



AS HISTORY

UNIT 2

DEPTH STUDY 7

THE CRISIS OF THE AMERICAN REPUBLIC c.1840-1877

**PART 1: SECTIONAL DIFFERENCES AND THE ROAD
TO CIVIL WAR c.1840-1861**

SPECIMEN PAPER

1 hour 45 minutes

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

In addition to this examination paper, you will need a 12 page answer book.

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Answer **both** the questions on the paper.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

The number of marks is given in brackets at the end of each question.

You are advised to spend around 50 minutes on each question.

The sources and quotations used in this unit may have been amended or adapted from the stated published work in order to make the wording more accessible.

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PART 1: SECTIONAL DIFFERENCES AND THE ROAD TO CIVIL WAR c.1840-1861

Answer **both** the questions on the paper.

QUESTION 1

Study the sources below and answer the question that follows.

Source A

Our country is a theatre which exhibits in full operation two radically different political systems: the one resting on the basis of servile labour, the other on the basis of voluntary labour of free men. These antagonistic systems are coming into closer contact, and collision results. Shall I tell you what collision means? Those who think it is accidental, unnecessary, the work of interested or fanatical agitators, and therefore ephemeral, mistake the case altogether. It is an irrepressible conflict between opposing and enduring forces, and it means that the United States must and will sooner or later become either entirely a slave-holding nation or entirely a free labour nation. It is the failure to apprehend this great truth that induces so many unsuccessful attempts at final compromises between the slave and free states. Our forefathers knew it to be true and that one or other system must exclusively prevail.

[William Seward, a leading Republican Senator with ambitions for leadership of the party, making a speech in New York. (25 October 1858)]

Source B

The northern states have assumed the right of deciding upon the propriety of our domestic institutions, and have denied the right of property established in fifteen of the states and recognised by the Constitution; they have denounced as sinful the institution of slavery. They have encouraged and assisted thousands of our slaves to leave their homes and those who remain have been incited by agents, books and pictures to servile insurrection. For twenty five years this agitation has been steadily increasing until it has secured to its aid the power of the common government. A geographical line has been drawn across the Union, and all the States north of that line have united in the election of a man to the high office of President of the United States whose opinions and purposes are hostile to slavery.

[From the South Carolina Convention, *Declaration of Causes of Secession*. (24 December 1860)]

Source C

On the 21st Kellogg, a Republican congressman, was here seeking to ascertain to what extent I should be consenting for our friends to go in the way of compromise on the now vexed question of the extension of slavery. I say now that on the territorial question I am quite inflexible. I am for no compromise which assists or permits the extension of the institution on soil owned by our American nation. And any trick by which our nation is made to acquire territory, and then allows some local authority over it, as obnoxious as any other, I take it that to effect some such result as this, and to put us again on the high road to a slave empire is the object of all these proposed compromises. I am against it. As for fugitive slaves, the District of Columbia, slave trade among the slave States and whatever springs from necessity from the fact that the institution is amongst us, I care but little—save that what is done should be proper and not altogether outrageous. Nor do I care much about New Mexico, if further extension were hedged against.

[Abraham Lincoln, President Elect, in a letter to a senior Republican politician, William Seward. (1 February 1861)]

With reference to the sources and your understanding of the historical context, assess the value of these three sources to an historian studying the outbreak of the Civil War. [30]

QUESTION 2

Study the extracts below and answer the question that follows.

Interpretation 1

As many historians have pointed out, a closer look at the way congressmen voted revealed that this was no true compromise. Douglas' main contribution to the passage of the measures was to break up Clay's omnibus bill into its individual components and to construct separate coalitions to support each one. Southerners broke party lines to vote against any restriction on slavery, and a substantial number of northern Democrats joined northern Whigs in opposing them. Only a minority of congressmen mostly southern Whigs, some northern Democrats and a minority of conservative northern Whigs, formed a genuine compromise block, supporting all the measures. In retrospect we know that the resolution of the slavery question hammered out with such effort in 1850 did not last. But at the time it was hailed widely for its statesmanlike resolution of a seemingly intractable problem. The Compromise removed the sting of slavery from national politics, at least for a short time. Southern radicals and northern Free Soldiers had been marginalized.

[Adam Smith, a university lecturer and author, writing in a textbook, *The American Civil War* (2007)]

Interpretation 2

The Compromise of 1850 may more accurately be described as a truce between politicians. But its terms were hardly held in universal repute. Whatever the precise balance of political power which the Compromise weighed, there can be little doubt concerning the *conditional* nature of the compact as far as the South was concerned. It depended first and foremost on the behaviour of northern electorates and their politicians. The South expected the latter to control the former; by enshrining in law a mechanism for coercing blacks back into slavery and demanding that northern state legislatures and judiciaries enforce it with the same zeal as if they were slave states, the symbolic reach of the slave system was extended into the free northern states. It was in this soil, fertilized by the blood and sweat of returned slaves, that anxiety about the growth of the 'slave power' sprang up. In truth, the Compromise of 1850 did not 'settle', once and for all, the contentious issue of slavery. It was delusion to expect that legalistic formulae, whose elegance might please politicians, would convince certain voters with strong views and deeply held convictions about the immorality of slavery. It has little chance of long-term success.

[Brian Holden Reid, a British academic historian specialising in the history of warfare and the American Civil War, writing in a specialist textbook, *The Origins of the American Civil War* (1996)]

Historians have made different interpretations about the Compromise of 1850. Analyse, evaluate and use the two extracts above and your understanding of the historical debate to answer the following question:

How valid is the view that the Compromise of 1850 was doomed to fail?

[30]