

American history

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1. Why did America go to war with Mexico in 1846. (There is more to it at this point than Texas) The main reason for this conflict was the desire of the American political elites to increase territorial expansion to the Pacific Coast, precisely the territories of current California and New Mexico. At first President Polk offered \$30 million dollars for these territories and then he sent American troops to the borderline.

At the same time Texas expressed desire to become an independent state, however Mexico could not let annexation of this territory to the US. Texas recognized the Rio Grande boundary line and the whole controversy around it provoked a military conflict between the US and Mexico.

2. What was the " Know-Nothing" party and what was their stand on immigrants?

The Know-Nothing party has the most controversial reputation in the American history. Party members were mainly against the immigration, since the number of people coming from Europe was increasing.

First generation of immigrants had a feeling that they had more rights in the country than those who just settled in. These sentiments resulted in series of violent attacks against Irish immigrants and the Catholic Church in the US.

Several small parties took into consideration the nativist ideas and formed the Know-Nothing Party. Since it was a secret society in the very beginning, party members were not allowed to tell anything about this organization.

They were saying that they " know nothing." That is where the name of the party originates from.

3. What was the Supreme Court decision in the Dred Scott case? Be very specific.

Using the Dred Scott case the Supreme Court tried to put an end to debates

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over issues of slavery in the territories. The Court figured that the decision of Wisconsin Territories to ban the slavery was unconstitutional. Since slaves were considered a property, the Court believed that constitution protects all property ownership rights. Therefore it was concluded that the Congress had no rights to outlaw the slavery on territories.

4. What did John Brown attempt to do in Harpers Ferry?

John Brown initially attempted to organize a revolt against slavery. According to his plan he was supposed to seize the arsenal at Harpers Ferry, give the weapon to slaves and go southward with his army. Brown's supporters were able to occupy the town without any problem. However the Federal troops did not let his plan to achieve, they killed almost all of his men and prevented the slave's revolt.

Even though slaves did not follow Brown, northerners supported and sympathized him a lot. The case of Harpers Ferry underlined the differences and increased the cleavage between the North and the South and highlighted the sense of disunion. This created a situation when the Northerners were sent off from the South? Some of people were lynched, slaves found themselves in the worse situation than before.