

The Kansas–Nebraska Act (pages 447–448)

Who proposed the Kansas–Nebraska Act?

In 1854, Senator Stephen A. Douglas proposed a bill that would divide the Nebraska Territory into two territories—Nebraska and Kansas. He suggested that the decision to allow slavery in these territories should be decided by **popular sovereignty**. This is a system where the *residents* vote to decide an issue.

Popular sovereignty would allow slavery in areas where it had been banned by the Missouri Compromise. Southerners supported the bill for this reason. But the bill angered opponents of slavery. Even so, the bill passed. The bill became known as the **Kansas–Nebraska Act**.

2. How was the issue of slavery to be decided in Nebraska and Kansas?

“Bleeding Kansas” (pages 448–449)

What happened after the Kansas–Nebraska Act was passed?

Proslavery and antislavery people rushed into Kansas. Each side wanted to have enough people to win the vote on slavery. Five thousand Missourians came and voted in the election illegally. The Kansas legislature was packed with proslavery representatives.

Antislavery settlers *boycotted* the official government and formed one of their own. Settlers on both sides armed themselves. In May 1855, a proslavery mob attacked the town of Lawrence, Kansas. They destroyed the offices and house of the governor of the antislavery government. This attack is known as the Sack of Lawrence.

John Brown, an extreme abolitionist, entered the scene at this point. He wanted revenge for the Sack of

Lawrence. He and seven other men came into Kansas and murdered five proslavery people. This attack became known as the Pottawatomie Massacre. As news of the violence spread, a small war broke out in Kansas. It lasted for three years. The area came to be called “Bleeding Kansas.”

3. Why did violence break out in Kansas in 1855?

Violence in Congress (page 449)

Why did violence spread to Congress?

Violence was not limited to Kansas. It also spread to the nation’s capital. In May 1856, Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts delivered a speech against the proslavery forces in Kansas. During the speech, Sumner insulted Senator A. P. Butler from South Carolina. The speech offended Preston Brooks, a relative of Butler. Brooks came to the defense of Butler and the South. He attacked Sumner with a cane as Sumner sat at his desk.

Many Southerners cheered Brooks’s defense of the South. Most Northerners were upset at the violence in the Senate. “Bleeding Kansas” and “Bleeding Sumner” became antislavery rallying cries. They also became slogans for the new Republican Party.

4. Why did Preston Brooks attack Sumner in the Senate in 1856?
