Kansas-Nebraska Act

Facts, information and articles about the Kansas-Nebraska Act, an event of Westward Expansion from the Wild West

Kansas-Nebraska Act summary: The US Congress passed the Kansas-Nebraska Act on May 30, 1854 and thereby the territories of Kansas and Nebraska were legally created. The controversial part of the Kansas-Nebraska Act was allowing settlers in those territories to decide for themselves whether they would permit slavery in their respective territories by taking a vote on the question. The Kansas-Nebraska Act was used to repeal the Missouri Compromise of 1820 which was used to prohibit slavery north of 36°30’ latitude. As the North of the US was against slavery and held the Missouri Compromise to be a valid and long-term agreement, this caused quite a tension. The South was inclined to support slavery and so the Act met with nothing but a hearty approval there.

Democratic Senator Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois was a man behind the Act. His original intention was to prepare conditions for opening many thousands of farms in the two territories and for building a Transcontinental Railroad through the Midwest. The problem was letting the voters decide whether the slavery would be permitted or not, just because they happened to be there at the time of voting. Those who opposed slavery feared that it would be easy for rich slave owners from the South to buy the best land in Kansas and influence the voting outcome as well.

The crowds of potential voters flooded into Kansas and the result was a bloody conflict between the opponents and supporters of slavery. One new political party emerged from the controversy: the new Republican Party soon assumed a dominant position on the North and in 1860, their member, Abraham Lincoln, was elected president.

Article found at http://www.historynet.com/kansas-nebraska-act