A Dividing Nation

Which events of the mid-1800s kept the nation together, and which events pulled it apart?

Introduction

In 1860, after one of the strangest elections in the nation's history, an Illinois lawyer named Abraham Lincoln was elected president. On learning of his victory, Lincoln said to the reporters covering the campaign, “Well, boys, your troubles are over; mine have just begun.”

Within a few weeks, it became clear just how heavy those troubles would be. By the time Lincoln took office, the nation had split apart over the issue of states' rights regarding slavery and was preparing for civil war. The survival of the United States of America, and the fate of 4 million slaves, rested in Lincoln's hands.

The issues Lincoln faced could be traced back to 1619, when the first slave ship arrived in Virginia. Since that time, slavery had ended in half of the United States, and the question remained whether the nation could continue being half-slave and half-free.

For decades, Americans tried to avoid this question, and many hoped slavery would simply die out on its own. Instead, slavery began to expand into new territories, and the question could no longer be ignored.

Between 1820 and 1860, Americans tried to fashion several compromises on the issue of slavery, but these compromises created new problems and new divisions. Slavery was not simply a political issue to be worked out through compromise. Rather it was a deeply moral issue, which is something Lincoln understood. As he wrote in a letter to a friend, “If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong.”

In this lesson, you will learn how Americans tried to keep the United States united despite their deep divisions over slavery. Some events during this period kept the nation together, whereas others pulled it apart. You will also find out how Americans finally answered the question of whether a nation founded on the idea of freedom could endure half-slave and half-free.

Social Studies Vocabulary

Compromise of 1850

Dred Scott decision

fugitive

Kansas-Nebraska Act

Lincoln-Douglas debates

Missouri Compromise

Union

Wilmot Proviso

1. Confronting the Issue of Slavery

A traveler heading west across the Appalachians after the War of 1812 wrote, “Old America seems to be breaking up and moving westward.” It was true. By 1819, settlers had formed seven new states west of the Appalachians.

In the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, Congress had established a process for forming new states. In addition to outlining the steps leading to statehood, this law also banned slavery north of the Ohio River. As a result, the three western states that were formed north of the river—Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois—became free states, and the four states that were formed south of the Ohio River—Kentucky, Tennessee, Louisiana, and Mississippi—permitted slavery.

In 1819, Alabama and Missouri applied to Congress for statehood as slave states. No one in Congress questioned admitting Alabama as a slave state, as it was located far south of the Ohio River and was surrounded by other slave states.

Congress had another reason for admitting Alabama with no debate. For years, there had been an unspoken agreement in Congress to keep the number of slave states and free states equal, a balance that had been upset by the admission of Illinois as a free state in 1818. By accepting Alabama with slavery, Congress was able to restore the balance between slave and free states. Missouri, however, was another matter.

Questions About Missouri Some Northerners in Congress questioned whether Missouri should be admitted as a slave state because most of Missouri lay north of the point where the Ohio River flows into the Mississippi. On the eastern side of the Mississippi, slavery was banned north of that point. Should this ban not also be applied west of the Mississippi?

This question led to another one. If Missouri were allowed to enter the **Union** as a slave state, some asked, what would keep slavery from spreading across all of the Louisiana Territory? The vision of a block of new slave states stretching from the Mississippi to the Rocky Mountains was enough to give some Northerners nightmares.

The Tallmadge Amendment When the bill to make Missouri a state came before Congress, Representative James Tallmadge of New York proposed an amendment to the bill. The amendment said that Missouri could join the Union, but only as a free state.

Southerners in Congress protested Tallmadge's amendment. What right, they asked, did Congress have to decide whether a new state should be slave or free? According to the theory of states' rights favored by many Southerners, Congress had no power to impose its will on a state, old or new.

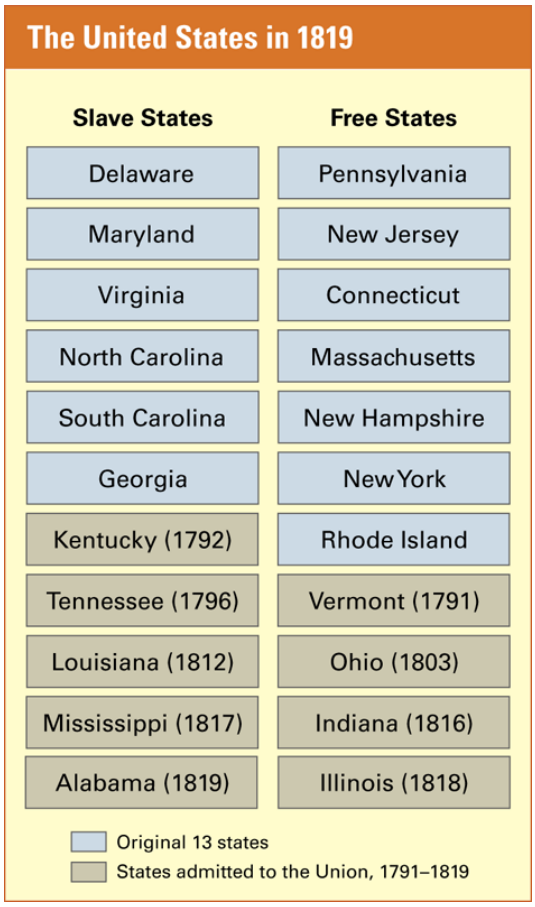
Instead, Southerners argued that the people of each state should decide whether to permit slavery. The fight over slavery thus involved a basic question about the powers of the federal and state governments under the Constitution.

A Deadlocked Congress Southerners' protests were based on their view that if Congress were allowed to end slavery in Missouri, it might try to end slavery elsewhere. The North already had more votes in the House of Representatives than the South. But in the Senate, the two sections had equal voting power. As long as the number of free states and slave states remained equal, Southern senators could defeat any attempt to interfere with slavery. However, if Missouri entered the Union as a free state, the South would lose its power to block antislavery bills in the Senate, which would mean disaster for the South.

In the North, the Tallmadge Amendment awakened strong feelings against slavery. Many people sent petitions to Congress, condemning slavery as immoral and unconstitutional. Arguing in favor of the amendment, New Hampshire representative Arthur Livermore spoke for many Northerners when he said,

> *An opportunity is now presented . . . to prevent the growth of a sin which sits heavy on the souls of every one of us. By embracing this opportunity, we may retrieve the national character, and, in some degree, our own.*

The House voted to approve the Tallmadge Amendment, but Southerners were able to defeat it in the Senate. The two houses were now deadlocked over the issue of slavery in Missouri, and they would remain so as the 1819 session of Congress drew to a close.



2. The Missouri Compromise

When Congress returned to Washington in 1820, it took up the question of Missouri statehood once again. By then, the situation had changed, for Maine was now asking to enter the Union as a free state.

For weeks, Congress struggled to find a way out of its deadlock over Missouri. As the debate dragged on and tempers wore thin, Southerners began using such dreaded words as secession and civil war.

“If you persist,” Thomas Cobb of Georgia warned supporters of the Tallmadge Amendment, “the Union will be dissolved. You have kindled a fire which . . . a sea of blood can only extinguish.”

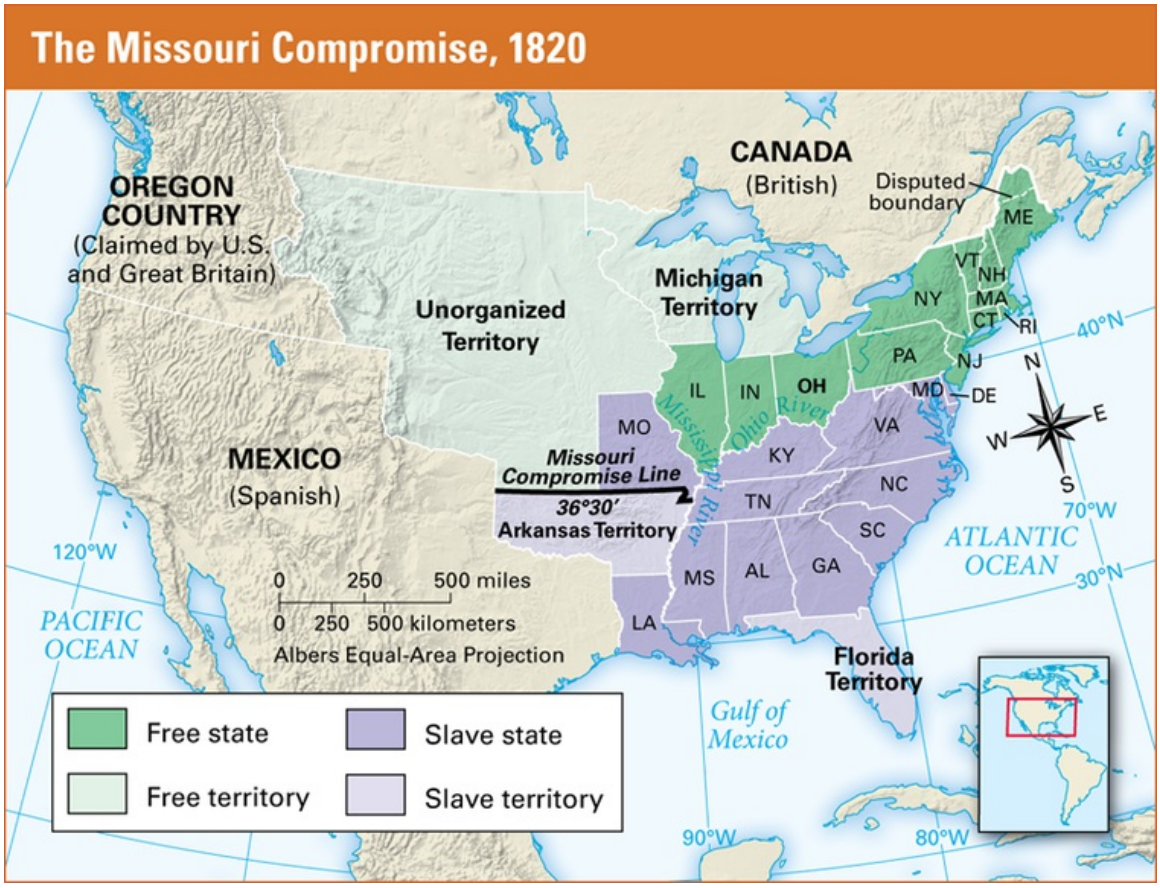
"If disunion must take place, let it be so!" thundered Tallmadge in reply. "If civil war . . . must come, I can only say, let it come!"

A Compromise Is Reached Rather than risk the breakup of the Union, Congress finally agreed to a compromise crafted by Representative Henry Clay of Kentucky. The **Missouri Compromise** of 1820 admitted Missouri to the Union as a slave state and Maine as a free state. In this way, it maintained the balance of power between slave and free states.

At the same time, Congress drew an imaginary line across the Louisiana Purchase at latitude 36°30′. North of this line, slavery was to be banned forever, except in Missouri, whereas slaveholding was permitted south of the line.

Reactions to the Compromise The Missouri Compromise kept the Union together, but it pleased few people. In the North, congressmen who voted to accept Missouri as a slave state were called traitors, and in the South, slaveholders deeply resented the ban on slavery in territories that might later become states.

Meanwhile, as Secretary of State John Quincy Adams recognized, the compromise had not settled the future of slavery in the United States as a whole. "I have favored this Missouri compromise, believing it to be all that could be effected [accomplished] under the present Constitution, and from extreme unwillingness to put the Union at hazard [risk]," wrote Adams in his diary. "If the Union must be dissolved, slavery is precisely the question on which it ought to break. For the present, however, the contest is laid asleep."



3. The Missouri Compromise Unravels

As John Quincy Adams predicted, for a time the “contest” over slavery was settled. However, a powerful force was building that soon pushed the issue into the open again: the Second Great Awakening. Leaders of this early-1800s religious revival promised that God would bless those who did the Lord's work. For some Americans, the Lord's work was the abolition of slavery.

The “Gag Rule” During the 1830s, abolitionists flooded Congress with antislavery petitions, but they were told that Congress had no power to interfere with slavery in the states. Abolitionists also wondered about the status of the District of Columbia: did Congress have the power to ban slavery in the nation's capital?

Rather than **confront** this question, Congress voted in 1836 to table—or set aside indefinitely—all antislavery petitions. Outraged abolitionists called this action the “gag rule,” because it gagged, or silenced, all congressional debate over slavery.

In 1839, the gag rule prevented consideration of an antislavery proposal by John Quincy Adams, who was now a member of Congress. Knowing that the country would not agree on abolishing slavery altogether, Adams proposed a constitutional amendment saying that no one could be born into slavery after 1842. Congress, however, refused to consider his proposal.

Southern Fears Abolitionists were far from silenced by the refusal of Congress to debate slavery. They continued to attack slavery in books, in newspapers, and at public meetings.

White Southerners deeply resented the abolitionists' attacks as an assault on their way of life. After Nat Turner's slave rebellion in 1831, resentment turned to fear. Southern states adopted strict new laws to control the movement of slaves. Many states tried to keep abolitionist writings from reaching slaves. Mississippi even offered a reward of $5,000 for the arrest and conviction of any person “who shall utter, publish, or circulate” abolitionist ideas.

Fugitive Slaves Nat Turner's rebellion was one of the largest slave revolts, but

individual slaves also continued to rebel by running away to freedom in the North. These **fugitives** from slavery were often helped in their escape by sympathetic people in the North.

To slaveholders, these Northerners were no better than bank robbers because they saw a slave as a valuable piece of property. Every time a slave escaped, it was like seeing their land vanish into thin air. Slaveholders demanded that Congress pass a fugitive slave law to help them recapture their property.

Slavery in the Territories The gag rule kept the slavery issue out of Congress for ten years. Then, in 1846, President James Polk sent a bill to Congress asking for funds for the war with Mexico. Pennsylvania representative David Wilmot added an amendment to the bill known as the **Wilmot Proviso**. (A proviso is a condition added to an agreement.) The Wilmot Proviso stated that “neither slavery nor involuntary servitude shall ever exist” in any part of the territory that might be acquired from Mexico as a result of the Mexican-American War.

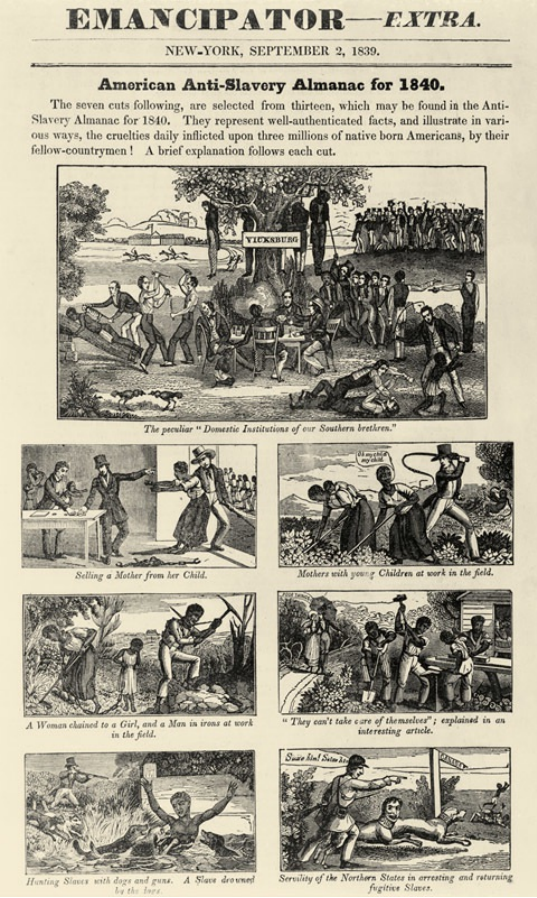
Southerners in Congress strongly opposed Wilmot's amendment and maintained that Congress had no right to decide where slaveholders could take their property. The Wilmot Proviso passed the House, but it was rejected by the Senate.

Statehood for California For the next three years, Congress debated what to do about slavery in the territory gained from Mexico. Southerners wanted all of the Mexican Cession open to slavery, but Northerners wanted all of it closed.

As a compromise, Southerners proposed a bill that would extend the Missouri Compromise line all the way to the Pacific. Slavery would be banned north of that line and allowed south of it. Northerners in Congress rejected this proposal.

Then, late in 1849, California applied for admission to the Union as a free state. Northerners in Congress welcomed California with open arms, but Southerners rejected California's request. Making California a free state, they warned, would upset the balance between slave and free states. The result would be unequal representation of slave states and free states in Congress.

The year ended with Congress deadlocked over California's request for statehood. Once again, Southerners spoke openly of withdrawing from the Union. And once again, angry Northerners denounced slavery as a crime against humanity.



EMANCIPATOR—EXTRA.

NEW-YORK, SEPTEMBER 2, 1839.

American Anti-Slavery Almanac for 1840.

The seven cuts following, are selected from thirteen, which may be found in the Anti-Slavery Almanac for 1840. They represent well-authenticated facts, and illustrate in various ways, the cruelties daily inflicted upon three millions of native born Americans, by their fellow-countrymen! A brief explanation follows each cut.

The peculiar "Domestic Institutions of our Southern brethren."

Selling a Mother from her Child.

Mothers with young Children at work in the field.

A Woman chained to a Girl, and a Man in irons at work in the field.

"They can't take care of themselves"; explained in an interesting article.

Hunting Slaves with dogs and guns. A Slave drowned by the hogs.

Servility of the Northern States in arresting and returning fugitive Slaves.

4. The Compromise of 1850

On January 21, 1850, Henry Clay, now a senator from Kentucky, trudged through a Washington snowstorm to pay a call on Senator Daniel Webster of Massachusetts. Clay, the creator of the Missouri Compromise, had a new plan to end the deadlock over California, but he needed Webster's support to get his plan through Congress.

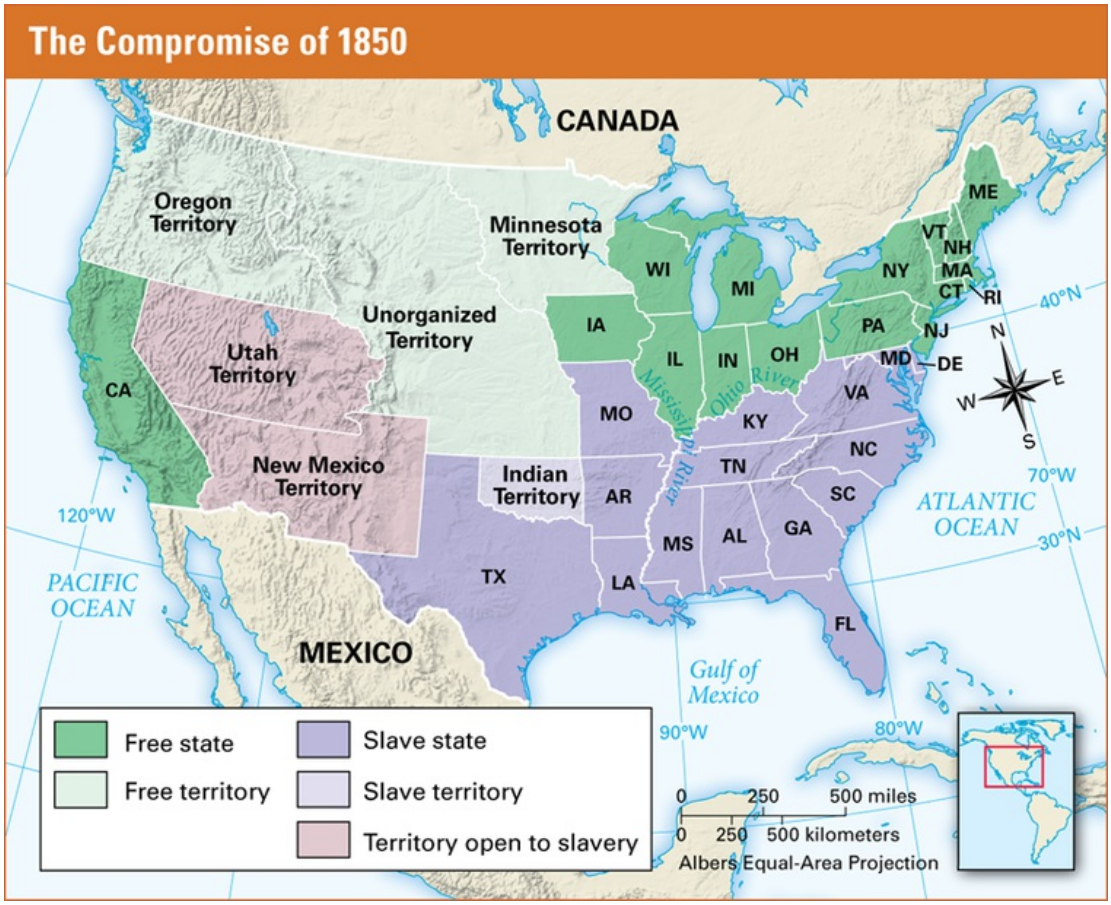
Something for Everyone Clay's new compromise had something to please just about everyone. It began by admitting California to the Union as a free state, which would please the North. Meanwhile, it allowed the New Mexico and Utah territories to decide whether to allow slavery, which would please the South.

In addition, Clay's plan ended the slave trade in Washington, D.C. Although slaveholders in Washington would be able to keep their slaves, human beings would no longer be bought and sold there. Clay and Webster agreed that this compromise would win support from abolitionists without threatening the rights of slaveholders.

Finally, Clay's plan called for passage of a strong fugitive slave law. Slaveholders had long wanted such a law, which would make it easier to find and reclaim runaway slaves.

The Compromise Is Accepted Hoping that Clay's compromise would end the crisis, Webster agreed to help it get passed in Congress. However, despite Webster's support, Congress debated the **Compromise of 1850** for nine frustrating months. As tempers frayed, Southerners talked of simply leaving the Union peacefully. Webster dismissed such talk as foolish. “Peaceable secession!” he exclaimed. “Your eyes and mine are never destined to see that miracle . . . I see it as plainly as I see the sun in heaven—I see that [secession] must produce such a war as I will not describe.”

A war over slavery was something few Americans wanted to face. In September 1850, Congress finally adopted Clay's plan. Although most Americans were happy to see the crisis end, some Southerners remained wary of the compromise. Moreover, the compromise led to the demise of one of the country's main political parties, the Whig Party—Clay and Webster's party—because members had moral objections to slavery.



5. The Compromise of 1850 Fails

Henry Clay and Daniel Webster hoped the Compromise of 1850 would quiet the slavery controversy for years to come. In fact, it satisfied almost no one—and the debate grew louder each year.

The Fugitive Slave Act People in the North and the South were unhappy with the Fugitive Slave Act, though for different reasons. Northerners did not want to enforce the act, whereas Southerners felt the act did not do enough to **ensure** the return of their escaped property.

Under the Fugitive Slave Act, a person arrested as a runaway slave had almost no legal rights. Many runaways fled all the way to Canada rather than risk being caught and sent back to their owners. Others decided to stand and fight. Reverend Jermain Loguen, a former slave living in New York, said boldly, “I don't respect this law—I don't fear it—I won't obey it . . . I will not live as a slave, and if force is employed to re-enslave me, I shall make preparations to meet the crisis as becomes a man.”

The Fugitive Slave Act also said that any person who helped a slave escape, or even refused to aid slave catchers, could be jailed. This provision, people complained, would force many Northerners to become slave catchers.

Opposition to the act was widespread in the North. When slave catchers came to Boston, they were hounded by crowds of angry citizens shouting, “Slave hunters—there go the slave hunters.” After a few days of this treatment, most slave catchers decided to leave.

Northerners' refusal to support the act infuriated slaveholders, and it also made enforcement of the act almost impossible. Of the tens of thousands of fugitives living in the North during the 1850s, only about 300 were captured and returned to their owners during this time.

Uncle Tom's Cabin Nothing brought the horrors of slavery home to Northerners more than *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, a novel by Harriet Beecher Stowe. The novel grew out of a vision Stowe had while sitting in church on a wintry Sunday morning in 1851. The vision began with a saintly slave, known as Uncle Tom, and his cruel master, Simon Legree, who, in a furious rage, had the old slave whipped to death. Just before Uncle Tom's soul slipped out of his body, he opened his eyes and whispered to Legree, “Ye poor miserable critter! There ain't no more ye can do. I forgive ye, with all my soul!”

Racing home, Stowe scribbled down what she had imagined. Her vision of Uncle Tom's death became part of a much longer story that was first published in installments in an abolitionist newspaper. In one issue, readers held their breath as the slave Eliza chose to risk death rather than be sold away from her young son. Chased by slave hunters and their dogs, Eliza dashed to freedom across the ice-choked Ohio River, clutching her child in her arms. In a later issue, Stowe's readers wept as they read her account of how the character of Uncle Tom died at the hands of Simon Legree.

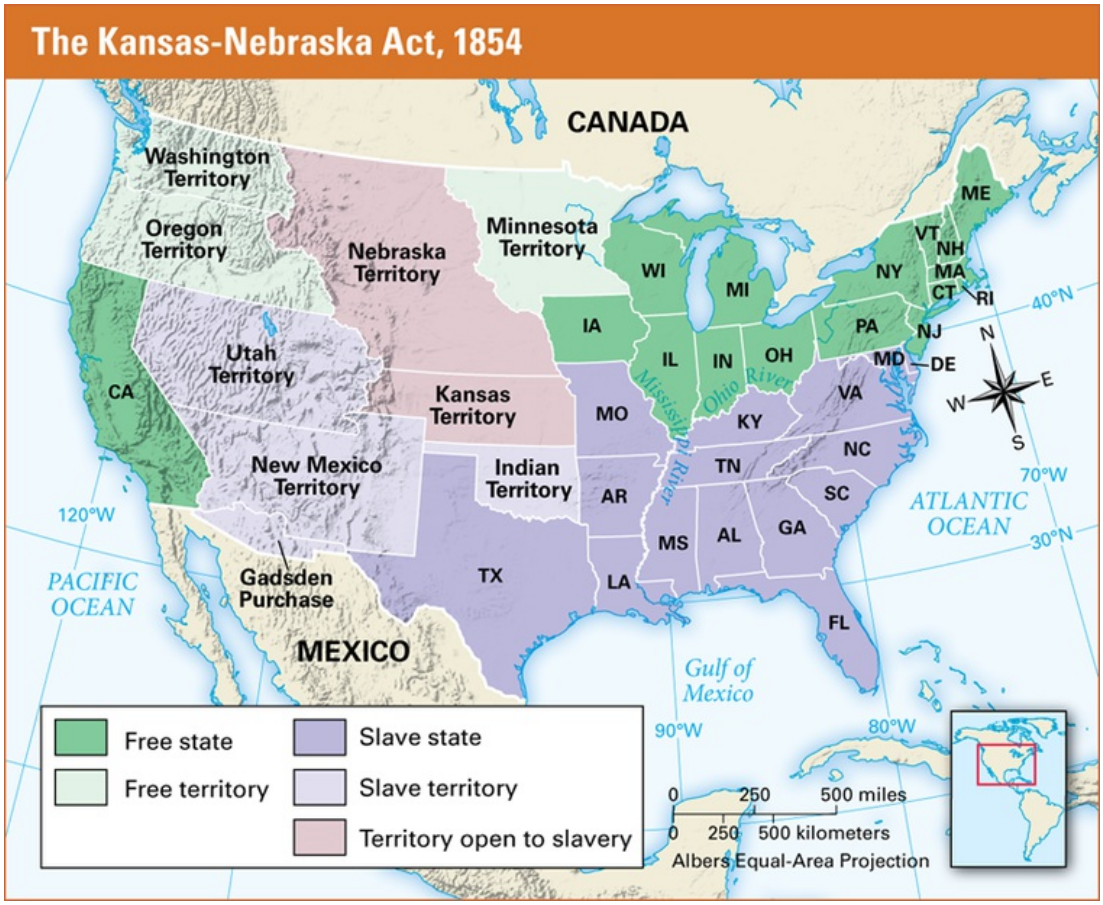
In 1852, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was published as a novel. Plays based on the book toured the country, thrilling audiences with Eliza's dramatic escape to freedom. No other work had ever aroused such powerful emotions about slavery. In the South, the novel and its author were scorned and cursed. However, in the North, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* made millions of people even angrier about the cruelties of slavery.

The Ostend Manifesto and the Kansas-Nebraska Act Northerners who were already horrified by slavery were roused to fury by two events in 1854: the

publication of the so-called Ostend Manifesto and the Kansas-Nebraska Act.

The document known as the Ostend Manifesto was a message sent to the secretary of state by three American diplomats who were meeting in Ostend, Belgium. President Franklin Pierce, who had taken office in 1853, had been trying to purchase the island of Cuba from Spain, but Spain had refused the offer. The message from the diplomats urged the U.S. government to seize Cuba by force if Spain continued to refuse to sell the island. When the message was leaked to the public, angry Northerners charged that Pierce's administration wanted to buy Cuba in order to add another slave state to the Union.

Early that same year, Senator Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois introduced a bill in Congress that sparked an uproar. Douglas wanted to get a railroad built to California. He thought the project was more likely to happen if Congress organized the Great Plains into the Nebraska Territory and opened the region to settlers. This territory lay north of the Missouri Compromise, and Douglas's bill said nothing about slavery. But Southerners in Congress agreed to support the bill only if Douglas made a few changes—and those changes had far-reaching consequences.



Douglas's final version of the bill, known as the **Kansas-Nebraska Act**, was passed in 1854 and created two new territories, Kansas and Nebraska. It also abolished the Missouri Compromise by leaving it up to the settlers themselves to vote on whether to permit slavery in the two territories. Douglas called this policy popular sovereignty, or rule by the people.

The Kansas-Nebraska Act hit the North like a thunderbolt. Once again, Northerners were haunted by visions of slavery marching across the plains. Douglas tried to calm their fears by saying that the climates of Kansas and Nebraska were not suited to slave labor, but when Northerners studied maps, they were not so sure. Newspaper editor Horace Greeley charged in the *New York Tribune,*

> *The pretense of Douglas & Co. that not even Kansas is to be made a slave state by his bill is a gag [joke] . . . Ask any Missourian what he thinks about it. The Kansas Territory . . . is bounded in its entire length by Missouri, with a whole tier of slave counties leaning against it. Won't be a slave state!*

. . . Gentlemen! Don't lie any more!

Bloodshed in Kansas After the Kansas-Nebraska Act was passed in 1854, settlers poured into Kansas. Most were peaceful farmers looking for good farmland, but some settlers moved to Kansas either to support or to oppose slavery. In the South, towns sent their young men to Kansas, and in the North, abolitionists raised money to send weapons to antislavery settlers. Before long, Kansas had two competing governments in the territory, one for slavery and one against it.

The struggle over slavery soon turned violent. On May 21, 1856, proslavery settlers and so-called “border ruffians” from Missouri invaded Lawrence, Kansas, the home of the antislavery government. Armed invaders burned a hotel, looted several homes, and tossed the printing press of an abolitionist newspaper into the Kaw River. As the invaders left Lawrence, one of them boasted, “Gentlemen, this is the happiest day of my life.”

The raid on Lawrence provoked a wave of outrage in the North. People raised money to replace the destroyed presses, and more “Free-Soilers,” as antislavery settlers were called, prepared to move to Kansas.

Meanwhile, a fiery abolitionist named John Brown plotted his own revenge. Days after the Lawrence raid, Brown and seven followers, including four of Brown's sons and his son-in-law, invaded the proslavery town of Pottawatomie, Kansas. There, they dragged five men they suspected of supporting slavery from their homes and hacked them to death with swords.

Violence in Congress The violence in Kansas greatly disturbed Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts. To Sumner, it was proof of what he had long suspected—that Senator Stephen Douglas had plotted with Southerners to make Kansas a slave state.

In 1856, Sumner voiced his suspicions in a passionate speech called “The Crime Against Kansas.” In harsh, shocking language, Sumner described the “crime against Kansas” as a violent assault on an innocent territory, “compelling it to the hateful embrace of slavery.”

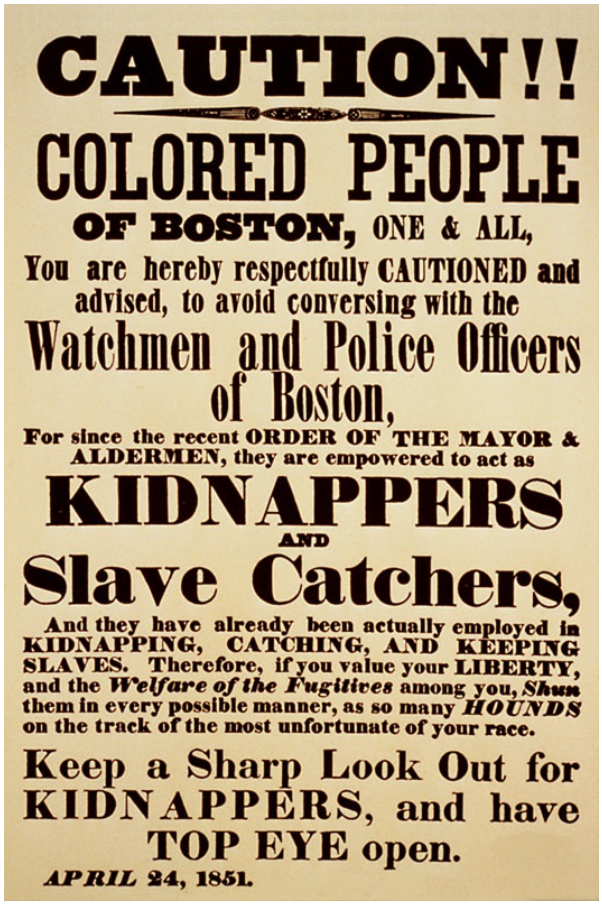
He dismissed Douglas as “a noisome [offensive], squat, and nameless animal.” Sumner also heaped abuse on many Southerners, including Senator Andrew P. Butler of South Carolina.

Just what Sumner hoped to accomplish was not clear. However, copies of his speech were quickly printed up for distribution in the North. After reading it, New England poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow congratulated Sumner on the “brave and noble speech you made, never to die out in the memories of men.”

Certainly, it was not about to die out in the memories of enraged Southerners. Two days after the speech, a relative of Senator Butler, South Carolina representative Preston Brooks, attacked Sumner in the Senate, beating him with his metal-tipped cane until it broke in half. By the time other senators could pull Brooks away, Sumner had collapsed, bloody and unconscious.

Reactions to the attack on Sumner showed how divided the country had become. Many Southerners applauded Brooks for defending the honor of his family and the South. From across the South, supporters sent Brooks new canes to replace the one he had broken on Sumner's head.

Most Northerners viewed the beating as another example of Southern brutality. One Connecticut student was so upset that she wrote to Sumner about going to war. “I don't think it is of very much use to stay any longer in the high school,” she wrote. “The boys would be better learning to hold muskets, and the girls to make bullets.”



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, *Shun* them in every possible manner, as so many *HOUNDS* 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.

6. The Dred Scott Decision

In 1857, the slavery controversy shifted from Congress to the Supreme Court, which was about to decide a case concerning a Missouri slave named Dred Scott. Years earlier, Scott had traveled with his owner to Wisconsin, where slavery was banned by the Missouri Compromise. When he returned to Missouri, Scott went to court to win his freedom, arguing that his stay in Wisconsin had made him a free man.

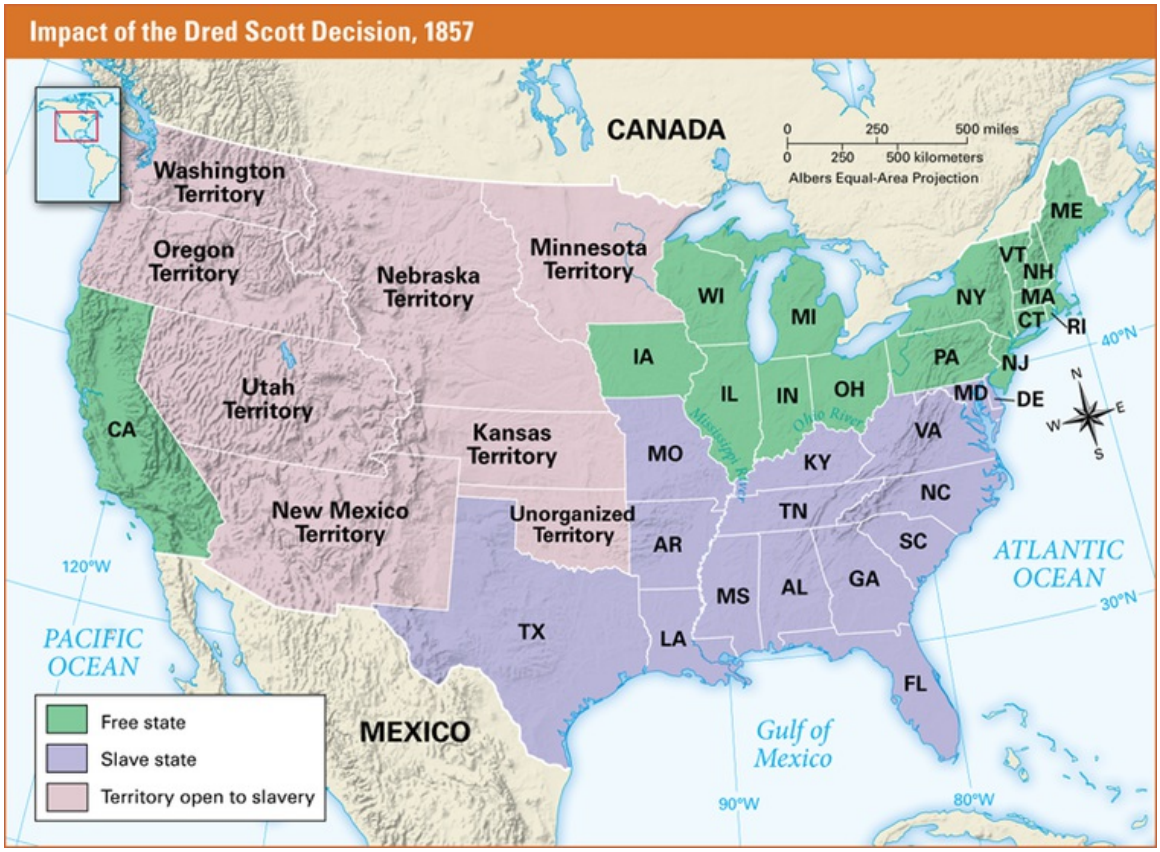
Questions of the Case There were nine justices on the Supreme Court in 1857. Four justices were from the South, four were from the North, and Chief Justice Roger Taney was from Maryland, a border state that permitted slavery. The justices had two key questions to decide. First, as a slave, was Dred Scott a citizen who had the right to bring a case before a federal court? Second, did his time in Wisconsin make him a free man?

Chief Justice Taney hoped to use the Scott case to settle the slavery controversy once and for all. So he asked the Court to consider two additional questions: Did Congress have the power to make any laws at all concerning slavery in the territories? And, if so, was the Missouri Compromise a constitutional use of that power?

Nearly 80 years old, Taney had long been opposed to slavery. As a young Maryland lawyer, he had publicly declared that “slavery is a blot upon our national character and every lover of freedom confidently hopes that it will be . . . wiped away.” Taney had gone on to free his own slaves, and many observers wondered whether he and his fellow justices would now free Dred Scott as well.

Two Judicial Bombshells On March 6, 1857, Chief Justice Taney delivered the **Dred Scott decision**. The chief justice began by reviewing the facts of Dred Scott's case, and then he dropped the first of two judicial bombshells. By a vote of seven to two, the Court had decided that Scott could not sue for his freedom in a federal court because he was not a citizen. Nor, said Taney, could Scott become a citizen because no African American, whether slave or free, was an American citizen—or could ever become one.

Second, Taney declared that the Court had rejected Scott's argument that his stay in Wisconsin had made him a free man. The reason was simple. The Missouri Compromise was unconstitutional.



Taney argued that slaves were property and that the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution said that property could not be taken from people without due process of law—that is, a proper court hearing. Taney reasoned that banning slavery in a territory was the same as taking property from slaveholders who would like to bring their slaves into that territory, which was unconstitutional. Rather than banning slavery, he said, Congress had a constitutional responsibility to protect the property rights of slaveholders in a territory.

The Dred Scott decision delighted slaveholders. They hoped that, at long last, the issue of slavery in the territories had been settled—and in their favor.

Many Northerners, however, were stunned and enraged by the Court's ruling. The *New York Tribune* called the decision a “wicked and false judgment.” The *New York Independent* expressed outrage in a bold headline:

NEW YORK, MARCH 7, 1857

The Decision of the Supreme Court Is the Moral Assassination of a Race and Cannot Be Obeyed!

7. From Compromise to Crisis

During the controversy over the Kansas-Nebraska Act, antislavery activists from the Free-Soilers and the once-popular Whig Party formed a new political organization, the Republican Party. The Republicans were united by their beliefs that “no man can own another man . . . That slavery must be prohibited in the territories . . . That all new States must be Free States . . . That the rights of our colored citizen . . . must be protected.”

In 1858, Republicans in Illinois nominated Abraham Lincoln to run for the Senate. In his acceptance speech, Lincoln pointed out that all attempts to reach

compromise on the slavery issue had failed. Quoting from the Bible, he warned, “A house divided against itself cannot stand.” Lincoln went on: “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 all the other.”

The Lincoln-Douglas Debates Lincoln's opponent in the Senate race was Senator Stephen Douglas, an Illinois senator who saw no reason why the nation could not go on half-slave and half-free. When Lincoln challenged him to debate the slavery issue, Douglas agreed.

During the **Lincoln-Douglas debates**, Douglas argued that the Dred Scott decision had put the slavery issue to rest, but Lincoln disagreed. In his eyes, slavery was a moral, not a legal, issue. He declared, “The real issue in this controversy . . . is the sentiment of one class [group] that looks upon the institution of slavery as a wrong, and of another class that does not look upon it as a wrong.”

Lincoln lost the election. However, the debates were widely reported, and they helped make him a national figure. His argument with Douglas also brought the moral issue of slavery into sharp focus. Compromises over slavery were becoming impossible.

John Brown's Raid While Lincoln fought to stop the spread of slavery through politics, abolitionist John Brown adopted a more extreme approach. Rather than wait for Congress to act, Brown planned to seize the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia. An arsenal is a place where weapons and ammunition are stored. Brown wanted to use the weapons to arm slaves for a rebellion that would end slavery.

In 1859, Brown launched his raid. It was an insane scheme during which many of his men were either killed or captured. Brown himself was convicted of treason and sentenced to die. On the day of his hanging, he left a note that read, “I John Brown am now quite certain that the crimes of this guilty land will never be purged away but with Blood.”

Such words filled white Southerners with fear because it was Southern blood that would be spilled if a slave rebellion began. The fact that many Northerners viewed Brown as a hero also left white Southerners uneasy.

8. The Election of 1860 and Secession

The 1860 presidential race showed just how divided the nation had become. The Republicans were united behind Lincoln. The Democrats, however, had split between Northern and Southern **factions**, with Northern Democrats nominating Stephen Douglas for president and Southern Democrats supporting John C. Breckinridge of Kentucky. The election became even more confusing when a group called the Constitutional Union Party nominated John Bell of Tennessee.

Abraham Lincoln Is Elected President With his opposition divided three ways, Lincoln sailed to victory, but it was an odd victory. Lincoln won the presidential election with just 40 percent of the votes, all of them cast in the North. In ten Southern states, he was not even on the ballot.

For white Southerners, the election of 1860 delivered an unmistakable message. The South was now in the minority. It no longer had the power to shape national events or policies, and Southerners feared that, sooner or later, Congress would try to abolish slavery. And that, wrote a South Carolina newspaper, would mean

"the loss of liberty, property, home, country—everything that makes life worth having."

The South Secedes from the Union In the weeks following the election, talk of secession filled the air. Alarmed senators formed a committee to search for yet another compromise that might hold the nation together. They knew that finding one would not be easy, but they still had to do something to stop the rush toward disunion and disaster.

The Senate committee held its first meeting on December 20, 1860. Just as the senators began their work, events in two distant cities dashed their hopes for a settlement.

In Illinois, a senator named Lyman Trumbull asked President-Elect Abraham Lincoln whether he could support a compromise on slavery. Lincoln's answer was clear. He would not interfere with slavery in the South, and he would support enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Act. However, Lincoln drew the line at letting slavery extend into the territories. On this question, he declared, "Let there be no compromise."

Meanwhile, in Charleston, South Carolina, delegates attending a state convention voted that same day—December 20, 1860—to leave the Union. The city went wild as church bells rang and crowds filled the streets, roaring their approval. A South Carolina newspaper boldly proclaimed, "The Union Is Dissolved!" Six more states soon followed South Carolina's lead, and in February 1861, those states joined together as the Confederate States of America.

The Civil War Begins On March 4, 1861, Lincoln became president of the not-so-united United States. In his inaugural address, Lincoln stated his belief that secession was both wrong and unconstitutional. He then appealed to the rebellious states to return in peace. "In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow countrymen, and not in mine," he said, "is the momentous issue of civil war."

The following month on April 12, 1861, Confederates in Charleston, South Carolina, forced the issue when they opened fire on Fort Sumter, a federal fort in Charleston Harbor. After more than 30 hours of heavy shelling, the defenders of the fort hauled down the Stars and Stripes and replaced it with the white flag of surrender.

The news that the Confederates had fired on the American flag unleashed a wave of patriotic fury in the North. All the doubts that people had about using force to save the Union vanished. A New York newspaper reported excitedly, “There is no more thought of bribing or coaxing the traitors who have dared to aim their cannon balls at the flag of the Union . . . Fort Sumter is temporarily lost, but the country is saved.”

The time for compromise was over. The issues that had divided the nation for so many years would now be decided by a civil war.

Lesson Summary

In this lesson, you learned how a series of compromises failed to keep the United States from splitting in two over the issue of slavery.

Confronting the Issue of Slavery The issue of granting Missouri statehood threatened to upset the balance of free and slave states. Northerners were concerned that if Missouri entered the Union as a slave state, other territories would also be admitted as slave states. Southerners worried that if Congress banned slavery in Missouri, it would try to end slavery elsewhere.

The Missouri Compromise In 1820, the Missouri Compromise resolved the issue by admitting Missouri as a slave state and Maine as a free state. It also drew a line across the Louisiana Territory. In the future, slavery would be permitted only south of that line.

The Compromise of 1850 The furor over slavery in new territories erupted again after the Mexican-American War. The Compromise of 1850 admitted California as

a free state and allowed the New Mexico and Utah territories to decide whether to allow slavery. It also ended the slave trade in Washington, D.C., and included a stronger fugitive slave law. Attitudes on both sides were hardened by Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and the Kansas-Nebraska Act.

The Dred Scott Decision In 1857, the Supreme Court issued a decision in the Dred Scott case: African Americans were not citizens and the Missouri Compromise was unconstitutional.

From Compromise to Crisis Antislavery activists formed a new political party: the Republican Party. The party nominated Abraham Lincoln for the Illinois Senate. Slavery was the focus of debates between Lincoln and opponent Stephen Douglas. Lincoln lost the election, but the debates brought slavery into sharp focus. A raid launched by abolitionist John Brown raised fears of a slave rebellion.

The Election of 1860 and Secession Lincoln won the presidency in 1860. Soon afterward, South Carolina and six other Southern states seceded from the Union and formed the Confederate States of America. In early 1861, Confederate troops fired on Fort Sumter in Charleston, South Carolina, marking the beginning of the Civil War.

Investigating Primary Sources

How Did Slavery Create Tension Among the States Prior to the Civil War?

By 1854, the United States consisted of 32 states with more on the way.

While this growth seemed promising, there were differences among the states that created tension so strong, they threatened to tear the nation apart. You will examine four primary sources about the biggest issue facing the nation— slavery—and then write a claim about how slavery created tension among the states.

People in the Northern states lived differently from people in the Southern states. The natural resources and new railroad lines in the North led people there to work in factories. The fertile soil and warm climate of the South led most people there to make their living by farming. The many large farms in the South, called plantations, depended on the labor of slaves who originally were captured in Africa and transported to the South. Southerners believed that without these slaves, their farms and way of life could not exist. In 1860, about 4 million slaves worked in the South. In the North, there were many abolitionists who believed that slavery was immoral and had to be stopped.

In 1850, 17 states had outlawed slavery and 14 states permitted it. As the nation added western territories, there was always a question of whether slavery would be permitted in these new areas. Southerners wanted to allow slavery in the new territories, but Northerners disagreed. When it was time for Kansas to become a territory, the argument grew more heated. Abolitionists recruited settlers from the East to live in Kansas and keep out slaveholders. These recruits were called Free-Soilers.

Examine this political cartoon titled “Forcing Slavery Down the Throat of a Freesoiler.” Use the caption to identify the people in the picture and the artist's message. How does this image demonstrate the tension between free states and slave states? What reaction does the artist want the audience to have?

The Fugitive Slave Act

As new territories in the West joined the nation, tensions remained high in the eastern states. In the U.S. Congress, Northern and Southern legislators attempted to address the slavery issue by creating new laws.

In 1850, Congress passed a Fugitive Slave Act as part of the Compromise of 1850. The new law harshly punished anyone in the North or South who helped a slave escape or did not assist the slave catchers. Although the law was intended to weaken the abolitionists' ability to help slaves, it actually angered and emboldened Northern opposition to slavery because it required people to defend

it.

As you examine this picture titled *Effects of the Fugitive-Slave-Law* that was published in 1850, notice the six armed white men in the corn field who have ambushed four black men. Below the image on the left is a quote from the Bible saying:

> *Thou shalt not deliver unto the master his servant which has escaped from his master unto thee. He shall dwell with thee. Even among you in that place which he shall choose in one of thy gates where it liketh him best. Thou shalt not oppress him.*

On the right is a quote from the Declaration of Independence stating, “We hold that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.”

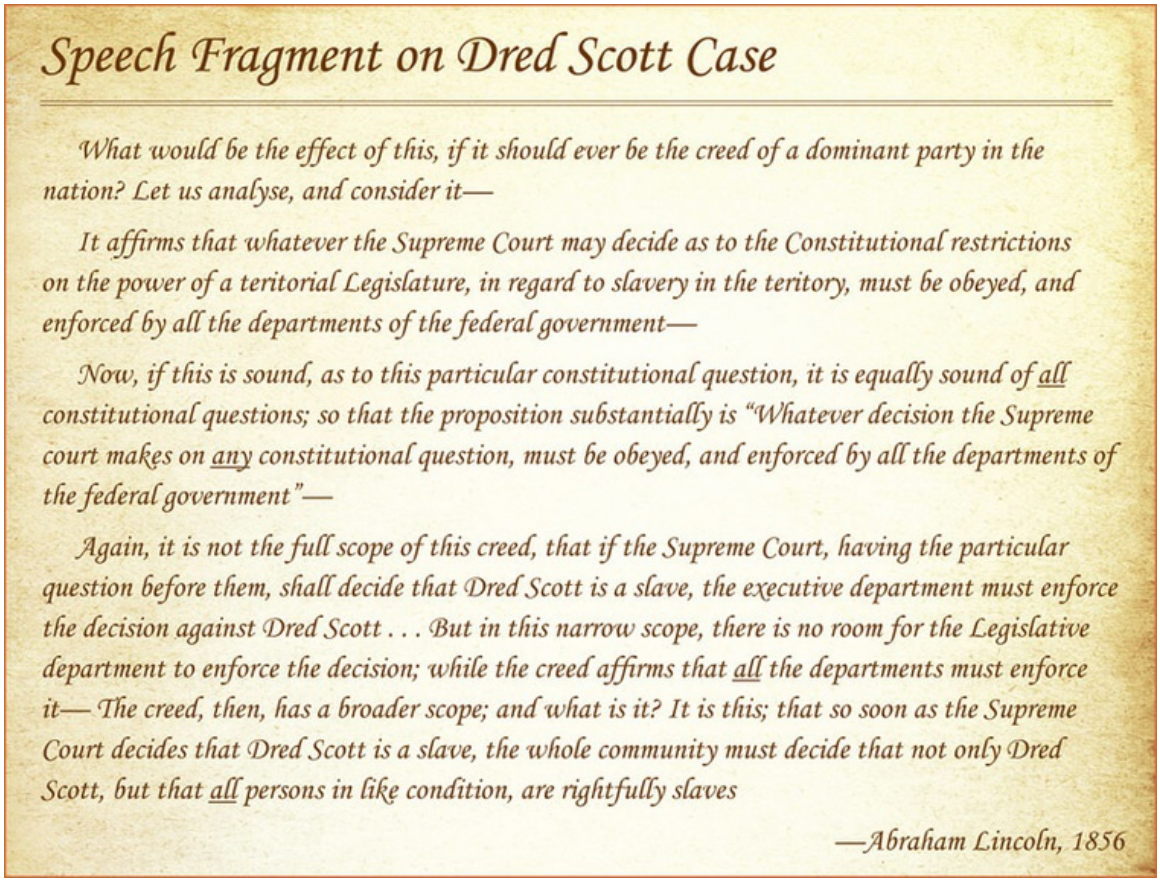
How are the white men and black men portrayed in this picture? Considering the tension of the time, how would abolitionists have reacted to this picture? How do you think the artist felt about the Fugitive Slave Law? How do the image and quotations help persuade the audience?

The Dred Scott Decision

By 1856, tensions between abolitionists and slave holders boiled up to an all-time high. The Supreme Court case of *Scott v. Sanford* added fuel to the heated arguments. Dred Scott was a slave owned by a man named John Emerson from the slave state Missouri. In the late 1830s, Emerson relocated to Wisconsin, taking Scott with him. Because the Wisconsin territory prohibited slavery, Dred Scott considered himself a free man there and in Missouri upon his return. Scott soon filed numerous lawsuits to try to establish his freedom.

The case made its way all the way to the Supreme Court, which made a monumental decision. The Court decided that Scott could not sue for his freedom because he was not a U.S. citizen, and he could never become one. This was a personal blow to Dred Scott and had devastating consequences for the abolitionist movement.

Three months before the Court made its decision, an Illinois politician named Abraham Lincoln gave a speech about the case. As you read this excerpt from Lincoln's speech, consider: What does Lincoln believe will happen if the Court decides against Dred Scott?



Speech Fragment on Dred Scott Case

What would be the effect of this, if it should ever be the creed of a dominant party in the nation? Let us analyse, and consider it—

It affirms that whatever the Supreme Court may decide as to the Constitutional restrictions on the power of a teritorial Legislature, in regard to slavery in the teritory, must be obeyed, and enforced by all the departments of the federal government—

Now, if this is sound, as to this particular constitutional question, it is equally sound of all constitutional questions; so that the proposition substantially is "Whatever decision the Supreme court makes on any constitutional question, must be obeyed, and enforced by all the departments of the federal government"—

Again, it is not the full scope of this creed, that if the Supreme Court, having the particular question before them, shall decide that Dred Scott is a slave, the executive department must enforce the decision against Dred Scott . . . But in this narrow scope, there is no room for the Legislative department to enforce the decision; while the creed affirms that all the departments must enforce it— The creed, then, has a broader scope; and what is it? It is this; that so soon as the Supreme Court decides that Dred Scott is a slave, the whole community must decide that not only Dred Scott, but that all persons in like condition, are rightfully slaves

—Abraham Lincoln, 1856

States Leave the U.S.A.

After much argument and attempts at legal solutions, the slavery issue eventually ripped the nation apart. From December 20, 1860, through June 8, 1861, eleven Southern states seceded from the United States. One by one, these states formed a new nation, the Confederate States of America, with its own president and capital city.

One of these states was Mississippi, which seceded on January 9, 1861. Here are excerpts from *An Address: Setting forth the declaration of the immediate causes which induce and justify the secession of Mississippi from the Federal Union and the ordinance of secession*. The full document includes 18 reasons why Mississippi chose to leave. What does this part of the secession document declare about Mississippi's reasons for leaving the Union? How might this statement have been received by abolitionists in the North and pro-slavery people in the South?

Secession of Mississippi

In the momentous step which our State has taken of dissolving its connection with the government of which we so long formed a part, it is but just that we should declare the prominent reasons which have induced our course.

Our position is thoroughly identified with the institution of slavery—the greatest material interest of the world. Its labor supplies the product which constitutes by far the largest and most important portions of commerce of the earth. These products are peculiar to the climate verging on the tropical regions, and by an imperious law of nature, none but the black race can bear exposure to the tropical sun. These products have become necessities of the world, and a blow at slavery is a blow at commerce and civilization . . . There was no choice left us but submission to the mandates of abolition, or a dissolution of the Union, whose principles had been subverted to work out our ruin . . .

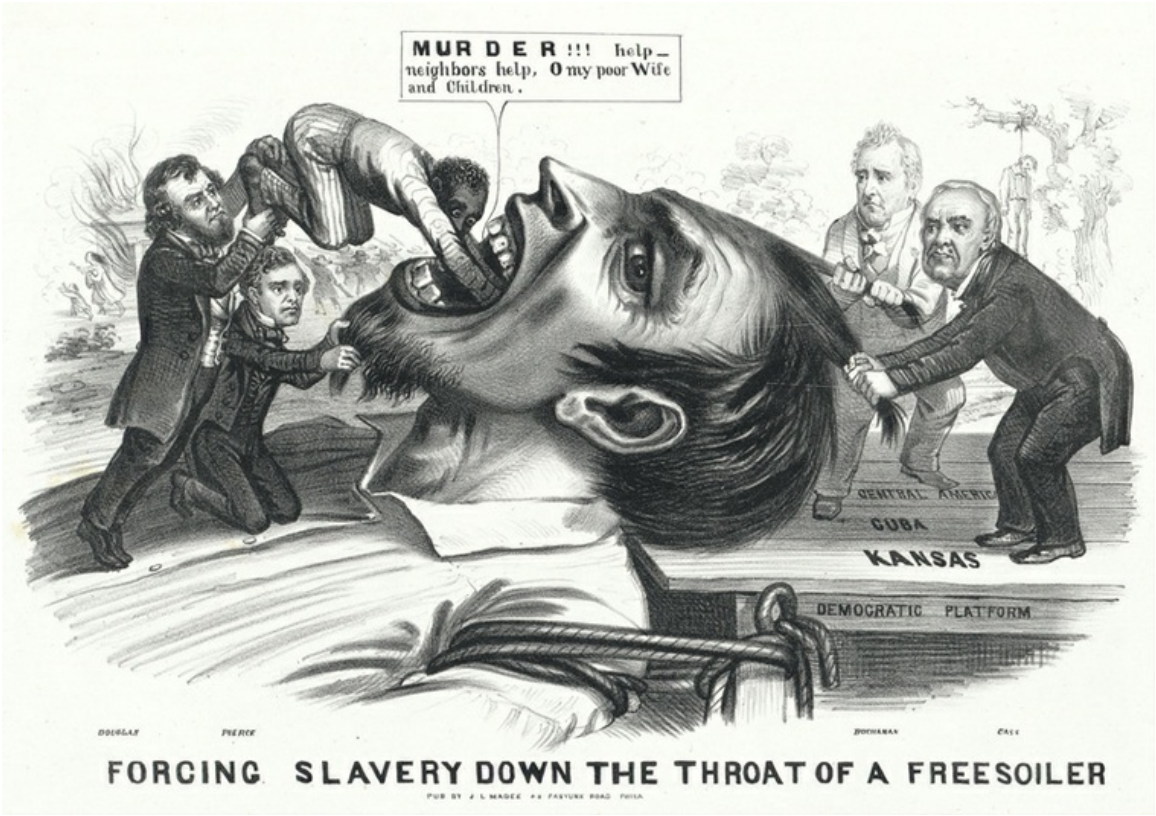
It refuses the admission of new slave States into the Union, and seeks to extinguish it by confining it within its present limits, denying the power of expansion . . .

It advocates negro equality, socially and politically, and promotes insurruction and incendiarism in our midst.

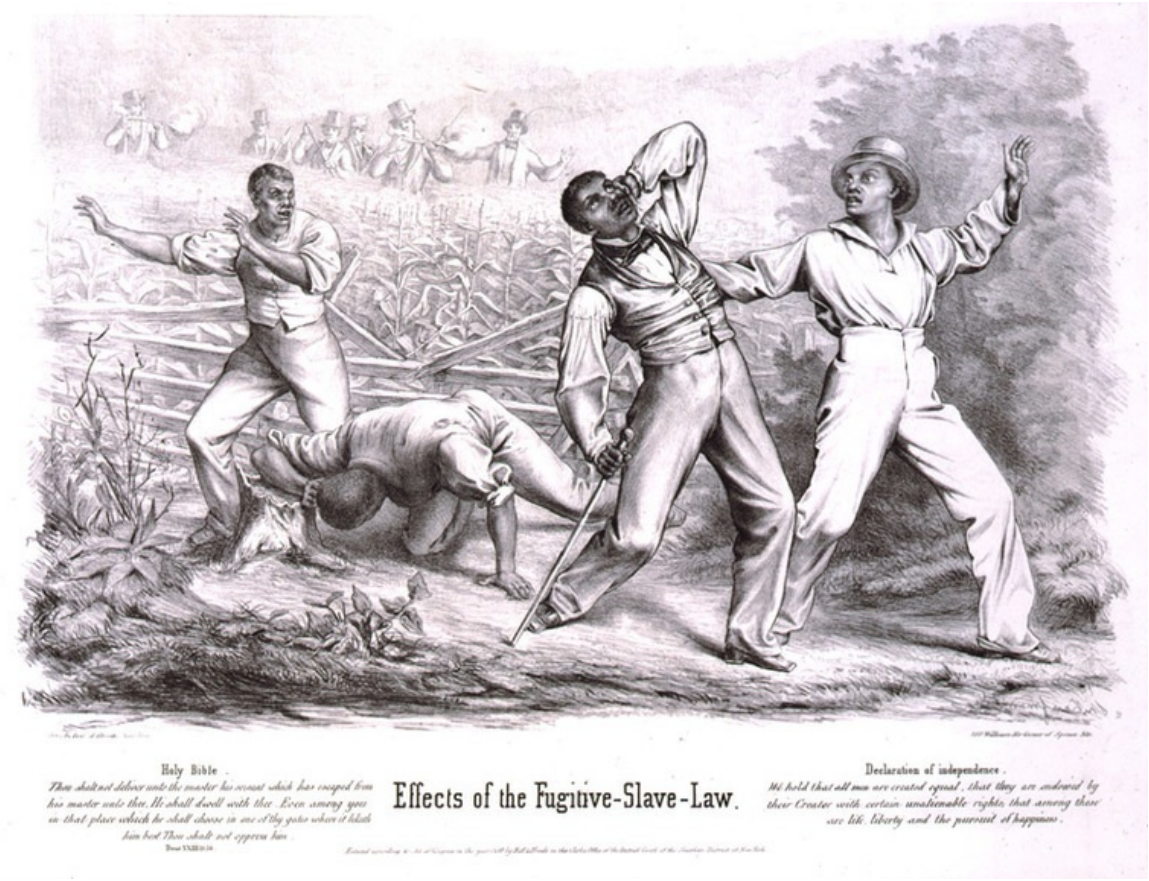
It has enlisted its press, its pulpit and its schools against us, until the whole popular mind of the North is excited and inflamed with prejudice.

—Mississippi Convention, 1861

Review the primary sources presented here. Write a claim to describe what they reveal about how the North and the South felt about slavery and how slavery created tension prior to the Civil War.



FORCING SLAVERY DOWN THE THROAT OF A FREESOILER



Slavery Divides Boston

Boston was a magnet for people who opposed slavery. The American Anti-Slavery Society was based in Boston, as was the abolitionist newspaper *The Liberator*. But the issue of slavery divided even the people of Boston. Tensions in Boston increased, as they did in other places. Boston, like the nation, was splitting apart.

On June 2, 1854, about 50,000 people lined the streets of Boston. Hundreds more gathered on rooftops. Businesses closed. People looked out of the windows and doorways of the buildings where they usually worked.

Women dangled black shawls out of second- and third-story windows. By the city's harbor, black fabric covered the Commonwealth Building. From its upper windows hung six American flags, all draped in black. Samuel May, who was born during the American Revolution, hung two U.S. flags upside down from his hardware store as a protest. At ground level, a black coffin displayed the word

Liberty.

Then, Anthony Burns emerged from the courthouse. Surrounded by federal marshals, he was walking to the docks where he would board a ship to Virginia. Burns, an escaped slave, was being returned to his owner.

Burns had escaped from slavery in Virginia by hiding in the cargo hold of a ship. He had settled in Boston just a few months earlier, believing that people in the free state of Massachusetts would welcome him. They did.

Now, many Bostonians were outraged that Burns was being forced back into slavery. Massachusetts had outlawed the institution decades earlier. Many escaped slaves lived as free people in the state.

Burns's three-block walk to the pier was dramatic. Boston's mayor had called on the military to keep order, fearing that angry crowds would use force to free Burns. Each guard who walked with Burns held a pistol in one hand and a sword in the other.

Anne Warren Weston, who came from a family of ardent abolitionists, described watching the procession from an upstairs office along the route from the courthouse to the pier. She reported in a letter to her sisters that she and her companions “called out, Shame and Slave Catcher in our most expressive and scornful voices” at the men who escorted Burns.

What was going on in Boston? Why was Anthony Burns being sent back to slavery?

The Fugitive Slave Act

According to Massachusetts law, Anthony Burns had been a free man for the months he lived in Boston. Nonetheless, because of the federal Fugitive Slave Act, he was still a fugitive from slavery. Passed by the U.S. Congress in 1850, the Fugitive Slave Act said that slave owners could retrieve their runaway slaves. Burns's master had come to Boston to reclaim his “property.” He did so with the full power of the law behind him. The outrage that greeted him in Boston was a symptom of the divisions tearing apart the country.

Burns was not the only one affected. Many slaves had fled to Northern states, where they lived in freedom. The new law meant that they were no longer safe in their Northern homes. They could be captured and returned to their owners at any

time.

With the new law in place, many former slaves saw that their only chance for real safety was to get out of the country entirely. William and Ellen Craft escaped slavery in Macon, Georgia, in 1848. They went first to Philadelphia, and then farther north to Boston. Even there, they weren't safe. Under the Fugitive Slave Act, slave catchers pursued them. William locked himself in his clothing store, while abolitionist friends hid Ellen somewhere else. When the immediate danger had passed, Boston's activists arranged for the couple to go to Liverpool, England. There, they could live in freedom, unthreatened by slave catchers or their status as fugitive slaves.

The Fugitive Slave Act affected Northern abolitionists as well as escaped slaves. The law now involved Northerners in the slave system that many of them hated. No matter how much the people of Boston opposed slavery, federal law overruled them. Meant to ease tensions between North and South, the Fugitive Slave Act only heightened them.

And so crowds of sad and angry Bostonians watched helplessly as Anthony Burns left their haven in the North. Outraged by the injustice they watched unfolding before them, they vowed to keep up the fight to end slavery.

The Cradle of Liberty Meets the Evil of Slavery

Boston had long been a symbol of freedom, sometimes called “the cradle of liberty.” It was in Boston, after all, that the colonists first rebelled against British rule. And Massachusetts was one of the first states to outlaw slavery. Bostonians in particular had a long commitment to abolition. How had that commitment led to the terrible day in 1854 when Anthony Burns boarded the boat to return to Virginia and become, once again, a slave?

No one could have foreseen that day back in 1829 when David Walker, an African American living in Boston, published a pamphlet called *Walker's Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World*. In the pamphlet, Walker urged black Americans to resist slavery. He even suggested that violence might be necessary. Walker also warned white Americans that God would punish them for the crime of slavery.

Many others spoke out against the evils of slavery. William Lloyd Garrison was one of them. In his newspaper, *The Liberator*, he made some radical claims. He

said that slaves must be freed immediately. Many abolitionists at the time said it would be best to end slavery gradually. He said that African Americans should not start colonies in Africa, as some reformers believed. Instead, they should live as free people in the United States. And perhaps most radical of all, he said that blacks should not only be free, but that they should have all the same rights as whites.

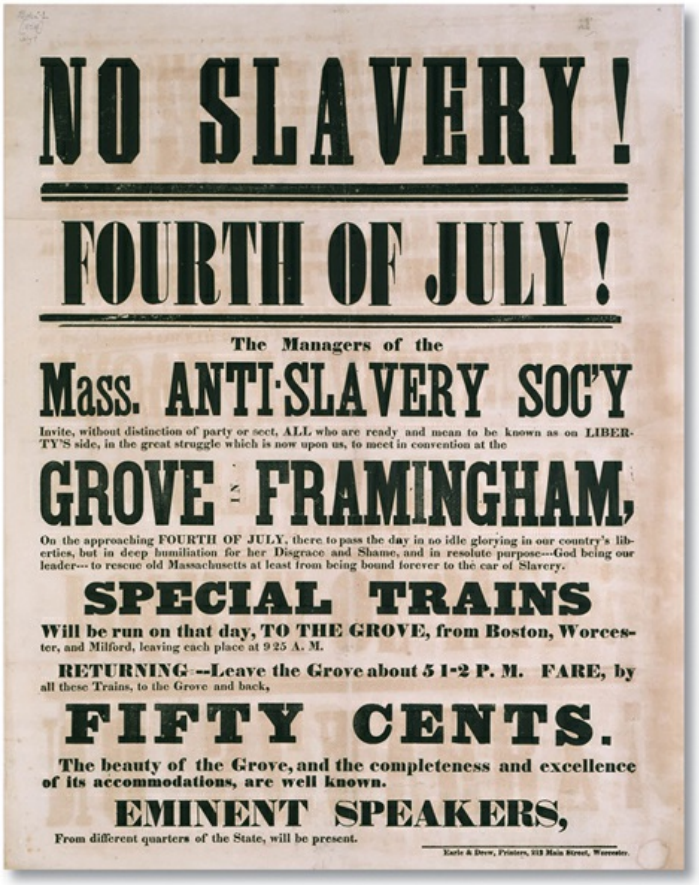
Of course, Bostonians who opposed abolition disliked Garrison and his ideas. In 1835, a mob nearly killed him.

Garrison later described how a few men carried him to safety. He hated the hypocrisy of accepting slavery in the land of the free.

> *I was thus conducted . . . over the ground that was stained with the blood of the first martyrs in the cause of LIBERTY and INDEPENDENCE, in the memorable massacre of 1770 . . . What a scandalous and revolting contrast! My offence was in pleading for LIBERTY—liberty for my enslaved countrymen . . . .*

Like Garrison, others in Boston suffered for their efforts to end slavery. One of them described what she and others had gone through.

> *It has occasioned our brothers to be dismissed from [their jobs as ministers]—our sons to be expelled from colleges and theological seminaries—our friends from professorships—ourselves from literary and social privileges.*
>
> —Maria Weston Chapman [Anne Warren Weston's sister], Foreign Cor. Secretary, Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society



NO SLAVERY!

FOURTH OF JULY!

The Managers of the

Mass. ANTI-SLAVERY SOC'Y

Invite, without distinction of party or sect, ALL who are ready and mean to be known as on LIBERTY'S side, in the great struggle which is now upon us, to meet in convention at the

GROVE IN FRAMINGHAM,

On the approaching FOURTH OF JULY, there to pass the day in no idle glorying in our country's liberties, but in deep humiliation for her Disgrace and Shame, and in resolute purpose---God being our leader--- to rescue old Massachusetts at least from being bound forever to the car of Slavery.

SPECIAL TRAINS

Will be run on that day, TO THE GROVE, from Boston, Worcester, and Milford, leaving each place at 9 25 A. M.

RETURNING---Leave the Grove about 5 1-2 P. M. FARE, by all these Trains, to the Grove and back,

FIFTY CENTS.

The beauty of the Grove, and the completeness and excellence of its accommodations, are well known.

EMINENT SPEAKERS,

From different quarters of the State, will be present.

Earle & Drew, Printers, 313 Main Street, Worcester.

It took courage to oppose slavery. Some sources estimate that only about 1 percent of Northerners were active abolitionists.

Their numbers may have been small, but Boston abolitionists fought on. They took strong steps to protect the free blacks who lived in the city. In 1842, a fugitive slave named George Lattimer went to jail in Boston. He had to wait there while his owner traveled to Virginia to get the papers that would prove that Lattimer was a slave. Angry abolitionists filed legal claims on Lattimer's behalf. Their efforts failed. Lattimer did not become free until black Bostonians paid his owner $400.

Free blacks realized how shaky their freedom was. Slave catchers could return them south. So they took the lead in distributing a petition calling for a state law to protect Massachusetts citizens. Those who signed the petition did so “desiring to free this commonwealth and themselves from all connection with domestic slavery and to secure the citizens of this state from the danger of enslavement.”

As a result of their efforts, the state passed the Personal Liberty Law in 1843. The

law said that state officials and facilities could not be used to capture and return fugitive slaves.

But the Fugitive Slave Act overruled the state's Personal Liberty Law. It put federal, not state, officials in charge of returning fugitive slaves.

And so, Anthony Burns had to return to Virginia as a slave. Eventually, Boston's activists bought his freedom. But the experience highlighted the fact that the North and South were bound to clash again until slavery was abolished.

• Letter to "Dear Folks" [her sisters in Paris] by Anne Warren Weston, Weymouth, Boston Public Library, June 5, 1854, p. 8.

Entire Selection:
https://www.digitalcommonwealth.org/book_viewer/commonwealth:vm418114k#1/8

Accessed March, 2017

• Account of the Boston Mob Oct 21, 1835 in *William Lloyd Garrison, 1805–1879: The Story of His Life Told by His Children* Vol. II 1835–1840 by Francis Jackson Garrison. New York: The Century Co, 1885, pp. 11–23.

Entire Selection: https://books.google.com/books?id=tLN2AAAAMAAJ&pg=PA21&lpgL

Accessed March, 2017

• Report of the Boston Female Anti Slavery Society; With a Concise Statement of Events, Previous and Subsequent to the Annual Meeting of 1835, p. 3.

Entire Selection:
https://ia802502.us.archive.org/34/items/ASPC0002429400/ASPC0002429400.pdf

Accessed March, 2017

• Great Massachusetts Petition, attributed to the Latimer Comittee, 1842.

Entire Selection: http://www.masshist.org/database/viewer.php?item_id=1683

Accessed March, 2017

Frederick Douglass's Lecture to the Rochester Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society (1855)

In the summer of 1851, a small group of women gathered together in Rochester, New York, to become active members in the fight against slavery. For over a decade, these women of the Rochester Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society held events annually to sell goods made locally or donated from other abolitionist societies. The money they raised went to support abolitionist efforts around the country.

As their influence continued to grow, the Rochester Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society began holding lectures by well-known speakers. Among the most famous of these speakers was Frederick Douglass.

In a lecture he gave to the Rochester Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society in 1855, Douglass discussed his hopes for the antislavery movement, as well as the perils that it faced.

Below is an excerpt from the lecture Frederick Douglass gave to Rochester Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society.

"The Nature, Character, and History of the Anti-Slavery Movement"

The subject of my lecture this evening is, the nature, character, and history of the anti-slavery movement . . . When I speak of the anti-slavery movement, I mean to refer to that combination of moral, religious, and political forces which have long been, and is now, operating and cooperating for the abolition of slavery in this country, and throughout the world. I wish to speak of that movement, to-night, more as the calm observer, than as the ardent and personally interested advocate. For, while I am willing to have it known, that every fibre of my soul is enlisted in the cause of emancipation, I would not have it throught that I am less capable than others, of calmly and rationally contemplating the movement design to accomplish that important and desired end. . . .

Let us now . . . examine the anti-slavery movement in its branches . . . I will not enter into an examination of their causes. God Forbid! that I should open here those bitter fountains. . .

I propose to speak of the different anti-slavery sects and parties, and to give my view of them very briefly. There are four principle divisions.

1st. The Garrisonians, or the American Anti-Slavery Society

2d. The Anti-Garrisonians, or the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society.

The Free Soil Party, or Political Abolitionists.

The Liberty Party, or Gerrit Smith School of Abolitionists. . . .

I shall consider, first, the Garrisonian Anti-Slavery Society . . . the oldest of modern Anti-Slavery Societies. . . Its peculiar and distinctive feature is, its doctrive of "no union with slaveholders." Its doctrine . . . dissolves the Union, and leaves the slaves and their masters to fight their own battles, in their own way. This I hold to be an abandonment of the great idea with which that Society started. It started to free the slave. It ends by leaving the slave to free himself. It started with the purpose to imbue the heart of the nation with sentiments favorable to the abolition of slavery, and ends by seeking to free the North from all responsibility for slavery. . . This, I say, is the practical abandonment of the idea, with which that Society started. It has given up the faith, that the slave can be freed short of the overthrow of the Government; and then, as I understand that Society, it leaves the slaves, as it must needs leave them, just where it leaves the slaves of Cuba, or those of Brazil. The nation, as such, is given up as beyond the power of salvation by the foolishness of preaching; and hence, the aim is now to save the North ; so that the American Anti-Slavery Society, which was inaugurated to convert the nation, after ten years' struggle, parts with its faith, and aims now to save the North.

[The] second branch of the anti-slavery movement. . . The American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society has not yet departed from the original ground, but stands where the American Anti-Slavery Society stood at the beginning. The energies of this association are mainly directed to the revival of anti-slavery in the Church. It is active in the collection, and in the circulation of facts, exposing the character of slavery, and in noting the evidences of progress in the Church on the subject. It does not aim to abolish the Union, but aims to avail itself of the means afforded by the Union to abolish slavery. The Annual Report of this Society affords the amplest and truest account of the anti-slavery movement, from year to year. Nevertheless, I have somewhat against this Society, as well as against the American Anti-Slavery Society. It has almost dropped the main and most potent weapon with which slavery is to be assailed and overthrown, and that is speech.

At this moment, when every nerve should be strained to prevent a re-action, that Society has not a single lecturing agent in the field

The next recognized anti-slavery body is the Free Soil party, alias—the Free Democratic party, alias—the Republican party. It aims to limit and denationalize slavery, and to relieve the Federal Government from all responsibility for slavery. Its motto is, "Slavery Local—Liberty National." The objection to this movement is the same as that against the American Anti-Slavery Society. It leaves the slave in his fetters—in the undisturbed possession of his master, and does not grapple with the question of emancipation in the States.

The fourth division of the anti-slavery movement is, the "Liberty Party"—a small body of citizens, chiefly in the State of New York, but having sympathizers all over the North. It is the radical, and to my thinking, the only abolition organization in the country, except a few local associations. It makes a clean sweep of slavery everywhere. It denies that slavery is, or can be legalized. It denies that the Constitution of the United States is a pro-slavery instrument, and asserts the power and duty of the Federal Government to abolish slavery in every State of the Union. Strictly speaking, I say this is the only party in the country which is an abolition party. . . . The Liberty Party, by its position and doctrines, and by its antecedents, is pledged to continue the struggle while a bondman in his chains remains to weep. Upon its platform must the great battle of freedom be fought out —if upon any short of the bloody field. It must be under no partial cry of "no union with slaveholders;" nor selfish cry of "no more slavery extension;" but it must be, "no slavery for man under the whole heavens." The slave as a man and a brother, must be the vital and animating thought and impulse of any movement, which is to effect the abolition of slavery in this country. Our anti-slavery organizations must be brought back to this doctrine, or they will be scattered and left to wander, and to die in the wilderness, like God's ancient people, till another generation shall come up, more worthy to go up and possess the land.

In conclusion, I have taken a sober view of the present anti-slavery movement. I am sober, but not hopeless. There is no denying, for it is everywhere admitted, that the anti-slavery question is the great, moral and social question now before the American people. . . Herein is my hope. The great idea of impartial liberty is now fairly before the American people. Anti-slavery is no longer a thing to be prevented. The time for prevention is past. This is great gain. When the movement was younger and weaker—when it wrought in a Boston garret to human apprehension, it might have been silently put out of the way. Things are different now. It has grown too large—its friends are too numerous—its facilities

too abundant—its ramifications too extended—its power too omnipotent, to be snuffed out by the contingencies of infancy. A thousand strong men might be struck down and its ranks still be invincible. One flash from the heart-supplied intellect of Harriet Beecher Stowe could light a million camp fires in front of the imbattled hosts of slavery, which, not all the waters of the Mississippi, mingled as they are, with blood, could extinguish. The present will be looked to by after coming generations, as the age of anti-slavery literature—when supply on the gallop could not keep pace with the ever growing demand—when a picture of a negro on the cover was a help to the sale of a book—when conservative lyceums and other American literary associations began first to select their orators for distinguished occasions, from the ranks of the previously despised Abolitionist. If the anti-slavery movement shall fail now, it will not be from outward opposition, but from inward decay. Its auxiliaries are everywhere. Scholars, authors, orators, poets, and statesmen, give it their aid. The most brilliant of American poets volunteer in its service.

In addition to authors, poets, and scholars at home, the moral sense of the civilized world is with us. . . .The growth of intelligence, the influence of commerce, steam, wind, and lighting, are our allie. It would be easy to amplify this summary . . . but there is a deeper and truer method of measuring the power of our cause, and to comprehend its vitality. This is to be found in its accordance with the best elements of human nature. The slave is bound to mankind, by the powerful and inextricable net-work of human brotherhood. his voice is the voice of a man, and his cry is the cry of a man in distress, and man must cease to be man before he can become insensible to that cry. It is the righteousness of the cause —the humanity of the cause—which constitutes its potency.

• ""The Nature, Character, and History of the Anti-Slavery Movement"," a lecture delivered before the Rochester Ladies' Anti-Slavery Association by Frederick Douglass, 1855, p. 5.

Entire Selection: https://books.google.com/books?id=SjFcAAAAcAAJ&pg=PA5&lpg

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Downtown Boston: Site of Struggles for Liberty

In the Anthony Burns reading, you learned that William Lloyd Garrison was attacked by a Boston mob in 1835. The pro-slavery mob originally was trying to capture English anti-slavery speaker George Thompson. A mob gathered outside the meeting place where they thought Thompson was giving a talk in order to confront him. But having received death threats, Thompson had already left town. So the mob turned their attention to Garrison.

This account, in Garrison's own words, comes from *William Lloyd Garrison, 1805–1879: The Story of His Life Told by His Children*.

As the meeting was to commence at 3 o'clock p. m., I went to the hall [adjoining the Anti-Slavery Office] about twenty minutes before that time. Perhaps a hundred individuals had already gathered around the street door and opposite the building, and their number was rapidly augmenting. . . . [T]he stairway and upper door of the hall were soon densely filled with a brazen-faced crew, whose behavior grew more and more indecent and outrageous.

Perceiving that it would be impracticable for me, or any other person, to address the ladies; and believing, as I was the only male abolitionist in the hall, that my presence would serve as a pretext for the mob to annoy the meeting. . . . I retired into the Anti-Slavery Office, (which is separated from the hall by a board partition), . . . It was deemed prudent to lock the door, to prevent the mob from rushing in and destroying our publications. . . .

In the meantime, the crowd in the street had augmented from a hundred to thousands. The cry was for 'Thompson! Thompson!'—but the Mayor had now arrived, and, addressing the rioters, he assured them that Mr. Thompson was not in the city, and besought them to disperse. As well might he have attempted to propitiate [satisfy] a troop of ravenous [starving] wolves. None went away—but the tumult [noise] continued momentarily to increase It was apparent, therefore, that the hostility of the throng was not concentrated upon Mr. Thompson, but that it was as deadly against the Society and the Anti-Slavery cause. . . .

. . .

An assault was now made upon the door of the office, the lower panel of which was instantly dashed to pieces. Stooping down, and glaring upon me as I sat at the desk,2 writing an account of the riot to a distant friend, the ruffians cried out—

‘There he is! That's Garrison! Out with the scoundrel!’ &c., &c. . . .

Two or three constables having cleared the hall and staircase of the mob. . . .

. . . ‘ *Garrison* is there!’ was the cry. ‘Garrison! Garrison! We must have Garrison! Out with him! Lynch him!’ These and number less other exclamations arose from the multitude. For a moment, their attention was diverted from me to the Anti-Slavery sign (“Anti-Slavery Rooms”), and they vociferously [loudly and continually] demanded its possession. It is painful to state that the Mayor promptly complied with their demand! . . .

. . .

The sign being demolished, the cry for ‘Garrison!’ was renewed, more loudly than ever. It was now apparent that the multitude would not disperse until I had left the building; and as egress out of the front door was impossible, the Mayor and his assistants, as well as some of my friends, earnestly besought me to effect my escape in the rear of the building. . . .

. . . I dropped from a back window on to a shed, and narrowly escaped falling headlong to the ground. We entered into a carpenter's shop, through which we attempted to get into Wilson's Lane, but found our retreat cut off by the mob. They raised a shout as soon as we came in sight, but the workmen promptly closed the door of the shop, kept them at bay for a time, and thus kindly afforded me an opportunity to find some other passage. . . . .

On seeing me, three or four of the rioters, uttering a yell, furiously dragged me to the window, with the intention of hurling me from that height to the ground ; but one of them relented and said—'Don't let us kill him outright [openly].' So they drew me back, and coiled a rope about my body—probably to drag me through the streets. I bowed to the mob, and, requesting them to wait patiently until I could descend, went down upon a ladder that was raised for that purpose. I fortunately extricated [freed] myself from the rope, and was seized by two or three powerful men, to whose firmness, policy and muscular energy I am probably indebted for my preservation. They led me along bareheaded, (for I had lost my hat), through a mighty crowd, ever and anon shouting, ‘He shan't be hurt! Yon shan't hurt him! Don't hurt him! He is an American,’ &c., &c. This seemed to excite sympathy among many in the crowd, and they reiterated the cry, ‘He shan't be hurt !’ I was thus conducted through Wilson's Lane into State Street, in the rear of the City Hall, over the ground that was stained with the blood of the first martyrs in the cause of LIBERTY and INDEPENDENCE by the memorable massacre of 1770—

and upon which was proudly unfurled, only a few years since, with joyous acclamations, the beautiful banner presented to the gallant Poles by the young men of Boston ! What a scandalous and revolting contrast ! My offence was in pleading for LIBERTY—liberty for my enslaved countrymen, colored though they be—liberty of speech and of the press for ALL! And upon that 'consecrated spot' I was made an object of derision and scorn. . . .

Orders were now given to carry me to the Mayor's office in the City Hall. As we approached the south door . . . my sturdy supporters carried me safely up to the Mayor's room."

• *William Lloyd Garrison, 1805–1879: The Story of His Life Told by His Children* Vol. II 1835–1840 by Francis Jackson Garrison. New York: The Century Co, 1885, pp. 11–23.

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