

Kansas-Nebraska Act

In 1854, Congress passed the Kansas-Nebraska Act, which organized the remaining territory acquired in the Louisiana Purchase so that such territories could be admitted to the Union as states.

Probably the most important result of the Kansas-Nebraska Act was its language concerning the contentious issue of slavery. Proposed by Stephen A. Douglas, and signed by president Franklin Pierce, the bill divided the region into two territories. Territory north of the 40th parallel was called Nebraska Territory, and territory south of the 40th parallel was called Kansas Territory. The most controversial aspect of the Kansas-Nebraska Act was that each territory would decide for itself whether or not to permit slavery. This stipulation repealed the Missouri Compromise of 1820 which stated that slavery was prohibited north of 36° 30'.

As there was more support for slavery in Kansas, both pro-slavery and anti-slavery advocates organized teams of people to settle in the state. Not surprisingly, the area became a battleground for both sides, and the resulting violence caused the territory to be referred to as “Bleeding Kansas,” and was one of the first major causes of the Civil War. Eventually, on January 29, 1861, after much controversy, Kansas was admitted to the Union as a free state – just months before the first shots of the Civil War were fired.

1. What was the purpose of the Kansas-Nebraska Act?

- A. To repeal the Missouri Compromise
- B. To make sure all territories could vote on the issue of slavery
- C. To admit Kansas and Nebraska to the Union as free states
- D. To organize territories so they could become states

2. What was controversial about the Kansas-Nebraska Act?

- A. Slavery would be allowed in both Kansas and Nebraska Territories
- B. Territories would decide whether or not to allow slavery within their borders
- C. Neither Kansas or Nebraska could become states if they allowed slavery
- D. Slavery would be prohibited in certain parts of the territories

3. What is a stipulation as used in the following sentence?

This stipulation repealed the Missouri Compromise of 1820 which stated that slavery was prohibited north of 36° 30'.

- A. A condition or requirement
- B. A change
- C. An illegal act
- D. A promise

4. Which of the following is true?

- A. There was more support for slavery in Kansas
- B. There was equal support for slavery in both Kansas and Nebraska
- C. There was more support for slavery in Nebraska
- D. There was little support for slavery in Kansas or Nebraska

5. Why did Kansas become known as “Bleeding Kansas?”

- A. Because of the increased slave trade that occurred before it became a state
- B. Because slavery supporters were always violent
- C. Because slavery supporters and slavery opponents both moved to the state
- D. Because it was a major cause of the Civil War

6. Eventually...

- A. Kansas became a slave state after the start of the Civil War.
- B. Kansas became a slave state before the start of the Civil War.
- C. Kansas became a free state after the start of the Civil War.
- D. Kansas became a free state before the start of the Civil War.

7. What was the effect of the Kansas-Nebraska Act?

- A. It brought the nation together
- B. It brought the nation closer to war
- C. Slavery became legal in Kansas
- D. Slavery would eventually become illegal in America