



# 3 The Crisis Deepens

## Objectives

1. Explain why the Republican Party came into being in the 1850s.
2. Summarize the issues involved in the Dred Scott decision.
3. Identify Abraham Lincoln's and Stephen Douglas's views on slavery.
4. Describe the differing reactions in the North and the South to John Brown's raid.

## Main Idea

The goal of the new Republican Party was to stop the spread of slavery into the western territories.



### Analyze Causes and Effects

How did growing northern concern about the growth of slavery affect the 1856 presidential election?

## Prepare to Read

### Reading Skill

#### Analyze Causes and Effects

Historians often disagree over exactly what caused the Civil War. As you read Section 3, watch carefully for cause-and-effect links. Analyzing these links will help you answer this difficult question for yourself. Remember that sometimes the link is not directly stated. Identify an event, then ask yourself: What caused this event to happen? What were the effects of this event?

## Vocabulary Builder

### High-Use Words

embrace, p. 496


clarify, p. 497

### Key People

Dred Scott, p. 495

Roger B. Taney, p. 495

Abraham Lincoln, p. 495

 **Background Knowledge** You have learned that bitterness between northerners and southerners over slavery weakened the nation's two major political parties. In this section, you will learn about a new party that rapidly came to dominate northern politics.

## A New Antislavery Party

As the Whig Party split apart in 1854, many northern Whigs joined a new political party. It was called the Republican Party, and its main goal was to stop the spread of slavery into the western territories. The Republicans' antislavery stand also attracted northern Democrats and Free-Soil Party members.

The Republicans quickly became a powerful force in politics. The congressional elections of 1854 were held only months after the party was founded. Of the 245 candidates elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, 105 were Republicans. Republican victories in state races also cost the Democrats control of all but two northern state legislatures.

Two years later, in 1856, the Republican Party ran its first candidate for President. It chose John C. Frémont, the army officer who had helped California win independence during the Mexican-American War. The Republicans waged a strong antislavery campaign. Although the Democrat James Buchanan was elected, Frémont won in 11 of the nation's 16 free states.

 **Checkpoint** What was the result of the election of 1856?

## The Dred Scott Decision

In March 1857—only three days after Buchanan took office—the U.S. Supreme Court delivered a shattering blow to antislavery forces. It decided the case of *Dred Scott v. Sandford*.

*Dred Scott* was an enslaved person who had once been owned by a U.S. Army doctor. The doctor, and Scott, lived for a time in Illinois and in the Wisconsin Territory. Slavery was illegal in both places. After leaving the army, the doctor settled with Scott in Missouri.

With the help of antislavery lawyers, Scott sued for his freedom. He argued that he was free because he had lived where slavery was illegal. In time, the case reached the Supreme Court. Neither northerners nor southerners were prepared for what the Court decided.

**The Court Decides** Chief Justice Roger B. Taney wrote the decision for the Court. Scott was not a free man, he said, for two reasons. First, according to Taney, Scott had no right to sue in federal court because African Americans were not citizens. Second, Taney said, merely living in free territory did not make an enslaved person free. Slaves were property, Taney declared, and property rights were protected by the U.S. Constitution.

But the ruling went even further. Taney wrote that Congress did not have the power to prohibit slavery in any territory. Thus, the Missouri Compromise was unconstitutional.

**Reaction** Supporters of slavery rejoiced at the Dred Scott decision. The decision meant that slavery was legal in all territories—just as white southern leaders had been demanding all along.

Northerners, however, were stunned. African American leaders such as Frederick Douglass condemned the ruling. Still, Douglass declared, “my hopes were never brighter than now.” He believed that outrage against the decision would bring more whites to the abolitionist cause.

Indeed, white northerners were also shocked by the ruling. Many had hoped that slavery would eventually die out if it were restricted to the South. Now, however, slavery could spread throughout the West.

One northerner who spoke out against the Dred Scott decision was an Illinois lawyer named *Abraham Lincoln*. The idea that African Americans could not be citizens, he said, was based on a false view of American history. In a very short time, Lincoln would become a central figure in the fight against the spread of slavery.

**Checkpoint** Why did Dred Scott claim he was no longer enslaved?

### Main Idea

The Dred Scott ruling meant that all American territories were open to slavery.

### Biography Quest



**Abraham Lincoln**  
1809–1865

Abraham Lincoln was not yet a nationally known figure in 1857. But he was well known in Illinois as a clever, successful lawyer and politician.

People liked Lincoln for his quick wit and down-to-earth approach. He was known as a good, straightforward speaker. Even so, a listener once complained that he could not understand a speech of Lincoln's. “There are always some fleas a dog can't reach,” was Lincoln's reply.

### Biography Quest online

**Why was Lincoln voted out of Congress after one term?**

**For:** The answer to the question about Lincoln

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# Links Across Time

## Elections and the Media

**1858** Americans followed the Lincoln-Douglas debates as telegraph reports circulated around the country.

**1960** Americans were for the first time able to watch presidential candidates debate live on television. Richard Nixon and John F. Kennedy debated before an enormous television audience. Many experts believe that the debates played a major role in Kennedy's victory.

## Link to Today Online

**Elections and the Media Today** The digital revolution is again changing American political campaigns. What media do candidates use today?

**For:** Voting and the media  
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### Main Idea

Abraham Lincoln took a strong stand against slavery's expansion in the Lincoln-Douglas debates.

### Vocabulary Builder

**embrace** (ehm BRAYS) v. to hold tight; to readily accept

## The Lincoln-Douglas Debates

Lincoln had had only a brief career in politics. After serving in the Illinois state legislature, he was elected to Congress as a Whig. There, he voted for the Wilmot Proviso. After a single term, he returned to Illinois to practice law.

Lincoln's opposition to the Kansas-Nebraska Act brought him back into politics, this time **embracing** the Republican cause. He had long been a rival of Illinois Senator Stephen Douglas, the author of the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Their rivalry was personal as well as political. Both men had courted Mary Todd, who married Lincoln.

**A House Divided** In 1858, Illinois Republicans chose Lincoln to run for the Senate against Douglas. Accepting the nomination, Lincoln made a stirring speech in favor of the Union:

“A house divided against itself cannot stand. I do not believe this government can endure, permanently, half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved—I do not expect the house to fall—but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other.”

—Abraham Lincoln, Springfield, Illinois, June 16, 1858

Lincoln did not state that he wanted to ban slavery. Still, many southerners became convinced that Lincoln was an abolitionist.

**Debating Slavery** Lincoln then challenged Douglas to a series of public debates. Thousands of people gathered to hear them speak. Newspapers throughout the nation reported what each man said.

Douglas strongly defended popular sovereignty. "Each state of this Union has a right to do as it pleases on the subject of slavery," he said. "In Illinois we have exercised that sovereign right by prohibiting slavery. . . . It is none of our business whether slavery exists in Missouri." Douglas also painted Lincoln as a dangerous abolitionist who wanted equality for African Americans.

Lincoln took a stand against the spread of slavery. He declared, "If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong." Lincoln predicted that slavery would die on its own. In the meantime, he said, it was the obligation of Americans to keep it out of the western territories.

In reply to Douglas, Lincoln stated: "I am not, nor ever have been in favor of bringing about in any way the social and political equality of the white and black races." But he did clarify this view. He insisted that "there is no reason in the world why the Negro is not entitled to all the rights enumerated in the Declaration of Independence, the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

In the end, Douglas won the Senate election. However, the debates had made Lincoln known throughout the country. Two years later, the men would be rivals again—this time for the presidency.

**Checkpoint** What position did Douglas take on slavery?

## John Brown's Raid

The nation's attention soon was captured by the actions of John Brown. Driven out of Kansas after the Pottawatomie Massacre, Brown had returned to New England. There he hatched a plot to raise an army and free people in the South who were enslaved.

In 1859, Brown and a small band of supporters attacked the town of Harpers Ferry in Virginia. His goal was to seize guns the U.S. Army had stored there. He thought that enslaved African Americans would support him. He would then give them weapons and lead them in a revolt.

Brown quickly gained control of the arms. But troops commanded by Colonel Robert E. Lee surrounded Brown's force before it could escape. Ten of Brown's followers were killed. Brown was wounded and captured.

### John Brown in Kansas

John Steuart Curry began painting this 10-foot-high mural in 1937. It shows John Brown as a fiery abolitionist with a rifle in one hand and a Bible in the other. **Critical Thinking: Detect Points of View** Based on this painting, do you think Curry admired John Brown?



### Vocabulary Builder

**clarify** (KLAIR ih fi) v. to make the meaning of something clear

### Main Idea

Northern support of John Brown shocked and angered southern slaveholders.



### Death of John Brown

Thomas Hovenden painted this portrait of a saintly John Brown. On his way to his death, Brown stops to kiss a child. Hovenden did not personally witness the events he showed here. **Critical**

**Thinking: Contrast** Compare this painting to the one on the previous page. How do these two paintings try to stir different emotions?

At his trial, Brown sat quietly as the court found him guilty of murder and treason. Before hearing his sentence, he gave a moving defense of his actions. The Bible, he said, instructed him to care for the poor and enslaved. "If it is deemed necessary that I should forfeit my life for the furtherance of the ends of justice . . . I say, let it be done." He showed no emotion as he was sentenced to death.

When the state of Virginia hanged Brown for treason on December 2, 1859, church bells across the North tolled to mourn the man who many considered a hero. But southerners were shocked. People in the North were praising a man who had tried to lead a slave revolt! More

than ever, many southerners were convinced that the North was out to destroy their way of life.

**Checkpoint** What was John Brown's goal in launching the raid on Harpers Ferry?

**Looking Back and Ahead** The nation had suffered one dispute after another over the expansion of slavery since the end of the Mexican-American War in 1846. By the election of 1860, talk of the breakup of the United States was everywhere. In the next section, you will read how that breakup came about.

## Section 3 Check Your Progress

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### Comprehension and Critical Thinking

- (a) Summarize** Which groups supported the newly formed Republican Party?

**(b) Draw Conclusions** How did the outcomes of the elections of 1854 and 1856 affect the Republican Party?
- (a) Identify** On what grounds did Dred Scott sue for his freedom in court?

**(b) Draw Conclusions** How did Taney's ruling further divide the North and the South?
- (a) Recall** What were the Lincoln-Douglas debates?

**(b) Apply Information** Why do you think the Lincoln-Douglas debates received national attention?

### Reading Skill

- Analyze Causes and Effects** Identify one cause and one effect of John Brown's raid. Why did Brown and his followers attack Harpers Ferry? What happened as a result?

### Writing

- Reread the paragraphs in this section that describe the Lincoln-Douglas debates. When you have finished, paraphrase the excerpt from Lincoln's Springfield speech. Remember, when you paraphrase, you restate something said by someone else, using only your own words.