

A black and white photograph of a historical Senate chamber. In the center, a man in a dark suit stands with his back to the camera, holding a large, bright blue sign. The sign has the words "NEED", "PREPPING", and "READING" written in blue, hand-drawn capital letters. The sign is tilted slightly to the right. The background shows several men in 19th-century attire seated at desks, and a large eagle sculpture on a high ledge in the upper right. The overall scene is dimly lit, with a focus on the central figure and the sign.

**SENATE IMMERSION
MODULE (SIM)**

Compromise of 1850

NEED
PREPPING
READING

EDWARD M. KENNEDY INSTITUTE
FOR THE UNITED STATES SENATE

THE STATE OF THE UNION: COMPROMISE OF 1850

Introduction and Purpose

In 1850, tensions between the north and south have been growing and growing over the past 4 years. The United States is on the brink of civil war. The northern and southern states are divided on many issues, especially slavery. As the country grows territory-wise, a debate rages about whether new states within the nation will be free or slave states. The U.S. legislature must work to keep the country together as best as they can.

Several senators played major roles in the creation and passage of the Compromise of 1850 – Senator Henry Clay (Whig from Kentucky), Senator Stephen Douglas (Democrat from Illinois), and Daniel Webster (Democrat from Massachusetts). Clay first proposed a bill with several amendments, supported by Webster, that failed to pass. Then, Stephen Douglas divided the omnibus bill into several individual bills so that senators could vote or abstain on different bills. The Compromise of 1850 was made of all the bills that were passed by different groups of senators.

The purpose of the compromise was to subdue growing conflict between northern and southern states about the slave and free territory in the country.

During this learning module, students take on the role of senators in 1850 as the country is faced with the impending civil war between northern and southern states. The pre-lesson will help you gain an understanding about major issues facing the nation in 1850.

During the actual SIM, you will work as senators to try to create and pass a bill to calm the tensions in the nation.

1850 State of the Union Timeline

1846

- The Wilmot Proviso is proposed, which stated that any territory added to the Union after the date when the Proviso was passed would be admitted as a free state. The Wilmot Proviso passed in the House of Representatives, but failed to pass in the Senate.
- Iowa was admitted as a free state.

1848

- Mexican-American War ended and U.S. gained territory from Texas to Arizona.
- Wisconsin was admitted as a free state. At this point, 15 states were free states and 15 states were slave states.
- The Free Soil Party formed. This anti-slavery party was in full support of the Wilmot Proviso.

1849

- California asked to be admitted as a free state.

1850

- Texas wanted to extend its borders to Santa Fe, New Mexico.
- Washington, DC had the largest slave market in North America.

TYPO!

STUDENT WORKSHEET

RESOURCES

CALHOUN-WEBSTER GRAPHIC ORGANIZER

JOHN CALHOUN

KEY EXCERPTS - WHAT JUMPS OUT TO YOU?	MAIN POINTS (IN YOUR OWN WORDS)
	States rights

SUMMARY OF POINT: (WHAT IS THE SENATOR TRYING TO SAY?)

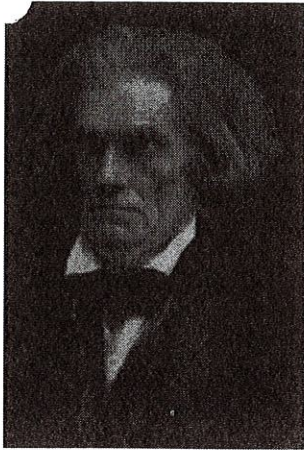
~~7-2~~ [7-2 lines]

DANIEL WEBSTER

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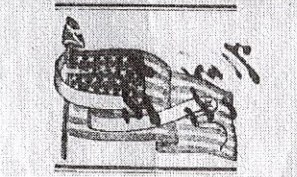
SENATOR 1
SOUTH CAROLINA (D)



YOU ARE SENATOR
**JOHN C.
CALHOUN**

There's no sugarcoating it: you're one of the Senate's strongest supporters of slavery, and not afraid to let people know it. You're pushing seventy and battling tuberculosis, but you're going to weigh in on this bill if it KILLS you (Spoiler: it does). You're a giant of the senate, and relish your position as a major influence holder.

Democratic Electoral Ticket.



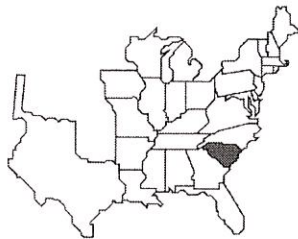
Democrat

As a Democrat, you feel that you represent the common people of the United States: small farmers, laborers, and settlers moving west. You think that wealthy landowners and businessmen shouldn't have as much influence over politics—they're overrepresented as it is!

↓ ARISTOCRATS

↑ EXPANSION

↑ FARMING



South Carolina

Things are tense in your state: people are leaving, the cotton crop has been low, and you have the sinking feeling that your "property" outnumbers you. Thank heavens you and your planter friends control the state government — it's the only way to make sure the North doesn't make things worse.

↑ ARISTOCRATS

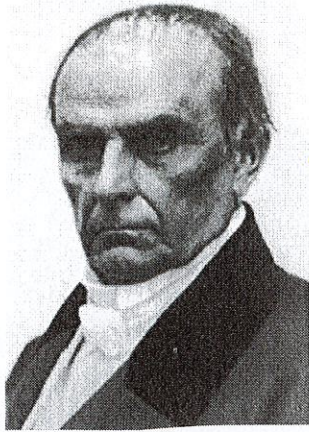
↑ STATES' RIGHTS

↑ SLAVERY

NULLIFICATION

SENATOR 2
MASSACHUSETTS (W)

YOU ARE SENATOR
DANIEL WEBSTER



You're one of the Senate's big guns: the greatest constitutional scholar of your generation, able to win anyone over with your powerful speeches. Even so, you can't STAND John Davis, the other Massachusetts senator, and you're not on speaking terms. You have national ambitions, and he's among those who have thwarted them. You're known to be pretty anti-slavery, but there is nothing more important to you than protecting the Union from dissolving.

the Whig Party
~~*Dem.*~~
~~*the Liberty Party*~~
~~*the Am. System*~~



Whig

As a Whig, you want to invest in America's future: the government needs to fund improvements in manufacturing and transportation, so that the U.S.A. can become an economic powerhouse. Businessmen and educated experts will lead the way; they deserve your support.

↑ ARISTOCRATS

↑ FEDERAL FUNDING

↑ INDUSTRY



Massachusetts

Massachusetts' textile mills drive its economy: if the South stops sending cotton your way, that business will dry up, and your constituents won't be happy. Still, Boston is a major international port...if you support laws that Britain or continental Europe would frown upon, you might not have any trading partners to sell those textiles TO.

OH OH!
SO MUCH CONFLICT
EVEN

↑ COTTON & TEXTILES

↑ FOREIGN OPINION

↓ SLAVERY

MAP OF THE UNITED STATES, 1848



Map of the United States
Including Western
Territories, December,
1848; RG 233, Records
of the U.S. House of
Representatives;
National Archives Building;
Washington, DC; National
Archives Identifier 2127339

EXCERPTS FROM "THE CLAY COMPROMISE MEASURES" SPEECH

BY JOHN C. CALHOUN
(MARCH 4, 1850)

The first question, then, presented for consideration in the investigation I propose to make in order to obtain such knowledge is: What is it that has endangered the Union? To this question there can be but one answer, that the immediate cause is the almost universal discontent which pervades all the States composing the Southern section of the Union. This widely extended discontent is not of recent origin. It commenced with the agitation of the slavery question and has been increasing ever since. The next question, going one step further back, is: What has caused this widely diffused and almost universal discontent?

One of the causes is, undoubtedly, to be traced to the long-continued agitation of the slave question on the part of the North, and the many aggressions which they have made on the rights of the South during the time.

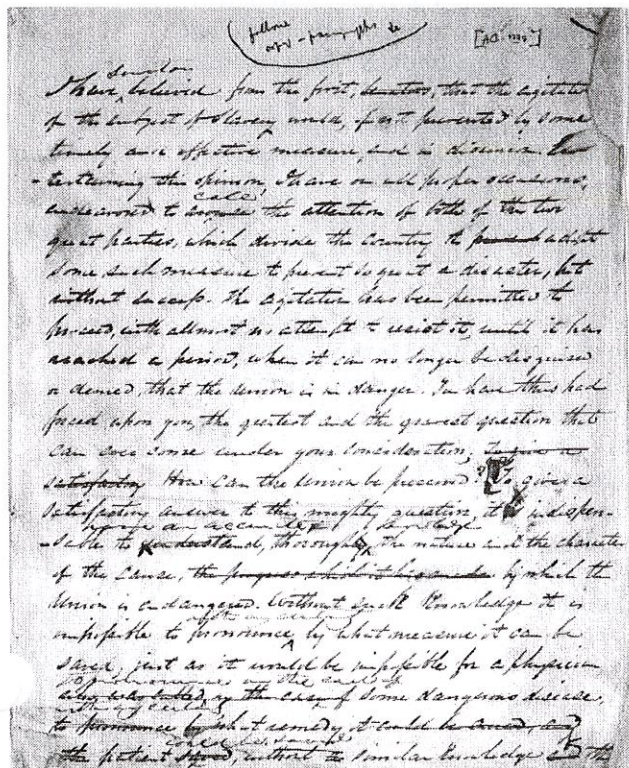
...There is another lying back of it--with which this is intimately connected--that may be regarded as the great and primary cause. This is to be found in the fact that the equilibrium between the two

sections in the government as it stood when the Constitution was ratified and the government put in action has been destroyed. At that time there was nearly a perfect equilibrium between the two, which afforded ample means to each to protect itself against the aggression of the other; but, as it now stands, one section has the exclusive power of controlling the government, which leaves the other without any adequate means of protecting itself against its encroachment and oppression.

The result of the whole is to give the Northern section a predominance in every department of the government, and thereby concentrate in it the two elements which constitute the federal government: a majority of States, and a majority of their population, estimated in federal numbers. Whatever section concentrates the two in itself possesses the control of the entire government.

...Having now, senators, explained what it is that endangers the Union, and traced it to its cause, and explained its nature and character, the question again recurs, How can the Union be saved? To this I answer, there is but one way by which it can be, and that is by adopting such measures as will satisfy the States belonging to the Southern section that they can remain in the Union consistently with their honor and their safety...The South asks for justice, simple justice, and less she ought not to take.

...But can this be done? Yes, easily; not by the weaker party, for it can of itself do nothing--not even protect itself--but by the stronger. The North has only to will it to accomplish it--to do justice by conceding to the South an equal right in the acquired territory, and to do her duty by causing the stipulations relative to fugitive slaves to be faithfully fulfilled--to cease the agitation of the slave question, and to provide for the insertion of a provision in the Constitution, by an amendment, which will restore to the South, in substance, the power she possessed of protecting herself before the equilibrium between the sections was destroyed by the action of this government. But will the North agree to this? It is for her to answer the question...



Retrieved from <http://www.nationalcenter.org/CalhounClayCompromise.html>

EXCERPTS FROM THE SEVENTH OF MARCH"

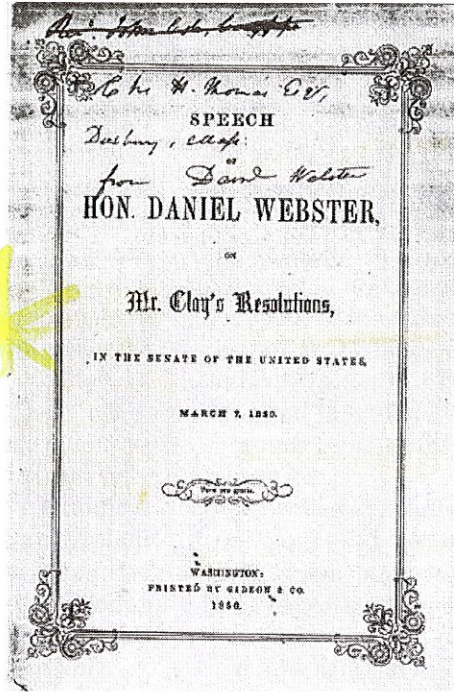
SPEECH BY DANIEL WEBSTER
(MARCH 7, 1850)

Mr. President - I wish to speak today, not as a Massachusetts man, nor as a Northern man, but as an American, and a member of the Senate of the United States.

...Now, Sir, upon the general nature and influence of slavery there exists a wide difference of opinion between the northern portion of this country and the southern. It is said on the one side, that, although not the subject of any injunction or direct prohibition in the New Testament, slavery is a wrong; that it is founded merely in the right of the strongest; and that is an oppression, like unjust wars, like all those conflicts by which a powerful nation subjects a weaker to its will.... These are the sentiments that are cherished, and of late with greatly augmented force, among the people of the Northern States.

...The South, upon the other side, having been accustomed to this relation between two races all their lives, from their birth, having been taught, in general, to treat the subjects of this bondage with care and kindness, and I believe, in general, feeling great kindness for them, have not taken the view of the subject which I have mentioned. There are thousands of religious men, with consciences as tender as any of their brethren at the North, who do not see the unlawfulness of slavery; and there are more thousands, perhaps, that whatsoever they may think of it in its origin, and as a matter depending upon natural right, yet take things as they are, and, finding slavery to be an established relation of the society in which they live, can see no way in which, let their opinions on the abstract question be what they may, it is in the power of the present generation to relieve themselves from this relation. And candor obliges me to say, that I believe they are just as conscientious, many of them, and the religious people, all of them, as they are at the North who hold different opinions.

...Mr. President, in the excited times in which we live, there is found to exist a state of crimination and recrimination between the North and South. There are lists of grievances produced by each; and those grievances, real or supposed, alienate the minds of one portion of the country from the other, exasperate the feelings, and subdue the sense of fraternal affection, patriotic love, and mutual regard.... I begin with complaints of the South... especially to one which has in my opinion just foundation; and that is, that there has been found at



Retrieved from <https://www.dartmouth.edu/~dwebster/speeches/seventh-march.html>

the North, among individuals and among legislators, a disinclination to perform fully their constitutional duties in regard to the return of persons bound to service who have escaped into the free States. In that respect, the South, in my judgment, is right, and the North is wrong.

...And now, Mr. President, instead of speaking of the possibility or utility of secession, instead of dwelling in those caverns of darkness... let us enjoy the fresh air of Liberty and Union.... We have a great, popular, constitutional government, guarded by law and by judicature, and defended by the affections of the whole people. No monarchical throne presses these States together, no iron chain of military power encircles them; they live and stand under a government popular in its form, representative in its character, founded upon principles of equality, and so constructed, we hope, as to last for ever. In all its history it has been beneficent; it has trodden down no man's liberty; it has crushed no State. Its daily respiration is liberty and patriotism; its yet youthful veins are full of enterprise, courage, and honorable love of glory and renown.