Renewing the Sectional Struggle
1848 – 1854
1848 in the US

- Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo signed
  - Gained Mexican Cession
  - Began debates over slavery that threatened to split US along sectional (North – South) lines
The Mexican Cession
The Popular Sovereignty Panacea

• Both national parties important for national unity
  – If they were replaced by 2 sectional parties (with support only in North or South), Union would be in danger
  – Politicians believed safest course was to ignore problems generated by slavery
  – Northern abolitionists and southern “fire-eaters” (strongly pro-slavery) continued to agitate
The Popular Sovereignty Panacea

• 1848 election for the Democrats
  – Polk chose not to run because of exhaustion from 1 term
  – Democrats chose General Lewis Cass, veteran of War of 1812, as nominee
    • Experienced senator and diplomat
    • Attacked by Whigs as pompous; used rhymes with “Cass” to attack him (Gass, jackass)
  – Democrats stayed silent on slavery issue
    • Even though Cass’s views on slavery (popular sovereignty) in territories were well known
The Popular Sovereignty Panacea

- “popular sovereignty”
  - Said people of each territory should choose whether to have slavery or not
  - People liked it because it fit with democratic tradition in US
  - Politicians liked it as compromise between free-soilers (wanting to completely ban slavery in territories) and South that wanted protection for slavery in territories
  - Hope was to weaken issue of slavery in many small, local elections
  - One big problem: it might allow for the spread of slavery
Political Triumphs for General Taylor

• 1848 election for the Whigs
  – Nominated General Zachary Taylor
    • Hero from Mexican War
    • Had never held elective office
  – Henry Clay should have been nominated
    • He was too outspoken and had too many enemies
  – Avoided slavery issue
    • Even though Taylor himself owned slaves on his Louisiana plantation
Political Triumphs for General Taylor

• Free Soil Party
  – Organized by abolitionist northerners
  – Supported Wilmot Proviso (ban on slavery in territories)
  – Tried to broaden appeal beyond antislavery

• Supported federal aid for internal improvements and free homesteads for settlers in West
Political Triumphs for General Taylor

• Diverse supporters of Free Soil Party
  – Industrialists who didn’t like Polk’s reduction of tariffs
  – (Northern) Democrats who didn’t like the fact that Polk got all of Texas but only part of Oregon
  – Northern and Western whites who did not want blacks to move into territories (because of prejudice against them)
  – “conscience Whigs” who condemned slavery on moral grounds
Political Triumphs for General Taylor

• Free-Soilers nominate Van Buren
  – Van Buren’s platform – “Free soil, free speech, free labor, free men”
Political Triumphs for General Taylor

• Free-Soilers and slavery
  – Condemned slavery more because it hurt whites’ chances to move up from wage earning to self-employment
  – Only with Free Soil in West (where whites would not have to compete with slave labor) could whites improve their social and economic condition
Political Triumphs for General Taylor

• Free Soil was first sectional party
  – South did not support Free Soil at all
  – Main support came from North (and somewhat from West)
  – Foreshadowed rise of sectional Republican party (in 1854)
Political Triumphs for General Taylor

• The campaign of 1848
  – Both sides focused on personalities instead of issues (especially slavery)
• Results of the election of 1848
  – Taylor won because of his popularity as a general and Van Buren took Democratic votes away from Cass in New York
“Californy Gold”

• Discovery of gold in California opened up slavery issue that both parties had tried to avoid
  – President Taylor’s lack of political skills shined through in the process
“Californy Gold”

- Early 1848 – gold discovered northern California at Sutter’s Mill
  - Huge numbers of lawless men poured into California
    - A few got rich; most lost lots of money
    - Most profits made by providing services to miners (laundry, food, etc.)
California
Gold Rush Country
Sutter’s Mill
“Californy Gold”

• Government in California overwhelmed
  – Outburst of crime (murder, robbery, claim jumping)

• Californians wanted stronger government to combat lawlessness
  – 1849 – California applied for admission to US
    • Constitution written that outlawed slavery
    • California would bypass usual territorial stage
    • Strongly opposed by South
Sectional Balance and the Underground Railroad

• Situation of the South in 1850
  – Controlled much of US’s top leadership
    • Presidents past and present, including Taylor
    • Majority on Supreme Court
    • Outnumbered in House, but equal in Senate
  – Cotton prices and production doing well
  – Extremely unlikely that slavery was threatened in 15 original southern states
Sectional Balance and the Underground Railroad

- In spite of positives, South felt like bad news outweighed good news
Sectional Balance and the Underground Railroad

• California
  – 15 slave, 15 free states in US
  – Admitting California would upset balance in Senate
  – South feared that California was just the start
    • Utah and New Mexico both wanted admittance as free states
Sectional Balance and the Underground Railroad

• Texas’ northern border
  – Texas claimed huge area east of Rio Grande and north to 42\textsuperscript{nd} parallel
  – Federal government was going to take this area away from Texas
  – Texas threatened violence if the area was taken from them
Texas and the Disputed Area Before the Compromise of 1850
Sectional Balance and the Underground Railroad

- Abolition of slavery in Washington, DC
  - Abolitionists worked for abolition in US capital
  - South did not want area of freedom in between slave states (Maryland and Virginia)
Sectional Balance and the Underground Railroad

• Runaway slaves
  – South hated losing slaves
  – Some escaped north through Underground Railroad
    • Runaways transported through antislavery homes to Canada
    • Harriet Tubman most famous “conductor”; traveled into South 19 times to rescue over 300 slaves
Conductors on the Underground Railroad
Sectional Balance and the Underground Railroad

- South demanded stricter fugitive-slave law
  - First one (passed in 1793) was inadequate and ignored by some antislavery public officials
  - Only about 1,000 slaves per year (out of 4 million) escaped
    - More purchased their freedom than escaped
  - The principal seen as more important than the actual loss
    - South angered that abolitionists were able to ignore law and believed they were morally superior to South (which was obeying the law)
Twilight of the Senatorial Giants

• Crisis in 1850 over California and slavery
  – “fire-eaters” in South talked of secession
  – Meeting called in Nashville to discuss Southern secession

• Congress had to act to keep Union together
  – 3 great leaders of older generation (Henry Clay, John C. Calhoun, Daniel Webster) worked for compromise
Twilight of the Senatorial Giants

• Henry Clay
  – “Great Compromiser” (from Missouri Compromise and nullification crisis)
  – Strongly and eloquently urged compromises by both North and South
    • Especially that North enact stronger fugitive-slave law
  – Supported by Senator Stephen A. Douglas (Illinois)
Henry Clay
Twilight of the Senatorial Giants

• John C. Calhoun
  – “Great Nullifier” (from role in nullification crisis in 1832)
  – Defended the South in speech a colleague delivered (because of Calhoun’s poor health)
  – Supported compromise, but did not think Clay’s proposals were enough to protect South
  – Wanted slavery and South left alone and restoration of political balance between North and South
    • Had unworkable plan for 2 presidents (1 from each section), each with a veto
  – Died in 1850, before debate was over
John C. Calhoun
Twilight of the Senatorial Giants

• Daniel Webster
  – Supported Clay’s compromises, including stronger fugitive-slave law
  – Argued legislation on slavery in territories unnecessary
    • Climate, geography, topography in Mexican Cession made slavery unworkable there
  – Powerful March 7, 1850 speech turned North to compromise
    • Especially supported by banking and commercial sectors of economy that would lose millions if secession occurred
    • Attacked by Free-Soilers and abolitionists as traitor to Northern (antislavery) cause
Deadlock and Danger on Capitol Hill

• Younger members of Congress from North disagreed with older members (Clay, Calhoun, Webster)
  – Believed Union had to be purified (of slavery), not patched together and preserved at all costs
Deadlock and Danger on Capitol Hill

- William H. Seward
  - New Senator from New York
  - Became spokesman for northern antislavery radicals
  - Opposed compromise with South
    - Ignored fact that Union had been made with compromise; refusal to compromise would lead to disunion
  - Called for obedience to “higher law” regarding slavery in the territories
Deadlock and Danger on Capitol Hill

• President Taylor’s position
  – Wanted South to maintain slavery there, but did not think West was suited to slavery
  – Opposed South’s talk of secession
    • Was ready to send troops to stop this if needed (as Jackson had threatened to do)
  – Threatened veto of any compromise passed by Congress
Breaking the Congressional Logjam

• 1850 – anti-compromise President Taylor dies
  – Millard Fillmore takes over; more willing to compromise
  – Taylor would have vetoed compromise measures; Fillmore signs them
Millard Fillmore
Breaking the Congressional Logjam

- North convinced by compromisers (Clay, Webster, Douglas)
  - Good will to South increased by prosperity from California gold
- Many in South were strongly opposed to compromise
  - "fire-eaters" spoke of secession and hatred for North at June 1850 meeting of southern extremists
  - Unionists and compromisers in South beat extremists to support compromise
Balancing the Compromise Scales

• North got more from Compromise of 1850
  – California admitted as free state
    • Balance of power in Senate favored North from then on
  – New Mexico and Utah open to slavery based on popular sovereignty
    • Very unlikely either area would vote for slavery
The Compromise of 1850
Balancing the Compromise Scales

• Even South’s gains turned into losses
  – $10 million paid to Texas for disputed territory; not very much money in long run
  – Sale of slaves in District of Columbia banned, but not slavery itself
    • Still was move toward emancipation
  – Fugitive Slave Law of 1850
    • South gained tougher law, but Northern opinion against slavery hardened as a result
Texas and the Disputed Area Before the Compromise of 1850
Balancing the Compromise Scales

- Enforcing the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850
  - Fleeing slaves could not testify on their own behalf and denied jury trial
  - Federal commissioner who handled cases of fugitive slaves received $5 if slave set free, $10 if slave not set free
  - Northerners who helped slaves escape could be fined or jailed
  - Northerners could even be forced to help recapture slaves
Balancing the Compromise Scales

• Northerners turned from compromise to abolition in large numbers because of Fugitive Slave law
  – Underground Railroad increased efforts
  – Mobs of whites rescued captured slaves
  – Massachusetts criminalized enforcement of law by state officials
  – “personal liberty laws” passed; denied jails and other help to federal enforcement officials
The Fugitive Slave Law Forced Whites to Recapture Escaped Slaves
Balancing the Compromise Scales

• Fugitive Slave law hurt South more than anything else from Compromise of 1850
  – Northern hatred against South and slavery awakened
  – Southern anger against North for not enforcing law and living up to agreement
Balancing the Compromise Scales

• How the Compromise of 1850 won the Civil War for the North
  – Delay gave the North more money, population, factories, crops, etc. to fight war with
  – Delay gave North increased moral strength
    • In 1850, most Northerners would not have supported use of force to keep South in Union
    • By 1860, most Northerners would support use of force against South (because of these 10 years of fighting over slavery with South)
The Legal Status of Slavery, from the Revolution to the Civil War

Map showing the legal status of slavery in the United States from the Revolution to the Civil War, including dates and methods of abolition and entry into Union as Free or Slave States.
Defeat and Doom for the Whigs

• Election of 1852 – Democrats
  – Nominated unknown Franklin Pierce
    • Had served in Mexican War
    • Was pro-South northerner, making him acceptable to Southern Democrats
  – Ran on platform supporting territorial expansion and Compromise of 1850 (including Fugitive Slave law)
Defeat and Doom for the Whigs

• Election of 1852 – Whigs
  – Chose a war hero, General Winfield Scott (from Mexican War) over compromisers (President Fillmore or Daniel Webster)
    • Had prideful, upper class demeanor that turned many ordinary people against him
  – Platform supported Compromise of 1850 (as had Democrats, though Whigs were less enthusiastic)
Defeat and Doom for the Whigs

- Whigs split in 1852
  - Antislavery northerners opposed endorsement of Fugitive Slave Law
  - Southerners did not believe Scott’s commitment to Compromise of 1850, especially Fugitive Slave Law
Defeat and Doom for the Whigs

• Campaign ignored issues, since both partied agreed on support of Compromise of 1850
  – Turned into attacks on other candidate’s personality
Defeat and Doom for the Whigs

• Results of election of 1852
  – Scott lost because of division in Whig party
  – Scott also hurt by Free Soil Party (winning 5% of popular vote in north) that took votes from him)
  – Pierce won 254 to 42 electoral votes; 1.6 to 1.38 million popular votes
Franklin Pierce
Election of 1852

1852

ELECTORAL VOTE
TOTAL: 296

POPULAR VOTE
TOTAL: 3,143,679

Democratic (Pierce) 86% 1,386,580
Whig (Scott) 14% 44% 155,825

42% 51% 1,801,274
Defeat and Doom for the Whigs

• 1852 marked end of Whig party
  – Had been national party (winning votes in North and South)
  – Destroyed by disagreements over slavery, especially Fugitive Slave Law
  – Had kept Union together during its existence
    • Important compromisers like Clay and Webster were Whigs
Expansionist Stirrings South of the Border

- Spirit of Manifest Destiny aroused by victory in Mexican War and gold in California
Expansionist Stirrings South of the Border

• Central America
  – British involvement in Central America (including seizure of a port in Nicaragua) aroused American concern
  – 1848 treaty between US and New Granada (Columbia)
    • Gave US right to travel across the area; US would maintain neutrality of area, so traffic could go freely
    • 1855 – first railroad across Panama completed
  – 1850 – Clayton-Bulwer Treaty
    • US avoided conflict with Britain
    • Neither Britain or US would fortify or seek exclusive control over any future waterway across isthmus
Central America, c. 1850, Showing British Possessions and Proposed Canal

- Gulf of Mexico
- Isthmus of Tehuantepec
- BELIZE (BRITISH HONDURAS)
- CUBA (Spanish)
- JAMAICA (British)
- Caribbean Sea
- Pacific Ocean
- Proposed canal route, then a land-and-water route
- British agents and traders influence natives
- Future Panama Canal
- Greytown
- Costa Rica
- Colombia (New Granada)
Expansionist Stirrings South of the Border

• The US South and Latin America
  – Southerners blocked by Compromise of 1850 in US, looked to expand slavery in Mexico, Caribbean, Central and South America
Expansionist Stirrings South of the Border

- Nicaragua
  - 1856 – William Walker took control; declared himself dictator
  - Legalized slavery; called on South to bring slaves there
  - Overthrown by alliance of other Central American countries
Expansionist Stirrings South of the Border

• Cuba’s appeal
  – Had large population of black slaves
  – Could be divided up into several states to restore balance of power in US
  – Polk offered $100 million for Cuba to Spain, but was turned down
Expansionist Stirrings South of the Border

• 1850 – 1851 – 2 groups of Southerners go to Cuba to try to take over
  – Are unsuccessful and about 50 are killed by Spanish

• 1854 – Spain seizes US ship, Black Warrior with little reason
  – Pierce has opportunity to start war with Spain to take Cuba
Expansionist Stirrings South of the Border

- **Ostend Manifesto**
  - US ministers to Spain, England, and France met in Ostend, Belgium and wrote secret demands – if Spain did not agree to sell Cuba for $120 million, US could take Cuba from Spain.
  - US plans leaked out; northern abolitionists strongly opposed extension of slave land.
  - Pierce administration dropped plans to take Cuba.
  - Caused North to fear the “slave power’s” attempts to secretly extend slavery.
Robbers Use Ostend Manifesto to Justify Robbing US Diplomat
The Allure of Asia

• 1840s – US gained territory on Pacific (Oregon, California)
  – US looked to Asia; brought out rivalry with Britain there

• 1842 – Britain beat China in Opium War
  – Gained right to export opium to China and access to 5 ports and control of Hong Kong
The Allure of Asia

• 1844 – Caleb Cushing sent by President Tyler to China
  – July – signed Treaty of Wanghia with China
    • “most favored nation” status gave US same trading terms as other powers
    • “extraterritoriality” gave US right to try citizens accused of crimes in China in US own courts
  – Increased trade with China
  – Christian missionaries sent to China to convert people
    • Chinese later turned against Western powers (including US) for trying to change their culture
The Allure of Asia

- Early 1600s – Japan cut off all contact with outside powers
- 1853 – President Fillmore sends warships under command of Commodore Matthew C. Perry to Japan
  - Perry presents US demands for free trade with Japan
- March 31, 1854 – Treaty of Kanagawa signed
  - Provided for proper treatment of shipwrecked sailors, US coaling rights, and exchange of ambassadors
- Perry’s opening of Japan led its leaders to drive for modernization
Commodore Matthew Perry in Japan
Pacific Railroad Promoters and the Gadsden Purchase

• Difficult travel to California and Oregon
  – Sea travel and overland trails long and dangerous
  – Transcontinental railroad needed to solve transportation problems
Pacific Railroad Promoters and the Gadsden Purchase

• North or South route for transcontinental railroad
  – Too expensive for both
  – Winning section would gain much in wealth, people, power
Pacific Railroad Promoters and the Gadsden Purchase

• Gadsden Purchase
  – South wanted a part of Mexico that was needed for best route for southern railroad
  – 1853 – treaty negotiated between James Gadsden and Mexico
    • US paid $10 million for the area
    • Criticized by North as waste of money on desert wasteland
    • Treaty approved by Senate
Gadsden Purchase, 1853
Pacific Railroad Promoters and the Gadsden Purchase

• South’s claim to transcontinental railroad
  – Terrain less mountainous in South
  – Track would not go through unorganized territory
    • Texas was a state; New Mexico was an organized territory

• North replied that US should organize Nebraska territory
  – Many settlers already there
  – Opposed by most Southerners
Douglas’s Kansas-Nebraska Scheme

- Senator Stephen A. Douglas (Illinois) wants railroad through Chicago, where he had invested heavily
  - Needs to counter Gadsden Purchase (and southern route)
  - Needs to get Southerners’ support
Senator
Stephen A.
Douglas
Douglas’s Kansas-Nebraska Scheme

- Douglas’ plan (Kansas-Nebraska Act)
  - Nebraska Territory cut into 2 areas; both would allow (or not) slavery based on popular sovereignty
    - Kansas Territory (west of slave state Missouri) would probably allow slavery
    - Nebraska Territory (across from free Iowa) would probably not allow slavery
  - Required repeal of Missouri Compromise (since both Kansas and Nebraska were north of 36° 30’ line)
Douglas’s Kansas-Nebraska Scheme

• The South’s reaction
  – Saw chance to gain another slave state (in area where slavery had been outlawed)
  – President Pierce (influenced by South) fully supported Kansas-Nebraska Act
Douglas’s Kansas-Nebraska Scheme

• The North’s reaction
  – Had come to see the area as totally off limits to slavery
  – Violently opposed Kansas-Nebraska Act
Douglas’s Kansas-Nebraska Scheme

• Kansas-Nebraska Act passed after violent arguments and speeches in Congress
  – Passed with strong support from the South
The Kansas-Nebraska Act (1854)
Douglas’s Kansas-Nebraska Scheme

- Why Douglas pushed Kansas-Nebraska Act through Congress
  - Personal (financial) motivation to have railroad through Chicago
  - Possible move for presidency in 1856
  - If he hadn’t sponsored this bill, someone else in Congress would have
  - Had no strong feelings on slavery; didn’t care if it was voted for or not, as long as people in territories had the choice (popular sovereignty)
Douglas’s Kansas-Nebraska Scheme

• Douglas’ miscalculation
  – Had predicted controversy, but nothing close to what actually happened
  – Many northerners felt strongly about slavery and did not want it to expand under any circumstances

• North turned against Douglas as a traitor, although he was still popular in Democratic party (especially his home state of Illinois)
Congress Legislates a Civil War

• Kansas-Nebraska Act led directly to Civil War
  – Missouri Compromise specifically repealed to allow slavery north of 36° 30’ line
  – Compromise of 1850 repealed in effect when northern opinion turned against South and further compromise
    • North refused to enforce Fugitive Slave Law after 1854
  – Without compromise, conflict was unavoidable
Congress Legislates a Civil War

- Other effects of Kansas-Nebraska Act
  - North gained many new converts to abolitionism
  - South angered when North tried to block slavery in Kansas (against “deal” of Kansas-Nebraska Act)
Congress Legislates a Civil War

• Kansas-Nebraska Act’s political effects
  – Democratic party shattered
    • Elected Buchanan in 1856, and then did not control White House for 28 years
  – Republican Party created
    • Began in Middle West (Wisconsin, Michigan) as moral protest against slavery
    • Gained strength from opponents of Kansas-Nebraska Act
      – Former Whigs, Democrats, Free-Soilers, Know-Nothings
    • Quickly spread east as purely sectional party
The Legal Status of Slavery, from the Revolution to the Civil War