

**THE COMING  
CRISIS,  
CHAPTER 15  
NOTES, PART 2**

# Compromise of 1850

- ⦿ Composed of 5 separate bills and three separate compromises
- ⦿ 1: California was admitted as a free state, but the status of remaining former Mexican possessions were left to be decided by popular sovereignty when they applied for statehood
  - Result: 15 slave states and sixteen free states

# Compromise, continued

- ② 2: Texas (Slave state) was required to cede land to New Mexico Territory (undecided) and the federal government would assume \$10 million in debts Texas had incurred
- ③ 3: Slave trade was ended in the District of Columbia, but a stronger fugitive slave law for all states was enacted

# Aftermath

The country was relieved, and the feeling was that the problem of slavery in the territories had been solved

# Fugitive Slave Act

- Northerners were appalled by professional slave catchers, who seized African Americans in the North and returned them to slavery
- Nine northern states passed personal liberty laws between 1842 and 1850 saying that they would not cooperate with federal recapture efforts

# Fugitive Slave Act

- ⦿ Fugitive Slave Law (1850) increased the power of slave owners to capture escaped slaves
- ⦿ Full authority of the federal government now supported slave owners
- ⦿ Fugitives were NOT allowed to testify on their own behalf
- ⦿ Law imposed federal penalties on citizens who protected or helped fugitives

# Reaction

## ◎ Boston cases:

- A group of African American men freed escaped slave Shadrach Minkins from a courtroom in 1851 and sent him to Canada and a Massachusetts jury refused to convict the group of men
- A biracial group of armed abolitionists led by a clergyman failed in an attempt to save escaped slave Anthony Burns in 1854
  - Burns's freedom could not be purchased and he was sent to the South

- Fugitive Slave Law brought home the reality of slavery to residents of the free states
- More and more in the northern states believed slavery was wrong

# Election of 1852

- ◉ Whigs ran General Winfield Scott for President
- ◉ Democrats ran Franklin Pierce, who was supported by immigrant votes and political machines in the Northern cities
- ◉ Pierce won in a landslide
- ◉ “Young America” movement—a group of writers and politicians in the New York Democratic Party who believed in conquering Central America and Cuba
- ◉ Pierce tried to force the Spanish to sell Cuba to the U.S., which failed—some Cuban slave owners wanted the US to take over so that slavery could continue
- ◉ Complicity between the Pierce administration and proslavery expansionists was foolhardy and lost it the northern goodwill with which it had begun

# Kansas-Nebraska Act

- Stephen Douglas introduced the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854 to further the construction of a transcontinental railroad
- Douglas wanted the rail line to end in Chicago (in his state) rather than in Missouri—to accomplish that, the land west of Iowa and Missouri had to be organized in territories

- Douglas proposed that the status of slavery in the new territories be determined by popular sovereignty
- The bill would effectively repeal the Missouri Compromise which barred slavery north of latitude 36 degrees 30'
- The bill passed, but it strained the major political parties—democrats and whigs were damaged

# Effects

- ① “Cotton Whigs” in the North who had economic ties with southern slave owners were convinced that the bill would encourage antislavery feeling in the North
- ② Cotton Whigs urged southern politicians to vote against it, but were ignored
- ③ Many northern Whigs concluded that compromise with the South was impossible

# Bleeding Kansas

- In 1855, 6,307 ballots were cast in a territory that had fewer than 3,000 eligible voters
- Most pro-slavery votes were cast by “border ruffians” from Missouri
- Northerners responded—New Englanders arrived also and started the free-soil town of Lawrence
- Kansas became a bloody battleground as the two factions struggled to secure the mandate of “popular sovereignty”
- 1856: the sack of Lawrence—pro-slavery forces burned and looted Lawrence, Kansas
- In retaliation, John Brown led his sons on a raid in the proslavery settlers of Pottawatomie Creek, killing five unarmed people

# Violence

- ⦿ Violence was caused by the breakdown of the two-party system
- ⦿ Breakdown of the Whig party left a political vacuum that was filled by one of the strongest bursts of nativism (antiimmigrant) feeling and the birth of the American Party, which was a nativist party
- ⦿ Nativism drew former Whigs
- ⦿ American Party was called the Know-Nothings (members were secretive and were asked to tell questioners that “I know nothing”)