

## Creating America (Survey)

### Chapter 15: The Nation Breaking Apart, 1846-1861

#### Section 1: Growing Tensions Between North and South

**Main Idea:** Disagreements between the North and the South, especially over the issue of slavery, led to political conflict.

In the early 1800s, the North began to develop more industry and trade than the South. Northern cities grew quickly, mainly because of immigration.

A few wealthy planters controlled Southern society. Their profits came from slave labor, used mainly to grow cotton. Therefore, planters invested in slaves instead of industry.

In the 1830s, many Northern workers and immigrants opposed slavery. They feared that slaves, who received no pay, would take jobs away from them. Although they opposed slavery, most Northerners were racist by today's standards. White Southerners defended slavery by claiming that white people were superior to blacks.

In 1846, Congress debated the Wilmot Proviso. This bill proposed to ban slavery in any territory that the United States acquired from the War with Mexico.

Congressmen from the North supported the Wilmot Proviso. Southerners opposed it. Although the Proviso passed the House of Representatives, it never passed the Senate. The Wilmot Proviso led to the formation of the Free-Soil Party. This party wanted to stop the expansion of slavery and made it a key issue in national politics.

In 1850, California applied for admission to the Union as a free state. Southerners in Congress were opposed, because this would have made slave states a minority in the Senate.

Senator Henry Clay proposed that California be admitted as a free state. To please the South, his bill included a strong law to help slaveholders recapture runaway slaves. In September, his plan—known as the Compromise of 1850—became law.

## **Section 2: The Crisis Deepens**

**Main Idea:** Turmoil over slavery led to acts of violence.

The 1850 law that helped slaveholders recapture runaway slaves was called the Fugitive Slave Act. People accused of being fugitives could be arrested without a warrant. Fugitives had no right to a jury trial. Instead, a federal official heard the case. The law also required that Northerners return runaway slaves to their masters.

In 1852, Harriet Beecher Stowe published the novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The novel described slavery as cruel and immoral.

In 1854, Senator Stephen A. Douglas proposed a bill that would divide the Nebraska Territory in two—Nebraska and Kansas. He suggested that the decision to allow slavery in these territories be decided by a vote of the residents, or popular sovereignty. The bill, which passed, became known as the Kansas–Nebraska Act.

Proslavery and antislavery people rushed into Kansas. Each side wanted to win the vote on slavery. Settlers on both sides armed themselves. In May 1855, a proslavery mob attacked the town of Lawrence, Kansas. They destroyed the offices and house of the governor of the antislavery government. This attack is known as the Sack of Lawrence.

John Brown, an extreme abolitionist, wanted revenge. He and seven other men came into Kansas and murdered five proslavery people. This became known as the Pottawatomie Massacre. The violence spread and the area came to be called “Bleeding Kansas.”

Violence also spread to the nation’s capital. In May 1856, Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts delivered a speech against the proslavery forces in Kansas. During the

speech, Sumner insulted Senator Butler from South Carolina. Preston Brooks, a relative of Butler, attacked Sumner with a cane. “Bleeding Kansas” and “Bleeding Sumner” became antislavery rallying cries. They also became slogans for the new Republican Party.

### **Section 3: Slavery Dominates Politics**

**Main Idea:** Disagreement over slavery led to the formation of the Republican Party and heightened sectional tensions.

The Whig Party split over the issue of slavery, which destroyed the Southern Whigs. The Northern Whigs joined with other slavery opponents and formed the Republican Party.

In the 1856 presidential election, the Republicans nominated John C. Frémont, who was in favor of admitting California and Kansas as free states. Because of his position on slavery, Frémont’s name did not even appear on Southern ballots.

The Democrats nominated James Buchanan. His goal was to keep the Union together.

The Know-Nothing Party nominated Millard Fillmore. The Party had little strength because it was divided over slavery.

The 1856 election became two separate races. In the North, it was Buchanan against Frémont. In the South, it was Buchanan against Fillmore. Buchanan won. Although Frémont lost, he won 11 Northern states.

Dred Scott was a slave who sued for his freedom. His case, *Dred Scott versus Sandford*, reached the Supreme Court in 1856. The Court ruled that Scott was not a U.S. citizen and therefore could not sue in U.S. courts. The Court also ruled that slaves were property. As such, the right to own slaves was protected by the Constitution.

In 1858, Stephen Douglas, a Democrat from Illinois, ran for reelection to the Senate. Republican Abraham Lincoln ran against him. Lincoln and Douglas held a series of debates about the expansion of slavery. Lincoln argued that slavery should not be

expanded. Douglas argued that voters in each territory should decide the slavery issue for themselves. Although Douglas won the election, the debates made Lincoln a national figure.

On October 16, 1859, John Brown and his followers captured the U.S. arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia, in a failed attempt to arm local slaves. Brown and his followers were captured by the U.S. Marines. They were tried, convicted, and executed.

#### **Section 4: Lincoln's Election and Southern Secession**

**Main Idea:** The election of Lincoln led Southern states to secede from the Union.

The Republicans nominated Abraham Lincoln for president in 1860. The Democratic Party was split. The Southern Democrats wanted to defend slavery in the party's platform, while the Northern Democrats wanted the platform to support popular sovereignty.

The Northern Democrats nominated Stephen A. Douglas. The Southern Democrats refused to support Douglas and nominated John Breckinridge of Kentucky, a supporter of slavery. A fourth party, the Constitutional Union Party, nominated John Bell of Tennessee.

The election turned into two different races. Lincoln and Douglas had support in the North. Breckinridge and Bell had support in the South.

Lincoln was against expanding slavery. Breckinridge wanted the federal government to protect slavery in any territory. Douglas and Bell were considered moderates.

Lincoln carried the North. Breckinridge won in the South. Because the North had more people, Lincoln became president.

Many Southerners warned that if Lincoln was elected, the Southern states would secede, or withdraw from the Union. In December 1860, South Carolina became the first state to secede. By February 1861, six more states had seceded. They formed the Confederate

States of America and named Jefferson Davis their president. Northerners believed that secession of the Southern states was unconstitutional.

In February 1861, Senator Crittenden of Kentucky created a compromise plan to stop the South from seceding. His plan, called the Crittenden Plan, did not pass.

President Lincoln assured the South that he would not abolish slavery there but spoke strongly against secession.

Fort Sumter in South Carolina was one of several Southern forts under Union control. When these forts needed to be resupplied, the whole nation waited to see what would happen.