

Failed Compromises-

Lesson 2

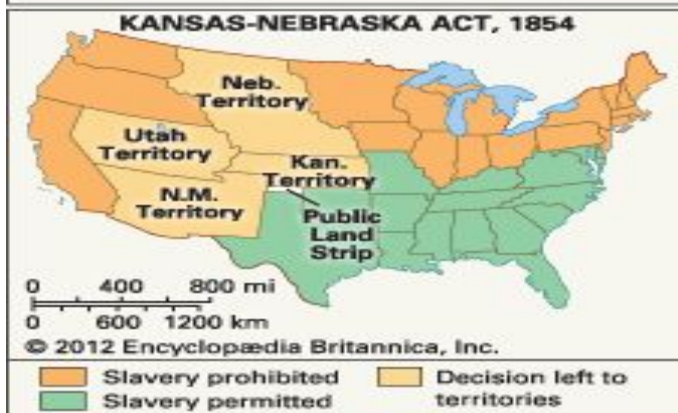
After the Louisiana Purchase was obtained, America began wanting to follow their Manifest Destiny. Eventually, America added the Oregon Territory, the Mexican Cession, and the Annexation of Texas. These new territories began to raise the question of whether or not slavery should exist in these new areas. Slavery had been a topic of discussion since the signing of the Constitution; however, it was never really dealt with to the extent of what was to come. Now, the issue of slavery became front and center as one of the greatest political debates of American history.

Compromise of 1850

California was apart of the Mexican Cession. Eventually, California met all of the criteria for becoming a state. The North wanted California to enter as a free state; however, the South wouldn't agree unless a unique set of terms were met. Under the Compromise of 1850, California would be a Free state, but North had to follow stricter Fugitive Slave Laws

Fugitive Slave Act

Anyone who helped a fugitives could be fined or imprisoned. Some Northerners refused to obey the new law. In his 1849 essay, “Civil Disobedience”, Henry David Thoreau wrote that if the law “requires you to be the agent (cause) of injustice to another, then I say, break the law”. Northern juries refused to convict people accused of breaking the new law.



In 1854 Senator Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois introduced a bill to settle the issue of slavery. Under the bill, he repealed the Missouri Compromise by allowing people to vote on whether or not they wanted slavery in the territories. This was known as “Popular Sovereignty”

Conflict in Kansas

Northerners protested to the Kansas-Nebraska Act. In some places, it now allowed for slavery where it had been previously outlawed for 5 years. Southerners supported the bill because it was suspected many slaveholders would move from Missouri to Kansas and they would naturally vote to keep slavery. The Kansas-Nebraska Act ended up passing in 1854

Border Ruffians

Supporters of both sides rushed to Kansas. Armed pro-slavery supporters known as border ruffians crossed the border just to place votes in favor of slavery. When elections took place more than 6,000 people voted, but only 1,500 people actually lived in Kansas. Slavery opponents refused to accept the laws. They armed themselves, held their own elections, and banned slavery. Consequently, there were two rival governments in Kansas. In May 1856, slavery supporters attacked the town of Lawrence, an antislavery stronghold. In return, an Abolitionists by the name of John Brown led an attack that killed 5 supporters of slavery. One newspaper coined the conflict as “Bleeding Kansas”