

d. Explain how the Compromise of 1850 arose out of territorial expansion and population growth.

Key terms

Compromise of 1850

1. What was the heated debate in Congress over the Mexican Cession?
2. What caused a population boom in California?
3. Why did Southerners object to allowing California into the Union? (2)
4. What were the 5 provisions of the Compromise of 1850?

The Compromise of 1850 was four years in the making. Northern Whigs and Southern Democrats engaged in heated attacks on one another over the status of slavery in the Mexican Cession. Then the discovery of gold in California in 1848 rapidly increased the population of the territory past the 100,000 citizens necessary for statehood. As a part of their plan of statehood, Californians drew up a state constitution that outlawed slavery in the proposed state.

Southern politicians objected to California's admission as a free state on two points. First, Southerners argued that the exclusion of slavery in the territory violated the Missouri Compromise (the compromise line would split the state). Second, Northerners already controlled the House of Representatives and Southerners feared the admission of California would upset the balance of free and slave states in the Senate. Northern and Southern representatives argued bitterly over California.

Henry Clay, who diffused tensions previously with the Missouri Compromise in 1820 and a compromise tariff in 1833, finally presented a plan that he hoped would solve this heated impasse. Clay became known as the "Great Compromiser" due to his pivotal role in negotiating resolutions to challenging political issues. Concerning the present debate over California's admission to the Union, tension was continuing to escalate between the North and the South. Debates between John C. Calhoun, representing the Southern position, and Daniel Webster, representing the Northern position, raged over the bill. Numerous votes were taken, but the extremists on both sides prevented passage of the bill. Clay and Calhoun both left the Senate too ill to continue, as they were quite advanced in age.

In Clay and Calhoun's absence, Senator Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois and Daniel Webster of Massachusetts worked to split the proposal into separate bills so that Congressmen could vote on each separately. The five bills then moved through the Congress individually and were ultimately passed. Collectively, the five laws were known as the Compromise of 1850. The provisions of the compromise included:

1. The state of New Mexico would be established by carving its borders from the state of Texas.
2. New Mexico's voters would determine whether the state would permit or prohibit slavery.
3. California would be admitted as a free state.
4. All citizens of the United States, regardless of region, would be required to apprehend runaway slaves and return them to their owners. Those who failed to do so would be fined or imprisoned.
5. The slave trade would be abolished in the District of Columbia, but the practice of slavery would be allowed to continue there.

Despite the Compromise of 1850's passage, sectional tension over slavery was eased for only a short time. The expansion of US territory to the Pacific Ocean had happened quickly and was viewed by many to be the country's Manifest Destiny. As populations of western areas grew to the level of statehood, the issue of slavery had to be negotiated through compromise due to the intense sectionalism of the period.

e. Evaluate the Kansas-Nebraska Act, the failure of popular sovereignty, *Scott v. Sanford*, Brown's Raid on Harper's Ferry, and the election of 1860 as events leading to the Civil War.

Key terms	<b>Kansas-Nebraska Act</b> <b>John Brown</b> <b>Harpers Ferry</b> <b>Bleeding Kansas</b>	<b>popular sovereignty</b> <b>election of 1860</b>	<b><i>Scott v. Sanford</i></b> <b><i>Dred Scott Decision</i></b> <b>Dred Scott</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What 4 issues of the 1850's pushed the U.S. closer to Civil War?</li> <li>2. What was the effect of the Kansas-Nebraska Act?</li> <li>3. What was bleeding Kansas?</li> <li>4. How did "bleeding Kansas" show that popular sovereignty failed?</li> </ol>			

Four issues in the last years of the 1850s further polarized the nation over the issue of slavery and pushed the North and South toward open conflict in the Civil War. The issues were each political in nature and some involved increasing violence. The **Kansas-Nebraska Act** was an unsuccessful attempt to use **popular sovereignty** as a solution to the slavery question. The Supreme Court, in ***Scott v. Sanford***, effectively overturned the **Missouri Compromise**. **John Brown's Raid on Harper's Ferry** marked an escalation of violence over the slavery issue. These events represent mounting **sectional division**. The trigger event that prompted the outbreak of the Civil War was **Abraham Lincoln's Republican victory** in the **1860 Presidential election**. No one event is responsible for the Civil War, instead the cumulative effect of many events led to the conflict.

The rich farmlands west of Missouri beckoned families and investors. In 1852 and 1853, Congress considered creating the territories of Kansas and Nebraska for settlement. The legislation caught the attention of Southern Congressmen who refused to consider the creation of the new territories unless the provision was made for Southerners to bring slaves into the region. Northern representatives argued that the expansion of slavery into the new territories was a violation of the Missouri Compromise, as the land was above the provision line set in 1820 to divide slave and free states.

In 1854, Congress again took up the issue of slavery in proposed states and territories. **Stephen A. Douglas** included a provision using **popular sovereignty** (rule by the people), which would allow the citizens of the territory to decide whether or not slavery would be allowed. Southerners hoped that by allowing the people to decide the issue that more slave states could be added. After a great deal of rancorous debate in both Houses, the bill was approved and became known as the **Kansas-Nebraska Act**.

The passage of the **Kansas-Nebraska Act** had several effects. **First**, the law virtually repealed the Missouri Compromise of 1820 and the Compromise of 1850. Settlers in all new territories would have the right to decide for themselves whether their new home would be a free or slave state. The previous compromises that established policy concerning where free and slave states would form in future territories were dismissed by the more democratic sounding approach of popular sovereignty.

The Kansas-Nebraska Act's second effect was that pro- and antislavery groups both hurried into Kansas in an attempt to create voting majorities there. Antislavery abolitionists came from eastern states; proslavery settlers came mainly from neighboring Missouri. Some of these proslavery supporters settled in Kansas, but many more stayed there only long enough to vote for slavery and then returned home to Missouri. Proslavery voters elected a legislature ready to make Kansas a slave state. Abolitionists then elected a rival Kansas government, wrote an antislavery constitution, established a different capital city, and raised an army. Proslavery Kansans reacted by raising their own army. Violence between the two sides created warlike conditions that led to the territory being referred to as "Bleeding Kansas." Popular sovereignty had failed.

The third effect of the Kansas-Nebraska Act was that it split existing political parties into regional

factions and gave rise to the new Republican Party. The new party developed after President Pierce signed the Kansas-Nebraska Act into law. The common cause that attracted supporters to the Republican Party was opposition to slavery. The groups that came together to make the new party included members of the Free-Soil Party, whose main platform opposed the expansion of slavery. Disgruntled followers of the existing political parties, the antislavery Whigs and antislavery Democrats, joined the Free-Soilers in creating the new Republican Party. President Pierce's inability to control the violence in Kansas led to his defeat in the election of 1856. The Republicans were gaining momentum. So too was Abraham Lincoln, who was soon to be the Republican Party's star candidate.

Another event that led the country toward Civil War was the Supreme Court ruling in **Scott v. Sanford**. Often referred to as the Dred Scott decision, the 1857 ruling settled a lawsuit in which a slave named Dred Scott claimed he should be a free man. Scott had lived with his master in slave states and in free states and believed he had been held illegally in the free states. The Supreme Court rejected Scott's claim, ruling that no enslaved or free Black could be a citizen of the United States. The Court said Congress could not prohibit slavery in federal territories. Thus, the Court found that popular sovereignty and the Missouri Compromise of 1820 were unconstitutional.

The Dred Scott decision gave slavery the protection of the United States Constitution. In essence, nothing short of a constitutional amendment could end slavery - an event not likely to occur. Proslavery Americans welcomed the Court's ruling as proof they had been right during their long struggle against abolitionists. In contrast, abolitionists convinced many state legislatures to declare the Dred Scott decision not binding within their state borders. The new Republican Party said that if its candidate were elected President in 1860, he would appoint a new Supreme Court that would reverse the Dred Scott ruling.

Violence over slavery escalated as the political maneuvering on the subject was not producing a lasting policy. **John Brown's Raid** is another event that led to the Civil War. John Brown, an ardent abolitionist, decided to fight slavery with violence and killing. In 1856, believing he was chosen by God to end slavery, Brown commanded family members and other abolitionists to attack proslavery settlers in Kansas killing five men. Leaving Kansas, Brown decided to begin a slave war in the east by seizing arms and munitions and leading slaves in rebellion.

In 1859, John Brown led a group of White and Black men in a raid on the federal armory at Harper's Ferry, Virginia (in modern-day West Virginia) in hopes of arming slaves for a rebellion. The raid failed and US Marines, led by Colonel Robert E. Lee, captured Brown. Eventually, Brown was convicted of treason against the state of Virginia and executed by hanging.

At first, many Northerners and Southerners were horrified by Brown's actions. Eventually, many Northerners came to respect what Brown had done, viewing him as a martyr for the abolitionist movement. Southerners were angered. Many in the South viewed Brown as a terrorist killer, a man that sought to incite a slave rebellion that would have led to the slaughter of hundreds of men, women, and children. Vocal Northern support of Brown's actions did little to calm an anxious South. Invoking the specter of the Nat Turner Rebellion nearly 20 years earlier, southern states began to strengthen and train their state militias. A war between the North and the South was becoming a real possibility.

The trigger that set the Civil War in motion was the victory of the Republican candidate, Abraham Lincoln, in the election of 1860. The sectionalism of the 1850s led to a split within the Democratic Party. The Northern Democrats nominated Stephen Douglas of Illinois and the Southern Democrats nominated John Breckenridge of Kentucky to be the nominees in the 1860 Presidential election. Some of the old Whigs who did not support either the Democrats or the Republican candidate formed the Constitutional Union Party and nominated John Bell of Tennessee as their candidate. The field was full with four candidates for the November election. Their positions on slavery were important to the outcome of the election. Lincoln believed that slavery should not be allowed to expand to the territories, but he would not interfere in states where it already existed. Douglas believed popular sovereignty should be the policy regarding slavery. Breckenridge viewed slaves as property and therefore believed that the government could not

deny citizens of their property regardless of their location. Bell did not commit to a position regarding slavery but maintained that he was most interested in the union of the United States. The final votes in the election fell along regional lines with Lincoln carrying the more populated North and thus the Electoral College.

Upon Lincoln's election, South Carolina voted to secede (separate from) the United States. Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and then Texas followed South Carolina in their break from the United States. These Lower South states were the original seven members of the Confederate States of America. Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina also joined the Confederacy. All of the events of the 1850s contributed to the outbreak of Civil War, but it was the election of Lincoln that triggered its actual beginning.