

5 The sectional compromises of the first half of the 19th Century were not in fact compromises, but rather “sectional sellouts” in which the North gave in to the insistent demands of the slaveholding South.

(Assess the validity of this statement)

Pre-history of North and South over slavery

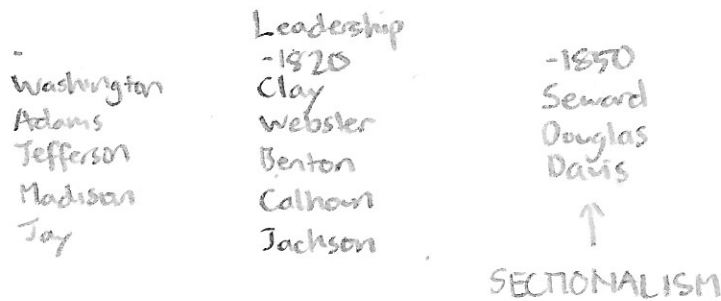
The stage was set for a clash between the North and South as early as the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia 1787. In essence the South intimated that it would not rubber stamp the new constitution unless some compromises were made to slavery. What resulted was the 3/5's compromise and a promise that the importation of new slaves would not be stopped for a least 20 years. Northern states begrudgingly accepted to give the constitution a chance.

Two major compromises marked the sectional issues of the first half of the 19th Century.

MISSOURI COMPROMISE 1820

Admitted Missouri as a slave state but divided the remainder of the Louisiana Purchase at the 36' 30 line. North and South forever divided.

Sellout? Yes partially,
Southerners received a slave state
South gains control of nearly 2/3's of Louisiana Purchase.
North appears to lose as the reports of Zebulon Pike and Stephen Long indicate that much of the northern portion is nothing more than a desert.
North does appear to get an important precedent, that slavery can be excluded by Congress from a territory.



COMPROMISE OF 1850

Quieted for the moment the uproar over the addition of slavery in the territories acquired during the Mexican War. Nashville Convention was cause for concern.

Some northerners saw the war as a southern plot to add additional slave states. The Wilmot Proviso was an outgrowth of this concern. (never passed).

Partial sellout to the South by the North? Yes!

North gets a free state (California)

South gets Congress to proclaim it does not have the power to abolish slavery in D.C. or to ban the interstate slave trade.

A fugitive slave law that made the Federal Gov't. the instrument of enforcement of the ugly abuses of slavery.

While the term sectional sellout may be too strong, it is clear that the Compromises of 1820 and 1850 did to some extent sacrifice justice and national interest to the aggressive demands of the slaveholding South.

Kansas-Nebraska Act 1854 – another sellout to the South, repealed the Missouri Compromise for the remaining territories, inserted Popular Sovereignty which was totally rejected by the abolitionists but accepted in Congress.

From this point, the “Bleeding Kansas” and other abolitionist pressure to stop the spread of slavery made the Civil War a foregone conclusion. _No more compromises or sellouts were possible.

CRITTENDEN COMPROMISE 1860

Last ditch attempt to save the Union, would reestablish the 36°30' line
Republican Party cannot agree as their platform is for absolutely no extension of slavery.