

**THE COMING  
CRISIS,  
CHAPTER 15  
NOTES, PART 3**

# North/South Split Made Complete

- In 1855, the American Party split into northern (antislavery) and southern (proslavery) wings
- Many people who had voted for the Know-Nothings shifted their support to the Republican Party, founded in 1854

# Republican Party

- ◎ Supporters:
  - Former northern Whigs who opposed slavery
  - Free-Soil Party supporters who opposed the expansion of slavery, but were willing to tolerate it in the South
  - Northern reformers concerned about temperance and Catholicism
  - Merchants and industrialists who wanted a strong national government to promote economic growth by supporting a tariff, transportation, and cheap western land

# Election of 1856

- ⦿ James Buchanan of Pennsylvania was the Democratic candidate
  - Buchanan was ambassador to Great Britain when the Kansas-Nebraska Act was voted on and he had not taken a position on it
  - Stephen Douglas and Pierce had supported it, so the Northern Democrats opposed them
- ⦿ Republican candidate was John C. Fremont
- ⦿ American Party candidate was former president Millard Fillmore

# Election of 1856 Outcome

- ◎ Two separate races:
  - Northern race was between Buchanan and Fremont
    - Fremont decisively defeated Buchanan in the North
  - Southern race was between Buchanan and Fillmore
- ◎ Buchanan was the only national candidate and won the election, but only received 45 percent of the popular vote
- ◎ One of the highest voter turnout figures in American history: 79%

# Dred Scott Decision

- Dred Scott v. Sandford was decided on March 6, 1857—two days after Buchanan was sworn in
- In Dred Scott, a southern-dominated Supreme Court attempted to solve the political controversy over slavery

# Facts of Dred Scott Case

- Dred Scott had been a slave all of his life
- Scott's owner, army surgeon John Emerson, took Scott on his military assignments during the 1830s to Illinois (a free state) and Wisconsin Territory (a free territory)
- While in free territory, Scott married another slave, Harriet, and their daughter Eliza was born in free territory
- Emerson and the Scotts then returned to Missouri (slave state) and there, in 1846, Scott sued for his freedom and that of his wife and daughter on the grounds that residence in free lands had made them free

# Decision

- ⦿ Chief Justice Roger Taney of Maryland wrote the majority opinion
- ⦿ Opinion stated:
  - Missouri Compromise was unconstitutional
  - Federal government had no right to interfere with the free movement of property throughout the territories
  - Dismissed the Scott case on the grounds that only citizens could bring suits before federal courts and that black people (free or slave) were not citizens

# Response to Dred Scott

- Southerners were pleased
- Northerners were troubled, and questioned the authority of the Supreme Court to perform judicial review
- Northerners feared that another decision could legalize slavery even in free states

# Lecompton Constitution

- The 1855 election of officers to a territorial government for Kansas produced a lopsided proslavery outcome that was the result of illegal voting
- Free-Soilers protested by forming their own government, giving Kansas both a proslavery territorial legislature in Lecompton and a Free-Soil government in Topeka
- Free-Soiler voters boycotted a June 1857 election of representatives to a convention called write a constitution for the territory
- Convention therefore wrote the proslavery Lecompton constitution and applied for statehood

# Buchanan Makes a Mistake

- Free-Soil voters hold honest elections for the territorial legislature and those elections returned a clear Free-Soil majority
- Buchanan endorsed the proslavery constitution because he feared the loss of the support of southern Democrats
- But: Stephen Douglas in 1857 opposed the Lecompton constitution on the grounds that it violated the principle of popular sovereignty
- He demanded honest elections
- Douglas voted with the majority in Congress in April of 1858 to refuse admission to Kansas under the Lecompton constitution
- People of Kansas also rejected the Lecompton constitution 11,300 to 1,788 and Kansas was admitted as a free state in January of 1861

# Panic of 1857

- Depression of 1857 and 1858
- In August of 1857, the failure of an Ohio investment house was the subject of a news story that went by telegraph wires to Wall Street and other markets
- Panic resulted, and led to business failures and slowdowns
- There was a sharp downturn in agricultural exports to Britain

# John Brown

- In 1859, John Brown came up with a scheme to raid the South and start a general slave uprising
- He believed that discontent amount southern slaves was great and only needed a spark to get going
- Free African Americans did not support Brown and thought his plans were doomed

# Raid on Harpers Ferry

- On October 15, 1859, Brown and a group of twenty-two white and African American men against the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia
- Brown made no escape plans
- Brown failed to notify slaves to go ahead and revolt
- Brown was captured and eight of his men were dead
- Virginia tried and convicted Brown of treason, murder, and fomenting insurrection

- ⦿ Brown's death by hanging on December 2, 1859 was marked by public mourning throughout northern communities
- ⦿ Many people in the North supported Brown's cause even if they disliked his tactics
- ⦿ Brown's raid brought fears of a slave rebellion to the South
- ⦿ Talk of secession as the only response to a future Republican presidential victory spread through the South

# Election of 1860

- The split of the Democratic Party into northern and southern wings that occurred during President Buchanan's tenure became official at the Democratic nominating conventions in 1860
- Southern Democrats nominated John C. Breckinridge of Kentucky
- The remaining 2/3 of Democrats nominated Stephen Douglas
- Some southern Whigs joined border-state nativists to form the Constitutional Union Party

# Abraham Lincoln Nominated

- Lincoln ran as a Republican candidate for President
- Breckinridge supported the extension of slavery into the territories
- Lincoln stood for its exclusion
- Douglas argued for popular sovereignty
- Republicans did not believe the South would secede if Lincoln won
- Douglas campaigned in the South:
  - “Mr. Lincoln is the next President. We must try to save the Union. I will go South.”
- Lincoln won the election

# The South Leaves the Union

- ① The results of the election shocked Southerners
- ① They were frightened by the prospect of becoming a permanent minority in a political system dominated by an anti-slavery party
- ① The only hope to preserve the Southern slave system was to secede from the Union

- On December 20, 1860, a state convention in South Carolina voted unanimously to secede from the Union
- Southerners believed they did not have a choice and Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas followed South Carolina

# North's Political Options

- Buchanan did nothing, of course
- Lincoln's options:
  - Compromise (rejected by Lincoln)
  - Let the seven seceding states "go in peace"
    - Lincoln felt strongly that a minority should not be able to break up the government whenever they did not get their way
  - Use of force to reform the Union

# Establishment of the Confederacy

- In February of 1861, delegates from the 7 seceding states created the Confederate States of America
- They wrote a constitution which supported states' rights and made the abolition of slavery impossible
- Jefferson Davis of Mississippi was chosen as President and Alexander Stephens of Georgia as Vice President