The Compromises of 1820 and 1850

In 1818 Missouri became a state. The settlers from Missouri wanted it to be a slave state. The Congressmen from the North did not want another slave state. That same year Maine also asked to be admitted to the Union.

In 1820 an agreement called the **Missouri Compromise** was reached. The compromise allowed Missouri to come into the Union as a slave state and Maine would be a free state.

Congress drew an imaginary line across the middle of the United States running from the east coast to the Pacific Ocean. This imaginary line separated the states into free and slave states. Any new state entering the Union that was south of the line would be a slave state. Any state north of the line would enter the Union as a free state.

Maine became a state in 1820. Missouri became a state in 1821. For the next 15 years no states entered the Union. From 1836 to 1850 six states were admitted:

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| Arkansas | 1836 | slave |
| Michigan | 1837 | free |
| Florida | 1845 | slave |
| Texas | 1845 | slave |
| Iowa | 1846 | free |
| Wisconsin | 1848 | free |

In 1850 California asked to be admitted to the Union. The Missouri Compromise had cut California in half. Congressmen argued over whether California should enter the war as a free or slave state.

Henry Clay, the man who worked out the Missouri Compromise, came out of retirement to try to work out another compromise. The new agreement was called the **Compromise of 1850**. In this compromise Northern California entered the Union as a free state.

The Compromise of 1850 added some new laws. Buying and selling slaves in Washington, D.C. was outlawed. The people living in Washington, D.C. could still own slaves, but could not buy or sell new ones. In the South the land received from Mexico was broken up into two states, New Mexico and Utah. In these states the settlers could decide for themselves whether they wanted slavery or not.

The South got a new law called the Fugitive Slave Law which said that any slaves escaping from the south to freedom in the north should be returned to their masters. Bounty hunters received a bounty for each slave they returned. Some free black people were captured by bounty hunters and sold as slaves. Any person who did not help a bounty hunter could be punished under the law.

Slavery

Americans used slaves for 200 years before California became a state. Slaves were needed to work on the cotton and tobacco plantations. The first black slaves had been brought to the Jamestown Colony in 1617 by the Dutch.

The Northeastern states made a great deal of money from slaves. Many slaves were taken to the West Indies and traded for molasses. The molasses was taken to New England and made into rum. Some New Englanders bought slaves to help with this.

After a time the North gave up their slaves. The climate and type of work in the North did not fit the African slaves as well as in the South. In 1790 the North had about 40,000 slaves while the South had about 650,000. By 1850 the number of slaves in the South had grown to more than 3,000,000. At this time the North had only about 250 slaves.

Only three hundred and fifty thousand out of six million Southerners owned slaves. Fewer than two thousand of these Southerners had one hundred or more slaves. Most slave owners had four or less slaves.

Slaves were treated very differently from one plantation to the next. Some slaves worked inside the home. They cooked, cleaned, and cared for the children of the white family. Most slaves worked in the fields. They worked a long day from sunrise to after sunset. Some slaves worked in factories in big cities such as Atlanta and New Orleans.

These slaves were not paid for their work. Slaves lived in dirt-floored huts.

Rebellion

Several events in the middle 1800's showed how unhappy slaves were. Two famous slaves who decided to fight their masters were Denmark Vessey and Nat Turner. Vesey planned a major slave rebellion near Charleston, South Carolina in 1822. This plan was discovered and the slave owners stopped the rebellion.

Nat Turner's rebellion in 1831 turned out differently. Over 100 blacks and 60 whites were killed in the rebellion. Turner hid for six weeks after the uprising. He was eventually tracked down by dogs. Turner was tried and found guilty. He was then hanged.

Rebellions worried slave owners. In 1790 a good field hand was worth about $300. In 1860 they were worth $2000. Guards rode the roads in the South each night looking for runaway slaves.

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Abolitionists

An abolitionist was a person who wanted to do away with slavery. In the 1830's abolitionists began to speak out in public.

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| In 1831 a Boston, Massachusetts newspaper called *The Liberator* was published. The editor was an abolitionist named William Lloyd Garrison. Garrison used the newspaper to tell Congress and the world that slavery must be abolished. Many people agreed with Garrison. In 1833 Garrison and others formed the National Antislavery Society which published books and papers about slavery. | garrison.jpg (7972 bytes) |

Remember the Fugitive Slave Law from the Missouri Compromise of 1820. This law stated  that "free" states, those states which did not allow slaves, must return escaping slaves to their owners. Abolitionists did not obeyed this law.

Sojourner Truth was a slave who was freed in 1827. She began lecturing about the issue of slavery. Truth was a forceful speaker. Many people listened to her causes. President Abraham Lincoln chose her to be a counselor to the freedmen in Washington.

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| Another group that helped slaves was the Underground Railroad. This was a chain of homes and farms where escaped slaves could go for help. The chain of safe houses ran to Canada were the slaves could be free.Many free ex-slaves took part in the Underground Railroad. Harriet Tubman guided more than 300 slaves along the Underground Railroad. | tubman.jpg (17977 bytes) |

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| douglass.jpg (5245 bytes) |  Frederick Douglass was born a slave. He taught himself to read and write. He ran away from his master. Douglass wrote and told of his life as a slave and gave lectures to groups of abolitionists. |

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| Henry "Box" Brown mailed himself from Richmond to the home of an abolitionist in the Philadelphia. Later he became free. | box1.gif (16845 bytes) |

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| stowe.gif (26946 bytes)  | Another person who helped Americans become aware of the life of a slave was Harriet Beecher Stowe. She lived in Hartford, Connecticut. Stowe's father was an abolitionist. She visited a plantation in Kentucky. There she learned about slavery. Stowe wrote a book about the cruelty of slavery called *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. This book was published in 1852. It became a best-seller in the north. The book was banned in the southern states. Later it was made into a play. |

In Uncle Tom's Cabin there was a cruel slave owner named Simon Legree. He mistreated all the slaves on his plantation. Most of all he mistreated Little Eva. She was a young black slave and Uncle Tom was an older slave. Tom tried to be nice to Legree. The nicer he was the more he was punished. Legree whipped and finally killed old Uncle Tom.

Kansas-Nebraska Act and
the Dred Scott Case

In 1854 the argument over slavery became part of the American political scene. Franklin Pierce was President. Congress wanted to open up the area west of Missouri and Iowa so that a railroad could be built across America to California.

The land over which the railroad would run had to be settled first. Arguments came up over whether this area should be a slave or free area.

Senator Douglas from Illinois introduced a bill called the Kansas-Nebraska Act. This act created 2 new territories, the Kansas Territory and the Nebraska Territory out of the land that the railroad would travel through. It also repealed the Compromise of 1850. This bill gave the people of those two states the right to choose whether they wanted slavery or not. The Northerners became angry about the law. They were afraid there would be two more slave states is the Union. The Southerners were happy.

The Northern abolitionists formed the Emigrant Aid Society. This society found people who believed that Kansas should be a free state and gave those people money, wagons, guns, and supplies to move to Kansas.

The Southerners formed a group called the Blue Lodge. They paid many settlers to move from Missouri into Kansas.

This fight in Kansas became an open war in 1855. It was called Bleeding Kansas because there were so many bloody battles all over the state. Congress decided to wait for the new President to decide about slavery in Kansas. The Presidential election was due in 1856.

The Whig Party which was the strongest party split in two. One part was the Whigs which were for slavery. The other part became the Republican Party which was against slavery. The other major party was the Democrats.

The election was won by James Buchanan who was a Democrat. Buchanan said the question of slavery had to be left to the Supreme Court.

Dred Scott was a slave. His master took him from the slave state of Missouri to the free state of Illinois. Scott lived as a slave for four years in a free state. Then his master took him back to Missouri. Abolitionist thought it was a good case to test slavery. Abolitionists paid for a lawyer so Scott could sue his master for freedom. The case went to the Supreme Court. On March 6, 1857 the court decided Scott had no right to freedom because he was property and could be moved anywhere, not a person. It also said that any state which did anything against slavery was unconstitutional.

 Lincoln Douglas Debates   

In 1858 another important election was held for the Senator of  Illinois. The election was important because of the two men who were running for that office.

One candidate was Stephen Douglas, the man who introduced the Kansas-Nebraska Act. He ran as a Democrat. The other candidate was Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln wanted all states to be free, but did not want to stop slavery in the states where it was already decided. Lincoln was a Republican.

Lincoln gave a famous speech after being chosen to run for Senator. In it he said, "A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe that the government cannot last as long as America is half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to fall apart - the house to fall. I do expect that it will become either all one thing or all the other - either all slave or all free. Either the people against slavery will stop it forever, or it will become lawful in all the states, old and new, north and south alike."

Douglas and Lincoln held a series of debates. Douglas and Lincoln talked about a war. The debates helped the Americans decide how they really felt about slavery. People came for hundreds of miles to hear the debates. Lincoln lost the race by only a few votes.

Abe Lincoln

**Becoming President**Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas both ran for President in 1860. Lincoln ran for the Republican Party. They wanted no slavery in the new states, but did not want to do away with slavery in those states that already had it. Douglas ran for the Democratic Party. In the north they wanted each state to decide for itself to be slave or free. Douglas made no secret of his pro-slavery feelings. John C. Breckenridge ran for the Southern Democrats. They wanted slavery in the new states. John Bell ran for the Constitutional Union Party. They said nothing at all about slavery.

The elected was held in November of 1860. Lincoln won the popular vote by more than 500,000 votes. He won most of the votes of the Electoral College

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| Electoral Votes |
| Lincoln | 180 |
| Breckenridge | 72 |
| Bell | 39 |
| Douglas | 12 |

Lincoln was now President.

**The Life of Abe Lincoln**Abraham Lincoln was born in a log cabin in Kentucky. When he was seven he went to Indiana. He attended a real school for only one year. Abe taught himself to read an write. By the age of 17 Abe was working for local farmers. Around 1830 his family moved to Illinois. Abe was a good speaker. In 1834 he decided to get into politics. He ran for the Illinois State Legislature and won. Abe then became a lawyer while he was in the state legislature. He opened his own law office. Abe ran against Stephen Douglas for Senator and lost. Two years later he ran against Douglas again for President and won.