

## Winter 2015-16 History & Heritage -- #1

(A Seasonal Catechism for the Study of Western and American Civilization)

### **Bleeding Kansas --- (Johnson; *North Against South*, pp. 34-41)**

**This battle cry**, implying pro-Southern, pro-slavery aggression in a Western territory, was picked up by Republicans in their first presidential election in 1856? Antislavery press accounts in the North greatly exaggerated the violence, most of which was typical of the rough frontier and fueled by property disputes. The troubles multiplied because of rival territorial governments, the result of competition for the land from neighboring, pro-Southern Missourians and migrating mission/profit-minded Northerners.

### **The Politics of Fear and Loathing --- (Johnson; *North Against South*, pp. 34-41)**

**This title** highlights the character of the U.S. presidential election in 1856, a contest won by James Buchanan (D) over John C. Frémont (R) and Millard Fillmore (A)? Republicans touting “free labor” did their best to alarm Northerners into thinking a rabid Southern Slave Power was poised to take over the whole country. Democrats, meanwhile, condemned radical Republican orations demeaning the patriotism of slaveholders and anticipating with glee slave insurrections to topple Southern white rule.

### **Scott Denied --- (Johnson; *North Against South*, pp. 43-46)**

**This headline** sums up the U.S. Supreme Court’s 1857 verdict against slave Dred Scott’s suit for freedom by virtue of his visits to free lands and States? Seven of the nine justices, including Chief Justice Taney, ruled against Scott, disallowing the right of any slave (given his lack of citizenship) to initiate a case in federal court. What was really controversial, however, especially among Republicans, was Taney’s contention that neither Congress nor a territory could bar slavery—only a duly constituted State.

### **“House Divided” Speech --- (Johnson; *North Against South*, pp. 52-55)**

**This Lincoln speech**, delivered in 1858 on the eve of his senatorial debates with Douglas, offered citizens a nationalist vision of an American future free of slavery? Quoting Jesus’ observation that no kingdom divided against itself can stand, Lincoln surmised that the Union could not go on indefinitely half-slave and half-free. He told his fellow Republicans he did not expect the Union to fall but to become all one thing or all the other, while appealing for measures to arrest slavery’s spread for the time being.

### **Kansas Conundrum --- (Johnson; *North Against South*, pp. 46-52)**

**This heading** calls attention to the complex political contests and intrigues spawned by the application of the Kansas territory for U.S. statehood in 1857-58? Naturally, the contests were exploited by Democrats (increasingly divided along sectional lines) and the new Republicans (an exclusively Northern party at the time) for partisan gain. Kansans themselves were split into proslavery/antislavery factions, although their rival governments and constitutions revealed many political differences besides slavery.