

1 Growing Tensions Between North and South

TERMS & NAMES

Wilmot Proviso
Free-Soil Party
Henry Clay
Daniel Webster
Stephen A.
Douglas
Compromise
of 1850

MAIN IDEA

Disagreements between the North and the South, especially over the issue of slavery, led to political conflict.

WHY IT MATTERS NOW

Regional differences can make national problems difficult to resolve.

ONE EUROPEAN'S STORY

Alexis de Tocqueville [TOHK•vihl] was a young French government official from a wealthy family. In 1831, he sailed across the Atlantic Ocean to study American prisons and politics.

At one point, Tocqueville traveled in a steamship down the Ohio River. The river was the border between Ohio, a free state, and Kentucky, a slave state. Tocqueville noted what he saw on both sides of the river.

A VOICE FROM THE PAST

The State of Ohio is separated from Kentucky just by one river; on either side of it the soil is equally fertile, and the situation equally favourable, and yet everything is different. Here [on the Ohio side] a population devoured by feverish activity, trying every means to make its fortune. . . . There [on the Kentucky side] are people who make others work for them and show little compassion, a people without energy, mettle or the spirit of enterprise. . . . These differences cannot be attributed to any other cause but slavery. It degrades the black population and enervates [saps the energy of] the white.

Alexis de Tocqueville, *Journey to America*

In this section, you will read about the differences between the North and the South. You will also read about how these differences caused political tensions that threatened to tear the nation apart.

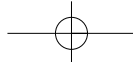


Alexis de Tocqueville

North and South Take Different Paths

As you read in Chapter 11, the economies of the North and the South developed differently in the early 1800s. Although both economies were mostly agricultural, the North began to develop more industry and commerce. By contrast, the Southern economy relied on plantation farming.

The growth of industry in the North helped lead to the rapid growth of Northern cities. Much of this population growth came from immigration. In addition, immigrants and Easterners moved west and built farms in the new states formed from the Northwest Territory. Most canals and railroads ran east and west, helping the Eastern and Midwestern states develop strong ties with each other.

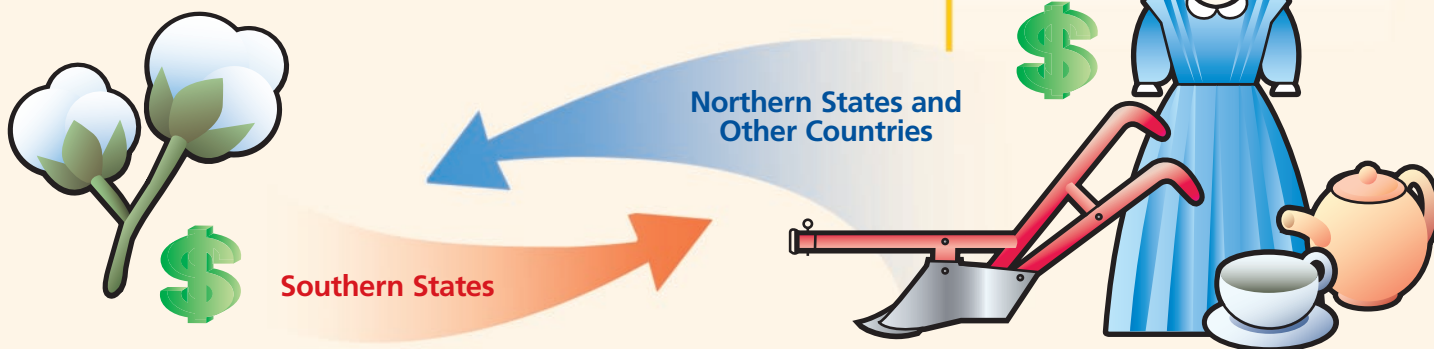


Economics *in* History

Trade


Trade is based on a simple idea. If you have something someone else needs or wants, and that person has something you need or want, you exchange, or trade, those two things. After the trade, you should both be better off than before.

The concept of trade works similarly for groups of people. For example, in the early 1800s, the South had few factories. Planters who wanted manufactured goods usually had to buy them from manufacturers in the North or in Europe. To have the cash to buy those goods, Southerners sold other goods, such as cotton, to the North and other countries. Each sold the goods they could produce in order to get money to buy the goods they could not make.



CONNECT TO HISTORY

1. Solving Problems What problem does trade help a country solve? How else could a country solve this problem?

 See Skillbuilder Handbook, page R18.

CONNECT TO TODAY

2. Comparing What goods do Americans sell to other countries today? What goods do Americans buy from other countries?

For more about trade . . .

 **RESEARCH LINKS**
CLASSZONE.COM

The South developed differently than the North. A few wealthy planters controlled Southern society. They made great profits from the labor of their slaves. Much of this profit came from trade. Planters relied on exports, especially cotton. Because these plantations were so profitable, planters invested in slaves instead of industry. As a result, the South developed little industry.

Most Southern whites were poor farmers who owned no slaves. Many of these people resented the powerful slaveholders. But poor whites accepted slavery because it kept them off the bottom of society.

Antislavery and Racism

The issue of slavery caused tension between the North and the South. In the North, the antislavery movement had slowly been gaining strength since the 1830s. Abolitionists believed that slavery was unjust and should be abolished immediately. Many Northerners who opposed slavery took a less extreme position. Some Northern workers and immigrants opposed slavery because it was an economic threat to them. Because slaves did not work for pay, free workers feared that managers would employ slaves rather than them. Some workers were even afraid that the expansion of slavery might force workers into slavery to find jobs.

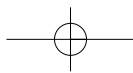
Despite their opposition to slavery, most Northerners, even abolitionists, were racist by modern standards. Many whites refused to go to

ReadingHistory

A. Making

Generalizations

How did the economies of the North and the South differ?



school with, work with, or live near African Americans. In most states, even free African Americans could not vote.

Vocabulary

racist: having prejudice based on race

When Northern attacks on slavery increased, slaveholders defended slavery. Most offered the openly racist argument that white people were superior to blacks. Many also claimed that slavery helped slaves by introducing them to Christianity, as well as providing them with food, clothing, and shelter throughout their lives. Slaveholders were determined to defend slavery and their way of life. In this way, the different ideas about slavery brought the North and the South into conflict.

The Wilmot Proviso

After the Missouri Compromise in 1820, political disagreements over slavery seemed to go away. But new disagreements arose with the outbreak of the War with Mexico in 1846. Many Northerners believed that Southerners wanted to take territory from Mexico in order to extend slavery. To prevent that, Representative David Wilmot of Pennsylvania proposed a bill, known as the **Wilmot Proviso**, to outlaw slavery in any territory the United States might acquire from the War with Mexico.

But slaveholders believed that Congress had no right to prevent them from bringing slaves into any of the territories. They viewed slaves as property. The Constitution, they claimed, gave equal protection to the property rights of all U.S. citizens. The Wilmot Proviso removed the right of slaveholders to take their slaves, which they regarded as property, anywhere in the United States or its territories. Southerners claimed that the bill was unconstitutional.

The Wilmot Proviso divided Congress along regional lines. The bill passed the House of Representatives. But Southerners prevented it from passing the Senate.

Even though the Wilmot Proviso never became law, it had important effects. It led to the creation of the **Free-Soil Party**, a political party dedicated to stopping the expansion of slavery. The party's slogan expressed its ideals—"Free Soil, Free Speech, Free Labor, and Free Men." The Free-Soil Party won more than ten seats in Congress in the election of 1848. More important, the party made slavery a key issue in national politics. Politicians could ignore slavery no longer.

Reading History

B. Recognizing Effects What were the effects of the Wilmot Proviso?

Connections TO WORLD HISTORY

EXPANDING SLAVERY

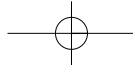
William Walker, a Tennessee-born adventurer, wanted to take over land in Central America. In 1855, he joined an army of Nicaraguan rebels and seized power. Walker declared himself president of Nicaragua in 1856. As president, he legalized slavery there.

Troops from nearby countries drove him from power in 1857. The actions of men like Walker helped to convince Northerners that slaveholders were intent on expanding slavery beyond the U.S. South.



Controversy over Territories

By 1848, the nation's leaders had begun to debate how to deal with slavery in the lands gained from the War with Mexico. The proposed addition of new states threatened the balance in Congress between North and South. The discovery of gold in California brought thousands of people into that territory. There would soon be enough people in California for it to apply for statehood. Most California residents wanted their state to



be a free state. But this would tip the balance of power clearly in favor of the North. Southerners wanted to divide California in half, making the northern half a free state and the southern half a slave state.

In 1849, President Zachary Taylor proposed that California submit a plan for statehood that year, without going through the territorial stage. By skipping this stage, Taylor's plan gave Southern slaveholders little time to move to California with their slaves.

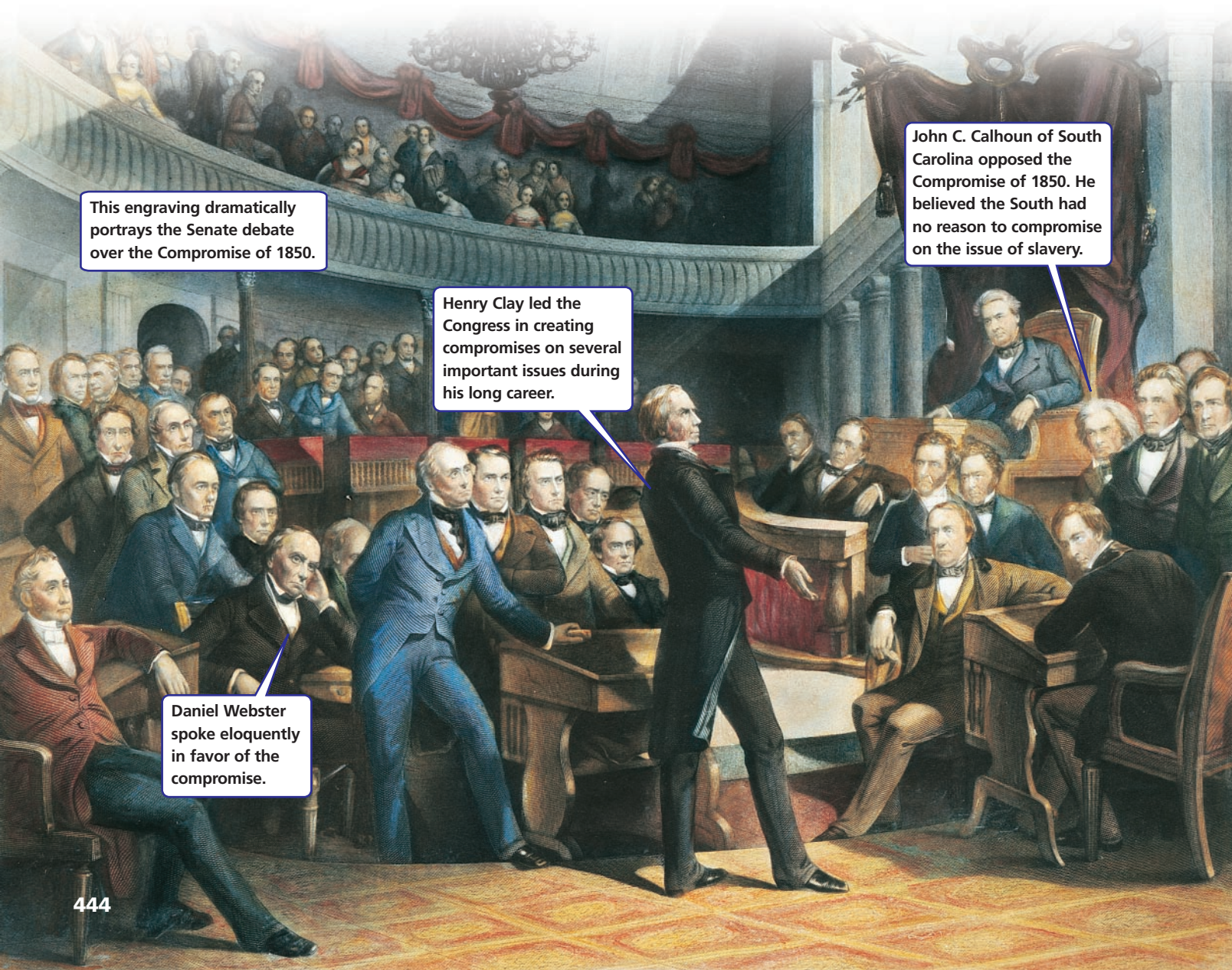
In March 1850, California applied to be admitted as a free state. With California as a free state, slave states would become a minority in the Senate just as they were in the House. Jefferson Davis, a senator from Mississippi, warned, "For the first time, we are about permanently to destroy the balance of power between the sections."

Background

U.S. land gains from the War with Mexico included all or parts of the future states of California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, and Colorado.

The Compromise of 1850

California could not gain statehood, however, without the approval of Congress. And Congress was divided over the issue. Behind the scenes, statesmen sought compromise. Taking the lead was Senator Henry Clay

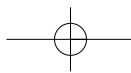


This engraving dramatically portrays the Senate debate over the Compromise of 1850.

Henry Clay led the Congress in creating compromises on several important issues during his long career.

Daniel Webster spoke eloquently in favor of the compromise.

John C. Calhoun of South Carolina opposed the Compromise of 1850. He believed the South had no reason to compromise on the issue of slavery.



of Kentucky. Clay had helped create the Missouri Compromise in 1820. Now Clay crafted a plan to settle the California problem.

ReadingHistory

C. Reading a Map

Look at the map on page 448 to see how the Compromise of 1850 affected the territories open to slavery.

1. To please the North, California would be admitted as a free state, and the slave trade would be abolished in Washington, D.C.
2. To please the South, Congress would not pass laws regarding slavery for the rest of the territories won from Mexico, and Congress would pass a stronger law to help slaveholders recapture runaway slaves.

Many people on both sides felt they had to give up too much in this plan. But others were tired of the regional bickering. They wanted to hold the Union together. **Daniel Webster**, senator from Massachusetts, supported the compromise for the sake of the Union.

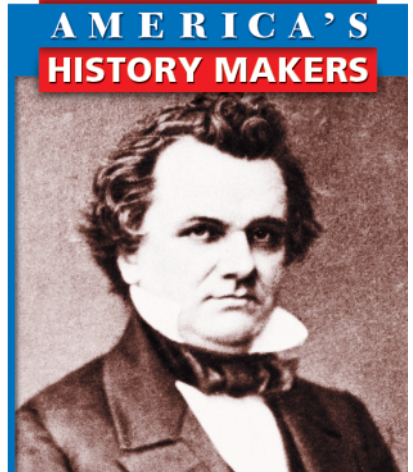
A VOICE FROM THE PAST

I wish to speak today, not as a Massachusetts man, nor as a Northern man, but as an American. . . . I speak today for the preservation of the Union. Hear me for my cause.

Daniel Webster, quoted in *The Annals of America*

The job of winning passage of the plan fell to Senator **Stephen A. Douglas** of Illinois. By the end of September, Douglas succeeded, and the plan, now known as the **Compromise of 1850**, became law.

Some people celebrated the compromise, believing that it had saved the Union. But the compromise would not bring peace. In the next section, you will learn how sectional tensions continued to rise.



STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS

1813–1861

Stephen A. Douglas was one of the most powerful members of Congress in the mid-1800s. In fact, he was called the “Little Giant” because he commanded great respect even though he was only five feet four inches tall.

Perhaps the most important issue that Douglas faced during his career was the expansion of slavery into the territories. Douglas privately hated slavery. But he did not believe a debate on morality would do any good. He suggested that the people of each territory should decide whether or not to allow slavery.

What groups of Americans agreed with Douglas’s position on slavery?

Section 1 Assessment

1. Terms & Names

Explain the significance of:

- Wilmot Proviso
- Free-Soil Party
- Henry Clay
- Daniel Webster
- Stephen A. Douglas
- Compromise of 1850

2. Taking Notes

Use a chart like the one below to explain the effects of each cause.

Causes	Effects
Abolitionism	
Wilmot Proviso	
California’s application for statehood	

Which issue do you think most threatened national unity?

3. Main Ideas

- a. What were two ways that the North and the South differed by the mid-1800s?
- b. In what ways was racism common in both the North and the South?
- c. How did the War with Mexico lead to conflict between the North and the South?

4. Critical Thinking

Comparing and Contrasting How was the Compromise of 1850 similar to and different from the Missouri Compromise?

THINK ABOUT

- the regional tensions at the time the compromises were proposed
- who proposed each bill
- the provisions of the bills

ACTIVITY OPTIONS

**TECHNOLOGY
SPEECH**

Imagine you are a television news director. Plan a five-minute **documentary** or organize a **panel discussion** on the Compromise of 1850.