

1 The Nation Breaking Apart

TERMS & NAMES

Compromise of 1850

Dred Scott v. Sandford

Abraham Lincoln
secede

Confederate States of America

Jefferson Davis

MAIN IDEA

Disagreements over slavery led the Southern states to secede from the Union.

WHY IT MATTERS NOW

The sectional crisis caused by slavery led to the Civil War.

ONE EUROPEAN'S STORY

Alexis de Tocqueville [TOHK•vihl] was a young French government official from a wealthy family. In 1831, he sailed across the Atlantic Ocean to study American prisons and politics. At one point, Tocqueville traveled by steamship down the Ohio River. The river was the border between Ohio, a free state, and Kentucky, a slave state. Tocqueville noted what he saw on both sides of the river.

A VOICE FROM THE PAST

The State of Ohio is separated from Kentucky just by one river; on either side of it the soil is equally fertile, and the situation equally favourable, and yet everything is different. Here [on the Ohio side] a population devoured by feverish activity, trying every means to make its fortune. . . . There [on the Kentucky side] are people who make others work for them and show little compassion, a people without energy, mettle or the spirit of enterprise. . . . These differences cannot be attributed to any other cause but slavery. It degrades the black population and enervates [saps the energy of] the white.

Alexis de Tocqueville, *Journey to America*



Alexis de Tocqueville

In this section, you'll read about the differences between the North and the South. You'll learn how political conflict between the two sections tore the nation apart.

Sectional Tensions

The economies of the North and the South developed differently in the early 1800s. While the North began to develop more industry and commerce, the Southern economy relied on plantation farming. In the South, a few wealthy planters made great profits from the labor of their slaves, especially by exporting cotton.

The issue of slavery caused tension between the North and the South. Some Northerners opposed slavery because they thought it was unjust. Others viewed it as a threat to workers who might lose jobs to slave labor. But slaveholders were determined to defend slavery.

The expansion of slavery into the territories taken after the War with Mexico brought the North and the South into conflict. Many Northerners

opposed the spread of slavery into the territories. White Southerners viewed slaves as property and said the Constitution gave them the right to take their property anywhere. They also believed that if slavery were banned in the territories, it would destroy the balance of power in Congress between the North and the South.

ReadingHistory

A. Making Generalizations

How did white Southerners defend slavery?

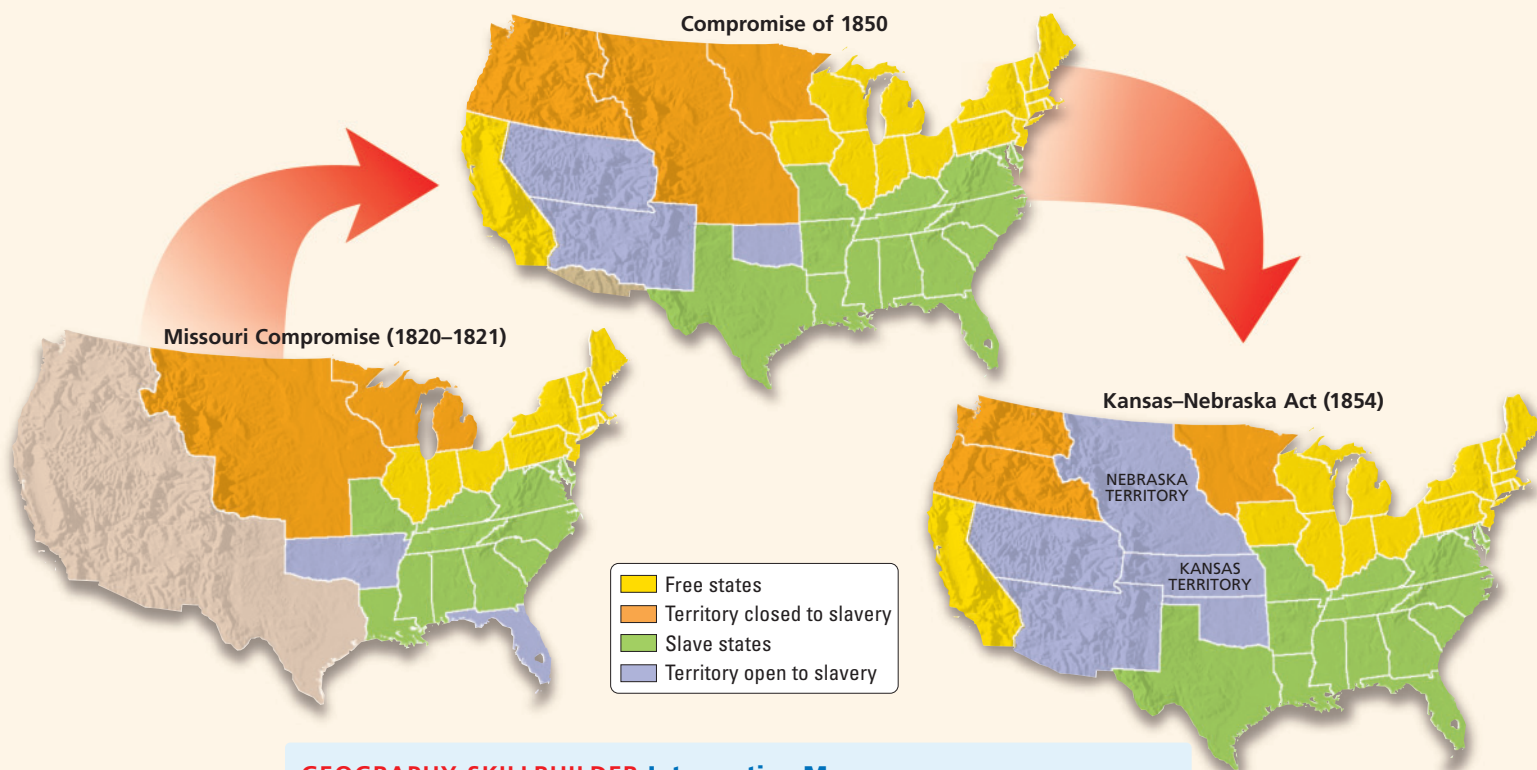
The Compromise of 1850

In 1850, California applied to join the Union as a free state. California could not gain statehood, however, without the approval of Congress, and Congress was divided. To resolve the division, Senator Henry Clay of Kentucky made a proposal to appeal to both regions.

1. To please the North, California would be admitted as a free state, and the slave trade would be abolished in Washington, D.C.
2. To please the South, Congress would not pass laws regarding slavery for the rest of the territories gained from the War with Mexico. Congress also would pass a stronger law to help slaveholders recapture runaway slaves.

Congress passed these proposals, which together became known as the **Compromise of 1850**. This compromise was designed to save the Union, but it actually deepened the division between the North and the South.

Free and Slave States and Territories, 1820–1854



GEOGRAPHY SKILLBUILDER Interpreting Maps

1. **Region** What new free states and slave states entered the Union between 1820 and 1854?
2. **Region** How did the Kansas–Nebraska Act change the amount of territory open to slavery?

The Crisis Deepens

The part of the Compromise of 1850 that dealt with runaway slaves was called the Fugitive Slave Act. It required citizens to help recapture runaway slaves. Northerners faced an unpleasant choice. They could obey the law and support slavery or oppose slavery and break the law.

Meanwhile, the issue of slavery in the territories brought bloodshed to the West. In 1854, Congress passed a law to organize territorial governments for the Nebraska Territory. The bill divided the area into two territories—Nebraska and Kansas. The law, called the Kansas-Nebraska Act, allowed people to vote for slavery in territories even though the Missouri Compromise had banned it.

Proslavery and antislavery settlers rushed into the Kansas Territory to vote for the territorial legislature. The two sides clashed, and eventually civil war broke out in Kansas. It continued for three years.

The Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 also caused political parties to realign. In the South, supporters of slavery flocked to the Democratic Party. In the North, slavery opponents formed a new, antislavery party called the Republican Party.

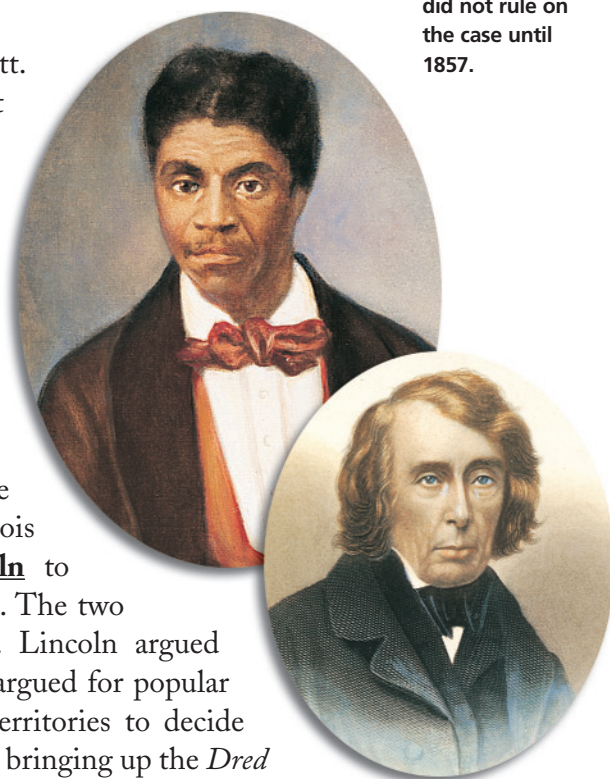
The Dred Scott Case

The Supreme Court decision in the case of Dred Scott, a slave from Missouri, worsened sectional tensions. Scott's owner took him to live in territories where slavery was illegal. Then they returned to Missouri. After his owner's death, Scott sued for his freedom. He argued that he was a free man because he had lived in territories where slavery was illegal. His case, *Dred Scott v. Sandford*, reached the Supreme Court in 1856.

In 1857, the Court ruled against Scott. Chief Justice Roger B. Taney stated that Scott was not a U.S. citizen and so could not sue in federal courts. In addition, Taney ruled that Congress could not ban slavery in the territories. To do so would violate the slaveholders' property.

After the *Dred Scott* decision, Republicans charged that the Democrats wanted to legalize slavery throughout the United States. They used this charge to attack Stephen A. Douglas, sponsor of the Kansas-Nebraska Act. In 1858, Illinois Republicans nominated Abraham Lincoln to challenge Douglas for his U.S. Senate seat. The two men held formal debates across Illinois. Lincoln argued against the expansion of slavery. Douglas argued for popular sovereignty, the rights of people in the territories to decide issues for themselves. Lincoln countered by bringing up the *Dred Scott* decision. Douglas won reelection. Lincoln, despite his loss,

Dred Scott (below left) first sued for his freedom in 1846. The Supreme Court, led by Chief Justice Roger B. Taney (below right), did not rule on the case until 1857.



Background

The Nebraska Territory was part of the Louisiana Purchase. It lay north of the 36° 30' line, so the Missouri Compromise banned slavery there.

ReadingHistory

B. Making

Inferences How do you think Republicans would respond to Taney's opinion in the *Dred Scott* case?

became a national figure and strengthened his standing in the Republican Party.

The Election of 1860

By 1860, the issue of slavery had raised sectional tensions to the boiling point. At Harpers Ferry, Virginia, on October 16, 1859, an extreme abolitionist named John Brown and his followers captured a federal arsenal, killing four people. The group planned to arm local slaves so that they

could fight for their freedom. Brown was captured, tried, and hanged. On the day of his hanging, abolitionists tolled bells and fired guns in salute. Southerners were enraged by Brown's actions and horrified by Northern reactions.

The presidential election of 1860 reflected the split in the nation. Four candidates with differing views on slavery ran. Many Southerners warned that if the Republican candidate Abraham Lincoln won, the

Southern states would **secede**, or withdraw, from the Union. Lincoln opposed the expansion of slavery into the territories, but he said he would not abolish slavery. White Southerners did not believe him.

After Lincoln won the election, seven Southern states seceded and formed the **Confederate States of America**. They named **Jefferson Davis** to be their president. In the next section, you will read how secession led to war.

ReadingHistory

C. Making Inferences Why were popular sovereignty and the opinion in the *Dred Scott* case inconsistent?



This cartoon of the long-legged Abe Lincoln shows him to be the fittest candidate in the 1860 presidential election.

Background

The first seven states to secede were South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas.

Section 1 Assessment

1. Terms & Names

Explain the significance of:

- Compromise of 1850
- *Dred Scott v. Sandford*
- Abraham Lincoln
- secede
- Confederate States of America
- Jefferson Davis

2. Taking Notes

Use a chart like the one below to compare Northern and Southern views of the issues listed.

Northern View	Issue	Southern View
	Fugitive Slave Act	
	Kansas-Nebraska Act	
	Harpers Ferry raid	

3. Main Ideas

- How did the issue of slavery divide the North and the South?
- What was the cause of violence in the Kansas territory?
- Why did the Southern states secede?

4. Critical Thinking

Solving Problems What would you have done to resolve the differences between the North and the South?

THINK ABOUT

- differences in the economy of the two sections
- their differing views on slavery

ACTIVITY OPTIONS

MATH GEOGRAPHY

Do research to find election returns from the 1860 presidential election. Make **graphs** or draw a **map** to illustrate the results.