



Coming Apart:

Crises of the late 1850s

Announcements and looking ahead

- **Survey closes tonight at midnight.** I'll review them over the weekend and will briefly discuss your answers on Monday.
- **Office hours today**, 1-3 pm by zoom
- You will receive an email this afternoon with your **TA assignment**. TAs will begin holding office hours next week.
- **Next week:** We'll be covering Lincoln's election, secession and the establishment of the Confederacy, and the early phases of the fighting.
 - Heaviest reading assignment is Monday
- **There will be a quiz on Monday that will cover reading.** Together with a neighbor or two, you will complete the quiz in class, but do not submit answers until we have reviewed as a class.

Lincoln letter to Joshua Speed, Aug. 24, 1855

- Joshua Speed
 - Long-term, close friend of Lincoln
 - From Kentucky; father enslaved over 50 people
- Context
 - Fallout from KS-NB Act
 - President Franklin Pierce had just removed the territorial governor from KS
 - Andrew Reeder
 - Democrat, supported the KS-NB Act, but wanted a fair vote for the territory's representative to Congress
 - Competing pro- and anti-slavery governments forming in the state
 - Sacking of Lawrence (antislavery stronghold); John Brown's group massacres people at Potawattomie
 - “Bloody Monday” – violent attacks on immigrants had occurred earlier that same month in Louisville, Kentucky
 - Over twenty killed

Lincoln to Speed

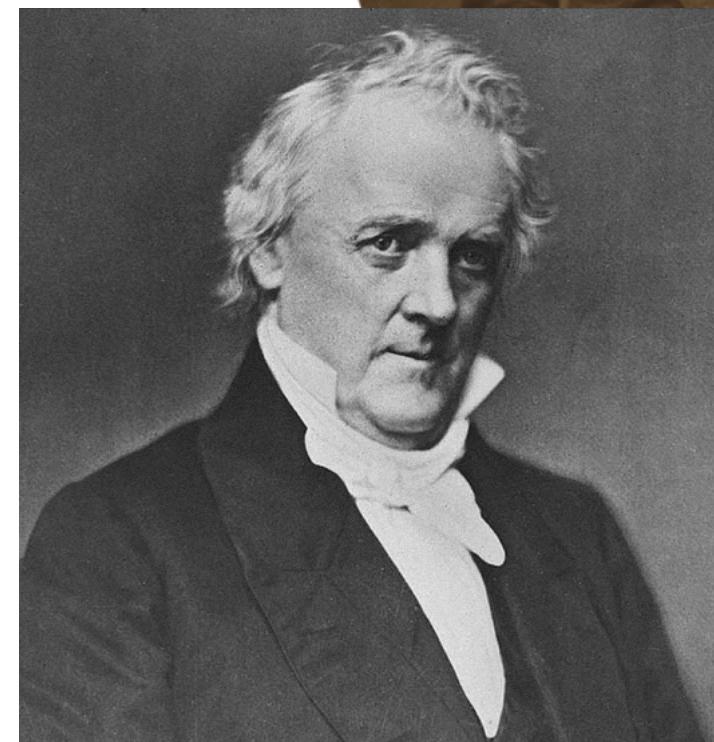
- Points to political cowardice
 - People claim to stand against violence, but then vote along party lines
 - And support policies that make violence inevitable
 - He argues that the KS-NB Act was “conceived in violence, passed in violence, is maintained in violence, and is being executed in violence.”
 - “You inquire where I now stand. That is a disputed point – I think I am a whig; but others say there are no whigs, and that I am an abolitionist. When I was at Washington I voted for the Wilmot Proviso as good as forty times, and I never heard of any one attempting to unwhig me for that. I now do no more than oppose the extension of slavery.”
 - “I am not a Know-Nothing. That is certain. How could I be? How can any one who abhors the oppression of negroes, be in favor of degrading classes of white people?”

Lincoln to Speed

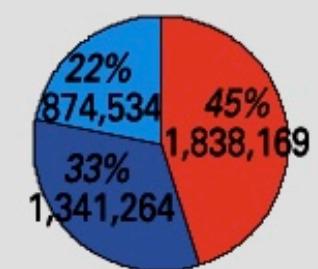
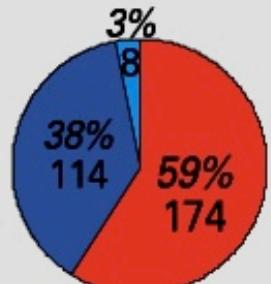
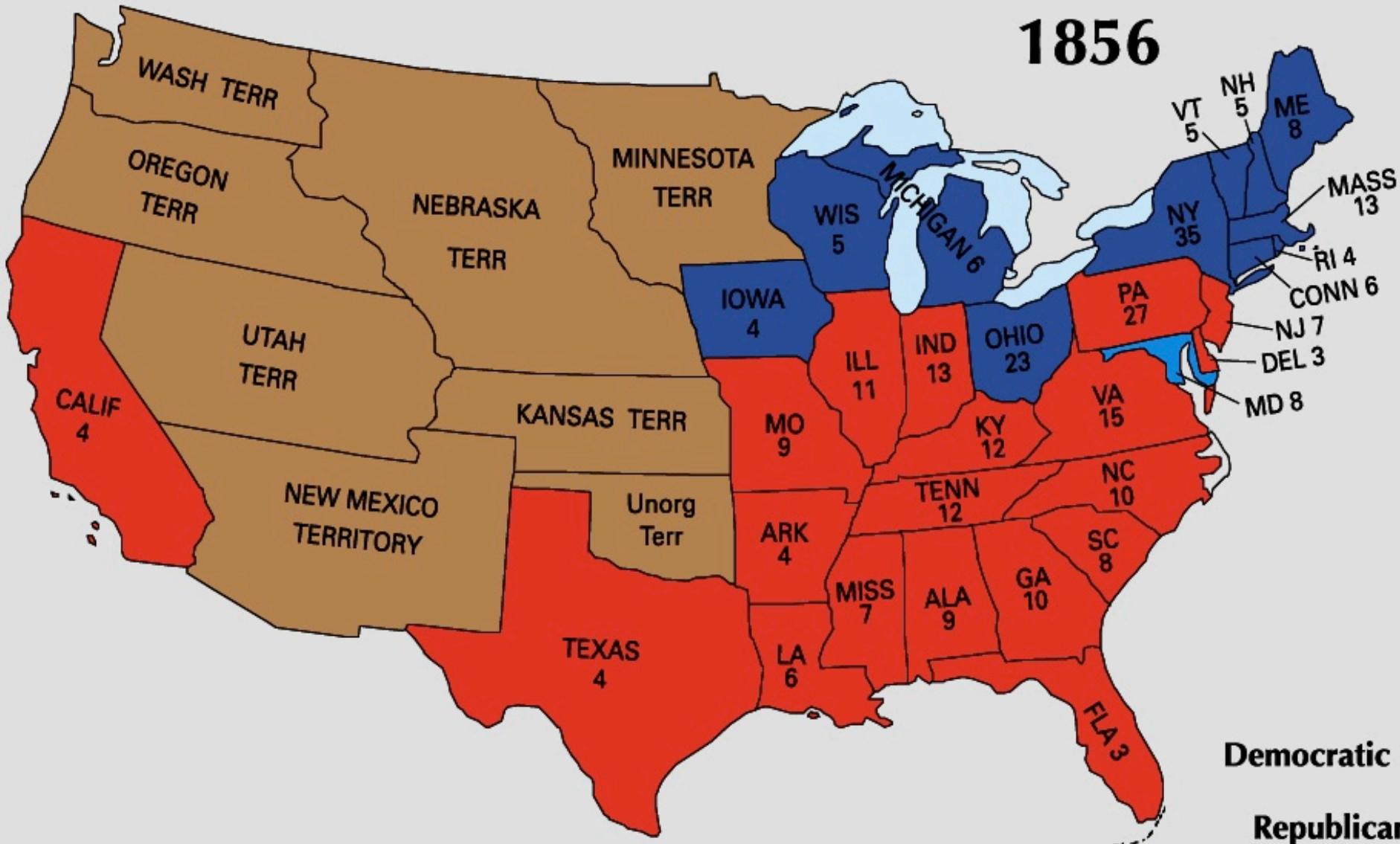
- “Our progress in degeneracy appears to me to be pretty rapid. As a nation, we began by declaring that “all men are created equal.” We now practically read it “all men are created equal, except negroes” When the Know-Nothings get control, it will read “all men are created equal, except negroes, and foreigners, and Catholics.” When it comes to this I should prefer emigrating to some country where they make no pretence of loving liberty – to Russia, for instance, where despotism can be taken pure, and without the base alloy of hypocrisy.”

1856 election

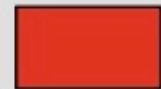
- Republican candidate: John C. Frémont (explorer)
 - Condemned the Kansas-Nebraska Act
 - Denounced “Slave Power” and the expansion of slavery
- Democrat candidate James Buchanan
 - “Doughface” – Northerner sympathetic to the South
 - Supported idea of popular sovereignty
 - Determined to put the slavery issue to rest
- American Party (“Know-Nothings”): Former President Millard Fillmore



1856



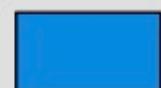
Democratic (Buchanan)



Republican (Fremont)



American-Know Nothing-Whig (Fillmore)



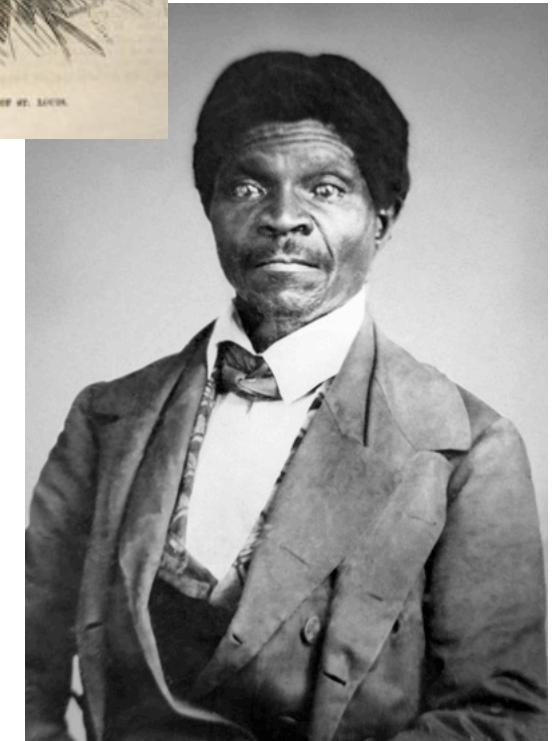
Territories

Dred Scott decision

- *Dred Scott* decision announced immediately following inauguration
 - Massively reinforced beliefs about a Slave Power conspiracy
- Background of case
 - Scott born around 1800
 - In 1830s, Scott's enslaver (a US army officer) had taken him to Illinois and the Wisconsin Territories, where they stayed for some 4 years
- 1846: Scott sued for his freedom
 - Claimed that residence in free state and territory made him free
- 1854: Lost and appealed to the Supreme Court

Harriet Scott

- Met Dred Scott when both worked as personal servants for officers at Fort Snelling in St. Paul, MN
- Couple married in a civil ceremony performed by Harriet's "owner," a justice of the peace
 - Meant that she became the "property" of Dred Scott's enslaver
- Fact that they were legally married figured in Scott's suit
 - He claimed it showed that he was free



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NEW YORK, SATURDAY, JUNE 27, 1857.

[PRICE 6 CENTS.

TO TOURISTS AND TRAVELLERS.
We shall be happy to receive personal narratives, of land or sea, including adventures and incidents, from our readers, who may care to communicate with our paper.

We take this opportunity of thanking our
various overseas correspondents throughout
the country, for the many sketches we are
constantly receiving from them of the news of the
day. We hope they will continue to send us
with drawings of results as they may occur.
We would also request them that it is necessary to
send all sketches, if possible, by the earliest opportunity.

VISIT TO DRED SCOTT—HIS FA-
MILY—INCIDENTS OF HIS LIFE
—DECISION OF THE SUPREME
COURT.

WORLD standing in the Fair grounds at St. Louis, and engaged in conversation with a prominent citizen of that enterprising city, he suddenly asked us if we would like to be introduced to Dred Scott. Upon our assenting, the despatched, the gentleman called to an old negro who was standing near by, and our wish was gratified. Dred made a rude obeisance to our recognition, and seemed to enjoy the notice we expended upon him. We found him to be a small African, perhaps fifty years of age, with a shrewd, intelligent, good-natured face, of rather light frame, being not more than five feet six inches high. After some general

efforts before, through correspondents, and failed, and own business, and let dat nigger 'lose'! Some of dose days day'll

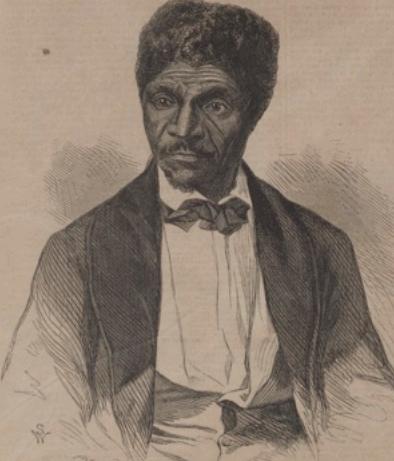
remarks we expressed a wish to get his portrait (we had made) | asked him if he would not go to Fitzgibbon's gallery and | steal dat nigger—that are a fact."



LIZA AND JESSIE, CHILDREN OF DRED SCOTT.

have it taken. The gentleman present explained to Dred that it was proper he should have his likeness in the "great illustrated paper of the country," overruled his many objections, which seemed to grow out of a superstitious feeling, and he promised to go to the gallery the next day. This determination Dred did not keep. Determined not to be trifled with, we sought an interview with Mr. Crase, Dred's lawyer, who promptly gave us a letter of introduction, explaining to Dred that it was to his advantage to have his picture taken to be copied for our paper, and also directed where we could find his domicile. We found the place with difficulty, the streets in Dred's neighborhood being more closely defined in the plan of the city than on the mother earth; we finally reached a wooden house, however, presided over by a balcony that overlooked the description of the house in the door. There saw a smart, tidy-looking negress, perhaps thirty years of age, who, with two female assistants, was busy ironing. To our question, "Is this where Dred Scott lives?" we received, rather hesitatingly, the answer, "Yes." Upon our asking if he was home, she said, "No."

"What white man arter dat nigger for?—why don't white man 'read' to his



DRED SCOTT. PHOTOGRAPHED BY FITZGIBBON, OF ST. LOUIS.



HIS WIFE, HARRIET. PHOTOGRAPHED BY FITZGIBBON, OF ST. LOUIS.

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A black and white portrait of Justice Roger B. Taney, an elderly man with white hair, wearing a dark coat and a white cravat. He is standing behind a wooden bench with books on it.

Justice Roger B. Taney

- Former slave owner
 - Had emancipated slaves he inherited in 1818
 - Catholic
- From Baltimore, Maryland
 - Large free Black community
- African Americans had voted in MD prior to 1802
- Had been the MD and US Attorney General
- Chief Justice from 1836-1864
- *Pennsylvania v. Prigg* (1842)
 - Determined that state laws could not contravene the federal Fugitive Slave Law
 - But Taney wanted to go further:
 - Protested the idea that states could refuse to cooperate with enforcement

Dred Scott v. Sandford (1857)

- Supreme Court had to decide:
 - Was Scott a citizen, so that his suit had standing?
 - Did residence in a free state make one free?
 - There was much precedent for this; “once free always free”
 - Freedom suits in Missouri
 - This required answering the question: Did state laws banning slavery supersede property rights?
- The Court took on an *additional* question:
 - Did Congress have the power to prohibit slavery in a territory?
 - Or: was the Missouri Compromise – a piece of federal legislation – constitutional?
 - Power of “judicial review” had only been asserted once before (1803)
- Answer, articulated by Chief Justice Roger B. Taney (Democrat, MD): NO on ALL counts (!)
 - Vote was 7-2; one justice resigns in protest

Dred Scott, cont.

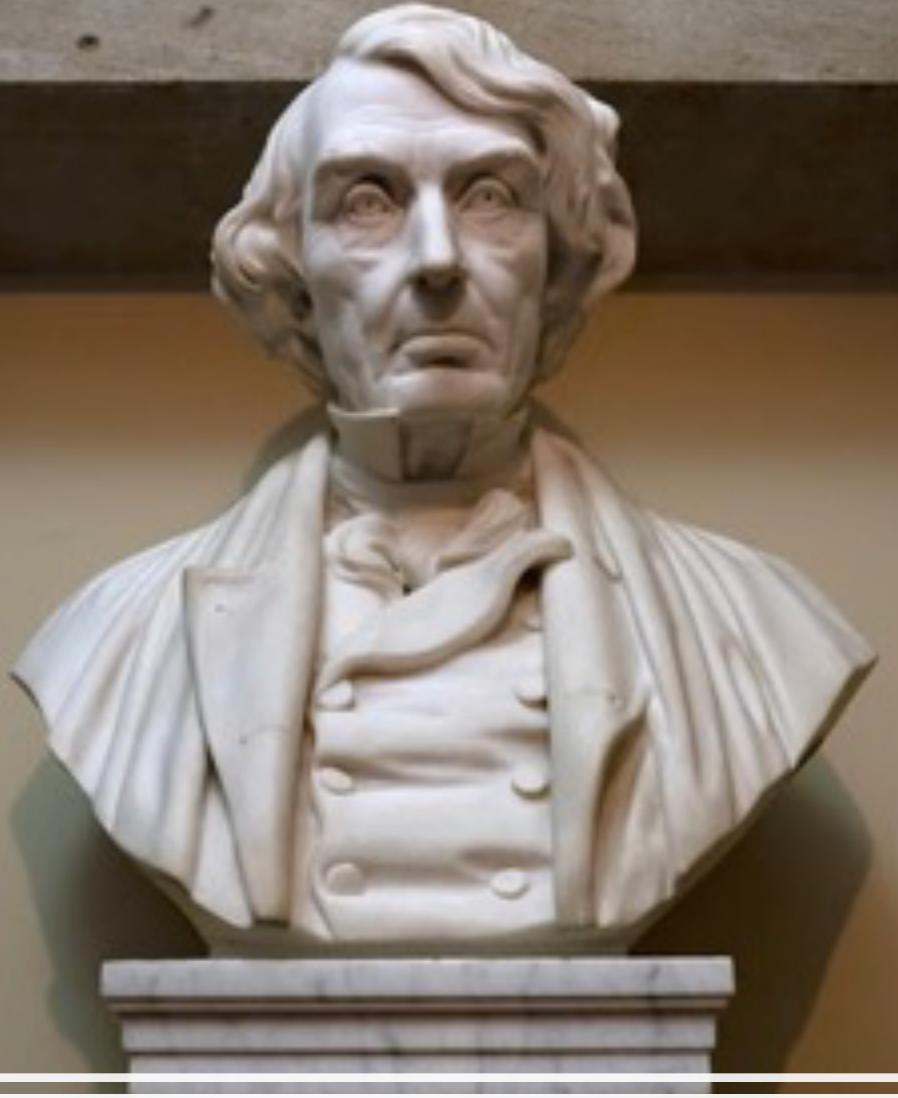
- Taney: Since before the founding of the republic, African Americans were *“regarded as beings of an inferior order...so far inferior that **they had no rights which the white man was bound to respect.**”*
 - Note: he’s not just talking about the enslaved; he’s talking about Black people *in general*
- Rewriting history
 - Free African Americans had enjoyed many of the rights of citizenship
 - Held property, entered contracts, brought suits in court, and exercised rights of speech, press, and assembly
 - In some states, propertied African Americans had even voted

Dred Scott, cont.

- Missouri Compromise was *unconstitutional* (!)
 - Deprived slaveowners of their property without due process or just compensation
 - Violation of 5th Amendment
- Implication of decision: no territorial legislature could ban slavery
 - Undermined concept of “popular sovereignty”
 - Only states (not federal government) could ban slavery
- African Americans were not and could never become U.S. citizens
 - Dred Scott had no standing to bring his suit

- Removal of statue Taney from the grounds of the Maryland State House in Annapolis, August 18, 2017





Bust of Taney in the US Capitol; removed in February 2023

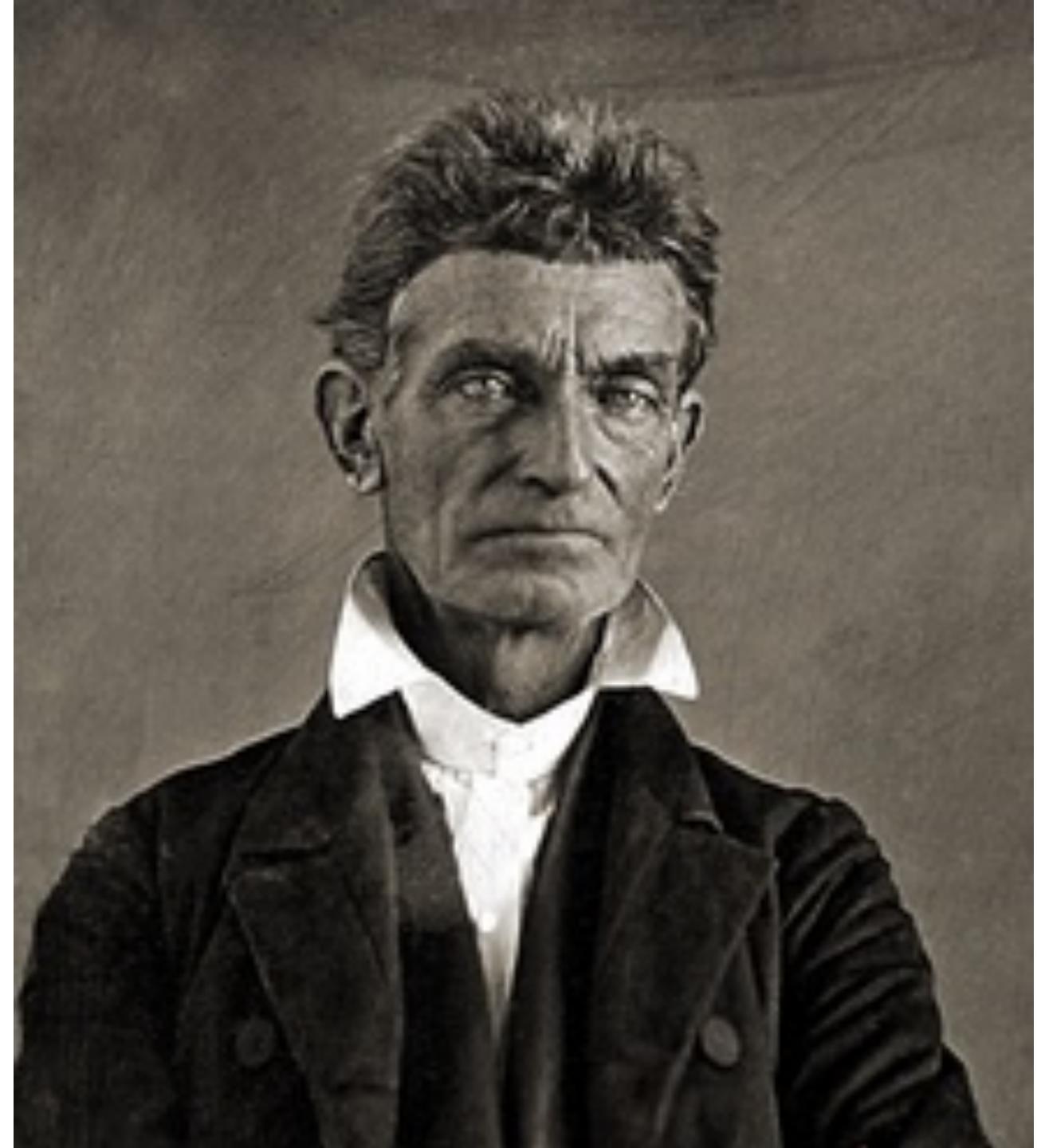
ROGER B. TANEY.
Fifth Chief Justice
Supreme Court U.S.

Lincoln-Douglas debate at Freeport, Illinois

- August 1858
- Lincoln to Douglas: how can you reconcile popular sovereignty with *Dred Scott v. Sandford*?
 - Decision denied Congress the power to exclude slavery from a territory
 - How could residents “in any lawful way” ban slavery before statehood?
- Douglas: residents of a territory refuse to pass a slave code
 - “Slavery cannot exist a day or an hour anywhere, unless it is supported by local police regulations.”
 - Came to be known as the Freeport Doctrine
- Infuriated southerners, who now began calling for a *federal* slave code
 - Would have made the nationalization of slavery complete

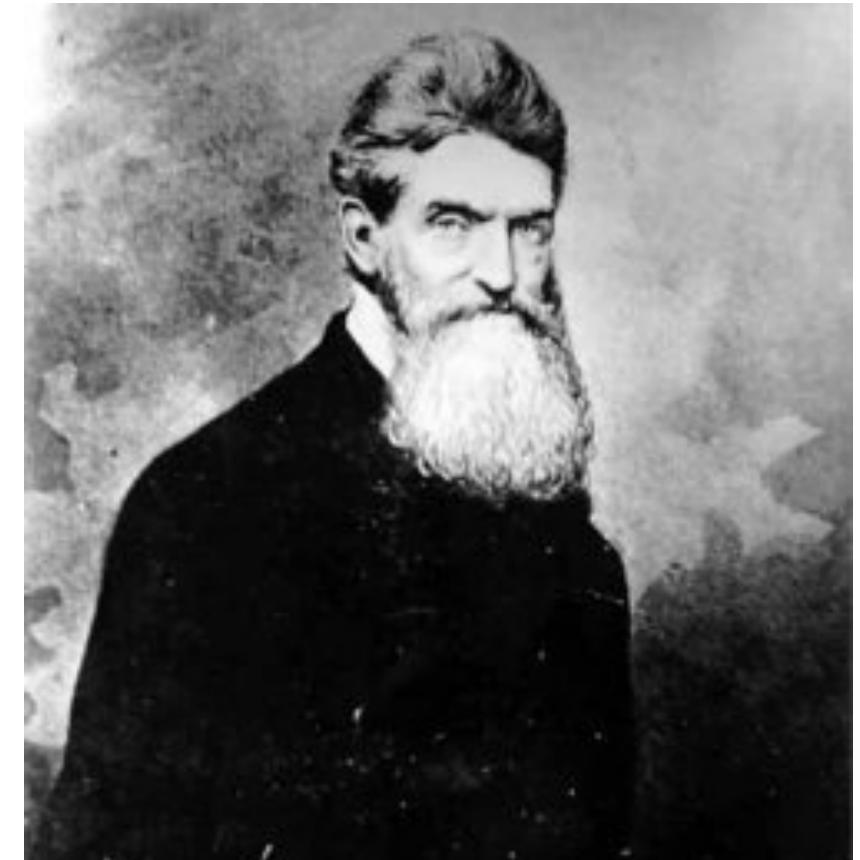
John Brown (1800-1860)

- Strict Calvinist background
- Fathered 20 children; also adopted an African American child
- Failed at numerous businesses
- Frederick Douglass: “*though a white gentleman, [Brown] is in sympathy a black man, and as deeply interested in our cause, as though his own soul had been pierced with the iron of slavery.*”



John Brown's Raid

- Brown and 18 followers launched a raid on Harper's Ferry, VA, in October 1858
 - Quickly arrested
 - Robert E. Lee and J.E.B. Stuart helped to retake the Arsenal for the US government
- Celebration of Brown by some northerners shocked southern communities
 - Recall what Ed Ayres (in video) says about what each side read in newspapers about the other
- Cast a pall over the presidential elections in 1859
- Hung on Dec. 2, 1859, soon after Lincoln's election



Brown's famous quotations

- Upon hearing his sentence: “*...if it is deemed necessary that I should forfeit my life for the furtherance of the ends of justice, and mingle my blood further with the blood of my children and with the blood of millions in this slave country whose rights are disregarded by wicked, cruel, and unjust enactments--I submit; so let it be done!*”
- Before going to the gallows: “*I John Brown am now quite certain that the crimes of this guilty, land: will never be purged away; but with Blood. I had as I now think: vainly flattered myself that without very much bloodshed; it might be done.*”



