

Conflict in Kansas/ “Bleeding Kansas”

- Pro-slave and anti-slave groups poured into Kansas, trying to establish their positions for the future of the state.
- Somehow, while only 1,500 voters lived in Kansas, over 6,000 people cast ballots in the elections..... pro-slavery **border ruffians**
- Anti-slavery groups refused to accept these laws established by the pro-slavery factions, armed themselves, held their own elections, and adopted a constitution that banned slavery.
- 1856- rival governments existed concurrently in Kansas; the president, Senate, and House of Representatives were also split on the issue of the recognition of Kansas!

- Violence was inevitable at this point; Lawrence, Kansas attacked by pro-slavery forces
- **John Brown**, a stout abolitionist, was determined to strike a blow against slavery supporters in Kansas. He also believed that God had “chosen” him to be a martyr that would end the scourge of slavery.
- Brown and four of his sons marauded the area around Pottawatomie Creek, capturing and killing five pro-slavery men. They shot the slavery supporters execution-style at point-blank range.
- Armed bands led raids and attacks as they roamed the territory. Kansas bled for over two years.....

- Violence in Kansas led to an actual physical assault in Congress.
- Charles Sumner delivered an angry speech directed against pro-slavery forces in Kansas. He also criticized pro-slavery senators, especially Andrew Butler of South Carolina.
- A few days later, Butler's cousin, Preston Brooks, walked into the Senate chamber and viciously smashed Sumner's head with a heavy wooden cane, knocking Sumner unconscious and severely injuring him.

A New Political Party

- The Republican Party (yes, the same Republican Party that exists today) began in 1854. It formed as a collection of antislavery Whigs, disgruntled Democrats, and the former Free-Soil Party. Its main aim was to eliminate the institution of slavery.
- The Republican Party enjoyed widespread support in the North, but was almost nonexistent in the South. The Democratic Party had become an almost exclusively Southern Party.
- The first Republican president in American history would eventually be Abraham Lincoln, but not until 1860.

The *Dred Scott* Decision

- Dred Scott was a slave in Missouri, but had lived for many years on free soil. When the family that “owned” Dred Scott returned to Missouri, he sued for his freedom.
- The *Dred Scott* decision attracted nationwide attention because of the bitter feelings and political environment of the era.
- The U.S. Supreme Court, led by Chief Justice Taney, stated that as a slave, Scott had no legal basis for a lawsuit. Even while living on free soil, Scott was still considered “property.” Taney invoked the 5th amendment, which states that Congress may not take away property without “due process.”
- Taney also stated that Congress had no authority to prohibit slavery in *any* new territory.

Reaction to the Decision

- Essentially, the Court's decision meant that the Constitution of the United States **protected** slavery.
- Southerners were jacked- the verdict meant that nothing could legally prevent the spread of slavery- an issue they had argued all along.
- Democrats, especially in the North, were happy that the Republicans' main issue (stopping the spread of slavery) had been ruled unconstitutional.
- Republicans and antislavery groups were very upset by the *Dred Scott* decision.

Lincoln and Douglas

- The Illinois Senate race of 1858 pitted the incumbent, Stephen Douglas, vs. newcomer Abraham Lincoln
- Douglas was nicknamed “The Little Giant” because of his short, stocky build mixed with his political and oratory skills.
- Douglas disliked slavery, but was more concerned with America’s economic growth.
- Abraham Lincoln wasn’t as educated as his counterpart, but he did possess incredible instincts and held firm to his core beliefs about slavery.

The Lincoln-Douglas Debates

- Lincoln and Douglas publicly debated several times prior to the election in 1858. The main topic was inevitably slavery.
- Douglas ultimately won the election, but Lincoln gained a strong national reputation.