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Chapter 19 - Drifting Toward Disunion

I. Stowe and Helper: Literary Incendiaries

1. In 1852, Harriet Beecher Stowe published *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, a popular book that awakened the passions of the North toward the evils of slavery.
 - In one line, it's about the splitting up of a slave family and the cruel mistreatment of likeable Uncle Tom by a cruel slave master.
 - The book sold millions of copies, and overseas, British people were charmed by it.
 - The South cried foul, saying Stowe's portrayal of slavery was wrong and unfair.
 - The book helped Britain stay out of the Civil War because its people, who had read the book and had now denounced slavery because they sympathized with Uncle Tom, wouldn't allow intervention on behalf of the South.
2. Another book, *The Impending Crisis of the South*, written by Hinton R. Helper, a non-aristocratic white North Carolinian, tried to prove, by an array of statistics, that the non-slave-holding Southern whites were really the ones most hurt by slavery.
 - Published in the North, this book and *Uncle Tom's Cabin* were both banned in the South, but widely read in the North. They drove the North—South wedge deeper.

II. The North-South Contest for Kansas

1. Northerners began to pour into Kansas, and Southerners were outraged, since they had supported the Compromise of 1850 under the impression that Kansas would become a slave state.
2. Thus, on election day in 1855, hordes of Southerners "border ruffians" from Missouri flooded the polls and elected Kansas to be a slave state; free-soilers were unable to stomach this and set up their own government in Topeka.
 - Thus, confused Kansans had to choose between two governments: one illegal (free government in Topeka) and the other fraudulent (slavery government in Shawnee).
3. In 1856, a group of pro-slavery raiders shot up and burnt part of Lawrence, thus starting violence.

III. Kansas in Convulsion

1. John Brown, a crazy man (literally), led a band of followers to Pottawatomie Creek in May of 1856 and hacked to death five presumable pro-slaveryites.
 - This brutal violence surprised even the most ardent abolitionists and brought swift retaliation from pro-slaveryites. “Bleeding Kansas” was earning its name.
2. By 1857, Kansas had enough people to apply for statehood, and those for slavery devised the Lecompton Constitution, which provided that the people were only allowed to vote for the constitution “with slavery” or “without slavery.”
 - However, even if the constitution was passed “without slavery,” those slaveholders already in the state would still be protected. So, slaves would be in Kansas, despite the vote.
 - Angry free-soilers boycotted the polls and Kansas approved the constitution with slavery.
3. In Washington, James Buchanan had succeeded Franklin Pierce, but like the former president, Buchanan was more towards the South, and firmly supported the Lecompton Constitution.
4. Senator Stephen Douglas, refusing to have this fraudulent vote by saying this wasn’t true popular sovereignty, threw away his Southern support and called for a fair re-vote.
5. Thus, the Democratic Party was hopelessly divided, ending the last remaining national party for years to come (the Whigs were dead and the Republicans were a sectional party).

IV. “Bully” Brooks and His Bludgeon

1. “Bleeding Kansas” was an issue that spilled into Congress: Senator Charles Sumner was a vocal anti-slaveryite, and his blistering speeches condemned all slavery supporters.
2. Congressman Preston S. Brooks decided that since Sumner was not a gentleman he couldn’t challenge him to a duel, so Brooks beat Sumner with a cane until it broke; nearby, Senators did nothing but watched, and Brooks was cheered on by the South.
3. However, the incident touched off fireworks, as Sumner’s “The Crime Against Kansas” speech was reprinted by the thousands, and it put Brooks and the South in the wrong.

V. “Old Buck” versus “The Pathfinder”

1. In 1856, the Democrats chose James Buchanan, someone untainted by the Kansas-Nebraska Act and a person with lots of political experience, to be their nomination for presidency against Republican John C. Fremont, a fighter in the Mexican-American War.
2. Another party, the American Party, also called the “Know-Nothing Party” because of its secrecy, was organized by “nativists,” old-stock Protestants against immigrants, who nominated Millard Fillmore.
 - These people were anti-Catholic and anti-foreign and also included old Whigs.
 - The campaign was full of mudslinging, which included allegations of scandal and conspiracy.

- Fremont was hurt by the rumor that he was a Roman Catholic.

VI. The Electoral Fruits of 1856

1. Buchanan won because there were doubts about Fremont's honesty, capacity, and sound judgment.
2. Perhaps it was better that Buchanan won, since Fremont was not as strong as Lincoln, and in 1856, many people were still apathetic about slavery, and the South could have seceded more easily.

VII. The Dred Scott Bombshell

1. On March 6, 1857, the Dred Scott decision was handed down by the Supreme Court.
 - Dred Scott was a slave whose master took him north into free states where he lived for many years. After his master's death, he sued for his freedom from his new master, claiming that he had been in free territory and was therefore free. The Missouri Supreme Court agreed, freeing him, but his new master appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, which overruled the decision.
2. Outcomes or decisions of the case...
 - Chief Justice Roger Taney said that no slave could be a citizen of the U.S. in his justification.
 - The Court said a legislature/Congress cannot outlaw slavery, as that would go against the 5th Amendment saying a person's property cannot be taken without due process of law. This was the bombshell statement.
 - The Court then concluded the Missouri Compromise had been unconstitutional all along (because it'd banned slavery north of the 36° 30' line and doing so was against the second point listed above).
3. The case inflamed millions of abolitionists against slavery and even those who didn't care much about it.
4. Northerners complained; Southerners were ecstatic about the decision but inflamed by northern defiance, and more tension built.
5. The North—South scoreboard now favored the South undeniably. The South had (1) the Supreme Court, (2) the president, and (3) the Constitution on its side. The North had only Congress (which was now banned from outlawing slavery).
 - Reasons the Constitution favored the South...
 1. the Supreme Court just said so with the Dred Scott decision and it is the Supreme Court that interprets the Constitution
 2. the 5th Amendment said Congress could not take away property, in this case, slaves
 3. it could be argued that slavery *is* in the Constitution by way of the Three-Fifths Compromise
 4. it could be argued slavery *is not* in the Constitution since the word "slavery" is not present, but using this argument, the 10th Amendment said anything not in the Constitution is left up to the states, and the Southern states would vote for slavery.

VIII. The Financial Crash of 1857

1. Psychologically, the Panic of 1857 was the worst of the 19th century, though it really wasn't as bad as the Panic of 1837.
It's causes were
 - California gold causing inflation,
 - over-growth of grain,
 - over-speculation, as always, this time in land and railroads.
2. The North was especially hard hit, but the South rode it out with flying colors, seemingly proving that cotton was indeed king and raising Southern egos.
3. Also, in 1860, Congress passed a Homestead Act that would provide 160 acres of land at a cheap price for those who were less-fortunate, but it was vetoed by Buchanan.
 - This plan, though, was opposed by the northeast, which had long been unfriendly to extension of land and had feared that it would drain its population even more, and the south, which knew that it would provide an easy way for more free-soilers to fill the territories.
4. The panic also brought calls for a higher tariff rate, which had been lowered to about 20% only months before.

IX. An Illinois Rail-Splitter Emerges

1. In 1858, Senator Stephen Douglas' term was about to expire, and against him was Republican Abraham Lincoln.
 - Abe was an ugly fellow who had risen up the political ladder slowly but was a good lawyer, had a down-home common sense about him, and a pretty decent debater.

X. The Great Debate: Lincoln Versus Douglas

1. Lincoln rashly challenged Douglas, the nation's most devastating debater, to a series of seven debates, which the Senator accepted, and despite expectations of failure, Lincoln held his own.
2. The most famous debate came at Freeport, Illinois, where Lincoln essentially asked, "Mr. Douglas, if the people of a territory voted slavery down, despite the Supreme Court saying that they could not do so (point #2 of the Dred Scott decision), which side would you support, the people or the Supreme Court?"
 - "Mr. Popular Sovereignty," Douglas replied with his "Freeport Doctrine," which said that no matter how the Supreme Court ruled, slavery would stay down if the people voted it down; tsince power was held by the people.
3. Douglas won the Illinois race for senate, but more people voted for Abe, so he won the moral victory.
 - Plus, Douglas "won the battle but lost the war" because his answer in the Freeport Doctrine caused the South to dislike him even more.
 - The South had loved Douglas prior to this due to his popular sovereignty position, but then came the Kansas pro-slavery vote which

he'd shot down.

- Then the Freeport Doctrine came down where he turned his back on the Supreme Court's pro-South decision).
- This Freeport statement ruined the 1860 election for presidency for him, which was what he really wanted all along.

XI. John Brown: Murderer or Martyr?

1. John Brown now had a plan to invade the South, seize its arms, call upon the slaves to rise up and revolt, and take over the South and free it of slaves. But, in his raid of Harper's Ferry, Virginia, the slaves didn't revolt, and he was captured by the U.S. Marines under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Robert E. Lee and convicted of treason, sentenced to death, and hanged.
2. Brown, though insane, was not stupid, and he portrayed himself as a martyr against slavery, and when he was hanged, he instantly became a martyr for abolitionists; northerners rallied around his memory. Abolitionists were infuriated by his execution (as they'd conveniently forgotten his violent past).
3. The South was happy and saw justice. They also felt his actions were typical of the radical North.

XII. The Disruption of the Democrats

1. After failing to nominate a candidate in Charleston, South Carolina, the Democrats split into Northern and Southern factions, and at Baltimore, the Northern Democrats nominated Stephen Douglas for president while the Southern Democrats chose John C. Breckinridge.
2. Meanwhile, the "Know-Nothings" chose John Bell of Tennessee and called themselves the Constitutional Union party. They tried to mend fences and offered as their platform, simply, the Constitution.

XIII. A Rail-Splitter Splits the Union

1. The Republicans, sensing victory against their split opponents, nominated Abraham Lincoln, not William "Higher Law" Seward.
2. Their platform had an appeal to every important non-southern group: for free-soilers it proposed the non-expansion of slavery; for northern manufacturers, a protective tariff; for the immigrants, no abridgement of rights; for the West, internal improvements at federal expense; and for the farmers, free homesteads.
3. Southerners threatened that Lincoln's election would result in Southern secession.
4. Lincoln wasn't an outright abolitionist, since as late as February 1865, he had still favored cash compensation for free slaves.
5. Abe Lincoln won the election despite not even being on the ballot in the South.

XIV. The Electoral Upheaval of 1860

1. Lincoln won with only 40% of the popular vote, and had the Democratic Party been more organized and energetic, they might have won.

2. It was a very sectional race: the North went to Lincoln, the South to Breckinridge, the “middle-ground” to the middle-of-the-road candidate in Bell, and popular-sovereignty-land went to Douglas.
3. The Republicans did not control the House or the Senate, and the South still had a five-to-four majority in the Supreme Court, but the South still decided to secede.

XV. The Secessionist Exodus

1. South Carolina had threatened to secede if Lincoln was elected president, and now it went good on its word, seceding in December of 1860.
 - Alabama, Mississippi, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas (the Deep South) followed in the next six weeks, before Abe was inaugurated.
 - The seven secession states met in Montgomery, Alabama in February of 1861 and created the Confederate States of America, and they chose Jefferson Davis as president.
2. President Buchanan did nothing to force the confederacy back into the Union, partly because the Union troops were needed in the West and because the North was still apathetic toward secession; he simply left the issue for Lincoln to handle when he got sworn in.

XVI. The Collapse of Compromise

1. In a last-minute attempt at compromise (again), James Henry Crittenden of Kentucky proposed the Crittenden Compromise, which would ban slavery north of the 36°30' line extended to the Pacific and would leave the issue in territories south of the line up to the people; also, existing slavery south of the line would be protected.
2. Lincoln opposed the compromise, which might have worked, because his party had preached against the extension of slavery, and he had to stick to principle.
3. It also seems that Buchanan couldn't have saved the Union no matter what he would have done.

XVII. Farewell to Union

1. The seceding states did so because they feared that their rights as a slaveholding minority were being threatened, and were alarmed at the growing power of the Republicans, plus, they believed that they would be unopposed despite what the Northerners claimed.
2. The South also hoped to develop its own banking and shipping, and to prosper.
3. Besides, in 1776, the 13 colonies had seceded from Britain and had won; now the South could do the same thing.

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