

Antebellum America: Political

The Polk Presidency

- Election of 1844
 - James Polk vs Henry Clay
 - Polk won narrowly (rip Henry Clay)
- Kept government funds in the treasury (as apposed to Jackson's pet banks)
- Oregon Treaty
 - Northerners demanded the annexation of Oregon in order to balance the annexation of Texas
 - Oregon Treaty was signed with Britain in 1846, which allowed US to claim Oregon, Washington and parts of Idaho
- Mexican American War
 - Mexican American War broke out after baiting the agitated Mexicans to start war
 - Whigs and Northerners disapproved the war
 - **Wilmot Proviso**: prohibited the extension of slavery to any territory gained from Mexico
 - Failed to pass
 - Evoked the suspicion of "Slave power" - that the government was controlled by a few powerful slave owners
 - Americans won the war easily
 - Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo granted America Arizona, New Mexico, California, Nevada and Utah in return of 15 million \$
 - Posed major problem in regards of slavery
- Popular sovereignty
 - the territories themselves would decide whether to allow slavery
 - Southerners saw the future of slavery confined, thus, wanted to open up more areas to slavery

The Compromise of 1850

- The debate over the status of California was very heated
- Thus, Henry Clay and Stephen Douglas carried out the Compromise of 1850
 - California admitted California as a free state
 - In return, fugitive slave law was reinforced
 - Territories of Utah and New Mexico would decide the status of slavery on their own (popular sovereignty)
 - Abolished slave trade

- *Uncle Tom's Cabin* represented antislavery sentiment in the North

The Kansas-Nebraska Act

- Reason
 - Illinois senator Stephen Douglas promoted the Kansas-Nebraska Act because he wanted the transcontinental railroad to terminate in Illinois, which would bring money to his hometown
 - To do so, he formed a coalition with the Southerners who wanted to repeal the Missouri Compromise.
- Content
 - Made Kansas and Nebraska determined by popular sovereignty instead of obeying the Missouri Compromise
- Amplified more tension
 - The Kansas-Nebraska Act made the Northerners felt betrayed
 - Bleeding Kansas
 - Both abolitionists and proslavery groups rushed into the territories, hoping to gain control of the territory
 - Violence broke out when proslavery Missourians (called Border Ruffians) started fighting abolitionists led by John Brown

Dred Scott v. Sandford

- Scott, a former slave, sued his master Sandford when he was taken to a state where slavery was illegal.
- Supreme Court Judge Roger Taney ruled against Scott and declared that black people were properties.
- The decision also nullified Missouri Compromise

Lincoln Douglas Debate & Election of 1860

- Lincoln Douglas debate occurred in 1858 for the senate seat in Illinois
- Lincoln forced Douglas to defend popular sovereignty, which became known as the Freeport Doctrine. It destroyed Douglas's political career by alienating both Northerners and Southerners.
- Lincoln won the Election of 1860 despite not gaining any vote from the South
- South Carolina and six other states seceded from the Union before Lincoln's inauguration to form the Confederate States of America.

Election of 1860