

A Divided Nation

Section 1



MAIN IDEAS

1. The addition of new land in the West renewed disputes over the expansion of slavery.
2. The Compromise of 1850 tried to solve the disputes over slavery.
3. The Fugitive Slave Act caused more controversy.
4. Abolitionists used antislavery literature to promote opposition.

Key Terms and People

popular sovereignty the idea that political power belongs to the people

Wilmot Proviso suggested bill that would outlaw slavery in new U.S. territory

sectionalism situation in which people favor the interests of one region over those of the entire country

Free-Soil Party third political party that formed to support abolition

Compromise of 1850 law that maintained America's slave-state/free-state balance

Fugitive Slave Act law that made it a crime to aid runaway slaves

Anthony Burns Virginia slave-fugitive whose attempted rescue from a Boston jail ended in violence

Uncle Tom's Cabin antislavery novel written by Harriet Beecher Stowe

Harriet Beecher Stowe author of the antislavery novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

Section Summary

NEW LAND RENEWS SLAVERY DISPUTES

The nation's debate over slavery continued as the country got bigger. Many northerners for example, supported the **Wilmot Proviso**, which would outlaw slavery in new lands. Many southerners, on the other hand, did not support the bill. Arguments about the proviso showed how **sectionalism** was dividing the country.

Some favored the idea of **popular sovereignty**. They thought each region's voters should decide the question of slavery for that region. The debate was so intense that a third political party, the **Free-Soil Party**, formed to support abolition.

Why do you think southerners were opposed to the Wilmot Proviso?

Section 1, *continued***COMPROMISE OF 1850**

The **Compromise of 1850** was presented by Kentucky's Henry Clay. Its purpose was to maintain the delicate balance between slave and free states. It became law because of support by representatives like Senator Daniel Webster.

What made Henry Clay's law a compromise?

FUGITIVE SLAVE ACT

Part of the Compromise of 1850 required passage of the **Fugitive Slave Act**. This act made it a crime to help runaway slaves. Abolitionists especially reacted in anger to the Compromise. Sometimes that anger turned to violence. This was true when abolitionists tried to rescue Virginia fugitive **Anthony Burns** from a Boston jail.

How can you tell that Anthony Burns was a slave?

ANTISLAVERY LITERATURE

Many abolitionists expressed their antislavery feelings in speeches. Others used the written word to influence people on the issue of slavery. One effective author was **Harriet Beecher Stowe**. In 1852 Stowe's antislavery novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, was published. The book showed some of the consequences of slavery. It sold more than 2 million copies and influenced many to support the end of slavery.

How did Harriet Beecher Stowe impact the issue of slavery in America?

CHALLENGE ACTIVITY

Critical Thinking: Write to Identify Write a paragraph about something you read or saw that made you change your mind. It could be a book, a speech, a television show—even a teacher.

Section 1, *continued*

DIRECTIONS Read each sentence and fill in the blank with the word in the word pair that best completes the sentence.

1. The _____ stated that “neither slavery nor involuntary servitude shall ever exist in any part of [the] territory.”
(Fugitive Slave Act/Wilmot Proviso)
2. When people favor the interests of one region over those of the entire country, this is called _____. (popular sovereignty/sectionalism)
3. _____ is where voters in a new territory decided if they wanted to ban or allow slavery. (popular sovereignty/sectionalism)
4. _____ was the author of an antislavery novel called _____. (Anthony Burns/Harriet Beecher Stowe);
(Compromise of 1850/*Uncle Tom’s Cabin*)
5. _____, a Virginia fugitive, was arrested in Boston and eventually returned to slavery in Virginia. (Anthony Burns/Daniel Webster)
6. Antislavery northerners formed a third party called the _____. (Free-Soil Party/Wilmot Proviso)
7. _____ came up with the plan called the _____, which allowed California to enter the Union as a free state while the question of slavery in Utah and New Mexico would be decided by popular sovereignty. (Anthony Burns/Henry Clay);
(Compromise of 1850/Wilmot Proviso)
8. _____ of Massachusetts supported the Compromise of 1850 and criticized northern abolitionists. (Daniel Webster/Harriet Beecher Stowe)
9. The _____ made it a crime to help runaway slaves.
(Fugitive Slave Act/Wilmot Proviso)