

Lecture 14: *Civil War*

Examine 1850's and describe why at the end of decade that 11 states will secede from the U.S.

Expansion of Slavery

- 1848, nation deeply divided over issue of fate of Western territories
- Proslavery advocates envision land open to expansion to slavery
- Free Soil Party forms
- Argument rooted in competing ideas of freedom and West as beacon for economic betterment

Summary

1848 U.S. Mexican-American war ends – massive acquisition of land

Land open or closed to slavery?

South used proslavery arguments in King Cotton lecture to justify that slavery should extend in the west

➔ Extend the “Cotton Kingdom”

1848 Free Soil Party is established (Competing with current Whigs and Democrats)

- ➔ Not an abolition party
- ➔ Slavery is fine in current states but to be stopped westward
- ➔ Economic argument
 - In order for the west would be open to wage labor
- ➔ Labor should be rewarded and slaves do not get paid
- ➔ Open competitive wage economy is closed if slavery is allowed to expand
- ➔ Appealed to northerners who wanted to own land in the west
 - Operate a commercial farm like those that came out of the Market Revolution
 - Preserve a future of wage labor

BOTH sides center their language it what FREEDOM meant to them

California and “Compromise”

- 1850 – California petitions for admission
- Compromise of 1850:
 - CA as a free state
 - Fugitive Slave Act
- Only 157 runaways returned, but further widens sectional divide:
 - Agitated abolitionists, civil disobedience, flee U.S.
- Compromise defers long-term, larger issue of slavery in the west

Summary

California was the first state (1848) where this question of slavery or no slavery was brought up in terms of state admittance.

Some thought slavery should be split into 2

People poured into the state of California because

1. Gold Rush
2. It is a free state

Congress passed the Fugitive Slave Act as a concession in making California a free state

Fugitive Slave Act – Runaway slaves found would have to be returned to their “owners”

- ➔ Gave South states the ability to hunt runaway slaves that have escaped into the north and bring them back to the south
- ➔ Also required states by this act to return slaves that before were not compelled to do this

Slavery is a threat to the value of labor

Abolitionists were hated by the north and the south because they were radical in this time period

Free Soil Party gave many northerners a reason to not support the expansion of slavery westward

Fuels divide between Southerners and Abolitionists

Served as a band aid for the overall problem of slavery

Compromise of 1850 (California Compromise)



Summary

Green = states closed to slavery

- ➔ Closed on admittance to the U.S.
- ➔ Abolished and ended slavery

Blue = states open to slavery

UNORGANIZED TERRITORY

- ➔ Still open for debate

Anthony Burns

- Escapes in 1853, arrested in 1854
- Mob of abolitionists storm the courthouse
- Boston under martial law
- Fuels abolitionism
- Burns finally free, moves to Canada, dead at 28

Summary

Symbolizes the Fugitive Slave Act and its effect on slaves

FLASHPOINT EVENT

Abolitionists would not accept Burns being given back to slave holders

Revolutionary violence and some believed it was right to kill to change society

Civil Disobedience

➔ Abolitionists broke the law in the name of a higher “law”

Fugitive Slave Act no longer abstract and Anthony Burns was the face of this act

On the side of enforcement or on the side of abolition

Owner sold Burns to an Abolitionist Society and left U.S. and fled to Canada

Uncle Tom's Cabin

- 1852:
 - 300,000 copies
 - 1 million by 1854
- 20 languages in 5 years, stage plays
- Slaves as human, men and women, Christian
- Slavery as violent, brutal
- Northerners as villains
- Made all complicit in slavery

Summary

Influencing and changing attitudes and opinions on slavery

Core argument of abolition

They are children of God

They deserve to be free

Novelists are not constrained and can speak to the injustices of slavery with vivid and relatable characters or dialogue

Kansas/Nebraska Act (1854) and Sectional Divide

- Idea of popular sovereignty
- Repeal of Missouri Compromise
 - Slavery now possible north of Missouri
- Federal government out of slavery issue
- Smashes political order

Summary

Congress passes Kansas/Nebraska Act that furthers divide over slavery

Stephen A. Douglas wanted to build a transcontinental railroad that would connect the east coast to the west coast

Slave question for Kansas and Nebraska

Popular sovereignty – those living in the territories could vote on the issue of slavery

Federal government is not involved in the abolishment or expansion of slavery

Colin Morris-Moncada
HIST 200

Whig Party is divided

Northern Whigs

Southern Whigs

Missouri admitted into union as slave state

➔ Going forward all territory north of southern border of Missouri would be closed to slavery