15.2: The Collapse of the Second Party System

Many Americans believed Franklin Pierce’s election in 1852 would end the sectional problems that emerged after the Mexican-American War. Southerners expected the new president to uphold the Fugitive Slave Law and protect slavery; for the most part, Pierce lived up to their expectations. Democrats also looked for ways to maintain the sectional balance and promote economic development that would benefit all Americans. However, the resulting efforts to annex Cuba and spread slavery to Kansas raised concerns about the future direction of the nation, especially among those opposed to slavery. As North and South once again pulled apart, the Whigs entered a period of decline. After the election of 1852, they ceased to exist as a national party. Several new parties emerged to take their place—most notably the Know-Nothing Party, or the American Party, and the Republican Party. Events in 1856 ultimately paved the way for the Republicans to supersede the Whigs as the second largest party in the nation. Showing the clear divide of the nation, all of the Republicans’ support came from the North.

15.3.1: The Possible Expansion of Slavery

Southerners, when surveying the national landscape in 1852 and 1853, continued to worry about their weakening power in the Union. Utah and New Mexico allowed slavery, but low levels of slaveholding did little to strengthen the southern hold on the national government. Moreover, although slavery remained profitable because of a cotton boom in the 1850s, the prices of slaves rose steadily since the ban on the international slave trade went into effect in 1807. Slaveholders, especially in the lower South, had bristled for years about the laws restricting the international slave trade. Some suggested states adopt laws allowing landowners to acquire “apprentices” from Africa. Others simply broke the law. Late in the decade, Charles Lamar sent the Wanderer to Africa. Federal authorities stopped the importation of these slaves, but southern juries acquitted Lamar and his cohorts of all charges, an acquittal which resembled the actions of northern juries in dealing with fugitive slave cases. The slaveholder’s desire for more territory, particularly in Latin America and later in Kansas, proved far more significant than their defiance of the ban on the international slave trade.
Young America and Cuba

Acquiring new slave territory in the 1850s fit well with a nationalistic movement in the Democratic Party known as Young America. For several years, some slaveholders had looked to Cuba. James Polk offered to purchase the territory, but the Spanish refused. When that effort failed, many expansionists were more than willing to go to war to win the island. Narciso López, a Cuban exile, encouraged these efforts by recruiting pirates to attack Cuba. His expeditions failed, but the desire to obtain Cuba did not abate. During 1852, the Young Americans made acquiring Cuba from Spain part of the Democratic Platform. Pierce’s victory increased the possibility of territorial expansion, especially after he appointed numerous southern expansionists to his administration.

Although Pierce sent Pierre Soulé, a devoted expansionist, to Spain as minister, he seemed less than confident the Spanish would sell. So, the president encouraged John Quitman to plan a piracy expedition. Pierce hoped the effort would spark an uprising against Spanish rule in Cuba. The revolution would lead to an independent republic, which, like Texas, would apply to enter the Union. Since slavery was legal in Spanish Cuba, it would remain so after annexation. By 1854, Quitman recruited enough volunteers for an invasion. Louisiana Senator John Slidell then introduced a measure to suspend the neutrality law so Americans could sell weapons to Cubans. At that point, the Pierce administration began to have second thoughts about supporting Quitman because of developments in Kansas and Nebraska.

Since the president still wanted Cuba, he instructed Soulé to offer the Spanish $130 million for the territory. Failing that, Soulé should “detach the island from the Spanish dominion.” Soulé encouraged James Buchanan, the minister to Great Britain, and John Mason, the minister to France, to join him in issuing the Ostend Manifesto. Their memorandum stated, “We firmly believe…the vital interests of Spain are as seriously involved in the sale, as those of the United States in the purchase, of the island and that the transaction will prove equally honorable to both nations.” They further declared that Spanish control of the island harmed the United States. If Spain would not sell, then the United States would “be justified in wresting it from Spain.” The European and American press savaged the Ostend Manifesto. By the end of the year, the administration gave up any hope of acquiring Cuba, though they later flirted with acquiring Nicaragua through similar means. Although the Pierce administration ultimately failed to acquire Cuba, it did complete the continental expansion of the United States. In 1853, the president appointed James Gadsden as the minister to Mexico. When he arrived in Mexico City, Gadsden had one goal—to negotiate the purchase of land in northern Mexico so the United States could complete a rail line from New Orleans to southern California. Gadsden offered Santa Anna $50 million for 250,000 square miles. Even though the Mexican leader needed the money, he would not part with one-third of his territory. Instead, he negotiated the sale of 55,000 square miles for $15 million. The Senate approved the Gadsden Purchase only after northern members cut the acquisition to 46,000 square miles. While many southerners did not give up their desire to acquire more slave territory, after 1854 they turned their attention to Kansas.

The Kansas-Nebraska Act

As southern politicians supported expansionist ventures, northern politicians looked for ways to promote national unity. Stephen Douglas, the “Little Giant” who successfully shepherded the Compromise of 1850 through Congress, saw economic expansion as the best means to bridge the gap between the sections. To facilitate that growth, Douglas looked to Congress to grant land concessions to the Illinois Central Railroad in order to complete a transcontinental
railroad from Chicago to San Francisco. Since the route would go through the central part of the country, Congress also needed to organize new territories out of the Louisiana Purchase. As an investor in the railroad, Douglas stood to gain financially upon the line’s completion. But more than personal gain motivated the senator. Douglas believed, according to Vernon Burton, his plan “offered something for everyone” and the spirit of manifest destiny would prevail. Unfortunately, the plan had the opposite effect.

As the chair of the Senate committee on territories, Douglas introduced a bill in 1853 to organize the Nebraska territory based on the terms of the Missouri Compromise. His counterpart in the House did likewise. While the House passed the measure, opposition from southern senators derailed it. Leading southern senators made it clear that, if Douglas wanted their support, he would have to allow slavery in the territory. He, of course, knew opening the territory to slavery would undermine northern support. When Douglas proposed a revised bill in 1854, he used the same phrase Congress used with respect to New Mexico and Utah. The southerners, however, indicated he had not gone far enough to meet their needs. They insisted on a stated repeal of the Missouri Compromise. By 1854, southerners grew frustrated with northern defiance of the Fugitive Slave Law. The case of Anthony Burns in Boston, where leading abolitions supported his failed
rescue attempt from the federal courthouse, made southerners want stronger federal protection for slavery. Douglas acquiesced to their demands when he introduced the Kansas-Nebraska bill. The measure proposed to create two territories instead of one; it also supported the use of popular sovereignty in both territories.

The Kansas-Nebraska bill ended the sectional peace. When the Pierce administration tried to propose a bill that would not repeal the Missouri Compromise, southern senators literally stormed the White House in protest. The president backed down because they told him he would lose southern support if he did not support the measure as proposed. The administration then put pressure on northern Democrats to vote for the measure. However, regardless of their party, many northerners could not accept the bill. The Free Soilers’ frequent warnings of a slave power conspiracy no longer seemed so farfetched. State legislatures across the North passed resolutions opposing the Kansas-Nebraska bill. In response, Douglas claimed that the Compromise of 1850 had already repealed the Missouri Compromise. But most northerners found the argument disingenuous since the 1850 measures only applied to the Mexican Cession, not the Louisiana Purchase.

Congress narrowly approved the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854 after Douglas found enough northerners to support the bill. At the same time, southerners prevented the simultaneous passage of a homestead act to provide settlers with 160 acres of free land in the newly-organized territories. James McPherson maintains the Kansas-Nebraska Act “may have been the most important single event pushing the nation toward civil war.” It undermined the Whigs as a national party and cut the strength of Democrats in the North. After the measure passed, most people assumed Nebraska would be a free territory because its climate was not suitable for plantation slavery. Kansas, on the other hand, would be up for grabs. Whichever side controlled the process of writing the state constitution would make the decision. In the coming years, the confrontation in Kansas turned violent.

15.3.2: The Emergence of New Parties

After the election of 1852, Whigs across the country thought that they could mount a comeback if they exploited the Democrats’ mistakes, a recovery that would come so long as the Whigs did not draw attention to themselves. Historian Michael Holt, however, maintained their strategy had serious flaws. By 1853, the Whigs had broken into five factions, ranging from those who wanted to create a new antislavery party to those who wanted to create a new union party. Try as they might, the Whigs could not find an issue in 1853 to unite their national party.

Although the Kansas-Nebraska debate weakened the Democrats, it did not benefit the Whigs. The rising concern about immigrants and about slavery hurt them. The Whigs’ wait-and-see strategy backfired because time was not on their side, as they believed. Moreover, they failed to consider other parties might gain more from voter backlash against the Democrats. While dozens of new political organizations vied for voters’ attention, two emerged as true contenders. One focused on concerns about immigration; the other focused on concerns about slavery. The party realignment that occurred in the 1850s did not rest solely on the issue of slavery; nativism played a significant role as well.

The Know-Nothing Party

During the 1830s, anti-immigrant sentiments in the United States began to rise. Protestant Americans viewed Catholic immigrants as ignorant and superstitious and so perceived their growing number as harmful to the nation’s republican form of government. At first, nativist tendencies influenced the workplace more than political debates.
advertisements often featured the phrase, “No Irish Need Apply.” When the potato famine sent thousands of Irish people to American shores, nativist organizations rose in both popularity and political power. In the 1840s, the Order of United Americans and the Order of the Star Spangled Banner, two secret organizations, formed in an effort to preserve native-born political power. They merged in 1852 to form the Know-Nothing Party, sometimes known as the American Party. Their name derived from member’s standard response to questions about the party: “I know nothing.” With over one million members, the group became an important political force in the North.

Men who gravitated toward Know-Nothingism tended to be in their twenties and to work in lower white-collar or skilled blue-collar positions. More than anything else, in light of the Market Revolution, they wanted to preserve their place in American society. Their political positions stemmed from their hostility to foreigners. They linked the poverty and ignorance of the Irish in Ireland and the United States to drink and to Catholic education. Therefore, the party supported the temperance movement and opposed tax support for parochial schools in order to assimilate the Irish into American culture. However, more than anything else, Know-Nothings wanted to undermine the political power of naturalized citizens. They proposed to lengthen the naturalization period from five to twenty-one years. They also called for public office to be restricted to the native born.

In 1854, the Know-Nothings did well in local and state elections. They controlled state governments in California, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and New York. By 1855, the party spread southward, as they made significant inroads in Maryland, Kentucky, and Tennessee. These victories stemmed less from nativist sentiment and more from the desire of southern Whigs to find a new home before the next presidential election. As the strength of the party shifted, slavery became a divisive issue. Northern Know-Nothings tended to oppose the spread of slavery. They thought slavery, like Catholicism, stemmed from ignorance and tyranny. They did well in the 1854 and 1855 elections in some states because they banded with Free Soil candidates. Southern Know-Nothings, however, could not accept a party that denounced the expansion of slavery into the territories. Northern delegates walked out of their 1855 national convention after southern delegates asked the party to endorse the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Antislavery advocates looked for other options; thus, the American Party grew stronger in the South and weaker in the North.

The Republican Party

After Stephen Douglas introduced the Kansas-Nebraska bill, some northerners thought they needed to create a new political coalition to stop the spread of slavery. As the nation approached the midterm elections in 1854, people opposed to the extension of slavery aligned in hopes of undermining the Democrats’ control of the national government. In time, disgruntled Democrats, disillusioned Free Soilers, distraught Whigs, and discouraged Know-Nothings united in what supporters eventually called the Republican Party, though until 1856 it had several different names. The results of the 1854 elections showed a great deal of resentment toward the Democrats among northern voters, but it did not guarantee a party hostile to slavery could be successful. Party organizers therefore looked for a way to unite their rather heterogeneous group of voters.

Efforts to build the Republican Party into a cohesive group began in earnest after the 1854 elections. Leaders sought to outline a political philosophy or ideology that could speak to former Democrats and former Whigs as well as appeal to nativists and immigrants. They needed to find a way to package their antislavery views to as many northerners as possible, since they did not expect to draw much support from southerners. Historian Eric Foner maintains “the concept of ‘free labor’ lay at the heart” of Republican ideology. It provided a “coherent social outlook” that allowed the party to suggest why slavery harmed American society. Republicans believed, as William Seward indicated, slavery was
“morally unjust, politically unwise, and socially destructive” because it undermined a person’s ability to achieve economic independence and social mobility. Free labor allowed Republicans to focus on the effects of slavery on non-slaveholders as opposed to the slaves; thus, they could better blunt criticism that they favored racial equality.

Republicans expanded on their platform of free labor by promoting “free soil” and “free men.” Free soil referred to the old Free Soil Party that hoped to stop the spread of slavery in the territories and to the crisis in Kansas following the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Republicans wanted to spread free labor to the West. For that to happen, those territories needed to be free of both slaves and free blacks. Free men referred to a belief that all men, black or white, deserved the right to their own labor. Few Republicans supported equality between the races, but they believed in basic human rights for all. The number of Republicans who supported the American Colonization Society’s efforts to encourage migration of former slaves to Africa suggested widespread racism in the party. At the same time, most Republicans fought efforts to make the legal and social position of blacks worse than it was in the 1850s.

Free labor ideology helped to bridge the gap between the radical, conservative, and moderate wings of the party. Regional variations in the North helped shape Republican policy and programs as well as determined which part leaders chose to focus on. When dealing with radical members, leaders addressed the need to end slavery. When dealing with conservative members, leaders focused on the need to preserve the Union. As the party grew in strength, moderates held the party together and tried to find a way to meet both of their goals. Although the Kansas-Nebraska Act helped form the party, it would be events in 1856 that helped the Republicans become the dominant alternative to the Democrats by the end of the decade.

15.3.3: The Tremors of 1856

Throughout 1854 and 1855, it seemed unclear whether the Know-Nothings or the Republicans would successfully manage to succeed the Whigs in the traditional two-party system. However, two events paved the way for the Republicans to rise in strength. After the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, both sides vowed to triumph in Kansas. New Englanders sent money and weapons to the antislavery settlers; meanwhile, Missouri slaveholders pledged to burn the abolitionists out of Kansas. In 1856, the conflict between proslavery and antislavery elements turned violent, leading to a civil war in Kansas and an attack on Charles Sumner in Washington. Combined, the two events made the threat of slavery seem far more serious than the threat of immigrants.

Bleeding Kansas

At first, antislavery and proslavery advocates in Kansas hoped to use the ballot box to swing the territory to slave or free. Initially, slaveholders outnumbered Free Soilers. Nevertheless, proslavery leaders wanted to ensure victory in elections for a representative to Congress and for the territorial legislature. Led by David Atchison, who was a Missouri senator, proslavery forces from Missouri cast ballots in the Kansas elections. On May 30, 1855, the slaveholders secured a majority in the territorial legislature, though almost 5,000 illegal ballots were cast. Andrew Reeder, the territorial governor, ordered new elections in many districts, which the Free Soilers won. However, when the legislature met in July, it refused to seat those elected in the second election. Then it passed a series of laws to undermine the influence of the Free Soilers, including one that made it a crime to express antislavery statements. When Missourians cast ballots in Kansas, according to William Freehling, they created a new issue there. It became less about legalizing slavery and more about “whether Kansas could abide antirepublican repression of whites.”
When Reeder traveled to Washington to meet with the president about the fraud, Franklin Pierce backed the proslavery forces in Kansas. He replaced Reeder with William Shannon, whom he instructed to uphold the laws passed by the proslavery legislature. At the same time, Free Soilers made it clear they had no intention of living under the laws of a legislature they considered fraudulent. They continued to move into Kansas to press their cause and soon outnumbered the slaveholders. Free Soilers held a convention in Topeka, where they adopted a constitution that barred slaves and free blacks from Kansas. Moreover, they proposed to select a new state legislature and a new governor. As 1856 began, Kansas had two constitutions and two legislatures: one representing proslavery forces in Lecompton, and one representing antislavery forces in Topeka.

Kansas descended into violence in 1856. Hoping to encourage Free Soilers to leave the territory, hundreds of proslavery forces, mostly from Missouri, marched into Lawrence on May 21, 1856. Their purpose was to arrest the leaders of the antislavery government for treason. Although the leaders did not resist arrest, the posse burned the local hotel, looted a number of houses, destroyed two antislavery printing presses, and killed one man. Less than a week later, the antislavery forces responded in kind. John Brown, who believed he had a personal duty to overthrow slavery, became quite agitated when he heard about what happened in Lawrence. He vowed to “fight fire with fire” and to “strike terror in the hearts” of the proslavery forces. Along with four of his sons and three other supporters, Brown headed to a neighborhood near Pottawatomie Creek on May 24, 1856. They killed five proslavery men and proceeded to cut off their heads and hands during the course of the night. The “Pottawatomie Massacre” coupled with the “Sack of Lawrence” led to a guerilla war that lasted for much of the rest of the decade.

Bleeding Sumner

Given the situation in Kansas, Congress opened debates on its statehood in a heated atmosphere. However, both sides knew neither a proslavery nor an antislavery constitution would win approval because the Republicans controlled the House and the Democrats controlled the Senate. Thus, both sides saw the debates as an opportunity to attack the opposition before the next presidential election. David Atchison had previously indicated if the South won Kansas, slavery would spread successfully to the Pacific. However, if the South failed, it would lose Missouri, Arkansas, and Texas. In other words, the South was playing “for mighty stakes.” South Carolina Representative Preston Brooks tied the fate of the South to the Kansas issue, noting it was a “point of honor.”

At the same time, Republicans highlighted the infringement of the rights of the Free Soil settlers. On May 19, 1856, Massachusetts Senator Charles Sumner began his “Crime against Kansas Speech.” Sumner hoped to inflame passions about the situation in Kansas when he stated, “It is the rape of a virgin Territory, compelling it to the hateful embrace of slavery; and it may be clearly traced to a depraved longing for a new slave State, the hideous offspring of such a crime, in the hope of adding to the power of slavery in the national government.” Democrats heavily criticized the speech, while Republicans remained muted in their praise because Sumner’s remarks showed so much hostility to the South. However, no one quite expected that one man’s response to the speech would revive political abolition.

During the speech, Charles Sumner made a passing reference to Andrew Butler, his aging colleague from South Carolina. Sumner accused Butler of not only defending but also lusting after the “harlot, Slavery” for most of his public life. Southerners were furious about this personal attack on one of their elder statesman, none more so than Butler’s cousin, Preston Brooks. The young representative felt compelled to defend the honor of both his cousin and the South. Under normal circumstances, Brooks would have challenged Sumner to a duel. However, he did not consider Sumner worthy of a duel, nor did he think Sumner would accept. On May 22, 1856, Brooks did what he considered the next best
thing. After the Senate adjourned, he approached Sumner who was working at his desk. Brooks declared Sumner had libeled his state and his relative, and he planned to punish him for it. As the senator looked up from his desk, Brooks began to assault him with his cane and did not stop until Sumner lay bleeding and unconscious on the floor.

In the wake of the caning, southerners labeled Brooks a hero. A Charleston newspaper praised him for “standing forth so nobly in defense of…the honor of South Carolinians.” Northerners in the House hoped to expel him, but southern support blocked the attempt. Brooks then resigned his seat; he returned home only to have the people of South Carolina reelect him unanimously. Fellow southerners also sent him gifts of new canes with inscriptions like “Hit Him Again” and “Use Knock Down Arguments.” Simultaneously, northerners turned Sumner into a martyr for the antislavery cause. Brooks’s assault symbolized the barbarity of the slave system. Moreover, it showed southerners would not tolerate free speech anywhere, even in the halls of Congress, when it criticized their beloved institution of slavery. Southern praise for Brooks proved even more damaging than the attack itself. Northern conservatives began to concede that southern society might be as bad as the radicals had suggested. The combined effects of “Bleeding Kansas” and “Bleeding Sumner” convinced many northerners of the necessity of curbing slave power.

The Election of 1856

As the election of 1856 approached, once again the future of slavery and the future of freedom dominated public discourse. “Bleeding Kansas” and “Bleeding Sumner” set the stage for the election as the Know-Nothings, the Republicans, and the Democrats looked to find candidates who could hold their fragmented coalitions together. In the end, the ongoing sectional tensions shaped the outcome. The election also paved the way for the continuation of those divisions as the Republican Party grew stronger in the North.

In 1856, Know-Nothing leaders hoped to bridge the gap between the two regions that had grown in the wake of their split over slavery the previous year. Once again, southerners called for support of slavery, and many northerners refused. The southern delegates nominated former president Millard Fillmore, who had cast his lot with the Know-Nothings when the Whigs fell apart in New York. Fillmore ran on a platform that did not specifically endorse slavery; rather, it endorsed popular sovereignty and respect for existing laws. The northerners who left the convention chose to support Speaker of the House Nathaniel Banks; however, Banks intended to pull out of the race so that antislavery Know-Nothings would have to support the Republican nominee.

Republican leaders chose not to use the name Republican when they called their convention. Instead, they held an antislavery convention in Philadelphia open to all those opposed to the Kansas-Nebraska Act and the Pierce administration. Party leaders looked to draft a platform and select a candidate that would help broaden their constituency in the North. The platform opposed the expansion of slavery. Republicans also supported Whig ideas about internal improvements and left their commitment to nativism ambiguous. The party selected John C. Frémont as their presidential nominee. His reputation as a notable explorer, known as the “Pathfinder,” served to enhance his political standing. His marriage to Missouri politician Thomas Hart Benton’s daughter helped him appeal to antislavery Democrats. Finally, his support for a free California and a free Kansas demonstrated his antislavery credentials. Throughout the campaign, the Republicans used the slogan “Free Soil, Free Speech, Free Men, Frémont!”
Democratic leaders shied away from incumbent Franklin Pierce and from Stephen Douglas because in the public’s mind both bore a great deal of responsibility for reigniting sectional hostilities. So, they turned to James Buchanan, then serving as the minister to Great Britain, because he seemed like a safe choice. Buchanan, who hailed from Pennsylvania, had made few political enemies in a long career of public service. The best thing Buchanan had going for him in securing the nomination and campaigning for president was he had been out of the country while it divided over Kansas. Southern delegates preferred Douglas, but they conceded to Buchanan’s selection. The party platform also helped mollify their concerns about choosing a northerner. The Democrats pledged to uphold popular sovereignty and states’ rights.

Since Frémont did not appear on the ballot in most southern states, two races occurred in 1856. Buchanan and Fillmore contested for votes in the South, while Buchanan and Frémont contested for votes in the North. Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Indiana, and Illinois were the battleground states. The Democrats, especially in these key states, focused on the sectional nature of the Republican Party. Given the fact that many southerners threatened secession if Frémont won, Democrats could claim a vote for Buchanan was a vote for the Union. Moreover, the Democrats suggested the Republicans wanted to end white supremacy and enact racial equality. The Republican Party found it very difficult to counter the charges, even though they were not true.

James Buchanan defeated John C. Frémont and Millard Fillmore by winning both the popular and Electoral College votes. He took the entire South, plus the battleground states. Southerners vowed to use their support of Buchanan to exact future concessions on the question of slavery. Astute politicians across the country, however, realized the potential for an entirely sectional candidate to triumph in 1860. If the Republicans could hold the North as well as take Pennsylvania and Illinois, then they could win the election without a single Electoral College vote from the South. The results cemented the strength of the Republican Party, but they spelled trouble for union in the future.
15.3.4: Before You Move On...

**Key Concepts**

Many Americans believed Franklin Pierce's presidency would help lessen the sectional divide, but the opposite happened. From 1853 to 1856, a series of events stemming from the southern desire to expand slavery and the northern desire to curb slavery made the resentment worse. Southerners, with the backing of the Young America movement, promoted the expansion to the South—looking to Cuba and Mexico. Their attempts raised concerns in the North, concerns which Stephen Douglas further exacerbated when he proposed to organize the Nebraska territory. The resulting Kansas-Nebraska Act, repealing the Missouri Compromise line, pleased southerners who wanted federal protection for slavery and angered northerners who opposed its extension into new territories.

The measure contributed to the end of the second party system. The Whigs could no longer find common ground and disintegrated into several factions. The Know-Nothings rose to prominence by opposing the influence of immigrants on the country in light of the fact that the rate of immigration rose in the late 1840s and early 1850s, whereas the Republicans began to gather support by expressing concern about the expansion of slavery especially in terms of how it affected nonslaveholding whites. As the two parties vied for support, the outbreak of violence in Kansas over the implementation of popular sovereignty, as well as Preston Brooks’s attack on Charles Sumner, set the stage for the presidential contest in 1856. Democrat James Buchanan defeated Republican John C. Frémont and Know-Nothing Millard Fillmore because the Democratic Party successfully managed to portray him as the only viable option to disunion and to racial equality. However, most people also realized his election would not bring sectional harmony.

**Test Yourself**

Exercise 

The Ostend Manifesto was

a. an agreement by the United States, Britain, and France to free oppressed Cubans.

b. a diplomatic dispatch suggesting that Cuba be taken from Spain to protect American interests.
c. an attempt to gain Cuba as a colony for freed American slaves.

d. a plot by slaveholders to gain more slave territory.

**Answer**

b

Exercise \(\PageIndex{2}\))

Stephen Douglas’s proposed Kansas-Nebraska Act

a. strengthened his presidential prospects.

b. showed his enthusiastic support of slavery.

c. strengthened the Missouri Compromise.

d. might allow slavery in Kansas and Nebraska.

**Answer**

d

Exercise \(\PageIndex{3}\))

During the presidential campaign of 1865, the Republican Party

a. nominated William H. Seward for president.

b. opposed the further spread of slavery.

c. supported states’ rights.

d. condemned nativism.

**Answer**

b