

Objective: SS.912.A.2.1: Review the Causes and Consequences of Reconstruction.

Directions:

Read and Annotate. Answer the questions with each section. Be sure to use complete sentences and restate the question in your answer. Remember: **No Annotation, no Grade.**

A. The Divisive Politics of Slavery

MAIN IDEA The issue of slavery dominated U.S. politics in the early 1850s.

North and South had grown apart, each with its unique economy and society. The North was heavily industrialized, crossed by 20,000 miles of railroad track, and full of factories and booming cities. It was also home to new immigrants, who opposed slavery. The South remained a rural, agricultural society. Industry was not very well developed, and immigrants were few.

As Congress debated a bill to fund the Mexican War, Congressman David Wilmot of Pennsylvania tried to add an amendment. It would ban slavery from any territory acquired in the war. Most members of Congress from the North supported the idea; those from the South bitterly opposed it. The **Wilmot Proviso** twice passed the House but failed in the Senate.

The issue arose again when California applied for statehood as a free state in 1849. Southerners thought it should be a slave state since it mostly lay south of the Missouri Compromise line. Many Southerners threatened to pull their states from the Union. Henry Clay of Kentucky offered a compromise: admit California as a state but enact a stricter law for punishing runaway slaves. Clay won support from long-time foe Daniel Webster of Massachusetts, but John C. Calhoun of South Carolina led Southern opposition. When the compromise failed to pass, Senator Stephen Douglas of Illinois took charge. He won passage by submitting each part of the compromise as a separate bill. After eight months of debate, the Compromise of 1850 became law.

1) Why was the issue of slavery in the territories so important to the North and South?

2) How did the war with Mexico make the issue of slavery more complicated?

B. Resistance and Violence

MAIN IDEA Proslavery and antislavery factions disagreed over the treatment of fugitive slaves and the spread of slavery to the territories.

The Fugitive Slave Law outraged many in the North. Nine Northern states passed laws that banned the imprisonment of fugitive slaves and guaranteed jury trials to African Americans charged with being escaped slaves.

Free blacks and sympathetic whites created a network of safe houses that escaping slaves could use on their way North. The route was called the Underground Railroad. The

most famous “conductor” on the railroad was Harriet Tubman, herself an escaped slave.

The debate over slavery was inflamed by the publication of **Uncle Tom’s Cabin** by Harriet Beecher Stowe. The best-selling novel convinced many Northerners that slavery was a moral issue.

The politics of slavery reappeared in the debate over the Kansas and Nebraska territories. Stephen Douglas proposed giving the residents of Kansas and Nebraska the right to choose slavery or not. He called the idea “popular sovereignty,” meaning that the people would have the power to decide the issue. For the plan to work, however, Congress had to repeal the Missouri Compromise because that law had banned slavery from these lands. Despite loud opposition in the North, the plan passed in the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854.

With the slavery issue based on popular sovereignty, the territories would become slave or free depending on which side had more votes. Both antislavery Northerners and proslavery Southerners scrambled to settle Kansas. One fierce slavery opponent, John Brown, killed five proslavery people in a raid and started a small civil war that killed some 200 people from both sides.

The widening gulf between North and South had major effects on political parties. Some were torn apart internally, giving birth to new parties.

3) What impact did the book Uncle Tom’s Cabin have on the abolitionist movement?

4) How did the idea of “popular sovereignty” make things worse instead of better?

C. Slavery and Secession

MAIN IDEA A series of controversial events heightened the sectional conflict that brought the nation to the brink of war.

A number of events drove the final wedge between North and South. First came a Supreme Court decision called Dred Scott v. Sandford. Scott was a slave who had been taken to free states. He sued for his freedom saying that living in these free states made him free. Chief Justice Roger Taney announced the decision in March 1857. Taney denied Scott’s argument.

In Kansas, proslavery forces applied for statehood with a constitution allowing slavery, known as the Lecompton constitution. President James Buchanan—who owed his election to Southern votes—accepted the constitution even though most Kansans were against slavery. At Douglas’s urging, Congress passed a law requiring a vote on the constitution in Kansas. The constitution was defeated, satisfying Northerners but angering the South.

In 1858, Douglas came up for re-election for the Senate. Opposing him was a little-known lawyer, Republican Abraham Lincoln. In a series of debates across the state, Douglas defended popular sovereignty. Lincoln argued that slavery was immoral and that Congress had to pass a law to

exclude it from the territories. Douglas won, but Lincoln gained national fame.

In 1859, violence erupted again. John Brown, who had fought in “Bleeding Kansas,” attempted to stage a slave revolt. He and a small band seized the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia, hoping to obtain guns that could be used to arm slaves. Federal soldiers captured Brown. He was convicted of treason and hanged. Many in the North called Brown a martyr to freedom. Southerners began increasingly to call for secession—a breakup of the United States.

Sectional differences marred the election of 1860. The Republicans nominated Lincoln as their candidate for president. The Democratic Party split, with Northern Democrats naming Douglas and Southern Democrats choosing Vice-President John C. Breckenridge of Kentucky. A pro-Union fourth party backed John Bell of Tennessee.

Lincoln won the election, but all his votes came from the North. In many states in the South his name did not even appear on the ballot. Convinced that a Republican president meant there would be laws passed to abolish slavery, the

Southern states began to leave the Union. South Carolina seceded on December 20, 1860. Six others followed. These states joined in February 1861 to form the Confederacy, or the Confederate States of America. A convention chose

Jefferson Davis of Mississippi as president of the Confederacy.

President Buchanan did nothing to stop the Southern states. Lincoln didn't take over until March.

5) Explain the significance of John Brown.

6) How did sectionalism ultimately cause the breakup of the United States of America?