



15.3 THE TRIUMPH OF THE REPUBLICANS

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| SUPPORT FOR REPUBLICANS INCREASES | The REPUBLICANS were a SECTIONAL PARTY, with no need to compromise with a southern wing. Support for the new party increased because of a series of events in the mid- to late 1850s, including events in Kansas, an attack on a respected northern senator, and a controversial Supreme Court decision. |
| Bleeding Kansas | When KANSAS was organized in the fall of 1854, a BITTER CONTEST began FOR CONTROL OF ITS TERRITORIAL GOVERNMENT. In the first territorial elections, proslavery settlers combined with thousands of illegal Missouri voters to give the proslavery forces victory. However, free-soilers, who were the majority of the actual territorial residents, established a rival government under a constitution outlawing slavery. A SMALL-SCALE CIVIL WAR ERUPTED, culminating in May 1856 when proslavery forces attacked the antislavery town of Lawrence. A bloody reprisal was carried out by the antislavery fanatic JOHN BROWN and his followers at Pottawatomie Creek. For Republicans, "BLEEDING KANSAS" became a potent symbol of the existence of an aggressive slave power. Another symbol soon appeared in the U.S. Senate, where the hardcore ANTISLAVERY MASSACHUSETTS SENATOR CHARLES SUMNER WAS BEATEN UNCONSCIOUS by the South Carolinian Preston Brooks for having insulted in a speech Brooks's relative, Senator Andrew P. Butler. |
| Attack on Anti-Slavery Mass. Sen. Charles Sumner | |
| Dred Scott Decision | Many hoped to see the troubling territorial issue resolved once and for all by a Supreme Court ruling. That opportunity came with the <i>DRED SCOTT CASE</i> . After his master's death, slave Dred Scott sued for his freedom on the basis that he had lived for many years in an area (the Wisconsin Territory) where slavery had been outlawed by the Missouri Compromise. The majority ruled against Scott, with Chief Justice Roger Taney proclaiming that BECAUSE SCOTT WAS NOT A CITIZEN HE COULD NOT SUE. Taney further argued that NO AFRICAN AMERICAN, SLAVE OR FREE, COULD BE A CITIZEN. But the most significant part of the ruling was the court's declaration that CONGRESS HAD NO POWER TO PROHIBIT SLAVERY IN ANY TERRITORY. The decision made popular sovereignty an untenable solution to the territorial issue and undermined the Democrats while giving a boost to Republican claims of a slaveholder conspiracy. |
| Abraham Lincoln | By the time of the <i>Dred Scott</i> decision, Abraham Lincoln had become a successful railroad lawyer in Illinois, but politics was his real passion. His idol was Henry Clay, and like Clay, LINCOLN PRACTICED a politics of MODERATION AND PRAGMATISM, especially on the issues of Union, slavery, and race. He opposed the Kansas-Nebraska Act because it effectively destroyed the Missouri Compromise, yet Lincoln accepted slavery where it existed. Still, he was convinced that slaveholders formed an aggressive and dangerous conspiracy to nationalize slavery. By 1858, Lincoln had so impressed Illinois Republicans that they decided to pit him against Stephen Douglas, the North's premier Democrat, in that year's Senate race. |
| The Lincoln-Douglas Debates | The 1858 Lincoln-Douglas debates attracted enormous crowds and received wide attention. By the time they ended, Lincoln's eloquent and passionate attacks on slavery had made him nationally prominent. AT THE HEART OF THE DEBATES WAS THE ISSUE OF SLAVERY. LINCOLN ARGUED THAT SLAVERY WAS WRONG, but he was NOT AN ABOLITIONIST and shared many northern whites' belief in WHITE SUPREMACY and in the CONSTITUTION'S PROTECTION OF SLAVERY where it existed. However, he made it clear he OPPOSED THE INSTITUTION'S SPREAD. DOUGLAS maintained in the FREEPORT DOCTRINE that settlers could still KEEP SLAVERY OUT OF THE TERRITORIES BY REFUSING TO PASS PROTECTIVE LAWS and accused the Republicans of promoting sectional conflict, of wishing to interfere with slavery in the South, |
| Freeport Doctrine | |

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| | <p>and of advocating social equality of the races. Though DOUGLAS ultimately WON REELECTION, Lincoln emerged from the contest with a growing following both in and beyond the state.</p> |
| <p>THE UNION COLLAPES</p> | <p>By the late 1850s, many Southerners had begun to fear that they could not protect slavery and their way of life if they remained Americans. Events in late 1859 and early 1860 heightened SOUTHERN ANXIETY about northern attitudes and policies, and threats of secession became increasingly common among slaveholders.</p> |
| <p>John Brown's Raid</p> | <p>JOHN BROWN was a New Englander by birth, who had taken an active part in the bloody struggle in Kansas. Now that Kansas was secured, he hoped to seize the arsenal at Harper's Ferry, free the blacks in the neighborhood, retreat to some strong-hold in the mountains, and force the emancipation of slaves in the South by making property in slaves an insecure business. In the autumn of 1859, he SEIZED THE NATIONAL ARSENAL AT HARPER'S FERRY and BEGAN TO FREE THE SLAVES in the neighborhood. Troops were soon hurried to the spot and the little band was overpowered. Some of the men were shot in the struggle. Brown himself, with several others, was captured. They were speedily BROUGHT TO TRIAL, CONVICTED, AND HANGED. He died with dignity, causing some northern abolitionists to praise both him and his tactics. Although MOST NORTHERNERS REPUDIATED BROWN, SOUTHERNERS became CONVINCED that SUCH FANATICISM WAS SUPPORTED BY THE REPUBLICAN PARTY and that the North would resort to similar slave uprisings to put an end to the institution.</p> |
| <p>Increase in Sectional Tension</p> | <p>Between John Brown's execution and the presidential election of 1860, a number of events INCREASED SECTIONAL TENSION. A convention of southern businessmen demanded the reopening of the AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE; Chief Justice Taney declared northern PERSONAL LIBERTY LAWS UNCONSTITUTIONAL; the business of electing a Speaker of the House almost became violent; and Jefferson Davis demanded a FEDERAL SLAVE CODE for the territories.</p> |
| <p><u>Democratic Party Split Over Slavery:</u> North: Douglas South: Breckenridge</p> | <p>The DEMOCRATIC PARTY WAS TORN APART BY THE CONFLICT OVER SLAVERY. When the party convention endorsed popular sovereignty, delegates from eight Lower South states walked out, and the remaining delegates later nominated STEPHEN DOUGLAS. In the meantime, Lower South Democrats met and nominated Kentuckian JOHN C. BRECKENRIDGE. Still another group, made up of conservatives, formed the Constitutional Union party, nominating Tennessean John Bell as their standard-bearer. This hastily thrown-together party endorsed the Union but remained silent on slavery.</p> |
| <p>Const. Union Party (John Bell)</p> | |
| <p><u>Election of 1860:</u> Republican Victory Abraham Lincoln <u>Platform:</u> Tariff, Internal Improvements, Homestead Bill, Pacific RR</p> | <p>Smelling victory, the Republicans worked to broaden their party base with a platform that endorsed PROTECTIVE TARIFFS, INTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS, a HOMESTEAD BILL, and a PACIFIC RAILROAD to be built with federal financial assistance. It supported the right of existing slave states to maintain the system. The Republican convention nominated ABRAHAM LINCOLN as the party's presidential candidate, and he won the presidency with a majority of the electoral votes and 39 percent of the fragmented popular vote. Most Southerners viewed the election as a catastrophe.</p> |
| <p>SECESSION</p> | <p>Almost as soon as the news of Lincoln's election reached the South, the region's militant "FIRE-EATERS" DEMANDED AN END TO THE UNION. Within weeks, the secession process had begun. Unionists argued that the South should wait and see what Lincoln did in office, but secessionists emphasized the urgency of the moment and the dangers of delay. The South's minority status made it impossible for Southerners to defend slavery within the Union. SOUTH CAROLINA seceded first, on December 20, 1860. By February 1861, SIX OTHER DEEP SOUTH STATES had withdrawn from the Union and sent representatives to Montgomery, Alabama, to form the Confederate States of America. EIGHT SOUTHERN STATES REMAINED UNDECIDED. Congressional efforts at forging a compromise failed. When President-elect Lincoln arrived in Washington for his inauguration, nothing had been</p> |

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| DISCUSSION QUESTIONS | <p>resolved. Despite Lincoln's conciliatory statements about respecting slavery in the South, he made it clear that secession would not be tolerated.</p> <p>Though the North and the South had divided over issues since the colonial era, compromises and solutions had always been found to preserve the union. But the extended crisis from 1846 to 1861 over the EXPANSION OF SLAVERY BROUGHT THE NATION TO A CRITICAL JUNCTURE. By secession winter, many doubted that the nation could survive "permanently half slave and half free," as Lincoln put it. But if the rupture of the union was inevitable, it remained to be seen whether this would mean war.</p> <p>Although the Republican party was a sectional party, it was able to win the presidential election of 1860. How do you explain this? The following website may help you formulate your answer: http://www.multied.com/elections/1860.html</p> |
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