



Compromises Fail

Objectives

1. Summarize the main points of the Compromise of 1850.
2. Describe the impact of the novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.
3. Explain how the Kansas-Nebraska Act reopened the issue of slavery in the territories.
4. Describe the effect of the Kansas-Nebraska Act.

Main Idea

The key part of the Compromise of 1850 related to the Fugitive Slave Act.

Prepare to Read

Reading Skill

Analyze Effects The important events of the 1850s had far-reaching effects around the nation. As you read Section 2, try to identify and understand these effects. Remember that two events do not necessarily have a cause-and-effect link just because they occur in sequence. Use signal words such as *result* to help you identify effects.

Vocabulary *Builder*

High-Use Words

deprive, p. 487

impose, p. 490


Key Terms and People

Harriet Beecher Stowe, p. 488

propaganda, p. 488

Stephen Douglas, p. 489

John Brown, p. 491

 **Background Knowledge** In the previous section, you learned how many Americans hoped that Henry Clay's proposed compromise would quiet the controversy over slavery. Their hopes were soon dashed. In this section, you will learn how new disputes about slavery destroyed the compromise and led to new crises.

The Compromise of 1850

In September 1850, Congress finally passed five bills based on Clay's proposals. This series of laws became known as the Compromise of 1850. President Zachary Taylor had opposed the Compromise. However, Taylor died in 1850. The new President, Millard Fillmore, supported the Compromise and signed it into law.

To Please the North The Compromise of 1850 was designed to end the crisis by giving both supporters and opponents of slavery part of what they wanted. To please the North, California was admitted to the Union as a free state. In addition, the Compromise banned the slave trade in the nation's capital. (However, Congress declared that it had no power to regulate the slave trade between slave states.)

To Please the South Under the terms of the Compromise, popular sovereignty would be used to decide the question of slavery in the rest of the Mexican Cession. People in the states created from that territory would vote whether to be a free state or a slave state when they requested admission to the Union. Also, in return for agreeing to outlaw the slave trade in Washington, D.C., southerners got a tough new fugitive slave law.

The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 allowed special government officials to arrest any person accused of being a runaway slave. Suspects had no right to a trial to prove that they had been falsely accused. All that was required to **deprive** them of their freedom was for a slaveholder or any white witness to swear that the suspect was the slaveholder's property. In addition, the law required northern citizens to help capture accused runaways if authorities requested assistance.

Outrage in the North The Fugitive Slave Act became the most controversial part of the Compromise of 1850. Many northerners swore that they would resist the hated new law.

Northerners were outraged to see people accused of being fugitive slaves deprived of their freedom. An Indiana man was torn from his wife and children and given to an owner who claimed the man had escaped 19 years earlier. A wealthy African American tailor was carried back to South Carolina after living in New York for years. His friends quickly raised enough money to buy his freedom. But most who were shipped south remained there. Thousands of northern African Americans fled to the safety of Canada, including many who had never been enslaved.

In city after city, residents banded together to resist the Fugitive Slave Law. When two white Georgians arrived in Boston to seize fugitives, Bostonians threatened the slave catchers with harm if they did not leave the city right away. Another group rescued an accused runaway and sent him to safety in Canada. When the mob leaders were arrested, local juries refused to convict them.

John C. Calhoun had hoped that the Fugitive Slave Law would force northerners to admit that slaveholders had rights to their property. Instead, every time the law was enforced, it convinced more northerners that slavery was evil.

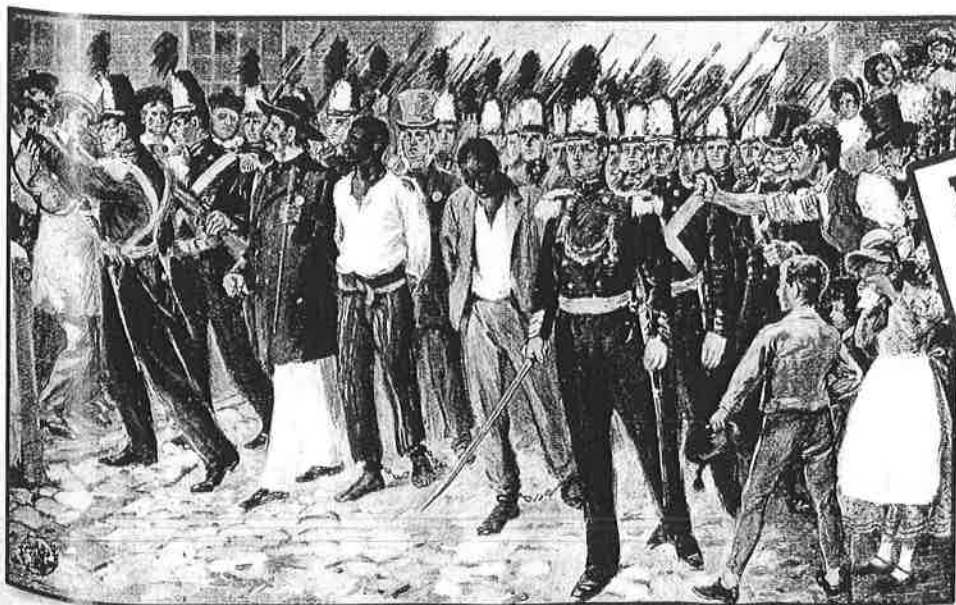
Checkpoint How did the Compromise of 1850 deal with the admission of California to the Union?

Vocabulary Builder

deprive (dee PRIV) v. to keep from happening; to take away by force or intent

Returned to Slavery

Guarded by federal troops, fugitives Anthony Burns and Thomas Sims are captured in Boston and returned to enslavement in South Carolina. Below is a poster distributed by a southern slaveholder. **Critical Thinking: Draw Conclusions** What details show the attitude of Bostonians to the return of Burns and Sims?



Main Idea

Anger over the Fugitive Slave Act led Harriet Beecher Stowe to write the antislavery novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

Uncle Tom's Cabin

One northerner deeply affected by the Fugitive Slave Act was Harriet Beecher Stowe. The daughter of an abolitionist minister, Stowe met many people who had escaped from slavery. She decided to write "something that will make this whole nation feel what an accursed thing slavery is."

In 1852, Stowe published *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, a novel about kindly Uncle Tom, an enslaved man who is abused by the cruel Simon Legree. In this passage, Tom dies after a severe beating:

"Tom opened his eyes, and looked upon his master. . . .
'There an't no more ye can do! I forgive ye with all my soul!'
and he fainted entirely away.

'I b'lieve, my soul, he's done for, finally,' said Legree, stepping forward, to look at him. 'Yes, he is! Well, his mouth's shut up, at last,—that's one comfort!'"

—Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Chapter 38



Analyze Effects

What was one effect of Harriet Beecher Stowe's horror over slavery? What word in this paragraph highlights the cause-effect link?

Stowe's book was a bestseller in the North. It shocked thousands of people who previously had been unconcerned about slavery. As a result, readers began to view slavery as more than just a political conflict. It was a human, moral problem facing every American.

Many white southerners were outraged by Stowe's book. They criticized it as *propaganda, false or misleading information* spread to further a cause. They claimed the novel did not give a fair or accurate picture of the lives of enslaved African Americans.

Checkpoint What impact did *Uncle Tom's Cabin* have?

Discovery
SCHOOL

Explore More Video

To learn more about Harriet Beecher Stowe's book, view the video.

Uncle Tom's Cabin The novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* had an impact that lasted long after slavery ended. An original illustration from the book and a scene on a decorative plate are shown here.

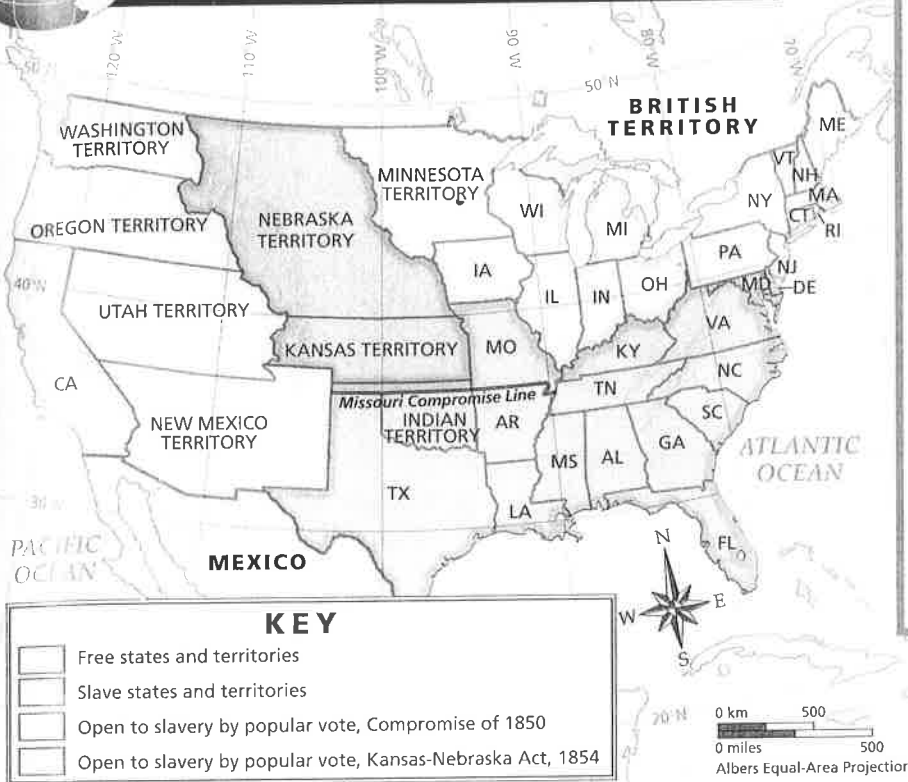
Critical Thinking: Identify Costs You are a northerner during the 1850s. A fugitive comes to your door seeking help. Will you help her? List the costs and benefits of helping the person.



Slavery After the Kansas-Nebraska Act

MAP MASTER

Skills Activity



The Compromise of 1850 and the Kansas-Nebraska Act threatened to upset the balance between slave and free states.

- Read a Map Key Which areas did the Kansas-Nebraska Act open to slavery?
- Clarify Problems What happened to the Missouri Compromise after 1854?

MapMaster online

For: Interactive map
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The Kansas-Nebraska Act

The nation moved closer to war after Congress passed the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854. The act was pushed through by Senator Stephen Douglas. Douglas was eager to develop the lands west of his home state of Illinois. He wanted to see a railroad built from Illinois through the Nebraska Territory to the Pacific Coast.

In 1853, Douglas suggested forming two new territories—the Kansas Territory and the Nebraska Territory. Southerners at once objected. Both territories lay in an area closed to slavery by the Missouri Compromise. This meant that the states eventually created from these territories would enter the Union as free states.

To win southern support, Douglas proposed that slavery in the new territories be decided by popular sovereignty. Thus, in effect, the Kansas-Nebraska Act undid the Missouri Compromise.

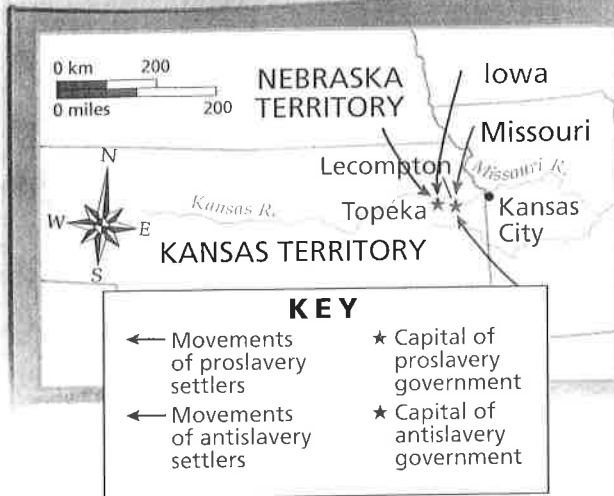
As Douglas hoped, southerners supported the Kansas-Nebraska Act. They were sure that slave owners from Missouri would move across the border into Kansas. In time, they hoped that Kansas would enter the union as a slave state.

Northerners, however, were outraged by the Kansas-Nebraska Act. They believed that Douglas had betrayed them by reopening the issue of slavery in the territories. "The more I look at it the more enraged I become," said one northern senator of Douglas's bill. "It needs but little to make me an out-and-out abolitionist."

Main Idea

The Kansas-Nebraska Act allowed settlers in the territories to decide whether their territory would allow slavery.

Links to Geography



Bleeding Kansas

The migration of proslavery and antislavery settlers into Kansas led to the outbreak of violence known as Bleeding Kansas. **Critical Thinking:**

Interpret Maps Why did some proslavery settlers take a more southerly route than did antislavery settlers?

After months of debate, southern support enabled the Kansas-Nebraska Act to pass in both houses of Congress. President Franklin Pierce, a Democrat elected in 1852, then signed the bill into law. Douglas predicted that, as a result of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, the slavery question would be “forever banished from the halls of Congress.” But events would soon prove how wrong he was.

Checkpoint How did Stephen Douglas’s plan undo the Missouri Compromise?

Main Idea

Kansas suffered widespread violence as proslavery and antislavery settlers battled for control.

Bleeding Kansas

The Kansas-Nebraska Act left it to the white citizens of the territory to decide whether Kansas would be free or slave territory. Both proslavery and antislavery settlers flooded into Kansas within weeks after Douglas’s bill became law. Each side was determined to hold the majority in the territory when it came time for the vote.

Thousands of Missourians entered Kansas in March 1855 to illegally vote in the election to select a territorial legislature. Although Kansas had only 3,000 voters, nearly 8,000 votes were cast on election day! Of 39 legislators elected, all but 3 supported slavery. The antislavery settlers refused to accept these results and held a second election.

Growing Violence Kansas now had two governments, each claiming the right to impose their government on the territory. Not surprisingly, violence soon broke out. In April, a proslavery sheriff was shot when he tried to arrest some antislavery settlers in the town of Lawrence. The next month, he returned with 800 men and attacked the town.

Vocabulary Builder

impose (ihm POHZ) v. to place a burden on someone or something

Three days later, John Brown, an antislavery settler from Connecticut, led seven men to a proslavery settlement near Pottawatomie (paht uh wah TOH mee) Creek. There, they murdered five proslavery men and boys.

These incidents set off widespread fighting in Kansas. Bands of proslavery and antislavery fighters roamed the countryside, terrorizing those who did not support their views. The violence was so bad that it earned Kansas the name Bleeding Kansas.

Bloodshed in the Senate Even before Brown's raid at Pottawatomie Creek, the violence in Kansas spilled over into the United States Senate. Charles Sumner of Massachusetts was the leading abolitionist senator. In a fiery speech, Sumner denounced the proslavery legislature in Kansas. He then attacked his southern foes, singling out Andrew Butler, an elderly senator from South Carolina.

Butler was not present the day Sumner made his speech. A few days later, however, Butler's nephew, Congressman Preston Brooks, marched into the Senate chamber. Using a heavy cane, Brooks beat Sumner until he fell to the floor, bloody and unconscious. Sumner never completely recovered from his injuries.

Many southerners felt that Sumner got what he deserved. Hundreds of people sent canes to Brooks to show their support. To northerners, however, Brooks's violent act was just more evidence that slavery was brutal and inhuman.

Checkpoint What was the outcome of the election to select a legislature in the Kansas Territory?

Looking Back and Ahead By 1856, all attempts at compromise had failed. The bitterness between the North and the South was about to alter the political landscape of the United States.



Analyze Effects

Describe the effect of the Kansas-Nebraska Act on Kansas.

Section 2 | Check Your Progress

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Comprehension and Critical Thinking

- (a) Recall** What parts of the Compromise of 1850 were included to please the North?
(b) Draw Conclusions Why do you think northerners were still not satisfied?
- (a) Recall** What was the Kansas-Nebraska Act?
(b) Evaluate Information How did the Kansas-Nebraska Act contribute to tension between the North and the South?

Reading Skill

- Analyze Effects** What was one effect of Harriet Beecher Stowe's book *Uncle Tom's Cabin*?

Vocabulary Builder

Complete the following sentence so that the second part further explains the first part and clearly shows your understanding of the key term.

- Many white southerners considered *Uncle Tom's Cabin* **propaganda**; _____ an unfair picture of slavery.

Writing

- Imagine that you are researching the effects of Harriet Beecher Stowe's book *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Write down five questions that would help you focus your research on this topic. The questions should point you to areas where you need to find more information about the influence of Stowe's book.