

## Renewing the Sectional Struggle, 1848–1854

### PART I: REVIEWING THE CHAPTER

#### A. CHECKLIST OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After mastering this chapter, you should be able to

1. explain how the issue of slavery in the territories acquired from Mexico disrupted American politics from 1848 to 1850.
2. point out the major terms of the Compromise of 1850 and indicate how this agreement attempted to deal with the issue of slavery.
3. indicate how the Whig party disintegrated and disappeared because of its divisions over slavery.
4. describe how the Pierce administration as well as private American adventurers pursued numerous overseas and expansionist ventures primarily designed to expand slavery.
5. describe Americans' first ventures into China and Japan in the 1850s and their diplomatic, economic, cultural, and religious consequences.
6. describe Douglas's Kansas-Nebraska Act and explain why it stirred the sectional controversy to new heights.

#### B. GLOSSARY

To build your social science vocabulary, familiarize yourself with the following terms:

1. **self-determination** In politics, the right of a people to assert its own national identity or form of government without outside influence. "The public liked it because it accorded with the democratic tradition of self-determination." (p. 391)
2. **homestead** A family home or farm with buildings and land sufficient for survival. "... they broadened their appeal ... by urging free government homesteads for settlers." (p. 391)
3. **vigilante** Concerning groups that claim to punish crime and maintain order without legal authority to do so. "... violence was only partly discouraged by rough vigilante justice." (p. 393)
4. **sanctuary** A place of refuge or protection, where people are safe from punishment by the law. "... scores of ... runaway slaves ... were spirited ... to the free-soil sanctuary of Canada." (p. 395)
5. **fugitive** A person who flees from danger or prosecution. "... southerners were demanding ... and more stringent fugitive-slave law." (p. 395)
6. **topography** The precise surface features and details of a place—for example, rivers, bridges, hills—in relation to one another. "The good Lord had decreed—through climate, topography, and geography—that a plantation economy ... could not profitably exist in the Mexican Cession territory. ... ." (p. 396)
7. **mundane** Belonging to this world, as opposed to the spiritual world. "Seward argued earnestly that Christian legislators must obey God's moral law as well as mundane human law." (p. 397)
8. **statecraft** The art of government leadership. "The Whigs ... missed a splendid opportunity to capitalize on their record in statecraft." (p. 401)
9. **isthmian (isthmus)** Concerning a narrow strip of land connecting two larger bodies of land. "... neither America nor Britain would fortify or secure exclusive control over any future isthmian water-way." (p. 402)

10. **filibustering (filibuster)** Adventurers who conduct a private war against a foreign country. "During 1850–1851 two 'filibustering' expeditions descended upon Cuba." (p. 403) (In a different meaning, the term also refers to deliberately prolonging speechmaking in order to block legislation.)
11. **mikado** A title of the Japanese emperor used by foreigners. "The mikado's empire, after some disagreeable experiences with the European world. . . ." (p. 403)
12. **cloak-and-dagger** Concerning the activities of spies or undercover agents, especially involving elaborate deceptions. "An incredible cloak-and-dagger episode followed." (p. 404)
13. **manifesto** A proclamation or document aggressively asserting a controversial position or advocating a daring course of action. ". . . rose in an outburst of wrath against this 'manifesto of brigands.'" (p. 404)
14. **booster** One who promotes a person or enterprise, especially in a highly enthusiastic way. "An ardent booster for the West, he longed to . . . stretch a line of settlements across the continent." (p. 405)
15. **truce** A temporary suspension of warfare by agreement of the hostile parties. "This bold step Douglas was prepared to take, even at the risk of shattering the uneasy truce patched up by the Great Compromise of 1850." (p. 406)

## PART II: CHECKING YOUR PROGRESS

### A. True-False

Where the statement is true, circle T; where it is false, circle F.

1. T F Democratic politicians and others attempted to avoid the issue of slavery in the territories by saying it should be left to "popular sovereignty."
2. T F The Free Soil party consisted of a small, unified band of radical abolitionists.
3. T F The California gold rush of 1849 diverted the nation's attention from slavery.
4. T F Southerners demanded a more effective fugitive-slave law to stop the "Underground Railroad" from running escaped slaves to Canada.
5. T F In the Senate debate of 1850, Calhoun spoke for compromise, while Clay and Webster each defended his own section's interests.
6. T F In the key provisions of the Compromise of 1850, New Mexico and Utah were admitted as slave states, while California was left open to popular sovereignty.
7. T F The provision of the Compromise of 1850 that aroused the fiercest northern opposition was the Fugitive Slave Law.
8. T F The greatest political winner in the Compromise of 1850 was the South.
9. T F The Whig Party disappeared because its northern and southern wings were too deeply split over the Fugitive Slave Law and other sectional issues.
10. T F The Pierce administration's expansionist efforts in Central America, Cuba, and the Gadsden Purchase were basically designed to serve southern proslavery interests.
11. T F In negotiating the first American treaty with China in 1844, diplomat Caleb Cushing made sure that the United States did not align itself with the imperialistic European great powers in China.
12. T F Douglas's Kansas-Nebraska Act was intended to organize western territories so that a transcontinental railroad could be built along a northern route.
13. T F Both southerners and northerners alike refused to accept Douglas's plan to repeal the Missouri Compromise.
14. T F The Kansas-Nebraska Act wrecked the Compromise of 1850 and created deep divisions within the Democratic Party.

15. T F The Republican Party was initially organized as a northern protest against Douglas's Kansas-Nebraska Act.

## B. Multiple Choice

Select the best answer and circle the corresponding letter.

1. "Popular sovereignty" was the idea that
  - a. the government of each new territory should be elected by the people.
  - b. the American public should vote on whether to admit states with or without slavery.
  - c. the people of a territory should determine for themselves whether or not to permit slavery.
  - d. the United States should assume popular control of the territory acquired from Mexico.
2. In the election of 1848, the response of the Whig and Democratic parties to the rising controversy over slavery was
  - a. a strong proslavery stance by the Democrats and a strong antislavery stance by the Whigs.
  - b. platforms stressing both parties' clear differences with the antislavery Free Soil party.
  - c. an attempt to ignore the issue.
  - d. to free each individual candidate to take his own stand on the issue.
3. Quick formation of an effective government in California was essential because of
  - a. the desire of antislavery forces to gain a new state for their cause.
  - b. the threat that Mexico would reconquer the territory.
  - c. the need to have a government capable of building a transcontinental railroad.
  - d. the very large and unruly population drawn into the state by the discovery of gold.
4. The proposed admission of California directly into the Union was dangerously controversial because
  - a. the territory was in a condition of complete lawlessness and anarchy.
  - b. the Mexicans were threatening renewed warfare if California joined the Union.
  - c. California's admission as a free state would destroy the equal balance of slave and free states in the U.S. Senate.
  - d. there was a growing movement to declare California an independent nation.
5. The existence of the "Underground railroad" added to southern demands for
  - a. the stationing of armed police and troops along the Ohio River and the Mason-Dixon line to capture runaways.
  - b. the death penalty for abolitionists.
  - c. a stricter federal Fugitive Slave Law.
  - d. the enslavement of free blacks in the South.
6. Among the notable advocates of compromise in the controversy over slavery in 1850 were
  - a. William Seward and Zachary Taylor.
  - b. Henry Clay and Daniel Webster.
  - c. John C. Calhoun and Abraham Lincoln.
  - d. Stephen Douglas and Harriet Tubman.
7. During the debate over the Compromise of 1850, northern antislavery forces were particularly outraged by what they considered the "betrayal" of Senator
  - a. Stephen A. Douglas.
  - b. Daniel Webster.
  - c. William Seward.
  - d. John C. Calhoun.
8. Under the terms of the Compromise of 1850,
  - a. California was admitted to the Union as a free state, and slavery in Utah and New Mexico territories would be left up to popular sovereignty.
  - b. California was admitted as a free state, and Utah and New Mexico as slave states.
  - c. California, Utah, and New Mexico were kept as territories but with slavery prohibited.
  - d. New Mexico and Texas were admitted as slave states and Utah and California as free states.

9. The final battle to gain passage of the Compromise of 1850 was substantially aided by
  - a. the conversion of William Seward to the idea of compromise.
  - b. the death of President Taylor and the succession of President Fillmore.
  - c. the removal of the proposed Fugitive Slave Law from the compromise bill.
  - d. the agreement to rely on popular sovereignty to resolve the future of slavery in California.
10. The greatest winner in the Compromise of 1850 was
  - a. the North.
  - b. the South.
  - c. neither the North nor the South.
  - d. the border states.
11. One of the primary effects of the Fugitive Slave Law passed as part of the Compromise of 1850 was
  - a. an end to slave escapes and the Underground Railroad.
  - b. the extension of the underground railroad into Canada.
  - c. a sharp rise in northern antislavery feeling.
  - d. an increase in violent slave rebellions.
12. The conflict over slavery after the election of 1852 led shortly to
  - a. the death of the Whig party.
  - b. the death of the Democratic party.
  - c. the death of the Republican party.
  - d. the rise of the Free Soil party.
13. Southerners seeking to expand the territory of slavery undertook filibustering military expeditions to acquire
  - a. Canada and Alaska.
  - b. Venezuela and Colombia.
  - c. Nicaragua and Cuba.
  - d. Hawaii and Japan.
14. The primary goal of Commodore Matthew Perry's treaty with Japan in 1854 was
  - a. establishing a balance of power in East Asia.
  - b. opening Japan to American trade.
  - c. guaranteeing the territorial integrity of China.
  - d. establishing American naval bases in Hawaii and Okinawa.
15. Northerners especially resented Douglas's Kansas-Nebraska Act because
  - a. it aimed to build a transcontinental railroad along the southern route.
  - b. it would make him the leading Democratic candidate for the presidency.
  - c. it repealed the Missouri Compromise prohibiting slavery in northern territories.
  - d. it would bring Kansas into the Union as a slave state.

### C. Identification

Supply the correct identification for each numbered description.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Hotheaded southern agitators who pushed for southern interests and favored secession from the Union
2. \_\_\_\_\_ The doctrine that the issue of slavery should be decided by the residents of a territory themselves, not by the federal government
3. \_\_\_\_\_ The boundary line between slave and free states in the East, originally the southern border of Pennsylvania
4. \_\_\_\_\_ The informal network that conducted runaway slaves from the South to Canada
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Senator William Seward's doctrine that slavery should be excluded from the territories as contrary to a divine moral law standing above even the Constitution
6. \_\_\_\_\_ The provision of the Compromise of 1850 that comforted southern slave-catchers and aroused the wrath of northern abolitionists

7. \_\_\_\_\_ Third-party entry in the election of 1848 that opposed slavery expansion and prepared the way for the Republican Party
8. \_\_\_\_\_ A series of agreements between North and South that temporarily dampened the slavery controversy and led to a short-lived era of national good feelings
9. \_\_\_\_\_ Political party that fell apart and disappeared after losing the election of 1852
10. \_\_\_\_\_ An agreement between Britain and America concerning any future Central American canal
11. \_\_\_\_\_ A top-secret dispatch, drawn up by American diplomats in Europe, that detailed a plan for seizing Cuba from Spain
12. \_\_\_\_\_ Southwestern territory acquired by the Pierce administration to facilitate a southern transcontinental railroad
13. \_\_\_\_\_ The sectional agreement of 1820, repealed by the Kansas-Nebraska Act
14. \_\_\_\_\_ The political party that was deeply divided by Douglas's Kansas-Nebraska Act
15. \_\_\_\_\_ A new political party organized as a protest against the Kansas-Nebraska Act

### D. Matching People, Places, and Events

Match the person, place, or event in the left column with the proper description in the right column by inserting the correct letter on the blank line.

- |           |                    |   |
|-----------|--------------------|---|
| 1. _____  | Lewis Cass         | a. American naval commander who opened Japan to the West in 1854  |
| 2. _____  | Zachary Taylor     | b. Democratic presidential candidate in 1848, original proponent of the idea of "popular sovereignty"     |
| 3. _____  | California         | c. Weak Democratic president whose pro-southern cabinet pushed aggressive expansionist schemes            |
| 4. _____  | Caleb Cushing      | d. Famous "conductor" on the Underground Railroad who rescued more than three hundred slaves from bondage |
| 5. _____  | Harriet Tubman     | e. Illinois politician who helped smooth over sectional conflict in 1850 but then reignited it in 1854    |
| 6. _____  | Daniel Webster     | f. Central American nation desired by proslavery expansionists in the 1850s                               |
| 7. _____  | William Seward     | g. Military hero of the Mexican War who became the Whigs' last presidential candidate in 1852             |
| 8. _____  | China              | h. Whig president who nearly destroyed the Compromise of 1850 before he died in office                    |
| 9. _____  | Franklin Pierce    | i. Rich Spanish colony coveted by American proslavery expansionists in the 1850s                          |
| 10. _____ | Winfield Scott     | j. American diplomat who negotiated the Treaty of Wanghia with China in 1844                              |
| 11. _____ | Nicaragua          | k. The ruling warrior dynasty of Japan with whom Matthew Perry negotiated the Treaty of Kanagawa in 1854  |
| 12. _____ | Matthew Perry      | l. New York senator who argued that the expansion of slavery was forbidden by a "higher law"              |
| 13. _____ | Cuba               |   |
| 14. _____ | Tokugawa Shogunate |   |
| 15. _____ | Stephen A. Douglas |   |
- m. Nation whose 1844 treaty with the United States opened the door to a flood of American missionaries
- n. Northern spokesman whose support for the Compromise of 1850 earned him the hatred of abolitionists
- o. Acquired from Mexico in 1848 and admitted as a free state in 1850 without ever having been a territory

## E. Putting Things in Order

Put the following events in correct order by numbering them from 1 to 5.

1. \_\_\_ A series of delicate agreements between the North and South temporarily smoothes over the slavery conflict.
2. \_\_\_ A Mexican War hero is elected president, as the issue of how to deal with slavery in the territory acquired from Mexico arouses national controversy.
3. \_\_\_ A spectacular growth of settlement in the far West creates demand for admission of a new free state and agitates the slavery controversy.
4. \_\_\_ Stephen A. Douglas's scheme to build a transcontinental railroad leads to repeal of the Missouri Compromise, which reopens the slavery controversy and spurs the formation of a new party.
5. \_\_\_ The Pierce administration acquires a small Mexican territory to encourage a southern route for the transcontinental railroad.

## F. Matching Cause and Effect

Match the historical cause in the left column with the proper effect in the right column by writing the correct letter on the blank line.

- | Cause   | Effect   |
|---|--|
| 1. ___ The evasion of the slavery issue by Whigs and Democrats in 1848                    | a. Was the predecessor of the antislavery Republican Party   |
| 2. ___ The California gold rush   | b. Fell apart after the leaking of the Ostend Manifesto  |
| 3. ___ The Underground Railroad   | c. Caused a tremendous northern protest and the birth of the Republican party  |
| 4. ___ The Free Soil Party  | d. Made the issue of slavery in the Mexican Cession areas more urgent  |
| 5. ___ The Compromise of 1850   | e. Created a short-lived national mood of optimism and reconciliation  |
| 6. ___ The Fugitive Slave Law   | f. Heightened competition between southern and northern railroad promoters over the choice of a transcontinental route |
| 7. ___ The Pierce administration's schemes to acquire Cuba                                | g. Led to the formation of the new Free-Soil antislavery party   |
| 8. ___ The Gadsden Purchase   | h. Aroused active northern resistance to legal enforcement and prompted attempts at nullification in Massachusetts     |
| 9. ___ Stephen Douglas's indifference to slavery and desire for a northern railroad route | i. Led to the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, without regard for the consequences                                  |
| 10. ___ The Kansas-Nebraska Act   | j. Aroused southern demands for an effective fugitive-slave law  |