

# **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

# Zachary Taylor





# 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

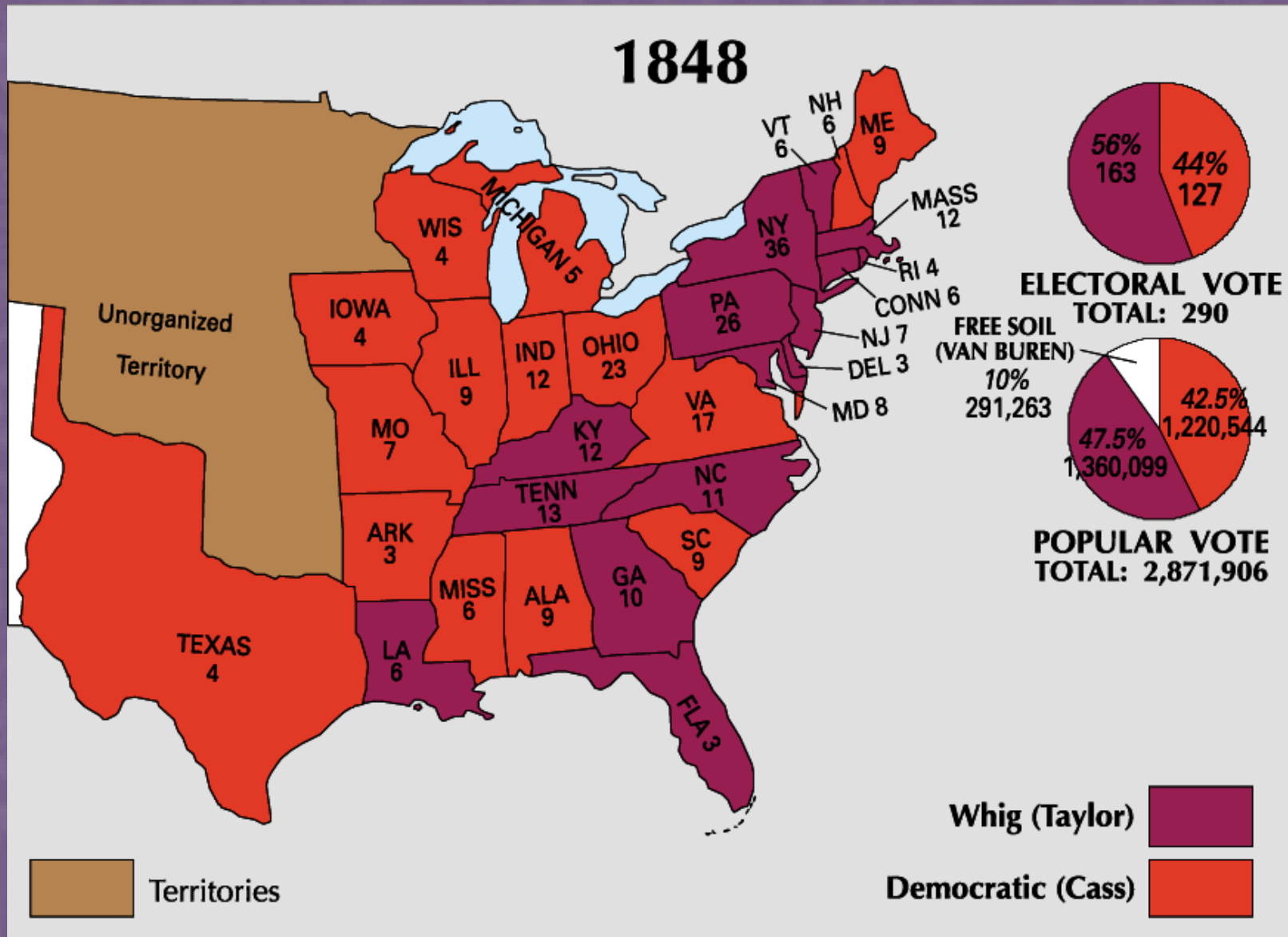
# Political Triumphs for General Taylor

- 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

# The Election of 1848



# “Californy Gold”

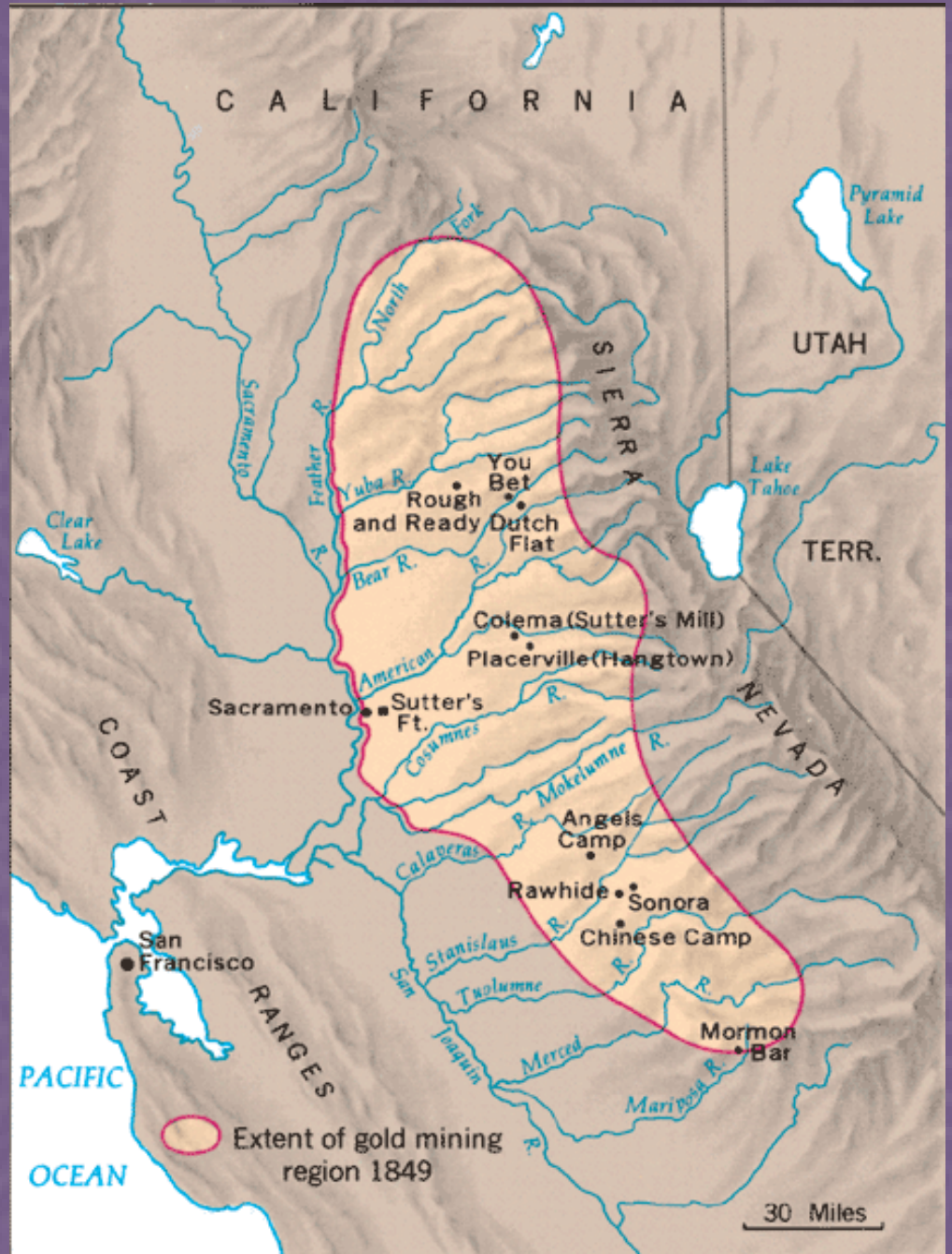
- Discovery of gold in California opened up slavery issue that both parties had tried to avoid
  - President Taylor’s lack of political skills shined through in the process



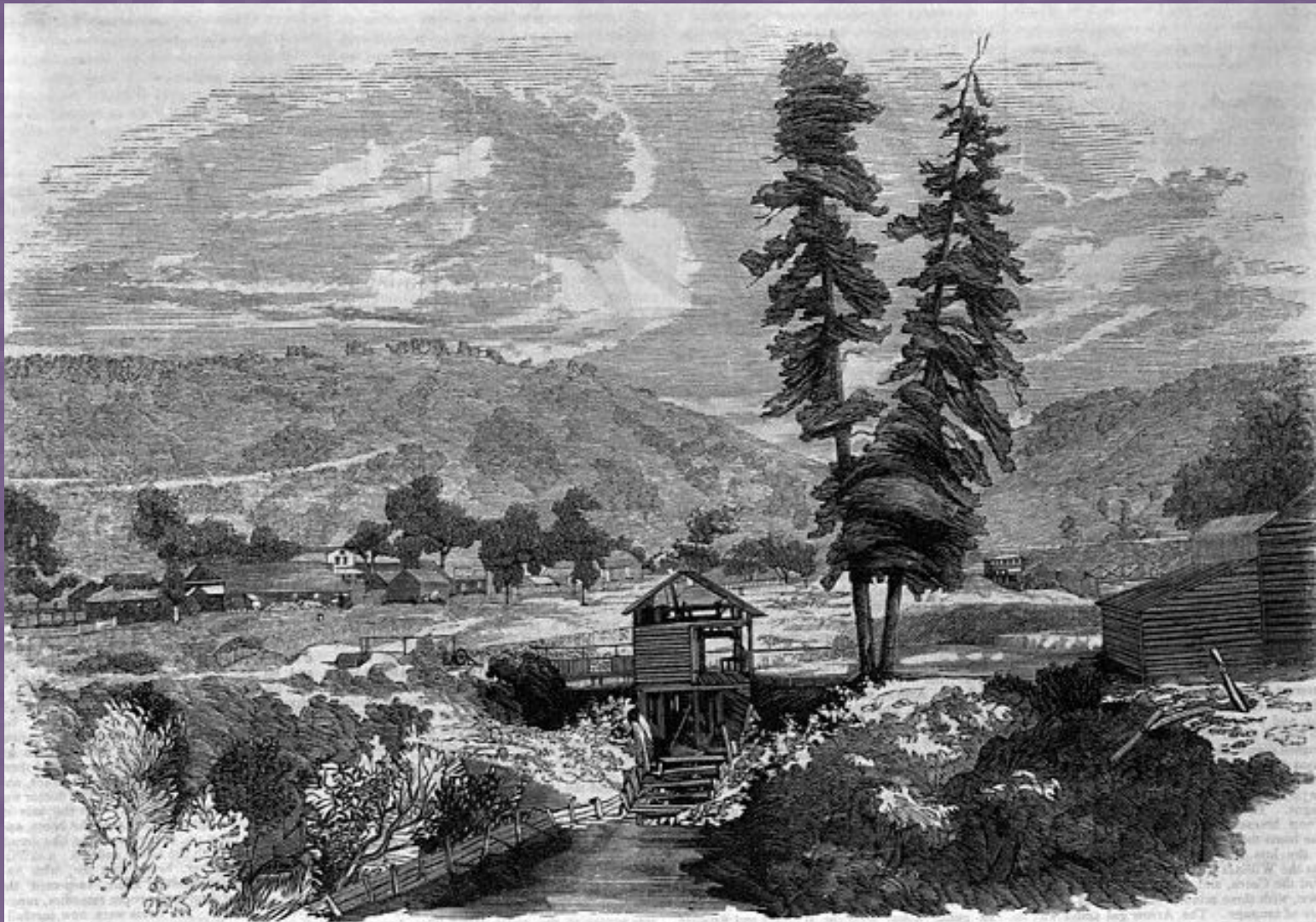
# “Californy Gold”

- 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<sup>nd</sup> 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

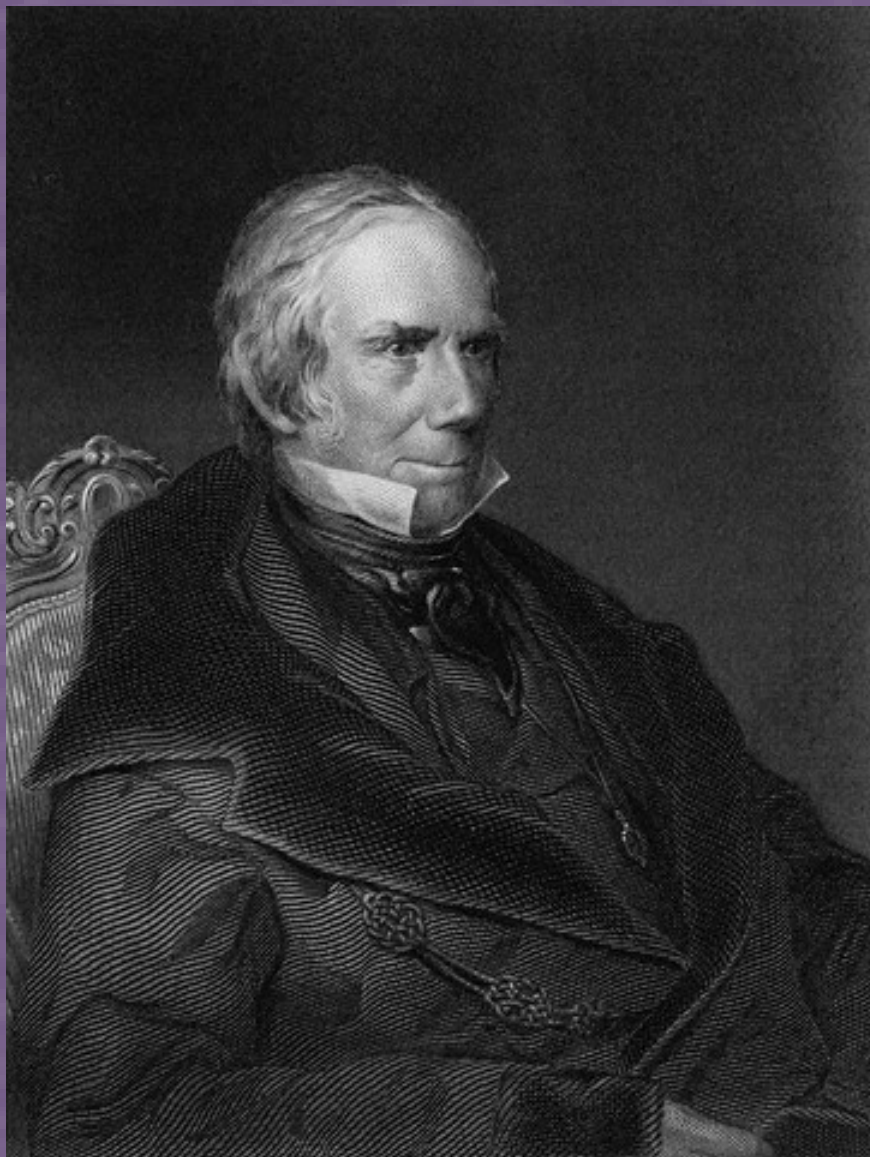
- South demanded stricter fugitive-slave law
  - First one (passed in 1793) was inadequate and ignored by some antislavery public officials
  - Only about 1,000 slaves per year (out of 4 million) escaped
    - More purchased their freedom than escaped
  - The principal seen as more important than the 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)



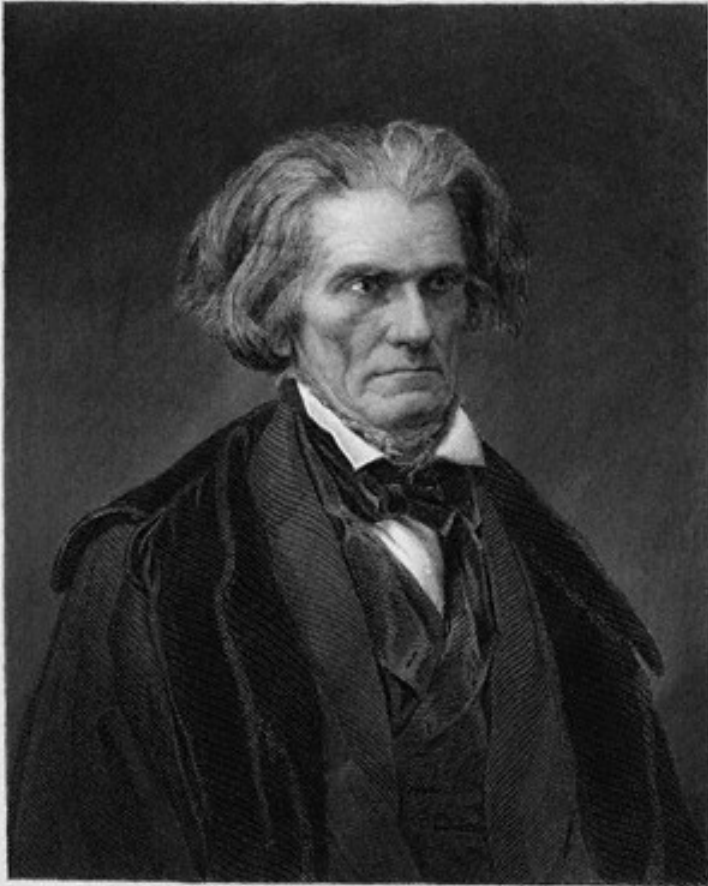
**Henry Clay**



# 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



Engraved by R. S. Ball, from a Daguerrotype by T. B. O.

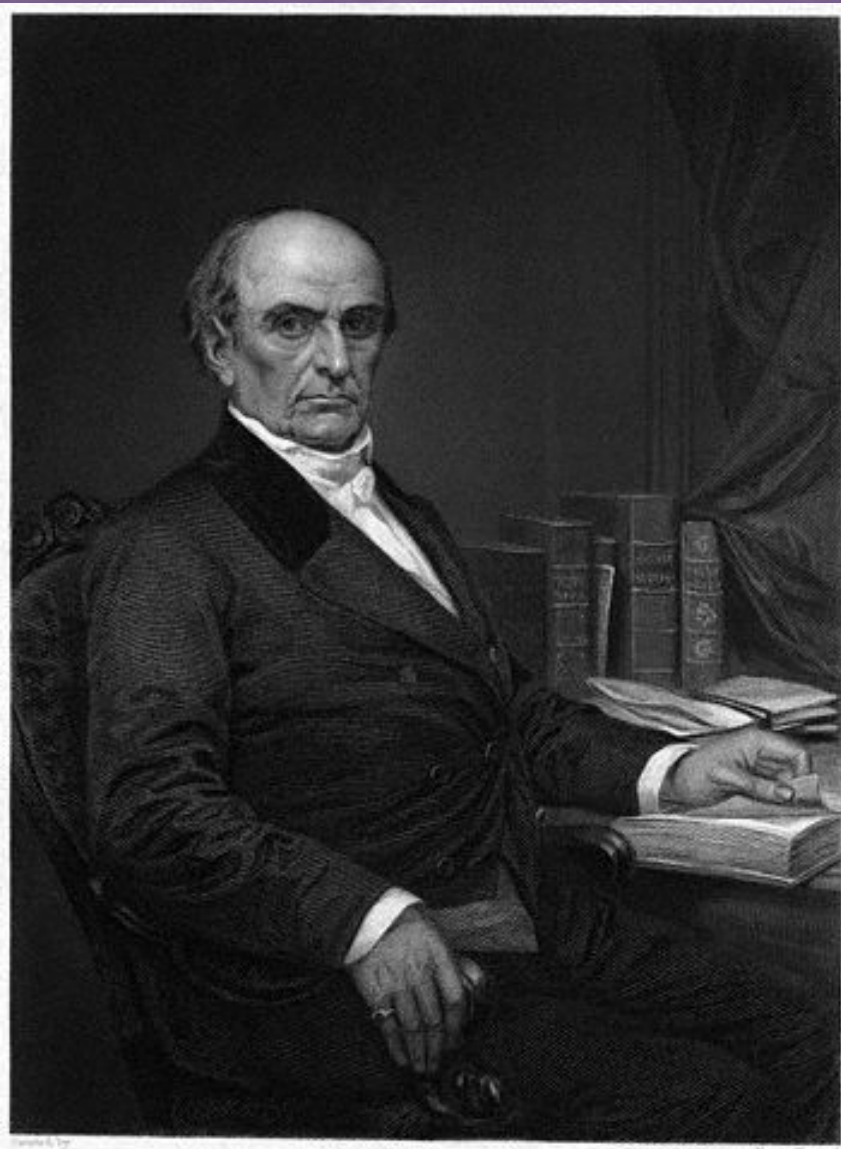
JOHN CALDWELL CALHOUN.

*J. 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

# Daniel Webster

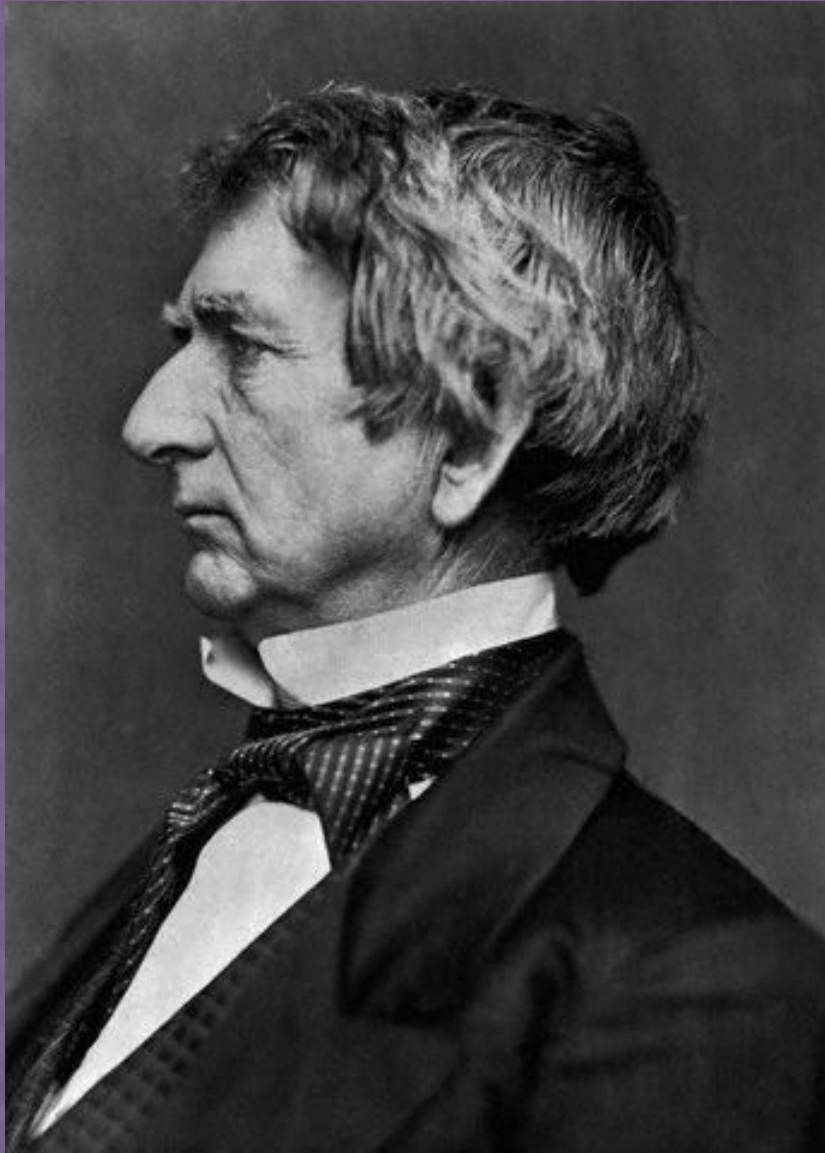


# Deadlock and Danger on Capitol Hill

- 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



**William H.  
Seward**

# Deadlock and Danger on Capitol Hill

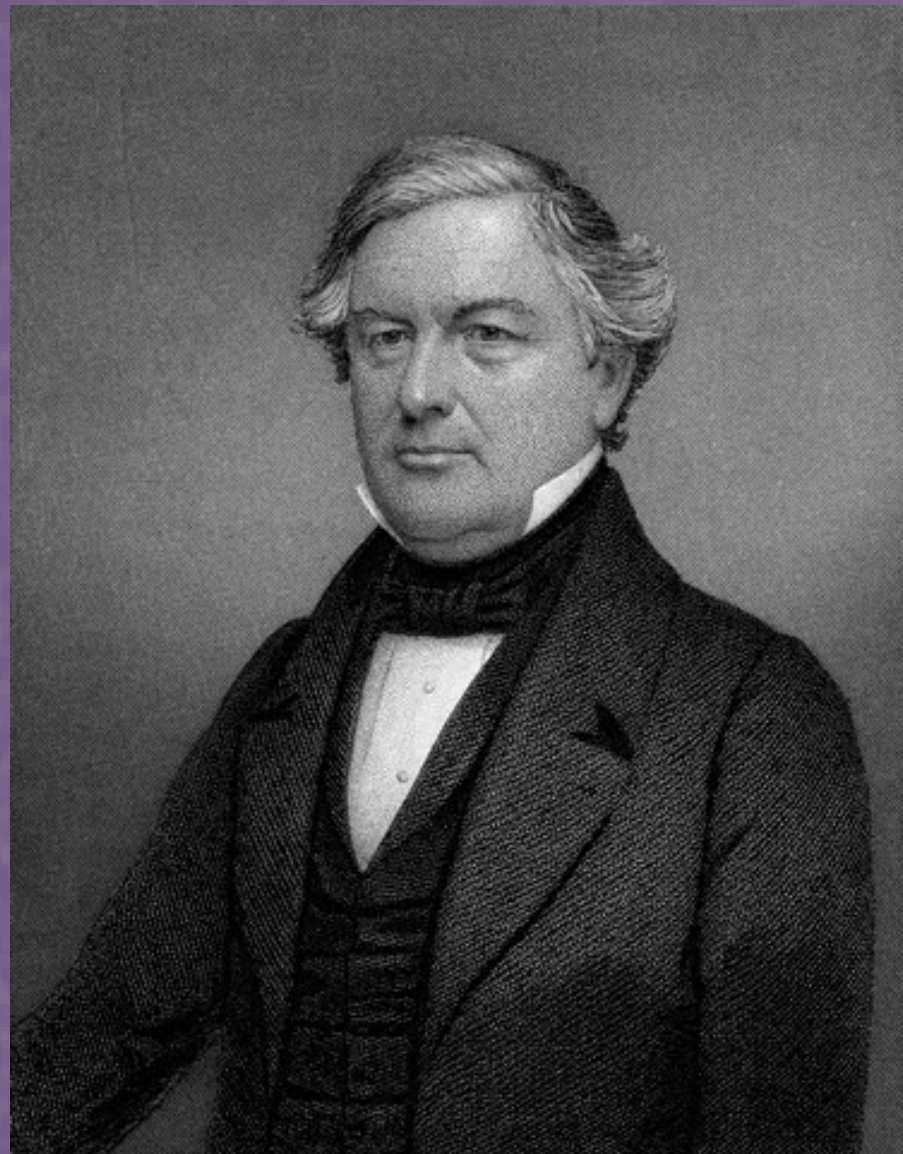
- President Taylor's position
  - Wanted South to maintain slavery there, but did not think West was suited to slavery
  - Opposed South's talk of secession
    - Was ready to send troops to stop this if needed (as Jackson had threatened to do)
  - Threatened veto of any compromise passed by Congress



# 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



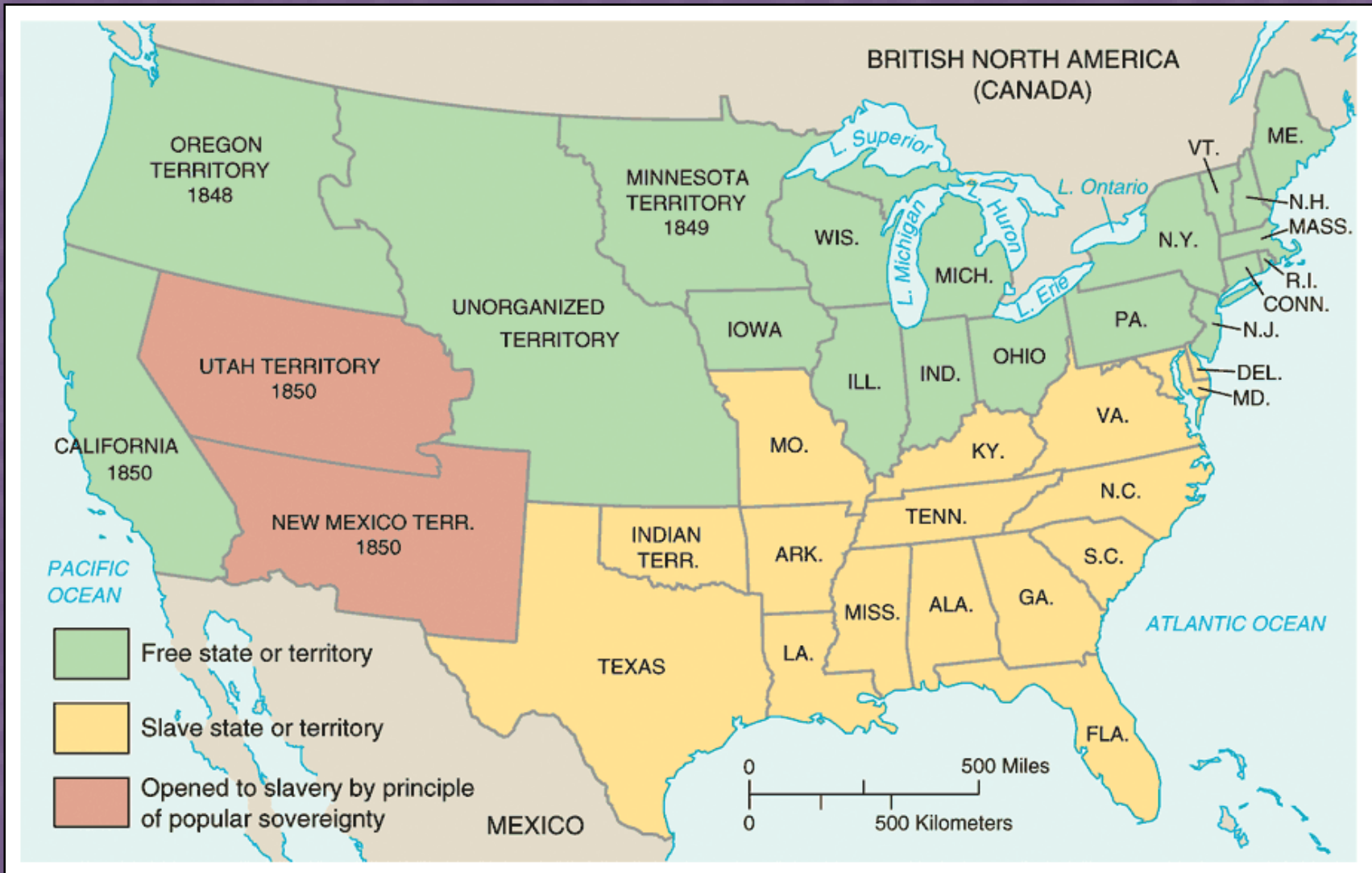
# Breaking the Congressional Logjam

- 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

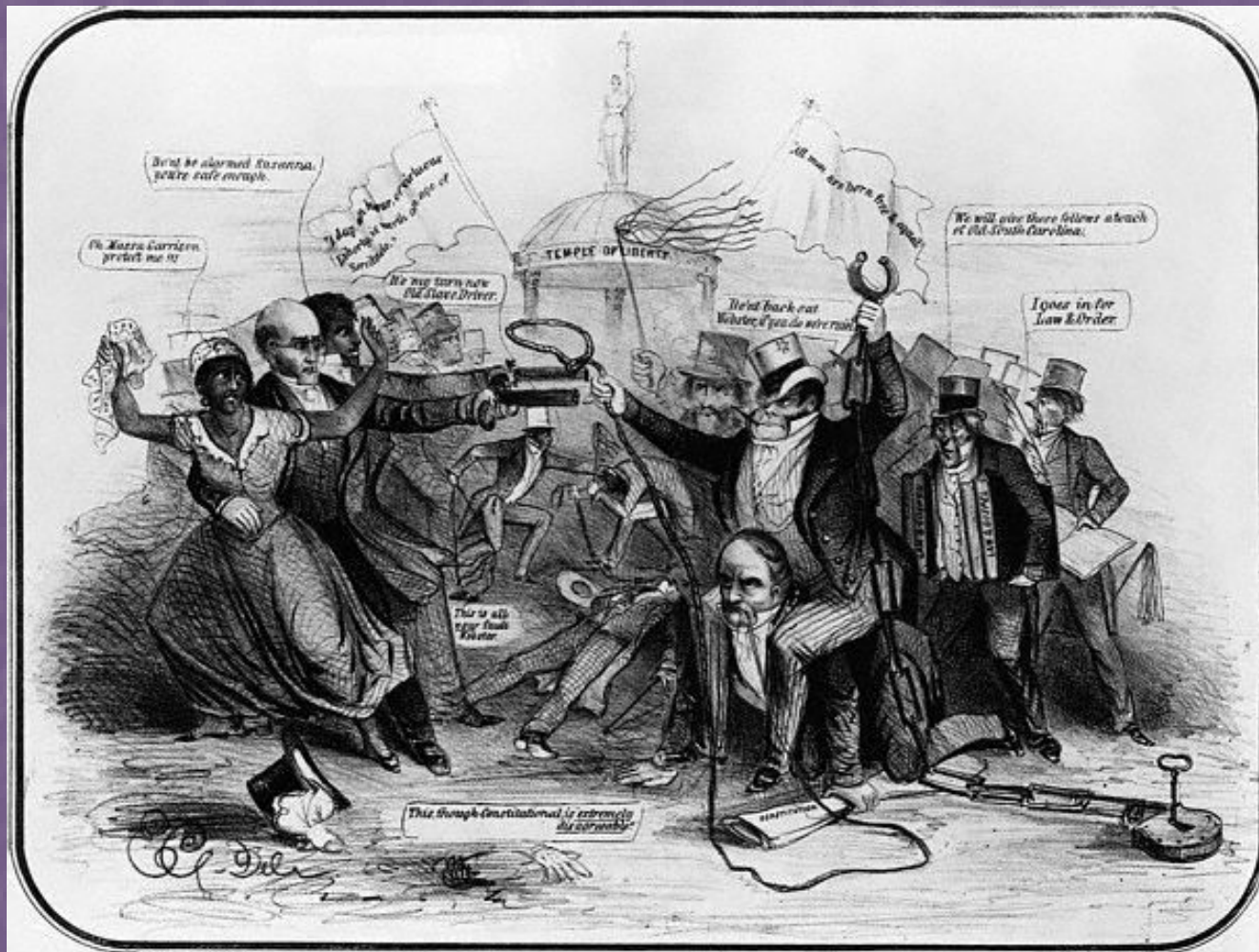
- Enforcing the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850
  - Fleeing slaves could not testify on their own behalf and denied jury trial
  - Federal commissioner who handled cases of fugitive slaves received \$5 if slave set free, \$10 if slave not set free
  - Northerners who helped slaves escape could be fined or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



**PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION OF THE FUGITIVE SLAVE LAW.**

# 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



# 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 parties agreed on support of Compromise of 1850
  - Turned into attacks on other candidate's personality

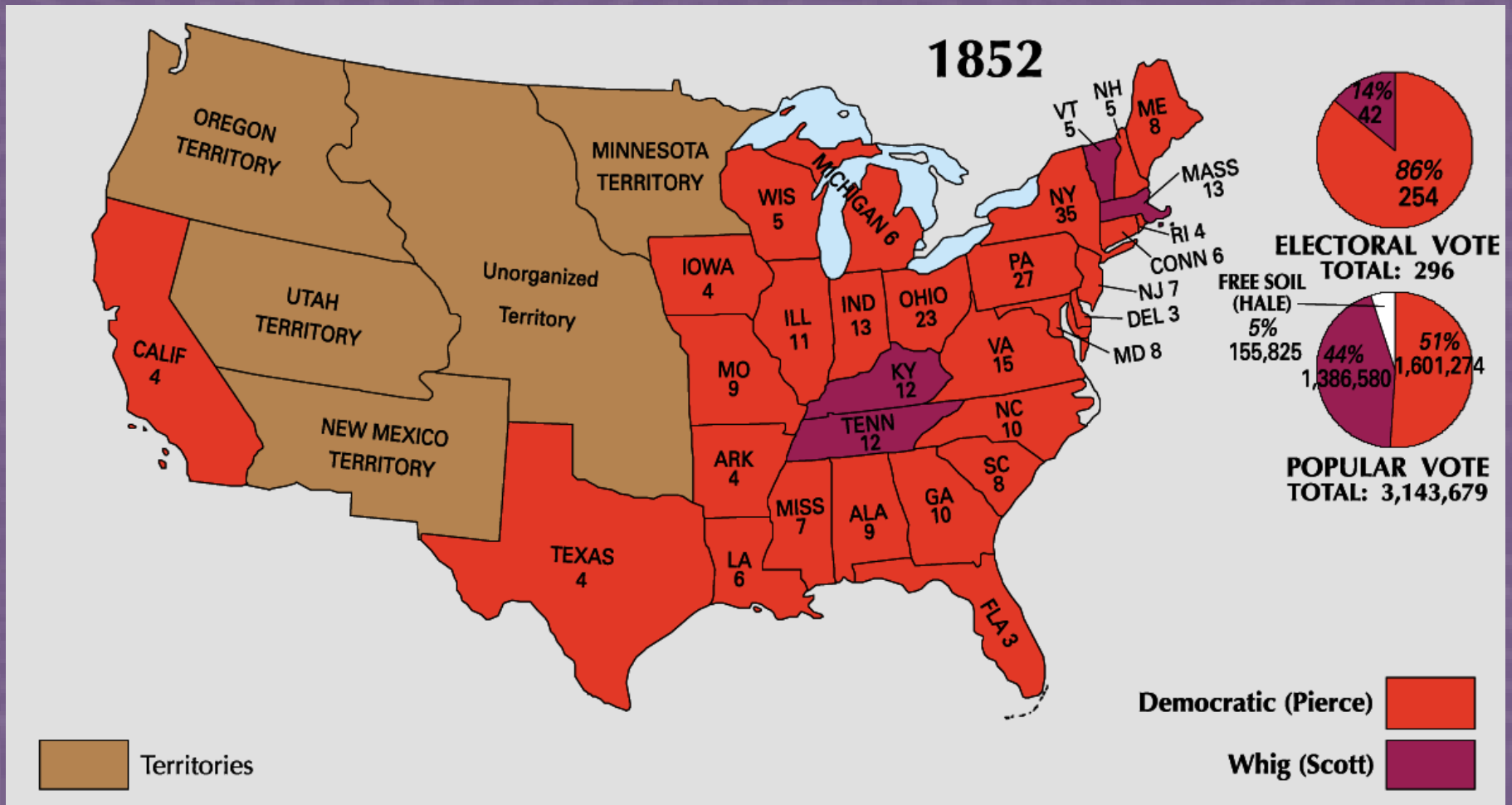
# Defeat and Doom for the Whigs

- 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



# 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





# 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

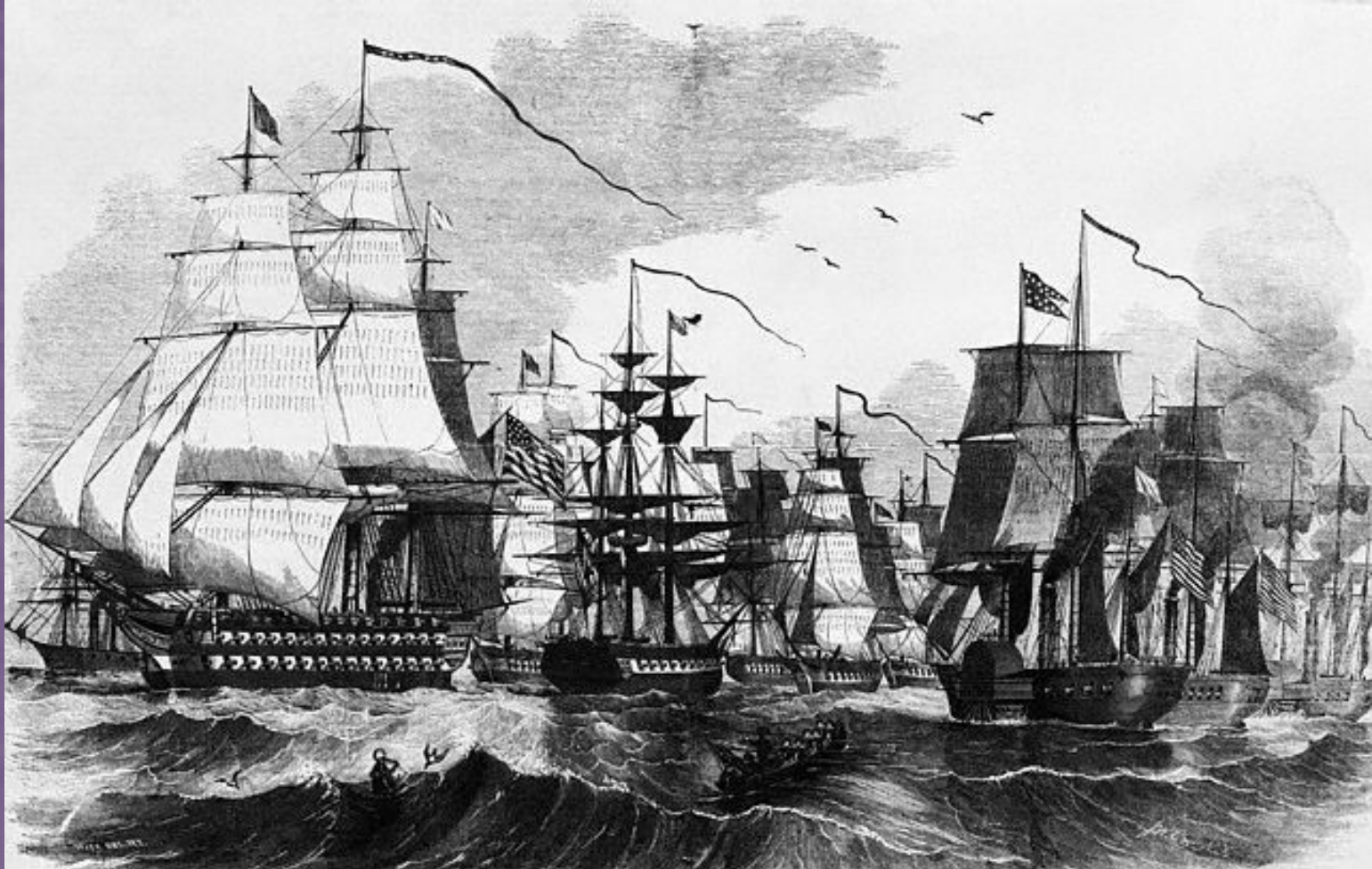
- 1844 – Caleb Cushing sent by President Tyler to China
  - July – signed Treaty of Wanghia with China
    - “most favored nation” status gave US same trading terms as other powers
    - “extraterritoriality” gave US right to try citizens accused of crimes in China in US own courts
  - Increased trade 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

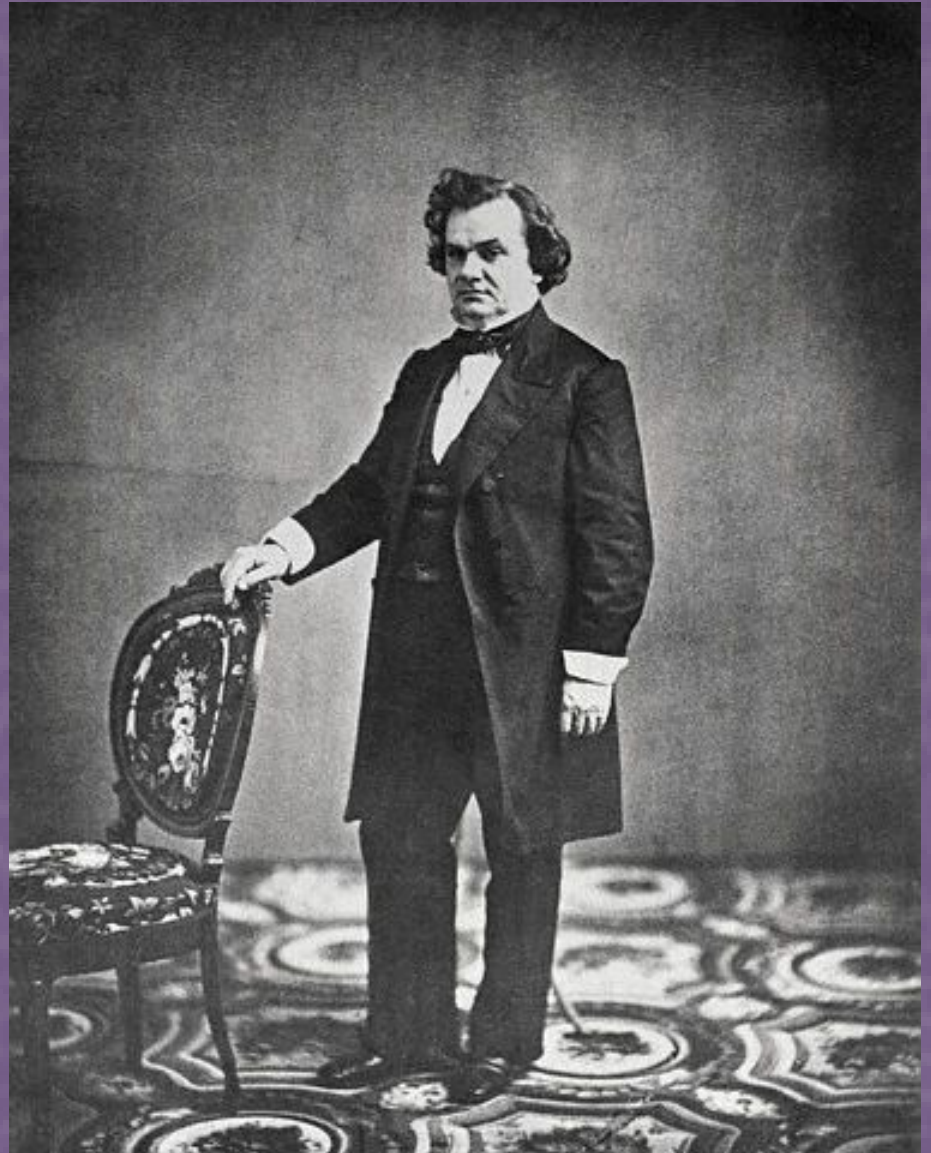
- South's claim to transcontinental railroad
  - Terrain less mountainous in South
  - Track would not go through unorganized territory
    - Texas was a state; New Mexico was an organized territory
- North replied that US should organize Nebraska territory
  - Many settlers already there
  - Opposed 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)

# Kansas and Nebraska, 1854



# 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

