

gaining in strength in the North in the 1830s. Many Northern workers and immigrants opposed slavery. They feared that slaves, who did not work for pay, would take jobs away from them.

Although they opposed slavery, most Northerners were *racist* by today's standards. Many whites refused to go to school with, work with, or live near African Americans. In most states, African Americans could not vote.

White Southerners defended slavery by claiming that white people were superior to blacks. Slaveholders claimed that slaves benefited by being introduced to Christianity. They also argued that slaves benefited by having their food, clothing, and shelter provided for them. These differences added to tensions between the North and the South.

2. Why did Northern workers and immigrants oppose slavery?

The Wilmot Proviso (page 443)

What was the Wilmot Proviso?

The North and the South disagreed whether slavery should be allowed in territories that were not yet states. In 1846, Congress debated the **Wilmot Proviso**. This bill proposed to ban slavery in any territory that the United States acquired from the War with Mexico. Slaveholders argued that slaves were property protected by the Constitution.

Congress divided along regional lines over the Wilmot Proviso. Northerners supported it. Southerners opposed it. Although it passed the House of Representatives, the Wilmot Proviso never passed the Senate. Southerners had more power in the Senate than in the House.

The Wilmot Proviso led to the formation of the **Free-Soil Party**. This party wanted to stop the expansion of slavery. It made slavery a key issue in national politics.

3. Why did slaveholders oppose the Wilmot Proviso?

Controversy over Territories; The Compromise of 1850 (pages 443–445)

How was a temporary compromise reached on the issue of slavery?

By 1848, the nation hotly debated how to deal with slavery in the lands gained after the War with Mexico. In 1850, California applied for admission to the Union as a free state. This would make slave states a minority in the Senate. Southerners in Congress opposed the admission of California as a free state.

Senator **Henry Clay** of Kentucky offered a bill to settle the California problem. To please the North, it proposed to admit California as a free state. For the South, it included a strong law to help slaveholders recapture runaway slaves. The law would also let some territories decide for themselves about slavery.

Daniel Webster, senator from Massachusetts, supported the compromise. Senator **Stephen A. Douglas** of Illinois worked to pass the plan. In September, the plan became law. The plan is now known as the **Compromise of 1850**.

4. What were two features of the Compromise of 1850?
