills. Dec. 10, 1860

Hon. L. Trumbull

My dear Sir: Let there be no compromise on the question of extending slavery. If there be, all our labor is lost, and ere long, must be done again. The dangerous ground—that into which some of our friends have a hankering to run—is Pop[ular] Sov[ereignty]. Have none of it. Stand firm. The tug has to come, & better now, than any time hereafter. Yours as ever,

A. Lincoln

Springfield, Ill. Dec. 15, 1860

Hon. John A. Gilmer:

My dear Sir: . . . I have no thought of recommending the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, nor the slave trade among the slave states . . . and if I were to make such recommendation, it is quite clear Congress would not follow it. As to the use of patronage in the slave states, where there are few or no Republicans, I do not expect to inquire for the politics of the appointee, or whether he does or not own slaves. . . . In one word, I never have been, am not now, and probably never shall be, in a mood of harassing the people, either North or South. On the territorial question, I am inflexible. . . . On that, there is a difference between you and us; and it is the only substantial difference. You think slavery is right and ought to be extended; we think it is wrong and ought to be restricted. For this, neither has any just occasion to be angry with the other.

Your obt. Servt.

A. Lincoln

Source: John G. Nicolay and John Hay, eds., *Works of Abraham Lincoln*, vol. 6 (New York, Century Co., 1905).



When the verdict of Fort Sumter reached President Lincoln, he called on the Southern states still in the Union to send troops to put down the rebellion. Refusing to make war on South Carolina, the Upper South states of Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Arkansas seceded, and the Confederacy expanded to eleven states.

CONCLUSION

When David Wilmot had submitted his amendment to ban slavery from the territories gained from Mexico, he could not have foreseen that the debate he unleashed would end in civil war just fifteen years later (see the overview table “The Emerging Sectional Crisis,” p. 372). By the 1850s the slavery issue had become weighted with so much moral and political freight that it defied easy resolution. Northerners and Southerners eventually interpreted any incident or piece of legislation as an attempt by one side to gain moral and political advantage at the other’s expense.

By 1861, the national political parties that had muted sectional animosities were gone, and so were national church organizations and fraternal associations. The ideals that had inspired the American Revolution remained in place, especially the importance of securing individual liberty against encroachment by government. But with each side interpreting them differently, these ideals served more to divide than to unite.

Ironically, as Americans in both sections talked of freedom and self-determination, the black men and women in their midst had little of either. Lincoln went to war to preserve the Union, Davis, to defend a new nation. Slavery was the spark that ignited the conflict, but white Americans seemed more comfortable embracing abstract ideals than real people. Northerners and Southerners would confront this irony during the bloodiest war in American history—but they would not resolve it.

SUMMARY

Slavery in the Territories As Americans expanded westward and new territories were added, the nation’s attention became focused on the expansion of slavery. Clashes between the North and the South became more frequent and shrill; the existing political parties seemed unable to resolve the issue. The admission of California triggered a new crisis; the resulting Compromise of 1850 and Fugitive Slave Act left both sides unhappy. The publication of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* brought the evils of slavery to ordinary Americans and galvanized opposition to slavery in the North. The presidential election of 1852 revealed an increasingly divided nation.

Political Realignment By the 1850s, all policies were interpreted in the light of their impact on slavery. Expansionist plans involving Cuba, the building of a transcontinental railroad, and organization of the Kansas and Nebraska Territories were all tied to either expanding or limited slavery. Political parties in the North realigned over slavery and immigration with a new party, the Republican party, emerging in 1854. The *Dred Scott* case and Lecompton Constitution caused bitter





reactions; the Lincoln-Douglas debates put the divisions and moral issue of slavery in sharp focus.

The Road to Disunion Ideological, economic, and social differences separated North and South. The South saw itself as increasingly victimized by the North; the raid of John Brown and its aftermath convinced Southerners their security in the Union was in jeopardy. The election of a Republican president would be a death sentence in Southern eyes; extremists believed it would give them the justification to secede. The election of Abraham Lincoln, the Republican candidate in 1860, was the signal for secession and formation of a separate nation. Lincoln initially took no action against the South, but when Fort Sumter was fired upon, Lincoln responded.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why was Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* such a great success?
 2. If you were a Democratic representative to the U.S. Congress in 1854, would you have supported or opposed the Kansas-Nebraska Bill? Why?
 3. How did evangelical religion affect the sectional conflict between North and South?
 4. Between the time he was elected president in November and his inauguration in March, how might Abraham Lincoln have resolved the sectional crisis?
 5. Could Northerners and Southerners both have been correct in their positions?
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KEY TERMS

"Bleeding Kansas" (p. 361)

Compromise of 1850 (p. 356)

Confederate States of America
(p. 371)

Constitutional Union Party (p. 368)

Dred Scott decision (p. 363)

Fort Sumter (p. 373)

Fugitive Slave Act (p. 356)

John Brown's Raid (p. 367)

Kansas-Nebraska Act (p. 361)

Know-Nothing party (p. 362)

Lecompton Constitution (p. 364)

Lincoln-Douglas Debates (p. 365)

Panic of 1857 (p. 364)

Popular sovereignty (p. 354)

Republican party (p. 362)


Sack of Lawrence (p. 361)


Wilmot Proviso (p. 353)



WHERE TO LEARN MORE

 **The Underground Railroad Freedom Center, Cincinnati, Ohio.** The Center provides information on the northern response to the Fugitive Slave Act. It also sponsors a traveling exhibition, “Free at Last: A History of the Abolition of Slavery in America.” www.undergroundrailroad.org

 **Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, West Virginia.** Exhibits interpret John Brown’s Raid and re-create some of the atmosphere and structures of the 1850s village and the federal arsenal. www.nps.gov/hate

 **Fort Sumter National Monument, Charleston, South Carolina.** This historic site interprets the bombardment of the fort and the events that immediately preceded the Civil War. www.nps.org/fosu



For additional study resources for this chapter, go to:
www.prenhall.com/goldfield/chapter14

*If it is necessary that I should
fall on the battle-field
for my Country I am ready.*



Awaiting combat, 1861: Union Soldiers from New York relax at camp awaiting orders to move to the front. The young men show great confidence and determination for their coming engagements, though one fellow to the left of the tent, perhaps a teenager far from home, seems to long for something as he stares beyond the camera. Note also the young African American with a broom sitting apart from the soldiers.