


the 1850s
The Coming Crisis

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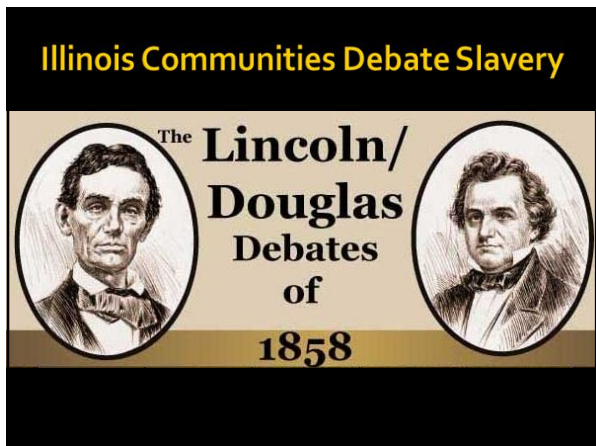
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Focus Questions

- Why did the Whigs and Democrats fail to find a lasting political compromise on the issue of slavery?
- What caused the end of the Second American Party System and the rise of the Republican Party?
- Why did the secession of the southern states follow the Republican Party victory in the election of 1860?





Political Parties and Slavery

- Prior to the 1840s, compromises had eased the divisions of American on slavery. The national party system had forced Whigs and Democrats to forge inter-sectional coalitions.
- By 1848, sectional interests were eroding these coalitions.
- Sectional divisions in religious and other organizations had begun to divide the country.

States' Rights and Slavery

- John C. Calhoun had laid out the states' rights defense by claiming that:
 - the territories were the common property of each of the states;
 - Congress could not discriminate against slaveowners.
- Northerners grew increasingly concerned over what they saw as a southern conspiracy to control the government: the "slave power."

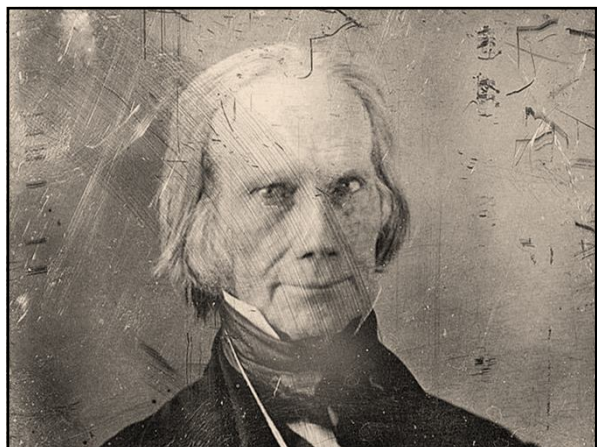
2 Communities, 2 Perspectives

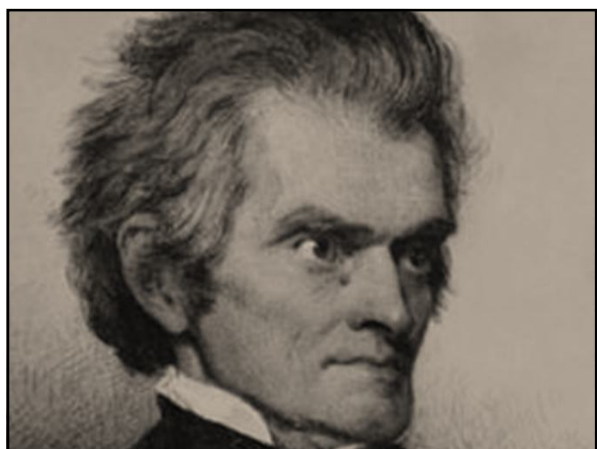
- Both North and South:
 - were committed to expansion
 - Shared commitment to basic rights and liberties
 - Northerners viewed their region as a dynamic society
 - opportunity to the common man
 - in contrast to the stagnant slave-owning aristocracy of the South.
 - Southerners
 - promoting equality for whites by keeping blacks in perpetual state of bondage.

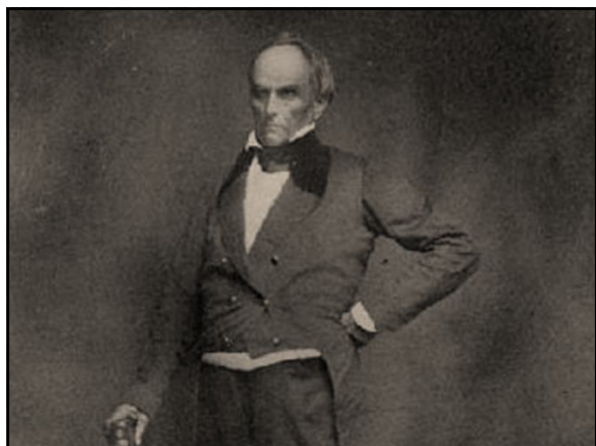
Conflicts of 1850

- The California gold rush forced the issue of the status of slavery in the new territories. Other conflicts had been developing as well.
- The three aging regional leaders--Daniel Webster of the North, Henry Clay of the West, and John C. Calhoun of the South--attempted to resolve the issues of 1850.











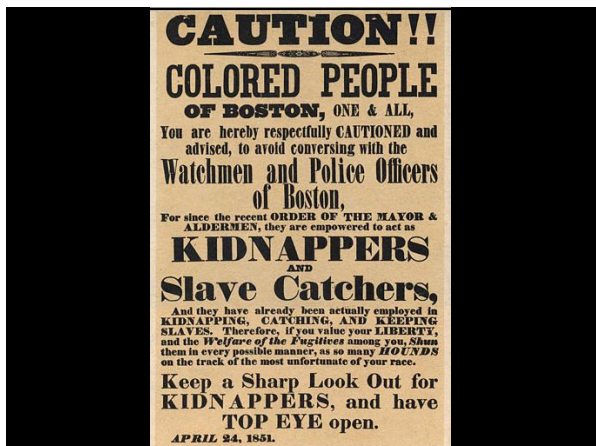
The Fugitive Slave Act

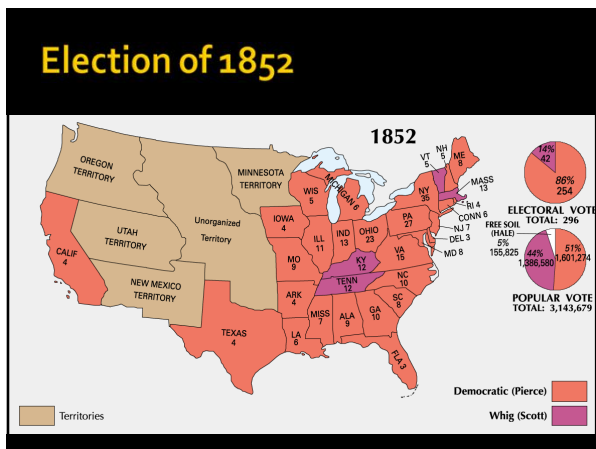
**FIFTY DOLLARS
REWARD.**

Run away from Mount Welby, Prince George's County, Maryland, on Monday, the 3d inst., a negro man calling himself Joe Bond, about 25 years of age, about 5 feet 6 inches in height, stout built, copper complexion; the only mark recollected is a peculiar speck in one of his eyes. Had on when he went away a frock, frock coat, dark brown, and cap near the same color. I will give twenty-five dollars if taken in Prince George's County, Md.; or in Alexandria County, Virginia; and fifty dollars if taken elsewhere and returned to me, or secured so that I get him again.

T. B. EDELL
Planetary, Prince George's, December 5, 1850.

- The *Fugitive Slave Law of 1850* put the full force of the federal government behind slave-catchers.
- States had previously passed acts against aiding slave-catchers.



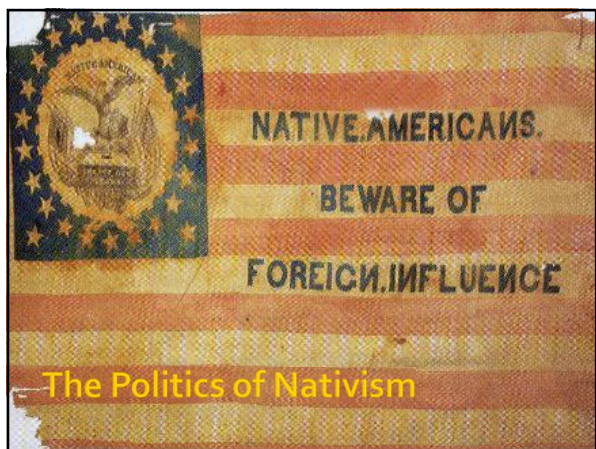


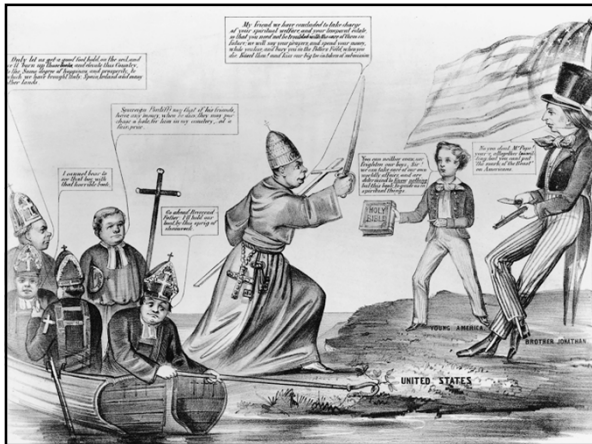
1852 and the Politics of Expansion

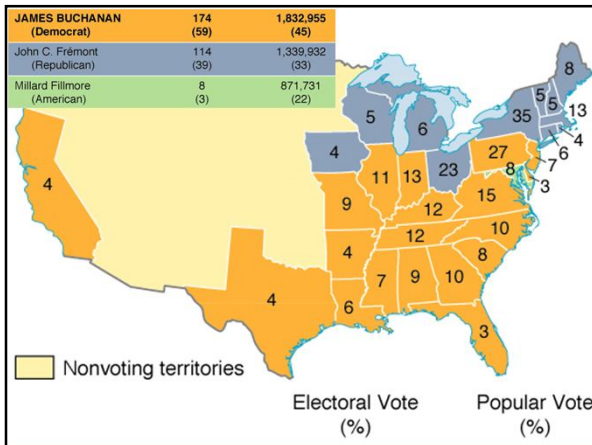
- The growing polarization of opinion strained the party system.
- The Democrats won in the election of 1852 by avoiding sectional issues.
- The new President Franklin Pierce supported independent efforts to seize territory by "filibusters" like William Walker and endorsed efforts to buy Cuba.

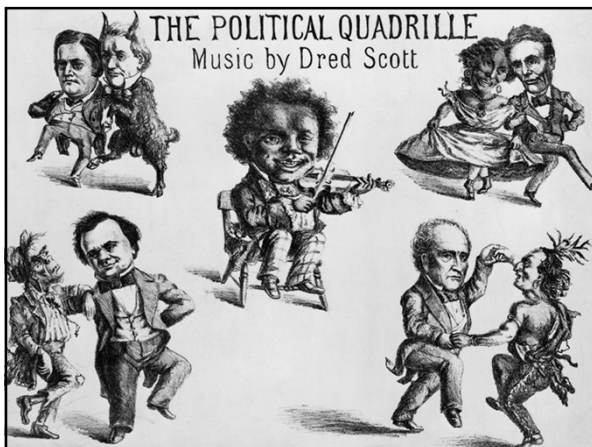








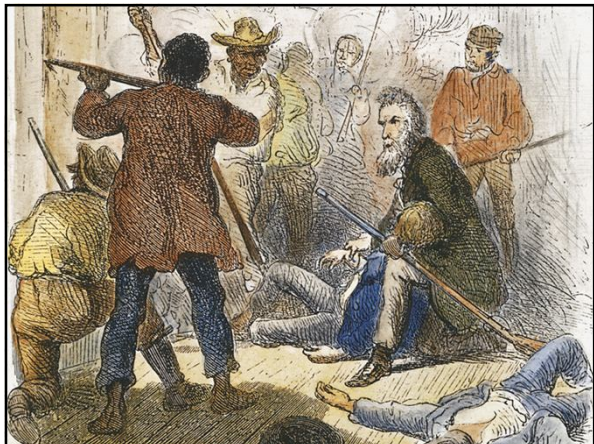


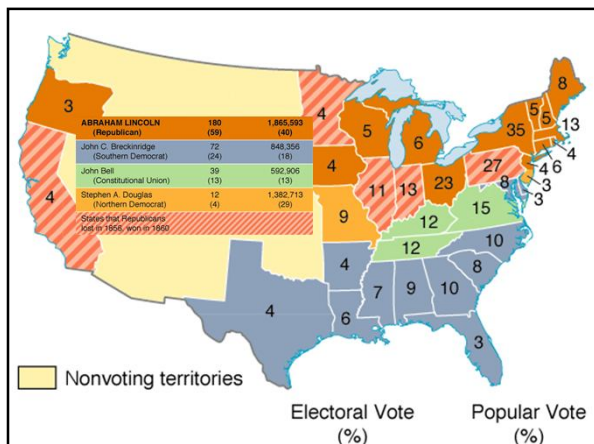


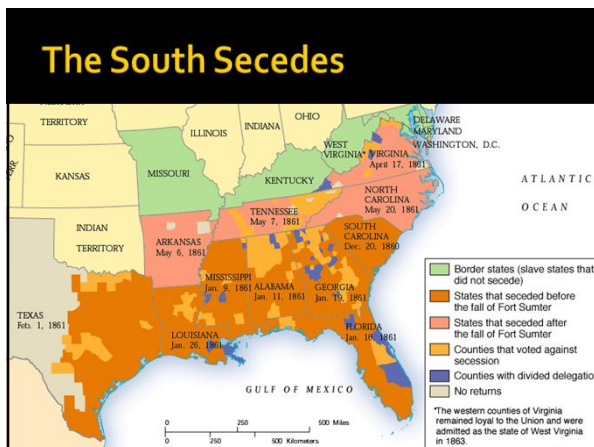
The Lecompton Constitution

- Conflict continued in Kansas as free-soilers:
 - organized their own territorial government;
 - boycotted the proslavery government's elections for a constitutional convention.
- The proslavery "Lecompton Constitution" was submitted to Congress.
- Stephen Douglas fought against it, alienating his southern supporters.
- Kansans rejected the constitution and came into the Union as a free state.
- The defeat of Lecompton came as Congress continued to divide along sectional lines.





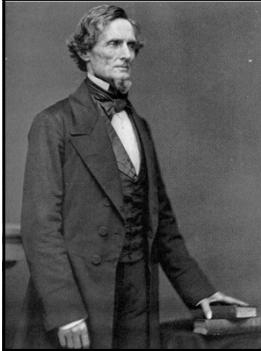




The North's Political Options

- Various northerners unsuccessfully tried to find some compromise that would satisfy all sides.
- Some northerners were willing to allow the South to go in peace.
- Lincoln believed that the idea of free government would be threatened if the South were permitted to leave.

Establishment of the Confederacy



- Southerners established the Confederate States of America.
- Jefferson Davis, a moderate, was chosen as its president.
- Davis tried to portray secession as a legal, peaceful step.
- Lincoln resolved to keep the nation together.

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