

Sectionalism 1820 – 1860

The Missouri Compromise

In 1819 there were an equal number of slave and free states (11 each)

East of the Mississippi the country was divided at the southern border of Pennsylvania

West of the Mississippi and in the Louisiana Territory there was no such distinguishing line

Many of the settlers in the west owned slaves, especially those who had moved to the Missouri area

In 1819 the House of Representatives was asked to approved legislation to allow Missouri to write a constitution since the population had reached 60,000

James Tallmadge of New York proposed legislation to forbid the introduction of more slaves and to free those who reached 25 after the state was formed

The House passed the measure, but the Senate rejected it – both voted on sectional lines

Since the Senate was based on equal representation (2 members for each state) it was clear that only in the Senate could the slave states defend their “peculiar institution”

At the same time Maine applied for statehood

Congress allowed both states to maintain the balance in the Senate

Maine was obviously a free state – Missouri would be a slave state

An amendment was added that declared all new states north of 36°30’ line would be free

The Compromise only stalled the slavery question

The Missouri Constitution

During the time Missouri was a territory those who supported slavery dominated the legislature and the constitutional convention

The proposed writing a constitution which banned free blacks from the state, but this violated the Constitution which said people should receive the same treatment in all states – free blacks were citizens

Henry Clay suggested a second Missouri compromise – Missouri would be admitted as a state so long as it never denied rights guaranteed by the Constitution

In 1821 Missouri became the twenty-fourth state

Jefferson said the Missouri Compromise was “like a firebell in the night” and he thought it would mean the end of the Union

The Cotton Gin

Agriculture was the basis of the southern economy

In 1793 Eli Whitney invented the cotton gin, which increased the need for slaves. Prior to 1793 it looked like the issue of slavery would disappear because cotton production significantly limited

With the invention of the cotton gin cotton became easier to produce and profitable

Consequently more land was turned over to cotton production and the demand for slaves increased dramatically

Slavocracy

The planter class of the south was a small number of very influential people

Those who owned slaves portrayed themselves as being paternalistic

By the start of the Civil War less than 1% of plantation owners owned more than 100 slaves
Small plantations with only a handful of slaves was more common
On the small plantations the white farmer usually worked alongside the slave
Yeoman farmers owned no slaves
The importation of slaves had been banned in 1808 but many were simply smuggled into the country

The Defense of Slavery

History had clearly shown all the great civilizations of the past had had slavery
There were numerous references to slavery in the Bible
Slaves were often regarded as the same as the northern factory worker – in fact the slave owner would have to take better care of the slave because he was an investment
Senator Calhoun called slavery a “positive good”
The more northerners attacked slavery the more southerners, even those without slaves, defended it
In 1836 the House of Representatives passed the Gag Rule which blocked any abolitionist petitions – it was repealed in 1844

Free Blacks

Blacks had made enormous contribution to the development of the United States
Benjamin Banneker, Phillis Wheatley, and David Walker
Many free blacks faced continual harassment in the south
They couldn't serve on juries against white men
Some had been former slaves who had been freed upon the death of their master, others had purchased their freedom, and some received freedom for fighting in the Revolutionary War
Some free blacks owned slaves, but it was a very small percentage
However, free blacks were not always free – the Black Codes passed in the South severely limited the blacks
In the north there was more freedom but many, especially the immigrants, were equally racist

Slave Revolts

Resistance by the slaves took various forms
Some slaves sabotaged their work or they pretended to be ill
Some slaves tried running away to the North but the color of their skin clearly identified them as a potential runaway slave
All out revolts were rare, but the belief in the possibility of a major slave revolt continually terrified the slave owners
In 1739 the Stono Rebellion of South Carolina
In 1800 Gabriel led a revolt in Richmond but he was betrayed
In 1822 Denmark Vesey led a rebellion in Charleston which was suppressed before it really develop
In 1831 Nat Turner led the most famous rebellion which resulted in the deaths of over 60 whites and 200 blacks

Abolitionism

In 1817, the American Colonization Society was founded for the purpose of transporting Blacks back to Africa

Henry Clay, John Marshall, and James Monroe supported it

Most blacks claimed they now lived in America and had few, if any connections to Africa

In 1822, agents of the ACS purchased a piece of land in West Africa - the Republic of Liberia

For twenty-five years the society controlled the land

Gradual demands for an end to slavery in the territories gave way to demands for complete and immediate abolition

In 1831, William Lloyd Garrison published the first edition of *The Liberator* in Boston

Nat Turner's rebellion was blamed on Garrison

In 1832 Garrison and his supporters established the New England Anti-Slavery Society

The creation of similar groups led to the creation of the American Anti-Slavery Society

The same year the British prohibited slavery and compensated slave owners in the British empire

Sarah and Angelina Grimké moved from South Carolina to the north support the antislavery movement and feminism

As the abolition movement developed so the issue of support from women came to the forefront – many believed women should have no say in the matter

Others embraced the role of women and give women hope that after the abolition of slavery the focus would be turned to the plight of women

Sojourner Truth, was a freed Black woman who had escaped slavery in 1827, fought for black emancipation and women's rights

The greatest Black abolitionist was Frederick Douglass, a former slave

Douglass was a great public speaker and in time he became the most recognized black man in the country

His autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, (1845) became a best seller

In 1847 he started an abolitionist newspaper, the *North Star*

He and others backed the Liberty Party in 1840, the Free Soil Party in 1848, and the Republican Party in the 1850s

Manifest Destiny

During the 1840s many Americans began to see the possibility of a nation that stretched from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and some even dreamed of adding Canada and/or Mexico

Such expansionism was generally summed up in the belief in Manifest Destiny

California: In 1821 Mexico gained independence from Spain

Mexico City had little influence in California

The Mexican government awarded huge tracts of land to Mexican settlers who wanted to move to California

These settlers were brutal to the local Indians who were treated much worse than slaves

During the 1830s American traders moved into the region

In 1848 gold was discovered in California and everything changed

Texas: Texas was the most obvious land for Americans to settle

It was large, open, cheap, and the Mexican government had, at least initially, little interest

The first American to negotiate with the Mexicans was Stephen F. Austin who started a colony on a large land grant near the Brazos River

Texas attracted newcomers because it could support the production of cotton – if it had cotton, it had slavery

As the number of settlers increased so did the concern of the Mexican government

Between 1832 and 1833 the Americans demanded greater autonomy

In 1834 General Santa Anna staged a coup and seized power in Mexico

On March 2, 1836, the Texans, led by Stephen F. Austin, Jim Bowie, and Sam Houston declared their independence

At the Alamo (San Antonio) a group of Texans led by William Travis and David Crockett held the Mexican army for 13 days – Crockett was from Tennessee and had fought Indians with Andrew Jackson

The Mexicans killed all the defenders, but their fight became a rallying cry for all Texans

On April 21, 1836 the Texans surprised the Mexican army at the San Jacinto River

The Texans slaughtered the Mexicans and forced Santa Anna to sign a treaty granting independence to Texas (The Mexican government later repudiated the treaty)

Texas was independent, with Houston the first president, but many wanted Texas added to the Union

President Jackson wanted to add Texas but he knew he would have to move slowly, because Texas would obviously be a slave state

Eventually the rumors that the British were interested in adding Texas for Congress to act

President Polk favored expansionism and wanted to add California and New Mexico (preferably by purchasing the land), as well as Texas

On March 1, 1845, Texas was offered statehood

Oregon: Since the days of the Lewis and Clark expedition Americans had traveled to the Pacific Northwest to trade.

During the 1820s trading posts were established

Oregon stretched from the 42nd parallel to 54° 51' and was inhabited by a few American mountain men and even fewer British explorers (Spain and Russia had given up their claims)

By the Convention of 1818 both countries agreed to 'joint occupation'

By the middle of the 1830s occupation was almost completely by Americans as settlers moved west looking for land and resources

"Oregon Fever" swept the country in the 1840s

President Polk abandoned the idea of taking part of Oregon and began talking about taking all of Oregon

The British had little interest in war and when the fur trade started to end they wanted to resolve the issue quick and cheap

In 1846 the British government offered a line along the 49th parallel, which Secretary of State Buchanan and British minister Pakenham signed

The Senate ratified it within days

Spot Resolution

Once the United States annexed Texas it was almost inevitable that war with Mexico would follow

Polk sent John Slidell to Mexico to purchase California and New Mexico and to settle the issue of the southern border of Texas

Slidell failed

While Slidell was in Mexico, Polk sent General Zachary Taylor and an army into the disputed region between Texas and Mexico

They met a Mexican patrol and in the ensuing fight 11 American soldiers were killed

This was enough for Polk to ask Congress for permission to declare war

Illinois Congressman Abraham Lincoln opposed the war and asked to be shown the spot where the American blood was spilled – this became the Spot Resolution

Even though the Whigs protested, Congress approved

Mexican-American War 1846-48

The actual fighting involved relatively small numbers of Americans

General Stephen Kearney captured Santa Fe and then southern California

John Frémont led a small group of Americans who overthrew Mexican rule in northern California and declared the independent Bear Flag Republic

General Taylor moved into Mexico and defeated the Mexicans at Buena Vista

General Scott captured Vera Cruz and then Mexico City in 1847

Most of the American soldiers died from disease or illness, not from wounds

This war was the first time the American army had successfully invaded a foreign country and it was also the first time officers from West Point were involved

Many of those who played a role in the success of the American army would go on to achieve further notoriety in the Civil War – Robert E. Lee, Ulysses S. Grant, “Stonewall” Jackson, George McClellan and George Meade

It also helped formulate the political careers of Zachary Taylor and Winfield Scott

But more than anything else – it only served to fuel the fires of sectionalism

Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo (1848)

The war was a military and political disaster for Mexico because the Mexican government was unwilling to accept the inevitable defeat and accept compromise

The American diplomat Nicholas Trist negotiated the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo

a. The Southern border of Texas would be the Rio Grande

b. Mexico would cede California and New Mexico (the Mexican Cession) – the United States government would pay Mexico \$15 million in claims against the United States by Mexican citizens

Wilmot Proviso

David Wilmot of Pennsylvania introduced his Wilmot Proviso to solve the issue of slavery in the newly acquired territory

He suggested that slavery should never exist in any of the territories that would be taken from Mexico (similar to the wording used in the Northwest Ordinance)

The amendment was passed twice by the House but never got passed the Senate because of southern resistance

Calhoun suggested that to prevent a person taking a slave into the new territory was a violation of the Fifth Amendment (Congress could not deprive a person of property)

Popular Sovereignty

Many politicians did not want to get drawn into the slavery question

To those who support or opposed slavery the issue was clear

But nearly everyone had an opinion

Senator Cass of Michigan suggested the people of each territory should be allowed to make their own decision as to slavery – this would make the issue of slavery and issue for the states and not the Federal government

The Democrats quickly endorsed the idea since it offered the best solution to save the Union

After the Mexican-American War the issue of slavery and the possible expansion could not be avoided

Free Soil Coalition

Many people in the north really did not care if slavery was abolished, they just did not want the institution to spread

The idea of free soil for white farmers rose to prominence as opposed to supporting abolition

A coalition of Democrats, antislavery Whigs, and members of the Liberty Party united to form the Free Soil party

They nominated Van Buren, with the Wilmot Proviso as the main platform

Their slogan was “free soil, free speech, free labor, and free men”

The Election of 1848

After the war Zachary Taylor “Old Rough and Ready” became one of the most well known men in America

He was nominated as the Whig candidate even though he contradicted many of the Whig principles conflict – Whigs opposed slavery, Taylor owned slaves

The democrats nominated Lewis Cass

Neither major party talked about the slavery issue

Taylor, who had never even voted before, won the election

Taylor felt the issue of slavery should be left up to the states

He opposed expanding slavery in the new states, but supported it in the existing states

In 1850 after eating some cherries and frozen milk at a Fourth of July celebration he fell ill and died 5 days later

Millard Fillmore became the new president

Fillmore disagreed with most of Taylor’s policies

California

In 1848 gold was discovered in California

In 1849 thousands of people left their homes and moved to California in the hope of finding gold

Few of these “Forty-niners” ever found anything but misery and disappointment

As the population increased so did the social problems

The state government found itself unable to cope with the sudden influx of wild and unruly men

By the end of 1849 California had established a free-state government

Taylor asked Congress for immediate statehood for California – but that would upset the balance of 15 free states and 15 slave states

Compromise of 1850

In 1850 slavery was addressed in what became the last great debate of Clay, Webster, and Calhoun – the issue was known as the Compromise of 1850

Henry Clay “The Great Compromiser” put forward a packet of 8 resolutions aimed at ending the sectional conflicts

Clay spoke first in defense of the proposal:

he told northerners that geography would limit slavery

he told southerners that secession would mean Civil War

Calhoun left his sickbed to hear his words read to the Senate

he proposed the idea of *concurrent majority* – (a sectional veto for the South) and defended the South and the institution of slavery

Webster spoke about the necessity of preserving the Union - March 7th speech emphasized conciliation

In offering conciliation he was attacked by New England abolitionists as being a traitor to New England

In May all the resolutions were put together in the “Omnibus Bill”

Senator Douglas broke up the “Omnibus Bill” because he realized that no one would vote for the whole Bill

In September the president signed the Compromise of 1850

i) California was accepted as a free state

ii) New Mexico was a territory

iii) Texas gave up claims to land east of the Rio Grande and received \$10 million

vi) Utah was a territory

v) A new Fugitive Slave law was enacted

vi) The slave trade (not slavery) abolished in District of Columbia

It can be clearly asserted that the north gained more from the Compromise than the south. The south gained, perhaps what it wanted more than anything else and that was a stricter enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law – but a verbal agreement did not always equate to enforcement by northerners

Also, secession was avoided and therefore so was war

Every month that passed the north grew bigger, stronger, and wealthier

The Election of 1852

The Democrats, unable to reach a consensus

Northern Democrats opposed the spread of slavery – Southern Democrats favored slavery

Eventually (49th ballot) they settled on Franklin Pierce of New Hampshire, mainly because he had not alienated many people

The Whigs nominated “Old Fuss and Feathers” Winfield Scott, the old veteran of the War of 1812 and the Mexican-American War

The Whigs ignored the issue of slavery and ran on a platform of internal improvements

Pierce supported the Fugitive Slave Law, which made him more acceptable to southerners

The Whigs were hopelessly split, and thus, Pierce won in a landslide, winning the electoral vote in all but four states

The election of 1852 marked the end of the Whigs and the start of a new type of politics – on based on sectionalism

President Pierce

Franklin Pierce was a Northern Democrat who wanted to avoid a war at all cost
He believe in the strict interpretation of the Constitution and he supported slavery
He filled his cabinet with southerners

Ostend Manifesto

Many Americans, especially southerners had long looked at Cuba as a possible state
Cuba still was a Spanish possession but Spain even though long past being a world power had no interest in losing her colony
Three U.S. foreign ministers met in Ostend, Belgium and proposed the Ostend Manifesto
The U.S. was to offer \$120 million to Spain for Cuba
If Spain refused, and if America felt endangered by Spanish influence in the Caribbean, then the United States would have the right to invade the island
Southerners hoped to add at least one more slave state, possibly two
When news of the arrangement leaked, northerners were outraged and the deal disappeared

Gadsden Purchase

Travel across the United States was dangerous and took a long time
A better solution seemed to be the possibility of a transcontinental rail route
Northerners wanted a northern route that would go through Chicago
Southerners, led by Secretary of War Jefferson Davis, wanted a southern route
The Southerners wanted a route through the South, but best one would go through Mexico
The problem with a southern route was it would have to pass through part of Mexico
Davis arranged to have James Gadsden appointed minister to Mexico and authorized him to start negotiations with Santa Anna to see if the land could be purchased
Santa Anna, always in need of money agreed
The Gadsden Purchase became part of the United States for \$10 million
Northerners complained about the deal but it passed Congress
It now seemed like the transcontinental rail route would be across the South
What had hurt the North was the fact their proposed route would have gone through the unorganized territories – Nebraska would have to be organized and added to the Union

Underground Railroad

With the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law as part of the Compromise of 1850 many slave owners expected the northerners to comply
Abolitionists and Free-Soilers resented the new law and often resisted
Commissioners were authorized to arrest fugitives (runaway slaves)
People who helped the fugitives could face heavy fines
Free blacks were often arrested and when they were put on trial they were denied the right to a jury

Gradually a network evolved across the south to help fugitives get to the north or even Canada

This organization was known as the Underground Railroad

The person most responsible for the success of the Underground Railroad was Harriet Tubman, an ex-slave who made many trips to the south to help slaves escape

Uncle Tom's Cabin

In 1852, Harriet Beecher Stow published the most influential novel of the day, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, about the life of a slave and his cruel white, slave owner

Millions of people, as far away as Europe read the book

Southerners called the book a pack of lies, but it persuaded many in Britain to stay out of a war that perpetuated such a cruel system

In 1857, Hinton R. Helper wrote, *The Impending Crisis of the South*

Hinton, from North Carolina, tried to prove that slavery had an adverse effect on the economy of the southern states

Both books were banned in the south

Kansas-Nebraska Act (1854)

Organizing the Nebraska territories became a major goal for the northern states

Senator Stephen Douglas proposed a plan to construct a northern rail route which would encourage settlement and increase the value of his own business interests in Chicago

The Kansas-Nebraska Act, would divide the Nebraska territory into the Nebraska territory and the Kansas territory

The settlers in both territories would decide the issue of slavery based on popular sovereignty

Nebraska was obviously going to be a free state, but Kansas could potential go either way

The Missouri Compromise had banned slavery north of a line 36° 30', so the act would have to be repealed

The possibility of adding more slave states interested the southern states who had been limited by the Missouri Compromise

After months of debate President Pierce signed the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854

The Kansas-Nebraska Act wrecked the Compromise of 1820 and indirectly wrecked the Compromise of 1850, including the Fugitive Slave Law

The Kansas-Nebraska Act split the Democratic Party

The Know-Nothing Party

During the 1850s a new type of politics appeared in the United States, one, which signaled the end of the old political parties and the birth of new parties – with new agendas and mandates.

Based on sectional issues

Many northerners had no love for slavery, but they had even less for free slaves

Northerners who worked in the factories feared the influx of thousands of free blacks that would be competing for their jobs, and that competition would push down wages

Out of this fear a new political party was formed – the American or the Know-Nothing party

The party attracted native-born Protestant Americans, who when asked about politics answered, "I know nothing"

Their nativist policies also attracted Whig votes and seriously weakened the Whig party

The Know-Nothing party disappeared after a few years when more significant sectional issues rose to the forefront

The Republican Party

The Republican party was formed as a direct consequence of the Kansas-Nebraska Act
Free-Soilers, antislavery Whigs, and disillusioned Democrats united to form the new party
Their first platform was the repealing of the Kansas-Nebraska Act and the Fugitive Slave Law
The members were not specifically abolitionists, but people who did not want to see slavery spread to the territories

The Election of 1856

The election of 1856 marked the first appearance of the Republican party
They nominated John Frémont, senator from California
They ran on a pro-business platform that also wanted to stop the spread of slavery
The Know-Nothing party nominated Millard Fillmore
The Democrats who were the one major party nominated James Buchanan of Pennsylvania and were expected to win
The Democrats did win; the Republicans came second, winning most of the free states

“Bleeding Kansas”

Kansas was a dress rehearsal for the civil war
Both sides moved into the state since the issue of slavery was to be decided by the people of Kansas
Most of the new settlers came from neighboring Missouri, and were sympathetic towards slave owners
In 1855 the first elections took place and thousands of “border ruffians” crossed from Missouri to vote
The governor realized the results were incorrect but refused to do anything, as he feared for his life
Consequently the legislature drafted a strict pro-slavery legislation
Those who advocated a free state met at Topeka and drafted a Constitution which banned slavery and free blacks and applied for admission to the Union as a free state
In 1856 proslavery men attacked the free-soil town of Lawrence, Kansas

Pottawatomie Massacre

After the “sack of Lawrence” a fanatical abolitionist from Connecticut, John Brown, determined to seek revenge
Brown, his sons, and some friends set out for Pottawatomie Creek, a proslavery settlement
They dragged five men from their houses and hacked them to death
Brown set off a guerrilla war, which lasted throughout the summer
In response “border ruffians” attacked the free soil settlement at Osawatomie and shot and killed one of Brown’s sons
Brown barely escaped with his life, but swore to die fighting for the cause

Senator Sumner

During the “Bleeding Kansas” violence spilled over to the Congress
In 1856, only a day after the “sack of Lawrence” Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts attacked what he called “The Crime against Kansas”

One of the main focuses of the attack was Senator Andrew Butler from South Carolina
Butler's nephew, Preston Brooks, a congressman from South Carolina, walked into the Senate chamber and attacked Sumner with his cane as he sat at his desk
Sumner became a martyr for those who opposed slavery
When the House censured Brooks for his actions he resigned, but was re-elected by his constituents
In the weeks following the incident Brooks received hundreds of canes to replace the one he broke on Sumner

Dred Scott v. Sanford (1857)

Dred Scott had been born a slave in Virginia and had been taken to St. Louis before being sold to an army surgeon
The surgeon took Scott to Wisconsin (a free state), before returning to St. Louis
In 1843 the surgeon died and Scott tried to buy his freedom
In 1846, with some help from white friends, Scott filed a case in Missouri claiming that his residency in Wisconsin had made him free
The jury agreed, but the state supreme court disagreed
On March 6, 1857, the Supreme Court agreed with the state court
Chief Justice Taney said that no slave could be a citizen of the U.S. and so Scott had no legal standing
Taney also said that residency in a free state did not free Scott
Without saying it, Taney implied that the Missouri Compromise violated the Fifth Amendment
This was the first time the Supreme Court had ruled against an act of Congress since *Marbury v. Madison* (1803)
The decision did nothing to clarify the situation
Proslavery people rejoiced because the Supreme Court validated their position
Antislavery people talked of a southern conspiracy

Lecompton Constitution

A convention at Lecompton, Kansas created a new constitution, which would address the issue of slavery
The referendum was worded in such a way that voters could not vote against slavery
Those who wanted a free state boycotted the referendum, claiming the process was rigged
In 1857 President Buchanan was forced to decide whether or not to accept the proslavery Constitution adopted at Lecompton
It was clear to all sides that the Lecompton constitution did not reflect the views of the majority of people from Kansas
Regardless, Buchanan, influenced by southern friends, recommended Congress accept the document and admits Kansas as a slave state
In Congress, many Democrats joined the Republicans and voted against the Lecompton constitution
In 1858 the new proslavery document was soundly defeated

The Panic of 1857

The end of the Crimean War in 1856 created a surplus of American grain, plus a slow-down in manufacturing, and a lack of confidence in the financial system created the Panic of 1857. The price of cotton fell but quickly rebounded leading to the belief that cotton really was “king” and that the slave system was better than the free-labor system.

Lincoln-Douglas Debates (1858)

In 1858, the veteran Illinois Senator Stephen Douglas’ term was about to expire. Republican Abraham Lincoln who had served only one two-year term in Congress challenged him.

Lincoln, a relative unknown, was against the spread of slavery, but he was not an abolitionist. Douglas “the Little Giant” was one of the nation’s leading politicians and the best hope to keep the country unified.

The pair agreed to a series of seven debates at various locations around the state.

The most famous debate came at Freeport, where Lincoln asked Douglas how the Dred Scott decision could be reconciled with popular sovereignty.

Douglas replied, (in the Freeport Doctrine) that slavery could only exist if the community passed and enforced laws to maintain it.

To Douglas the people had the power.

Douglas won the debates, but southerners saw him as not being strong enough in his support of Dred Scott.

Lincoln emerged as a national figure and a leading candidate for the 1860 elections.

John Brown

In October 1859, John Brown led a group of abolitionists to the federal armory at Harper’s Ferry, Virginia.

The plan was to give the weapons to slaves who would revolt and free themselves.

Brown and his followers did take the armory but then they were surrounded by federal troops led by Robert E. Lee.

Lee’s men, led by Lt. J. E. B. Stuart rushed the building, killing ten (including two sons).

Brown was arrested and turned over to the Virginia authorities.

He was charged with treason, found guilty and hanged.

Nevertheless, Brown became a martyr for the cause of abolition.

Southerners became even more defensive as they feared the possibility of further insurrections across the south.

The Election of 1860

The Democrats met in Charleston, South Carolina.

They nominated Stephen Douglas for president, but southern Democrats and supporters of Buchanan blocked him.

A second convention was held in Baltimore, but this time many of the southern representatives walked out.

Douglas was chosen as the Democratic candidate.

Southern Democrats held their own convention and nominated Vice President John C. Breckinridge of Kentucky.

The Republicans met in Chicago and nominated Abraham Lincoln.

(Southerners warned that if Lincoln were elected they would secede)

The Constitutional Union party (a group of Know-Nothing, Whigs, and moderate Democrats dedicated to preserving the Union) nominated John Bell of Tennessee

Lincoln won all the free states in the north and collected 59% of the electoral votes

Lincoln won the election but would be a minority president (having collected less than 40% of the popular vote)

Secession

On December 1860 South Carolina was the first state to secede

Within weeks Alabama, Mississippi, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas followed

These states sent representatives to Montgomery, Alabama in February 1861 and created the Confederate States of America

Jefferson Davis of Mississippi was chosen as the first president

Their constitution was very similar to that of the north with the exception of dealing with tariffs and slavery

Crittenden Compromise

Senator John Crittenden of Kentucky proposed a series of amendments to save the Union

It recognized slavery south of a line 36° 30' and guaranteed slavery where it already existed

Lincoln rejected the proposal because it went against the Republican platform to not extend slavery to the territories