

Slavery and the West

Essential Question

Did the compromises that Congress made effectively address slavery and sectionalism?

Reading Guide

Content Vocabulary

sectionalism (p. 449) secede (p. 451)

fugitive (p. 451) abstain (p. 451)

Academic Vocabulary

temporary (p. 449) regulate (p. 450)

Key People and Events

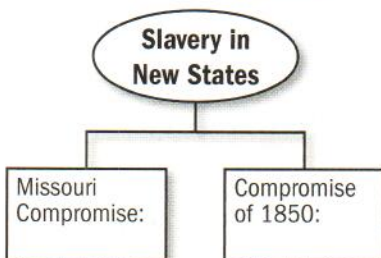
Missouri Compromise (p. 449)

Stephen A. Douglas (p. 451)

Compromise of 1850 (p. 451)

Reading Strategy

Taking Notes As you read, use a diagram like the one below to describe how two compromises addressed the issue of slavery in new states.



American Diary

When Missouri applied for statehood in 1819, controversy arose in Congress. Slavery was legal in Missouri, and Missouri's admission would change the balance between free states and slave states. The Missouri debate became so bitter that Thomas Jefferson wrote: "This momentous question, like a fire bell in the night, awakened and filled me with terror. I considered it at once as the knell [funeral bell] of the Union."

—letter to John Holmes

A riverboat traveling on the Mississippi River at St. Louis

The Missouri Compromise

Main Idea The Missouri Compromise temporarily resolved the issue of whether new states would be slave states or free states.

History and You Do you feel loyalty to your school during a contest with another school? Read how differences between the North and the South created feelings of loyalty to a region.

Many settlers brought enslaved African Americans into Missouri with them. When Missouri applied for statehood, its constitution allowed slavery. The request sparked an angry debate in Congress. In 1819, 11 states permitted slavery and 11 did not. The Senate—with two members from each state—was, therefore, evenly balanced between slave and free states. The admission of a new state would upset that balance.

In addition, the North and the South, with their different economic systems, were competing for new lands in the western territories. At the same time, a growing number of Northerners wanted to restrict or ban slavery. Southerners, even those who disliked slavery,

opposed these antislavery efforts. They resented the interference by outsiders in Southerners' affairs. These differences between the North and the South grew into **sectionalism**—an exaggerated loyalty to a particular region of the country.

The Senate suggested a way to resolve the crisis—allow Missouri to join as a slave state and admit Maine at the same time as a free state. Maine, formerly part of Massachusetts, had also applied for statehood. The Senate wanted to settle the issue of slavery in the territories for good. It proposed banning slavery in the rest of the Louisiana Purchase north of 36°30' N latitude.

Speaker of the House Henry Clay carefully guided the bill through the House of Representatives, which passed it by a close vote in 1820. Maine joined the union that year. In 1821 Missouri became the twenty-fourth state. The **Missouri Compromise** preserved the balance between slave and free states in the Senate. It also brought about a **temporary**, or brief, lull in the debate over slavery.

Reading Check **Explaining** Why was the admission of a new state controversial in 1819?

By the Numbers The Missouri Compromise

The Vote The map shows how the House of Representatives voted on provisions in a law restricting slavery.



Critical Thinking

Comparing Which region united in favor of extending slavery? Which region opposed extending slavery?

New Territories and the Free-Soil Party



A New Party Forms The acquisition of New Mexico and California brought the slavery issue into the open. Many Southern senators argued that Congress had no constitutional power to forbid slavery in the new territories. In 1848, a new party—the Free-Soil Party—formed. Free-Soilers supported the Wilmot Proviso, which banned the spread of slavery into the new territories gained from Mexico.



▲ The Van Buren-Adams Free-Soil ticket received nearly 300,000 votes in 1848. Later the Republican Party would adopt many principles from the Free-Soil Party.

“Gen. [Zachary] Taylor and Gen. [Lewis] Cass are proslavery candidates. Mr. Van Buren and Mr. Adams are antislavery candidates. The former are the shameful tools of the slave-power. The latter bravely resist it.”

—Gerrit Smith, New York abolitionist, August 1848

Critical Thinking

Finding the Main Idea What led to the formation of the Free-Soil Party?

A New Compromise

Main Idea The Compromise of 1850 addressed several issues, including slavery in the territories.

History and You Do you engage in some give and take in order to settle an argument? Read how Congress settled its differences in 1850.

The debate over slavery in new territories erupted again in the 1840s. The annexation of Texas, where slavery already existed, became the main issue in the presidential election of 1844. Democrat James Polk won the election and pressed forward on acquiring Texas. Texas became a state in 1845. At the same time, support grew in the South for taking New Mexico and California from Mexico. Government actions led to war with Mexico.

Conflicting Views

Soon after the Mexican War began, Representative David Wilmot of Pennsylvania introduced a proposal. Called the Wilmot

Proviso, it would ban slavery in any lands that might be acquired from Mexico.

Southerners protested. They believed that any antislavery policy about the territories endangered slavery everywhere. They wanted California and New Mexico to remain open to slavery. Senator John C. Calhoun of South Carolina countered with another proposal. It stated that neither Congress nor any territorial government had the authority to ban slavery from a territory or **regulate**, or control, it.

Neither proposal passed, but both caused bitter debate. By the 1848 presidential election, the United States had gained California and New Mexico from Mexico but took no action on slavery in those areas.

The Free-Soil Party

In 1848 the Whigs selected Zachary Taylor, a Southerner and a hero of the Mexican War, as their candidate. The Democrats chose Senator Lewis Cass of Michigan. Both candidates ignored the slavery issue.

This failure to take a stand angered voters. Many opponents of slavery left their parties and formed the Free-Soil Party. Adopting the slogan “Free Soil, Free Speech, Free Labor, and Free Men,” they chose former president Martin Van Buren as their candidate. Taylor won, but the Free-Soil Party gained several seats in Congress.

The Compromise of 1850

With the backing of President Taylor, California applied to become a free state in 1849. Meanwhile, antislavery forces wanted to ban slavery in Washington, D.C. Southerners, however, wanted a strong national law that required states to return **fugitive**, or runaway, enslaved people. The key issue, however, remained the balance of power in the Senate. If California entered as a free state, the slaveholding states would be outvoted in the Senate. Southerners talked about **seceding** from, or leaving, the Union.

In 1850 Senator Henry Clay tried to find a compromise. He proposed that California enter as a free state, while the rest of the new territories would have no limits on slavery. In

addition, the slave trade, but not slavery itself, would be banned in Washington, D.C. Finally, Clay pushed for a stronger fugitive slave law.

A heated debate began in Congress. Senator Calhoun opposed Clay’s plan. He felt that the Union could be saved only by protecting slavery. Senator Daniel Webster supported the plan. He reasoned that slavery had little chance in the new territories because the land was not suited to plantations.

When President Taylor—an opponent of Clay’s plan—died unexpectedly, Vice President Millard Fillmore succeeded him and favored a compromise. To end the crisis, Illinois Senator **Stephen A. Douglas** divided Clay’s plan into parts that could be voted on separately. Fillmore had several Whigs **abstain**, or not vote, on the parts they opposed. Congress finally passed five bills in 1850. Taken together, these laws became known as the **Compromise of 1850**.



Reading Check

Explaining

Who formed the Free-Soil Party and why?

Section 1 Review

History ONLINE
Study Central™ To review this section, go to glencoe.com.

Vocabulary

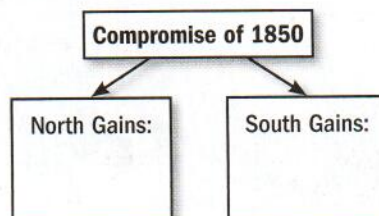
- Use each of the following terms in a sentence that clearly expresses its meaning:
sectionalism, temporary, regulate, fugitive, secede, abstain.

Main Ideas

- Describing** How did the Missouri Compromise preserve the balance of power in the U.S. Senate?
- Explaining** How did Stephen Douglas help win approval of the Compromise of 1850?

Critical Thinking

- Analyzing** What was the Wilmot Proviso? Why was this amendment to a bill so controversial?
- Comparing** Describe what the North and South each gained from the Compromise of 1850. Use a diagram like the one below.



- Creative Writing** Write a dialogue in the form of a conversation in which John Calhoun and Daniel Webster express their views on the Compromise of 1850.

Answer the Essential Question

- Did the compromises that Congress made effectively address slavery and sectionalism?