Chapter 19 – Drifting towards Disunion 1854-1861

1. Stowe and Helper: Literary Incendiaries
2. *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, a novel by Harriet Beecher Stowe, was a great success at showing the people the evils of slavery.
* It was a great political force as well that helped start and win the civil war, it was very influential.
* The novel was popular abroad.
1. *The Impending Crisis of the South* also was influential and was written by Hinton R. Helper.
* It was banned in the south.
1. The North-South Contest for Kansas
2. Most of the people coming into Kansas were westward moving pioneers.
* Some were financed by a northern abolitionist group – New England Aid Company.
1. Southerners cried betrayal and set up their own government at Shawnees, Missouri
* Free spoilers set up their own government in Topeka, Kansas.
1. Kansas in Convulsion
2. John Brown, an abolitionist led a band to hack to pieces 5 men, besmirching the free-soil cause.
3. Civil War in Kansas erupted destroying property and lives.
4. By 1857 Kansas was ready to apply for statehood.
* Proslavery forced devised the Lecompton Constitution which wouldn’t let people vote for or against the constitution, insuring slavery in Kansas.
1. James Buchanan Succeeded Pierce, and approved the Lecompton Compromise.
* Eventually another compromise let the people vote on the Lecompton Compromise and it was revoked.
1. The Democrats, the last national party was divided and so was the union.
2. “Bully” Brooks and His Bludgeon
3. Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts was disliked one day he was giving a speech insulted many people Congressman Preston S. Brooks of South Carolina got offended and beat Sumner with his cane until Sumner passed out and his cane had broken.
* The speech made by Sumner was applauded in the north angering the south.
1. Broadly speaking these were among the first blows of the civil war.
2. “Old Buck” Versus the “Pathfinder”
3. The democrats chose James Buchanan as their presidential candidate because he wasn’t tainted by the Kansas-Nebraska act.
4. The republicans chose John C. Fremont.
5. New immigrants alarmed the nativists.
* The Know-Nothing party was organized by protestants who said “Americans must rile America”.
1. The Electoral Fruits of 1856
2. James Buchanan won the election of 1856
* It was a good thing because if a republican would have won the nation would have split earlier.
1. The republicans were only a group of 2 years old but had given the democrats a run for their money.
2. The Dread Scott Bombshell
3. A Black Slave sued for his freedom because he lived on free soil.
* Supreme Court said that he couldn’t sue in federal courts.
* They also decided that a slave was property and could be taken into any territory and held there as a slave.
* The Court went further and said that the Missouri compromise was unconstitutional; and congress had no right to ban slavery.
1. This unexpected victory delighted the southerners.
* Northerners defined this “opinion”.
1. The Final Crash of 1857
2. The Panic of 1857 was psychologically the worst of the 19th century.
* California Gold inflated the currency.
* Crimean war had over stimulated grain growth.
* 5 thousand businesses failed in one year.
* The North was hardest hit, south still had could get favorable prices for their cotton and rode out the storm.
1. Northerners wanted to make farming land available to the pioneers for free.
* Industrialists feared that they would lose workers and southerners feared that it would fill with anti-slavery farmers.
1. Congress passed Homestead Act making public land available at $ .25 per acre but President Buchanan had vetoed it.
2. Congress had enacted the Tariff of 1857, reducing duties on goods about 20%.
* The north blamed it for causing the panic.
1. An Illinois Rail-Splitter Emerges
2. The Senatorial elections in Illinois were coming up and republicans nominated Abraham Lincoln- and awkward yet imposing figure.
3. He wasn’t very educated but was an avid reader and became a lawyer earning the nickname “honest Abe” because he wouldn’t take cases that he didn’t feel right about defending.
4. The Great Debate : Lincoln Versus Douglas
5. Lincoln challenged Douglas to seven debates.
* Douglas was a great debater and the candidates seemed ill matched.
* Most famous debate was at Freeport, Illinois.
1. Douglas won the Senate seat but Lincoln seemed to be playing for larger stakes.
2. John Brown: murderer or martyr
3. John Brown, with a group of men, wanted to raid Harpers Ferry- a federal arsenal, and then give the weapons to the slaves so they would start and uprising.
* He failed and was captured by the marines.
* Convicted of murder and treason, he pleaded insanity.
* Acted very bravely towards his death and was seen as a martyr by the free-soilers.
1. The Disruption of the Democrats
2. The democrats almost chose Douglas as candidate for presidency but the southern democrats didn’t agree and left.
* Not enough votes for the 2/3 majority to choose Douglas so the whole body dissolved.
1. They tried again in Baltimore, the northerners chose Douglas. The Southerners chose John C. Breckinridge.
2. A Middle-of-the-road group organized the Constitutional Union Party.
* Mainly consisted of former Whigs and know-nothings.
* Nominated John Bell
1. A Rail- Splitter Splits the Union
2. Republicans were happy about their opponents splitting, and they eventually chose Lincoln.
3. Republicans appealed to the important non-southern groups: the freesoilers, because of the non extension of slavery; northern manufacturers for a protective tariff; for the immigrants, no abridgement of rights; people in the north west, pacific railroad; for the west, internal improvements and for farmers, free homesteads.
4. The Electoral Upheaval of 1860
5. Awkward “Abe” Lincoln ran a curious race.
* He was a minority president, {60 percent of voters preferred some other candidate} and he wasn’t allowed on some southern state’s ballots.
1. Douglas campaigned for himself instead of the usual presidential dignified silence.
2. Still, Lincoln won 180 to 123 electoral votes
3. The Secessionist Exodus
4. Now that Lincoln won, South Carolina’s legislature voted unanimously to secede.
* During the next six weeks, six other states seceded and later on four more did.
1. The seceding states formed a new government called the confederate states of America.
* Their president was Jefferson Davis.
1. Lincoln, even though elected, couldn’t take office for four more months.
2. President Buchanan was blamed for not holding the seceders in the union.
* His small army was occupied controlling the Indians in the west and as ling as no shots were fired everyone still hoped for reconciliation.
1. The Collapse of Compromise
2. The Crittenden amendments were proposed to appease the south.
* Slavery was prohibited north of the 36, 30’ line but south of that got protection in all territories now and the ones to be acquired (made with the Caribbean in mind).
1. Lincoln flatly rejected the Crittenden scheme.
* All hope of compromise evaporated,
1. If Buchanan had used force on keeping South Carolina he might have started the war three months earlier and under worst conditions.
2. Farewell to the Union
3. Sectionalists left mostly because of slavery issues.
* They were alarmed by the growing northern numbers and were dismayed by the republicans winning because they felt that their rights as the slaveholding minority were being threatened.
1. Jefferson Davis said “All we ask is to be left alone”.
2. The Southerners didn’t think that the northerners could fight them
* They wanted to trade with less tariffs, and didn’t think they were doing anything wrong or immoral by seceding.