

Chapter 14

The Nation Divided

Growing Tensions of Slavery

SECTION 1

The Missouri Compromise

- 1819- 11 free states, 11 slave states
- MO applied for statehood- with slavery- northern opposed since they would lose power
- Clay found compromise- ME had also since applied- he said allow MO to enter as slave state and ME as a free state
- Congress also drew imaginary line along 36'30N latitude along southern border of MO
- Anything south allowed slavery, anything north didn't (except MO)

Slavery in the West

- Wilmot Proviso
 - David Wilmot (PA) proposed not allowing slavery in any territories taken from Mexico in Mexican American War (1846-48)
 - South said Congress had no right to do so
 - House passed Wilmot Proviso, Senate defeated it
 - Still no resolution

Slavery in the West

- Opposing Views
 - Abolitionist- slavery was morally wrong and should be banned everywhere
 - Southern slaveholders- slavery should be allowed in any territory- escaped slaves should be returned to owners
 - Most southern whites, regardless of whether or not they owned slaves, agreed
 - Moderates- 1 of 2:
 - Missouri Compromise should extend to Pacific
 - Popular sovereignty- each state could choose for itself by vote

The Free-Soil Party

- By 1848- most northern Dems and Whigs opposed slavery but neither would take a stand- afraid of losing votes
- Antislavery members from both parties met in Buffalo, NY- set up Free-Soil party- the goal: not allow slavery in the West
 - Few FS members were abolitionists
- Election of 1848:
 - FS- Martin Van Buren- no slavery in Mexican Cession
 - Dems- Lewis Cass- popular sovereignty (people in each territory could vote for/against issues directly)
 - Whigs- Zachary Taylor- took no direct issue but was a slave holder
- Taylor won, but FS party took 10% and gained 13 seats in House
- Showed that slavery was becoming a national issue

A Bitter Debate

- 1849- Gold discovered in California- population blew up- enough to become a state
- Would upset balance of free/slave states
- North argued most of CA was above MO Comp line- should be a free state
- South felt if CA was a free state, Congress could pass more antislavery laws like WP
 - Threatened to secede if CA entered as free state
- North also wanted to end slave trade in DC
- South wanted fugitive slaves returned to south

A Bitter Debate

- Henry Clay to the rescue!
 - Jan 1850- (already nicknamed the Great Compromiser)- plan presented to Congress
 - Calhoun- old and sick- had speech read against Clay's proposal
 - 2 choices: Constitutional Amendment that protects states' rights.....or secession
 - Webster stepped up in support of Clay
 - But who would win.....duh duh duuuuuuuuh....