

SS-6 Study Guide Chapter 13 - Background to the Conflict

Lesson 3 - Facing a National Problem

1. When settlers wanted to join the Union as a new state, what was the most important question?

Would the new state be a free state or a slave state?

2. What Compromise did Henry Clay initiate?

The Missouri Compromise

Under the Missouri Compromise:

Missouri was admitted to the Union as a slave state

Maine was admitted to the Union as a free state

Lands of the Louisiana Purchase were divided by an imaginary line – slavery would be allowed south of the line and would not be allowed north of the line.

3. What two states joined the Union after this Compromise?

Missouri and Maine

Missouri was a slave state and Maine was a free state.

4. What were the two results that came from the Compromise of 1850?

California was admitted to the Union as a free state.

Lands won from Mexico were divided into two territories: Utah and New Mexico.

The people would decide whether or not to allow slavery.

Fugitive Slave Law:

Anyone caught helping slaves escape would be punished.

Runaways would have to be returned to the south – even if they made it to freedom.

5. Who became known as the Great Compromiser?

Henry Clay was known as the Great Compromiser

Henry Clay was from Kentucky, a slave owner, and a member of Congress. He did not want the question of slavery to tear the country apart.

6. What changed the rules of the Missouri Compromise?

When Congress passed the Kansas-Nebraska Act.

The new law changed the rules of the Missouri Compromise. Under the compromise, slavery would not be allowed in the territories of Kansas and Nebraska.

People living in those lands were now given the chance to decide for themselves whether to allow slavery. They would decide by voting – popular sovereignty.

7. What was Chief Justice Taney's ruling statement after the Dred Scott Decision?

The Court said that slaves were property and had none of the rights and privileges of citizens. Living on free land did not change the fact that Dred Scott was a slave. Chief Justice Taney also declared that Congress had no right to outlaw slavery in the Wisconsin Territory to begin with. The Constitution protects people's right to own property and slaves were considered to be property. He believed that the Missouri Compromise kept people in some places from owning property and this went against the Constitution.

Dred Scott was an enslaved African who had asked the Court for his freedom. Scott argued that his owner had often moved from place to place and Dred went with him. They had once lived in Illinois, a free state and in the Wisconsin Territory, a free territory under the Missouri Compromise.

Dred Scott's owner died and he took his case to court. His battle led all the way to the Supreme Court of the United States. In his fight for freedom, he argued that because he had once lived on free land he should be free.

8. What were Abraham Lincoln's feelings about slavery?

Lincoln grew up on the frontier in Kentucky and Illinois. He was against the spread of slavery. Lincoln did not think the government had the right to end all slavery in the country. He hoped that if slavery were not allowed to spread that it would one day just die out.

9. What political party did Lincoln join?

Lincoln joined the Republican Party.
The Republican Party was formed to fight the spread of slavery.

10. What were the Lincoln-Douglas debates about?

Stephen Douglas was a U.S. Senator from Illinois who had written the Kansas-Nebraska Act.

Abraham Lincoln was challenging Douglas for his Senate seat in 1858. Lincoln was not well known around the country - many people outside of Illinois did not know who he was or what he believed in.

The focus of the Lincoln-Douglas debates was the spread of slavery:
Douglas thought the decision about slavery should be made by the states.
Lincoln thought that slavery should not be allowed to spread because it was wrong.

11. Who won the election to the U.S. Senate?

Stephen Douglas won the race for the Senate seat.
Lincoln lost the election but people around the country now knew who he was.