



Chapter 3 Crisis, Civil War, and Reconstruction

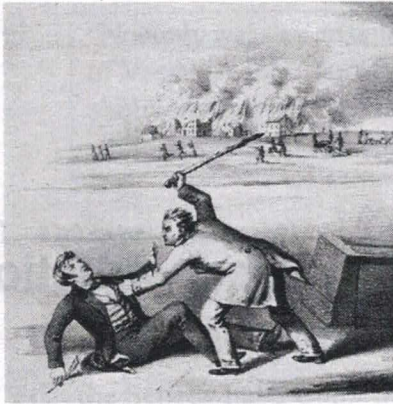
Section I	Competency 3 / Objective 1 – 2
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Section III	Competency 3 / Objective 4 – 5

I. THE ROAD TO SECESSION

Objectives 3.01 and 3.02

LEGISLATION REGARDING SLAVERY

The debate over slavery grew more heated as controversy continued over which territories should be slave states and which ones should be free. Congress passed the Missouri Compromise in 1820 with the hope of maintaining the balance of power between slave and free states. With the acquisition of land from Mexico, however, conflict surfaced once again. Henry Clay of Kentucky helped maintain national unity by proposing the **Compromise of 1850**. Under this agreement, Congress admitted California as a free state and declared the unorganized western territories free as well. These provisions greatly pleased Northerners. The Utah and New Mexico territories, however, were allowed to decide the issue by **popular sovereignty**. In other words, the people living in these areas would vote on whether or not to allow slavery. Attached to the Compromise was the **Fugitive Slave Law**. This law required that northern states forcibly return escaped slaves to their owners in the South. This provision pleased southerners, but because the law was unpopular in the North, many northerners refused to obey it.



Sumner-Brooks Incident

In 1854, Congress passed the **Kansas-Nebraska Act**. This act allowed the previously free and unorganized territories of Kansas and Nebraska to choose whether or not to permit slavery (popular sovereignty). This act effectively repealed the Missouri Compromise and reignited the slavery issue. Settlers rushed into the territory from both the North and the South. Kansas became known as "**Bleeding Kansas**" as armed clashes between pro-slavery forces and abolitionist settlers became commonplace. In Washington, the act caused heated debate. A fiery Senator from Massachusetts named **Charles Sumner** strongly denounced the act in a speech that spanned two days. Sumner attacked the act and the senators who authored it (**Stephen A. Douglas** and

Andrew Butler). A couple of days after the speech, Sumner was approached on the Senate floor by South Carolina Congressman, **Preston Brooks**. Brooks was insulted by Sumner's words both because he was from the South and because he was related to Butler. Brooks beat Sumner with a heavy cane, almost killing him and causing him to be absent from the Senate for three years while he recovered from the attack. The **Sumner-Brooks incident** was a brutal example of how inflamed passions had become over the slavery issue. Meanwhile, two rival governments (one slave and the other free) formed in Kansas, leaving the territory in a state of civil war.

THE DRED SCOTT DECISION



Dred Scott

The 1857 case of *Dred Scott v. Sanford* threw the nation further into turmoil. Dred Scott, a slave in Missouri, was taken by his owner into free territory where he lived for four years. The owner later returned to Missouri, where he died. After his death, Dred Scott sued for his freedom. The Supreme Court ruled that Scott had no right to sue because, as a slave, he was not a citizen. It also declared that a slave owner could not be deprived of his "property" without due process of law. The decision also struck down the Missouri Compromise because it declared that it was a violation of the Fifth Amendment to declare slaves free of their owners without due process of law — even if that slave had entered a free state. The decision outraged both abolitionists and those who favored popular sovereignty.

BIRTH OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY

In 1854, a coalition of Democrats, Whigs, Free Soilers (a party opposing slavery in new territories), and former Know-Nothings formed the **Republican Party**. While the party did not call for the immediate abolition of slavery, it was noted for adopting the Free-Soilers' position of opposing the extension of slavery into new US territories.

THE LINCOLN-DOUGLAS DEBATES

In 1858, the Republicans nominated **Abraham Lincoln** (1809 – 1865) to run for the US Senate in Illinois against Democrat **Stephen A. Douglas** (1813 – 1861). The two confronted one another in a series of public debates that won national attention. Lincoln, an opponent of expanding slavery into new territories, insisted that Douglas explain how his view supporting popular sovereignty could hold up in light of the Dred Scott case. Douglas, who had hopes of being president in 1860 and wanted to appeal to both southern Democrats and his northern constituents, argued that slavery could not be implemented without laws to govern it. If a territory had no slave laws, then it could not have slaves. This view became known as the **Freeport Doctrine** because it was espoused by Douglas during a debate in Freeport, Illinois. Douglas went on to win the election, but his refusal to support the court's decision in the Dred Scott case outright ended up costing him valuable southern support.



Stephen Douglas

ACTION AGAINST SLAVERY

UNCLE TOM'S CABIN AND THE "UNDERGROUND RAILROAD"

While politicians fought desperately to maintain peace as they dealt with the topic of slavery, others began to take action. **Slave codes** (laws that seriously limited the actions of slaves) and harsh treatment of slaves in the South led radical abolitionists to believe that they could not afford to wait for legislation that would do away with slavery. **Harriet Tubman** (1820 – 1913), herself an escaped slave, was a hero of the abolitionist movement. She secretly returned to the South nineteen times in order to lead other slaves to freedom by way of the **Underground Railroad**. The Underground Railroad was not actually a railroad, but rather a network of people who helped slaves escape to the northern US and Canada.

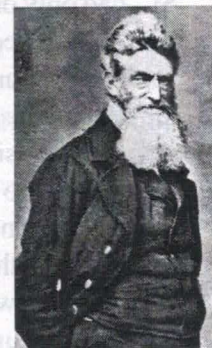


Harriet Tubman

Another activist was **Harriet Beecher Stowe** (1811 – 1896). Her 1852 novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, was a fictional account of the horrors faced by a slave family in the South; though she was white and had never been a slave, many northerners accepted her book as truth and were motivated to support the abolition of slavery. Most southerners, however, found her book outrageous and dismissed it as lies.

JOHN BROWN'S RAID

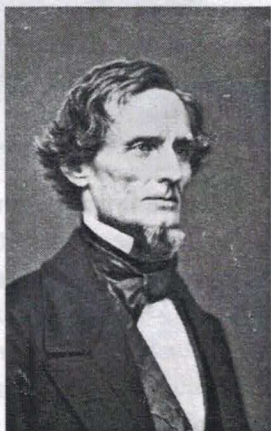
One of the most radical white abolitionists was **John Brown** (1800 – 1859). In October of 1859, Brown and his followers attacked the federal arsenal (location where weapons are made and/or stored) at **Harper's Ferry, Virginia**. They hoped to seize weapons and give them to slaves



John Brown

who could then rise up in armed rebellion. The plan failed when US troops under the command of Colonel Robert E. Lee surrounded the arsenal and forced Brown's surrender. Brown was hanged and southern resentment towards the abolitionist movement intensified.

ELECTION OF 1860 AND SOUTHERN SECESSION



Jefferson Davis



Abraham Lincoln

By the time of the **presidential election of 1860**, the country was at a boiling point regarding slavery. At its convention, the Democratic Party split along sectional lines over the issue. The northern Democrats supported popular sovereignty and nominated Stephen Douglas. The southern Democrats, wanting federal protection of slavery in the territories, nominated Vice President John Breckinridge of Kentucky. The Republicans, meanwhile, chose **Abraham Lincoln**. The South felt

threatened by Lincoln's candidacy because, unlike Douglas who considered slavery a legitimate choice, Lincoln considered it a moral evil. The southern states feared that Lincoln would seek not only to prevent slavery in the new territories, but to dismantle it in the South as well. When Lincoln won the election without winning any Southern electoral votes, South Carolina responded by **seceding** (announcing their withdrawal) from the Union on December 20, 1860. By February 1861, six other states had seceded as well: Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Louisiana, and Texas. In February of 1861, southern delegates from the seceded states met in Montgomery, Alabama to draft their own constitution and elect **Jefferson Davis** (1808 – 1889) as president of the **Confederate States of America**.

FORT SUMTER

The day after his inauguration, President Lincoln learned that Union soldiers at **Fort Sumter, SC**, had only one month of supplies remaining. Wanting to uphold the Union without provoking war, he notified the governor of South Carolina that he was sending ships with food but no soldiers or munitions. On April 12, 1861, Confederate soldiers opened fire on the fort before the relief ships could arrive, forcing the Union troops to surrender the following day. In response, President Lincoln issued a call for 75,000 volunteers. The so-called border states were forced to decide whether to support the Union or the Confederacy. With a great deal of controversy and division, Kentucky, Missouri, and Maryland remained in the Union, while Virginia, North Carolina, Arkansas, and Tennessee joined the Confederacy. The capital of the Confederacy was then moved from Montgomery, Alabama to Richmond, Virginia. The **Civil War** had begun.