

Challenges to Slavery

Essential Question

What was the significance of the *Dred Scott* decision?

Reading Guide

Content Vocabulary

arsenal (p. 461) martyr (p. 461)

Academic Vocabulary

rigid (p. 458) topic (p. 460)

Key People and Events

Republican Party (p. 457)

John C. Frémont (p. 457)

James Buchanan (p. 457)

Dred Scott (p. 458)

Abraham Lincoln (p. 460)

Reading Strategy

Taking Notes As you read, use a diagram like the one below to note each party's candidate and platform in the 1856 presidential election. Also record the election result.

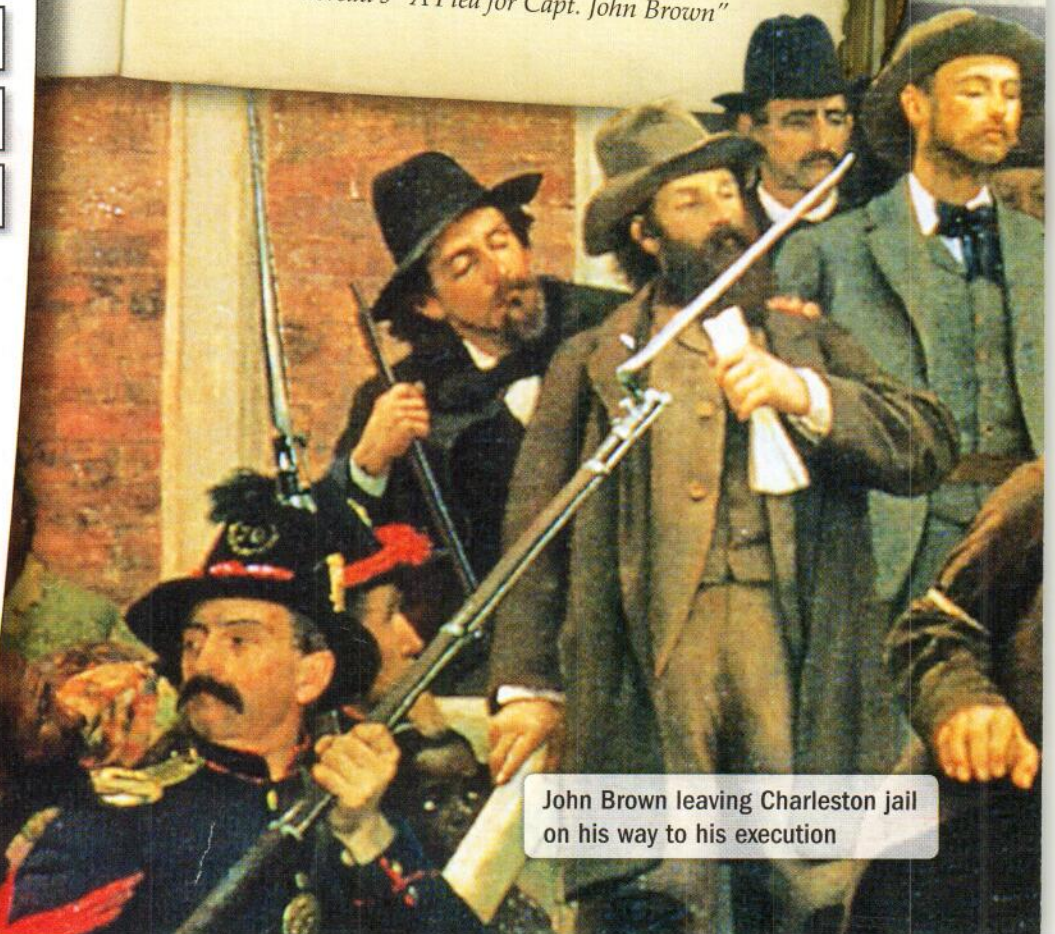
Republican:	Platform:
Democrat:	Platform:
American Party:	Platform:

Election Result:

American Diary

A few years after the attacks in Kansas, John Brown led a raid in Harpers Ferry, Virginia. Many people considered Brown and his followers to be ruthless murderers. The Fredericksburg Herald declared that, "shooting is a mercy they should be denied." Others viewed Brown as a freedom fighter. When Brown was executed in 1859, writer Henry David Thoreau wrote, "He is not Old Brown any longer, [but] an angel of light."

—quoted in "John Brown at Harpers Ferry" and from Thoreau's "A Plea for Capt. John Brown"



John Brown leaving Charleston jail on his way to his execution

A New Political Party

Main Idea Opponents of slavery from different political parties came together to form the new Republican Party.

History and You Which of today's political issues is most important to your family? Read to learn how the parties stood on key issues of the 1854 and 1856 elections.

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Even before Brown's raid, other events drove the North and South further apart. After the Kansas-Nebraska Act, the Democratic Party began to divide along sectional lines, with Northern Democrats leaving the party. Differing views over the slavery issue destroyed the Whig Party.

The Election of 1854

In 1854 additional antislavery Whigs and Democrats joined forces with Free-Soilers to form the **Republican Party**. The Republicans challenged the pro-slavery Whigs and Democrats, choosing candidates to run in the state and congressional elections of 1854. Their main message was that the government should ban slavery from new territories. The

Republican Party quickly showed its strength in the North. In the election, the Republicans won control of the House of Representatives and of several state governments. In the South, the Republican Party had almost no support.

Almost three-fourths of the Democratic candidates from free states lost in 1854. The Democrats were increasingly becoming a Southern party.

The Election of 1856

Democrats and Republicans met again in the presidential election of 1856. The Whig Party, disintegrating over the slavery issue, did not offer a candidate of its own.

The Republicans chose **John C. Frémont** of California as their candidate for president. Frémont gained fame as an explorer in the West. The party platform called for free territories, and its campaign slogan became "Free soil, Free speech, and Frémont."

The Democratic Party nominated **James Buchanan** of Pennsylvania, an experienced diplomat and former member of Congress. Buchanan wanted to appease the South in order to save the Union. As a result, the party endorsed the idea of popular sovereignty.

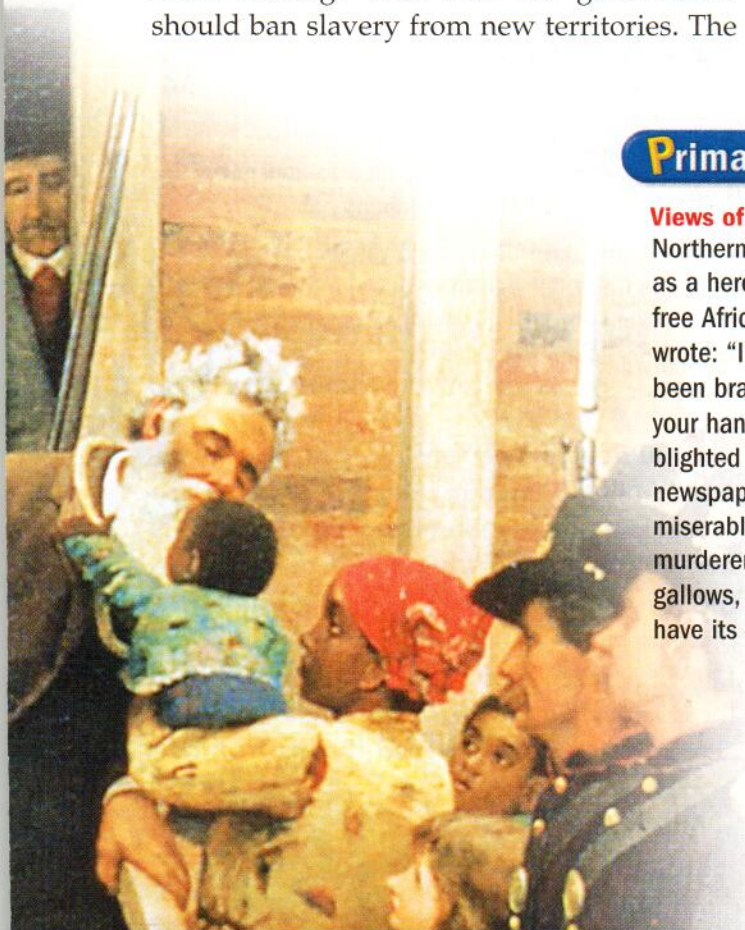
Primary Source Hero or Villain?

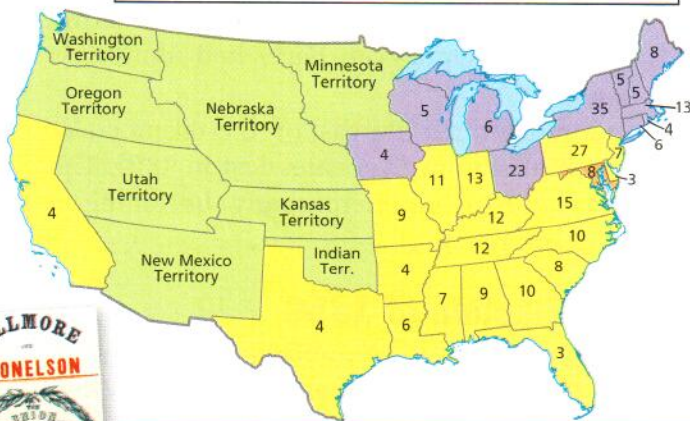
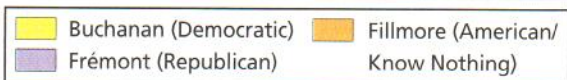
Views of John Brown Some Northerners regarded John Brown as a hero. In a letter to Brown, a free African American in Indiana wrote: "I thank you that you have been brave enough to reach out your hands to the crushed and blighted of my race." A Southern newspaper, however, wrote: "The miserable old traitor and murderer belongs to the gallows, and the gallows will have its own."



Critical Thinking

Evaluating In what ways might a Northerner and a Southerner view John Brown's actions differently?





Candidate	Popular Vote (%)	Electoral Vote (%)
Buchanan	1,838,169 (45%)	174 (59%)
Frémont	1,341,264 (33%)	114 (38%)
Fillmore	874,534 (22%)	8 (3%)

▲ Third-party candidate Fillmore appealed to voters concerned about immigration and Catholicism.

Democrats stressed that Buchanan was the candidate of conciliation and stability and believed that a Frémont victory would lead to civil war. ►



Northern States for Buchanan The presidential election of 1856 was decided in the swing states of Pennsylvania, Illinois, and Indiana. Democratic candidate James Buchanan won all three. Only 1,200 of Republican John Frémont's 1.34 million popular votes came from slaveholding states.

The Republican ticket of John C. Frémont and William L. Dayton opposed slavery's expansion into the territories. ►



Map Skills

Regions In which region was Frémont most successful? Which states in that area did he not win?

Maps in Motion See StudentWorks™ Plus or glencoe.com.

The American Party, or Know Nothings, grew quickly between 1853 and 1856 by attacking immigrants. The Know Nothings nominated former president Millard Fillmore. Most of the Northern delegates, however, walked out of the convention when the party refused to call for the repeal of the Kansas-Nebraska Act.

The presidential vote divided along **rigid**—firm and inflexible—sectional lines. Buchanan won the election. He took all Southern states except Maryland and received 174 electoral votes compared to 114 for Frémont and 8 for Fillmore. Frémont did not receive a single electoral vote south of the Mason-Dixon line, but he carried 11 of the 16 free states.

Reading Check Identifying Which political party was emerging as the party of the South in the 1854 and 1856 elections?

The Dred Scott Case

Main Idea The Supreme Court's decision in the *Dred Scott* case dealt a severe blow to antislavery forces and further divided the country.

History and You How would you feel if the Supreme Court decided that you were “property”? Read to find out how the decision in the *Dred Scott* case shocked the nation.

Dred Scott was an enslaved African American bought by an army doctor in Missouri, a slave state. In the 1830s, the doctor moved his household to Illinois, a free state, and then to the Wisconsin Territory, where slavery was banned by the Northwest Ordinance of 1787. Later the family returned to Missouri, where the doctor died. In 1846, with the help of anti-slavery lawyers, Scott sued for his freedom.

Scott claimed he should be free because he once lived in areas of the North where slavery was prohibited.

Eleven years later, as anger grew over the slavery issue, the case reached the Supreme Court. The case attracted enormous attention across the country. While the immediate issue was Dred Scott's status, the Court also had the opportunity to rule on the question of slavery in the territories.

The Court's Decision

The Court's decision electrified the nation. Chief Justice Roger B. Taney (TAW•nee) said that Dred Scott was still an enslaved person. As such, Scott was not a citizen and had no right to bring a lawsuit. Taney continued on, addressing broader issues.

Taney wrote that Scott's residence on free soil did not make him free. An enslaved person was property, and the Fifth Amendment prohibits Congress from taking away property without "due process of law."

Finally, Taney wrote that Congress had no power to prohibit slavery in any territory. The

Missouri Compromise—which banned slavery north of 36°30'N latitude—was unconstitutional. For that matter, so was popular sovereignty. Not even the voters in a territory could prohibit slavery because that would amount to taking away a person's property. In effect, the decision meant that the Constitution protected slavery.

Reaction to the Decision

Rather than settling the issue, the decision divided the country even more. The Court upheld what many in the South had always maintained: Nothing could legally stop the spread of slavery. The Republicans' main issue—limiting the spread of slavery—was ruled unconstitutional.

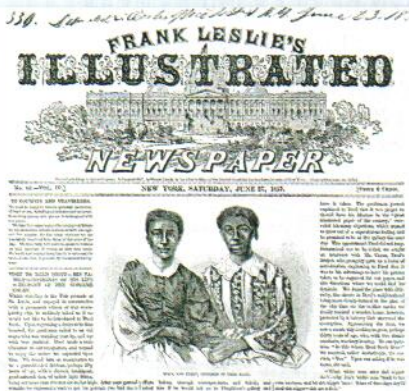
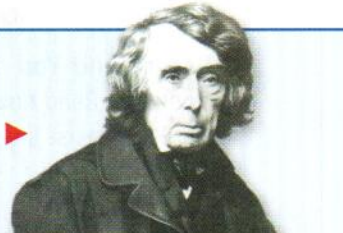
Republicans and other antislavery groups were outraged. They called the *Dred Scott* decision "a wicked and false judgment" and "the greatest crime" ever committed in the nation's courts.

Reading Check **Applying** Based on the *Dred Scott* decision, could voters ban slavery? Explain.

Primary Source The Dred Scott Decision

A Controversial Ruling In his ruling in the *Dred Scott* case, Chief Justice Roger B. Taney declared the Missouri Compromise unconstitutional because it deprived slaveholders of their property without due process or compensation. Southerners praised the decision, which opened all U.S. territory to slavery.

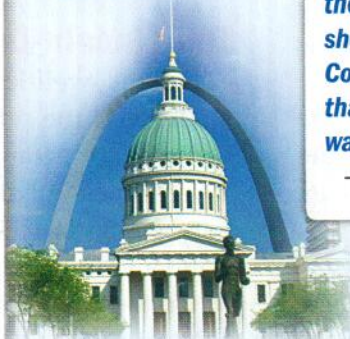
Supreme Court Chief Justice Roger B. Taney ▶



◀ Newspaper announcing the *Dred Scott* decision

"They [African Americans] had for more than a century before been regarded as beings of an inferior order and altogether unfit to associate with the white race . . . and so far inferior that they had no rights which the white man was bound to respect. . . . No one . . . should induce the Court to give to the words of the Constitution a more liberal construction in their favor than they were intended to bear when the instrument was framed and adopted."

—Roger Taney, *Dred Scott v. Sandford* decision, March 1857



▲ The Old Courthouse in St. Louis where the *Dred Scott* case was heard

Critical Thinking

Assessing How do you think the *Dred Scott* decision affected sectional tensions in the country?



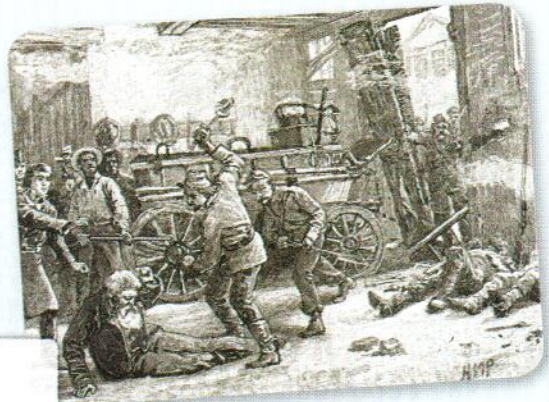
Primary Source The Raid on Harpers Ferry

A Raid to Fight Slavery John Brown gained notoriety fighting against pro-slavery forces in Kansas in the mid-1850s. Financed by wealthy abolitionists, Brown led a raid in 1859 to capture the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia. Brown hoped to use the weapons at the arsenal to spark an uprising by enslaved people in Virginia.

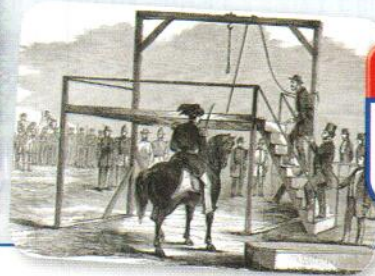
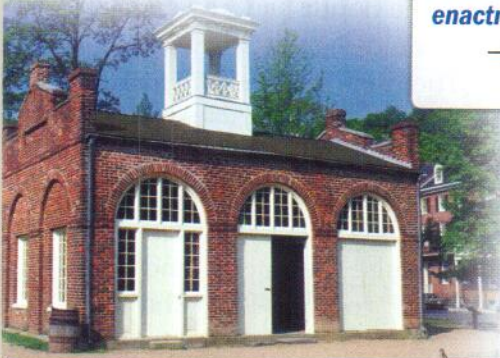
John Brown and his men barricaded themselves in this brick engine house to fight off attacks from federal troops. ▼

“Now if . . . I should forfeit my life for the furtherance of the ends of justice and MINGLE MY BLOOD . . . with the blood of millions in this slave country whose rights are disregarded by wicked, cruel, and unjust enactments—I submit; so LET IT BE DONE.”

—John Brown’s statement to the Virginia Court



▲ Federal troops commanded by Colonel Robert E. Lee crushed Brown’s raid. More than half of Brown’s force, including two of his sons, died in the fighting. Brown and his surviving men were captured and Brown was later hanged.



Critical Thinking

Drawing Conclusions Was the raid on Harpers Ferry a success for abolitionists? Why or why not?

Lincoln and Douglas

Main Idea The Lincoln-Douglas debates placed the little-known Lincoln into the national spotlight.

History and You Do you like to root for the underdog? Read how Abraham Lincoln skillfully debated against the powerful Stephen Douglas.

In the congressional election of 1858, the Senate race in Illinois was the center of national attention. The contest pitted the current senator, Democrat Stephen A. Douglas, against Republican challenger **Abraham Lincoln**. People considered Douglas a likely candidate for president in 1860. Lincoln was nearly an unknown.

Douglas, a successful lawyer, joined the Democratic Party and won election to the House in 1842 and to the Senate in 1846. Short, stocky, and powerful, Douglas was called “the Little Giant.” He disliked slavery but thought that the controversy over it would interfere with the nation’s growth. He

believed the issue could be resolved through popular sovereignty.

Born in the poor backcountry of Kentucky, Abraham Lincoln moved to Indiana as a child, and later to Illinois. Like Douglas, Lincoln was intelligent, ambitious, and a successful lawyer. He had little formal education—but excellent political skills. He had served in the Illinois legislature and in the U.S. House of Representatives. Lincoln saw slavery as morally wrong but admitted there was no easy way to end slavery where it existed. He was certain, though, that slavery should not be allowed to spread.

The Lincoln-Douglas Debates

Not as well-known as Douglas, Lincoln challenged the senator to a series of debates. Douglas reluctantly agreed. The two met seven times in August, September, and October of 1858 in cities and villages throughout Illinois. Thousands came to these debates. The main **topic**, or subject of discussion, was slavery.

During the debate at Freeport, Lincoln pressed Douglas about his views on popular sovereignty. Could the people of a territory legally exclude slavery before becoming a state? Douglas replied that the people could exclude slavery by refusing to pass laws protecting slaveholders' rights. Douglas's response, which satisfied antislavery followers but lost him support in the South, became known as the Freeport Doctrine.

Douglas claimed that Lincoln wanted African Americans to be fully equal to whites. Lincoln denied this. Still, Lincoln said, "in the right to eat the bread . . . which his own hand earns, [an African American] is my equal and the equal of [Senator] Douglas, and the equal of every living man." The real issue, Lincoln said, is "between the men who think slavery a wrong and those who do not think it wrong. The Republican Party think it wrong."

Following the debates, Douglas won a narrow victory in the election. Lincoln lost the election but did not come away empty-handed. He gained a national reputation as a man of clear thinking who could argue with force and persuasion.

The Raid on Harpers Ferry

After the 1858 election, Southerners felt threatened by Republicans. In late 1859, an act of violence added to their fears. On October 16 the abolitionist John Brown led a group on a raid on Harpers Ferry, Virginia. His target was an **arsenal**, a storage site for weapons. Brown hoped to arm enslaved African Americans and start a revolt against slaveholders. Abolitionists had paid for the raid.

Brown's raid was defeated by local citizens and federal troops. Convicted of treason and murder, Brown was sentenced to hang. His execution shook the North. Some antislavery Northerners denounced Brown's use of violence. Others saw Brown as a **martyr**—a person who dies for a great cause.

John Brown's death rallied abolitionists. When Southerners learned of Brown's abolitionist ties, their fears of a great Northern conspiracy against them seemed to be confirmed. The nation was on the brink of disaster.

 **Reading Check** **Identifying** Why did John Brown raid the arsenal at Harpers Ferry?

Section 3 Review

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

Vocabulary

1. Define each of the following terms, and use each in a sentence: **rigid**, **topic**, **arsenal**, **martyr**.

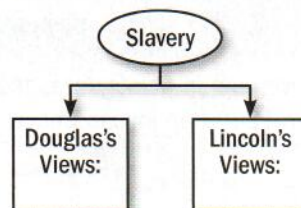
Main Ideas

2. **Specifying** What issue led to the formation of the Republican Party, and what stand did the new party take on that issue?
3. **Explaining** What reasons did Taney give for Dred Scott's status as an enslaved person?

4. **Identifying** How did the Lincoln-Douglas debates benefit Lincoln?

Critical Thinking

5. **Identifying Points of View** Use a diagram like the one below to compare the views of Lincoln and Douglas on the issue of slavery.



6. **Making Inferences** Why do you think the raid on Harpers Ferry by a mere 18 men seemed so threatening to Southerners?

7. **Persuasive Writing** Write a rebuttal, or response, to Roger B. Taney on the *Dred Scott* decision. Address the points he made in his remarks on the Court's decision.

8. Answer the Essential Question

What was the significance of the *Dred Scott* decision?