THE SLAVE POWER COMES NORTH

- New fugitive slave law encouraged more white Southerners to try to recover escaped slaves
  - Many African Americans headed to Canada
  - Many Northerners refused to stand aside when people came
- Many abolitionists interfered with slave captures
  - Such incidents exacerbated sectional feelings
- Most white Northerners were not prepared to interfere with the enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Act themselves
  - 332 slaves were put on trial and 300 were returned to slavery without incident
  - Enforcing the law was increasingly difficult
Free Blacks, c. 1860

Legend:
- Counties with more than 100 free blacks
- Concentrations of 2,000 or more free blacks

Map showing the distribution of free black populations in the United States, c. 1860.
Without any first hand knowledge of slavery, Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote novel in 1852
- Conscience had been roused by Fugitive Slave Act
- Depended on abolitionist writers when gathering material for the book

Extremely successful
- 10,000 copies were sold in a week
- 300,000 in a year
- It was translated into a dozen languages
- Dramatized in countries throughout the world

Avoided self-righteous accusatory tone of most abolitionist tracts and did not seek to convert readers to belief in racial equality
Southern critics correctly noted that Stowe’s portrayal of plantation life was distorted and her slaves atypical.

Most Northerners viewed Southern criticism as biased.

No earlier American writer had viewed slaves as people.
“Young America” movement began to think of transmitting the dynamic, democratic U.S. spirit to other countries by aiding local revolutionaries, opening new markets and perhaps annexing foreign lands.

1855: William Walker seized control of Nicaragua and elected himself president.
- Ousted two years later
- Tried again several times until he died before Honduran firing squad in 1860
DIVERSIONS ABROAD: The “Young America” Movement

- Central part of America had become important because rapid development of California created a need for improved communication with the west coast.
- Desire to obtain Cuba grew stronger.
  - President Franklin Pierce offered $130 million.
- Ostend Manifesto—confidential dispatch from State Department suggesting if Spain refused to sell Cuba it was acceptable for U.S. to take it.
  - Northerners were outraged by “slave” plot and the government had to disavow.
DIVERSIONS ABROAD: The “Young America” Movement

- President Fillmore dispatched Commodore Matthew C. Perry to obtain commercial concessions from Japan in 1854
  - Japan agreed to establish diplomatic relations
  - 1858: American envoy Townsend Harris negotiated a commercial treaty that opened six Japanese ports to American ships
- President Pierce negotiated a Canadian reciprocity agreement with Great Britain in 1854
STEPHEN DOUGLAS: “The Little Giant”

- Was most prominent spokesman of Young America movement
  - Elected to Congress in 1842, age 29
  - After two terms, elected Senator
- Foundation of politics was popular sovereignty and expansion
- Wanted development
- Considered slavery a curse but refused to see it as a moral issue
- Wanted Democratic nomination in 1852 but went to dark horse Franklin Pierce who defeated Whig candidate Winfield Scott
  - Whig Party disintegrating as “cotton” Whigs of South joined Democrats while Northern Whigs divided between antislavery “conscience” Whigs and those less disturbed by slavery
1854: Senator Douglas, chairman of the Committee on Territories, introduced a bill organizing the land west of Missouri and Iowa as the Nebraska Territory

- Essential to railroad development, especially if Chicago was to be terminus of transcontinental railroad

- Southerners noted that could start in New Orleans or Memphis and go through organized territory
  - United States Minister to Mexico, James Gadsden, in 1853 had purchased an additional 29,000 square miles of Mexican territory
The Kansas-Nebraska Act

- Southerners objected because Nebraska lay north of Missouri Compromise line so would become free territory.
- Douglas agreed to divide the area into two territories—Kansas and Nebraska—and then to allow them to decide status through popular sovereignty (essentially repealing the Missouri Compromise).
  - Northerners were furious.
  - Many moderate opponents of slavery were radicalized.
THE KANSAS-NEBRASKA ACT

- Southerners, regardless of party, backed the bill
- Northern Democrats split
- Bill passed in May 1854
- Days after Bill was passed, arrest of fugitive slave Anthony Burns in Boston led to mob action, the death of a guard and the need to use two companies of soldiers and 1,000 police and marines to ship Burns back to Virginia in a revenue cutter
  - Cost of return over $100,000
  - Few months later, friends purchased Burns freedom for several hundred dollars
- Radicalized Bostonian Whigs
KNOW-NOTHINGS, REPUBLICANS, AND THE DEMISE OF THE TWO-PARTY SYSTEM

- Existing parties were dying
  - 91 free state Democrats in House when Kansas-Nebraska Act was passed, only 25 after next election
  - Whigs were moribund

- Two new parties were forming
  - American or “Know Nothing” Party—primarily nativists
  - Republican Party
Know-Nothings, Republicans, and the Demise of the Two-Party System

Know-Nothing Party

- Immigration on the rise in the 1850s and crime and drunkenness were also rising in cities
- Large percentage of immigrants were Irish and German Catholics
- Major issues for Know-Nothings
  - Public financing of parochial schools
  - Lay control of church policies
  - Prohibition of alcoholic beverages
  - Increasing time before immigrants could become citizens (favored 21 years)
- Party successful in North and South and adopted dominant views of section regarding blacks
- 1854: won a string of victories and elected more than 40 congressmen
KNOW-NOTHINGS, REPUBLICANS, AND THE DEMISE OF THE TWO-PARTY SYSTEM

Republican Party
- Made up of Free Soilers, Conscience Whigs, and “Anti-Nebraska” Democrats
- Purely sectional party (Old Northwest and New England)
- Presented themselves as the party of freedom: slavery must be kept out of territories (though not necessarily abolished)
- Free white labor must have exclusive access to West
- 1854: won more than 100 seats in House of Representatives and control of many state governments
“BLEEDING KANSAS”

- Almost none of the settlers who flocked to Kansas owned slaves and few were interested in slavery question
  - Most had a low opinion of blacks
  - Wanted land and local political office, lucrative government contracts and other business opportunities

- When Congress opened gates to settlement in May 1854, none of the land was open for sale
  - Treaties extinguishing Indian titles had not been ratified
  - Public lands had not been surveyed
  - Result was confusion over property boundaries, graft and speculation
“BLEEDING KANSAS”

- Focus became legal status of slavery
- Problem was who were the citizens who were to determine the future, and under what institutions were they to do this?
- Also a problem was that outsiders from North and South refused to let Kansas decide its own fate
  - New England Emigrant Aid Society formed to help transport anti-slavery settlers to area (transported few but deeply worried Southerners)
  - Many pro-slavery Missourians rushed to protect “their rights” in Kansas
“Bleeding Kansas”

- Topeka (Seat of Free-State Government)
- Lecompton (Seat of Slave-State Government)
- Lawrence
  - May 21, 1856
- Pottawatomie Creek
  - May 24, 1856
  - (John Brown Leads Attack on Slave-Staters)

- Osawatomie
  - Aug. 31, 1856
  - (Atchison Attacks Free-Staters)

- Marais des Cygnes
  - May 19, 1858
  - Pro-Slavers Massacre Five Free-Staters

- Kansas City
- Missouri R.
- Osage R.
“BLEEDING KANSAS”

- November 1854 election was held to pick territorial delegate to Congress
  - Large band of Missourians crossed over specifically to vote for proslavery candidate who won
- March 1855: 5,000 pro-slavery “border ruffians” again descended on Kansas to elect territorial legislature
  - Census registered 2,905 eligible voters but 6,307 votes were cast
  - Legislature enacted slave code and laws prohibiting abolitionist agitation
- Anti-slavery settlers refused to recognize this regime and held elections of their own
- By January 1856, there were two governments in Kansas
Pierce encouraged pro-slavery group by denouncing free-state government located in Topeka

May 1856: 800 of pro-slavery group sacked the anti-slavery town of Lawrence

John Brown, believing sack of Lawrence had killed 5, retaliated by attacking Pottawatomie Creek and murdering 5 men

Result was armed warfare by both sides and by the time Brown forced out of Kansas in October, 200 people had died

Republicans printed tales of “bleeding Kansas” in northern newspapers

Main fault for excesses was Pierce administration which was supposed to ensure orderly nature of elections
SENATOR SUMNER BECOMES A MARTYR FOR ABOLITIONISM

- At same time of blood shed in Kansas, Congressmen were wrangling in DC
- Prominent among these was Charles Sumner, a new Senator from Massachusetts
  - In Kansas debates, derided administration, demanded admittance of Kansas as free state, and launched personal attacks on Daniel Webster and elderly South Carolinian Senator Andrew Butler
  - Two days later, Congressman Preston Brooks, Butler’s nephew, stormed in Senate and viciously caned Sumner
    - Sumner was unable, psychologically, to return to his seat until 1859
    - Brooks was censured, resigned, and was then re-elected by his home district
    - Southerners sent him canes while Northerners viewed him as proof of the brutalizing nature of slavery
BUCHANAN TRIES HIS HAND

1856 Election:
- Republicans nominated John C. Frémont:
  - popular military man with no political experience
  - Party slogan: Free soil, free speech, and Frémont
- Democrats nominated James Buchanan
- American party nominated Millard Fillmore
- Democrats denounced Republicans as sectional party threatening to destroy Union
- Buchanan won with 174 electoral votes to Frémont’s 114 and Fillmore’s 8
THE DRED SCOTT DECISION

- 1834: Dr. John Emerson of St. Louis joined the army and was assigned first to Rock Island, Illinois, then to Fort Snelling, Wisconsin Territory
- 1838: returned to Missouri
- Dred Scott, Emerson’s slave, accompanied him on these journeys
- 1846: after Emerson’s death, Scott and his wife (whom he had married in Wisconsin) sued in Missouri Courts for their freedom claiming that since they had lived in free territory, they were free
- Case eventually reached Supreme Court
THE DRED SCOTT DECISION

March 6, 1857 Supreme Court ruled:
- Blacks, free or slave, were not citizens and could not, therefore, sue in federal court
  - Legally dubious ruling
- Court continued noting that since returned to Missouri, laws of Illinois did not matter and residency in Wisconsin unimportant since Missouri Compromise (which made area free territory) was unconstitutional
- Decision invalidated Missouri Compromise and threatened popular sovereignty
- Essentially made slavery inviolate until a territory was a state because only then could it formally abolish slavery
- Convinced Northerners the South was engaged in an aggressive attempt to extend slavery
Buchanan appointed Mississippian Robert J. Walker as governor of Kansas
- Denounced constitution drawn up at Lecompton by proslavery delegates (antislavery ones refused to participate) after they refused to submit it to populace for a vote
- Buchanan asked Congress to admit Kansas to Union as a slave state under the Lecompton constitution

Stephen Douglas opposed because if he hadn’t he would be:
- Ignoring popular sovereignty
- Committing political suicide

Resulted in split within Democrats and defeat of Lecompton bill
THE PROSLAVERY LECOMPTON CONSTITUTION

- October 1857: new legislature had been elected in Kansas with participation of anti-slavery voters
  - Ordered referendum on Lecompton Constitution in January 1858
  - Constitution rejected overwhelmingly (proslavery settlers boycotted vote)
- Buchanan persisted with admittance under Lecompton so Congress ordered another referendum with stipulation that if not approved then Kansas could not become state until had population of 90,000
  - Kansans rejected by margin of 6 to 1
THE EMERGENCE OF LINCOLN

- During Panic of 1857 Northerners blamed depression on reduction of tariff by southern dominated Congress.
- South read its relative immunity from the depression as proof of the superiority of its system.
- Attention focused on Stephen Douglas’ 1858 Senatorial re-election campaign in Illinois.
- Republicans nominated Abraham Lincoln.
  - Spotless reputation for integrity.
  - Compassionate toward slave owner yet stern toward institution.
THE LINCOLN-DOUGLAS DEBATES

- July 1858: Lincoln challenged Douglas to a series of seven debates
  - Douglas epitomized efficiency and success
  - Lincoln was a man of the people
  - Exaggerated differences during debates
- Lincoln did not, anymore than Douglas, favor equality of black and white races
  - He opposed allowing blacks to vote, to sit on juries, to marry whites, even to become citizens
  - Fence sitting position on question of abolition in DC
  - Opposed repeal of Fugitive Slave Act
THE LINCOLN-DOUGLAS DEBATES

- Freeport Doctrine: (Douglas) despite Dred Scott decision, people of a territory could exclude slavery by simply refusing to enact laws that were essential for holding blacks in bondage
  - Doctrine helped Douglas win the Senate seat but cost him southern support during 1860 presidential bid
- Elsewhere in North, elections went heavily toward Republicans
- Old Congress that reconvened in December saw a series of Northern measures (transcontinental RR, higher tariff, river and harbor improvements, a free homestead bill) blocked by southern votes
- Radical Southerners, meanwhile, demanded a federal slave code for the territories and talked of annexing Cuba and reviving the African slave trade
JOHN BROWN’S RAID

- October 1859: John Brown gathered 18 men, black and white, and attacked the federal arsenal at Harper’s Ferry, Virginia
  - Planned to arm the slaves and form a black republic in the mountains of Virginia
  - No slaves rallied to his side after his capture of the arsenal and he was soon trapped by federal troops under the command of Robert E. Lee
  - After a 2 day siege in which 10 of Brown’s men were killed, he was captured

- Northerners and Southerners reacted with strong emotion to Brown’s attack
Virginia authorities charged Brown with treason, conspiracy and murder and sentenced him to hang.

Cool heads everywhere called for calm and denounced the attack while most Republican politicians repudiated Brown.

But in his dying on December 2, 1859, John Brown rose above violence to become a martyr:

“If it is deemed necessary that I should forfeit my life for the furtherance of the ends of justice, and mingle my blood with the blood of ... millions in this slave country whose rights are disregarded by wicked, cruel, and unjust enactments, I say let it be done.”
THE ELECTION OF 1860

Extremism increasingly marked both sides

- Republicans flooded market with book by Hinton Rowan Helper that Southerners considered an appeal for social revolution
  - book tried to use statistics to show that slavery was ruining the Southern economy and corrupting its social structure
- Especially evident in South which felt itself under constant attack and surrounded by hostility and a rapidly growing North which threatened them with abolition and social chaos
  - Legislatures in the South cracked down on freedom of expression, made the manumission of slaves illegal and banished free blacks
  - Southerners also talked of secession
THE ELECTION OF 1860

- April 1860: Democrats met in Charleston, South Carolina
  - Southerners refused to support Douglas unless he promised not to disturb slavery in the territories and accept the proposition that slavery was right
  - Northerners refused, Deep South delegates walked out and the convention adjourned
  - In June, reconvened in Baltimore but to no avail so met separately
- Northern Democrats nominated Stephen Douglas and stood by Freeport Doctrine
- Southern Democrats nominated John C. Breckenridge of Kentucky and insisted neither Congress nor territorial governments could prohibit people from moving with “their property”
THE ELECTION OF 1860

- Republicans met in Chicago in mid-May
  - Platform was attractive to all classes and sections of the northern and western states
    - Manufacturers: high tariff
    - Farmers: homestead law providing free land for settlers
    - Federal aid for internal improvements
    - No limits on immigration
    - No slavery in the territories
- Then had to choose candidate
  - Front runner Seward was too extreme and could not get enough votes
  - Lincoln looked good and would win on fourth ballot
THE ELECTION OF 1860

- Lincoln’s advantages:
  - Moderate views and strong debating skills
  - Political personality: man of humble origins, self-educated, self-made
  - From crucial state of Illinois

- Few days previously, remnants of Whig and American parties had formed the Constitutional Union party and nominated John Bell of Tennessee

- Breckenridge was sure to get slave states, Bell would run strong in border areas but majority of electoral votes lay in populous northern and western states where the contest was between Lincoln and Douglas

- Republican platform was clearly more appealing
THE ELECTION OF 1860

- Douglas, realizing Lincoln likely to win, went South to appeal to voters to stand by Union regardless of election outcome

- Results:
  - Lincoln: 1.866 million votes; 180 electoral votes
  - Douglas: 1.383 million votes; only Missouri and part of New Jersey
  - Breckenridge: 848,000 votes; won most of South
  - Bell: 593,000 votes; carried Virginia, Tennessee and Kentucky
THE SECESSION CRISIS

- December 20, 1860: specially convened convention in South Carolina voted for secession from the Union.
- February 1, 1861: six other states of the Lower South had joined South Carolina.
- A week later, in Montgomery, Alabama, provisional government of the Confederate States of America was established.
- Virginia, Tennessee, North Carolina and Arkansas did not leave Union but announced that would do so if federal government used force against Confederacy.
Secession of the South, 1860–1861

A comparison of this map with the one on page 369 shows the minimal support for secession in the mainly nonslave mountain areas of the Appalachians. The strong antisecession sentiment in the mountainous areas of Virginia eventually led several counties there to break from Virginia in 1863 and form the new state of West Virginia.
THE SECESSION CRISIS

There seemed few reasons for seceding:

- Danger that expanding North would overwhelm South was not pressing
- Lincoln had repeatedly stated he would respect slavery where it existed
- Democrats had retained control of Congress in the election
- Supreme Court was also in Southern hands
- To leave Union meant abandoning share of federal territories and an enforceable fugitive slave law
THE SECESSION CRISIS

South saw it differently:

- North’s economic growth seemed to threaten Southern independence
- Secession seemed only way to obtain balanced economy which had proved so successful in North
- Mere possibility of emancipation was a powerful force
- Patriotic feelings of Southerners had been undermined by years of sectional conflict and criticism
- Southerners tended to see all Northerners as “Yankee abolitionists”
THE SECESSION CRISIS

- While some slave owners issued bloody rhetoric, others remained loyal to U.S. and some only seceded after deep soul searching.
- North had trouble believing South was serious while South had trouble believing North would use force to keep them in Union.
- Buchanan drifted.
- Crittenden offered a compromise that would have recognized slavery in the South but Lincoln refused.
- Confederacy wrote a constitution, chose Jefferson Davis as President and seized federal properties within its bounds.
## MILESTONES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>Compromise of 1850 preserves Union U.S. and Great Britain sign Clayton-Bulwer Treaty on interoceanic canal</td>
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<tr>
<td>1851–1860</td>
<td>Northerners resist enforcement of Fugitive Slave Act</td>
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<td>1852</td>
<td>Harriet Beecher Stowe publishes <em>Uncle Tom’s Cabin</em>, a novel depicting slavery</td>
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<td>1854</td>
<td>Franklin Pierce is elected president</td>
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<td>1854</td>
<td>U.S. disavows secret Ostend Manifesto on Cuba</td>
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<td>Kansas-Nebraska Act repeals Missouri Compromise</td>
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<td>1855</td>
<td>Commodore Matthew Perry forces Japan to open its ports to U.S. trade</td>
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<td>1855</td>
<td>Senate ratifies Gadsden Purchase of Mexican territory</td>
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<td>1855</td>
<td>William Walker seizes power in Nicaragua</td>
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<td>1856</td>
<td>John Brown and followers murder five proslavery men in Pottawatomie Massacre</td>
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<td>South Carolina’s Preston Brooks canes Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts on Senate floor</td>
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<td>1857</td>
<td>James Buchanan is elected president</td>
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<td>1857</td>
<td>U.S. Supreme Court issues decision in Dred Scott case, declaring slaves are not citizens</td>
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<td>1857</td>
<td>Panic of 1857 collapses economy</td>
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<td>1858</td>
<td>Abraham Lincoln loses Senate race to Stephen Douglas after Lincoln-Douglas Debates, but wins national attention</td>
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<td>1859</td>
<td>John Brown raids Harpers Ferry, Virginia, arsenal</td>
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<td>1860</td>
<td>Abraham Lincoln is elected president</td>
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<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>South Carolina secedes from Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>Seven southern states establish Confederate States of America</td>
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<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>Lincoln rejects Crittenden Compromise, last peaceful attempt to save Union</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WEBSITES

- Secession Era Editorial Project
  http://history.furman.edu/editorials/see.py

- John Brown Trial Links
  http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/Brown.html

- Harriet Beecher Stowe and *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*
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- Abraham Lincoln Online
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