

Picturing History

Independence for California In June 1846, John C. Frémont and other California settlers declared their independence from Mexico. **When did California become part of the United States?**



War With Mexico Texas's entry into the Union outraged the Mexican government, which promptly broke diplomatic relations with the United States. Matters worsened when the two countries disputed Texas's southwestern border.

President Polk's designs on California added to the conflict. In November 1845, he sent John Slidell as an envoy to Mexico City to try to purchase California and resolve other differences. Mexico's new president, José Joaquín Herrera, refused even to meet with Slidell.

With no realistic chance of a diplomatic solution, the president ordered General Zachary Taylor in January 1846 to lead troops across the Nueces River into territory claimed by both the United States and Mexico. Polk wanted Mexican troops to fire the first shot. If he could say Mexico was the aggressor, he could more easily win support for a war. Finally, on May 9, news reached him that a force of Mexicans had attacked Taylor's men. Four days later, the Senate and House both overwhelmingly voted in favor of the war.

Even before war with Mexico was officially declared, settlers in northern California, led by American general **John C. Frémont**, had begun an uprising. The official Mexican presence in the territory had never been strong, and the settlers had little trouble overcoming it. On June 14, 1846, they declared California independent and renamed the region the **Bear Flag Republic**. Within a month, American navy forces arrived to occupy the ports of San Francisco and San Diego and claim the republic for the United States.

Despite the loss of California and defeat in several battles, Mexico refused to surrender. Polk decided to send General Winfield Scott to seize Mexico City. After a 6-month campaign beginning in the Gulf Coast city of Veracruz, Scott's forces captured Mexico's capital in September 1847.

Defeated, Mexico's leaders signed the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo on February 2, 1848. Mexico gave the United States more than 500,000 square miles (1,295,000 sq. km) of territory—what are now the states of California, Nevada, and Utah, as well as most of Arizona and New Mexico and parts of Colorado and Wyoming. Mexico also accepted the Rio Grande as the southern border of Texas. In

return, the United States paid Mexico \$15 million and took over \$3.25 million in debts the Mexican government owed to American citizens.

With Oregon and the former Mexican territories now under the U.S. flag, the dream of Manifest Destiny had been realized, but this expansion had cost more than 12,000 American lives. Furthermore, the question of whether the new lands should allow slavery would soon lead the country into another bloody conflict.

Reading Check **Explaining** What is the idea of Manifest Destiny?

Slavery and Western Expansion

Now Info Continuing disagreements over the westward expansion of slavery increased sectional tensions between the North and South.

Reading Connection Under what circumstances, if any, do you believe that citizens are justified in disobeying a law? Read on to learn how some Northerners responded to the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, which required them to aid in the capture of runaway slaves.

When California applied for statehood, attempts by Congress to find a compromise further heightened opposing viewpoints on slavery.

Impact of the War With Mexico In August 1846, Representative David Wilmot, a Democrat from Pennsylvania, proposed that in any territory the United States gained from Mexico, “neither slavery nor involuntary servitude shall ever exist.” Despite fierce Southern opposition, a coalition of Northern Democrats and Whigs passed the **Wilmot Proviso** in the House of Representatives. The Senate refused to vote on it. Senator John C. Calhoun of South Carolina argued that Americans settling in the territories had the right to bring along their property, including enslaved laborers, and that Congress had no power to ban slavery in the territories.

Senator Lewis Cass of Michigan suggested that the citizens of each new territory should be allowed to decide for themselves if they wanted to permit slavery. This idea, which came to be called **popular sovereignty**, appealed strongly to many members of Congress because it removed the slavery issue from national politics. It also appeared democratic, since the settlers themselves would make the decision. Abolitionists, however, argued that it still denied African Americans their right to be free.

As the 1848 election approached, both major candidates—Democrat Lewis Cass and General Zachary

Taylor, the Whig nominee—sidestepped the slavery issue. Many Northern opponents of slavery decided to join with members of the abolitionist Liberty Party to form the Free-Soil Party, which opposed the spread of slavery onto the “free soil” of the western territories. Adopting the slogan “Free soil, free speech, free labor, and free men,” they chose former president Martin Van Buren as their candidate. On Election Day, support for the Free-Soilers pulled votes away from the Democrats. When the ballots were counted, the Whig candidate, Zachary Taylor, had won a narrow victory.

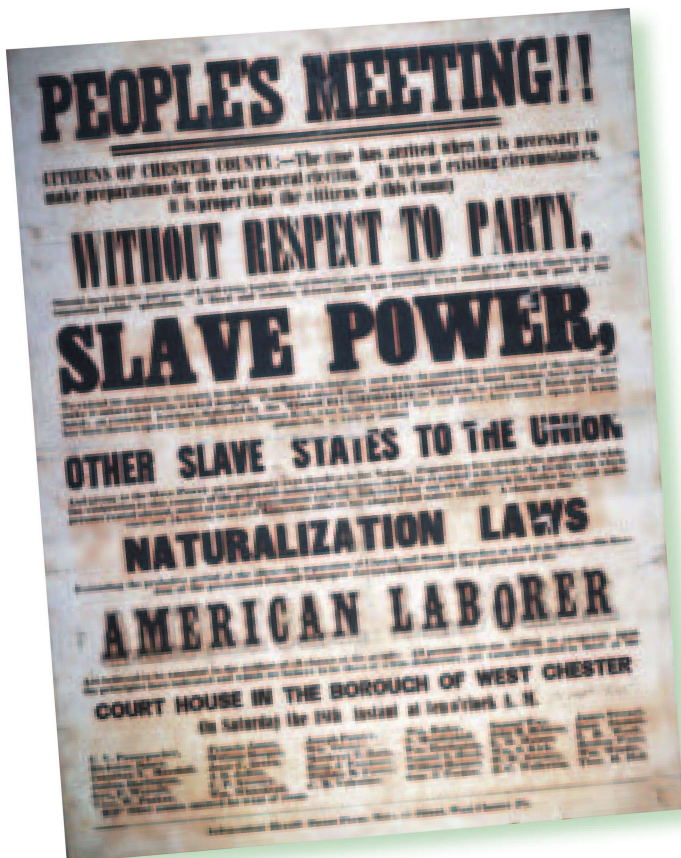
Congress Struggles for a Compromise Within a year of President Taylor’s inauguration, the issue of slavery took center stage. A year earlier, in January 1848, a carpenter named James Marshall found traces of gold in a stream near a sawmill in Sacramento, California. Word of the find leaked out, and San Franciscans abandoned their homes and businesses to pile into wagons and head to the mountains in search of gold. During the summer, news of the find swept all the way to the East Coast and beyond, and the California Gold Rush was on.

By the end of 1849, over 80,000 “Forty-Niners” had arrived in California hoping to make their fortunes. Mining towns sprang up overnight, and the frenzy for gold led to chaos and violence. Needing a strong government to maintain order, Californians decided to seek statehood. With the encouragement of President Taylor, California applied to enter the Union as a free state in December 1849.

At the time, there were 15 free states and 15 slave states. If California tipped the balance, the slaveholding states would become a minority in the Senate. Southerners dreaded losing power in national politics, fearful it would lead to limits on slavery. A few Southern politicians began to talk of **secession**—taking their states out of the Union.

In early 1850, one of the most senior and influential leaders in the Senate, Henry Clay of Kentucky, tried to find a compromise that would enable California to join the Union and resolve other sectional disputes. Among other resolutions, Clay proposed allowing California to come in as a free state and organizing the rest of the Mexican cession without any restrictions on slavery. Clay further proposed that Congress would be prohibited from interfering with the domestic slave trade and would pass a stronger law to help Southerners recover African American runaways. These measures were intended to assure the South that the North would not try to abolish slavery after California joined the Union.

▼ Poster calling for antislavery meeting



Clay's proposal triggered a massive debate in Congress. When President Taylor, who opposed the compromise, died unexpectedly of cholera in July 1850, Vice President Millard Fillmore succeeded him and quickly threw his support behind the measure. By September, Congress had passed all parts of the Compromise of 1850, which had been divided into several smaller bills.

The Fugitive Slave Act To Northerners, one of the most objectionable components of the Compromise of 1850 was the Fugitive Slave Act. Under this law, a slaveholder or slavecatcher had only to point out alleged runaways to have them taken into custody. The accused would then be brought before a federal commissioner. With no right to testify on their own behalf, even those who had earned their freedom years earlier had no way to prove their case. An affidavit asserting that the captive had escaped from a slaveholder, or testimony by white witnesses, was all a court needed to order the person sent South. Furthermore, federal commissioners had a financial incentive to rule in favor of slaveholders: such judgments earned them a \$10 fee, while judgments in favor of the accused paid only \$5.

In addition, the act required federal marshals to assist slavecatchers. Marshals could even deputize citizens to help them. It was this requirement that drove many Northerners into active defiance. The abolitionist Frederick Douglass, himself an escapee from slavery, would work crowds into a furor over this part of the law. Northerners justified their defiance of the Fugitive Slave Act on moral grounds. In his 1849 essay "Civil Disobedience," Henry David Thoreau wrote that if the law "requires you to be the agent of injustice to another, then I say, break the law."

A key to many African Americans' escape from the South was the **Underground Railroad**. This informal but well-organized network of abolitionists helped thousands of enslaved persons flee north. "Conductors" transported runaways in secret, gave them shelter and food along the way, and saw them to freedom in the Northern states or Canada with some money for a fresh start. The most famous conductor was **Harriet Tubman**, herself a runaway. Again and again, she risked journeys into the slave states to bring out men, women, and children.

New Territorial Troubles The opening of the Oregon country and the admission of California to the Union brought further problems. Many people became convinced of the need for a **transcontinental**

The Compromise of 1850	
Legislative Item	Victory for?
• California admitted to the Union as free state	Clear victory for the North
• Popular sovereignty to determine slavery issue in Utah and New Mexico territories	Moderate victory for both sides
• Texas border dispute with New Mexico resolved	Moderate Southern victories
• Texas receives \$10 million	
• Slave trade, but not slavery itself, abolished in the District of Columbia	Moderate Northern victory
• Strong federal enforcement of new Fugitive Slave Act	Clear victory for the South

Chart Skills

- Interpreting Charts** Did the new Fugitive Slave Act appeal to the North or the South?
- Generalizing** Which side, North or South, achieved more of its goals in the Compromise of 1850?

railroad to promote growth in the territories along the route. The choice of the railroad's eastern starting point, though was contentious.

Many Southerners favored the southern route, from New Orleans to San Diego. Since part of that route would lead through northern Mexico, the United States purchased the necessary land for \$10 million. Democratic Senator Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois, though, wanted the eastern starting point to be in Chicago. He knew that any route from the north would run through the unsettled lands west of Missouri and Iowa and prepared a bill to organize the region into a new territory to be called Nebraska. Key Southern committee leaders prevented this bill from coming to a vote in the Senate. These senators made it clear that before Nebraska could be organized, Congress would have to repeal part of the Missouri Compromise and allow slavery in the new territory.

At first, Douglas tried to gain Southern support for his bill by saying that any states organized in the new Nebraska territory would be allowed to exercise popular sovereignty, deciding themselves whether to allow slavery. When this did not satisfy Southern

leaders in the Senate, Douglas proposed to repeal the antislavery provision of the Missouri Compromise and to divide the region into two territories. Nebraska, **adjacent** to the free state of Iowa, appeared to become a free state, while, located west of the slave state of Missouri, Kansas would become a slave state. Warned that the South might secede without such concessions, President Pierce eventually gave his support to the bill. Despite fierce opposition, Congress passed the Kansas-Nebraska Act in May 1854.

Intent on creating an antislavery majority, hordes of Northerners hurried into Kansas. Before the March elections of 1855, however, thousands of armed Missourians—called “border ruffians” in the press—swarmed across the border to vote illegally, helping to elect a pro-slavery legislature. Furious antislavery settlers countered by drafting their own constitution that prohibited slavery. By March 1856, Kansas had two governments, one opposed to slavery and the other supporting it. As more Northern settlers arrived, border ruffians began attacks. “Bleeding Kansas,” as newspapers dubbed the territory, had become the scene of a territorial civil war between pro-slavery and antislavery settlers.

Reading Check Analyzing Why did the Compromise of 1850 not succeed in ending sectional division?

The Crisis Deepens

Main Idea The slavery controversy shook up political parties and accelerated the crisis between North and South.

Reading Connection Do you know of Supreme Court decisions that have sparked major debates? Read on to learn about Dred Scott, who sued to end his slavery.

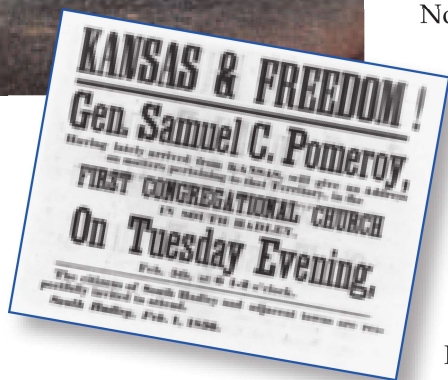
The Kansas-Nebraska Act enraged many opponents of slavery because it reopened the territories to slavery and made obsolete the delicate balance previously maintained by the Missouri Compromise. While a few people struck back with violence, others worked for change through the political system.

The Kansas-Nebraska Act shattered the Whig Party. Many Northern Whigs left their party and joined forces with Free-Soilers and a few antislavery Democrats during the congressional elections of 1854 to organize as the **Republican Party**. Their main goal was to stop Southern planters from becoming an aristocracy that controlled the government. Republicans did not agree on whether slavery should be abolished in the Southern states, but they did agree that it had to be kept out of the territories. A large majority of Northern voters shared this view, enabling the Republicans to make great strides in the elections.

At the same time, public anger against the Northern Democrats enabled the American Party—better known as the Know-Nothings because party members were sworn to secrecy—to make gains as well, particularly in the Northeast. The American Party was an anti-Catholic and nativist party. In the 1840s and early 1850s, a large number of immigrants, many of them Irish and German Catholics, had begun to arrive. Prejudice and fears that immigrants would take away jobs enabled the Know-Nothings to win many seats in Congress and the state legislatures in 1854. The party quickly began to founder when Know-Nothings from the Upper South split with Know-

Nothings from the North over their support for the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Most Americans considered slavery a far more important issue than immigration. Eventually, the Republican Party absorbed the Northern Know-Nothings.

The 1856 presidential campaign pitted Republican John C. Frémont, Democrat James Buchanan, and former president Millard Fillmore, the Know-Nothing candidate, against




Picturing History

Bleeding Kansas These antislavery settlers in Topeka, Kansas, were among those on both sides who resorted to violence. **What act triggered violence in Kansas?**

each other. Buchanan had not taken a public stand on the Kansas-Nebraska Act and campaigned on the idea that only he could save the Union. When the votes were counted, Buchanan had won easily.

Sectional Divisions Grow Just two days after Buchanan’s inauguration, the Supreme Court ruled in a landmark case involving slavery, *Dred Scott v. Sandford*. **Dred Scott** was a Missouri slave who had been taken north to work in free territory for several years. After he returned with his slaveholder to Missouri, Scott sued to end his slavery, arguing that living in free territory had made him a free man. On March 6, 1857, the Supreme Court ruled against Scott. As part of his decision, Chief Justice Roger B. Taney stated that Congress’s ban on slavery in the western territories, enacted as part of the Missouri Compromise, was unconstitutional and void.

While Democrats cheered the *Dred Scott* decision, Republicans called it a “willful perversion” of the Constitution. They argued that if Dred Scott could not legally bring suit, then the Supreme Court should have dismissed the case without considering the constitutionality of the Missouri Compromise.  (For more on *Dred Scott v. Sandford*, see page 1004.)

After the *Dred Scott* decision, the conflict in “Bleeding Kansas” intensified. Hoping to end the troubles, Buchanan urged the territory to apply for statehood. The pro-slavery legislature scheduled an election for delegates to a constitutional convention, but antislavery Kansans boycotted it. The resulting constitution, drafted in 1857 in the town of Lecompton, legalized slavery in the territory.

An antislavery majority then voted down the Lecompton constitution in a territory-wide referendum, or popular vote on an issue. Although the Senate approved the vote, Republicans and Northern Democrats in the House blocked the measure, arguing that it ignored the people’s will. Finally, in 1858, President Buchanan and Southern leaders in Congress agreed to allow another referendum in Kansas. Again the voters in Kansas overwhelmingly rejected the Lecompton constitution. Not until 1861 did Kansas become a state—a free one.

John Brown’s Raid About a year after the second rejection of the Lecompton constitution, national attention shifted to John Brown, a fervent abolitionist who opposed slavery not with words but with violence. After pro-slavery forces sacked the town of Lawrence in the Kansas Territory, Brown took revenge by abducting and murdering five pro-slavery settlers living near Pottawatomie Creek.

Brown developed a plan to incite an **insurrection**, or rebellion, against slaveholders. To obtain weapons, he and about 18 followers seized the federal arsenal at **Harpers Ferry**, Virginia (now West Virginia) on the night of October 16, 1859. A contingent of U.S. Marines, commanded by Colonel Robert E. Lee, rushed from Washington, D.C., to Harpers Ferry. Outnumbered, Brown surrendered, and a Virginia court sentenced him to death.

Many Northerners viewed Brown as a martyr in a noble cause. For most Southerners Brown’s raid offered all the proof they needed that Northerners were actively plotting the murder of slaveholders.

 **Reading Check** **Evaluating** How did the issue of Kansas statehood reflect the growing division between North and South?

The Union Dissolves

 **The election of Abraham Lincoln led the Southern states to secede from the Union.**

 **-TURNING POINT-**

Reading Connection Think of a time when you were unable to compromise over an issue. Read on to learn why Southern states refused to compromise in 1861 and instead decided to secede from the Union, sparking a bloody civil war.

John Brown’s raid on Harpers Ferry became a turning point for the South. Many Southerners were terrified and enraged by the idea that Northerners would deliberately try to arm enslaved people and encourage them to rebel. Although Republican leaders quickly denounced Brown’s raid, many Southern newspapers and politicians blamed Republicans for the attack. To many Southerners, the key point was that both the Republicans and John Brown opposed slavery.

In April 1860, with the South still in an uproar, Democrats from across the United States gathered in Charleston, South Carolina, to choose their nominee for president. Southern Democrats wanted their party to uphold the *Dred Scott* decision and defend slaveholders’ rights in the territories. Northern Democrats, led by Stephen Douglas, preferred to continue supporting popular sovereignty. When Northerners also rebuffed the idea of a federal slave code in the territories, 50 Southern delegates stormed out of the convention. The walkout meant that neither Douglas nor anyone else could muster the two-thirds majority needed to become the party’s nominee.

In June 1860, the Democrats reconvened in Baltimore. Again, Southern delegates walked out. The Democrats who remained then chose Stephen Douglas to run for president. The Southerners who had bolted organized their own convention in Richmond and nominated John C. Breckinridge of Kentucky, the sitting vice president.

Meanwhile, many former Whigs and others were alarmed at the **prospect** of Southern secession. They created a new party, the Constitutional Union Party, and chose former Tennessee senator John Bell as their candidate. The party took no position on issues dividing North and South. Their purpose, they said, was to uphold the Constitution and the Union.

The Republicans, realizing they stood no chance in the South, needed a candidate who could sweep most of the North. They turned to Abraham Lincoln, who had gained a national reputation during his debates with Douglas. Although not an abolitionist,

Lincoln believed slavery to be morally wrong, and he opposed its spread into western territories.

During the campaign the Republicans remained true to their free-soil principles, but they reaffirmed the right of the Southern states to preserve slavery within their borders. They also supported higher tariffs to protect manufacturers and workers, a new homestead law for settlers in the West, and federal funds for a transcontinental railroad.

The Republican proposals greatly angered many Southerners. As expected, Lincoln won no Southern states; in fact, his name did not even appear on the ballot in some states. With the Democrats divided, the Republicans won in only their second national campaign. Lincoln won with the electoral votes of all of the free states except New Jersey, whose votes he split with Douglas.

Many Southerners viewed Lincoln's election as a threat to their society and culture, even their lives. They saw no choice but to secede. The dissolution of the Union began with South Carolina, where secessionist sentiment had been burning the hottest for many years. Shortly after Lincoln's election, the state legislature called for a convention. On December 20, 1860, amid marching bands, fireworks, and militia drills, the convention voted unanimously to repeal the state's ratification of the Constitution and dissolve its ties to the Union.

By February 1, 1861, six more states in the Lower South—Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas—had also voted to secede. Although a minority in these states did not want to leave the Union, the majority of Southerners viewed secession as similar to the American Revolution—a necessary course of action to uphold people's rights.

Compromise Fails Although Lincoln was elected president in November 1860, he would not be inaugurated until the following March. The Union's initial response to secession remained the responsibility of President Buchanan. Declaring that the government had no authority to forcibly preserve the Union, Buchanan urged Congress to be conciliatory.

In December, Senator John J. Crittenden of Kentucky proposed a series of amendments to the Constitution. **Crittenden's Compromise**, as the newspapers called it, would guarantee slavery where it already existed. It would also reinstate the Missouri Compromise line and extend it all the way to the California border. Slavery would be prohibited in all territories north of the line and protected in all territories south of the line.

Causes and Effects of the Civil War

Causes

- Disagreement over the legality, morality, and politics of slavery
- Kansas-Nebraska Act sparked violence in Kansas.
- *Dred Scott* ruling voided any limitations on expansion of slavery.
- John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry polarized North and South.
- Southern states seceded from the Union.
- Confederates attacked Fort Sumter in South Carolina.

Effects

- Slavery was outlawed in the United States.
- Southern states rebuilt their economy.
- African Americans gained citizenship and voting rights.
- The first U.S. civil rights laws were passed.

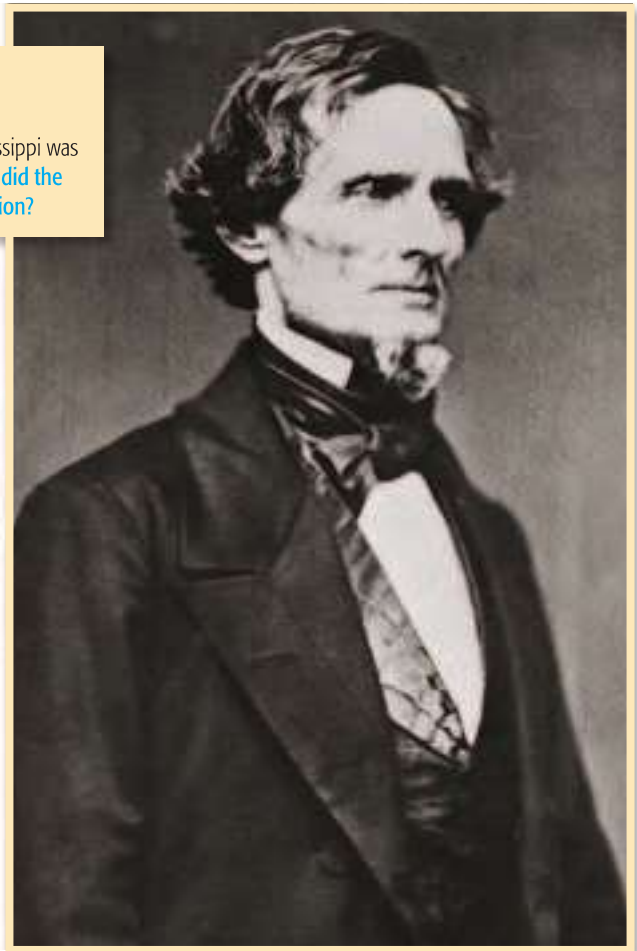
Graphic Organizer Skills

Mounting sectional tensions erupted into open warfare in 1861.

Analyzing What do you think was the most important cause of the Civil War? Why?

Picturing History

Confederate States of America Jefferson Davis from Mississippi was chosen as the president of the newly formed Confederacy. **How did the constitution of the Confederacy differ from the U.S. Constitution?**



At Lincoln’s request, congressional Republicans voted against Crittenden’s Compromise. Accepting slavery in any of the territories, Lincoln argued, “acknowledges that slavery has equal rights with liberty, and surrenders all we have contended for.”

On February 8, 1861, delegates from the seceding states met in Montgomery, Alabama, where they declared themselves to be a new nation—the Confederate States of America, also known as the **Confederacy**. They drafted a frame of government based largely on the U.S. Constitution but with some important changes. The Confederate Constitution acknowledged the independence of each state, guaranteed slavery in Confederate territory, banned protective tariffs, and limited the president to a single six-year term.

The convention delegates chose former Mississippi senator **Jefferson Davis** to be president. In his inaugural address, Davis declared, “The time for compromise has now passed. The South is determined to . . . make all who oppose her smell Southern powder and feel Southern steel.” He then called on the remaining Southern states to join the Confederacy.

 **Reading Check** **Explaining** Why did Southern Democrats walk out of the Democratic Convention?

HISTORY **Study Central** *Online*

For help with the concepts in this section of *American Vision: Modern Times* go to tav.mt.glencoe.com and click on **Study Central**.

SECTION 3 ASSESSMENT

Checking for Understanding

- Vocabulary** Define: Manifest Destiny, annexation, popular sovereignty, secession, Underground Railroad, adjacent, transcontinental railroad, insurrection, prospect, Confederacy.
- People and Terms** Identify: John C. Frémont, Bear Flag Republic, Wilmot Proviso, Harriet Tubman, Republican Party, Dred Scott, Crittenden’s Compromise, Jefferson Davis.
- Places** Locate: Harpers Ferry
- Explain** why the Gold Rush created a new crisis over slavery.

Reviewing Big Ideas

- Comparing and Contrasting** Examine the argument to leave the Union from the perspective of a Secessionist. How does their argument compare with an

American colonists’ argument for independence from Great Britain. How were the situations similar? How were they different?

Critical Thinking

- Historical Analysis** **Synthesizing**
How did the ruling in *Dred Scott v. Sandford* increase sectional division?
CA HI1; HI2
- Categorizing** Use a graphic organizer similar to the one below to group key events of the 1840s and 1850s according to whether they were executive, legislative, judicial, or nongovernmental.

Executive	
Legislative	
Judicial	
Nongovernmental	

Analyzing Visuals

- Examining Photographs** Study the poster on page 196 advertising an anti-slavery meeting. What was one main reason that the poster designers opposed slavery?

Writing About History

- Expository Writing** Write a research report about the Underground Railroad, the California Gold Rush, or the *Dred Scott* decision. In your report, explain what impact the topic had on sectionalism. Make sure you carefully check your report for correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

CA 11WS1.1; 11WS1.6; 11WA2.4