

CHAPTER  
**2**  
SECTION 2

**Section Summary**

THE UNION IN CRISIS

**READING CHECK**

Who wrote *Uncle Tom's Cabin*?

---



---



---

**VOCABULARY STRATEGY**

Find the word *intense* in the underlined sentence. What does *intense* mean? Look for context clues in nearby words and phrases.

---



---



---

**READING SKILL**

**Recognize Sequence** List by order of date the laws and court cases that caused division between the North and the South in the 1850s.

---



---



---

After the Mexican-American War, slavery became a major issue. The **Wilmot Proviso**, which stated that slavery would not be allowed in the territory won from Mexico, was defeated. It led to the creation of the antislavery **Free-Soil Party**.

The **Compromise of 1850** admitted California to the Union as a free state. In other territories acquired by Mexico, the voters would decide the issue of slavery. This approach was known as **popular sovereignty**. Another provision of the Compromise was the Fugitive Slave Act. This law required citizens to apprehend runaway slaves. Northern opponents of the law mounted an intense resistance. **Harriet Beecher Stowe** further stirred opposition to slavery with her novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

In 1854, Congress passed the **Kansas-Nebraska Act**. This law divided the Nebraska Territory into Kansas and Nebraska. Voters in each territory would decide the issue of slavery. After much violence, Kansas entered the Union as a free state in 1861.

In 1857, the Supreme Court widened the growing divisions over slavery. In *Dred Scott v. Sandford*, the Court ruled that African Americans were not citizens. The Court also ruled that the government could not ban slavery, which made the Missouri Compromise unconstitutional.

In 1859, abolitionist **John Brown** and a small band of followers tried to start an antislavery revolt by seizing a federal arsenal in Harpers Ferry, Virginia. He failed and was executed.

Republican **Abraham Lincoln** was elected President in 1860. To southerners, the election was a sign that the free states would take control of national politics. South Carolina **seceded**, or broke away from, the Union. Ten other states joined South Carolina to establish the Confederate States of America. On April 11, 1861, Confederate troops fired on Union troops at Fort Sumter. The Civil War had begun.

**Review Questions**

1. Why did the election of Abraham Lincoln as President lead to the secession of South Carolina?

---



---

2. What major decisions about slavery were made in the *Dred Scott v. Sandford* case?

---



---