Why It Matters

As you study Unit 6, you will learn how social, economic, and political differences between the North and South grew. As compromises failed, the country plunged into civil war. The following resources offer more information about this period in American history.

Primary Sources Library

See pages 602–603 for primary source readings to accompany Unit 6.

Use the American History Primary Source Document Library CD-ROM to find additional primary sources about the Civil War and Reconstruction.

General Patrick R. Cleburne by Don Troiani
“A house divided against itself cannot stand.”

—Abraham Lincoln, 1858
Why It Matters

Slavery was a major cause of the worsening division between the North and South in the period before the Civil War. The struggle between the North and South turned more hostile, and talk grew of separation and civil war.

The Impact Today

“If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong,” Abraham Lincoln wrote in a letter to A.G. Hodges in 1864. By studying this era of our history, we can better understand the state of racial relations today and develop ways for improving them.

The American Republic to 1877 Video


1850 - Compromise of 1850 passed

1845 - Texas becomes a state

1852 - Uncle Tom’s Cabin published

1848 - Marx publishes The Communist Manifesto

1845 - Many people begin emigrating to escape potato famine in Ireland

1840 1845 1850
African Americans in 1850  About 425,000 African Americans in the United States were free while 3.2 million lived in slavery.

Sequencing Events Study Foldable  Make and use this foldable to sequence some of the key events that led to the Civil War.

Step 1  Fold a sheet of paper in half from side to side, leaving a \( \frac{1}{2} \) inch tab along the side.

Step 2  Turn the paper and fold it into fourths.

Step 3  Unfold and cut up along the three fold lines.

Step 4  Label your foldable as shown.

Reading and Writing  As you read, write facts about the events under each appropriate tab of your foldable. How did these events lead to the Civil War?

**1854**
- Kansas-Nebraska Act passed

**1855**

**1857**
- Dred Scott decision

**1859**
- Raid on Harpers Ferry

**1860**
- Lincoln elected president

**1861**
- Civil War begins

**1861**
- Alexander II frees serfs in Russia

**1863**
- French troops occupy Mexico City

**1864**
- Emancipation Proclamation

**1865**
- Lincoln assassinated

**1866**
- Reconstruction

**1867**
- Fourteenth Amendment

**1868**
- Fifteenth Amendment

**1869**
- Homestead Act

**1877**
- Grant becomes president

**1879**
- Texas vs. Johnson

**1881**
- Garfield assassinated

**1883**
- Sherman Antitrust Act

**1886**
- Rise of the Populists

**1887**
- Blessing of the Farmers’ Alliance

**1890**
- Populist Party

**1892**
- Populist successes

**1896**
- Election of 1896

**1899**
- Spanish-American War

**1901**
- McKinley's death

**1901**
- T. Roosevelt takes office

**1907**
- Mexican revolution

**1913**
- Federal Reserve System

**1917**
- Entry into World War I

**1921**
- End of World War I

**1929**
- Stock market crash

**1933**
- Franklin D. Roosevelt

**1941**
- Entry into World War II

**1945**
- End of World War II

**1954**
- Brown v. Board of Education

**1963**
- Assassination of Kennedy

**1964**
- Civil Rights Act

**1965**
- Voting Rights Act

**1973**
- Watergate scandal

**1981**
- Reagan becomes president

**1994**
- Clinton becomes president

**2000**
- Bush becomes president

**2008**
- Obama becomes president

**2016**
- Trump becomes president

**2020**
- Biden becomes president
Main Idea
As new states entered the Union, the question of whether to admit them as free states or slave states arose.

Key Terms
sectionalism, fugitive, secede, abstain

Reading Strategy
Organizing Information As you read the section, re-create the table below and describe how these compromises answered the question of admitting new states.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Admission of new states</th>
<th>The Missouri Compromise</th>
<th>The Compromise of 1850</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Read to Learn
- how the debate over slavery was related to the admission of new states.
- what the Compromise of 1850 accomplished.

Section Theme
Government and Democracy Controversy over slavery grew during the early and mid-1800s.

Preview of Events
- 1820 Missouri Compromise is passed
- 1840 Free-Soil Party nominates Martin Van Buren
- 1850 Compromise of 1850 diverts war

The Missouri Compromise
The request by slaveholding Missouri to join the Union in 1819 caused an angry debate that worried former president Thomas Jefferson and Secretary of State John Quincy Adams. Jefferson called the dispute “a fire-bell in the night” that “awakened and filled me with terror.” Adams accurately predicted that the bitter debate was “a mere preamble—a title-page to a great tragic volume.”

Many Missouri settlers had brought enslaved African Americans into the territory with them. By 1819 the Missouri Territory included about 50,000 whites...
and 10,000 slaves. When Missouri applied to Congress for admission as a state, its constitution allowed slavery.

In 1819, 11 states permitted slavery and 11 did not. The Senate—with two members from each state—was therefore evenly balanced between slave and free states. The admission of a new state would upset that balance.

In addition, the North and the South, with their different economic systems, were competing for new lands in the western territories. At the same time, a growing number of Northerners wanted to restrict or ban slavery. Southerners, even those who disliked slavery, opposed these antislavery efforts. They resented the interference by outsiders in Southerners’ affairs. These differences between the North and the South grew into sectionalism—an exaggerated loyalty to a particular region of the country.

Clay’s Proposal

The Senate suggested a way to resolve the crisis by allowing Missouri’s admittance as a slave state while simultaneously admitting Maine as a free state. Maine, formerly part of Massachusetts, had also applied for admission to the Union. The Senate also sought to settle the issue of slavery in the territories for good. It proposed prohibiting slavery in the remainder of the Louisiana Purchase north of 36°30’N latitude.

Speaker of the House Henry Clay of Kentucky skillfully maneuvered the Senate bill to passage in 1820 by dividing it into three proposals. The Missouri Compromise preserved the balance between slave and free states in the Senate and brought about a lull in the bitter debate in Congress over slavery.

Conflicting Views

Just months after the Mexican War began, Representative David Wilmot of Pennsylvania introduced a proposal in Congress. Called the Wilmot Proviso, it specified that slavery should be prohibited in any lands that might be acquired from Mexico. Southerners protested furiously. They wanted to keep open the possibility of introducing slavery to California and New Mexico.

Senator John C. Calhoun of South Carolina countered with another proposal. It stated that neither Congress nor any territorial government had the authority to ban slavery from a territory or regulate it in any way.

New Western Lands

For the next 25 years, Congress managed to keep the slavery issue in the background. In the 1840s, however, this heated debate moved back into Congress. Once again the cause of the dispute was the issue of slavery in new territories. The territories involved were Texas, which had won its independence from Mexico in 1836, and New Mexico and California, which were still part of Mexico.

Many Southerners hoped to see Texas, where slavery already existed, join the Union. As a result, the annexation of Texas became the main issue in the presidential election of 1844. Democrat James Polk of Tennessee won the election and pressed forward on acquiring Texas, and Texas became a state in 1845. At the same time, support for taking over New Mexico and California also grew in the South. The federal government’s actions on these lands led to war with Mexico.
Neither Wilmot’s nor Calhoun’s proposal passed, but both caused bitter debate. By the time of the 1848 presidential election, the United States had gained the territories of California and New Mexico from Mexico but had taken no action on the issue of slavery in those areas.

The Free-Soil Party

The debate over slavery led to the formation of a new political party. In 1848 the Whigs chose Zachary Taylor, a Southerner and a hero of the Mexican War, as their presidential candidate. The Democrats selected Senator Lewis Cass of Michigan. Neither candidate took a stand on slavery in the territories.

This failure to take a position angered voters. Many antislavery Democrats and Whigs left their parties and joined with members of the old Liberty Party to form the Free-Soil Party. The new party proclaimed “Free Soil, Free Speech, Free Labor, and Free Men,” and endorsed the Wilmot Proviso. The party nominated former president Martin Van Buren as its presidential candidate.

Whig candidate Zachary Taylor won the election by successfully appealing to both slave and free states. Taylor defeated Cass 163 to 127 in electoral votes. Van Buren captured only 14 percent of the popular vote in the North, but several candidates of the Free-Soil Party won seats in Congress.

California

Once in office President Taylor urged leaders in the two territories of California and New Mexico to apply for statehood immediately. Once these lands had become states, he reasoned, their citizens could decide whether to allow slavery. New Mexico did not apply for statehood, but California did in 1850.

Taylor’s plan ran into trouble when California’s statehood became tangled up with other issues before Congress. Antislavery forces wanted to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, the nation’s capital. Southerners wanted a strong national law requiring states to return fugitive, or runaway, slaves to their masters. Another dispute involved the New Mexico–Texas border.

The greatest obstacle to Taylor’s plan was concern over the balance of power in the Senate. In 1849 the nation included 15 slave states and 15 free states. If California entered as a free state—and New Mexico, Oregon, and Utah followed as free states, which seemed likely—the South would be hopelessly outvoted in the Senate. As tension grew, some Southerners began talking about having their states secede from, or leave, the United States.

Explaining

How was John C. Calhoun’s proposal different from the Wilmot Proviso?

A New Compromise

In January 1850, Henry Clay, now a senator, presented a multi-part plan to settle all the issues dividing Congress. First, California would be admitted as a free state. Second, the New Mexico Territory would have no restrictions on slavery. Third, the New Mexico–Texas border dispute would be settled in favor of New Mexico. Fourth, the slave trade, but not slavery itself, would be abolished in the District of Columbia. Finally, Clay pushed for a stronger fugitive slave law.

Clay’s proposal launched an emotional debate in Congress that raged for seven months. Opening that debate were Clay and two other distinguished senators—John C. Calhoun of South Carolina and Daniel Webster of Massachusetts.
Calhoun opposed Clay’s plan. He believed that the only way to save the Union was to protect slavery. If Congress admitted California as a free state, Calhoun warned, the Southern states had to leave the Union.

Three days later Webster gave an eloquent speech in support of Clay’s plan. He argued that antislavery forces lost little in agreeing to the compromise:

“I would rather hear of natural blasts and mildews, war, pestilence, and famine, than to hear gentlemen talk of secession.”

Webster reasoned that geography would prevent slavery from taking root in the new territories, since most of the land was not suited for plantations. What was most important was to preserve the Union.

The Compromise of 1850

Clay’s plan could not pass as a complete package. Too many members of Congress objected to one part of it or another. President Taylor also opposed the plan and threatened to use force against the South if states tried to secede.

Then in July President Taylor suddenly died. The new president, Millard Fillmore, supported some form of compromise. At the same time, Stephen A. Douglas, a young senator from Illinois, took charge of efforts to resolve the crisis. Douglas divided Clay’s plan into a series of measures that Congress could vote on separately. In this way members of Congress would not have to support proposals they opposed.

President Fillmore persuaded several Whig representatives to abstain—not to cast votes—on measures they opposed. Congress finally passed a series of five separate bills in August and September of 1850. Taken together these laws, known as the Compromise of 1850, contained the five main points of Clay’s original plan. Fillmore called the compromise a “final settlement” of the conflict between North and South. The president would soon be proved wrong.

**Before They Were Presidents**

Like Zachary Taylor, did most presidents make the military their profession? Some presidents did make the military their principal profession. Washington, William Henry Harrison, Grant, and Eisenhower, as well as Taylor, all made a career in the military. However, more presidents came from the ranks of attorneys than from any other profession. More than half of all presidents, including Jefferson and Lincoln, made their living in the practice of law.

### Checking for Understanding

1. **Key Terms** Use each of these social studies terms in a sentence that will help explain its meaning: sectionalism, fugitive, secede, abstain.

2. **Reviewing Facts** List the provisions of the Missouri Compromise.

3. **Reviewing Themes**

   **Government and Democracy** Why was the Free-Soil Party created?

### Critical Thinking

4. **Analyzing Information** What was the Wilmot Proviso? Why was it controversial?

5. **Comparing** Re-create the table below and describe what the North and South each gained from the Compromise of 1850.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compromise of 1850</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northern gains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern gains</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Analyzing Visuals

6. **Examining Artifacts** Look at the campaign banner on page 437. Compare it to a modern political button or advertisement you have seen. In what ways are they similar? In what ways are they different?

### Interdisciplinary Activity

**Government** Create a poster for the Free-Soil Party presidential candidate. Include slogans or symbols to gain popular support.
Why Learn This Skill?
Cats make better pets than dogs. If you say this, then you are stating a bias. A bias is a prejudice. It can prevent you from looking at a situation in a reasonable or truthful way.

Learning the Skill
Most people have feelings and ideas that affect their point of view. This viewpoint, or bias, influences the way they interpret events. For this reason, an idea that is stated as a fact may really be only an opinion. Recognizing bias will help you judge the accuracy of what you read. There are several things you should look for that will help you recognize bias. Identify the author of the statement and examine his or her views and possible reasons for writing the material. Look for language that reflects an emotion or opinion—words such as all, never, best, worst, might, or should. Examine the writing for imbalances—leaning only to one viewpoint and failing to provide equal coverage of other possible viewpoints.

Practicing the Skill
Read the excerpts on this page. The first excerpt is from an 1858 newspaper editorial. The second is from a speech by Senator John C. Calhoun of South Carolina. Then answer the four questions that follow.

"Popular sovereignty for the territories will never work. Under this system, each territory would decide whether or not to legalize slavery. This method was tried in the territory of Kansas and all it produced was bloodshed and violence."
—The Republican Leader, 1858

"...[T]he two great divisions of society are not rich and poor, but white and black; and all the former, the poor as well as the rich, belong to the upper classes, and are respected and treated as such."
—Senator Calhoun

1. Is Senator Calhoun expressing a proslavery or antislavery bias?
2. What statements indicate the racism in Calhoun’s bias?
3. What political party’s view does the editorial represent?
4. What biases or beliefs are expressed in the editorial?

Applying the Skill
Recognizing Bias Look through the letters to the editor in your local newspaper. Write a short report analyzing one of the letters for evidence of bias.
On May 24, 1854, the people of Boston erupted in outrage. Federal officers had seized Anthony Burns, a runaway slave who lived in Boston, to send him back to slavery. Abolitionists tried to rescue Burns from the federal courthouse, and city leaders attempted to buy his freedom. All efforts failed. Local militia units joined the marines and cavalry in Boston to keep order. Federal troops escorted Burns to a ship that would carry him back to Virginia and slavery. In a gesture of bitter protest, Bostonians draped buildings in black and hung the American flag upside down.

The Fugitive Slave Act

The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 required all citizens to help catch runaways. Anyone who aided a fugitive could be fined or imprisoned. People in the South believed the law would force Northerners to recognize the rights of Southerners. Instead, enforcement of the law led to mounting anger in the North, convincing more people of the evils of slavery.

After passage of the Fugitive Slave Act, slaveholders stepped up their efforts to catch runaway slaves. They even tried to capture runaways who had lived in freedom in the North for years. Sometimes they seized African Americans who were not escaped slaves and forced them into slavery.
CHAPTER 15 Road to Civil War

Writer Harriet Beecher Stowe called the Fugitive Slave Act a “nightmare abomination.” Stowe, the daughter of a New England minister, spent part of her childhood in Cincinnati. There, on the banks of the Ohio River, she saw enslaved people being loaded onto ships to be taken to slave markets. As an adult and the wife of a religion professor, she wrote many books and stories about social reform. Her most famous work was a novel about the evils of slavery. Uncle Tom’s Cabin was published in 1852. Packed with dramatic incidents and vivid characters, the novel shows slavery as a cruel and brutal system. Uncle Tom’s Cabin quickly became a sensation, selling over 300,000 copies in the first year of publication. The book had such an impact on public feelings about slavery that when Abraham Lincoln was introduced to Stowe during the Civil War, he said, so, you “wrote the book that started this great war.”

Resistance to the Law

In spite of the penalties, many Northerners refused to cooperate with the law’s enforcement. The Underground Railroad, a network of free African Americans and whites, helped runaways make their way to freedom. Antislavery groups tried to rescue African Americans who were being pursued or to free those who were captured. In Boston, members of one such group followed federal agents shouting, “Slave hunters—there go the slave hunters.” People contributed funds to buy the freedom of African Americans. Northern juries refused to convict those accused of breaking the Fugitive Slave Law.

The Kansas–Nebraska Act

Franklin Pierce, a New Hampshire Democrat who supported the Fugitive Slave Act, became president in 1853. Pierce intended to enforce the Fugitive Slave Act, and his actions hardened the opposition. In 1854 the dispute over slavery erupted in Congress again. The cause was a bill introduced by Stephen A. Douglas, the Illinois senator who had forged the Compromise of 1850.

Hoping to encourage settlement of the West and open the way for a transcontinental railroad, Douglas proposed organizing the region west of Missouri and Iowa as the territories of Kansas and Nebraska. Douglas was trying to work out a plan for the nation to expand that both the North and the South would accept. Instead his bill reopened the conflict about slavery in the territories.

Because of their location, Kansas and Nebraska seemed likely to become free states. Both lay north of 36°30’N latitude, the line established in the Missouri Compromise as the boundary of slavery. Douglas knew that Southerners would object to having Kansas and Nebraska become free states because it would give the North an advantage in the Senate. As a result Douglas proposed abandoning the Missouri Compromise and letting the settlers in each territory vote on whether to allow slavery. He called this popular sovereignty—allowing the people to decide.
Passage of the Act

Many Northerners protested strongly. Douglas’s plan to repeal the Missouri Compromise would allow slavery into areas that had been free for more than 30 years. Opponents of the bill demanded that Congress vote down the bill.

Southerners in Congress, however, provided solid support for the bill. They expected that Kansas would be settled in large part by slaveholders from Missouri who would vote to keep slavery legal. With some support from Northern Democrats and the backing of President Pierce, Congress passed the Kansas–Nebraska Act in May 1854.

Division Grows

Northern Democrats in the House split almost evenly on the vote, revealing deep divisions in the party. Many Northerners became convinced that compromise with the South was no longer possible. Sam Houston, senator from Texas, predicted that the bill “will convulse [upset] the country from Maine to the Rio Grande.”

Conflict in Kansas

Right after passage of the Kansas–Nebraska Act, proslavery and antislavery groups rushed supporters into Kansas. In the spring of 1855, when elections took place in Kansas, a proslavery legislature was elected.

Although only about 1,500 voters lived in Kansas at the time, more than 6,000 people cast ballots in the elections. Thousands of proslavery supporters from Missouri had crossed the border just to vote in the election. These Missourians traveled in armed groups and became known as border ruffians. Soon after the election, the new Kansas legislature passed laws supporting slavery. One law even restricted political office to proslavery candidates.

The antislavery people refused to accept these laws. Instead they armed themselves, held their own elections, and adopted a constitution that banned slavery. By January 1856, rival governments existed in Kansas, one for and one against slavery. Each asked Congress for recognition. To confuse matters further, President Pierce and the Senate favored the proslavery government, while the House backed the forces opposed to slavery.

Reading Check Describing Write a definition of “popular sovereignty” in your own words.

Slavery and Sectionalism

The Compromise of 1850

Kansas–Nebraska Act, 1854

1. Region How did the Kansas–Nebraska Act change the amount of territory open to slaveholding?
2. Analyzing Information What territories were non-slaveholding in 1854?
Checking for Understanding

1. Key Terms Use each of these terms in a sentence that will help explain its meaning: popular sovereignty, border ruffians, civil war.

2. Reviewing Facts Describe how Northern abolitionists reacted to the Fugitive Slave Act.

Reviewing Themes

3. Continuity and Change How did popular sovereignty lead to violence in Kansas?

Critical Thinking

4. Predicting Consequences Could the violence in Kansas have been prevented if Congress had not abandoned the Missouri Compromise? Explain.

5. Organizing Information Re-create the diagram below and list the steps that led to bloodshed in Kansas.

Analyzing Visuals

6. Geography Skills Study the maps on page 443. From which territory or territories were the Nebraska and Kansas Territories formed? Was the Utah territory closed to slaveholding?

Interdisciplinary Activity

Descriptive Writing With members of your class, choose a scene from Uncle Tom’s Cabin to portray in a one-act play. Write a short script, assign roles, and present it to the class.

“Bleeding Kansas”

With proslavery and antislavery forces in Kansas arming themselves, the outbreak of violence became inevitable. In May 1856, 800 slavery supporters attacked the town of Lawrence, the antislavery capital. They sacked the town, burned the hotel and the home of the governor, and destroyed two newspaper offices. Soon after, forces opposed to slavery retaliated.

John Brown, a fervent abolitionist, believed God had chosen him to end slavery. When he heard of the attack on Lawrence, Brown went into a rage. He vowed to “strike terror in the hearts of the proslavery people.” One night Brown led four of his sons and two other men along Pottawatomie Creek, where they seized and killed five supporters of slavery.

More violence followed as armed bands roamed the territory. Newspapers began referring to “Bleeding Kansas” and “the Civil War in Kansas.” A civil war is a conflict between citizens of the same country. Not until October of 1856 did John Geary, the newly appointed territorial governor, stop the bloodshed in Kansas. He suppressed guerrilla forces and used 1,300 federal troops.

Violence in Congress

The violence that erupted in Kansas spilled over to the halls of Congress as well. Abolitionist senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts delivered a speech entitled “The Crime Against Kansas.” Sumner lashed out against proslavery forces in Kansas. He also criticized proslavery senators, repeatedly attacking Andrew P. Butler of South Carolina.

Two days after the speech, Butler’s distant cousin, Representative Preston Brooks, walked into the Senate chamber. He hit Sumner again and again over the head and shoulders with a cane. Sumner fell to the floor, unconscious and bleeding. He suffered injuries so severe that he did not return to the Senate for several years. The Brooks-Sumner incident and the fighting in “Bleeding Kansas” revealed the rising level of hostility between North and South.
Main Idea
Social, economic, and political differences divided the North and South.

Key Terms
arsenal, martyr

Reading Strategy
Sequencing Information As you read the section, re-create the diagram below and list major events for each year.

1846 1854 1856 1858

Read to Learn
• why the Republican Party was formed.
• how the Dred Scott decision, the Lincoln-Douglas debates, and John Brown’s raid affected Americans.

Section Theme
Continuity and Change The slavery issues continued to drive the North and South further apart.

Preview of Events

1854 Republican Party is formed 1856 James Buchanan is elected president 1857 Dred Scott decision states that all slaves are property 1859 John Brown raids Harpers Ferry, Virginia

AN American Story

Many people considered John Brown to be a radical murderer, while others viewed him as a fighter for the cause of freedom. When he was executed in 1859, the Anglo-African Magazine wrote that, as John Brown left the jail, “a black woman, with a little child in her arms, stood near his way. . . . He stopped for a moment in his course, stooped over, and with the tenderness of one whose love is as broad as the brotherhood of man, kissed the child affectionately.”

A New Political Party

Even before Brown’s raid, other events had driven the North and South further apart. After the Kansas–Nebraska Act, the Democratic Party began to divide along sectional lines, with Northern Democrats leaving the party. Differing views over the slavery issue destroyed the Whig Party.

In 1854 antislavery Whigs and Democrats joined forces with Free-Soilers to form the Republican Party. The new party was determined to rally “for the establishment of liberty and the overthrow of the Slave Power.”
The Republicans challenged the proslavery Whigs and Democrats, choosing candidates to run in the state and congressional elections of 1854. Their main message was that the government should ban slavery from new territories.

The Republican Party quickly showed its strength in the North. In the election, the Republicans won control of the House of Representatives and of several state governments. In the South the Republicans had almost no support.

Northern Democrats suffered a beating. Almost three-fourths of the Democratic candidates from free states lost in 1854. The party was increasingly becoming a Southern party.

The Election of 1856

Democrats and Republicans met again in the presidential election of 1856. The Whig Party, disintegrating over the slavery issue, did not offer a candidate of its own.

The Republicans chose John C. Frémont of California as their candidate for president. Frémont had gained fame as an explorer in the West. The party platform called for free territories and its campaign slogan became “Free soil, free speech, and Frémont.”

The Democratic Party nominated James Buchanan of Pennsylvania, an experienced diplomat and former member of Congress. The party endorsed the idea of popular sovereignty.

The American Party, or Know Nothings, had grown quickly between 1853 and 1856 by attacking immigrants. The Know Nothings nominated former president Millard Fillmore.

The presidential vote divided along rigid sectional lines. Buchanan won the election, winning all of the Southern states except Maryland and received 174 electoral votes compared to 114 for Frémont and 8 for Fillmore. Frémont did not receive a single electoral vote south of the Mason-Dixon line, but he carried 11 of the 16 free states.

Reading Check Explaining What stand did the new Republican party take on the issue of slavery?

The Dred Scott Decision

President Buchanan took office on March 4, 1857. Two days later the Supreme Court announced a decision about slavery and the territories that shook the nation.

Dred Scott was an enslaved African American bought by an army doctor in Missouri, a slave state. In the 1830s the doctor moved his household to Illinois, a free state, and then to the Wisconsin Territory, where slavery was banned by the Northwest Ordinance of 1787. Later the family returned to Missouri, where the doctor died. In 1846, with the help of antislavery lawyers, Scott sued for his freedom. He claimed he should be free because he had once lived on free soil. Eleven years later, in the midst of growing anger over the slavery issue, the case reached the Supreme Court.

The case attracted enormous attention. While the immediate issue was Dred Scott’s status, the

Picturing History

Family members (left) honor the memory of Dred Scott. Scott (above), who lived in slavery, had appealed to the Supreme Court in hopes of being granted his freedom. How did the Court rule?
Court also had the opportunity to rule on the question of slavery in territories. Many Americans hoped that the Court would resolve the issue for good.

**The Court’s Decision**

The Court’s decision electrified the nation. Chief Justice Roger B. Taney (TAW•nee) said that Dred Scott was still a slave. As a slave, Scott was not a citizen and had no right to bring a law-suit. Taney could have stopped there, but he decided to address the broader issues.

Taney wrote that Scott’s residence on free soil did not make him free. An enslaved person was property, and the Fifth Amendment prohibits Congress from taking away property without “due process of law.”

Finally, Taney wrote that Congress had no power to prohibit slavery in any territory. The Missouri Compromise—which had banned slavery north of 36°30’N latitude—was unconstitutional. For that matter, so was popular sovereignty. Not even the voters in a territory could prohibit slavery because that would amount to taking away a person’s property. In effect, the decision meant that the Constitution protected slavery. (See page 624 of the Appendix for a summary of the Dred Scott decision.)

**Reaction to the Decision**

Rather than settling the issue, the Supreme Court’s decision divided the country even more. Many Southerners were elated. The Court had reaffirmed what many in the South had always maintained: Nothing could legally prevent the spread of slavery. Northern Democrats were pleased that the Republicans’ main issue—restricting the spread of slavery—had been ruled unconstitutional.

Republicans and other antislavery groups were outraged, calling the Dred Scott decision “a wicked and false judgment” and “the greatest crime” ever committed in the nation’s courts.

**Lincoln and Douglas**

In the congressional election of 1858, the Senate race in Illinois was the center of national attention. The contest pitted the current senator, Democrat Stephen A. Douglas, against Republican challenger Abraham Lincoln. People considered Douglas a likely candidate for president in 1860. Lincoln was nearly an unknown.

Douglas, a successful lawyer, had joined the Democratic Party and won election to the House in 1842 and to the Senate in 1846. Short, stocky, and powerful, Douglas was called “the Little Giant.” He disliked slavery but thought that the controversy over it would interfere with the nation’s growth. He believed the issue could be resolved through popular sovereignty.

Born in the poor backcountry of Kentucky, Abraham Lincoln moved to Indiana as a child, and later to Illinois. Like Douglas, Lincoln was intelligent, ambitious, and a successful lawyer. He had little formal education—but excellent political instincts. Although Lincoln saw slavery as morally wrong, he admitted there was no easy way to eliminate slavery where it already existed. He was certain, though, that slavery should not be allowed to spread.
The Lincoln–Douglas Debates

Not as well known as Douglas, Lincoln challenged the senator to a series of debates. Douglas reluctantly agreed. The two met seven times in August, September, and October of 1858 in cities and villages throughout Illinois. Thousands came to these debates. The main topic, of course, was slavery.

During the debate at Freeport, Lincoln pressed Douglas about his views on popular sovereignty. Could the people of a territory legally exclude slavery before achieving statehood? Douglas replied that the people could exclude slavery by refusing to pass laws protecting slaveholders’ rights. Douglas’s response, which satisfied antislavery followers but lost him support in the South, became known as the Freeport Doctrine.

Douglas claimed that Lincoln wanted African Americans to be fully equal to whites. Lincoln denied this. Still, Lincoln said, “in the right to eat the bread . . . which his own hand earns, [an African American] is my equal and the equal of [Senator] Douglas, and the equal of every living man.” The real issue, Lincoln said, is “between the men who think slavery a wrong and those who do not think it wrong. The Republican Party thinks it wrong.”

Following the debates, Douglas won a narrow victory in the election. Lincoln lost the election but gained a national reputation.

The Raid on Harpers Ferry

After the 1858 elections, Southerners began to feel threatened by growing Republican power. In late 1859, an act of violence greatly increased their fears. On October 16 the abolitionist John Brown led 18 men, both whites and African Americans, on a raid on Harpers Ferry, Virginia. His target was an arsenal, a storage place for weapons and ammunition. Brown—who had killed five proslavery Kansans in 1856—hoped to start a rebellion against slaveholders by arming enslaved African Americans. His raid had been financed by a group of abolitionists.

Brown and his men were quickly defeated by local citizens and federal troops. Brown was convicted of treason and murder and was sentenced to hang. His execution caused an uproar in the North. Some antislavery Northerners, including Republican leaders, denounced Brown’s use of violence. Others viewed Brown as a hero. Writer Ralph Waldo Emerson called Brown a martyr—a person who dies for a great cause.

John Brown’s death became a rallying point for abolitionists. When Southerners learned of Brown’s connection to abolitionists, their fears of a great Northern conspiracy against them seemed to be confirmed. The nation was on the brink of disaster.

How did the Dred Scott decision regulate the spread of slavery?

Checking for Understanding

1. Key Terms Use the terms arsenal and martyr in a paragraph about John Brown’s raid on Harpers Ferry.
2. Reviewing Facts Discuss stages in the development of the Republican Party.
3. Continuity and Change How did the Dred Scott decision reverse a previous decision made by Congress? What was the reaction of Republicans?

Critical Thinking

4. Making Inferences Why did Lincoln emerge as a leader after the Lincoln-Douglas debates?
5. Organizing Information Re-create the table shown here, and describe the positions taken by Lincoln and Douglas in their debates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lincoln–Douglas Debates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln’s position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Douglas’s position</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analyzing Visuals

6. Examining Art Study the painting of the debate on page 447. What elements of the painting suggest the seriousness of the debate?

Government Draw a political cartoon that illustrates Lincoln’s statement “A house divided against itself cannot stand.”
Main Idea
In 1860 Abraham Lincoln’s election as president of the United States was followed by Southern states leaving the Union.

Key Terms
secession, states’ rights

Reading Strategy
Sequencing Information As you read the section, re-create the time line below and list the major events at each time.

Read to Learn
• how the 1860 election led to the breakup of the Union.
• why secession led to the Civil War.

Section Theme
Geography and History The election of 1860 clearly divided the nation along sectional lines.

Preview of Events

1860
Nov. 1860 Abraham Lincoln is elected president
Dec. 1860 South Carolina secedes

1861
February 1861 Southern states form the Confederate States of America
March 1861 Confederate forces attack Fort Sumter; the Civil War begins

1862

AN American Story
After John Brown’s raid on Harpers Ferry, calls for secession grew. South Carolina’s Charleston Mercury declared “The day of compromise is passed . . . [T]here is no peace for the South in the Union.” The Nashville Union and American said, “The South will hold the whole party of Republicans responsible for the bloodshed at Harpers Ferry.” Republicans refused to take the threat of secession seriously. Secession is only a scare tactic, they argued, aimed at frightening voters from casting their ballot for Abraham Lincoln. To many Southerners, however, the election of Lincoln would be a final signal that their position in the Union was hopeless.

The Election of 1860
Would the Union break up? That was the burning question in the months before the presidential election of 1860. The issue of slavery was seriously discussed and eventually caused a break in the Democratic Party. As the election approached, a northern wing of the Democratic Party nominated Stephen
Abraham Lincoln's Inaugural Address, March 4, 1861

One section of our country believes slavery is right and ought to be extended, while the other believes it is wrong and ought not to be extended. This is the only substantial dispute.

Physically speaking, we can not separate. We can not remove our respective sections from each other nor build an impassable wall between them. A husband and wife may be divorced and go out of the presence and beyond the reach of each other; but the different parts of our country can not do this.

In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war.

Lincoln Nominated

The Republicans nominated Abraham Lincoln. Their platform, designed to attract voters from many quarters, was that slavery should be left undisturbed where it existed, but that it should be excluded from the territories. Many Southerners feared, however, that a Republican victory would encourage slave revolts.

Lincoln Elected

With the Democrats divided, Lincoln won a clear majority of the electoral votes—180 out of 303. He received only 40 percent of the popular vote, but this was more than any other candidate. Douglas was second with 30 percent of the vote.

The vote was along purely sectional lines. Lincoln’s name did not even appear on the ballot in most Southern states, but he won every Northern state. Breckinridge swept the South, and Bell took most border states. Douglas won only the state of Missouri and three of New Jersey’s seven electoral votes.

In effect, the more populous North had outvoted the South. The victory for Lincoln was a short-lived one, however, for the nation Lincoln was to lead would soon disintegrate.

Jefferson Davis's Inaugural Address, February 18, 1861

As a necessity, not a choice, we have resorted to the remedy of separation, and henceforth our energies must be directed to the conduct of our own affairs, and the [continuation] of the Confederacy which we have formed. If a just perception of mutual interest shall permit us peaceably to pursue our separate political career, my most earnest desire will have been fulfilled. But if this be denied to us . . . [we will be forced] to appeal to arms . . .

Learning From History

1. According to Lincoln, what was the only substantial disagreement between the North and the South?
2. What did Lincoln compare the United States to?
3. Did Lincoln and Davis say anything in their inaugural addresses that was similar?
The South Secedes

Lincoln and the Republicans had promised not to disturb slavery where it already existed. Many people in the South, however, did not trust the party, fearing that the Republican administration would not protect Southern rights. On December 20, 1860, the South’s long-standing threat to leave the Union became a reality when South Carolina held a special convention and voted to secede.

Attempt at Compromise

Even after South Carolina’s action, many people still wished to preserve the Union. The question was how. As other Southern states debated secession—withdrawal from the Union—leaders in Washington, D.C., worked frantically to fashion a last-minute compromise. On December 18, 1860, Senator John Crittenden of Kentucky proposed a series of amendments to the Constitution. Central to Crittenden’s plan was a provision to protect slavery south of 36°30’ N latitude—the line set by the Missouri Compromise—in all territories “now held or hereafter acquired.”

Republicans considered this unacceptable. They had just won an election on the principle that slavery would not be extended in any territories. “Now we are told,” Lincoln said, “the government shall be broken up, unless we surrender to those we have beaten.”

Leaders in the South also rejected the plan. “We spit upon every plan to compromise,” exclaimed one Southern leader. “No human power can save the Union,” wrote another.

The Confederacy

By February 1861, Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, and Georgia had joined South Carolina and also seceded. Delegates from these states and South Carolina met in Montgomery, Alabama, on February 4 to form a new nation and government. Calling themselves the Confederate States of America, they chose Jefferson Davis, a senator from Mississippi, as their president.

Southerners justified secession with the theory of states’ rights. The states, they argued, had voluntarily chosen to enter the Union. They defined the Constitution as a contract among the independent states. Now because the national government had violated that contract—by refusing to enforce the Fugitive Slave Act and by denying the Southern states equal rights in the territories—the states were justified in leaving the Union.

Reactions to Secession

Many Southerners welcomed secession. In Charleston, South Carolina, people rang church bells, fired cannons, and celebrated in the streets. A newspaper in Atlanta, Georgia, said the South “will never submit” and would defend its liberties no matter what the cost.

Other Southerners, however, were alarmed. A South Carolinian wrote,

“My heart has been rent [torn] by . . . the destruction of my country—the dismemberment of that great and glorious Union.”

Virginian Robert E. Lee expressed concern about the future. “I see only that a fearful calamity is upon us,” he wrote.

In the North some abolitionists preferred to allow the Southern states to leave. If the Union could be kept together only by compromising on slavery, they declared, then let the Union be destroyed. Most Northerners, however, believed that the Union must be preserved. For Lincoln the issue was “whether in a free government the minority have the right to break up the government whenever they choose.”

Presidential Responses

Lincoln had won the election, but he was not yet president. James Buchanan’s term ran until March 4, 1861. In December 1860, Buchanan sent a message to Congress saying that the Southern states had no right to secede. Then he added that he had no power to stop them from doing so.

As Lincoln prepared for his inauguration on March 4, 1861, people in both the North and the South wondered what he would say and do. They wondered, too, what would happen in Vir-
secession would not be permitted, vowing to hold federal property in the South and to enforce the laws of the United States. At the same time, Lincoln pleaded with the people of the South for reconciliation:

“We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection.”

Virginia, North Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee, Missouri, and Arkansas. These slave states had chosen to remain in the Union, but the decision was not final. If the United States used force against the Confederate States of America, the remaining slave states also might secede. In his Inaugural Address, the new president mixed toughness and words of peace. He said that

After the attack on Fort Sumter, four more Southern states joined the seven that had already seceded from the Union.

1. **Region** Which slave states remained in the Union after the Fort Sumter attack?
2. **Analyzing Information** Which states did not secede until after the Fort Sumter attack?

secession would not be permitted, vowing to hold federal property in the South and to enforce the laws of the United States. At the same time, Lincoln pleaded with the people of the South for reconciliation:

“We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection.”

**Reading Check** Explaining How did the seceding states justify their right to leave the Union?
Fort Sumter

The South soon tested President Lincoln’s vow to hold federal property. Confederate forces had already seized some United States forts within their states. Although Lincoln did not want to start a war by trying to take the forts back, allowing the Confederates to keep them would amount to admitting their right to secede.

On the day after his inauguration, Lincoln received a dispatch from the commander of Fort Sumter, a United States fort on an island guarding Charleston Harbor. The message warned that the fort was low on supplies and that the Confederates demanded its surrender.

The War Begins

Lincoln responded by sending a message to Governor Francis Pickens of South Carolina. He informed Pickens that he was sending an unarmed expedition with supplies to Fort Sumter. Lincoln promised that Union forces would not “throw in men, arms, or ammunition” unless they were fired upon. The president thus left the decision to start shooting up to the Confederates.

Confederate president Jefferson Davis and his advisers made a fateful choice. They ordered their forces to attack Fort Sumter before the Union supplies could arrive. Confederate guns opened fire on the fort early on April 12, 1861. Union captain Abner Doubleday witnessed the attack from inside the fort:

“Showers of balls . . . and shells . . . poured into the fort in one incessant stream, causing great flakes of masonry to fall in all directions.”

High seas had prevented Union relief ships from reaching the besieged fort. The Union garrison held out for 33 hours before surrendering on April 14. Thousands of shots were exchanged during the siege, but there was no loss of life on either side. The Confederates hoisted their flag over the fort, and all the guns in the harbor sounded a triumphant salute.

News of the attack galvanized the North. President Lincoln issued a call for 75,000 troops to fight to save the Union, and volunteers quickly signed up. Meanwhile, Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Arkansas voted to join the Confederacy. The Civil War had begun.

Explaining What action did Lincoln take after the attack on Fort Sumter?
What were people’s lives like in the past?
What—and who—were people talking about? What did they eat? What did they do for fun? These two pages will give you some clues to everyday life in the U.S. as you step back in time with TIME Notebook.

Profile

It’s 1853, and AMELIA STEWART is heading west to Oregon with her husband and seven children in a covered wagon. How hard can the five-month trip be? Here are two entries from her diary:

MONDAY, AUGUST 8
We have to make a drive of 22 miles without water today. Have our cans filled to drink. Here we left, unknowingly, our [daughter] Lucy behind, not a soul had missed her until we had gone some miles, when we stopped a while to rest the cattle; just then another train drove up behind us, with Lucy. She was terribly frightened and said she was sitting under the bank of the river when we started, busy watching some wagons cross, and did not know that we were ready….It was a lesson for all of us.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 12
Lost one of our oxen. We were traveling slowly along, when he dropped dead in the yoke….I could hardly help shedding tears, when we drove round this poor ox who had helped us along thus far, and had given us his very last step.

MILESTONES

CLOTHED. Hundreds of miners in 1850 by LEVI STRAUSS. Using canvas he originally intended to make into tents, Levi made sturdy, tough pants with lots of pockets—perfect clothing for the rough work of mining. Can you imagine anyone in the city ever wearing them?

MARCHED. Just under 100 camels in 1857, from San Antonio to Los Angeles, led by hired Turkish, Greek, and Armenian camel drivers. It is hoped the desert beasts will help the U.S. Army open the West.

MAILED. Thousands of letters carried by PONY EXPRESS in 1860 from Missouri to California in an extremely short time—only 10 days! Riders switch to fresh horses every 10 or 15 miles and continue through the night, blizzards, and attacks by outlaws.

FRONTIER FOOD

Trail Mix
Hard Tack for a Hard Trip

INGREDIENTS: 3 cups flour  3 tsp. salt  1 cup water

• Mix all ingredients and stir until it becomes too difficult.
• Knead the dough; add more flour until mixture is very dry.
• Roll to 1/2-inch thickness and cut into 3” squares, poke with a skewer [pin] to make several holes in each piece (for easy breaking). Bake 30 minutes in a hot oven until hard. Store for up to 10 years.
SALE OF SLAVES AND STOCK
The Negroes and Stock listed below are a Prime Lot, and belong to the ESTATE OF THE LATE LUTHER McGOWAN, and will be sold on Monday, Sept. 22nd, 1852, at the Fair Grounds, in Savannah, Georgia, at 1:00 P.M. The Negroes will be taken to the grounds two days previous to the Sale, so that they may be inspected by prospective buyers.

On account of the low prices listed below, they will be sold for cash only, and must be taken into custody within two hours after sale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Lunesta</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Prime Rice Planter</td>
<td>$1,275.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Violet</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Housework and Nursemaid</td>
<td>900.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Lizzie</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Rice, Unsound</td>
<td>300.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Minda</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Cotton, Prime Woman</td>
<td>1,200.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Adam</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Cotton, Prime Woman</td>
<td>1,100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Abel</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Rice Hand, Eyesight Poor</td>
<td>675.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Tanney</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Prime Cotton Hand</td>
<td>850.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Clementina</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Good Cook, Stiff Knee</td>
<td>400.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Price of a Life
This notice appeared in 1952.

NUMBERS
U.S. AT THE TIME

$81,249,700
Estimated value of gold mined in 1852

89 Days it takes the American clipper ship, the Flying Cloud, to go from Boston around Cape Horn to San Francisco in 1851—a trip that normally takes eight or nine months

12 Poems included in Walt Whitman’s new collection, called Leaves of Grass (1855)

33 Number of states in 1859 after Oregon enters the union

100 Seats in Congress won by the Republicans in 1854, the year the party was created

300,000 Copies of Harriet Beecher Stowe’s novel, Uncle Tom’s Cabin, sold in 1852
**Reviewing Key Terms**

Write five true and five false statements using the terms below. Use only one term in each statement. Indicate which statements are true and which are false. Below each false statement explain why it is false.

1. sectionalism
2. secede
3. border ruffians
4. arsenal
5. secession
6. fugitive
7. popular sovereignty
8. civil war
9. martyr
10. states’ rights

**Reviewing Key Facts**

11. What was the purpose of the Missouri Compromise?
12. List the five parts of the Compromise of 1850.
13. What was Stephen Douglas’s solution to the slavery issue in the Kansas and Nebraska territories?
14. How did Abraham Lincoln become a national figure in politics?
15. What was the *Dred Scott* decision? What did it mean for those opposed to slavery?
16. Why were there four parties and candidates in the presidential election of 1860?
17. How did Lincoln plan to prevent secession?

**Critical Thinking**

18. **Finding the Main Idea** Why was the balance of free and slave states in the Senate such an important issue?
19. **Drawing Conclusions** Why did Northerners protest Douglas’s plan to repeal the Missouri Compromise?
20. **Determining Cause and Effect** Re-create the diagram below. List three ways pro- or antislavery groups changed the structure of political parties in the 1850s.

![Diagram: Political parties change](diagram.png)

21. **Analyzing Themes: Geography and History** How did the North’s larger population give it an edge over the South in the 1860 election?
Self-Check Quiz
Visit tarvol1.glencoe.com and click on Chapter 15—Self-Check Quizzes to prepare for the chapter test.

HISTORY
CHAPTER 15 Road to Civil War

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Directions: Use the map of the Compromise of 1850 on page 443 to choose the best answer to the following question.

Which of the following statements is true?
A The Compromise of 1850 allowed the Oregon Territory to be open to slaveholding.
B The Compromise of 1850 did not make any land on the Pacific Ocean open to slaveholding.
C The Compromise of 1850 made every state touching the southern border of the United States open to slaveholding.
D The Compromise of 1850 gave the Minnesota Territory the authority to choose whether it would allow slaveholding.

Test-Taking Tip
Remember to use the information on the map to support your answer. Don’t rely only on your memory. Check each answer choice against the map. Only one choice is correct.

HISTORY Online

Citizenship Cooperative Activity
27. Making Compromises With a partner, think of a controversial issue that is a source of disagreement today. Take opposite sides on the issue; then work together to come up with a list of three compromises that would make the solution to this problem acceptable to both sides. Share the issue and your compromises with the class.

Alternative Assessment
28. Portfolio Writing Activity Write a report that answers these questions: Why was Congress in conflict over the question of statehood for California? How did the Compromise of 1850 address this question? What role did Clay, Calhoun, and Webster play in the Compromise?

Election of 1860

Candidate | Electoral Vote | Popular Vote | Political Party
--- | --- | --- | ---
Lincoln | 180 | 1,865,593 | Republican
Breckinridge | 72 | 848,356 | Southern Democrat
Bell | 39 | 592,906 | Constitutional Union
Douglas | 12 | 1,382,713 | Northern Democrat

22. Location Which states supported Douglas?
23. Region In what region(s) was the Republican Party strongest?
24. Region In what region did Breckinridge find support?

Practicing Skills
25. Recognizing Bias Find written material about a topic of interest in your community. Possible sources include editorials, letters to the editor, and pamphlets from political candidates and interest groups. Write a short report analyzing the material for evidence of bias.

Technology Activity
26. Using the Internet Search the Internet for a list of political parties in existence today. Make a table that briefly summarizes each party’s current goals. Then research to find the date that the party was founded. Include this information on your table, too. Then compare your table to the political parties discussed in Chapter 15.

Geography and History Activity
The election of 1860 divided the nation along sectional lines. Study the map below; then answer the questions that follow.

Practice Skills
25. Recognizing Bias Find written material about a topic of interest in your community. Possible sources include editorials, letters to the editor, and pamphlets from political candidates and interest groups. Write a short report analyzing the material for evidence of bias.

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