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Renewing the Sectional Struggle, 1848-1854

PART I: Reviewing the Chapter

A. Checklist of Learning Objectives

After mastering this chapter, you should be able to

1. explain how the issue of slavery in the territories acquired from Mexico disrupted American politics from 1848 to 1850.
2. point out the major terms of the Compromise of 1850 and indicate how this agreement attempted to deal with the issue of slavery.
3. indicate how the Whig party disintegrated and disappeared because of its divisions over slavery.
4. describe how the Pierce administration engaged in various prosouthern overseas and expansionist ventures.
5. describe Douglas's Kansas-Nebraska Act and explain why it stirred the sectional controversy to new heights.

B. Glossary

To build your social science vocabulary, familiarize yourself with the following terms.

1. **self-determination** In politics, the right of a people to assert its own national identity or form of government without outside influence. "The public liked it because it accorded with the democratic tradition of self-determination." (p. 391)
2. **homestead** A family home or farm with buildings and land sufficient for survival. "... they broadened their appeal . . . by urging free government homesteads for settlers." (p. 391)
3. **vigilante** Concerning groups that claim to punish crime and maintain order without legal authority to do so. "... violence was only partly discouraged by rough vigilante justice." (p. 393)
4. **sanctuary** A place of refuge or protection, where people are safe from punishment by the law. "... scores of . . . runaway slaves . . . were spirited . . . to the free-soil sanctuary of Canada." (p. 395)
5. **fugitive** A person who flees from danger or prosecution. "... southerners were demanding a new and more stringent fugitive-slave law." (p. 395)
6. **topography** The precise surface features and details of a place—for example, rivers, bridges, hills—in relation to one another. "The good Lord had decreed—through climate, topography, and geography—that a plantation economy . . . could not profitably exist in the Mexican Cession territory. . . ." (p. 396)
7. **mundane** Belonging to this world, as opposed to the spiritual world. "Seward argued earnestly that Christian legislators must obey God's moral law as well as mundane human law." (p. 397)
8. **statecraft** The art of government leadership. "The Whigs . . . missed a splendid opportunity to capitalize on their record in statecraft." (p. 401)

9. **isthmian (isthmus)** Concerning a narrow strip of land connecting two larger bodies of land. "... neither America nor Britain would fortify or secure exclusive control over any future isthmian water-way." (p. 402)
10. **filibustering (filibuster)** Adventurers who conduct a private war against a foreign country. "During 1850-1851 two 'filibustering' expeditions descended upon Cuba." (p. 403) (In a different meaning, the term also refers to deliberately prolonging speechmaking in order to block legislation.)
11. **mikado** A title of the Japanese emperor used by foreigners. "The mikado's empire, after some disagreeable experiences with the European world. . . ." (p. 403)
12. **cloak-and-dagger** Concerning the activities of spies or undercover agents, especially involving elaborate deceptions. "An incredible cloak-and-dagger episode followed." (p. 404)
13. **manifesto** A proclamation or document aggressively asserting a controversial position or advocating a daring course of action. ". . . rose in an outburst of wrath against this 'manifesto of brigands.'" (p. 404)
14. **booster** One who promotes a person or enterprise, especially in a highly enthusiastic way. "An ardent booster for the West, he longed to . . . stretch a line of settlements across the continent." (p. 405)
15. **truce** A temporary suspension of warfare by agreement of the hostile parties. "This bold step Douglas was prepared to take, even at the risk of shattering the uneasy truce patched up by the Great Compromise of 1850." (p. 406)

PART II: Checking Your Progress

A. True-False

Where the statement is true, mark T. Where it is false, mark F, and correct it in the space immediately below.

- ___ 1. Democratic politicians and others attempted to avoid the issue of slavery in the territories by saying it should be left to "popular sovereignty."
- ___ 2. The Free Soil party consisted of a small, unified band of radical abolitionists.
- ___ 3. The California gold rush of 1849 diverted the nation's attention from slavery.
- ___ 4. Southerners demanded a more effective fugitive-slave law to stop the "Underground Railroad" from running escaped slaves to Canada.
- ___ 5. In the Senate debate of 1850, Calhoun spoke for compromise, while Clay and Webster each defended his own section's interests.
- ___ 6. In the key provisions of the Compromise of 1850, New Mexico and Utah were admitted as slave states, while California was left open to popular sovereignty.
- ___ 7. The provision of the Compromise of 1850 that aroused the fiercest northern opposition was the Fugitive Slave Law.
- ___ 8. The greatest political winner in the Compromise of 1850 was the South.
- ___ 9. The Whig Party disappeared because its northern and southern wings were too deeply split over the Fugitive Slave Law and other sectional issues.

- ___ 10. The Pierce administration's expansionist efforts in Central America, Cuba, and the Gadsden Purchase were basically designed to serve southern proslavery interests.
- ___ 11. The Gadsden Purchase resulted in a general national agreement to build the transcontinental railroad along the southern route.
- ___ 12. Douglas's Kansas-Nebraska Act was intended to organize western territories so that a transcontinental railroad could be built along a northern route.
- ___ 13. Both southerners and northerners alike refused to accept Douglas's plan to repeal the Missouri Compromise.
- ___ 14. The Kansas-Nebraska Act wrecked the Compromise of 1850 and created deep divisions within the Democratic Party.
- ___ 15. The Republican Party was initially organized as a northern protest against Douglas's Kansas-Nebraska Act.

B. Multiple Choice

Select the best answer and write the proper letter in the space provided.

- ___ 1. "Popular sovereignty" was the idea that
 - a. the government of each new territory should be elected by the people.
 - b. the American public should vote on whether to admit states with or without slavery.
 - c. the people of a territory should determine for themselves whether or not to permit slavery.
 - d. the United States should assume popular control of the territory acquired from Mexico.
- ___ 2. In the election of 1848, the response of the Whig and Democratic parties to the rising controversy over slavery was
 - a. a strong proslavery stance by the Democrats and a strong antislavery stance by the Whigs.
 - b. platforms stressing both parties' clear differences with the antislavery Free Soil party.
 - c. an attempt to ignore the issue.
 - d. to free each individual candidate to take his own stand on the issue.
- ___ 3. Quick formation of an effective government in California was essential because of
 - a. the desire of antislavery forces to gain a new state for their cause.
 - b. the threat that Mexico would reconquer the territory.
 - c. the need to have a government capable of building a transcontinental railroad.
 - d. the very large and unruly population drawn into the state by the discovery of gold.
- ___ 4. The proposed admission of California directly into the Union was dangerously controversial because
 - a. the territory was in a condition of complete lawlessness and anarchy.
 - b. the Mexicans were threatening renewed warfare if California joined the Union.
 - c. California's admission as a free state would destroy the equal balance of slave and free states in the U.S. Senate.
 - d. there was a growing movement to declare California an independent nation.

5. The existence of the "underground railroad" added to southern demands for
- the stationing of armed police and troops along the Ohio River and the Mason-Dixon line to capture runaways.
 - the death penalty for abolitionists.
 - a stricter federal Fugitive Slave Law.
 - the enslavement of free blacks in the South.
6. Among the notable advocates of compromise in the controversy over slavery in 1850 were
- William Seward and Zachary Taylor.
 - Henry Clay and Daniel Webster.
 - John C. Calhoun and Abraham Lincoln.
 - Stephen Douglas and Harriet Tubman.
7. During the debate over the Compromise of 1850, northern antislavery forces were particularly outraged by what they considered the "betrayal" of Senator
- Stephen A. Douglas.
 - Daniel Webster.
 - William Seward.
 - John C. Calhoun.
8. Under the terms of the Compromise of 1850,
- California was admitted to the Union as a free state, and slavery in Utah and New Mexico territories would be left up to popular sovereignty.
 - California was admitted as a free state, and Utah and New Mexico as slave states.
 - California, Utah, and New Mexico were kept as territories but with slavery prohibited.
 - New Mexico and Texas were admitted as slave states and Utah and California as free states.
9. The final battle to gain passage of the Compromise of 1850 was substantially aided by
- the conversion of William Seward to the idea of compromise.
 - the death of President Taylor and the succession of President Fillmore.
 - the removal of the proposed Fugitive Slave Law from the compromise bill.
 - the agreement to rely on popular sovereignty to resolve the future of slavery in California.
10. The greatest winner in the Compromise of 1850 was
- the North.
 - the South.
 - neither the North nor the South.
 - the border states.
11. One of the primary effects of the Fugitive Slave Law passed as part of the Compromise of 1850 was
- an end to slave escapes and the Underground Railroad.
 - the extension of the underground railroad into Canada.
 - a sharp rise in northern antislavery feeling.
 - an increase in violent slave rebellions.

- ___ 12. The conflict over slavery after the election of 1852 led shortly to
- the death of the Whig party.
 - the death of the Democratic party.
 - the death of the Republican party.
 - the rise of the Free Soil party.
- ___ 13. Southerners seeking to expand the territory of slavery were especially interested in acquiring
- Canada and Alaska.
 - Venezuela and Colombia.
 - Nicaragua and Cuba.
 - Hawaii and Japan.
- ___ 14. The primary goal of Commodore Matthew Perry's treaty with Japan in 1854 was
- establishing a balance of power in East Asia.
 - opening Japan to American trade.
 - guaranteeing the territorial integrity of China.
 - establishing American naval bases in Hawaii and Okinawa.
- ___ 15. Northerners especially resented Douglas's Kansas-Nebraska Act because
- it aimed to build a transcontinental railroad along the southern route.
 - it would make him the leading Democratic candidate for the presidency.
 - it repealed the Missouri Compromise prohibiting slavery in northern territories.
 - it would bring Kansas into the Union as a slave state.

C. Identification

Supply the correct identification for each numbered description.

- _____ 1. Hotheaded southern agitators who pushed for southern interests and favored secession from the Union:
- _____ 2. The doctrine that the issue of slavery should be decided by the residents of a territory themselves, not by the federal government
- _____ 3. The boundary line between slave and free states in the East, originally the southern border of Pennsylvania
- _____ 4. The informal network that conducted runaway slaves from the South to Canada
- _____ 5. Senator William Seward's doctrine that slavery should be excluded from the territories as contrary to a divine moral law standing above even the Constitution
- _____ 6. The provision of the Compromise of 1850 that comforted southern slave-catchers and aroused the wrath of northern abolitionists
- _____ 7. Third-party entry in the election of 1848 that opposed slavery expansion and prepared the way for the Republican Party
- _____ 8. A series of agreements between North and South that temporarily dampened the slavery controversy and led to a short-lived era of national good feelings
- _____ 9. Political party that fell apart and disappeared after losing the election of 1852
- _____ 10. An agreement between Britain and America concerning any future Central American canal

- _____ 11. A top-secret dispatch, drawn up by American diplomats in Europe, that detailed a plan for seizing Cuba from Spain
- _____ 12. Southwestern territory acquired by the Pierce administration to facilitate a southern transcontinental railroad
- _____ 13. The sectional agreement of 1820, repealed by the Kansas-Nebraska Act
- _____ 14. The political party that was deeply divided by Douglas's Kansas-Nebraska Act
- _____ 15. A new political party organized as a protest against the Kansas-Nebraska Act

D. Matching People, Places, and Events

Match the person, place, or event in the left column with the proper description in the right column by inserting the correct letter on the blank line.

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|-----------------------------|---|
| ___ 1. Lewis Cass | A. American naval commander who opened Japan to the West in 1854 |
| ___ 2. Zachary Taylor | B. Democratic presidential candidate in 1848, original proponent of the idea of "popular sovereignty" |
| ___ 3. California | C. Weak Democratic president whose pro-southern cabinet pushed aggressive expansionist schemes |
| ___ 4. District of Columbia | D. Famous "conductor" on the Underground Railroad who rescued more than three hundred slaves from bondage |
| ___ 5. Harriet Tubman | E. Illinois politician who helped smooth over sectional conflict in 1850 but then reignited it in 1854 |
| ___ 6. Daniel Webster | F. Central American nation desired by proslavery expansionists in the 1850s |
| ___ 7. William Seward | G. Military hero of the Mexican War who became the Whigs' last presidential candidate in 1852 |
| ___ 8. Utah and New Mexico | H. Whig president who nearly destroyed the Compromise of 1850 before he died in office |
| ___ 9. Franklin Pierce | I. Rich Spanish colony coveted by American proslavery expansionists in the 1850s |
| ___ 10. Winfield Scott | J. Place where the slave trade was ended by the Compromise of 1850 |
| ___ 11. Nicaragua | K. Organized as territories under Douglas's controversial law of 1854 that left their decision on slavery up to popular sovereignty |
| ___ 12. Matthew Perry | L. New York senator who argued that the expansion of slavery was forbidden by a "higher law" |
| ___ 13. Cuba | M. Organized as territories under the Compromise of 1850, with their decision about slavery left up to popular sovereignty |
| ___ 14. Kansas and Nebraska | N. Northern spokesman whose support for the Compromise of 1850 earned him the hatred of abolitionists |
| ___ 15. Stephen A. Douglas | O. Acquired from Mexico in 1848 and admitted as a free state in 1850 without ever having been a territory |

E. Putting Things in Order

Put the following events in correct order by numbering them from 1 to 5.

- ___ A series of delicate agreements between the North and South temporarily smoothes over the slavery conflict.
- ___ A Mexican War hero is elected president, as the issue of how to deal with slavery in the territory acquired from Mexico arouses national controversy.
- ___ A spectacular growth of settlement in the far West creates demand for admission of a new free state and agitates the slavery controversy.
- ___ Stephen A. Douglas's scheme to build a transcontinental railroad leads to repeal of the Missouri Compromise, which reopens the slavery controversy and spurs the formation of a new party.
- ___ The Pierce administration acquires a small Mexican territory to encourage a southern route for the transcontinental railroad.

F. Matching Cause and Effect

Match the historical cause in the left column with the proper effect in the right column by writing the correct letter on the blank line.

Cause	Effect
___ 1. The evasion of the slavery issue by Whigs and Democrats in 1848	A. Was the predecessor of the antislavery Republican Party
___ 2. The California gold rush	B. Fell apart after the leaking of the Ostend Manifesto
___ 3. The Underground Railroad	C. Caused a tremendous northern protest and the birth of the Republican party
___ 4. The Free Soil Party	D. Made the issue of slavery in the Mexican Cession areas more urgent
___ 5. The Compromise of 1850	E. Created a short-lived national mood of optimism and reconciliation
___ 6. The Fugitive Slave Law	F. Heightened competition between southern and northern railroad promoters over the choice of a transcontinental route
___ 7. The Pierce administration's schemes to acquire Cuba	G. Led to the formation of the new Free-Soil antislavery party
___ 8. The Gadsden Purchase	H. Aroused active northern resistance to legal enforcement and prompted attempts at nullification in Massachusetts
___ 9. Stephen Douglas's indifference to slavery and desire for a northern railroad route	I. Led to the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, without regard for the consequences
___ 10. The Kansas-Nebraska Act	J. Aroused southern demands for an effective fugitive-slave law

G. Developing Historical Skills

Understanding Cause and Effect

It is often crucial to understand how certain historical forces or events cause other historical events or developments. In the pairs of historical events listed below, designated (A) and (B), indicate which was the cause and which was the effect. Then indicate in a brief sentence how the cause led to the effect.

1. (A) The acquisition of California (B) The Mexican War
2. (A) The entry of California into the Union (B) The California gold rush
3. (A) The death of President Zachary Taylor (B) The passage of the Compromise of 1850
4. (A) Northern aid to fugitive slaves (B) The passage of the Fugitive Slave Law
5. (A) The disappearance of the Whig party (B) The election of 1852
6. (A) The Compromise of 1850 (B) Southern "filibuster" ventures
7. (A) The Gadsden Purchase (B) The southern plan for a transcontinental railroad
8. (A) Douglas's plan for a transcontinental railroad (B) The Kansas-Nebraska Act
9. (A) The Ostend Manifesto (B) The end of Pierce administration schemes to acquire Cuba
10. (A) The rise of the Republican party (B) The Kansas-Nebraska Act

H. Map Mastery

Map Discrimination

Using the maps and charts in Chapter 18, answer the following questions.

1. *Texas and the Disputed Area Before the Compromise of 1850*: A large territory claimed by Texas was taken from it in the Compromise of 1850, and parts of it were later incorporated into *five* other states. Which were they?
2. *Slavery After the Compromise of 1850*: Under the Compromise of 1850, which *free* state was partially located south of the line $36^{\circ}30'$ (the southern border of Missouri), which had been established by the Missouri Compromise as the border between slave and free territories?
3. *Slavery After the Compromise of 1850*: Under the Compromise of 1850, which territory located *north* of $36^{\circ}30'$ *could* have adopted slavery if it had chosen to do so?
4. *Slavery After the Compromise of 1850*: After 1850, how many organized territories prohibited slavery? Identify them.
5. *Central America c. 1850*: In Central America, British influence extended along the Atlantic coasts of which two nations?
6. *Central America c. 1850*: In the 1850s, the territory of the future Panama Canal was part of which South American country?
7. *The Gadsden Purchase, 1853*: The proposed southern transcontinental railroad was supposed to run through which two Texas cities?
8. *Kansas and Nebraska, 1854*: The proposed *northern* transcontinental railroad was supposed to run through which territory organized by Stephen Douglas's act of 1854?
9. *The Legal Status of Slavery, from the Revolution to the Civil War*: In 1854, what was the status of slavery in the only state that bordered on the Kansas Territory?

10. *The Legal Status of Slavery, from the Revolution to the Civil War*: Under the Kansas-Nebraska Act, how far north could slavery have extended had it been implemented in Nebraska territory?

Map Challenge

Using the map of *The Legal Status of Slavery, from the Revolution to the Civil War*, write a brief essay in which you describe how the Missouri Compromise, the Compromise of 1850, and the Kansas-Nebraska Act each affected the legal status of slavery in various territories.

PART III: Applying What You Have Learned

1. What urgent issues created the crisis leading up to the Compromise of 1850?
2. What was the effect of the morally powerful slavery debate on American political parties? What caused the demise of the Whig Party, and the rise of the Free Soil and Republican parties?
3. How did the Compromise of 1850 attempt to deal with the most difficult issues concerning slavery? Was the Compromise a "success?" By what standard?
4. Why were proslavery southerners so eager to push for further expansion in Nicaragua, Cuba, and elsewhere in the 1850s?
5. What were the causes and consequences of the Kansas-Nebraska Act?
6. How similar was the Compromise of 1850 to the Missouri Compromise of 1820? (See Chapter 13.) How did each sectional compromise affect the balance of power between North and South? Why could sectional issues be compromised in 1820 and 1850, but not in 1854?