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# The Development of Sectionalism in the Usa in the Mid. 19th Century

## Sectionalism in the United States between 1840-1860

During the years from 1840-1860, the United States faced an increased rise in sectionalism throughout the country. This sectionalism divided the North and the South and pinned them against each other through rising tension and opposition. Several events led to the sectionalism during this time period. By examining the Compromise of 1850, The Kansas-Nebraska Act, and the election of president Abraham Lincoln one can see how these key events left the nation divided.

The Compromise of 1850 set the tone for the 50's where sectionalism in the United States was at it's highest. The compromise was made in response to disputes of the expansion of slavery into newly gained territories from the Mexican-American War. The North was concerned that if a new slave state was added, it would upset the balance of free versus slave states in the Union which would further sway representation. The compromise tried to appease both sides by abolishing the slave trade in the District of Columbia in favor of the North, and by creating a new Fugitive Slave Law in favor of the South. This new Fugitive Slave Law was hated by the Northerners because it required those who tried to remain neutral in the matter to get involved.

In 1854, the Kansas-Nebraska Act was passed and created uproar between the two opposing sides. The act infuriated the North because it overturned parts of the Compromise of 1850 and made slavery possible in territories where it had been previously not permitted by allowing these two territories to decide whether or not they would allow slavery by the practice of popular sovereignty. This act led to Bleeding Kansas. Due to the uproar that was create by this Act, many quarrels broke out and resulted in bloodshed and ultimately fifty-six lives being lost. Although both of these territories voted against slavery, the whole incident really shocked the Union as a whole.

The final straw that ultimately led to sectionalism so great it resulted in the start of the Civil War was the election of president Abraham Lincoln in 1860. Even though Lincoln was left off many ballots in the South, he still won by a considerable amount of votes. The South was well aware of his views on slavery and were fearful for what was to come. This led to the South feeling they have no choice but to leave. South Carolina ended up deciding that the Constitution did not prevent them from succeeding the Union and felt that they had to leave in order to keep their ways of life.

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These key events throughout the years of 1840-1860 created the intense sectionalism seen within these two decades. The Compromise of 1850, the Kansas Nebraska Act, and the election of president Abraham Lincoln left a nation divided. Each of these events only further created growing tension between the two opposing sides. One can see how the tension these events ultimately created led to a nation that could only be split further by actually becoming split which is what happened shortly after Lincoln was elected.

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