

The Crisis of Union

- ❖ **How did slavery become increasingly politicized?**
 - ❖ **How did the Compromise of 1850 and the Kansas-Nebraska Act reflect sectional tensions?**
 - ❖ **What led to the rise of a third-generation party system: Republicans or Democrats?**
 - ❖ **What events led to the secession of the southern states?**
- **America's winning of the war with Mexico gave rise to quarrels over newly acquired land**

Slavery in the Territories

The Wilmot Proviso

- **Democratic congressman from Pennsylvania , David Wilmot endorsed annexation of Texas as a slave state—provocative speech to the House**
- **Wilmot Proviso: Declared that slavery would be banned in any newly-obtained Mexican territory after Texas**
 - Politicized debate over slavery
 - House adopted Proviso, Senate did not
 - **President Polk dismissed it**
- **John C. Calhoun devised thesis to counter proviso**
 - Slaveholding cotton planter
 - **Declared that Proviso would violate 5th Amendment—slaveholders had to right to property**

Popular Sovereignty

- **Senator Benton and others sought to bypass the slavery conflict**
 - President Polk suggested extension of Missouri Compromise
 - Senator **Lewis Cass** suggested that the citizens of a territory regulate their own internal concerns
 - **Would take issue of slavery out of the national area**
- **Popular sovereignty, or “squatter sovereignty,” appealed to many Americans**
 - Did not directly challenge slaveholders access to new lands
 - Idea prospered in the Midwest
- **After Mexican war, slavery issue was no longer hypothetical**
 - Territorial status was delayed for Oregon because its provisional government excluded slavery
 - Congress let Oregon organize without slavery but postponed a decision on the Southwest
- **Polk refused to run for reelection—exhausted and major goals already accomplished**
 - **Lewis Cass** won Democratic nomination but party refused to endorse his “squatter sovereignty” plan
 - **Zachary Taylor** was endorsed by Whigs, no platform
 - **Van Buren** nominated by Free-Soil Coalition

The Free-Soil Coalition

- **David Wilmot raised standard for resisting expansion of slavery**
 - Free soil in the new territories, rather than abolition in the slave states, became the rallying point
- **Three major groups entered the Free-soil coalition:**

- **Rebellious northern Democrats**—New York, Van Burenite “Barnburners”
- **Anti-slavery Whigs**—Massachusetts, “Conscious” Whigs (opposed to “Cotton “Whigs)
- **Liberty party**
- **Free-soil national convention in New York**
 - Van Buren—presidential nominee
 - Platform endorsed Wilmot Proviso
 - “free soil, free speech, free labor, and free men”
- **Impact of the new Free-Soil party on the election was mixed**
 - Split Democratic vote
 - Split Whig vote
- **Taylor won**

The California Gold Rush

- 1848: Gold discovered in California
- **Gold rush constituted greatest mass migration in American history**
- “Forty-niners” included people of every class and state, as well as slaves
- **Miners were mostly unmarried young men, diverse**
 - Few were interested in permanent residence—get rich quick
- **Mining shantytowns were disorganized, unsanitary, lawless**
 - few women
- Contempt was focused on Indians and foreigners
 - Tax on foreigners

California Statehood

- **In lack of law and order in California, President Taylor saw an ideal opportunity to end stalemate in Congress brought about by slavery issue**
 - Southern Whigs supported Taylor, thinking he would uphold slavery
 - **Intended to make California and New Mexico free states immediately, thus bypassing the whole issue**
 - Without consulting Congress, California established new free-state government
 - New Mexico adopted a free-state constitution

The Compromise of 1850

- Southerners fumed over President Taylor’s efforts to bring California and New Mexico into union as free states
- Southerners proposed that North states should return runaways to the South
- South threatened secession when anti-slavery Whigs called for end to national slave trade

The Great Debate

- **The Compromise of 1850: Clay presented to Congress a package of eight resolutions in ways that would settle the “controversy between the free and slave states”**
 - **Admit California as a free state**
 - **Organize territories of New Mexico and Utah without restrictions on slavery, allowing residents to decide for themselves**
 - **Deny Texas its extreme claim to much of New Mexico**
 - **Compensate Texas by having the federal government pay pre-annexation Texas debts**

- Uphold slavery in the District of Columbia
- Abolish slave trade across its boundaries
- Adopt more effective federal fugitive slave act
- Deny congressional authority to interfere with the interstate slave trade
- **President Taylor's beliefs—opposed Clay's compromise**
 - Slavery could be protected if South didn't inject into issues of statehood
 - Did not believe the new western territories were suitable for slave-based agriculture
- **Ultras** were southern leaders who threatened to secede from the Union if slavery were not allowed in California
- **Calhoun's argument**
 - The South simply needed an acceptance of its rights: equality of treatment in the territories, return of fugitive slaves, guarantee of equilibrium between sections
- Webster spoke primarily to preserve the union—he's a Whig from the North but presents middle ground

Toward a Compromise

- **Taylor's sudden death due to gastrointestinal affliction**
 - Strengthened chances of a congressional compromise
 - **President Millard Fillmore replaced Taylor**
- **President Fillmore had made up mind to support Henry Clay's compromise**
 - **Democrat Stephen A. Douglas** rescued Clay's compromise
 - Douglas reduced compromise components to 5 points, **led to more conclusive vote**
 - **Douglas was successful**
- **Final version of the Compromise of 1850**
 - California entered as free state
 - Texas-New Mexico Act made New Mexico a territory; compensation for Texas
 - Utah Act set up Utah territory—territory legislature would decide on issue of slavery themselves
 - Fugitive Slave Act
 - Slave trade abolished in Washington DC
- Utah and New Mexico were open to slavery
- **Fugitive slave act was the only clear-cut victory for the south, but would north enforce it?**

The Fugitive Slave Act

- **Southern insistence on the Fugitive Slave Act presented abolitionists with an emotional new focus for their agitation**
 - Offered strong temptation to kidnap free blacks
 - Denied alleged fugitives a jury trial
 - **Tremendous effect of deepening anti-slavery impulse in the north**

Uncle Tom's Cabin

- Anti-slavery appeal in **Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin***
- Delayed impact due to prosperity of the time

The Election of 1852

- **Franklin Pierce** was Democratic nominee for President
 - Platform pledged to abide by measures of Compromise of 1850
 - Southern advocates and Van Burenites were rallied

- Free-Soilers chose John Hale but lost
- **Winfield Scott** was Whig nominee
 - Endorsed the compromise, but with some opposition from the North
 - Scott had reputation for anti-slavery and nativist sentiments
- **Pierce won**
 - Young Hickory, like James Polk
 - By trying to be all things to all people, he looked like a Northern man with Southern principles

Foreign Adventures

Cuba

- **Cuba continued to be an object of America's desire**
 - American expeditions intended to incite Cubans against Spain
 - **Pierre Soulé**: American minister in Madrid made offer to purchase Cuba
 - **Ostend Manifesto**: justified that Cuba should be taken by force
 - Regarded as a slaveholders' plot

Diplomatic Gains in the Pacific

- **China**
 - **Treaty of Wanghsi**: opened four Chinese ports to American trade
 - **Treaty of Tientsin**: opened eleven more ports, granted travel and trade throughout China
 - Protestant missionaries were interested in China
- **Japan**
 - Commodore Matthew Perry
 - **Treaty of Kanagawa**: Japan allowed a US consulate, promised to treat castaways cordially, permitted American ships to enter certain ports
 - **Harris Convention**: opened five more ports

The Kansas-Nebraska Crisis

- **Desire for transcontinental railroad**
- **Gadsden Purchase of 1853**
 - US paid Mexico
 - Acquired land offering route for transcontinental railroad
 - **Sectional rivalries on railroad issue**
- **Routes**
 - Milwaukee to Columbia River
 - St. Louis to San Francisco
 - Memphis to Los Angeles
 - Houston to Los Angeles

Douglas's Proposal

- Southern routes did not go through Indian territories
- **Senator Douglas proposed that Chicago should be transcontinental railroad's east terminus**

- As chairman of Committee on Territories, proposed Nebraska bill—**became Kansas-Nebraska Act**
- **Railroad bill became a pro-slavery bill**
- **Incorporated popular sovereignty**
- Douglas supported amendment for repeal of Missouri Compromise
- **Douglas’s motives are unclear**
 - Railroads were main concern but influenced by popular sovereignty
 - **Set the road to civil war by replacing Missouri Compromise with popular sovereignty**
 - **Caused moderates to choose sides**
 - Kansas-Nebraska Act would destroy Whig party, fragment Democrats
- **Flaw in Douglas’s reasoning was his failure to appreciate the growing breadth and intensity of anti-slavery sentiment spreading across the country**
- **Anti-slavery congressmen published “Appeal of the Independent Democrats”**
 - Opposed to Douglas
 - Dismissed his bill
 - Minority idea soon became widespread in the north
- **President Pierce supported Douglas**
 - Southerners supported Douglas
 - Exception: Sam Houston
- **Douglas persuaded some Democrats and Kansas-Nebraska bill was passed in the House**
 - In opposition, anti-slavery Democrats denied Fugitive Slave Act
 - Anthony Burns was the last African-American to be returned from Boston—his freedom was purchased

The Emergence of the Republican Party

- **Kansas-Nebraska Act soon destroyed the Whig party**
 - South Whigs didn’t vote
 - North Whigs gravitated to other parties
 - Know-Nothings
 - **Whigs, independent Democrats, and Free-Soilers formed Republican party**

Bleeding Kansas

- **Opposing elements in Kansas staged rehearsal for civil war**
 - Agreement that Nebraska would be a free state
 - Ambiguity of popular sovereignty helped Douglas pass the bill but led to chaos
- **Settlement of Kansas differed from normal pioneering efforts**
 - Most settlers were from Missouri and surrounding states
 - Racism was prevalent even among nonslaveholders
 - Many settlers wanted to keep blacks out, free or slaves
- **Election for a territorial legislature in 1855**
 - **“Border ruffians” swept polls for pro-slavery forces**
 - Legislature expelled anti-slavery members, adopted slave code, made it a capital offense to aid fugitive slave and felon to question slavery
- **Constitutional convention met in Topeka and drafted state constitution excluding slavery and free blacks and applied for admission to the Union**
 - There were two illegal governments in Kansas: “free-state governor” and “legislature”

- **Pro-slavery mob sacked Lawrence, Kansas**
 - Aroused fanatic Free-Soldier John Brown—killed pro-slavery men in **Pottawatomie Massacre**
- **Pottawatomie Massacre set off guerrilla war in Kansas Territory**
 - By end of 1856, 200 settlers dead, \$2 million damage
 - Federal troops restored semblance of order

Violence in the Senate

- **Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts delivered inflammatory speech on “The Crime Against Kansas”**
 - Free-Soldier Democrat
 - Suggested that pro-slavery Missouri “border ruffians” were the root of all evil
 - Singled out Andrew Butler of South Carolina
 - **Preston Brooks** defended Andrew Butler by accusing Sumner of libel—beating
- **Sumner became martyr for anti-slavery**

Sectional Politics

- **Major parties could no longer avoid the slavery issue**
- Southern delegates killed effort to restore Missouri Compromise and nominated **Fillmore**
- **First Republican party national convention**
 - **John C. Frémont**
 - Platform favored transcontinental railroad, government-financed internal improvements
 - Condemned repeal of Missouri Compromise
 - Against slavery
- **Democrats nominated Buchanan**
 - Pierce’s policies
 - Platform endorsed Kansas-Nebraska Act, called for enforcement of Fugitive Slave Act, popular sovereignty
 - Condemned nativism to get Irish and German support
- **Buchanan won**
 - Promotion of expansion
 - Saving the union depended on concession to the South

The Deepening Sectional Crisis

- **Three major events during Buchanan’s first six months**
 - Supreme Court decision in *Dred Scott* case
 - New troubles in Kansas
 - Financial panic of 1857 that sparked a widespread economic depression

The Dred Scott Case

- ***Dred Scott v. Sandford***
 - After his master’s death, Scott tried to buy his freedom
 - Question: **Whether freedom once granted could be lost by returning to a slave state**
 - Chief Justice **Roger Taney**
 - **Ruled against Dred Scott, slaves had no citizenship; argued that Missouri Compromise had deprived citizens of property by prohibiting slavery**

- Act of Congress had been declared void—first time since *Marbury v. Madison*
- **Popular sovereignty was challenged**
- Ruling was an obiter dictum, Scott was a slave and thus had no position and no right to sue
- **Pro-slavery elements were favored**
- Anti-slavery elements were weakened

The Lecompton Constitution

- **Pro-slavery legislature in Kansas called for constitutional convention**
 - Kansas governor resigned—replaced with Robert Walker
 - **Walker put the Union above slavery**—wanted to make Kansas a free state through fair popular sovereignty
- **Walker persuaded free-state leaders to vote in the election of a new territorial legislature**
- **Polarity between pro and anti-slavery legislature emerged at Lecompton Convention**
 - Drew up a constitution under which Kansas would become a slave state
 - Free-state men boycotted the vote
 - **Buchanan unexpectedly supported pro-slavery constitution**—Walker resigned
- **There was more support for the constitution without slavery**
 - Buchanan was pro-slavery because he depended on southerners for support
 - **Pro-slavery Lecompton constitution was passed in Senate**
 - **Pro-slavery Lecompton constitution was rejected in House**
 - Called to re-vote
 - Southerners were confident that it would pass—if not, it would go against Constitution
- **Kansas voters finally rejected pro-slavery Lecompton constitution**
 - **Kansas adopted anti-slavery legislature**

The Panic of 1857

- **Financial crisis was brought on by a reduction in foreign demand for American grain, a surge in manufacturing that outran the growth of markets, and the continued weakness and confusion of the state bank-note system**
 - Failure of Ohio Life Insurance, Trust Company
- **Sectional conflict**
 - Northern businessmen blamed depression on the Democratic tariff of 1857, which had set rates on imports at their lowest level since 1816
 - Agricultural south weathered the crisis better than the north
 - Cotton prices fell, but slowly
 - World markets for cotton recovered quickly
 - Notion that agriculture was superior to industry

Douglas versus Lincoln

- **Douglas was seen as last hope for unity but Kansas-Nebraska act had cast him as a southern sympathizer**
 - But he had also been opposed to the Lecompton Constitution—lost Buchanan's support
- Douglas vs. Lincoln for Illinois Senate seat
- Lincoln was opposed to slavery but was not an abolitionist
- Lincoln joined the Republican party
- **Lincoln-Douglas debates occurred throughout Illinois**

- Lincoln was the underdog
- Freeport Debate: Lincoln asked how popular sovereignty coincided with *Dred Scott* ruling
 - **Freeport Doctrine:** Douglas answered that Court ruling must be enforced to be legitimate
- Douglas was indifferent to moral question of slavery
- Lincoln had better arguments
- Buchanan administration lost control of the House

John Brown's Raid

- **John Brown's commitment to abolish the "wicked curse of slavery" intensified to a fever pitch**
 - Driven by a sense of crusading zeal
 - Believed he was an instrument of god
- **Brown launched attack—his supreme gesture**
 - Occupied federal arsenal in Harpers Ferry
 - Planned to arm slaves of the area
 - Planned to set up black stronghold in the mountains and provide nucleus of support
- **Brown epic failed—he was surrounded by militiamen and townspeople**
- **Brown was tried for treason**
 - He was hanged
 - **He had achieved two things:**
 - Martyr for anti-slavery
 - Set off panic throughout the south
- **Pro-slavery southerners equated Brown with the Republican party**
 - South became suspicious of all northerners

The Center Comes Apart

The Democrats Divide

- **Democratic convention Charleston**
 - Platform promised congressional noninterference with slavery
 - Southern firebrands and Buchanan-supporters demanded federal protection of slavery
 - Southern Democrats left the convention because pro-slavery planks were not adopted
 - Anti-slavery Democrats nominate **Stephen Douglas**
- **Pro-slavery Democrats seceded and convened to adopt slave-code platform**
 - **Nominated John Breckinridge**

Lincoln's Election

- **Republicans nominated Abraham Lincoln**
 - Moderate enough to satisfy pro and anti-slavery parties
- **Republican convention in Chicago**
 - William Seward was former presidential nominee, but was seen as an extremist
 - Platform denounced *Dred Scott* ruling, denounced John Brown's raid, promised that states could control their own domestic institutions, resistance to expansion of slavery, endorsed higher tariff to gain support of manufacturers, free federal homesteads for farmers, more liberal naturalization law for immigrants, internal improvements

- **Strong appeal to eastern businessmen, western farmers, large immigrant population**
- **Attitude followed latitude**
 - In border states, die-hard Whigs reorganized into **Constitutional Union Party** and nominated **John Bell**
- **Lincoln and Douglas in the north, Breckinridge and Bell in the south**
- **Lincoln's victory was clear by November 6, 1860**
 - Only Douglas won votes from free and slave states
 - **Lincoln had been elected on pure sectional basis**

Secession of the Deep South

- **Convention in South Carolina**
 - Unanimous endorsement for **Ordinance of Secession**
 - **Declaration of the Causes of Secession**
- **Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Texas seceded by February 1, 1861**
 - Provisional constitution of the Confederate States of America
 - **Jefferson Davis elected as president**

Buchanan's Waiting Game

- Buchanan criticized northern agitators
 - Declared that secession was illegal but he lacked authority to bring states back into the Union
 - Lincoln and Buchanan refrained from bold acts
- **Fort Sumter was commanded by Major Robert Anderson**
 - South Carolina demanded withdrawal of all federal forces—Buchanan sharply rejected
 - Buchanan dispatched *Star of the West*—Confederate fire drove it away

Final Effort at Compromise

- John Crittenden proposed a series of amendments and resolutions that **allowed for slavery where it already existed**
- Peace conference met in Washington D.C.
 - **Crittenden** Compromise failed to win support of either Congressional house
- **Only successful proposal: constitutional amendment guaranteeing slavery where it existed**
 - Future Thirteenth Amendment abolished instead